

CIAL set to welcome chartered flights

A Correspondent

NEDUMBASSERY: While Kochi is preparing to play host to over 10,000 foreign tourists arriving here by luxury cruise liners over the next two weeks, the city's international airport here is set to witness a corresponding increase in the operation of tourist chartered flights.

On March 19, as many as 1,585 foreign tourists will be flying in here to board Aida Diva – a luxury ship that will be docked at Kochi port from Sunday till Tuesday.

A like number of tourists, who will disembark the ship, will be flying back by the return legs of the same flights. "About five chartered flights, operated by four different agencies, are scheduled to touch down here, transferring about 3,000 tourists in different batches," a senior CIAL official said.

- **1,585 foreign tourists to arrive on Monday**

- **CIAL to focus on 'cruise exchange'**

The first batch of 189 tourists will be landing from Munich via Bahrain by a Quick Aviation flight at 4.30 a.m., followed by another group of 303 by an Air Berlin flight from Dusseldorf, Germany.

In addition to the chartered flights, about 465 tourists will be arriving here by the various commercial passenger flights via Doha and Dubai.

Arrangements have been made at the immigration counters to expedite the clearance procedure apart from setting up a help desk outside the arrival lounge to carry out paper work. Be-

sides, large coaches, luggage vans, and personal executives will be pressed into service to assist the guests.

According to officials, all the arriving guests will be taken straight to the port to complete the immigration and check-in formalities for boarding the ship.

The visitors are then expected to take a tour of their own choices in different groups to the nearby spots such as Mattancheri and Kumbalangi.

With Kochi evolving into a major cruise destination, CIAL proposes to take more proactive steps towards developing 'cruise exchange' by connecting this airport with the Kochi port.

With the initiative, it aims to improve the number of chartered aircraft landings at the airport here and seeks to expand revenue from its core product of aircraft landings.