

Kerala Tourism goes to East Asia to market 'God's Own Country'

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Thiruvananthapuram: Giving a push to its East Asia initiatives, Kerala Tourism showcased its products in China, Singapore and Japan this month to promote the south Indian state's as a must-visit destination.

As part of the initiative, a high-profile delegation of the Tourism Department, Kerala, including trade partners from the state, participated in the China International Travel Mart (CITM) 2019 at Kunming and also organised two roadshows in Shanghai and Beijing.

Kerala Tourism secretary Rani George, who led the delegation, made a presentation on the tourism products and potential of Kerala, a press release said here.

Deputy chief of the mission Dr Acquino Vimal was the chief guest at the Beijing show in which India Tourism also participated.

The Kerala event was attended by 84 buyers and representatives of prominent media establishments, the release said.

Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran was quoted as saying in the release that "We need to make Kerala hospitable to Chinas outbound tourists as the worlds most populous country has the potential to give a fillip to the tourism economy of the state. We are looking into the issues like paucity of guides well-versed in Chinese language."

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, the release said.

A destination audit from Chinese tourists perspective to ascertain the attractiveness of the destination has also commenced in Alappuzha, Thekkady, Munnar, and Kochi.

In Singapore, Kerala Tourism participated in ITB Asia 2019, Asia's leading travel trade show.

The 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.

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, too, is a leading market for Kerala in terms of tourist arrivals. In 2018, the country sent 9,460 tourists to the Indian state, the release said.

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 1,000 businesses from 130 countries.

The co-exhibitors from Kerala held meetings with tour operators and media from Japan to create awareness about the state. For this purpose, a roadshow was 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, the release said.