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PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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SC asks Centre to submit new airfare rules in a month

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has directed the Central government to place its finalised rules addressing excessive and arbitrary airfares charged by private airlines before the court within a month.

The direction came during the hearing of a public interest litigation (PIL) questioning the pricing practices of private airline operators. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the court that the government had approved the proposed regulations and that they would be published within a fortnight.

The court has scheduled the next hearing for Nov 16 and directed the Centre to submit the rules by then. The PIL raises concerns about significant variations in airfares, particularly instances where passengers face unusually high ticket prices. The petition seeks greater scrutiny of airline pricing practices and regulatory measures to protect travellers from potentially arbitrary charges.

During an earlier hearing in August, the Supreme Court had expressed concern over airlines allegedly failing to comply with government instructions. The court had asked the Centre to consider grounding carriers that did not follow applicable rules.

The court's latest direction follows the government's submission that the regulations have now received approval.

Air India to launch Delhi–Osaka non-stop flights from Feb 2027



NEW DELHI: Air India is set to make travel between India and Japan easier with new non-stop flights connecting New Delhi with Osaka from Feb, 2027. The service will give travellers a direct connection to one of Japan's major cities, known for its food, culture and proximity to popular tourist destinations. It will be the only airline operating non-stop flights on this route, offering travel- **(Cont. on page - 2)**

Indian airlines extend Saudi flight cancellations as tension escalates

MUMBAI: Air India and Air India Express have extended the temporary suspension of flights to and from Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam in Saudi until Oct 24 amid Houthi rebel strikes in the region.

In a travel advisory, Air India said passengers whose tickets were issued on or before Oct 15 for travel between Oct 9 and 25 can change their travel date once, free of charge, for travel up to Nov 10.

"In view of the prevailing situation, Air India and Air India Express have temporarily suspended flights to and from Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam until October 24, 2026. We understand that these disruptions may affect our guests' travel plans and are committed to providing as much flexibility as possible during this period," Air India stated.



Crowded Mumbai Airport

Air India said passengers with confirmed bookings issued on or before Oct 15, 2026, for travel between Oct 9 and 25, 2026, could opt for a one-time complimentary date change or rebook from an alternative departure station in the GCC region, subject to availability. Guests who do not wish to rebook on the originally preferred sector for a future date may, instead, choose to rebook from an alternative station in the GCC region served by their respective airline, subject to availability," the statement read.

Passengers can also rebook flights to or from alternative destinations in West Asia, depending on the airline. Air India customers can choose Dubai or Doha, while Air India Express passengers can rebook to or from Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Bahrain, Doha, Dubai, Kuwait, Muscat, Ras Al Khaimah, Salalah or Sharjah.

"Guests choosing the latter option are required to make their own travel arrangements to get to their preferred alternative point of departure and meet the **(Cont. on page - 2)**

Oman Air's winter schedule

MUMBAI: Oman Air's Winter 2026/27 schedule begins this month with the introduction of additional frequencies and increased capacity across its global network.



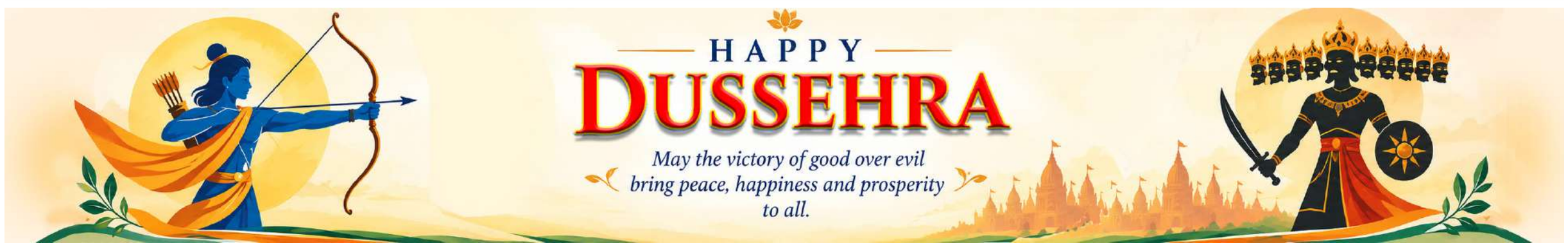
Commencing Oct 25, 2026, the winter programme includes significant expansion across the GCC, Europe, Russia and Far-East, as well as an expanding portfolio of codeshare partnerships.

