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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Top artistes honoured as folk fest 'Utsavam 2020' commences**



*Tourism Minister inaugurates 7-day fest to be held at 28 venues across state*

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 22:** Showcasing Kerala's rich and diverse folk art traditions, the seven-day Utsavam 2020 got off to a colorful start with Hon'ble Minister for Co-operation, Tourism and Devaswoms Shri Kadakampally Surendran honouring eminent artists at the state-level inauguration of the cultural festival at Madavoorpara near here today .

Over 5000 artistes, representing a spectrum of folk and ethnic traditions that flourished in different parts of the state, are performing in the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the festival, organized by Kerala Tourism Jointly with Kerala Folklore Academy and District Tourism Promotion Councils.

Eminent actor Shri Nedumudi Venu was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony, which was presided over by Corporation Councilor Smt Sindhu Sasi. Tourism Secretary Smt Rani George IAS and Tourism Director Shri Bala Kiran IAS were present.



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A spectacular fusion of sight and sound to be staged at 28 venues across the state, the festival brings alive an array of ethnic and rural art forms, enthralling art lovers, connoisseurs and tourists.

The festival provides a platform to state's traditional folk arts, many of which are on the verge of being pushed to oblivion.

Shri Mannur Chandran (Porattu Kali), Shri Parappil Karumban (Kakkarassi Natakam), Smt Ambujakshi (Pulluvanpattu), Sister. Immanuel Prakash (Margam Kali), Shri Thambi Payyappalli (Chavittu Natakam), Shri Nazar Kappad (Mappilakala), Shri Aruvi Arumughan (Paliyanritham), Smt Rajamma Mullankuzhi (Parunthu kali), and Smt Sreedevi Srikumar (Nadan Pattu) were honoured at the function.

The artists being honored and the performers for the festival were selected by a two-member panel comprising Folklore Academy Chairman Shri C J Kuttappan and Bharat Bhavan member secretary Shri Pramod Payyannur.

Councillor Shri Pradeep Kumar, Block Panchayat President Smt Shaniba Beegum, Panchayat President Shri Venugopalan Nair, ADM Shri Vinod, Shri BS Indran, Shri D Ramesan and Shri Sidharthan were also present at the inaugural function.

The inaugural was followed by the performance of 'Mathrukam-Penmayude paithrukam', conceived by Pramod Payyanur.

**ENDS**