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**Press Release**

**Top scholars to lead sessions at global Spice Routes Conclave**

**Kochi to host three-day event from Jan. 6**

**Kochi, Jan. 02:** The three-day International Spice Routes Conference scheduled in Kochi from January 6 will see convergence of eminent historians, archivists and scholars representing multiple disciplines engaging in absorbing conversations on the shared maritime and cultural heritage and its relevance in the present global narrative.

The event, organized by Muziris Heritage Projects in collaboration with Kerala Tourism Department, will be hosted at the historic Bolgatty Palace, Ernakulam, a site intrinsically linked to centuries of maritime trade and cultural encounters.

The first such initiative in India, the January 6-8 event will see 38 international delegates from 22 countries apart from national participants.

The event will feature a remarkable cross-section of participants, including academicians, archaeologists, diplomats, policy-makers and tourism stakeholders, artists, cultural practitioners and performers.

The line-up of speakers at various sessions include Dr. Hugo Cardoso, Lisbon University, Portugal; Prof. Istawan Perczel, Central European University, Austria; Prof. Jajat Burhanudheen, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta; Prof. James Onley, American University of Sharjah; Dr. Nia Deliana, Universitas Islam Internasional, Indonesia; Dr. Sara Mondini, Ghent University, Belgium; Dr. Akhila Yechury, University of St. Andrews, UK; Dr. Sandhya Rao Mehta, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman; Dr. Ophira Gamliel, University of Glasgow, UK; Dr. Manal Ataya, Director, Sharjah Museums; Dr. Peter Nagy, Qatar Museums and Prof. Sher Banu A L, National University of Singapore.

On the opening day, Dr. Venu V, former Chief Secretary & Chairperson, Kochi Muziris Biennale Foundation, will speak at a session on 'Governing and Sustaining Transnational Heritage Corridors—Policy Pathways' with the other panelists being Dr. Rima Hooja, President, ICOMOS India and Mr. Tim Curtis, Director, UNESCO. Mrs Sikha Surendran, Director, Kerala Tourism, will be the moderator.

On the same day, Mrs Sikha Surendran also will present an opening note on 'Spice Routes: People, Goods and Ideas in Motion.'



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The session on 'Living Legacies- Cultural Livelihood of Spice Route' will feature Mr. Rupeshkumar K, CEO, Responsible Tourism Mission Society, Kerala; Dr. Richa Negi, Director, Adi Drishya, IGNA; Dr. Mahesh S from Agasthya Kalari; Koodiyattom scholar Dr. Margi Madhu and Dr. Rajeev Pulvar, Shadow Puppeteer.

The session on 'Digital Spice Routes—Technology, Immersive Media and the future of heritage interpretation' will have Mr. Anoop Ambika, CEO, Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM); Mr. Arun Ashok, Booking.com; Mr. Densil Antony, CEO, XR Horizon; and Mr. Johan Kuruvila, Kochi Heritage Project, as panelists. Mr. Sharon V, MD, Muziris Projects Ltd. will be the moderator.

The event will span paper presentations, conversations, poster displays, art shows, film screening, performances and site visits.

The speakers will explore the Spice Route not as a single trade corridor, but as a vast, interconnected cultural ecosystem that shaped societies across continents. Moving beyond the economics, the conference will delve into the human narratives embedded in maritime history.

The event will explore new pathways to strengthen cultural and heritage tourism among a host of countries across continents that lay in the ambit of the famed global trade corridor.

The Conference seeks to position Kerala not merely as a destination but as a living crossroad of global heritage and maritime civilization.

For more details, visit: <https://www.keralatourism.org/muziris>

**Ends**