

DESTINATION KERALA MAGAZINE

KERALA TOURISM FORAYS INTO EAST ASIAN MARKET

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MINISTER KADAKAMPALLY SURENDRAN AND RANI GEORGE IAS WITH MEMBERS OF TRADE DELEGATION FROM KERALA AT TOURISM EXPO JAPAN 2019

KERALA TOURISM FORAYS INTO EAST ASIAN MARKETS

A high profile delegation, including top officials from the Department of Tourism, visited Singapore, China and Japan to market State's tourism potential

Giving a formidable push to its efforts to tap the East Asian market, Kerala Tourism showcased a wide spectrum of its alluring products and services in the thriving markets of China, Singapore and Japan recently. The main focus was to enhance the profile of the State as a 'must-visit destination' and bolster Kerala Tourism's brand visibility in the region.

CHINA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MART (CITM)

As part of its strategy to aggressively promote the State in the China market, a high-profile delegation of Kerala Tourism, which included leading trade partners from the State, participated in China International Travel Mart (CITM) 2019 held in Kunming and also organised two roadshows in Shanghai and Beijing.

"WE NEED TO MAKE KERALA HOSPITABLE TO CHINESE TOURISTS AS THE WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE A FILLIP TO THE TOURISM ECONOMY OF THE STATE"

Rani George IAS, State Tourism Secretary, who led the delegation, made a presentation on the tourism products and potential of Kerala at the trade meets in Shanghai and Beijing.

Dr. Acquino Vimal, Deputy Chief of Mission, was the Chief Guest at the Beijing show, where India Tourism also participated. The Kerala

event was attended by 84 buyers and representatives of prominent media establishments.

At the roadshow in Shanghai, business sessions were held between tour operators from the region and members of the Kerala trade. Anil Kumar Rai, Consul General, was the Chief Guest at this event, which saw the participation of 80 buyers.

At CITM 2019, Kerala had set up a 36-sq.m. pavilion, attracting a steady stream of visitors and business stakeholders.

"We are trying to ensure brand visibility in East Asian markets using innovative strategies. China is an important emerging market for Kerala Tourism. In just two decades, it has become the world's largest outbound travel market, with around 145 million Chinese travellers visiting abroad in 2017,"

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said Kadakampally Surendran, State Tourism Minister.

“We need to make Kerala hospitable to China’s outbound tourists as the world’s most populous country has the potential to give a fillip to the tourism economy of the State. We need to pique their interest in Kerala through a multi-pronged strategy. We are looking into the issues like paucity of guides well-versed in Chinese language. Additionally, we have to rustle up new products, especially in the adventure segment, promote MICE tourism and latch on to *Kalaripayattu* and Ayurveda in a big way,” he added.

A total of 9630 tourists from China visited Kerala in 2018 as compared to 7113 in 2017, registering a 35 per cent increase.

“We are determined to put Kerala firmly on the radar of globe-trotting Chinese travellers and create awareness among them about *God’s Own Country*. By organising roadshows, we were able to whip up a lot of excitement among the stakeholders of China’s tourism and hospitality industry,” Rani George said.

“Besides developing B2B contacts, we also sent a strong message to the Chinese travellers that Kerala is a



safe, attractive and affordable tourist destination. We need to be ready with package and customised tours to attract them,” she added.

Kerala has become the first Indian State to be partnered with the ‘China Ready’ programme, which has already been conducted in 48 countries, to increase footfalls from China. A destination audit from Chinese tourists’ perspective to ascertain the attractiveness of the destination has also commenced in Alappuzha, Thekkady, Munnar and Kochi.

ITB ASIA 2019

In Singapore, Kerala Tourism participated in ITB Asia 2019, Asia’s leading travel trade show held at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands. The 24-sq.m. Kerala pavilion was splashed with the theme of ‘Human by Nature’, a three-minute new campaign film

launched to appeal to high spenders and backpackers. It attracted a lot of visitors while brochures were distributed to potential tour operators.

A string of meetings were held at the pavilion between leading outbound tour operators and travel publications. Alongside, B2B meetings with the trade partners from Kerala were also held, opening doors for Kerala as a renowned destination in the product catalogue of Singapore-based operators. Singapore, a leading market for Kerala in terms of tourist arrivals, sent 9460 tourists to the State in 2018.

TOURISM EXPO JAPAN 2019

Kerala Tourism also participated in Tourism Expo Japan, which was organised for the first time in Osaka. The event attracted more than 2,25,000 visitors and representatives of over 1000 businesses from 130 countries. The sellers from Kerala held meetings with tour operators and media from Japan to create awareness about the State.

A roadshow was also organised in Tokyo. In 2018, Kerala’s backwaters and Ayurveda had attracted 15,665 tourists from Japan, which was a 17 per cent increase over the previous year. **DK**

