

TODAY'S PAPER

Andhra Pradesh and WTO to promote sustainable tourism

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Initiative to be launched in Berlin on March 8; themes in focus include sustainable fishing and beach tourism

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority is raring to go. In its quest to put the State on the international map, it has partnered with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (WTO) to promote sustainable tourism across the state.

The U.N. has declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The decision comes 50 years after the celebration of the International Tourist Year on Tourism – Passport to Peace (1967) and 15 years since the International Year of Ecotourism (2002).

The General Assembly has invited WTO to “facilitate the organisation and implementation of the Year, in collaboration with governments, relevant organisations of the United Nations system, other international and regional organisations and other stakeholders”.

First in country

“The A.P. Government has grabbed the opportunity. We are the first State in the country to forge a partnership with the global body and [India is] one of the very few nations who have come forward for participation,” said Himanshu Shukla, Director, Tourism wing.

The WTO Secretary General Taleb D. Rifai will inaugurate the A.P. initiative in Berlin on March 8.

The themes that the A.P. Tourism will focus are sustainable fishing culture in East Godavari district, beach tourism at Yerada in Visakhapatnam, at Pulicat Lake and in Kondapalli village.

“We will invite international tourists to visit this picturesque location and experience the local lifestyle. They can go fishing, share what the locals eat and live their life besides feeling the thrill of the first Godavari river catch,” says Mr. Himanshu.

He said the local fishing community in this district used traditional boats unlike trawlers used in most parts of the world for big catch. “But they are harmful to the aqua life. Our boats are not mechanised and they are safe. The Chinese-made nylon fishing nets have not entered the Andhra market as our fishermen use only eco-friendly hand-woven nets. This is a very healthy trend,” he said.

In Pulicat Lake, the myriad migratory birds, especially flamingos, are a big attraction. The natural habitat of exotic birds is worth promoting in a big way. Even in the Pulicat Lake, no mechanised boats are used; only rowing boats are available.

In the Araku tribal valley, tourists have a number of choices. They can relish the bamboo chicken, join the tribal Dhimsa dance or simply observe the simplicity of the life of the tribes of this picturesque valley.

The tourism drive will be guided by three main themes: protection of environment, protection of the livelihood of the local community and steps to ensure that the benefits of the tourism reaches the local community, said Mr. Shukla.

