



**Department of Tourism**

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**Press Release**

**Kerala opens huge investment avenues in Tourism sector: Minister Mohamed Riyas**



- *Minister leads delegation to Expo 2020 Dubai to showcase Kerala Tourism*

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 08:** As tourism in Kerala is set to bounce back from the covid-induced crisis, the state offers high investment opportunities in travel and hospitality sector with the government unveiling several ambitious projects to tap its potential as an extended tourist haven, Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohamed Riyas said.

Addressing a press conference in Dubai today on the sidelines of the Kerala Week at Expo 2020, Shri Riyas said the state is keen to partner with UAE based investors and Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) in scripting a new story of growth and development in key sectors, especially tourism.



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Major initiatives promising attractive investment opportunities are 'Exploring the Unexplored' destinations, opening up the untapped Malabar region, Caravan Tourism, safe and regulated adventure tourism, experiential tourism, workcations and active holidays, the Minister said.

While the recently launched Caravan Tourism is sure to provide a riveting experience to visitors, houseboats will continue to be one of the top holiday experiences in Kerala. Caravanning will help Kerala tourism to expand beyond established destinations, he said.

Shri Riyas, who is leading a delegation from Kerala to Expo 2020 Dubai to showcase the state's strengths, said the new projects have opened up investment possibilities in MICE facilities, resorts and hotels, caravans and caravan parks, farmstays, adventure holidays and travel and tour operations. The delegation includes Dr. Venu V, Additional Chief Secretary (Tourism) and Shri. VR Krishna Teja, Director, Tourism.

Kerala has an investor-friendly institutional mechanism to provide quick approvals and mandatory clearances for investment proposals, the Minister said.

When the pandemic fades away, Ayurveda/health and wellness holidays will become important, for which the state is well-positioned to attract clients from the Middle East for wellness and rejuvenation holidays.

A must-visit destination for nature enthusiasts, Kerala is well positioned to attract young travellers with soft adventure activities in the hills and forests of Western Ghats. Kerala's forests cover nearly 30% of the total land area and there are 15 wildlife sanctuaries, 2 tiger reserves, 5 national parks and 60 plus eco-tourism destinations.

On the caravan tourism initiative, Shri Riyas said the aim of the project is to popularise this mode of holidaying among common people.

"About 297 potential investors have evinced interest in caravans and have registered for availing subsidy so far under the project. The construction of caravan parks is underway. The response to the registration process for setting up caravan parks has been overwhelming. So far, we have received as many as 78 registrations for caravan parks," he said.

Shri Riyas also urged the Keralites in the UAE to be the brand ambassadors of the tourism projects of the state.

Kerala's tourism development is centred around the idea of Responsible Tourism with community participation. Sustainable growth is the right approach to development, he said.

Emphasising on the strong government-to-government relations with UAE and people-to-people social and cultural ties, Mr Riyas said he is confident that tourism will be a key driver



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in this relationship with more and more Keralites travelling to UAE, and vice-versa, in the future.

The reception accorded to the Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan by the Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, has further strengthened the ties, he said.

Noting that the last few years have been challenging for Kerala, Mr Riyas said the offer of help from the ruler of UAE and NRKs to carry out relief, rehabilitation and revival measures have been great.

“We have been successful in weathering these crises under the able and visionary leadership of the Honourable Chief Minister, Sri Pinarayi Vijayan. There is growing optimism among the industry and the people that the worst is behind us,” he added.

Dr. Venu said Kerala provides world class services to visitors to ensure them a different experience. “Now we have a host of new and exciting projects envisaged by the Tourism Minister, who represents the vibrant youth in tourism sector. UAE is one of our important markets and we hope an exponential growth in the business in the next four to five years,” he added.

Shri Krishna Teja, who made a presentation on Kerala Tourism, said the leadership in Kerala has helped overcome the impact of the pandemic that hit the industry badly. The swift roll out of the total vaccination drive in tourism destinations quite early on was one of the important measures initiated by the Government.

**Ends**