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Press Release

A first for India: Kerala Tourism at the Westminster

British MPs Charmed by 'God's Own Country' at Kerala Tourism Presentation

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 16: Kerala's time-tested Ayurveda and the enchanting backwaters have wooed the British parliamentarians, in a first-time presentation by an Indian state tourism board at the Westminster.

Kerala Tourism made the presentation about the state for the British MPs, at a special meeting held in the British Parliament complex on October 11. The meeting was led by State Chief Secretary Shri Jiji Thomson and Tourism Secretary Shri G Kamala Vardhana Rao, who met the British MPs, including many Indian-origin members of the British Parliament.

Shri Thomson and Shri Rao were in the British capital to take part in the 'Mayor of London' event to showcase 'God's Own Country' to a British audience. The cultural extravaganza, which had 'mohiniyattam', 'thiruvathirakali' and 'kathakali' performances, was held at the iconic Trafalgar Square on the same day.

"It was an honour for Kerala to address the British MPs in the parliament complex," said Shri Thomson. "The MPs evinced great interest in Kerala and admired our top status on the global tourism map," he added.

Among those present were Shri Virendra Sharma, Indian-born MP of the West London constituency Ealing, Southall, and Stephen Timms, Member of Parliament from the suburban East Ham seat.

"We wanted to directly address the British parliamentarians and tell them why the United Kingdom is the biggest tourism market for Kerala in the world," Shri Thomson said.

Two years ago, the British royal couple, Prince Charles and wife Camilla Parker Bowles, had visited Kerala, watching Kathakali in Kochi and celebrating the 65th birthday of the Prince of Wales at the backwaters resort of Kumarakom. Among prominent British visitors to Kerala include the Beatles legend Sir Paul McCartney.

Last year, Kerala had received 151,497 travellers from the United Kingdom. Kerala Tourism's London visit is aimed at increasing the figure substantially during the 'Visit Kerala' year.

The presentation by Kerala Tourism in the British Parliament complex assumed significance because of the many Indian-origin politicians elected to the House of Commons.

"The Indian community members in Britain are the greatest ambassadors of our country," Shri Thomson said, while inviting them to come and invest in Kerala's tourism sector.

The meeting, held in a Parliament conference hall, was also attended by several prominent members of the large Indian diaspora in Britain.



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"Kerala is a very enchanting land," said the Ealing MP Shri Sharma, while recalling his visit to the state. Offering his support, he appreciated the efforts of Kerala Tourism in leading an energetic campaign across the world to promote tourism in the state.

"The engagement with the British parliamentarians was a major step in elevating our campaign to a much higher level of direct dialogue," said Shri Rao, who talked to the MPs about the varied destinations and new tourism products offered by Kerala.

"We will organise an exclusive meeting with British parliamentarians during the World Trade Mart in London next month," he added.

Kerala Tourism will take part in the WTM, London, the leading travel and tourism fair in the world attended last year by more than 50,000 participants and 5,000 exhibitors from 186 countries. The WTM 2015 will be held during November 2-5.

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