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PRESS RELEASE

Champions' Boat League to rev up Kerala backwaters from this monsoon

- ***Winning team to get Rs 25 lakhs***
- ***First and second runners up will get Rs 15 and Rs 10 lakhs respectively***
- ***Races will follow the IPL format***

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 17: Giving a fresh leap to Kerala's famed boat races, the government is all set to launch a mammoth backwater event under a league format that spans nearly three months during the monsoon, starting this year.

The Champions' Boat League (CBL) has been conceived in the IPL format with the intention of making the celebratory races a world-class experience for tourists and creating an international sporting atmosphere for the participant clubs and their oarsmen, top officials said today.

The CBL will start on August 10 with the prestigious Nehru Trophy Boat Race in Alappuzha and end with the President's Trophy Boat Race in Kollam on the state's formation day (November 1), holding 12 races during the intervening weekends.

All races will be held in the afternoons: between 2.30 pm and 5 pm. The CBL winner will get a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh, while those finishing second and third receive Rs 15 lakh and Rs 10 lakh respectively.

Into its run-up, the Department of Tourism is looking for entities that have expertise in managing, executing and promoting CBL in the next five years. Authorities have floated a request for proposal that aims to make the selections through bidding. The agency should have a minimum standing of three years and preferably be sports-related proprietorships, sports and games companies or event management companies of repute.

Through the CBL featuring nine teams, the government aims to conduct the snake-boat races more professionally, according to Minister for Tourism, Shri Kadakampally Surendran. "We want CBL to be a world-class tourism product capable of attracting thousands of tourists," he said. "Further, the league championship helps boat clubs financially. The players become more skilled. That will inspire a whole new generation of them."

The CBL will further ensure tourists' stream to continue during Kerala's rainy season, traditionally considered lean. "The monsoon (June to September) has its unique charm. That is not just owing to the beauty of the rains, but the activities around it. Boat race is among the tradition," pointed out Shri Surendran.



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Kerala has 14 districts out of which six will hold CBL races this year. Overall, the league will conduct 12 boat races in the districts of Alappuzha, Kottayam, Kollam, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Malappuram. The 1952-incepted Nehru Trophy will be the qualifying boat race for the selection of the top teams for the CBL. That will be held on the sprawling Punnamada Lake of Alappuzha on August 10 (typically the second Saturday of that monsoon month).

The CBL boat races are Nehru Trophy, Pulinkunnu, Kainakari, Kayamkulam, Karuvatta (Alappuzha), Marine Drive, Piravom (Ernakulam), Ponnani (Malappuram), Kottapuram (Thrissur) and Thazhathangadi (Kottayam) besides Kallada and President's (Kollam).

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