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## Press Release

### **Tourism Minister pledges high-level commitment to Kerala's tourism market**

*Minister underscored importance of growing industry to revenue and employment generation*

**Thiruvananthapuram, June 10:** Providing assurances of resolute top-down support to Kerala's tourism initiatives, Honourable Minister for Tourism Shri A.C. Moideen said the newly elected state government was well aware of the industry's importance, particularly in revenue and employment generation.

"The Honourable Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan has agreed to take the lead in co-ordinating the various government departments to push through approvals for the implementation of many tourism projects in the state," the minister said.

Speaking at a meeting in Mascot Hotel on Wednesday that received around 50 representatives from leading industry players and saw a host of topics come under discussion, the minister said all support would be given to ensure towards the positive growth of the industry and called for fresh concepts and ideas to attract more tourists to 'God's Own Country'.

"The Honorable Finance Minister Dr T.M. Thomas Issac has graciously extended the support of his ministry to the growth of Kerala Tourism," Shri Moideen said, adding that greater focus would be paid to raise the profile of lesser known destinations in the state as also the Malabar region.

Lauding the minister for convening the meeting immediately after assuming office, the attendees mooted a number of important points: Taxation and infrastructure, responsible tourism, Ayurveda and wellness, waste management, a tourism friendly liquor policy, the South India Tourism circuit, air connectivity, home stay taxation and licensing, the Gulf market, backwater and houseboat operations, Kerala Travel Mart 2016 and the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2016.

As well, a number of written proposals were submitted. Shri Moideen promised that the government would review each concern in depth and take appropriate and decisive action.

The minister had earlier written a letter to Honourable Union Minister for Tourism Shri Mahesh Sharma to reconsider the implementation of new biometric requirements for Saudi nationals to avail a visa to India, citing concerns about the policy's effect on tourist arrivals from the Gulf state to Kerala.



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“Kerala Tourism is committed to helping the state move towards greater heights by giving due importance to employment and revenue generation,” said Principal Secretary (Tourism) Dr Venu V. IAS.

Kerala Tourism Director Shri U.V. Jose IAS also attended the meeting

Among the prominent trade organisations in attendance were Kerala Travel Mart Society, Association of Tourism Trade Organisations, India (ATTOI), Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), Ayato, Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), CATO, South Kerala Hoteliers Forum, Malabar Tourism Consortium, Wayanad Tourism Organisation, Houseboat Owner’s Federation, Home Stay Owners Association, Home Stay and Tourism Society and Houseboat Operators Association.

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