


Eco panel to boost tourism activities in Uttarakhand's forest areas

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DEHRADUN: With 72% area of the state under forest cover, the Uttarakhand cabinet has decided to promote tourism activities in certain areas that come under the forest department.

A committee headed by the chief secretary and comprising members of the forest and tourism department was approved by the cabinet, which would explore the prospects and take a call on tourism activities that can be started in forest areas.

The committee would also handle issues related to mountaineers and trekkers coming to Uttarakhand. Besides, the chief secretary, the committee would also comprise principal secretary forest, secretary tourism, secretary forest and chief wildlife warden.

On a question related to the queries raised by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on activities in forests, chief secretary S S Sandhu said, "We will keep these factors in mind and only those works would be done which are permitted by the NGT. There are many activities which are permitted by the NGT but they are not being carried out in the state. The committee would look into such matters and start tourism activities as they would provide employment to the youth and bring economic growth. Some tourism activities are being carried out in forest areas but they are very less."

He pointed out that there was a great potential in the sector but it was not being tapped.

"Forest department is a regulatory authority. Some forest officials back development activities but there are some who create

hurdles and it has become a part of their nature," said the chief secretary. He further said that in addition to identifying sectors for tourism activities, the committee would also resolve the issues faced by trekkers and mountaineers.



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