



Department of Tourism

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Press Release

Tap biodiversity, experiential potential to promote Wayanad as a destination: Panellists at 'Brand Wayanad' event

Kalpetta, Oct 6: Wayanad can be promoted as a major tourism destination by leveraging its biodiversity and experiential potential in a sustainable manner, panellists suggested at a seminar held here today to mark the announcement of the 'Brand Wayanad' project, an initiative rolled out by the Tourism Department as part of the State Government's 100-day action plan.

Pitching for creation of a reliable data base of Wayanad as a destination, Shri T. Sivaraju, MD of Uravu Ecolinks, pointed out that the data regarding Wayanad's tourism potential is inaccurate. Data must be accurate when granting industry status to tourism to attract more investments in the sector, mostly from outside Wayanad, said Shri Sivaraju.

"The potential for local development also needs to be explored. A 'service villa' culture is now emerging, replacing the traditional homestay model, and a comprehensive survey incorporating such features is required," he added.

Shri Saneesh C.S., Biodiversity Lead at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, said Wayanad's biodiversity should be increasingly leveraged for tourism. "Efforts need to be made to specifically attract tourists interested in biodiversity," he said.

Shri Saneesh illustrated, with examples, how the region's unique topography contributes to the distinctiveness of Wayanad's biodiversity.

Shri Kalpetta Narayanan, writer and Chairman of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, pointed out Wayanad's unique features and identity should be safeguarded while tapping its tourism potential. "The region boasts of biodiversity that is unmatched even by the Himalayas. The very air of Wayanad possesses medicinal qualities," said Shri Narayanan.

Shri David Raju (General Manager, CGH Earth Experience), Shri Prashanth Rajesh (Plantation Expert), Shri Sibiraj Raveendran (Architect and Tourism Consultant), Shri Raghu Narayana Swamy (Co-founder and Operational Director, BB Voyage Pvt. Ltd.), Shri Shri Sanoop Kumar P.V. (Assistant Professor of Travel and Tourism, Pazhassi Raja College, Pulpally) and Sumesh Mangalassery, a responsible tourism practitioner and sustainable tourism consultant, participated in the panel discussion titled 'What Next for Brand Wayanad'.

Kerala Tourism Mart Society (KTM) member Shri Vanchiswaran anchored the session.



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Shri David Raju said the tourism industry must commit to strictly preserving Wayanad's biodiversity.

Shri Prashanth Rajesh pointed out the need for policy and legal support from the government to harness the tourism potential of the plantation sector.

Shri Sibiraj Raveendran said greater clarity regarding investment opportunities in Wayanad is needed, given the complexities surrounding land regulations. Shri Raghu Narayana Swamy said the future of Wayanad lies in homestays.

Shri Sanoop Kumar PV said tourism education need to give greater emphasis on skill development rather than approaching the domain as an area of academic studies. He also pointed out the need for a government order in this regard.

Shri Sumesh Mangalassery called for improving weather monitoring system in places like Wayanad using modern technology, instead of limiting restrictions to solely to disaster-prone areas.