

Eco-tourism plan for Kurseong forest school

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The Bengal forest department has decided to develop an eco-tourism project at Dow Hill in Kurseong by upgrading the existing infrastructure of the 116-year-old West Bengal Forest School.

Located in a lush green pine forest, it is one of the attractive tourist spots of the hill town, some 55km from here.

State forest minister Jyotipriya Mallick reached the Bengal Safari Park on the outskirts of Siliguri on Monday and elaborated on the plan.

“Our department has been running a training school for foresters there for decades now. There is an aviary and a museum at the site. We want to promote it among tourists and there is a plan to set up an eco-tourism project in association with the state tourism department,” he said.

The minister said a detailed report will be drawn up for the project soon. As a part of the initiative, the department also intends to upgrade the aviary as a captive breeding centre for endangered avian species.

Sources said the school was opened back in 1907. Here, training is provided to employees who join as beat officers in the department.

“It is a residential course for six months. Earlier, candidates who worked in the forest department in the Northeast and even in Nepal and Bhutan used to come here for training. But after the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of trainees has considerably reduced. Thus, we want the school to run and simultaneously use the infrastructure for tourism,” Mallick added.

While visiting the safari park, he released two hog deer and 12 black bucks (Indian antelope) at the open enclosure of herbivores.

“We are in touch with different zoological parks of the country and also the Central Zoo Authority to get other animals like lions, zebras, hippos, and giraffes here at the park (Bengal Safari Park),” the minister said.

Source: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/eco-tourism-plan-for-kurseong-forest-school/cid/1927061>