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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Kerala to set up SPV for the conduct of Champions' Boat League**

**Thiruvananthapuram, June 26:** Kerala Government has decided to form a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for the conduct of the IPL-model Champions' Boat League (CBL) as an annual event in August-November, showcasing Kerala's famed snake-boat race in the backwaters in six districts across the state as a world class experience.

This was disclosed by state Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran at a meeting of stakeholders, jointly held with Finance Minister Dr T M Thomas Isaac, here on Tuesday.

The company, primarily intended to generate revenue through telecast rights, advertisements and sponsorships for conducting the premier event, will also decide on the revenue sharing among the stakeholders.

The inaugural edition of the Champions' Boat League (CBL) will get under way with the Nehru Trophy Boat Race on August 10 at Punnamada Lake in Alappuzha.

The competitions in the CBL will start a week later at Pulinkunnu(Aug 17). In subsequent Saturdays, races will be conducted at Thazhathangadi (August 24), Piravam (Aug 31), Marine Drive (Sep 7), Kottappuram (Sep 14), Ponnani (Sep 21), Kainakari (Sep 28), Karuvatta (Oct 05), Kayamkulam (Oct 12) and Kallada (Oct 19), before concluding in a grand finale at the President's Trophy Boat Race at Kollam on November 1, the state-formation day. All races will be held in the afternoon.

The CBL winner will get a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh, while those finishing second and third can claim Rs 15 lakh and Rs 10 lakh respectively.

" This event is going to open a glorious chapter in the long history of boat races in Kerala as it will not only showcase this unique tradition to the whole world but also bring benefit to the entire spectrum of stakeholders," Shri Kadakampally Surendran, said at the meeting attended by representatives of boat owners, boat clubs and rowers' associations.

The Minister also said the CBL has been conceived and planned as a world class tourism product which will firm up Kerala on the international map, luring visitors during the monsoon season.

Dr Thomas Isaac said the event has been structured in a commercial-friendly manner so as to bring advantage to the stakeholders who have kept up the tradition over a long period. "I am sure that in coming years, CBL will grab a prime spot in international sporting calendar and TV channels will vie for telecasting it live", Dr Isaac said.



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The Ministers also made it clear that CBL will not clash with the traditional boat races held during the season at various places in the state.

State Tourism Director Mr P Bala Kiran said negotiations have already begun with TV channels on the telecast rights of the event.

The Champions' Boat League (CBL) has been planned in the IPL format with the intention of making the celebratory races a unique experience for tourists and creating an international sporting atmosphere for the participant clubs and their oarsmen.

The teams that held the first nine slots in the 2018 Nehru Trophy Boat Race will compete in the CBL 2019. Four top performers of the CBL 2019 will automatically qualify for participation in the 2020 edition and the remaining five teams slots will be selected from the winners of this year's Nehru Trophy Boat Race. At the meeting all the boat owners and clubs agreed to the race format of the CBL.

On Monday a high-level meeting was convened by ministers of Tourism and Finance to discuss the arrangements for the CBL at various places where the races will be held. Legislators of the respective areas and senior officials attended the meeting.

The Tourism Department has signed an MOU with a two-member consortium led by Delhi-based E Factor Entertainment Pvt Ltd for branding, promoting and marketing of the CBL. The other member of the consortium is AMP Communications Pvt Ltd, Mumbai.

A comprehensive draft on the CBL contract has been circulated to the boat owners and clubs and asked them to give their feedback by July 2.

**ENDS**