



Ecotourism in J&K

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir government announced **new rules for Bangus**, a remote tourist spot near **the Line of Control (LoC)** in north Kashmir, to promote it as an **ecotourism destination**.

Key Points

- **Uncontrolled Construction in Popular Tourist Spots:**
 - The decision to develop Bangus as an ecotourism destination follows **unchecked and unplanned construction in Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Sonamarg**.
 - Authorities have observed **rapid concrete expansion in these traditional tourist hubs**, affecting the ecological balance.
- **Focus on Sustainable Development:**
 - The concerned department aims to **prevent large-scale hotel and building constructions** to maintain the region's ecological balance.
 - The approach **prioritizes sustainable tourism** while preserving the natural landscape.
- **Basic Amenities for Visitors:**
 - The government plans to create recreational spaces, rain shelters, public conveniences, signages, lighting, and waste disposal facilities.
 - These developments aim to enhance visitor experience while minimizing environmental impact.
 - Work on basic facilities will begin after the Deputy Commissioner of Kupwara, in consultation with the Forest Department, identifies suitable land parcels.
 - **Necessary permissions and clearances will be obtained** through the Parivesh Portal for forest clearance before proceeding with construction.
- **Geographic and Strategic Importance:**
 - **Bangus is located in Kupwara district** near the Line of Control (LoC), approximately 100 km from Srinagar.
 - It **consists of two bowl-shaped valleys** at an altitude of 10,000 feet.
 - The region, once an infiltration route for militants, is now being promoted as a secure tourist destination.
- **Promoting Local Livelihoods:**
 - The J&K Tourism Department is registering paying guest houses to **support local shepherds, nomads, and residents**.
 - This initiative seeks to **preserve and promote the local culture, traditions, and cuisine** while offering tourists an immersive experience.

Line of Control



- The Line of Control (LoC) **emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN)** after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, **following the Shimla Agreement** between the two countries.
- LoC is **demarcated up to the Siachen Glacier (Point NJ9842)**- the world's highest battlefield.
- LoC is delineated on a map signed by the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.