



## KERALA TRAVEL MART SOCIETY

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### Press Release

## KTM 2016: The Evolution of Brand Kerala

*Seminar on Mart's second day traces development of state as tourism hotspot*

**Kochi, Sept 29:** A panel of experienced travel and tour operators explored a range of issues affecting Kerala's tourism industry and mooted solutions to develop the state's destination profile at KTM 2016, the ongoing ninth edition of the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) here today.

Over the course of a seminar titled 'Buyer's perspective of the evolving Kerala destination', the panel featuring long-time visitors to the state highlighted its decades-long transformation into a must-visit tourist hotspot.

Noting that Kerala was a special place, Karen Anderson, a Canadian food writer and tour operator, said, "Food is a way to connect authentically with people. The style, mis-en-place, diverse platter and preparations make Kerala's cuisine an excellent ambassador for the state."

"The spices one finds here, there really are very few places that can match Kerala in this aspect," said Anderson, who stressed the importance of retaining core competencies and authenticity.

This was further emphasised by Sandeep Dayal, who works in inbound tourism sales and praised the state's ability to sustain the magic, charm and relevance of its core products while attempting diversification.

"Kerala is booming in the domestic tourism market. There is so much history and culture here – particularly in Fort Kochi. Just walking through a city gives you a sense of the place. This makes heritage tours a viable tourism offering," Dayal said.

Gilles Guillot, who works for a French tour operator, discovered Kerala in 1977 and praised the progression over the four decades he has visited the state.

"A destination's culture and tourism potential complement each other and Kerala is blessed with both. A better relationship between the two is needed. In this regard, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale and the Muziris Heritage Project are steps in the right direction – building connections between art and travel," Guillot said.



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Complimenting the state's management of its abundant Ayurveda heritage, Amrit Singh, of a leading UK-based travel agency, said, "People from all over come to try out the rejuvenating therapies offered in Kerala. Standardised categorisation of the treatments and ensuring compliance with these standards would go a long way."

The seminar, which also saw representation from noted tour operators S. Krishnan and Zia Siddiqui, was moderated by Riyas Ahamed, past President, KTM Society.

KTM 2016 runs till Friday at Samudrika and Sagara Convention Centre, Willingdon Island.

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