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Press Release

Onam Tourism Week Celebrations: City gets illuminated; Food Fest begins

- **CM to inaugurate state-level celebrations tomorrow (August 24)**

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug. 23: Revving up the festive mood set by the Onam season, Minister for Health and Devaswoms Shri K Muraleedharan switched on the festival lights in the state capital, ahead of the grand Onam Tourism Week celebrations organised by the state government starting tomorrow (August 24).

Chief Minister Shri VD Satheesan will inaugurate the state-level celebrations at Nishagandhi Open Air Auditorium on August 24 at 5:30 pm.

Tourism Minister Shri PC Vishnunadh hoisted the Onam flag before the switch-on ceremony, while MP Shri Shashi Tharoor inaugurated the food festival at Sooryakanthi Exhibition Ground.

Tourism Minister also inaugurated the Media Centre at Kanakakkunnu.

MLAs Shri MR Baiju, Shri M Vincent, Shri G Steephen and Councillor Shri KR Cleetus were present for the switch-on ceremony, while MLA Shri CK Hareendran presided over the function.

Tourism Director Smt Anjana M and Additional Director (General) of the Department of Tourism, Smt Sreedhanya Suresh, were also present.

Onam festival committee Vice Chairmen Shri Neyyatinkara Sanal, Shri Manacaud Suresh, Shri Mariyapuram Sreekumar, Shri MA Vaheed also attended the ceremony.

Recalling the year 1986, when then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Thiruvananthapuram for Onam celebrations as the chief guest along with Sonia Gandhi, Shri K Muraleedharan said, "Onam celebration in the state capital is an iconic event that has a positive impact on the tourism sector."

"Onam festival week is a pride of our state, and it is conducted on a grand scale over the years, and it attracts a lot of tourists into the city," said Shri K Muraleedharan.

The Tourism Department will illuminate areas from Kowdiar to Attakulangara and from Sasthamangalam to Vellayambalam during the festive week.



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“Onam season in the state is attracting a lot of tourists, and the Tourism Department has taken every step to make this year’s Onam celebrations a grand event with a lot of ingredients that can attract domestic and foreign tourists,” said Shri PC Vishnunadh.

“Identifying tourists’ interest in our traditional art and folk culture, greater prominence has been given to Kerala’s traditional art forms this year,” said the Tourism Minister.

“Mudiyett, Tholpavakoothu, Padayani, Arjunanirtham, Poothanum Thirayum are among the traditional art forms to be staged at the main venue,” he added.

Earlier, Shri Shashi Tharoor, MP, inaugurated the food festival at the Sooryakanthi Exhibition Ground, offering a wide selection of traditional Kerala dishes and delicacies.

Around 15 food stalls will be open throughout the festival week, offering a variety of food from all regions of the state.

Tourism Minister PC Vishnunadh distributed prizes to the winners of Payasam competition organised by KTDC at the event.

Smt Jalaja Shaju, Smt Shifa Fathima and Vineeth AM won the first second and third prizes respectively in the Payasam competition.

The eagerly-awaited Onam festival this year has been organised on a grander scale featuring thousands of artists drawn from Kerala’s classical, ethnic, folk and martial art traditions.

The capital city, district headquarters and scores of other venues across the state have been decked up for the celebrations, setting the stage for an exciting experience that brings alive the amazing range of Malayalis’ cultural expressions.

The festival gives opportunities for over 3000 artists in about 350 events across the state. In Thiruvananthapuram district alone, programmes will be staged in 35 venues.

The Tourism Department, District Tourism Promotion Councils and District Administrations will coordinate the programmes in other districts.

The event will conclude with a grand pageantry on August 30 which will be flagged off by Vice President of India Shri CP Radhakrishnan.

Ends