

THE HINDU

Tourists opting for shorter stay

Date : 4.1.2021 | Edition : Kochi | Page : 3 | Clip size (cm) : W: 12 H: 12

Tourists opting for shorter stay

Pandemic has hit wellness sectors which contribute hugely to tourism revenue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The influx of domestic tourists to Kerala in the run-up to the Christmas-New Year festive season brought some cheer to tourism stakeholders, even as quarantine norms are keeping away guests who generally stay put in the State for a fortnight.

Apart from hospitality stakeholders, it has severely hit the Ayurveda and wellness sectors, which together contribute a major chunk of income from tourism. Most guests thus prefer short vacations lasting less than a week.

The Ayurveda Promotion Society recently submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, citing the plight of operators and staff at Ayurveda hospitals, clinics, and resorts, which offer treatment packages ranging from 11 to 28 days for guests. "We have demanded that the sector be exempted from the mandatory quarantine norms at least till April, since guests from other States and West Asia are willing to stay put



Popular spot: Guests are flocking to destinations like the Thattekkad bird sanctuary where migratory birds are now arriving in large numbers. ■ FILE PHOTO

for over a week for various treatments, but for quarantine norms," said Sajeew Kurup, president of the society.

They include those from West Asia who are willing to opt for medical visa and confirm booking. Many are keen to visit Kerala for annual and follow-up treatments too. The State will otherwise have to wait till September when the tourist season begins, he added.

Responsible Tourism Mission State coordinator K. Rupesh Kumar said domestic tourism was on the revival path, as can be gauged from

the arrival of guests from other States. "Knowing that responsible tourism is the way forward post-pandemic, they come in search of experiential tourism. Stakeholders have readied unique packages where care is taken to avoid crowding and adhere to hygiene," he said.

"In keeping with the new trend, we are promoting micro destinations, hitherto unheard-of locales which have not been marketed so far. They have units which offer ethnic cuisines, which are a hit among guests," he added.

Discerning guests have begun flocking to destinations in the suburbs of Kochi to be in the lap of nature. Among their favourite locales is the Thattekkad bird sanctuary. "Tourist footfall is increasing, since migratory birds have arrived in large numbers," said Girish Chandran, who owns a homestay and accompanies nature lovers on forest and bird watching treks.

"We open our doors only to nature lovers and families, since the time is not yet ripe for regular tourism," he added.