



Department of Tourism

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Press Release

Destination development project for Varkala to be fast-tracked



• **Tourism Minister holds high-level meet, V Joy MLA attends**

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 06: The destination development project for Varkala, a major beach and pilgrim tourism centre in Kerala, will be fast-tracked to turn the core site and the adjoining areas into a world-class tourism destination.

A high-level meeting convened by Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas here on Monday, attended by Shri V Joy MLA and senior officials, discussed a raft of schemes to be taken up at Varkala on a priority basis, including protection of the Varkala Cliff, a distinguishing feature of the panoramic site.

Varkala Municipality Chairman Shri K M Laji, Tourism Secretary Shri K Biju, Tourism Director Shri P B Nooh, District Collector Shri Geromic George, District Police Chief, Thiruvananthapuram Rural, Smt. Kiran Narayanan IPS, Vision Varkala Infrastructure Development Corporation (VIVID) MD Shri Ramachandran Potti and officials of Suchitwa Mission and other government departments were present.

Shri Riyas emphasised that the decisions taken by the meeting should be translated into tangible results by adhering to the timeline set for the implementation of each work. He also said it is important to strictly follow the green protocol considering the peculiarities of the ecosystem.

The Minister said issues like illegal occupation and constructions on the cliff and realigning the cliff path to reduce the pressure on its edge need to be addressed urgently.

He suggested development of the wetland beside the beach into a biopark with an elevated welcome lounge, working out plans to decongest the parking spaces by demarcating separated lots and exploring possibilities of using buggies and electric autos to gain access to the cliff.



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Situated around 45 km north of the state capital and well connected with road and rail links, Varkala is famed for its cliff beach, which the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has declared a geological monument.

“Already a major tourism destination, infrastructure and safety measures in Varkala need to be enhanced further considering the huge potential of the place and the steady increase in footfall,” the Minister said.

Varkala is also of great importance considering its association with Sree Narayana Guru, who profoundly influenced the socio-cultural transformation of Kerala into a modern society, Shri Riyas said.

An officer of the Tourism Department will be appointed with full responsibility for the destination and a taskforce formed to expedite the works.

Dr Manoj Kumar Kini, Managing Director, Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Limited (KTIL), made a presentation on the proposed master plan for Varkala destination development. The Master Plan proposed development of the region from Anchuthengu to Kappil into multiple destinations, expanding the existing tourism zone.

Priority will be given to addressing tourist concerns and infrastructure development related to the cliff and the Papanasam beach. The construction of a toilet block at Varkala and Papanasam beach will be completed by March and changing rooms and seating facilities before the commencement of the season.

A regulatory framework will be drawn up for all activities to identify and declare tourism zones. Discussions will be held with the Local Self Government Department Minister in this regard.

Enhancing basic infrastructure at the destination, increasing safety with improved lighting and installation of digital cameras and path realigning at the cliff will be primary components of the development project.

As part of the project, steps will be taken to conserve the ecology of the destination and reduce sharply the use of plastic and other polluting material, turning the whole area clean and hygienic to preserve the healthy and refreshing ambience of the seashore and the surrounding areas.

Apart from Sivagiri Mutt founded by Sree Narayana Guru, the Janardhana Swamy temple at Varkala is visited by devotees gather in large numbers during all seasons.



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A key feature that marks Varkala beach as a must-see site is the fascinating stretch of cliffs, which geologists call as the “Varkala Formation.”

The destination, which boasts of top hotels, resorts, homestays and ayurvedic spas, is also an important wellness tourism centre.

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