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Tourism sector sets eyes on villages, folklore, local heritage for recovery from Covid crisis

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HOPEFUL of resuming activities by December and recovering from the economically disastrous effect of the Covid-19, the state's tourism department has decided to deviate from its conventional methods and switch to a new and developing mode of tourism. Under the department's Responsible Tourism Mission (RT Mission), a set of novel plans will be introduced to woo travellers.

Anticipating a change in sightseeing-tourism in the wake of the pandemic, the RT Mission is looking to shift the focus to villages and remote destinations, which are likely to be less crowded.

"The department's objective will be to build confidence among tourists," said K Rupesh Kumar, coordinator of the mission. The new package will be rooted in the state's local culture and heritage. Offering a taste of ritualistic art



forms like 'yakshaganam', 'theyyam' and 'sarpam thullal', the package will seek to network the cultural heritage of different locations so as to generate a new profile for tourism in the state.

Customised package

"A major highlight of the initiative is that the tourist can customise the package as per their choice. The package will

include culinary, art, craft and storytelling experiences. Guests can even choose to learn an art form from experts. Besides, tourists will also get to meet artisans who work in micro-enterprise units, watch theatre performances, and listen to folklore unique to the area," said Rupesh.

Of the nearly 18,000 units registered with the RT Mission, 6,000 of them can provide art and culture experiences to nearly 1,000 people.

"For instance, visitors opting for 'yakshagana bommayatta', a traditional puppet show prevalent in the villages of Kasaragod which shares a border with Karnataka, will be presented as an activity unique to that area. Tourists can learn and take part in the

preparation process, including dollmaking and narration. Similarly, 'garudan thookkam', 'theeyattu' and 'sarpam thullal' will be included in Kottayam's package," he said. As most of these activities take place in the afternoon, guests can opt for activities like sightseeing in the morning.

The RT Mission has already prepared an e-brochure and uploaded it in its website. The brochure has started receiving responses from different countries. With Covid restrictions expected to be in place for some more time, the immediate focus of these packages will be on tourists within the state. As and when global travel and tourism industry recovers, the packages will be extended to interstate and international guests.



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K Rupesh Kumar, coordinator of Responsible Tourism mission

