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ORISSA

August 24, 2005

New fest on tourism calendar

Wednesday August 24 2005 12:10 IST

BHUBANESHWAR: In a bid to promote Bhubaneswar as a heritage tourism draw, the Tourism Department has embarked upon an ambitious plan to launch *Ekamra Utsav* here in January.

It is also expected to make Orissa-bound tourists prolong their stay in the State.

The one-year-old *Srikshetra Utsav* at Puri has been rescheduled to retain the inflow of tourists.

Sources in Tourism Department informed that the State receives a large number of tourists from home and abroad during the winter months that prefer to tour the golden triangle of Puri Konark Bhubaneswar.

While Konark has the 15-year-old annual classical dance festival being held from December 1 to 5, the fortnightly long *Srikshetra Utsav* will start on December 15.

The 10-day *Ekamra Utsav* from January 6 to 15 will be designed as the last leg for tourists visiting the triangle, he explained.

The sprawling *Ekamra Haat* and the Exhibition Ground will be the venue for the big budget festival.

For the first time, the department is contemplating to rope in the corporate sector to collaborate in the event that will showcase the culture, cuisine, art and craft of the State.

The festival will have classical and folk dances as well,

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the sources said hoping the event will promote *Ekamra Haat* in a big way. The city with an estimated population of 8 lakh should also have its own annual cultural festival, he pointed out.

Although the *Shrikshetra Utsav* has been rescheduled, its format will continue to be the same, the sources informed. The festival aims to promote Puri in the tourism map of the country as the most favoured destination.

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