



**Department of Tourism**

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**Press Release**

**Kerala Tourism's ambitious campaign to coincide with Vishu festivities**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Apr 10:** The *Vishu* festivities this year will be spiced up with an added attraction as Kerala Tourism formally rolls out one of its most ambitious, events-filled campaign to woo travellers from across the world that would firmly position God's Own Country as an all-weather tourist destination.

Beginning April 15 (the Vishu day), Kerala Tourism's 'Visit Kerala 2015' campaign would get off the block with a string of innovative and interactive programmes, ranging from Ayurveda to adventure trips, from destination weddings to heritage tourism, from food festivals to quiz competitions.

"Starting this Vishu, up to the next Vishu in 2016, every visitor to Kerala will experience 'God's Own Country' like never before. Every visitor will take home memories that will last a lifetime," said Kerala Tourism Minister Shri A P Anil Kumar.

"Kerala has already acquired all the trappings of a tourist hotspot. I believe the new initiatives will trigger an upsurge in footfalls in God's Own Country and make the state an inescapable tourist destination," he added.

The major focus of the campaign, which was launched by Union Minister of State for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Dr Mahesh Sharma in New Delhi yesterday, is to aggressively showcase the tourism products that are unique to the state -- Ayurveda, Responsible Tourism, Spice Route–Muziris heritage and culinary traditions.

"Kerala needs to be promoted across the world. Its beauty is splendid and its hospitality top-rate," said Dr Sharma, who promised central assistance to the state to raise the profile of the state as a top tourist destination in the world.

Kerala Chief Minister Shri Oommen Chandy, who addressed the launch ceremony of 'Visit Kerala' through a video message, said visitors to Kerala during 2015-16 would find the state's destinations more attractive and full of surprises.

"Make the most of 'God's Own Country' with a visit to Kerala," Shri Chandy told the high-profile gathering, which included Who's Who of the country's tourism and travel industry.

Union Tourism Secretary, Dr Lalit K Panwar, the Guest of Honour, said creativity and imagination by the state tourism department have sustained the visitor's interest in Kerala over the years.



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“Ayurveda and backwaters would be incorporated in the central government’s global tourism promotion campaign,” Dr Panwar said, adding Kerala has come a “role model” for other states in promoting tourism through its multidimensional programmes

In order to give a competitive edge to its campaign, Kerala Tourism will foray into new markets in China and Sri Lanka through trade fairs, road shows and familiarisation tours. In addition, it will launch aggressive campaigns in traditional markets like the UK, France and Germany to woo potential travellers by holding trade fairs and road shows. Consumer fairs and familiarisation trips will be introduced in upcoming markets like the US.

“We are keen to leverage the increased air connectivity for a focused Ayurveda and monsoon campaign in the Middle East where 90 per cent of the Indian diaspora is from Kerala,” Shri Anil Kumar pointed out. Also, the second phase of Ayurveda campaign will be launched in the select international markets like Germany.

‘Visit Kerala 2015’ will promote Kerala Tourism products like cultural festivals, weddings, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE). It will also showcase the Spice Route and Muziris heritage through an international campaign to promote heritage tourism in the state.

A major feature of the campaign is targeted on domestic tourism. An offseason promotional blitz in the country has been planned to counter seasonality in arrivals and make Kerala an all-weather destination.

Competitions like ‘Visit Kerala Contests’ will be conducted for tourists, who have holidayed in Kerala in 2015, with attractive gift vouchers, complementary return holidays and discounts.

Kerala Tourism Secretary Shri G Kamala Vardhana Rao, who made a theme presentation on the new campaign initiative, said a comprehensive calendar of festivals and events would be prepared and promoted through multiple channels, including India Tourism Offices and Indian embassies abroad.

Kerala will be promoted as a major “Wedding and MICE destination” through online campaigns. The tourism department will also prepare wedding venue databases. In addition, adventure and cycling holidays will be promoted to attract youths and students.

To create a destination pull, food festivals will be held in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad to market Kerala’s authentic cuisine, one of the tourist attractions in the state.



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Highlighting the importance of Responsible Tourism, Kerala Tourism Director Shri P I Sheik Pareeth said a 'God's Own Country, People's Own Tourism' campaign would be conducted across the state to sensitise local communities to tourism and its opportunities.

As part of the destination development initiative, Kerala will embark on industry-driven cleanliness campaign in major destinations in the state. A hop-on hop-off bus will also be introduced in Thiruvananthapuram to enable the tourists go around the city with a single ticket. A new set of Kerala souvenirs will be marketed with the support of Kudumbashree units.

Among those who addressed the gathering included Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) chief Shri Subhash Goyal, Kerala Travel Mart Society president Shri Abraham George, Kerala Tourism Advisory Council member Shri Jose Dominic, and Kerala Confederation of Tourism Industry president, Shri E M Najeeb.

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