

NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

UK, US advisories dampen Kerala Tourism morale

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POST RAPE INCIDENTS

UK, US advisories dampen Kerala Tourism morale

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THE travel advisories issued by the UK and US, asking their women to exercise caution while visiting India following the rising rape incidents in the country, have dampened the morale of the Kerala Tourism industry, which is on the path of revival after back-to-back floods and issues including Nipah scare and Latvian national's murder here in 2018.

Though the state has not figured

among the country's 'vulnerable places', the travel advisories are expected to have a bearing on the state's growth projection of the state.

National Tourism Advisory Board member Abraham George

told TNIE: "Our tourist season peaks at the start of November and ends in February. We've received considerable number of bookings — both individual and group — from the US, UK and other European countries this time.

We expect there would not be any change in the bookings we received so far, but if the rape is portrayed as a national trend in the coming days, then certainly we would be the first one to feel the heat as the US, UK and Europe constitute more than 60 per cent of the foreign tourist arrivals in Kerala," he said.

Great Britain urged its citizens to exercise caution when travelling in India even in a group.

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3 HELD ON MONDAY IN 2 SEPARATE INCIDENTS

Two youths, in their early 20s, were arrested on the charge of raping a 16-year-old girl in Adoor while a physical education teacher was held at Keezhvayppooru, near Tiruvalla, for sexually harassing a schoolgirl, both on Monday. **P6**

Kerala safe, says tourism secretary

FOREIGN FLAVOUR

10,96,407

was the total foreign tourist footfall in 2018

SHARE OF COUNTRIES

UK 18.36%

US 8.8%

France 7.95%

Germany 6.04%

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GREAT BRITAIN asked the British women to respect the local dress code and customs, avoid isolated areas when alone at any time of day and travelling alone in a public transport, and to not leave drinks unattended.

According to the stats available with the Tourism Department, Europe constitutes around 48.5 per cent of the total foreign tourist arrival to Kerala annually.

US and Canadian citizens visiting the state would be around 60.06 per cent. The first six months of the current year have also seen a dip of 13.64 per

cent in UK nationals reaching the state.

Tourism Secretary Rani George said Kerala is safe.

"Though the situation in other parts of the country is damaging for the prospects of tourism, Kerala is safe and there's a considerable improvement in foreign tourist arrival to the state after two back-to-back floods," said Rani.

"At present, we won't be taking any urgent measures to counter the advisories, but we'll certainly interfere if the industry feels the heat in the long run," she said.

Kerala Tourism is already in the process of attracting more foreign tourists from Japan and China this year. It has conducted road shows and attended tourism fairs in these destinations.