To meet strong demand on high-performing routes, Oman Air will introduce select widebody services on flights to Mumbai and Dhaka once per week, increasing capacity and offering guests the enhanced comfort of the airline's B787 fleet.

Europe features prominently in Oman Air's winter schedule. Capacity to Zurich will triple compared to the summer season, supported by the deploy- **(Cont. on page - 2)**

HOLIDAY NOTICE

Tuesday, October 20, being Dussehra, our offices will remain closed on that day.



Leh Airport to get Rs 640 cr passenger terminal

LEH: Ladakh is set to strengthen its aviation infrastructure with a new passenger terminal at Leh Airport, involving an investment of Rs.640 crore.

The proposed facility is expected to enhance passenger-handling capacity, improve travel comfort and support the region's growing tourism potential.

The development forms part of a broader infrastructure push in Ladakh, aimed at improving connectivity and upgrading essential facilities in the strategically important Himalayan region. Leh Airport, officially known as Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport, serves as a vital gateway for tourists, pilgrims, business travellers and local residents. Given Ladakh's challenging terrain and limited road connectivity, air travel plays a crucial role, particularly during peak tourist seasons and periods when weather

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conditions affect surface transport.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the new terminal on Oct 15, 2026, as part of five development projects valued at about Rs.3,350 crore. The terminal spans 23,800 square metres and is designed to handle 3.5 million passengers annually.

GCC tourism revenue rises 9.7pc

MUSCAT: Tourism revenue across the Gulf Co-operation Council rose 9.7pc to about $131.9 billion in 2025, outpacing growth in visitor numbers and indicating higher average spending, according to GCC-Stat.



The number of tourists visiting GCC countries increased 4.9pc to about 75.7 million, with average revenue per international visitor reaching approximately $1,743.

More than 20 million tourists travelled between GCC countries during the year, an increase of 3.6pc from 2024, the Statistical Centre for the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf said.

The figures were published in a bulletin titled "GCC Tourism in the Era of Smart Transformation", released to mark World Tourism Day. Tourism is projected to contribute around $365.7 billion to the GCC's gross domestic product by 2035 and support 5.8 million jobs across



the region, the bulletin said.

The stronger rise in revenue relative to visitor numbers indicated an improvement in the economic value generated by tourism and an increase in average visitor spending. tThe number of hotel establishments across the GCC rose 4.8pc to around 12,400 in 2025, reflecting continued investment in accommodation and tourism services. GCC-Stat said digital technology and artificial intelligence were moving regional tourism into a new phase based on data and innovation.

A I reduces flights to Europe for winter season

MUMBAI: Air India is cutting capacity on several European routes and suspending non-stop services to Copenhagen and Vienna as higher fuel costs and the continued closure of Pakistan airspace drive a winter network overhaul. The airline is reallocating capacity to strengthen connectivity to Australia and

Oman Air's winter...

(Cont. from page - 1)

ment of wide-body aircraft on up to five weekly services. Frequencies to Paris, Frankfurt, Munich, Milan and Istanbul will also increase to as many as five flights per week, while Moscow will grow from four weekly services during summer to up to eight flights per week throughout the winter schedule.

Services to Singapore will operate four times weekly, while Tashkent will continue with twice-weekly flights and Sochi with a weekly service, providing guests with an even broader range of travel options across Asia and beyond.

Japan.

