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**Press Release**

**Kerala Budget will expedite post-pandemic surge of tourism: Minister**

- ***New projects include Kovalam-Kollam-Beyyapuzha-Goa cruise project, "One Panchayat - One Destination" initiative***

**Thiruvananthapuram, Mar. 11:** Making a substantial allocation of Rs. 362.15 crore for planning and implementation of a slew of projects in the tourism sector during 2022-23, the Budget presented by Finance Minister Shri K N Balagopal in the Kerala Assembly today will impart a great momentum to the post-pandemic travel and hospitality activities in the state, Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohamed Riyas said today.

"The Budget has made substantial allocations to the development of the tourism sector to take up a slew of initiatives like Tourism Hubs and Destination Challenge. The amount earmarked in the budget this year for tourism is Rs. 42 crore more than what was set apart last year," Shri Riyas said.

The increased allocation will support the revival of the pandemic-battered tourism in the state. The entire spectrum of tourism enterprises, which provide jobs for thousands, will benefit from this budget, the Minister said.

The new projects on the anvil include the launch of cruise tourism connecting Kovalam, Kollam, Kochi, Beyyapuzha, Mangalore and Goa, for which an initial allocation of Rs. 5 crore has been made. A sum of Rs. 15 crore has been set apart for transforming the Champions Boat League (CBL) into an Indian Premier League model.

The budget has also earmarked Rs. 20 crore for interest subvention for an ambitious project to avail Rs. 1000 crore loan for the rejuvenation and development of tourism sector.

The scheme-wise allocations include Rs. 132.14 crore for the "one panchayat-one destination" initiative, Rs. 81 crore for marketing strategies and promotional activities, Rs. 29.30 crore for training activities in tourism sector and Rs. 5 crore for setting up caravan parks.

Apart from putting the Caravan Tourism initiative firmly on track, the new projects to be implemented include development of 25 eco-friendly tourist hubs in five years, strengthening of the pilgrim circuit and inclusion of marine travels in tourism plans.