

## **Gujarat: A Roaring Lion of Tourism in India (State Series)**

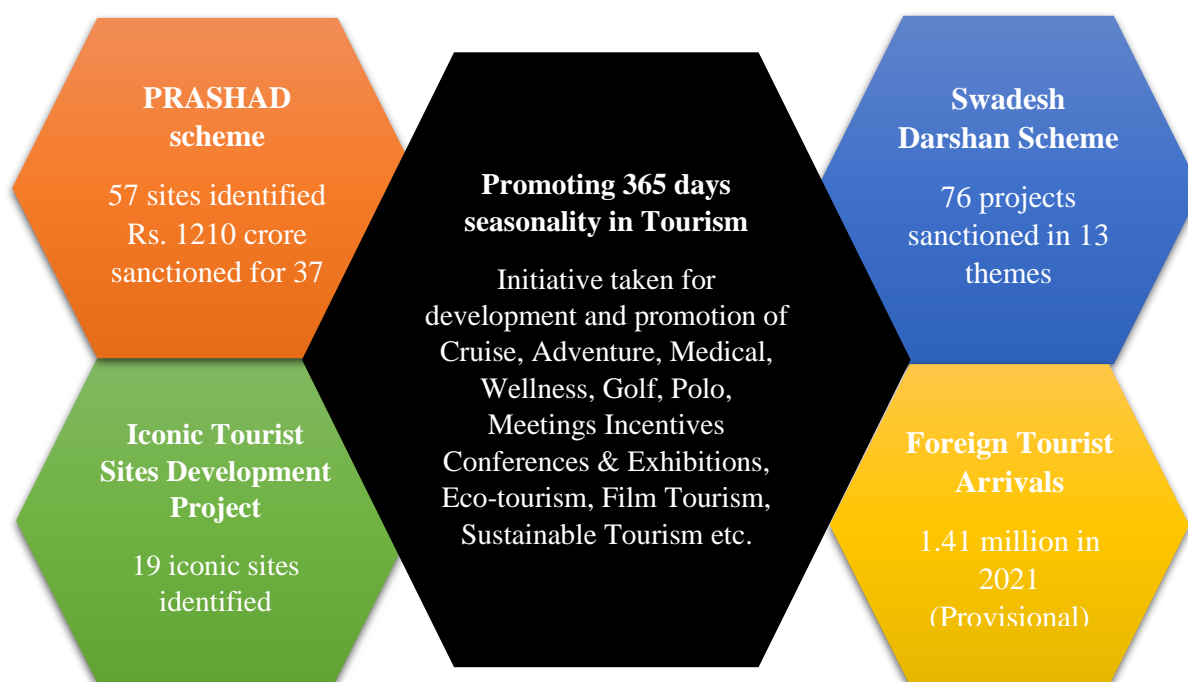
### **Slew of measures by the Government of India to promote tourism in the state**

*“Tourism is contributing to the economy of many countries in the world in a big way. India also has endless possibilities like this in every state and every region. We are taking this issue holistically and developing and launching many religious, cultural and heritage tourist circuits in a big way.”<sup>1</sup>*

- [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#)

The tourism sector has emerged as one of the key drivers of economic growth in India. Tourism promotes national integration and makes citizens aware of the beauty and rich cultural heritage of our great nation. It also promotes inter-regional relationships and encourages cultural pursuits and provides support to local handicrafts. India’s rich and diverse natural, cultural, and religious heritage also provides a unique opportunity for tourism, ranging from the architecture of palaces, forts, and temples, to the grandeur of its sculptures, and the beauty of its paintings, the scenic landscapes including 70% of the Himalayas and over 7500 km long coastline, rich flora and fauna, all offering an unparalleled experience.

The growing influence of the Indian tourism sector as an economic powerhouse and its potential as a tool for development is irrefutable.



<sup>1</sup> [PM Modi inaugurates new Circuit House near Somnath Temple, appeals people to adopt 'Vocal for Local' in tourism sector \(newsonair.gov.in\)](https://www.newsonair.gov.in)

Facilitation, as well as strengthening of tourism in India, is the main objective of Ministry of Tourism. Augmenting tourism infrastructure, easing of visa regime, assurance of quality standards in services of tourism service providers, projection of the country as a 365 days' tourist destination, promotion of sustainable tourism etc. are some of the policy areas which are constantly worked upon to increase and facilitate tourism in India.<sup>2</sup>

### **Gujarat: Diverse Tourist Destination**

With a 3500-year-old heritage and diverse, natural, cultural, and geographical history, the vibrant state of Gujarat occupies 6% of India's geographical area, making it the fifth-largest Indian state. Its strategic location, long coastline, natural beauty, and globally recognised heritage sites are gifts that make the state stand out.