The Tata Group-owned carrier is reducing frequencies to Birmingham, London Gatwick and San Francisco, while several Boeing 787 aircraft remain unavailable as they undergo cabin refurbishment and exterior repainting. The maintenance work is expected to keep the aircraft out of service for at least a month, depending on the According to sources, Air India will suspend its four-times-weekly Delhi-Vienna service from Oct 31 and its three-times-weekly Delhi-Birmingham flights from Nov1. No resumption date has been indicated for the Birmingham service. Discussions are also under way to temporarily suspend the three-times-weekly Amritsar-Birmingham route for the winter season.

The withdrawal from Vienna will end the only non-stop air link between India and Austria. The city, however, will continue to serve as a technical stop for select North America-bound flights. Air India will increase frequencies on the Delhi-Sydney route from seven to 11 flights per week. The additional capacity will provide around 170,000 extra seats annually to the Sydney market, offering passengers more options and strengthening connections between Australia, India, the UK and Europe. On Thursday, the airline also announced a new four-times-weekly service between Delhi and Osaka, beginning Feb 2027. Osaka will become Air India's second destination in Japan after Tokyo

Haneda, which is served from Delhi and Mumbai.A comment sought from Air India on the above details did not elicit any response.

IndiGo is scaling back European operations, ending its six-aircraft Boeing 787-9 damp-lease arrangement with Norse Atlantic Airways and suspending Manchester flights from Aug 31. London Heathrow services will also pause pending Airbus A350-900 induction. Mumbai-Amsterdam flights will continue from Oct 25, but at three weekly frequencies.

Air India to launch Delhi–Osaka...

(Cont. from page - 1)

lers a direct option without a stopover. The airline will use its Boeing 787-8 aircraft for the route. Flight AI360 will depart Delhi at 10:50 pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, arriving in Osaka at 9:50 am the following day. The return flight, AI359, will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, departing Osaka at 11:50 am and arriving in Delhi at 6:20 pm on the same day. All timings are local. Osaka will become Air India's second destination in Japan after Tokyo. The airline currently operates daily flights between Delhi and Tokyo and four weekly flights between Mumbai and Tokyo. The direct service will remove the need for a stopover for passengers travelling between Delhi and Osaka. It will also make it easier for travellers to plan holidays, business trips and visits to family and friends in Japan. Passengers will also have the option of booking multi-city itineraries. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), more than 3.15 lakh Indian visitors travelled to Japan in 2025. This was a 35pc increase over 2024 and nearly 80pc higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Indian airlines extend...

(Cont. from page - 1)

applicable visa and entry requirements.

Air India Express guests may rebook to or from Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Bahrain, Doha, Dubai, Kuwait, Muscat, Ras Al Khaimah, Salalah or Sharjah. Guests whose flights have been cancelled may also opt for a full refund if they choose not to travel.

" The disruptions follow the Oct 10 attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, which took the death toll to 13 after the Indian embassy in Riyadh confirmed that an Indian national injured in the incident had died.

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NRI who started schools in UAE dies at 84

DUBAI: Daniel Lazar, an Indian engineer who left a secure job at with the Tatas in Pune in 1968 and sailed to the UAE in a small boat, going on to start an educational group in Northern Emirates, has died aged 84. Daniel, a Dubai resident and founder of the Lazar Group and the North Point Education Group of Schools, died in Kerala where he was originally from.

He is survived by his son Lanson Lazar, the chairman of the group, and daughter, Lincy D'Souza, director of operations. The group described him as an engineer, entrepreneur, educator and visionary.



The young engineer reportedly gave up his position and set off for the UAE on a small boat from Gujarat on April 8, 1968. The 10-day voyage across the Arabian Sea was perilous and he finally reached the shores of Khor Fakkan. The group described the journey as one marked by uncertainty, hardship and faith and the start of a life dedicated to hard work and service.

After arriving, Daniel began working in the power sector. His professional success, however, was only the beginning. He wanted to build something meaningful for future generations, and that ambition took shape as The Lazar Group, which he started in 1969. The group built its presence in various business fields including construction, facility management and garments and fashion.

