



## SASCI Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale

**For Prelims:** [Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment](#) , [Public-Private Partnership](#), [Jal Jeevan Mission](#) , [Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana](#), [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)

**For Mains:** Scheme of Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment, Sustainable tourism and infrastructure

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

The Union Government has allocated Rs 3,295 crore for the development of **40 tourism projects across 23 states** under the [Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment \(SASCI\)](#) - **Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale**.

- While SASCI has been active since 2020-21, this is the first time funds have been specifically earmarked for tourism.

### What is the SASCI Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale?

- **About:** The Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale component under the SASCI scheme focuses on developing tourism infrastructure in India, promoting less-visited sites like **Bateshwar (Uttar Pradesh), Ponda (Goa), and Gandikota (Andhra Pradesh)** to diversify tourism.
- **Objective:** The scheme provides **interest-free loans for 50 years to States** for developing iconic tourist centers, branding, and global marketing.
  - It aims to **boost local economies, create jobs, promote sustainable tourism** and strengthen the entire tourist value chain (includes Transportation, Accommodation, Activities, and Services) through challenge-mode projects.
- **Salient Features of the Scheme:** Funding is provided only for shortlisted proposals submitted by the State that meet the scheme's guidelines and objectives.
  - The **Ministry of Tourism** will evaluate proposals based on criteria such as **connectivity, existing tourism ecosystem, site capacity, utilities availability, project impact, financial viability, and sustainability**.
  - Proposals must follow the **challenge mode development process**.
    - The challenge mode development process selects the best proposals through **competitive evaluation based on set criteria**, ensuring high-quality, innovative projects.
  - States must provide **encumbrance-free land at no cost**. Projects must be sustainable, with long-term operation and maintenance.
  - Completion time for projects is capped **at two years**, with funds available until 31st March 2026.

- The State Government is **solely responsible for the project's operations** and maintenance, potentially through [Public-Private Partnership \(PPP\) mode](#).
- States may offer incentives to attract private players for world-class tourist development.
- **Pattern of Assistance:** States can submit multiple projects, with a **maximum funding of Rs. 100 crores per project**.
  - For exceptional projects, the Ministry of Tourism may propose higher funding, subject to approval by the [Department of Expenditure \(DoE\)](#).
  - The Government of India will provide **100% of the project cost**, while States must contribute to peripheral infrastructure, safety, connectivity, and capacity building.
    - **No State will receive more than Rs. 250 crores**, with funds allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Implementation and Monitoring:** States are responsible for the implementation of projects, while the Ministry of Tourism will oversee their progress.

## What is SASCI Scheme?

- **About:** The '**Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure**' was launched in 2020-21 due to the [Covid-19](#) pandemic. It was then implemented as the **Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment**' in 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- **Objective:** Provides financial assistance to states in the form of 50-year interest-free loans.
- **Structure of the Scheme:** The scheme focuses on key development areas, including vehicle scrappage incentives, urban planning reforms, housing for police personnel, and promotion of national integration through Unity Mall projects.
  - It also supports the establishment of libraries with digital infrastructure at Panchayat and Ward levels to enhance educational access.
- **Objectives of the Scheme:** The scheme aims to boost the economy by stimulating demand and creating jobs, while accelerating key projects like the [Jal Jeevan Mission](#) and [Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana](#) through state funding.
  - It also encourages reforms in urban planning and finance to enhance quality of life and governance in cities.

## Capital Expenditure

- **Capital Expenditure (Capex)** refers to government funds for acquiring or improving physical assets like infrastructure and machinery, enhancing economic productivity and employment.
- In the Union Budget 2024-25, Rs 11.11 lakh crore (or 3.4 % of [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#)) have been allocated for capital expenditure.

## India's Initiatives to Enhance Tourism Sector

- [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)
- [Draft National Tourism Policy 2022](#)
- [Dekho Apna Desh Initiative](#)
- [Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat](#)
- [Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification Programme](#)
- [E-Visa](#)
- [Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik \(RCS - UDAN\)](#)
- [National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive \(PRASHAD\)](#)
- **Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development Scheme:** Financial assistance for developing tourism infrastructure and cultural tourism.
- **Domestic Promotion & Publicity including Hospitality (DPPH) scheme:** Supports States/UTs in organizing tourism events, fairs, and festivals.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Q. How does the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment Scheme boost state capital

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. Which of the following is/are included in the capital budget of the Government of India? (2016)**

1. Expenditure on acquisition of assets like roads, buildings, machinery, etc.
2. Loans received from foreign governments
3. Loans and advances granted to the States and Union Territories

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (d)**

### Mains

**Q.1** How can the mountain ecosystem be restored from the negative impact of development initiatives and tourism? **(2019)**

**Q.2** The states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are reaching the limits of their ecological carrying capacity due to tourism. Critically evaluate. **(2015)**