Centuries-old sculptures, handicrafts, arts, and festivals make the state of Gujarat culturally rich. Such diversifications on richness on many fronts have helped Gujarat achieve an immense growth in the total tourist footfall.<sup>3</sup>

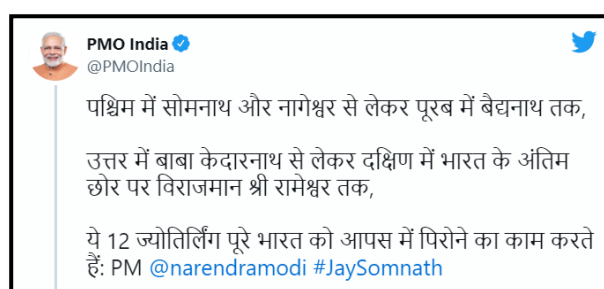
<sup>2</sup> [Min of Tourism English AR 21-22.pmd](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.grihaindia.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Griha-incentives/Gujarat-tourism-policy.pdf>

## Major Initiatives taken by the Union Government to promote Tourism in Gujarat

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah inaugurated '[Seema Darshan Project](#)' at Nadabet located on the Indo-Pak border in Banaskantha District of Gujarat on 10 April, 2022. Under the 'Seema Darshan Project', all kinds of tourist facilities and other special attractions have been developed at a cost of Rs. 1 crore 25 lakhs.<sup>4</sup>
- Three projects have been sanctioned for Gujarat by Ministry of Tourism under 'Swadesh Darshan' scheme. All three projects are physically complete.<sup>5</sup> These include:
  - **Heritage Circuit** - Development of Ahmedabad- Rajkot- Porbandar – Bardoli- Dandi project, with released amount of ₹ 56.21 crore
  - **Heritage Circuit**- Development of Vadnagar - Modhera project with released amount of ₹ 87.25 crore
  - **Buddhist Circuit**- Development of Junagadh- Gir Somnath- Bharuch- Kutch- Bhavnagar- Rajkot- Mehsana project worth ₹ 22.28 crore
- Gujarat Tourism, in association with India Tourism, organised a familiarization tour from August 31 to September 04, 2021, for travel bloggers and photographers from Mumbai to Saputara, Gujarat. The objective of the trip was to promote the Ministry of Tourism's domestic tourism campaign **Dekho Apna Desh**. The tour further sought to promote the destination and showcase the unique experiences that Saputara offers for tourists.<sup>6</sup>

- In August 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of Somnath Promenade, Somnath Exhibition Centre, and reconstructed the temple precinct of Old (Juna)



Somnath.<sup>7</sup> **The Somnath Promenade has been developed under PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive) Scheme** at a total cost of over ₹ 47 crore. The Somnath Exhibition Centre, developed on the premises of 'Tourist Facilitation Centre', displays the exhibits

<sup>4</sup>[Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurates Indo-Pak border viewing point in Banaskantha District of Gujarat \(newsonair.gov.in\)](https://www.newsonair.gov.in)

<sup>5</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1807696>

<sup>6</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1750865>

<sup>7</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1747666>

from dismantled parts of the old Somnath temple and its sculptures having Nagar style temple architecture of old Somnath.<sup>8</sup>

- An MoU was signed in 2020 between the Government of Gujarat and India Tourism Development Corporation Ltd ([ITDC](#)) for providing consultancy towards innovative and decorative lighting & illumination at various monuments and Sound & Light shows at various locations in the state of Gujarat.<sup>9</sup>
- Ministry of Culture, Government of India constructed a [National Salt Satyagraha Memorial \(NSSM\) at Dandi in Navsari district](#) in 2019 at the cost of Rs.70 crore, which has become a tourist attraction place.<sup>10</sup>



