Need for an Effective Tourist Police

Why in news?

With optimistic predictions of about 13.34 million foreign tourists arriving by 2024, there is a pressing need to upgrade security systems to provide a flawless security blanket cover to foreign tourists.

How about the picture of crime against foreigners in India?

- **Tourism in India** - Tourism happens to be one of the biggest foreign exchange earners for India.
- Tourism sector
    - Contributes around **5.02%** of India's GDP
    - Supported around **14.87%** of total direct & in-direct employment during 2018-19
    - Contributed Foreign Exchange Earnings of Rs. 2.12 lakh crore (USD 30 billion) during 2019
- India's earnings through tourism declined in 2020 due to COVID-19 and the resultant restrictions in foreign tourists entering the country.
- **Crime against foreigners** - According to data of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB),
    - As many as 29 foreigners were murdered in the last three years
    - 14 foreigners fell victim to rape last year
    - As many as 15 cases of assault to outraging modesty of foreign women were registered last year
    - 23 cases of theft were lodged last year
- States such as Delhi and Rajasthan have shown a sharp reduction in registration of crimes last year, which could be attributed to the sharp decline in tourist arrivals due to COVID-19.
- **Impact** - Crime against foreigners not only dents our image globally but could also adversely affect the inflow of foreign tourists, which is a vital source of income for our country.

India's ranking in the global Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) is 54th in 2021.

What efforts were taken regarding the safety of the tourists?

- The Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD), organised a conference for effective implementation of Uniform Tourist Police Scheme.
- **The Tourist Police Scheme -** As many as 25 popular tourist spots have been identified in the country where the tourist police necessarily need to be deployed to help foreigners.
- The gender ratio of Policemen in Tourist Police is proposed to be 50:50.
- The deputation term should last from 2 to 3 years.
- As an incentive, 30% deputation allowance has been recommended for the police personnel who joins the tourist police on deputation.

The States that have tourist police are Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Rajasthan and Kerala.

What is the need of the hour?

- There is a need to instil a sense of security in the foreign tourists even before they leave their countries for India.
- With theft being the most common crime committed against foreigners, all criminals in and around tourist spots need to be identified and kept under constant surveillance.
- Fast track courts should be set up immediately to try cases of crime against foreigners and the culprits punished speedily.

References

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