



Department of Tourism

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Press Release

Govt to bring out initiatives to promote state as venue for global meets: Tourism Minister



● **Shri Riyas inaugurates two-day Soft Power Club annual conference**

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 16: Seeking to make Kerala a Soft Power hub, the state government will soon come out with upfront initiatives to promote it as a preferred venue for global conferences, Tourism and Public Works Minister Shri PA Mohamed Riyas announced today.

Shri Riyas was speaking after inaugurating the two-day annual conference of the Soft Power Club, a leading global organisation headed by Francesco Rutelli, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, at Technopark here.

In the context of hosting the event by Kerala Tourism, Shri Riyas said Kerala has immense opportunities in this segment considering the picturesque landscape, eclectic history and rich cultural heritage of the state.



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“The beautiful locales including hill stations, beach and backwater destinations in various parts of the state make it as the most ideal location for international meets. The soft power at our disposal, which is tourism, is the most potent component and it has to be harnessed in a sustainable manner,” he said.

According to him, over the centuries Kerala has leveraged soft power in its evolution as an inclusive society and social and communal harmony of state reinforces its position as a soft power hub.

Commenting that sustainability and inclusiveness are the fundamentals of Kerala Tourism, he said the Responsible Tourism initiatives of the state have earned several global accolades.

G20 Sherpa Shri Amitabh Kant, who made a presentation on India, said the country blends both its soft and hard powers to project itself and to ensure that the nation retains its very unique civilisational approach.

Introducing the Soft Power Club, Mr. Francesco Rutelli stressed the need for promoting the value of international cooperation on strategic issues in the difficult times.

He said building resilient stories of soft power involves inculcating resilient values, driving it through policy, recognising the role of social media as a soft power tool and bringing the subject into public discourse.

Highlighting that soft power is tool for reputation, international competitiveness and economic growth formations, Mr. Rutelli informed that the Soft Power Club meet will discuss the persisting and potential role of trade in the changing international landscape.

“India’s soft power is on global level and fascinating as well. Kerala as a venue for this event would be a splendid opportunity to understand, promote and showcase the country’s positive assets,” he observed.

In his keynote address, Shri Suman Billa, Principal Secretary, Industries & NORKA, said soft power, which is universally endearing, has cultural and relationship aspects.

Tourism Secretary Shri Biju K, in his welcome address, said tourism plays a vital part in state’s soft power elements and public diplomacy alongside destination branding.

“Kerala’s promotion of eco-friendly tourism and its initiatives committed to environmental sustainability enhance its soft power. State’s progressive social development and humanitarian initiatives have garnered global acclaim and contributed to its soft power of social development,” Shri Biju added.



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Ambassador of Italy to India Mr Vincenzo De Luca read out a message from Italian President Mr Sergio Mattarella on the occasion.

Secretary, Electronics & IT, Government of Kerala, Dr Rathan U Kelkar; Kerala Tourism Director Shri P B Nooh; Executive Chairman, IBS Software and Chairman, GTECH, Shri V K Mathews; Soft Power Club Member, Director UNESCO Liaison Office, Geneva, Ms Ana Luiza Massot Thompson Flores; and President, Gambero Rosso and Acotel Mr Paolo Cuccia, among others who were present.

The state will showcase its achievements in tourism, hospitality, IT, the local government system, the health sector, Kudumbashree, women empowerment, geographical diversity, historical and heritage features, art and cultural scene, secularism and media freedom.

Around thirty members of the Soft Power Club, including high-level officials, heads of international organisations, analysts, and experts in the fields of business, science, art, digital technologies and climate, are attending the conference.

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