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Press Release

Minister Riyas congratulates Kerala surfing champ

- **Ramesh Budihal creates history as the first Indian surfer to qualify for the Open Men's final at the Asian Surfing Championships**

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 09: Kerala Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas has congratulated Ramesh Budihal from the state who has made history by becoming the first Indian surfer to qualify for the Open Men's final at the 2025 Asian Surfing Championships.

He said Budihal's remarkable achievement at the ongoing Asian Surfing Championships in the picturesque coastal town of Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, underscores the rapid advancement of Kerala on the global surfing map.

The surfing sensation from Kovalam in Kerala secured his spot in the finals after an impressive performance in the semifinal heat, finishing with a score of 11.43 points, which earned him second place.

"Ramesh's accomplishment not only celebrates individual talent but also validates Kerala's dedicated efforts to position itself as a prominent hub for adventure sports," Shri Riyas said.

"Events like the International Surfing Championship, hosted in Varkala, have significantly attracted energetic youth to explore this exhilarating discipline and have drawn surfing enthusiasts to Kerala coasts from across the globe."

Budihal's journey to the finals was marked by an impressive display of skill and determination in the quarterfinals.

He dominated his heat with a remarkable score of 14.84 points, surpassing top competitors from across Asia, including the Philippines' Neil Sanchez, who finished with 12.80 points.

"The journey of this young man, who started surfing the waves of Kovalam, embodies the spirit of perseverance and excellence in adventure sports," he said.

"His qualification for the finals, particularly after overcoming the challenges of missing last year's competition, is a remarkable achievement in international surfing."



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By reaching the final round, Budihal has established himself among the top surfers in Asia.

His recent qualification for the Asian Games in Tokyo adds even more significance to this achievement.

“Kerala is at the forefront of major events in adventure sports,” Shri Riyas said, highlighting major events listed on the God’s Own Country’s tourism calendar. All of these events attract global champions, helping Kerala to emerge as a model for adventure sports in India

They include the Malabar River Festival, which is one of Asia's largest white-water kayaking tournaments; the National Surfing Championship in Varkala; the Paragliding Festival in Vagamon; and the Mountain Terrain Bike Tournament in Mananthavady.

“Although many regions in the country boast a rich tradition of surfing, Ramesh's recognition on the international stage signifies a meaningful intervention by the government to promote and enhance this field,” Shri Riyas said.

“With his stellar performance and dedication, Ramesh not only represents his home state but also inspires budding surfers nationwide to pursue their dreams in the exhilarating world of surfing.”

The Asian Surfing Championships attracted elite surfers from several countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, China, and South Korea, who fiercely competed on the scenic shores of Mahabalipuram.

Budihal’s ascent in such a competitive environment highlights India's emerging presence on the surfing circuit.

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