

The tourism boom



Comments 1



Rituparna Goswami Pande 14 November 2007 15603 views

The tourism sector of Assam is a boom waiting to happen. Picturesque landscape, cultural heritage, historical monuments and artifacts all are in abundance here albeit in various stages of neglect. A little effort on the part of the government and people can turn the state into a tourist hub.

Many steps are in the pipeline to give the all important push to the fledging tourism industry of the state. One such project jointly funded by the state government and the Centre promises to give a new lease of life to the neglected Ahom era monuments in Siva sagar district, a project

which was initiated by Hemoprava Saikia the chairperson of the Assam Tourism Development Corporation. The budget of the project is estimated at Rs 5 crore of which the centre will pay Rs 3.7 and the rest 1.3 will be paid by the state.

Another project that aims to lure the Thai tourists is banking on the Tai-Ahom link. It was in the year 1228 when King Sukafa leading a band of followers settled in Assam and today almost nine hundred years later his community the Tai - Ahom is being promoted as a tourist mascot. However the lack of a regular air connectivity is a major snag in this area. A weekly flight is not enough at least one daily flight from a major city of the Northeast to Bangkok is essential to give a right impetus to the tourism sector.

Moreover, Assam and the northeast is all set to get its first ever five star hotel. A joint venture agreement signed between the Dharampal Satyapal (DS) Group and Guwahati Municipal Development Authority(GMDA) was signed by the director of DS group PK Gupta and AK Bhutani of GDD. According to the memorandum of agreement the DS Group will invest Rs 100 crore and develop the hotel on a 27 bigha plot at Gotanagar along National Highway 37.

FINER and NEC are also promoting NE in the international level. The North East Council has launched a scheme for promotion of tourism in the region by developing infrastructure, holding of festivals and fairs, tourist circuit development etc. tea tourism is also being tapped to promote tourist inflow in the state.

Guwahati too is not lagging behind in the race to lure tourists. Sixteen heritage sites in the city will soon dazzle with festive lights if Dispur's proposal of giving a facelift to the city comes through. The tourism

department has prepared a concept paper to develop these sites which include Basistha Ashram, Gandhi Mandap, Saraighat park, Lachit park, Ulubari mazar etc.

In a few years we can expect that Assam and the Northeast will feature in the itinerary of world tourists as hot tourist destinations.

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BY RITUPARNA GOSWAMI PANDE

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