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Press Release

Kerala's tourism will benefit from e-visa facilities to Saudi national: Minister

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 22: Kerala Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran today welcomed the joint decision of India and Saudi Arabia to extend e-visa facilities to Saudi nationals and also to simplify the travel document procedures of tourists.

The decision, taken at a meeting between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in New Delhi on Wednesday, would give a huge fillip to Kerala's tourism, he noted.

The minister said the state's tourism department had been demanding for the past two and a half years the withdrawal of the biometric visa system introduced by the Union government for the Saudi citizens visiting India.

Besides England and the USA, Saudi Arabia is among the leading countries in terms of tourist arrivals to Kerala. Kerala Tourism has been organising several promotional campaigns, including roadshows, in Saudi Arabia. However, the introduction of biometric enrolment visa for Saudi nationals has dealt a major blow to Kerala's tourism.

"The latest announcement will remove this major irritant," the minister said.

In this context, Mr Surendran pointed out that the tourists from Saudi Arabia have a special liking for Kerala's tourism products such as backwaters, hill stations, Ayurveda and monsoon.

On an average, 50,000 Saudi tourists visit Kerala annually.

"A major leap in the arrival figures can be expected because of the introduction of e visa facilities," he added.

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