



## KERALA TRAVEL MART SOCIETY

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### Press Release

#### **Government working to ensure minimal disruption to tourism: Chief Minister**

*The Chief Minister, inaugurating KTM 2016, said it was important tourists have best impression*

**Kochi, September 27:** While it was not feasible to avoid hartals in the state outright, the Government of Kerala would do its utmost to ensure minimal disruption to tourism activities, Honourable Chief Minister of Kerala Shri Pinarayi Vijayan said here today.

Speaking at the inauguration of the ninth edition of Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), the Chief Minister was responding to a request for tourism-friendly policies with regards to hartals and excise regulations made by KTM Society President Shri Abraham George during his welcome address at the Le Meridien Convention Centre.

Noting that it was important that visitors leave with the best impression of the state, Shri Vijayan also said mechanisms to stop open defecation was being implemented with a stated deadline of November 1 – the official start of the tourist season.

“By November 1, it is expected that the policy would be fully implemented in districts across the state,” he said, voicing the benefits of destination-friendly initiatives like waste management to the state’s tourism enterprises – known for professionalism and high quality of service delivery.

To preserve Kerala’s reputation as the Ayurveda capital, the Chief Minister said, “Only trained professionals should be permitted to work in such an important sector. The government is mooted proposals to bring out an Ayurveda training centre under its purview.”

Terming KTM a shining example of a public-private partnership, Shri Vijayan said it was a matter of pride that an initiative started in Kerala by the government is counted among the best of its type. He marked for special mention, the state’s award-winning ‘Responsible Tourism’ initiatives and the Muziris and Spice Route projects – two important sectors for Kerala’s tourism industry and the themes for KTM 2016.

Stating that the state had followed a special path in tourism, Shri Vijayan said, “Our industry is dominated by small business owners who have successfully presented the different products and experiences of Kerala before the world and KTM brings under one roof almost all tourism stakeholders in the state.”



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“The main aim of KTM is to help the tourism sector raise earnings by about Rs 5,000 crore in the coming five years. In this respect, it is encouraging to hear that the Mart is expected to witness around 25,000 business meetings between buyers and sellers. I hope that this Mart will enable buyers to make new relationships and partnerships, create new packages and bring more visitors to Kerala,” the Chief Minister said.

The ceremony was presided over by Honourable Minister for Tourism and Co-operation Shri A.C. Moideen who said the Mart was important to distribute the benefits of tourism across the state – a stated goal of the government.

“Tourism can become a major catalyst for social change by providing opportunities for employment, preserving traditional ways of life and engaging with local communities,” Shri Moideen said, expressing hope that KTM would open new avenues for success for both the state and its people.

Citing the importance of tourism to the state – accounting for 10 per cent of the state’s GDP and providing employment to three million people, Principal Secretary (Tourism) Dr Venu V. said, “The Mart is seen as the spearhead for inclusive, accessible growth for tourism in the state as well as a showcase for the vibrancy of Kerala as a tourist destination.”

The ceremony saw felicitations by Prof K.V. Thomas MP and Chairman – Public Accounts Committee (Government of India), P.K. Biju MP, Shri M. Vijyakumar, KTDC Chairman, ex-MP P. Rajeev, and Shri Suman Billa IAS, Joint Secretary – Union Ministry of Tourism.

Also in attendance were, Smt Soumini Jain, Mayor of Kochi, Smt. Divya Anilkumar, Maradu Municipal Chairperson

Kerala Tourism Director Shri U.V. Jose delivered the vote of thanks

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