

Assam Govt. to lift Covid restrictions from Nov1 to revive tourism sector-CM

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Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said his government is making efforts to revive the COVID-hit tourism industry by lifting restrictions from November 1 as the pandemic situation in the state has considerably improved. Addressing a state government programme on the occasion of World Tourism Day, he announced a relief package which will provide ₹2 lakh each to 142 tour operators and ₹25,000 each to 605 guides to overcome losses due to the pandemic.

"The Assam government is working towards lifting all COVID restrictions from November 1 in the state and also making all-out efforts to ensure that the maximum number of people get vaccine doses," he said.

The chief minister hoped that COVID would no longer be able to threaten the lives and livelihood of people around the world from 2022, and the tourism industry is expected to witness a major boost. Sarma also stressed on the need to promote less-explored destinations of Assam for outside visitors and asked the industry stakeholders not to keep the tourism circuit limited to only Kaziranga National Park and other known places.

The state's food, handloom, handicraft, tribal culture and natural beauty must be explored by travellers, he said. Sarma asserted that militancy has been controlled to a large extent in the state as several extremist groups are in talks with the government. He urged tour operators to aggressively promote places in Dima Hasao, Karbi Anglong, Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) and other parts of the state by taking advantage of the prevailing peaceful situation. He appreciated the Indian Railways' initiative to start the Vistadome service from Guwahati to New Haflong in Dima Hasao, which would go a long way in popularising the hill station. Speaking at the programme, Tourism Minister Bimal Bora highlighted the importance of domestic travellers to revive the industry in the post-pandemic era.

Meanwhile, India Tourism (North East) Regional Director Sankha Subhra Devburman flagged off a vintage car rally from the Chandamri field here on the occasion of World Tourism Day. Devbarman urged all stakeholders in the region to raise awareness about tourism's immense potential to uplift those who have been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten vintage car owners and 35 motorcyclists participated in the rally which passed through Dighalipukhuri-Jalukbari-Khanapara-Ulubari-Guwahati Club.

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