



Forest dept eyes 540-acre ecotourism site in Ranchi

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Ranchi: If things move according to plan, the citizens of Ranchi will soon have an eco-tourism site right next to their homes.

The state department of forests, environment and wildlife has set rolling a plan to develop its sprawling 540 acre biodiversity park in Lalkhatanga on the outskirts of the state capital into an ecotourism site of international standards.

Last month, the office of Ranchi divisional forest officer (DFO) floated an expression of interest (Eoi) inviting consultancy firms across the country to chalk up a plan for developing the park. As per the department sources, a consultancy firm based in New Delhi has been shortlisted through a technical bidding process.

Ranchi DFO Ashok Dubey said, "Since the vision is to develop the park into an ecotourism site of international standards, it needs technical expertise. A firm has been shortlisted and a proposal for appointing it has been sent to the government."

Forest officials said the planning for developing the park into an ecotourism site began after chief minister Hemant Soren visited the facility earlier this year. "After taking a tour of the park, the CM instructed the department officials to consider developing the park and its surrounding areas into an ecotourism site complete with adventure sports and tourism," a senior department official said.

The park, which is over a decade old, is home to several indigenous and medicinal plant varieties. Primarily maintained by the department for educational purposes, the park is a popular getaway destination for locals and tourists.

"If it becomes an ecotourism centre, the park will become a popular attraction for tourists both from Jharkhand and other parts of the country. It will also contribute to the local economy and provide livelihood to those living in its vicinity," Dubey said.

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