



**Department of Tourism**

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: [info@keralatourism.org](mailto:info@keralatourism.org)

[marketing@keralatourism.org](mailto:marketing@keralatourism.org)

[www.keralatourism.org](http://www.keralatourism.org)

## PRESS RELEASE

### Partner in Kerala's transformation into a world class economy: CM Pinarayi Vijayan



**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 16:** Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan today called upon investors to become partners in Kerala's transformation into a world-class economy by investing in the State's flourishing tourism sector.

"Kerala is all set to transform itself from being the best tourism destination to the perfect tourism investment destination in the country. By investing in Kerala Tourism, you will also be a part of this tremendous transformation, the Chief Minister said, while inaugurating the Tourism Investors Meet here on Thursday.

"Kerala is the only state in the country with four international airports. We have numerous national and State highways. Soon one can travel from Kerala's northern end to its southern end on water. Kerala has the highest number of 5-star hotels in the country. We are investment-ready, we are accessible, our workforce is well trained and our physical and digital infrastructure is unmatched in the country," the Chief Minister said.

The Tourism Investors Meet, Mr. Vijayan said, is intended to connect investors with key stakeholders, local entrepreneurs, and industry experts to explore potential collaborations and gain valuable insights into Kerala's tourism ecosystem.

The Chief Minister said that a Single Window Clearance System has been created to assist tourism investors and a Facilitation Centre set up to follow up on the preliminary deliberations at the Investors meet. The State, he pointed out, is providing investment subsidies and incentives and encouraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the tourism sector.



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“As the tourism sector in Kerala continues to grow at a rapid pace, your investments will also reap rich dividends. Your investments can further develop our tourism infrastructure and enhance the quality of our services. Your investments will surely benefit from the vibrant hospitality and services industries here. Your investments will generate indirect employment in allied industries such as handicrafts and agriculture as well,” he added.

Shri. Vijayan said the emergence of Kerala as a global tourism hotspot is backed by solid numbers. In terms of domestic tourist arrivals, the state hit an all-time record in 2022, with 1.88 crore domestic travelers visiting Kerala. International tourist arrivals also registered an exceptional growth of 171.55 % in the first half of 2023, compared to the first half of 2022. Revenue generated by Kerala’s tourism sector has also been on a steady rise, with revenue more than tripling from Rs. 11,335.96 crore in 2020 and Rs. 12,285.91 crore in 2021 to Rs. 35,168.42 crore in 2022. The State’s foreign exchange earnings from tourism was to the tune of Rs. 2,792.42 crore in 2022. Tourism accounts for about 12% of Kerala’s GDP and almost a quarter of the State workforce - 23.5% - is employed in the tourism sector.

“The fact that we have come back stronger than ever before, despite recurring challenges, be it Ockhi or Nipah or floods or COVID-19, is a testament to Kerala being an everlasting tourist attraction. Strategic crisis management, innovative marketing and community focused sustainable tourism initiatives have made us resilient and adaptable in the face of multiple crises,” the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Vijayan pointed out that Kerala Tourism has expanded its horizons with the launch of 'Keravan Kerala' for caravan tourism enthusiasts. Kerala Tourism has introduced Heli-Tourism which provides aerial views of our enchanting landscapes and Cruise Tourism is being tapped into to showcase our serene backwaters.

“We are also positioning Kerala as a wedding destination, targeting a global audience. To give a new perspective to Kerala Tourism, seven visual corridors with a product that is unique to each corridor is also being envisaged,” the Chief Minister said.

The State has seamless connectivity, which would enable those coming in to Kerala to work from anywhere in the State. With work away from home gaining traction in the post pandemic scenario, Kerala is set to welcome all those who want to work from remote and relaxing locations.

At the same time, those who would prefer leisure or adventure instead, that will also be available, uninterrupted. Accessibility to all tourist places is being ensured so that everyone finds a sense of belonging here, he added.



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He said the efforts at transforming Kerala Tourism is part of the overall project of transforming the State, into a knowledge economy and an innovation society. Kerala is being reshaped into 'Navakeralam', a society which would be at par with advanced middle-income nations, with resilience, sustainability and inclusivity as its hallmarks.

MICE facilities are aplenty in Kerala. Hospitality, leisure, entertainment, human resources, IT, wellness, heritage, wildlife, backwaters, hill stations, beaches are all areas which can create rewarding investment opportunities in the State.

The State is very keen to promote responsible and sustainable tourism investments that align with Kerala's commitment to environmental conservation and community development. Kerala is looking for sustainable tourism initiatives that seeks to develop eco-friendly accommodations, promote responsible travel practices, and supports community-based tourism projects that empower local communities while preserving their way of life and the natural surroundings.

The expectations of modern travelers are high. "Kerala is already meeting them, but we want to exceed them. To me, that is where this Meet can make a marked difference," the Chief Minister said hoping that the Tourism Investors Meet will be a game changer in Kerala's tourism development.

**Ends**