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PRESS RELEASE

Kerala Tourism turns post-pandemic leaf; luxury liner with 1,200 travellers docks at Kochi



Dancers and bouquet-carrying women in traditional dress greet passengers of MV Empress

Kochi, Sept. 22: The newly-built cruise terminal in Cochin Port today received the first batch of tourists as the luxury liner M V Empress from Mumbai called at the port city, marking a promising start to the revival of post-pandemic domestic tourism in Kerala.

The Lakshadweep-bound luxury cruise carrying 1200 travellers had a stop-over here with 300 travellers de-boarding the ship for a day-long on-shore sightseeing.

Kerala Tourism Department accorded a warm welcome to the guests with martial Velakali dancers and women in traditional off-white dress greeting them.

The snow-white vessel, owned by Cordelia Cruises, became the first luxury cruise to anchor at the state-of-the-art terminal, after the devastating Covid-19 pandemic swept across the world.

The Cochin Port wore a festive look, as Velakali performers holding sword and shield swayed with graceful vigour in two rows, showcasing the richness of the medieval cultural form.



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“I am from Indore in Madhya Pradesh. This is a particularly exciting reception,” said a middle-aged passenger walking past the Velakali dancers besides more than a dozen women facing each other in a line-up and presenting bouquets to the guests. “We plan to explore some of the heritage pockets of Kochi,” the passenger said.

The day-long Kochi leg scheduled a round of Mattancherry and Fort Kochi, touching several points of historical importance. Boat rides along the backwaters for the tourists to take in the charm of the ‘Queen of Arabian Sea’ were also arranged.

The Lakshadweep islands is the next destination of the liner, but passengers who have opted for just the Kochi package will be taken to other parts of the state, according to Voyages Kerala, the tour agent.

The tourists walked down the new-look terminal around 9.30 a.m, one-and-a-half hours after MV Empress anchored at the terminal in sunny weather. The guests were received by Kerala Tourism Joint Director Shri K. Radhakrishnan and Deputy Director Shri T G Abhilash besides top officials at the port.

With today’s event, Kerala Tourism signals a busy future following the waning of the pandemic even as the on-shore tour adheres to the strict Covid-19 protocols.

Ends