



Potential of Lakshadweep

For Prelims: [Lakshadweep](#), [Arabian Sea](#), [Coral](#), [Blue Flag Certification](#), [Interim Budget 2024-25](#).

For Mains: Potential of Lakshadweep, Government Policies & Interventions.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Lakshadweep, India's smallest Union Territory (UT), due to its proximity to international shipping routes, has the potential to become a logistics hub and a remarkable tourist destination of India.

What are the Tourism and Logistics Potential of Lakshadweep?

▪ Tourism:

- Lakshadweep's pristine beaches, [Coral Reefs](#), and clear waters present a **remarkable tourist destination**.
- With proper infrastructure development and sustainable tourism practices, Lakshadweep **could become a premier tourist hotspot**.

▪ Trade and Logistics:

- Situated near international shipping routes, Lakshadweep holds the potential to become a strategic logistics hub. Its proximity to **coastal Karnataka, particularly Mangaluru (a Major Port)**, offers opportunities for trade partnerships and cargo handling.
 - Many Islands of Lakshadweep are closer to Mangaluru. Many Lakshadweep residents rely on supplies from Mangaluru for their daily living. This **business link is centuries-old**.
- With the proposed development of port connectivity and infrastructure, Lakshadweep **could facilitate smoother trade operations**, benefiting both local businesses and the broader regional economy.

▪ Regional Growth:

- The development initiatives for Lakshadweep, as outlined in the [Interim Budget 2024-25](#) proposal, not only benefit the islands but also contribute to regional growth, particularly for areas like Mangaluru.
 - The Union Finance Minister while presenting the Budget stated that projects for port connectivity, tourism infrastructure, and amenities will be taken on Indian islands including Lakshadweep to address zeal for domestic tourism.
- Enhanced connectivity, coupled with the establishment of cruise routes, could boost tourism and economic activities in both Lakshadweep and its neighbouring regions.

▪ Ecological Significance:

- Lakshadweep's **designation as a restricted area** underscores its ecological significance.

Suggestions to anchor cruise vessels at sea instead of building large infrastructure on the islands demonstrate a **commitment to sustainable practices**.

What are the Key Facts About Lakshadweep?

▪ About:

- India's **smallest Union Territory, Lakshadweep** is an archipelago consisting of 36 islands with an area of 32 sq km.
- It is a uni-district Union Territory and comprises 12 atolls, three reefs, five submerged banks, and ten inhabited islands.
- All Islands are 220 to 440 km away from the coastal city of Kochi in Kerala, in the emerald [Arabian Sea](#).
- It is directly under the control of the Centre through an administrator.

