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PRESS RELEASE

Kanakakkunnu comes alive with art, culture and interactive Onam experiences

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 26: As the evening light gently fades over Kanakakkunnu, the iconic landmark in the capital city shines brightly in a festive glow.

With resplendent lights, the rhythmic sound of Chendamelam, traditional art and crafts, digital games, startup innovations, and interactive setups, visitors are pulled into the mesmeric Onam festivity as Kerala's distinctive festival stands out not only merely as a spectacle but also as an experience.

As the Kanakakkunnu Palace bristles with Kerala's cultural heritage and contemporary creativity, one fact that comes in sharp focus is that there is no room for passive spectatorship: everyone is exuberant to become a part of the festivity that radiates merriment, togetherness and vibrant energy.

The festivities, part of the Onam Week celebrations organised by the Department of Tourism, will continue till August 29. A day later, (Aug 30), the celebrations will conclude with a grand procession featuring over 100 traditional and folk art forms.

For the viewers thronging the venue, the festivity provides an ultimate experience. For instance, there are many interested in painting but never try it because of inhibitions. Onam serves the occasion for children and adults alike to come together and unleash their creativity - painting whatever they wish and absolutely for free.

Not far away, the booming rolls of Chendamelam, Kerala's traditional drum ensemble, reverberate in the atmosphere. The surprise element is that it is not a performance by professional artistes. Anyone can join and become part of the Chenda experience.

To make the festivity a memorable experience, the Department of Tourism has made every effort to ensure that people of all age groups savour a diverse range of activities spread across Kanakakkunnu.

Shri P.C. Vishnunadh, Minister for Tourism, Cinema and Culture, said the government's aim is not merely to present culture as a performance, but to make it a living, shared experience for everyone.

"Through our Onam celebrations at Kanakakkunnu, we are making a conscious effort to place Kerala's rich artistic traditions and native artistes at the heart of the festivities. By creating



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opportunities for local artists and traditional craftspeople to showcase their skills, while also inviting visitors to participate and experience these traditions first-hand, we hope to offer an authentic Onam experience that connects people with Kerala's cultural heritage," he noted.

For the exhibition, Kanakakkunnu has been divided into five theme-based zones. Alongside traditional business and food zones, dedicated spaces have been created for art, culture and technology.

Right next to the entrance gate is a startup exhibition, titled "Future of Zone". Curated by the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), it features emerging startups, with their representatives explaining their technologies to visitors.

The zone also features several digital games, both Onam-themed and otherwise. Visitors participate in these games and activities free of charge. One of the highlights is a digital 'Vallam Kali' experience.

This is for the first time that such an exhibition has been organised as part of the Onam Week celebrations.

The Art and Culture section has a striking entrance gate shaped like a Valkannadi, Kerala's traditional mirror. The structure offers an attractive backdrop for selfies and reels and is decorated with Kasavu, festoons and floral arrangements. Beyond the gateway is a miniature model of a traditional Kerala homestead, or Tharavadu.

Further inside this section, visitors can watch live demonstrations of traditional crafts, such as pottery-making. Workshops on Tholpavakoothu, Kerala's traditional shadow puppetry, and Kathakali makeup are also conducted.

Documentaries are screened at a temporary mini-theatre set up on the Kanakakkunnu lawn every evening from 6 pm.

A maze game, designed to challenge both children and adults to find their way through without getting lost, is one among the attractions.

The business and food zones have been set up at Suryakanthi. The food zone features 15 stalls.

Ends