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## Press Release

### **Kerala wins 'Best Stand Feature' at World Travel Market, London**

*Snake boat themed Kerala Tourism pavilion beats international competition for award*

**Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 9:** The fabled snake boat races of Kerala are poised to woo more tourists to 'God's Own Country' from the UK, going by their standout performance at World Travel Market (WTM) 2016 in London.

Sporting a centerpiece of three vibrant and visually appealing replicas of the spectacular snake boats – with images and a video of a 'vallam kali' adding to the experience, the Kerala Tourism pavilion was judged to be the 'Best Stand Feature' by an expert panel at WTM.

Spread over 120 square metres, the pavilion wowed visitors at the three-day WTM 2016, the world's leading travel and tourism show held from November 7-9. In awarding Kerala Tourism, the judges noted that the snake boats made them "want to go to Kerala just to see that in action".

"The award and response to our stand is a reflection of Kerala's stature on the world tourism map. We are very proud to have been able to showcase Kerala as a top tourism destination at the WTM. Tourism remains one of the most important sectors for Kerala and we are keen to develop the potential of the state further by catering to foreign tourists through such prestigious events," said Minister for Tourism Shri A.C. Moideen.

The eye-catching theme provided Kerala Tourism with better visibility and branding at WTM 2016, which featured 5,000 exhibitors from 182 countries and regions and attracted important tourism industry stakeholders from across the globe.

Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture Dr Mahesh Sharma and Union Tourism Secretary Shri Vinod Zutshi were among those who visited the Kerala Tourism stall.

"The snake boats are synonymous with Kerala and have once again showed why they are a big attraction among visitors to the state from across the world. We want to further popularise to a global audience the many culture and festivals associated with our tourist-friendly state," said Dr Venu V., Principal Secretary (Tourism), Kerala.

Dr Venu led the state's delegation to the trade event, which showcased Kerala's best-selling products, including its award-winning Responsible Tourism initiatives, pristine beaches, hill stations, backwaters, houseboats and Ayurveda therapies, among an array of offerings.



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The Tourism Secretary also participated in a roundtable interview chaired by BBC presenter Aaron Hazelhurst on Tuesday (Nov 8) to mark WTM Responsible Tourism Day.

“The award is a coup for Kerala Tourism’s marketing strategy. It rewards our innovative approach in showcasing the legendary snake boats and the quality of the state’s many diverse products and destinations,” said Kerala Tourism Director Shri U.V. Jose.

The WTM’s location added to its importance as the UK is the primary source market for Kerala Tourism. Kerala received 1,66,792 tourists from the UK last year, accounting for 17 per cent of the total foreign tourist arrivals to the state.

On Monday (Nov 7), WTM 2016 hosted a talk on Responsible Tourism titled “India: Enhancing the tourist Experience”. Kerala State Responsible Tourism Coordinator Shri K. Rupeshkumar spoke at the session.

The pavilion was conceptualised and designed by Stark Communications, Kerala Tourism’s creative and brand management agency. Flanders (Belgium) and Egypt were other winners in the Best Stand awards.

Kerala Tourism was joined at the event by nine private exhibitor-partners: Kumarakom Lake Resort, Punarnava Ayurvedic Hospitals, Punnamada Resort, Uday Samudra Leisure Beach Hotel, Xandari Resorts, Jayasree Travels and Tours, Intersight Tours and Travels, Pioneer Personalised Holidays and Spiceland Holidays.

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