

Karnataka aims to attract Rs 20,000-cr tourism investments

Master plan to create theme cities, parks

Our Bureau

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The Karnataka Government plans to attract investments of about Rs 20,000 crore over the next five years for tourism-related infrastructure using models that do not strain its Budget.

This is part of its 'Tourism Master Plan' drawn towards fulfilling the Government's 'Vision 2020' that was unveiled on Monday.

Present at the occasion were the State Tourism Minister, Mr G. Janardhana Reddy, the Economic Advisor to the Chief Minister, Dr K.V. Raju, and the Tourism Secretary, Mr K. Jothiramalingam.

It is also expected that such investments would create two lakh new jobs across the State during this period. The Master Plan also includes creation of theme cities and parks in the State, and a crisis management policy for critical infrastructure.

SOUTHERN SPLENDOUR

The Minister launched the extended tour itinerary of Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation's (KSTDC) flagship 'The Gold-



Mr Vinay Luthra (3rd right), Managing Director, KSTDC, and Mr C.B. Ramkumar, Founder and MD of Native Village (2nd right) exchange the MOU in the presence of (from left) Mr G. Janardhana Reddy, Minister for Tourism and Infrastructure Development, Karnataka, Mr K.Jothiramalingam, Principal Secretary, Tourism, Karnataka, and Mr R. Roshan Baig, MLA (right) at the Launch of "southern splendour" in Bangalore. — K. Gopinathan

en Chariot'. The luxury train would now chug into Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala as part of its extended tour itinerary 'Southern Splendour' from March 15.

Starting from Bangalore,

the seven-night-eight-day package includes Chennai, Mahabalipuram, Puducherry, Tiruchi, Thanjavur, Madurai, Thiruvananthapuram, Alleppey and Kochi.

"Similar to our first 'Pride of the South' package, we

would follow a dual pricing policy for international and domestic tourists. While we would charge \$450 per person per night (double occupancy) for international tourists, the tariff would be Rs 15,000/person/night

(double occupancy) for domestic tourists," said Mr Vinay Luthra, Managing Director, KSTDC.

SILVER CHARIOT

The Minister also launched the 'Silver Chariot', which is the economy version of train itinerary.

"We are now giving an option to people who wanted to experience Karnataka's treasures comfortably, but didn't have the spending ability, with an affordable option," said Mr Reddy. Tourists opting for the 'Silver Chariot' itinerary would travel on an air-conditioned Volvo coach at Rs 22,000 per person for the whole trip.

"The first Silver Chariot trip commences on April 2," said Mr Luthra.

The six-night-seven-day trip would start at Bangalore and include Srirangapatna, Mysore, Madikari, Belur, Halebid, Bhadra, Badami, Pattadakal, Aihole, Kudalasangama, Hampi and Chitradurga. Travellers could also opt for three-night-four-day package at Rs 11,000 per person.