### Prominent Achievements of Gujarat in the domain of Tourism

- The **182 metre statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, was dedicated to the nation, at Kevadiya in Narmada District of Gujarat on October 31, 2018.<sup>11</sup>
- **UNESCO has included Dholavira of Kutch in the list of World Heritage Sites in 2021.** With the inclusion of Dholavira in the World Heritage Site, Gujarat has also got the pride of being a state with four World Heritage Sites.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>8</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleashere.aspx?PRID=1747570>

<sup>9</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1603147>

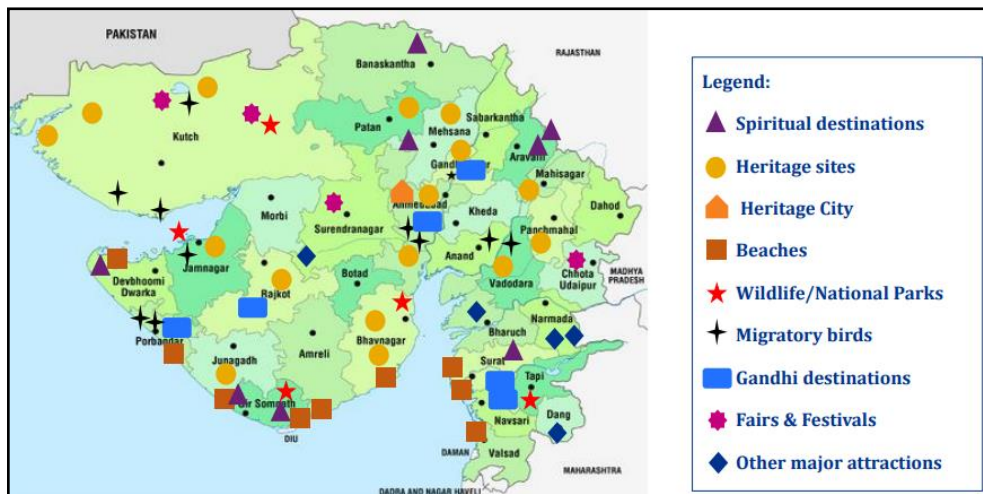
<sup>10</sup> [Bud-Eng\\_1096\\_2022-3-3\\_683.pdf \(gujarat.gov.in\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Press Information Bureau \(pib.gov.in\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Dholavira \(gujarattourism.com\)](#)



- Dholavira and Somnath have been selected for development under Iconic Destination Development Scheme of Government of India.<sup>13</sup>

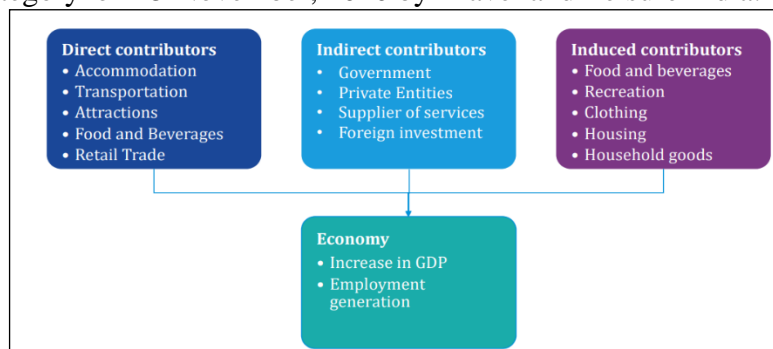


Somnath



Dholavira

- The Somnath Trust has been awarded Certificate of Amazing Talent on 11 March, 2021 by the US-based “World Talent Organization” for wonderful nature and development of Somnath.<sup>14</sup>
- Gujarat has received the Best Awards 2020 for 'Best Cultural Place in Domestic Tourism Category' on 25 November, 2020 by Travel and Leisure India.<sup>15</sup>



Gujarat Tourism: Key Indicator for State's Economy

<sup>13</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1603147>

<sup>14</sup> [Bud-Eng\\_1096\\_2022-3-3\\_683.pdf \(gujarat.gov.in\)](#) (page no xiii)

<sup>15</sup> [Bud-Eng\\_1096\\_2022-3-3\\_683.pdf \(gujarat.gov.in\)](#)

## Gujarat's Tourism Sector– Highlights<sup>16</sup>



World's tallest Statue at 182 metre - Statue of Unity at Kevadia



World's only home for Asiatic lions- Gir Forest



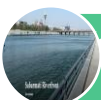
Asia's longest rope way - Girnar Ropeway



