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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Kerala Tourism and Harper Collins jointly launch bestseller ‘Onam in a Nightie’**



- **Anjana Menon’s book brings about uniqueness of Kerala with fun, wit and empathy**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Mar 24:** Foraying into the world of letters, Kerala Tourism has joined hands with a top Indian publisher to unveil a bestseller that celebrates the hope, resilience, and intrinsic humaneness of Malayalis during the pandemic and depicts the ordinary in an extraordinary and authentic manner.

The book, *Onam in a Nightie: Stories from a Kerala Quarantine*, written by noted journalist-author Anjana Menon and published by Harper Collins India, was unveiled at a function at Oberoi Hotel in New Delhi last night, attended by an impressive gathering of glitterati and literati.



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Dr Shashi Tharoor, MP, and Mr Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, unveiled the 230-page book that revolves around the Delhi-based author's relationship with her parents living in Kerala, and her idea of belonging and identity. In the process, the non-fiction tome, with a series of slice-of-life stories, opens wide a window on the uniqueness of Kerala and what it is to be a Malayali.

Kerala Tourism has made a strong pitch for the book as part of its conscious strategy to present a tapestry of its human aspects and not only the beautiful nature of the state. Earlier also, it had launched internationally-acclaimed 'Human by Nature' campaign, showcasing the culture and daily life of the people of the state.

Dr. Venu V, Additional Chief Secretary (Tourism), Government of Kerala, said the overarching theme adopted by Kerala Tourism is portrayal, not showcasing, of its abiding principles which are to present the ordinary in the state that is extraordinary, and the intense humaneness of its people.

"We have moved away from the classical idea of hard selling destination. The book does not talk about places of touristy interest but about the ordinary people in a small town and their relationship imbued with intense humanness and some minuses too. The overarching principle should shine through whatever we do. That is why we are supporting this book which portrays and epitomises these abiding principles," he pointed out.

"This is something we have never done before," he added. "The book opens door to the real contemporary Kerala and also represents the new-age spirit of Kerala Tourism."

Dr Venu said a destination can be beautiful but Kerala Tourism believes that people are more beautiful if viewed through the prism of humanness and togetherness. "The fact is destinations are not really the heroes for us; the ordinary human beings are as they lead their lives with grit, jollity and camaraderie. These are the qualities that made them survive and return from the brink during the catastrophic times of the pandemic."

Onam in a Nightie is a searingly funny book about what happens when the author leaves her home in Delhi to visit her ageing parents in faraway Kerala to keep them company during the pandemic that has brought life to a grinding halt.



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The book captures the hope and resilience of the Malayalis in a hopeless time of the pandemic through 40 real stories. This is part travelogue, part memoir, peppered with wry sense of humour, empathy, and heart-warming accounts.

Dr Tharoor said the author looks at Kerala and its people in a non-intrusive way. “Anjana isn’t sarcastic or judgemental; instead she is deeply observant. She gives deep little insights into the human mind and conduct. “

Mr Kant said the book is “extraordinary and it beautifully captures the life of Kerala and Malayalis.”

Already in the bestseller list on Amazon.in the travel category, the book, set in the midway Kerala town of Thrissur, has got rave reviews and the writing has been compared to that of literary giants such as William Faulkner and R K Narayan with traces of P G Wodehouse.

The book also takes readers on a heart-warming and hilarious journey into Kerala by unravelling the strong community spirit that rescues it each time it is on the brink. As an outsider looking in, Menon’s taut writing paints a vivid picture of the state that could also be any corner of small-town India. It is filled with quirky and feisty characters whose extraordinariness is both uplifting and universal. The book can trigger what the author says ‘a smile or a memory’.

The launch function was followed by a session of book reading and discussion between the author and Jyoti Malhotra, consulting editor, The Print.

**Ends**