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# Kerala Tourism launches virtual travel guide

Visitors who scan QR code will get e-brochure on the State's tourism centres

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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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Kerala Tourism has come up with a QR-code based virtual travel guide aimed at imparting information on tourism locations in the State. Launching the digital tool at Fort Kochi on Monday, Minister for Tourism P.A. Mohamed Riyas said it would provide information on the distance to the nearest bus stand, railway station and airport, working hours of tourism spots, and their contact numbers. Currently details of Fort Kochi are available on the travel guide.

Visitors who scan the QR code displayed at tourism locales and at important airports will get an e-brochure about the State's tourism centres. It will provide information on popular and lesser known tourism locales. More such technology-driven services will be popularised in the tourism sector to ensure hassle-free travel, Mr. Riyas added.

## On tour packages

The virtual guide will also impart information regarding tour packages and their bookings. The e-brochure works in auto mode too and provides highlights of tourist destinations, along with short videos and high-resolution pictures. Pages can be downloaded to recall points of interest.

Mr. Riyas said Fort Kochi, which is Kerala's foremost tourist destination, will get washrooms of global standards by year-end. In addition, ₹2.5 crore has been allotted to renovate the PWD rest house on the beach front, where guests would be able to stay at economical rates.

## Directive for homestays

Directions have been given to improve the quality of food in the hospitality sector. Homestays in Kerala will no longer require no-objection certificate from local self-government institutions to obtain licence, since they play a vital role in the tourism sector which recorded 75 lakh footfall in the last fiscal, despite the pandemic.

Most people are desperate to travel, in what is being viewed as 'revenge tourism.' Even as Ernakulam recorded the maximum number of tourists, Wayanad and Idukki are seeing a marked increase in footfall, mainly from neighbouring States, he said. The Minister added that youngsters and students would be roped into tourism clubs to help in the upkeep and marketing of tourist destinations. "The government will shortly issue a notification in this regard," he said.

## ₹42 crore for Fort Kochi

Mayor M. Anilkumar hoped that a ₹42-crore scheme to restore the Fort Kochi beach would bring in more visitors to the locale, which has a unique topography and is a melting pot of cultures. Director of Kerala Tourism V.R. Krishna Teja was present. K.J. Maxi, MLA, said the virtual travel guide would help tourists check out locales, without relying on others for primary information.