Daniel's wife, Sosamma , co-founder of the Lazar Group, had started her own journey in education by tutoring children from different backgrounds at her home in 1979. The couple established Little Flower Nursery in Ajman in 1985.

FOREX RATES

As on 19th October 2026 (In rupees)

Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
US Dollar	94.15	95.41
British Pound	125.47	127.27
Euro	105.38	107.64
Japanese Yen	59.56	60.52
Swiss Franc (CHF)	113.75	116.3
Canadian Dollar	66.4	67.9
Australian Dollar	65.49	66.93
Norwegian Krone	9.88	10.17
Swedish Krona	9.4	9.68
New Zealand Dollar	52.99	54.18
Hong Kong Dollar	11.84	12.21
Kuwaiti Dinar	313.7693	299.6999
Singapore Dollar	73.27	74.96
Saudi Arabian Riyal	24.76	25.55
U A E Dirham	25.37	26.1

India's exports surge 23pc to $44.4bn

NEW DELHI: India's merchandise exports surged 23pc to $44.4 billion in Sept 2026, driven by engineering goods, electronics and petroleum products. Imports rose eight per cent to $74.6 billion, leaving a $30.2 billion trade deficit. Strong export momentum lifted first-half shipments to $259.9 billion, supporting expectations of record annual exports despite global uncertainties.

India's merchandise exports jumped 23pc year-on-year to $44.4 billion in Sept 2026, supported by strong demand for engineering goods, electronics and petroleum products.



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GULF FAQs

Stranded abroad during leave? What law says about my job security?

If I go on leave and get stranded abroad amid the current regional escalation, can my employer fire me? Or is there provision for me to demand work from home despite our organisation not having such an option? Can you explain my legal rights?

Pursuant to your queries, the provisions of the UAE employment law and the subsequent cabinet resolutions are applicable. In the UAE , if an employee does not return to work after their leave ends and has no valid reason for not returning to work, an employer does not have to pay an employee a salary for the days an employee is absent from work after the leave of an employee ends. This is in accordance with article 34 of the federal decree by law no. 33 of 2021 concerning regulating labour relations (the "employment law").

"The employee who does not return directly to work without a legitimate reason after the end of his leave shall not be entitled to his salary for the period of absence following the end of the leave." Further, the employment law sets out the circumstances in which an employer may dismiss an employee without a notice period. In particular, article 44 of the employment law provides that: "The employer may dismiss the employee without warning, after conducting a written investigation with him and the decision to dismiss shall be in writing and reasoned and the employer or his representative shall hand it to the employee" in certain specified cases.

Among these cases, article 44(8) of the 44(8) of the of the employment law states: "If the worker is absent from work without a legitimate reason or an excuse acceptable to the employer for more than 20 non-consecutive days or more than seven seven consecutive days." Therefore, an employer may terminate the employment of an employee without a notice period if an employee is absent for the specified duration without a legitimate reason.

However, if an employee is stranded abroad due to extraordinary circumstances such as geopolitical developments, travel restrictions or suspension of flights, such circumstances may constitute a legitimate reason for being absent from work.

In such cases, dismissal solely based on absence from work may be challenged by an employee if an employee can demonstrate that the absence was unavoidable and properly communicated to an employer.

With respect to remote working arrangements, the employment law is silent on the demand for work-from-home arrangements where an employer has not implemented such a policy. However, in adverse circumstances the UAE ministry of human resources and emiratisation or any other relevant government authority in the UAE issues notifications / advisories for remote working which apply to all employers.

Nevertheless, if an employee remains willing and able to perform their duties and the nature of the role allows the work to be carried out remotely, an employee may request temporary remote work as a practical arrangement during the period they are unable to return to the UAE. In accordance with the aforesaid provisions of the law, in the event you are stranded abroad due to circumstances beyond your control, it is advisable to promptly notify your employer; provide supporting documentation such as travel advisories issued by a relevant government authority or cancelled flights where applicable; and arrange working arrangements with your employer.