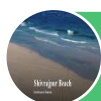
India's first World Heritage City by UNESCO \_ Ahmedabad



World's Earliest known dock and India's first port City - Lothal



India's first sea plane service - Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad to Statue of Unity in Kevadia



Home to one of the Blue Flag Certified Beaches in India: Shivrajpur Beach, Dwarka



Home to one of India's exemplary city planning models: Dholavira, Indus Valley Civilization



Longest Coastline in India at 1600 Km with 16 beaches



22 Sanctuaries and 4 National Parks



Rann of Kutch: only White Desert in the world

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.grihaindia.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Griha-incentives/Gujarat-tourism-policy.pdf>

## Festivals in Gujarat: Major Source of Tourist Attraction



### Navratri Festival

Navratri, meaning 'nine nights', is one of the most popular and widely celebrated Hindu festivals in many parts of India. Gujarat, however, is the only state that erupts into a nine-night dance festival, perhaps the longest in the world. Each night, all over the state, villages and cities alike, people gather in open spaces to celebrate feminine divinity, referred to as Shakti.



### Ran Utsav

This three to four day carnival organized at the various locales within Kutch takes one around the natural grandiose while introducing the visitor to the indigenous cultural and ethnical flavor of the people. The colourful fairs around Kutch are an ideal occasion to be part of the region and experience the zeal and uniqueness of the people through celebration of life.



### Kite Festival

The festival of "Uttarayan" is a uniquely Gujarati phenomenon, when the skies over most cities of the state fill with kites from before dawn until well after dark. The festival marks the days in the Hindu calendar when winter begins turning to summer, known as 'Makar Sankranti' or 'Uttarayan'.



### Madhavpur Ghed Fair

Ghed Fair is a manifestation of India's cultural richness. The Government of Gujarat, in association with the Union Ministry of Culture, organizes this fair every year to celebrate the sacred union of Lord Krishna and Rukmini. This week-long 'Utsav' (Fair) showcases the vibrant cultural trail of art, dance, music, poetry, storytelling and folk drama from Gujarat and other NorthEastern States with the aim to promote national unity.

## The emerging tourism areas in Gujarat

Tourism in Gujarat offers a Traveller's Paradise. It offers a wide spectrum of Tourism sectors which reflect the glory of Gujarat's rich culture and heritage.



## Way Forward

- Gujarat has been highlighted on the national and global level through the [Dinosaur Museum and Fossil Park in Raiyoli](#), a village which is globally known to be the third largest fossil site and the second largest dinosaur hatchery. This park is equipped with modern technology and is very important from tourism viewpoint.<sup>17</sup> Now, Gujarat Tourism Department is developing the Park and Museum as a World Tourism Center.<sup>18</sup>
- A new tourism policy '[Gujarat Tourism Policy 2021-2025](#)' for Gujarat has been announced on January 12, 2021. Under this policy, the goal of "Vocal for Local" will be encouraged. Secondly, unique and less explored products displaying the art and culture of Gujarat will be promoted.<sup>19</sup> This policy offers a wide range of incentives and subsidies to tourism development projects in the State.<sup>20</sup> The vision of this policy is to position the state of Gujarat as the foremost tourist destination in India by developing it in a sustainable, responsible, and inclusive manner with a focus on investment and livelihood opportunities.

<sup>17</sup> <https://cmogujarat.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Gujarat-Volume-03-July-2019-Edition.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> [Bud-Eng\\_1096\\_2022-3-3\\_683.pdf \(gujarat.gov.in\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [https://financedepartment.gujarat.gov.in/Documents/Bud-Eng\\_1096\\_2022-3-3\\_683.pdf](https://financedepartment.gujarat.gov.in/Documents/Bud-Eng_1096_2022-3-3_683.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <https://twitter.com/cmogui/status/1348953526420926464?lang=en>



- UNESCO will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2023 in which the Government of India will nominate **the Gujarati Garba folk tradition**.<sup>21</sup>



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<sup>21</sup> <https://cmogujarat.gov.in/en/latest-news/guj-cm-inaugurates-3-day-vadnagar-international-conference-at-mahatma-mandir-in-gandhinagar/>

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**Link for Images**

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