

PRASHAD SCHEME: SCHEMES

NEWS: *House panel seeks SOPs for timely completion of spiritual tourism projects*

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture** has expressed concerns over the **slow progress** of projects under the **Spiritual Tourism Circuits (Swadesh Darshan Scheme)** and the **PRASHAD Scheme**, urging the government to establish **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** and ensure **prior clearances** for timely completion.

1. Concerns Raised by the Parliamentary Standing Committee

- **Delayed Implementation:** Several projects under **Spiritual Tourism Circuits** and the **PRASHAD Scheme** have faced **significant delays**.
- **Lack of SOPs:** The committee emphasized the **absence of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** to streamline the execution process.
- **Approval & Clearance Issues:**
 - Many projects **lack prior clearances and approvals** from relevant authorities, causing further delays.
 - Urged the government to **pre-approve** all necessary permits before project initiation.

2. Spiritual Tourism Circuits – Part of Swadesh Darshan Scheme

What are Spiritual Tourism Circuits?

- A key component of the **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** designed to boost **religious and spiritual tourism** in India.
- These circuits aim to **connect and develop pilgrimage sites** with better infrastructure and facilities.

Current Status & Delays

- **Out of 23 sanctioned Spiritual Circuits, 5 are still incomplete.**
- **Two major projects in Kerala facing severe delays:**
 1. **Sabarimala – Erumeli – Pampa – Sannidhanam Circuit**
 2. **Sivagiri Sree Narayana Guru Ashram Circuit**
- The committee has **urged immediate action** to accelerate these projects.

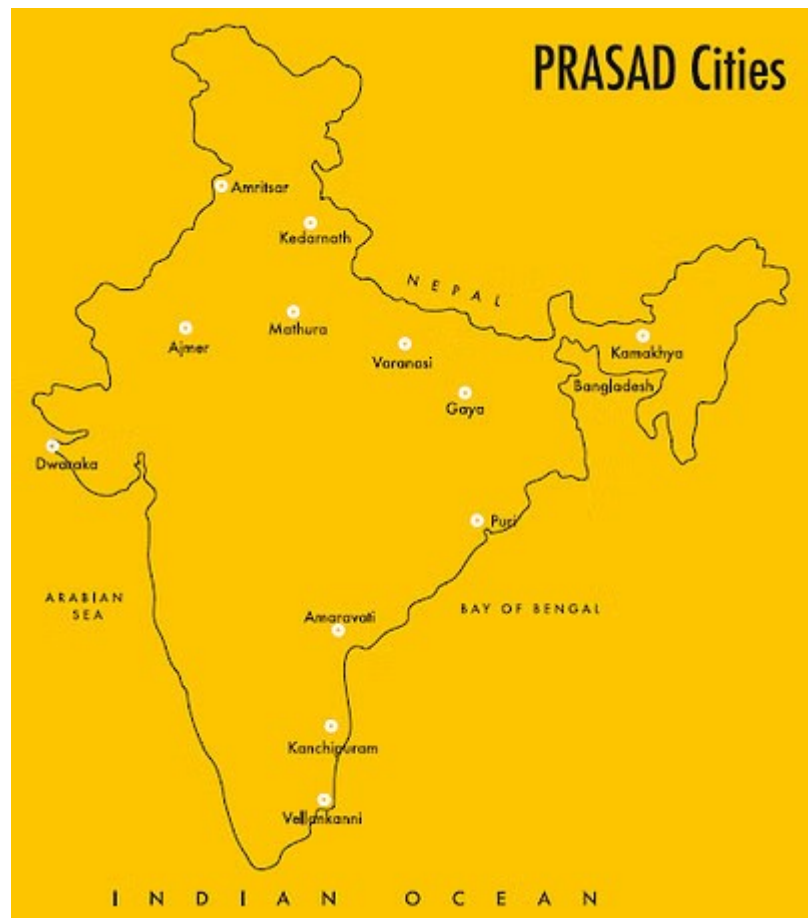
3. Swadesh Darshan Scheme – Overview

About the Scheme:

- Launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** for the **integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits** across India.
- Aims to **enhance tourist experience, promote local economies, and boost infrastructure** in tourism destinations.

Identified 15 Thematic Circuits:

1. North-East Circuit
2. Buddhist Circuit
3. Himalayan Circuit
4. Coastal Circuit
5. Krishna Circuit
6. Desert Circuit
7. Tribal Circuit
8. Eco Circuit
9. Wildlife Circuit
10. Rural Circuit
11. Spiritual Circuit
12. Ramayana Circuit
13. Heritage Circuit
14. Sufi Circuit
15. Tirthankara Circuit



4. PRASHAD Scheme (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive)

About the Scheme:

- **Launched:** 2014-15 by the **Ministry of Tourism**.
- **Objective:**
 - **Enhance & rejuvenate pilgrimage sites** with modern infrastructure.
 - Develop **community participation** and **local tourism-based livelihoods**.
 - **Promote cultural integration** by showcasing local arts, crafts, and cuisine.
 - **Address infrastructural gaps** in religious destinations.

Implementation Mechanism:

- **Implementing Agency:** Respective **State/Union Territory Governments**.
- **Funding:**
 - **100% financial assistance** is provided by the **Central Government** for projects under public funding.
 - Encourages **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** and **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** involvement for **long-term sustainability**.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/house-panel-asks-tourism-ministry-to-formulate-sops-for-timely-completion-of-projects/article69184121.ece>