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Dept lines up fests to draw tourists

Tuesday October 25 2005 15:28 IST

BHUBANESWAR: In order to boost cultural and heritage tourism in the State, the State Tourism Department has lined up six major festivals in the Golden Triangle of Puri-Konark-Bhubaneswar during the current tourism season.

Sources in the department informed that the series would start with the five-day Konark dance festival from December 1 to 5.

Into its 16th year, the annual classical dance festival being mounted on the open air auditorium with the world famous Sun Temple as its backdrop, will showcase most of the major Indian classical dances. The event would coincide with a crafts fair beside the venue.

To lure the Buddhist pilgrims and tourists, the department has decided to host Buddha Mahotsav, a three-day exclusive festival at the historic Dhauli hills near here from December 9 to 11.

The participants would be taken round the Ratnagiri-Udayagiri-Lalitgiri Buddhist circuit where a segment of the festival will be celebrated.

Moving the focus of festivity from classical to popular, the department will host the second edition of Srikshetra Utsav at Puri from December 14 to 25.

The dates of this festival was rescheduled from May to December to keep up the festive fervour intact and linger the tourists' stay in

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the State, the sources revealed.

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The event would showcase art, craft, culture and cuisine of Orissa. It would include Odissi dance and music performances, an exhibition of Orissa's handlooms and handicrafts and an Oriya food festival.

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Keeping in view the inflow of pilgrims, the festival will also have a series of spiritual discourses, it was learnt.

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The new year will witness launching of an annual classical dance festival on the Mukteswar Temple premises in the Capital City.

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Named after the well-known temple, the four-day Mukteswar Nrutya Utsav will commence on January 12 showcasing eminent Odissi dancers.

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The city will also host the first annual Ekamra Utsav here during January 6 to 15.

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It is being modelled after the Srikshetra Utsav to promote Orissa's craft and cuisine besides art and culture, the sources maintained.

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In the last leg of the festival series, the national Rajarani Music Festival will be underway on the lush green lawns of Rajarani Temple in the city from February 26 to 28.

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One of the few festivals of its kind in the country that aims at promotion of classical music, the three-day event is being mooted to showcase the best of the three music styles of India-- Hindustani, Carnatic and Odissi.

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The department is further collaborating with Hotel and Restaurant Association of Orissa and the district administrations of Nabarangapur and Koraput to host the annual Puri Beach Festival, Mondei and Parab festivals in November, it was learnt.

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