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Resorts and hotels have started receiving bookings but stakeholders say it will take more time to return to normalcy

● Toby Antony

With relaxation in lockdown restrictions, the tourism sector in Kochi is limping back to normal. The past two weeks have had hotels and resorts witnessing the arrival of business and local tourists. According to industry stakeholders, it will take at least two to three months for the footfall to match that of the pre-lockdown period. "Business tourists from other states and districts have started coming in. Resorts and hotels have started receiving bookings. But, the number of tourists is low compared to pre-Covid days. Recently, a group of people who came to Kochi on a business tour booked resorts here. Besides Kochi, guests have started arriving at Kumarakom and Munnar too. However, it would take time for tourism activities to return to normal," said K Raj Kumar, joint director, Kerala Tourism.

According to Raj Kumar, Tourism Department has issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to all tourism stakeholders. "Business tourists coming from other states can stay for only limited days. Guidelines on precautions to be taken while accepting guests have also been issued. The directive from the Ministry of Tourism is being followed. Details of the guests are collected before their arrival and we keep in touch with hotels and resorts to update the status of the guests," he said.

Paid quarantine

Hotels, resorts and lodges are receiving good response to their paid quarantine facilities in Ernakulam. As on Tuesday, 1,207 people are staying in hotels and resorts in paid quarantine. "There are two types of people who opt for paid quarantine. People who don't want to mingle with family members despite having all facilities at home and those with limited facilities at home. Daily, 10 to 20 people avail paid quarantine facilities," a health official said.

He added that training sessions were conducted recently for employees of hotels and resorts where paid quarantine facility is provided.

HOMESTAYS

Homestays in Kochi which are popular among tourists are yet to open. "We are receiving several enquiries. However, owing to Covid-19 threat, people are apprehensive. Most of the homestays are located away from the city and local people are not enthusiastic about the arrival of people from other states. We are not accepting guests for paid quarantine too," M P Shivadathan, director, Kerala Home Stay and Tourism Society (HATS).

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