

THE HINDU

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Date : 25.1.2020 | Edition : Mumbai | Page : 6 | Clip size (cm) : W: 7 H: 4

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Backwaters to host six-day Chess Houseboat Tournament, the first international event on a houseboat

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Vembanad Lake is no stranger to tourism. But on January 27, the backwaters will tread unfamiliar terrain, hosting the Chess Houseboat Tournament.

Billed as the first international chess tournament to be held on a houseboat, the mascot of Kerala Tourism, the six-day tourney will be held in a 'Spice Route luxury houseboat,' which will cruise along the backwaters, blending chess and tourism and promoting Kerala globally.

40 players to take part
The event is on the lines of the Chess Train Tournament



The luxury houseboat that will host the Chess Houseboat Tournament from January 27.

being hosted by the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Poland and Slovakia since 2013. Around 40 chess players, including 10 from the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, the

Netherlands and the United Arab Emirates, will fly down to Alappuzha. The tourney is being organised by Oriental Chess Moves Trust, an independent forum headed by N.R. Anil Kumar,

a former member of the Indian Chess Olympic team and an International Master in correspondence chess, along with Joe Parappilly and P. Manojkumar, former international players.

"A visit to Prague in October to see the Chess Train Tourney inspired us to commence this initiative. Travel advisories by various countries have reduced the number of participants though we were ready for 100 players. We want to make it an annual event," Mr. Anil Kumar told *The Hindu*.

Pavel Matocha, a key organiser of the Chess Train Tournament will also be in attendance. Kerala Tourism is extending support to the

event as a partner.

The luxury houseboat had hosted Netherlands King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima in October last. The vessel, which can accommodate 60 persons at a time, will this time resemble a chess tournament venue.

10-round tourney

It will be a 10-round tournament – two rounds per day in the mornings for five days with a rest day after six rounds. Prize money of €2,600 is up for grabs for registered players.

The participants will be taken to some tourist attractions in the State, typically in the afternoons and on the rest day.