Visa cancellation and your health insurance; How long does Dubai health insurance last after visa cancellation?

If your UAE residence visa is cancelled, you may have a grace period of 30 to 90 days to remain in the country. But that does not necessarily mean your employer-provided health insurance will remain valid for the entire period.

There is no single standard rule across the UAE, as health insurance requirements and arrangements differ between emirates. In Dubai, if an employee's residence visa is cancelled, their employer must keep their health insurance active for 30 days after the cancellation or until the employee leaves the UAE, whichever happens first.

This is set out in Article 26 of Administrative Resolution No. (78) of 2022, which issued the Implementing Bylaw of Law No. (11) of 2013. This means the 30-day insurance period should not be confused with the immigration grace period, which may allow someone to remain in the UAE for longer.

"Your health insurance being active depends on the validity of the health insurance. While your residency visa and health insurance are linked, they do not necessarily have the same expiry date," Firose Khan, CEO and Managing Partner of Arabian Business Centre – Amer, explained.

"When it comes to the residence visa being cancelled by the employer, there isn't really a standard rule. Some employers terminate the insurance on the same day they cancel your visa, while others keep it active during the grace period, especially if they are giving you time to find a new job."

"That's why it is best to check with your previous employer to understand what the health insurance policy is."

What is a UAE visa cancellation grace period? Visa cancellation is a formal process that ends your legal residency in the UAE. It is usually initiated by your employer, sponsor or yourself if you are leaving the country. Once cancelled, your visa becomes invalid and your residency status is effectively revoked.

After cancellation, the UAE government gives a grace period of 30 to 90 days, depending on the circumstances. This allows residents to find a new job and apply for a new visa, switch their visa category or make arrangements to leave the country. Who provides health insurance for expat workers? In the UAE, employers are required to provide and fund health insurance for their employees. This responsibility also applies to sponsors of domestic workers.

In Abu Dhabi, employers and sponsors are responsible for providing health insurance for their employees and usually, their families, including one spouse and up to three children under 18. Health insurance is mandatory in Dubai under the Dubai Health Insurance Law, which came into effect in Jan 2014. Employers are legally responsible for providing health insurance for their employees. If an employer provides insurance only for the employee and not their family, the employee is required by law to arrange coverage for dependants under their sponsorship, including a spouse, parents or children.

As of Jan 2025, all private-sector employees and domestic workers in the UAE's northern emirates, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah, must have basic health insurance coverage.

This extends mandatory insurance schemes already in place in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.



What UAE expats now get for each dirham?

DUBAI: Continued declines in Asian currencies are helping UAE expats make their money go further on remittances. The Indian rupee, Philippine peso and Pakistani rupee are all lingering near lows not seen in years.

The rupee has been gaining strength ever since RBI decided to rein in the fait currency. Currently the Indian rupee is trading at Dh25.87 versus unchanged since the previous session. Now, an expat will have to spend DH38.65 to get a Rs1000 in exchange.

The Philippine peso (PHP) is back above the Dh17-mark coming in at DH17.12 slightly higher than its previous close.

Changes in oil prices impact the local currency because the Philippines imports most of its oil. Expectations that the US Federal Reserve may keep rates high have strengthened the US dollar.

For now, favorable rates are prompting households to reassess strategy, deciding whether to lock in current levels or wait for another shift in the market.

Current exchange rates as of 08:30 am on Oct 19:Indian rupee: 25.87 slightly weaker from its previous close. Pakistani rupee: 75.65, unchanged from previous s levels. Philippine peso: 17.12, slightly stronger from previous levels.

Dubai rental contracts exceed one million, value hits Dh127.4b



DUBAI: Dubai's rental market hit a record with over one million registered contracts in 2025, valued at Dh127.4 billion, driven by growth in both new and renewed agreements across the emirate.

The number of contracts rose 7.3pc to 1.04 million, while the annual rental value climbed 15.1pc to Dh98.9 billion, reflecting continued growth in the emirate's property market.

