

DESTINATION KERALA MAGAZINE

RECOGNITION GALORE

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Billed as a game-changing initiative modeled on the Indian Premier League, the Changanassery Boat League (CBL), which seeks to professionalise Kerala's largely scripted snake-boat races, by commercialising them without losing the conventional spirit, is currently underway in Kerala's quiet backwaters. Being organised by Kerala Tourism, the CBL, with nine teams, features 12 rounds of races slated across Saturdays at 12 different locations till November 23, 2019. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan flagged off the event on August 31 in the presence of Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar. Tickets can be booked online through 'Book My Show' platform.

challenges impeding the growth of revenue and job-generating tourism sector in the country.

"Apart from reducing taxes, improving air connectivity and introducing competitive airfares, creating extensive connectivity between Tier II and III cities should also be seriously taken up," he added.

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At the same time, it's raining laurels for Kerala Tourism from across the globe. Recently, Kerala Tourism was bestowed with three prestigious Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold awards, including the one for an ethnic food restaurant run by women at Kamarakom under its Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM). The two other gold awards were for an advertisement campaign of Kerala Tourism - Come Out and Play - and for its website (www.keralatourism.org), respectively. While the advertising campaign was created by Stark Communications, the Kerala Tourism website has been designed and maintained by Invis Multimedia.

"Kerala Tourism has won the highest number of PATA awards in South Asia this year. India Tourism has bagged one award. It is a big honour for Kerala Tourism and also a strong validation of the State's image as an alluring tourist destination. I am particularly happy for receiving the gold award for the women-run ethnic food restaurant at Kamarakom under RTM, which has become the mainstay of our tourism policy and initiatives. Out of the 15,500 RTM initiatives, 13,500 units are led by women," the Minister added, citing it as yet another milestone in women empowerment the State is well known for.

Kerala is the only Indian State in the list of 20 trending destinations for 2020 published by Airbnb based on its Y-o-Y growth in bookings. Earlier in 2019, CNN Travel declared the State as one among the 19 places across the globe to visit in 2019.

Kerala Tourism's website had 10 million visits during FY19 and is one among the top 10 tourism websites in Asia. It also hosts almost

one lakh web pages and major sections of the site are available in 13 languages, too. The portal now competes with the tourism websites of countries like Hong Kong, New Zealand, South Korea and Australia for higher ranking!

Recently, Kerala Tourism's Facebook page has become the second most followed in the whole of Asia after 'Visit Dubai'. "The enviable feat has been achieved by a sustained social media and digital media campaign, especially 'Human by Nature' video film, which focused on the people of Kerala and garnered 15 million views," he said. The Minister also mentioned about 'Kerala Tales Video Campaign', a series of 50-plus videos based on authentic stories from the State, which garnered over 60 million views online.

Kadakampally Surendran has also exhorted the tourism trade organisations and travel firms from across India to seek the services of Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) to strengthen business at a time when technology has an increasing say in the sector.

