



**ସୂଚନା ଓ ଲୋକ ସଂପର୍କ ବିଭାଗ**  
**Information & Public Relations Department**  
Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar-751001  
Phone : (91-674) 2536736 /2390818 (Fax)  
e-mail : iprsec.or@nic.in

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### **Identify More Locations for enhancing Nature Tourism -Chief Secretary Sri Mohapatra**

Bhubaneswar, 12 Feb

With overwhelming results from eco-retreat interventions in post-lockdown scenario, Chief Secretary Sri Suresh Chandra Mahapatra directed the departments of tourism, forest and environment and water resources to identify more locations for enhancing nature tourism activities in the State. Sri Mahapatra gave this direction while reviewing the present state and future prospect of nature tourism in the State in a high level meeting held in *Lokseba Bhawan* conference hall today wherein Principal Secretary Tourism Sri Vishal Dev outlined the issues for discussion.

Reviewing State's potential, Chief Secretary Sri Mahapatra directed the collectors to identify locations for setting up year-round eco-retreat sites, nature camps, day destinations, river cruise, boating, jungle safari, wild life sighting towers *etc.* Sri Mahapatra said, "Selection of the appropriate site for nature tourism is very crucial for taking it to next level. Principal Secretary Tourism Sri Dev and Chairman & Managing Director IDCO Sri Sanjay Kumar Singh, present in the meeting were advised to verify the identified locations and evaluate their potential for development to year-round tourist destinations.

Further, Sri Mohapatra added, “Nature tourism is no more an international tourist activity. Now more domestic tourists are visiting the nature camps in Odisha. Eco-locations, nature sites and nature camps will generate more employment opportunities for local populace and will help enhancing their income”. The proposals regarding scaling up such activities at Talasari, Konark, Satpada, Chandipur, Debrigarh, Bhitarkanita, Similipal, Daringibadi, Astarang, Satkosia gorge, Tikarpada, Hirakud, Chilika and Nalabana were discussed in the meeting.

Chief Secretary directed to demarcate tourism zones in forest areas, list out the dams, river stretches and water bodies having good potential for boating, water boats, cruises and placement of houseboats. The Collectors were also asked to identify suitable locations near major tourist destinations for development of tourist stay and convenience project sites by IDCO. It was decided that the diesel motor boats engaged in tourist sites would be converted to CNG mode. Additional Chief Secretary Forest & Environment Dr Mona Sharma, present in the meeting was advised to start nature camps in thirty to forty new locations during the year. It was also decided to invite more private sector investment for making the nature tourism activity more competitive and employment generating.

Additional Chief Secretary Forest & Environment Dr Mona Sharma, Principal Secretary Water Resources Smt Anu Garg, Chairman and Managing Director IDCO Sri Sanjay Kumar Singh, Chief Executive Officer Chilika Development Authority Sri Susanta Kumar Nanda, Director Tourism Sri Sachin Ramchandra Jadav, Collector Puri Sri Samarth Verma along with senior officers from concerned departments participated in the deliberations.

**\*\*U.K.Mohapatra\*\***

PRO to Chief Secretary.