



**Department of Tourism**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Tourist arrivals in Kerala up 6.82% in Jan-Mar 2019**

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 31:** Giving strong indications that Kerala had swiftly overcome the ordeal of last year's devastating floods, tourist arrivals in the state shot up by an impressive 6.82 per cent in the first quarter of 2019 as compared to the figures of corresponding period in the previous year.

During January-March 2019, the total number of tourist arrivals (both domestic and foreign) was 46,12,937 as compared to 43,18,406 during the same period in 2018.

The number of domestic tourists arriving in the state was 41,90,468 as against the figures of 38,77,712 during the corresponding period in 2018, registering an increase of 8.07 per cent. However, the arrival of foreign tourists suffered a dip of 4.14 per cent.

The increase in domestic tourist footfalls, especially in Ernakulam, Alappuzha and Idukki — the districts that suffered the brunt of floods that ravaged large swathes of Kerala in August-September last year — is a pointer that the state's tourism has recovered completely from January 2019 onwards.

In fact, Ernakulam, with an increase of 108,169 domestic tourists, registered the highest growth among the 14 districts of the state. The total number of domestic tourist arrivals in this district was pegged at 9,96,091 during January-March this year as against 8,87,922 in the corresponding period of 2018.

The districts of Idukki, Alappuzha, Kannur and Kozhikode also registered decent growth during the period. The number of domestic tourists was 3,43,938 (2,48,052 in 2018) in Idukki, 1,80,562 (1,32,442) in Alappuzha, 2,10,247 (1,84,389) in Kannur and 3,20,795 (2,76,188) in Kozhikode.

Kollam, Kottayam, Malappuram, Wayanad and Palakkad were among the other districts that registered an uptick in domestic tourist arrivals.

Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram districts showed negative trends in domestic arrivals, which was possibly due to the downtrend in the arrival of pilgrim-tourists to the temples of Guruvayur and Sree Padmanabhaswamy.

"Last year's floods were unprecedented in fury and devastation and it battered large swathes of the state, affecting its infrastructure that had a bearing on the tourism sector. There was rampant apprehension that Kerala's tourism would take a long time to recover. But we were able to allay these apprehensions by swiftly putting in place an effective action plan to win back the confidence of tourists," said Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran. "The uptick in domestic tourist arrivals is a strong testimony to it."



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The growth in tourist arrivals was due to the Tourism Department's sustained promotion campaigns from November last year. The first among these was 'It's time for KERALA campaign' from November 2018 to January 2019. It was followed by 'Human by Nature'- part of the marketing initiative to refurbish the perception of the state's tourism sector. The video film, launched in February, has been designed to appeal to both high spenders and backpackers and firmly entrench Kerala's tourism in a competitive global marketplace.

As for the foreign tourist arrivals during January-March, the total number stood at 4,22,469 as against the figures of 4,40,694 in the corresponding period of the previous year, registering a decline of 4.14 per cent.

Thiruvananthapuram (including Kovalam and Varkala) witnessed the highest downfall with a decrease of 27,760 tourists. The total number of footfalls of foreign visitors in the district was 1,08,787 as against 1,36,547 in the corresponding period of 2018.

Ernakulam district registered a downfall of 22,667 tourists, but the districts of Idukki, Alappuzha and Kottayam (Kumarakom) marked a decent growth with an increase of 8,976, 8,541 and 9,593 tourists over the corresponding period of 2018.

The other districts that registered an uptick in foreign tourist arrivals were Kannur, Kasaragod, Kollam, Kozhikode, Pathanamthitta and Thrissur.

Tourism Secretary Smt. Rani George said the growth in domestic tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2019 is a strong reflection of the state government's efforts to repair the damage in double-quick time. "It sent out a message to tourists that things were fast becoming normal in the flood-ravaged Kerala. Our efforts have now handsomely paid off with a steady growth in tourist arrivals, and it has reflected in the first quarter of the current year," she added.

Tourism Director Shri P. Bala Kiran said the appreciable growth in domestic tourist arrivals in the face of one of the worst natural calamities brought to the fore not only the concerted efforts of the government but also the resilience of the people and the entire stakeholders of tourism industry to revive the sector, which is a major pillar of the state's economy.

"This May, we launched the 'Dream Season' campaign to woo travellers during the monsoon by combining the magic of rains, wellness tourism, especially Ayurveda treatments, and backwaters. Its impact will be seen in the second quarter of 2019," he added.

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