

# THE HINDU

## KTM to switch to virtual meet

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## Four-day tourism promotion fair from Nov. 23

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Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), the four-day trade fair for the promotion of tourism in God's Own Country scheduled from September 26, has been deferred and will be held as virtual meet from November 23.

"The deferment of the biannual KTM is due to the pandemic. The virtual edition of the mart will be a window for the State to return to the development path through the tourism sector," Minister for Tourism Kadakampally Surendran said on Thursday.

The 2018 edition of the KTM had helped the State tourism sector to

overcome the apprehension following the floods, the Minister said. The buyers who came down to Kochi were able to increase the footfalls by spreading the view that Kerala is safe to holiday.

### Previous edition

In the previous edition, 35,000 business meetings were held and 10,000 meetings were with the buyers who came from abroad. The 1,600 buyers were selected from the 7,000 applications received.

Good response has been received for the KTM from within the country and outside. But COVID-19 has upset the plans as the tourism

sector has been hit badly with the travel restrictions and lockdown. The setback in the tourism sector, which provides foreign exchange, has also hit the economy badly. In the virtual mart from November 23 to 27, over 500 sellers and 2,500 buyers from within the country and abroad are expected to participate.

The Minister said the tourism sector is expected to bounce back by January-February 2021 after the pandemic.

The steps taken to contain the pandemic and the ₹455-crore financial aid provided to the stakeholders of the industry has been appreciated by all.