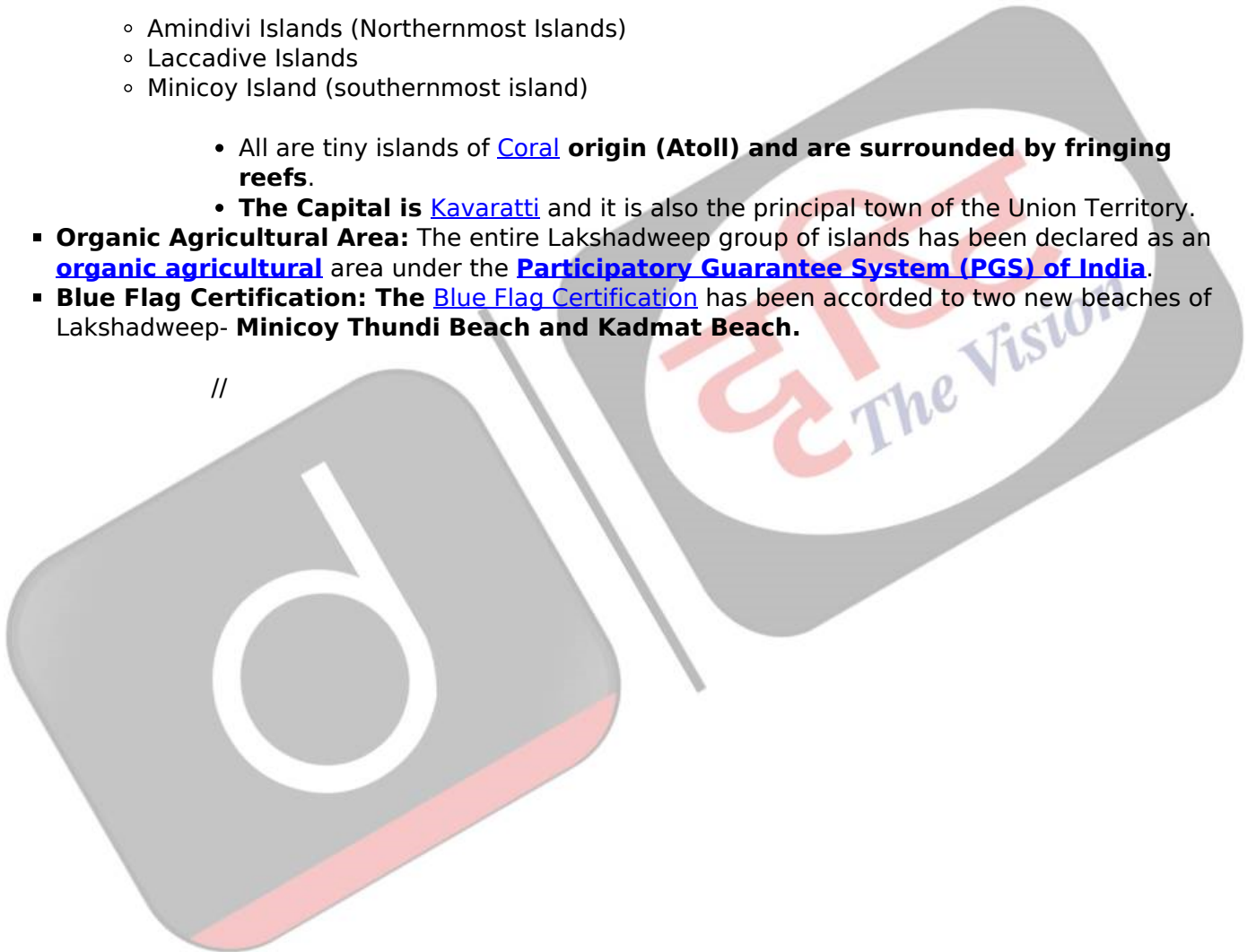
▪ There are three main groups of islands:

