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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Kerala announces new schedule for Champions Boat League races**

*Nine teams to vie for titles in three-month-long CBL races during Aug. 31-Nov. 23*

**Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 21:** With the flood waters receding and skies clearing, Kerala Tourism today announced rescheduled dates for Champions Boat League (CBL), the country's first-ever boat racing patterned on the IPL format of cricket.

Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran said here that the CBL would start on August 31 alongside the illustrious Nehru Trophy Boat Race and would end on November 23 on the sidelines of the President's Trophy at Kollam.

Originally slated to begin on August 10, the championship will retain its essential features, as nine teams are to vie for top honours and prize monies totalling Rs 5.9 crore.

Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan will flag off the event at the sprawling Punnamada Lake in Alappuzha city in the presence of cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar.

The league will have 12 races in the following weekends. The participating teams remain the same: Tropical Titans (traditionally, Pallathuruthi Boat Club), Backwater Knights (Village Boat Club), Backwater Ninja (Brothers Boat Club), Backwater Warriors (Town Boat Club), Coast Dominators (United Boat Club), Mighty Oars (NCDC), Pride Chasers (Vembanad Boat Club), Raging Rowers (Police Boat Club) and Thunder Oars (KBC/SFBC).

The new schedule of the ticketed CBL's snake-boat races goes thus: September 7 (Thazhathangadi, Kottayam), September 14 (Karuvatta, Alappuzha), September 28 (Piravam, Ernakulam district), October 5 (Marine Drive, Kochi), October 12 (Kottappuram, Thrissur district), October 19 (Ponnani, Malappuram), October 26 (Kainakari, Alappuzha), November 2 (Pulinkunnu, Alappuzha district), November 9 (Kayamkulam, Alappuzha), November 16 (Kallada, Kollam district), and November 23 (President's Trophy Boat Race, Kollam).

"The new rollout of the CBL show how much resilient we in Kerala are as a people," said Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran. "True, we are all aggrieved, given the magnitude of the monsoon tragedy. But then such events effectively hasten our return to normalcy and help the state's economy give a boost, which is the need of the hour."



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In this context, the Minister noted that Tourism sector contributes around 12% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the state.

Touted as a game-changing initiative, the CBL ([www.championsboatleague.in](http://www.championsboatleague.in)) is meant to professionalise Kerala's largely scattered snake-boat races. "The boat league commercialises them in a positive way. For, the conventional spirit is kept intact," he said.

The CBL, whose Rs 5.9-crore prize money makes it the fourth highest in all sports in India, will mark a paradigm shift in the state's age-old culture of boat races, the Minister said.

"It is not just about the prizes or the cash. Our streamlining the regional boat races by making them part of a series that attracts worldwide attention will enrich the traditional event in tune with the times. It is anyway meant to benefit local communities, given its focus on social aspects," Shri Surendran added.

While the first three winners of each CBL match will get Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 1 lakh respectively, all participants are entitled to a bonus prize of Rs 4 lakh for each match.

Finance Minister Dr Thomas Isaac, who was also present, said the CBL will give an impetus to backwater tourism and the change it brings about will be felt in three years.

The CBL is being conceived as an annual global spectacle, given its potential as a unique tourism product, said State Tourism Director Mr P Bala Kiran. "The swiftness with which we announced the fresh schedule shows how much we value CBL and the potential we see in it as an event that can bring more people worldwide to Kerala," he said.

The government has formed a company, CBL Limited, for the conduct.

Tickets for the boat races can be booked online through 'Book my Show' platform. Around 20 counters are being set up in all the venues for spot purchase of tickets, priced between Rs 100 and Rs 3,000.

The races, being held from 2 pm to 5 pm, will be broadcast live. Star Sports 2, Star Sports 2 HD, Star Sports 1 Tamil, Asianet Worldwide, Asianet Plus, Hotstar, ETV Andhra Pradesh and ETV Telangana will beam the event for an hour from 4 pm.



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Shri Surendran said the Onam celebrations organised by the Tourism Department will be held as scheduled.

A conclave of Tourism Ministers of all states will be held at Kovalam on September 16 in the presence of Union Tourism Minister Shri Prahlad Singh Patel and Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan, he said.

Tourism Minister also launched the website of The Kollam District Tourism Promotion Council, online booking facility and campaign video of 'Enjoy Onam feast, get Onam gifts, 'a project worked out by the State Responsible Tourism (RT) Mission.

**ENDS**