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PRESS RELEASE

Manchester City's 'Happy Onam' Instagram post in Malayalam goes viral



Thiruvananthapuram, Aug. 31: English Premier League giants Manchester City wished Malayalis across the world 'Happy Onam' over social media by displaying the greetings in Malayalam, turning the Instagram picture go viral and heartening the club's fan base in Kerala.

While the image focuses on superstar Erling Haaland in blue jersey biting into a fried **pappadam**, the background shows two houseboats lined up close to a green plot of land defined by coconut trees, catching the instant attention of Malayalis across continents.

Kerala Tourism reposted the image on Facebook, saying "The team with 32 major honours in the English Premier League wishes all Malayalis a happy Onam. Manchester City has quite a dedicated Malayali following all over the world". This, too, earned a flurry of congratulations.

Commenting on the post, Kerala Tourism Minister Shri P.A. Mohamed Riyas said football has for long been part of the state's sporting culture, which has now earned yet another note of warmth from abroad. "Manchester City is among the world's top football clubs; they have



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dedicated followers in Kerala as well. The Instagram picture is effectively a token of the club's gratitude to us," he said.

While Onam, as Kerala's harvest festival, bears the egalitarian spirit of universal bonding, experts note that the impact of Manchester City's Onam post is a pointer to ways a football club can go beyond its traditional boundaries and appeal to faraway people from different backgrounds. One commentator said the 143-year-old club is making a "concerted effort to connect with its fans in Kerala and the surrounding region".

The 23-year-old Haaland, a Norwegian who plays as a striker for Manchester City, is rated as one of the world's best footballers, going by his speed, strength, positioning and finishing inside the box.

For Kerala and its tourism, this is not the first kind of experience. Five months ago, football powerhouse Chelsea FC made a virtual tour of Alappuzha, praising the beauty of the state's backwater paradise. "The beauty of Kerala! The Blues visit the scenic backwater of Alleppey as part of the virtual tour," ran the caption of a virtual image of March 20.

Ends