

# Govt to push ecotourism, add facilities at nine circuits in UP

# TOI

Lucknow: With the aim of promoting ecotourism to boost employment generation and economy, the state government has identified nine ecotourism circuits for their development and promotion.

The government will initially start promotion of the Lakhimpur Kheri-Pilibhit-Katarniaghat circuit that has Dudhwa tiger reserve, Pilibhit tiger reserve and Katarniaghat wildlife sanctuary since it is developed and will start development of three others on priority.

UP Forest Corporation (UPFC), which is nodal agency for ecotourism, has proposed dry runs on three ecotourism circuits – the Agra-Etawah circuit, Vindhyan circuit and Gorakhpur circuit.

“The dry runs will be held by local officers of the forest department during the wildlife week, which is the first week of October. The department will take its officials on a tour of the circuit to review the existing facilities and identify others that need to be provided to tourists,” said UPFC GM Eva Sharma.

The Agra-Etawah circuit would start from Taj Nature Walk and include the Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary (Keetham lake) in Agra, the National Chambal Sanctuary famous for ghariyals and over 300 bird species and finally the lion safari at Etawah.

Since there is a heavy footfall of foreign tourists in Agra, tapping them for ecotourism would be a profitable move for the forest department.

The Chandrakanta ecotourism circuit would start from Varanasi and cover Rajdari-Devdari waterfalls on the dam built on Chandraprabha river flowing through the state’s oldest wildlife sanctuary, the Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary in Chandauli.