

THE HINDU

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Global meet to discuss ways to prepare for tourist inflow

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A strategic shift in investment in tourism, with a greater role for the local bodies, is being explored by Kerala Tourism in the post-pandemic era. "Our investment model is in contrast to the one successfully followed in most parts of the world, where local governments are encouraged to play a bigger role and to attract more investment. This assumes significance in the context of community-centred Responsible Tourism gaining greater prominence," says V. Venu, member secretary, Kerala State Planning Board.

The COVID-19 outbreak has hit the tourism industry severely, rendering thousands jobless, and closing down hotels and service op-

erations. Kerala Tourism is looking for ways to keep the State ready to welcome visitors as the world recovers from the pandemic-induced shutdown.

For higher growth

The three-day global conference Kerala Looks Ahead (KLA), scheduled to start on February 1, will discuss the need for a shift in investment in tourism. Reputed stakeholders will chart out strategies at the conclave to put the Kerala brand on a higher growth trajectory. The meet will examine the changing international trends and compare Kerala's experience with those of similar competing destinations.

The principal themes to be explored by the online

meet include 'Changing trends in international tourism,' 'Scope of Responsible Tourism,' 'Segmentation in domestic tourist arrivals,' 'Government investment in tourism,' and 'Skill development in tourism.' "Kerala Tourism enjoys the status of a global brand due to consistent growth over decades aided by far-sighted policies and a robust public-private partnership. Now, the sector is in the grip of pandemic-induced uncertainties. The strategies for the future must be carefully worked out," says V.K. Ramachandran, vice chairperson, Kerala State Planning Board.

The session will draw attention to issues such as giving due attention to north Kerala and supporting small and local enterprises.