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Vizag tourism poised for a big leap

Five mega tourism projects planned with an investment of Rs. 850 crore

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VISAKHAPATNAM: The State government has decided to float global tenders seeking private investments for five mega tourism projects in Visakhapatnam involving an investment of Rs.850 crore.

After none came forward to sign a Memorandum of Understanding among 29 parties who submitted their bids to the expression of interest sought two years ago apparently due to increase in land rates and higher lease rentals, the government has decided to advertise for global tenders afresh.

"Owing to increase in land rates and higher lease rentals, the government wants to restructure the projects and shortly release Request for Proposal (RFP). We expect that this time we will get a good response," Special Chief Secretary, Tourism, Chandana Khan, told *The Hindu*.

The five projects for which fresh bids will be sought include a mega theme park with emphasis on 'active tourism' on the lines of global theme parks of Sentosa, Singapore. The project is proposed at Madhurawada at a cost of Rs.300 crore.

International convention centre will come up at Mudasarlova to make the city as favoured destination for meetings, incentives, conferencing and exhibitions (MICE). This will involve an investment of Rs.300 crore.



An aerial view of Visakhapatnam, where the State government wants to take up tourism projects with an investment of Rs.850 crore. — PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

- Mega theme park proposed at Madhurawada
- Science and Entertainment City to come up at Thotlakonda

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Arogyadham, a traditional health city to promote ayurveda and herbal therapies and wellness centre is mooted at Madhurawada at a cost of Rs.50 crore.

Wonders of the World will be a theme park, an innovative project featuring miniatures of famous heritage structures and natural sceneries. It will come up at Yen-

dada at an estimated cost of Rs.100 crore.

Science and Entertainment City is proposed at Thotlakonda at a cost of Rs. 100 crore to make it a venue for students and youngsters to enhance their knowledge.

In PPP mode

Andhra Pradesh as of now has implemented tourism projects worth \$500 million

with private sector investment. In PPP mode, projects to the tune of \$50 million have been taken up and 14 involving an investment of \$200 million are in the pipeline. A large number of projects, including iconic Vizag Eye on the lines of London Eye are at conceptual stage.

IL&FS Infrastructure Development Ltd is the consultant for all the projects.