New rental agreements increased 10.5pc to 515,300 contracts, with a combined value of Dh69.1 billion. Renewed contracts rose 4.3pc to 521,600, worth Dh58.3 billion, pointing to sustained demand and stability in the rental market.

Business Bay recorded the highest annual rental value at Dh4.45 billion, an increase of 22.3pc, followed by Dubai Marina at Dh3.53 billion and Burj Khalifa at Dh3.52 billion.

However, the Burj Khalifa area led in the total value of registered rental contracts, reaching Dh7.61 billion. Business Bay ranked second at Dh5.50 billion, followed by Al Barsha First at Dh4.42 billion.

The Racecourse area recorded the sharpest increase in the total value of rental contracts, rising 119.8pc, followed by Al Barsha South Fourth at 86.5pc reflecting the expansion of rental activity and demand into emerging residential communities.

Indo-Canadians elected as mayors

VICTORIA: An Indo-Canadian was elected mayor of Fernie while another person of Indian origin was re-elected as Williams Lake's top city official as municipal election results were declared in Canada's westernmost province of British Columbia. A third Indo-Canadian was elected the Mission city's youngest mayor without a contest a month earlier.

Incumbent mayors were defeated as the elections were held for 161 municipalities and 27 regional districts on Saturday across British Columbia

India's Russian crude imports to stay near current levels

NEW DELHI: India is expected to maintain Russian crude oil imports at close to current levels after US President Trump waived sanctions and tariffs mandated by a new law targeting major buyers of Russian oil, analysts said.

Trump issued an executive order waiving the "sanctions, restrictions and duties" under the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, a day before the 30-day deadline for enforcement expired. He signed the law on Sept 18.

The law authorised tariffs of up to 100 pc on goods from the five largest importers of Russian crude and gas, along with sanctions on Russia's shadow fleet of tankers.

The waiver is not specific to India and could also benefit China, while allowing the administration to reconsider the decision later.

Odisha's forest dept identifies 12 sites for adventure ecotourism

BHUBANESWAR: The Forest department has identified 12 ecotourism sites for introduction of a wide array of low-impact adventure tourism activities to enhance visitors experience and extend sustainable livelihood support to the local communities.

Deputy conservator of forests (DCF), ecotourism, Vivek Kumar said Similipal, Satkosia, Mahendragiri, Jiranga, Deomali, Barbara, Hirakud, Bichitrapur-Kuldiha, Gandhamardan, Karlapat and Chandaka are among the sites where the department has decided to introduce adventure tourism activities in the initial phase.

Kumar said the state plans to upgrade its ecotourism sites with environmentally conscious infrastructure that improves tourist experience while minimal to zero impact on the forests.

"The eco-tourism wing has worked out a low-impact plan to bring fun outdoor activities to the nature spots. Visitors will get to experience the thrill of high-rope challenges like zip lines, Burma bridges and commando nets while there will also be special tracks for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and mountain biking trails wherever permitted," he said.

There will also be provision of archery at some of these places, while for water lovers, the plan includes kayaking, canoeing, boating and river crossing. People will be able to enjoy rock climbing on built structures. The camping sites and long walking paths will also allow guests to enjoy nature safely while keeping the environment clean. There will also be provision of view points and children's adventure zone at these sites, he added.



"While wall climbing, canopy walk and rowing have been introduced in Chandaka wildlife sanctuary recently, steps will be taken for introduction of the eco-adventure activities in other identified eco-tourism sites. The initiative will diversify sustainable tourism offerings, enhance visitors experience and strengthen livelihoods of local community members engaged in these eco-tourism sites," he said.

The Odisha Ecotourism Society has initiated a process for selection of a professional agency capable of implementing the project in identified sites in a responsible manner.

Officials said the agency, apart from installing and operating the required eco-adventure tourism infrastructure with due compliance to national and international safety standards, will co-ordinate with local eco-development corporations (EDCs), train local youths, nature guides and adventure instructors at the sites.

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