



KERALA TRAVEL MART SOCIETY

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Press Release

KTM 2016: Spreading the Zero Waste, Plastic-free message

Environment-conscious tourism stalls a big hit at KTM 2016

Kochi, Sept 29: The stall might be built out of paper and canvas, but the green message and offerings at the resort it represents have been blowing buyers away at KTM 2016, the ongoing ninth edition of the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) here.

Touting a 'no plastics, no chemicals' policy, the two-year-old resort on the Munnar high range promises tourists a luxury experience while staying in tune with nature. This is in keeping with the KTM Society's nine-point CSR charter to promote green and sustainable destination models.

The agenda for action requires measures to tackle waste management, promote organic farming, efficient use of energy and extensive use of local produce and products. Other key areas are rain-water harvesting, reducing the use of plastics and improving greenery.

"We don't permit plastic bags or bottles on site, use reverse osmosis (RO) for our water needs, reduce our solid waste to compost for organic farming and self-source most of our produce. The aim is to provide our like-minded guests the wholesome, holistic experience they come to us for," said the resort's managing director.

Among the experiences offered is bird watching for some 150 identified species on the property. "Because we don't use chemicals, we have everything a natural ecosystem has. There are grasshoppers, cicadas and even bushfrogs," he said

Claiming an 85 per cent occupancy rate even in the off-season, the resort – which offers mud cottages built in the traditional style of the local Muduvan tribes – gets repeat and referred customers, mainly from Europe but also the Middle East.

"Though this is our first time at KTM, we have buyers coming by in bunches thanks to word of mouth – the cheapest and best way to advertise," he said.

The experience has been much the same for another eco-themed stall, bedecked by 'zero waste, no plastic' signage. The four-year-old Munnar resort represented here implemented eco-friendly policies two years ago and has seen a surge in clientele from the inbound segment: the UK, Switzerland and Nordic countries topping the list.



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“There is a definite trend towards eco-friendly tourism, especially from Europe and North America. We have 16 rooms with 75 per cent occupancy rates. Our clients appreciate our carbon neutral practices: no carry bags, treated sewage used for irrigating organic farms, solid waste disposed in bio-degradable paper besides RO for water,” said the resort’s managing director.

“We meet 45 per cent of our energy needs through solar power via panels on the roof and only source meat from the market since we grow about 85 per cent of our food. The emphasis, for us and our clients, is quality over quantity,” he added.

According to him, the major obstacle to implementing green policies across the state is land. With the overall emphasis on guest volume and not space, the waste is concentrated in a small area – which leads to poor waste management.

“If you train a 50-home farming village to form homestays, you would get the equivalent of a 100 room hotel but with the waste disposal activities concentrated over a wider area – besides supplementing villagers’ income and offering a true experiential holiday for visitors,” he said, adding that the KTM Society’s nine-point charter was a good start.

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

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