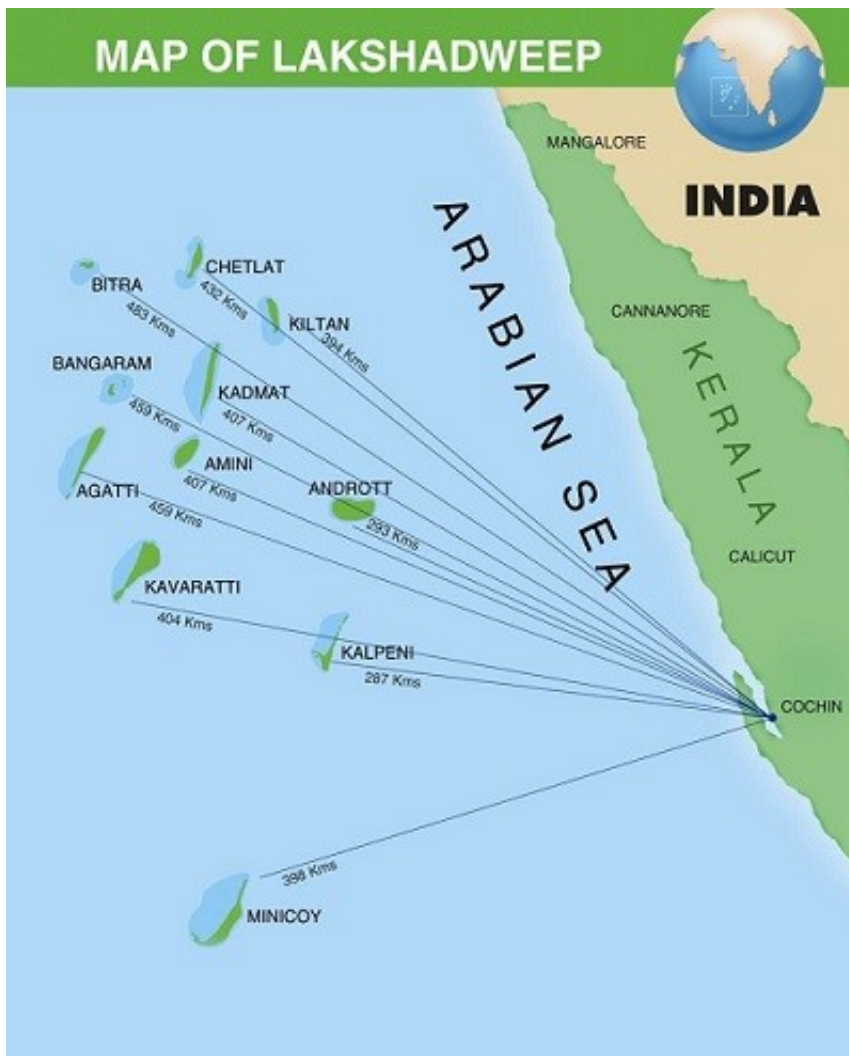
- Amindivi Islands (Northernmost Islands)
- Laccadive Islands
- Minicoy Island (southernmost island)

- All are tiny islands of [Coral](#) origin (**Atoll**) and are surrounded by fringing reefs.
- **The Capital is Kavaratti** and it is also the principal town of the Union Territory.

- **Organic Agricultural Area:** The entire Lakshadweep group of islands has been declared as an [organic agricultural](#) area under the [Participatory Guarantee System \(PGS\) of India](#).
- **Blue Flag Certification:** The [Blue Flag Certification](#) has been accorded to two new beaches of Lakshadweep- **Minicoy Thundi Beach and Kadmat Beach**.

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What are the Concerns Related to Development in Lakshadweep?

▪ Environmental Impact:

- The delicate ecosystem of the islands, including coral reefs and marine life, is vulnerable to damage from construction, pollution, and increased human activity.
- Sustainable development practices and stringent environmental regulations are necessary to mitigate these risks.

▪ Socio-cultural Impact:

- The traditional way of life and cultural heritage of the indigenous communities in Lakshadweep could be at risk with rapid development and increased tourism.

▪ Infrastructure Development:

- The lack of adequate infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and healthcare facilities, poses a significant challenge to tourism and trade in Lakshadweep.
- Developing modern infrastructure while preserving the islands' natural beauty and unique character requires careful planning and investment.

▪ Security Concerns:

- Lakshadweep's proximity to international shipping routes and its designation as a restricted area raise security concerns. Balancing security needs with the promotion of tourism and

trade requires coordinated efforts between government agencies and stakeholders.

▪ **Community Engagement:**

- Engaging local communities in the planning and implementation of development projects is crucial for their success and sustainability.
- Ensuring that the benefits of development are **equitably distributed among residents** and that their concerns are addressed is essential for fostering social cohesion and support for growth initiatives.

Conclusion

- Addressing these concerns and challenges will require a concerted effort from government agencies, private sector stakeholders, civil society organizations, and local communities.
- By adopting a holistic and inclusive approach to development, Lakshadweep can overcome these challenges and realise its full potential as a sustainable and thriving island destination.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which one of the following pairs of islands is separated from each other by the 'Ten Degree Channel'? (2014)

- (a) Andaman and Nicobar
- (b) Nicobar and Sumatra
- (c) Maldives and Lakshadweep
- (d) Sumatra and Java

Ans: (a)

Mains:

Q. What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps taken by India to counter this. (2013)

Q. Discuss the political developments in the Maldives in the last two years. Should they be of any cause for concern to India? (2013)