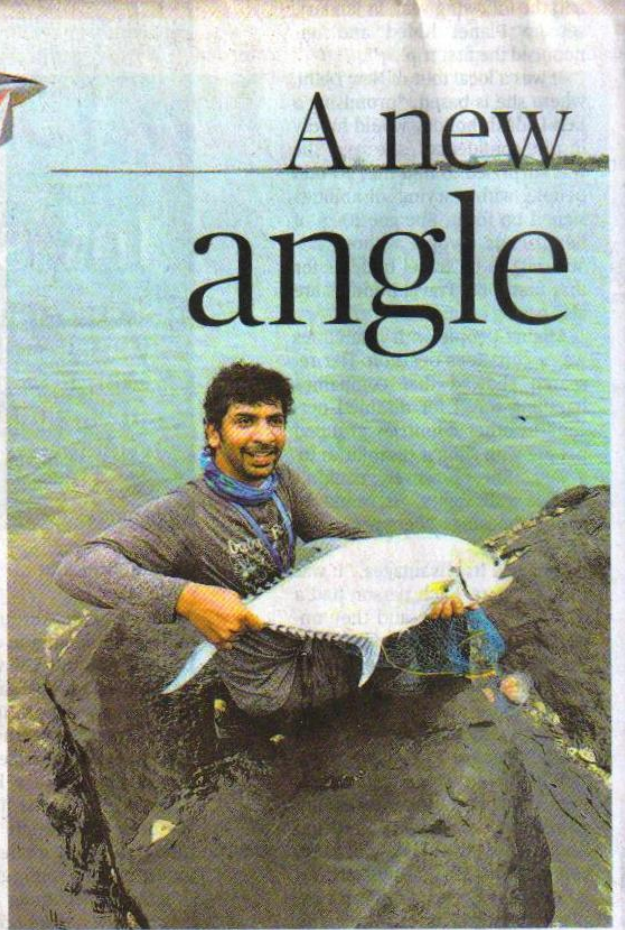




Apart from surfing, off-roading and angling are catching up on the coast



A new angle

M RAGHURAM

The coast of Karnataka has transformed itself into a lifestyle sport destination. The potential was always there behind the mighty Western Ghats and the roaring waters of the Arabian Sea and now the 90 kilometres between the two is bubbling with lifestyle sports. There is scuba diving, parasailing, wind, kite and board surfing, snorkelling, kayaking and beach camping, apart from trekking, hiking, wildlife reconnaissance, off-roading, cycling and golf on the land.

The Mantra Surf Club run by Jack Hebner (aka Surfing Swami) and Rick Perry that combines surfing with a vegan diet and ascetic living continues to be popular. Apart from surfing, off-roading and angling are all the rage.

"We did not know if there was scope for angling on the sea front," says Yatish Baikampady CEO of the Panamburu Beach Tourism Development Project.

"We started with a small event

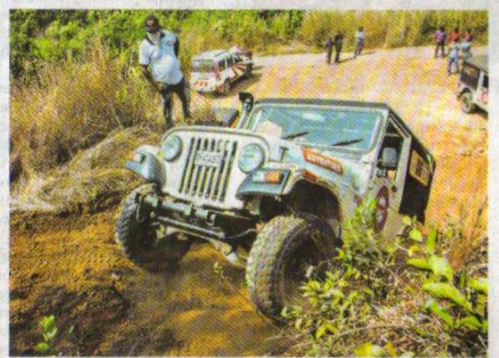


a few months ago and the response was good. When we announced the dates for the international angling competition, we were surprised that anglers from all over the world responded and we had a total of 120 anglers registering. While we had the infrastructure in the form of the southern breakwaters, approaching

the site was a task."

For motorheads, the site overlooking the Mangaluru International Airport has over 100 acres of rough terrain with 19 major hurdles. "This is bigger than the one we have in Igatpuri in Maharashtra," says Bijoy Kumar, chief of Mahindra Adventure Initiative.

Flying radio-controlled planes



finds favour with a small dedicated group of 12 to 16 flyers. Jayaprakash, who is an enthusiast, says, "We regularly hold RC planes flying festival at Sahyadri Engineering College and many have been inspired by this sport."

There are innovative sports in the pipeline. "We have plans for kite surfing. The surfer will stand

on the board and fly a kite. The board is propelled by the wind caught by the kite," says Baikampady.

Dolphin watching, hot air balloon rides, zorbing, yachting, night at the fishing village, experiential rides on fishing boats, and life-saving using surf boards, are also on the anvil.