

# THE HINDU

## State wants Centre to retain two dropped tourism projects

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### State wants Centre to retain two dropped tourism projects

#### Sree Narayana Guru circuit and project linking 133 places of worship

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Kerala has suffered a major setback with the Union Ministry of Tourism dropping the Sree Narayana Guru spiritual circuit and the spiritual circuit linking 133 places of worship in the State from the Swadesh Darshan scheme.

Assistant Director General, Swadesh Darshan Division, Ministry of Tourism, has not cited any reasons for dropping the ₹69.47-crore Sree Narayana Guru spiritual

circuit and the ₹85.23-crore spiritual circuit linking 133 places of worship in a letter to the Secretary, Kerala Tourism.

The decision, with the 'approval of the Union Minister of State for Tourism', was communicated in the letter. The two projects were approved under Swadesh Darshan – integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits – launched by the Union Ministry of Tourism in 2014-15.

State Minister for Tourism Kadakampally Surendran urged the Union Tourism Ministry to cancel the decision to drop the Sree Narayana Guru spiritual circuit. The Sree Narayana Dharma Sanghom and those involved in promoting the ideals of the Guru should raise voice against the decision, he said.

#### Sivagiri project

The Minister said the concept prepared by Kerala Tourism for the Sivagiri project in 2017 had put the estimate at ₹118 crore. In between, the Sivagiri Madhom prepared

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**KADAKAMPALLY SURENDRAN**  
Tourism Minister

another concept. The estimate was downsized to ₹69.47 crore and ITDC was entrusted the execution. Former Union Minister of State for Tourism K.J. Alphons kicked off the project in February 2019. "We had doubts but were extending

all support to the project despite having no control," he said.

In the case of the other spiritual circuits, the Minister said Kerala Tourism was awaiting the first tranche of funds for commencing the works. "All documents asked were submitted to the Ministry and we were planning to complete the project in 36 months," he said.

The Tourism Minister said dropping the two projects estimated at ₹154 crore without any warning is a setback to the tourism sector in the State.