

Jacaranda, a visual feast, gives boost to Munnar tourism

Sandeep Thomas | TNN

Idukki: Giving a visual feast to the tourists at the Munnar hill station, jacaranda flowers are in full bloom. Believed to be planted by the Britishers, jacaranda and spathodea are now part of the Munnar plantations.

A distant view of jacaranda gives the visitors a complete blue hue of a huge tree without its green leaves. Locally called *Neela Vaga*, it is a major attraction for the visitors now. The jacaranda trees are in full bloom on the Munnar-Marayoor stretch of the Munnar-Udumalpet interstate route in Idukki. Trees enveloped in blue dot both sides of the road.

According to the natives, the jacaranda flowers are also known as exam trees. In some countries the jacaranda trees are colloquially called "exam tree" or "purple panic". At the University of Queensland, students even maintain a joke superstition that if a jacaranda bloom falls on their head during exam time, they will fail the exam. The bad luck can be broken by catching another bloom befo-



The jacaranda trees are in full bloom on the Munnar-Marayoor stretch of the Munnar-Udumalpet interstate route in Idukki

re it hits the ground. The jacaranda trees shed its leaves during December and starts flowering in the beginning of March.

According to local residents, the jacaranda trees were planted by the Britishers as an ornamental tree. Jacaranda *Mimosifolia* is one of the 49 species of flowering plants in the family of Bignoniaceae, native to Central and South America, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Bahamas.

Aju Abraham Mathew, general manager of Tall Trees Re-

sort in Munnar, said that after the helicam visuals of the jacaranda flowers went viral on social media, many tourists reached Munnar to enjoy the beauty of the flowers.

Jithesh Cheruvallil, a tourism stakeholder in Marayoor, said that hundreds of tourists arrived at the Munnar-Marayoor route to enjoy the beauty of the flowers. "The view of Jacaranda flowers provides an extra push to the tourism sector in the Covid-hit period," said Jithesh.