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**Press Release**

**Kerala Tourism's glory to sparkle in Britain Ahead of Diwali**

*State to participate in Oct 11 Mayor of London Event as a 'Visit Kerala Initiative'*

**Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 08:** A rich variety of products from God's Own Country by the Arabian Sea will be a major attraction in an ancient city along the Thames shortly this month ahead of India celebrating its traditional festival of lights. Kerala Tourism, in association with the Indian High Commission in Britain, is participating in the Mayor of London Event—a cultural extravaganza falling on October 11, exactly a month before Diwali.

Kerala's Tourism Minister Shri AP Anil Kumar said the participation would be part of Visit Kerala—a joint initiative by the Kerala Tourism and the state's tourism industry.

"We consider this opportunity as an ideal platform to market our state by exhibiting our unique products including performing arts and culture, cuisine, natural splendor, Ayurveda and backwaters," he pointed out, expressing joy over his state joining the prestigious UK event.

'Visit Kerala 2015' was launched in April this year in the advent of 'Vishu', a festival marking the start of the Malayalam New Year. Having gone on to showcase Kerala's unique tourism products, it has now taken Kerala to a different league in the global tourist map by offering exciting deals, offers and new travel experiences to travellers.

"Another initiative as part of the Visit Kerala is to establish communication on a regular basis with various foreign Ambassadors in India and Indian Ambassadors in major countries," added the minister.

The delegates from Kerala for the event will be led by Kerala Chief Secretary, Shri Jiji Thomson.

The Mayor's events programme is poised to enhance and enrich London with free events including Diwali that celebrate diverse cultures and bring together Londoners from different communities. Letters inviting the Ambassadors to the State have been sent out, and relevant promotional material of Kerala Tourism have been delivered at their offices. Mayor of London has included the details of the event in his website.

The Diwali festival is being organized in conjunction with a 'Diwali in London' Committee, with media partner Zee TV at Trafalgar square—the most iconic venue in London. The event, which includes the finest in contemporary music and dance from community groups and professional artists, attracts in the region of 50,000 visitors, British Asians, festival goers and tourists alike.

The Indian diaspora in London is the largest ethnic-group minority. Diwali, which spiritually indicates the victory of good over evil, is celebrated in London with vigour akin to that in India.

The Mayor of London Event includes live music stage, delicious food stalls, children's area and animated foot procession, adult's parade of lights, saree zone and fashion show showcasing exquisite sarees.



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“We aim at creating live experiences for a prime audience,” said Kerala Chief Secretary Shri Thomson.

The festival will highlight Kerala’s immense tourism potential as a land of multiple experiences, endless celebrations, healing touch and deep holistic appeal. “The event will present a multifaceted and persuasive depiction of Kerala. Aimed at B2C (Business to Consumer) and B2B (Business-to-Business) audiences, it will be the first such “live” exposition in the UK,” he added.

The UK is Kerala’s key market with 1,51,497 tourists having arrived in the state in 2014. “We have been conducting road shows in Britain and has been participating in the World trade Mart (WTM) for the last two decades,” Shri Thomson recalled.

The chief secretary will also make a presentation before the Indian diaspora for inviting investments in Kerala’s tourism sector. A meeting is also scheduled with the London tour operators and select media persons as part of the promotion campaigns.

This year’s WTM is scheduled from November 2 to 5. Kerala Tourism’s Responsible Tourism was acclaimed in last year’s WTM and three movies on the innovate concept were premiered at Mart.

**Ends.**