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**Press Release**

**Kerala Tourism's Onam fest to begin on Sept 6 with grand inaugural**

- **Chief Minister to inaugurate seven-day celebrations at Nishagandhi**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Sept. 03:** The week-long Onam celebrations organised by the Kerala Tourism will start off on September 6 at a grand inaugural ceremony here, setting the stage for presenting the best of the state's classical, folk, ethnic and popular art forms before a wider audience in multiple venues in the capital city and districts across the state.

Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the festival at Nishagandhi Auditorium here on September 6, at 6 pm, as the whole of the state permeates with a resurgent mood overcoming the pandemic-induced downturn and devastations spawned by floods in previous years.

Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohammed Riyas will preside over the state-level inaugural ceremony, which will be attended by General Education and Labour Minister Shri V Sivankutty, Transport Minister Shri Antony Raju, Mayor Kumari Arya Rajendran, Dr Shashi Tharoor MP, legislators and elected representatives.

Keralites are all set to celebrate Onam in a grand manner this time as it marks the state's resurgence from the crippling impact of Covid-19 and back-to-back natural disasters, Shri Riyas and Shri Sivankutty told a joint press conference here.

Unveiling the highlights of the programmes planned during the festival in over 30 venues across the state, Shri Riyas said the festival will feature over 8000 artistes, half of whom will be from traditional streams.

Onam celebrations organised by Tourism Department has over the years become one of the most popular cultural events that enthrall both tourists visiting the Kerala during the season and the local communities as well, Shri Riyas said.

The inaugural ceremony will be preceded by the Elanjithara Melam led by Kalamandalam Sivadas heralding the festival. The cultural extravaganza will conclude on September 12 with colourful pageantries in the state capital and other centres.

Aparna Balamurali, who won the national award for best actress, and actor Dulquar Salman will be the chief guests. The ganamela led by Vijay Yesudas and Rimi Tomy, sponsored by Kairali TV, will be the evening's highlight.

Ahead of the inaugural, Shri Riyas will switch on illuminations across basking in colour the heart of the city from Kowdiar to the East Fort and from Vellayambalam to Sasthamangalam.



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The illumination has also been extended to world renowned Kovalam beach, which hosted the South Indian Chief Ministers' meet on September 3.

Programmes will be staged in as many as 32 venues across the state. A trade fair and food festival have been organised at Sooryakanthi near Kanakakunnu.

Two more venues have been added this year in the capital—Kerala Arts and Craft Village at Vellar and Sree Narayana Gurukulam at Chempazhanthi.

Over 8000 artistes will perform in different venues in the festival. The state capital will be witness dance performances by actor Navya Nair, danseuse Paris Lakshmi and music performances by Thykoodam Bridge & Agam music band and a wide variety of other programmes.

Ganamela led by eminent singer Sithara and symphony fusion by classical musician Ramesh Narayanan will be hosted at the Greenfield Stadium, Kazhakootam.

Major media houses Mathrubhumi TV, Jeevan TV, ACV, Madhyamam and Kerala Kaumudi will present programmes at the Central Stadium. The Musical Night presented by Malayala Manorama will be a highlight at Nishagandhi. As in the past, a grand ganamela will be held at Poojapura Maidan. There will also be ganamela at sooryakanthi and Public Office area.

Vailoppilly Samskrithi Bhavan and Bharat Bhavan will be the venues for dance performances, classical music and classical dance.

There will be 'Kathaprasangam' at Gandhi Park while the Museum will host amateur drama and yoga display on all days. Folk arts will be staged at Thiruvarangu and Sopanam. Katha, Kaviyarangu and dramas at Ayyankali Hall.

Musical and percussion instruments will be played at Kanakakunnu gate, and Kathakali, Koothu, Koodiyattam and Aksharslokam will be staged at Karthika Thirunal Theatre.

Keeping the tradition, swings will be installed at various points in the city. Pookalam competition will be held at Jawahar Balabhavan and Thiruvathirakali competition at Bharat Bhavan.

Various performances by women and children will be held at Shankumughom.

Programmes have been planned in Nedumangadu, Mudavoorpara Boat Club, Veli Tourist Village, Peroorkada Bapuji Library, Kazhakoottam, Attingal, Neyyattinkara Municipal ground, Kottakkakam Sree Chithira Thirunal Park and Akkulam also.

**ENDS**