

NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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To be a world class brand of Kerala Tourism | Showcases about 50 crafts in 28 studios

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @TPuram

THE revamped Arts and Crafts Village located at Vellar near Kovalam, a world tourism hotspot in the district, is all set to receive visitors with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurating the facility on Saturday. He will also release the syllabus of the proposed Kalaripayattu Academy there. M Vincent, MLA, will be the chief guest.

The Arts and Crafts Village will be a world-class brand of Kerala Tourism. This handicraft village, situated within 10km of the city on the NH66 bypass to Kovalam, Vizhinjam and Kanyakumari, will be an attraction to the visitors to the capital.

The project owned by the Department of Tourism provides livelihood to about 750 artists and artisans. The craft village was rebuilt and run by the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS), which had brought global recognition to the Sargaalaya Arts and Crafts Village under the Department of Tourism at Iringal in Kozhikode.

The craft village showcases about 50 crafts in 28 studios. Each studio gives the customer an option to see the making of the handicrafts first hand and buy them. It has paintings, pottery, cane products, jewellery, home decor, home and office equipment, clothing, statuettes,



R Nagappan, master sculptor, giving final touches to Lord Vishnu's Viswaroopam on the eve of the launch of the first phase of Kerala Arts & Crafts Village. The Viswaroopam is being specially made for actor Mohanlal | VINCENT PULICKAL

curios, souvenirs, exhibits and tools made of wood, palm and palm fronds, bamboo, reeds, coir and cloth. Handicrafts like Pattachitra (cloth-based scroll paintings) from Bengal and Odisha, murals of Kerala, colourful paper quilting originating in ancient Egypt, centuries-old Nettoor boxes and glass-stone ornaments can also be seen in the studios.

There is a weaving village that showcases all traditional and modern styles of Kerala, including world-class handloom styles such as Balaramapuram, Chendaman-galam, Kuthampully and Kan-nur. Visitors can see all the stages of weaving including natural dyeing.

A well-equipped design lab works closely with the weavers. Training programmes and exhibitions in collaboration with the Handicrafts Department to nurture the potential of weaving will also be conducted. Visitors can interact with the artists at craft studios and also participate in building things.

There is also the opportunity to make a souvenir of your own design and designer item. The designs of the products will be constantly changing to attract visitors. Extensive programmes are being prepared to improve the quality of art and handicrafts to develop the market and to ensure better income. The paintings

- The village features eight-and-a-half acres of beautifully landscaped emporium, art gallery, studios, design strategy lab, special handloom village and auditorium.

- Pools, fair courts, game zones, bookshops, libraries, cafeterias, restaurants and walkways are also part of the project.

- Basic infrastructure like toilet blocks, office, kitchen, roads etc has also been set up.

A library with a collection of great works of world, Indian and Malayalam literature will also be set up

of the selected artists will be exhibited at the Craft Village Art Gallery.

The Emporium Village will be home to an innovative market for world-class crafts and paintings from other states too. The spice garden, herb garden, vegetable garden and evolution garden will be added attractions.

There will be facilities for purchase, digital and non-digital reading. A game zone is also under discussion that could be developed into a training club in the future. There are also plans to organise a world-class art and craft biennale and workshops every year based on a specific theme, including painting, terracotta, handlooms, sculptures and bamboo and reed products.