



Department of Tourism

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Press Release

UNWTO Secretary General to Attend Nehru Trophy Boat Race 2016
Boat races theme of Kerala Tourism pavilion at WTM, London 2015

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 4: The famed snake boat race of 'God's Own Country' has bowled over the visitors to the influential World Travel Mart in London with the United Nations global tourism body chief leading the list of those who want to watch the Nehru Trophy event next year.

"I am fascinated by the story of the boat races and I would love to watch the action live in Kerala," United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Secretary General Mr. Taleb D Rifai said after visiting the Kerala Tourism pavilion at the ongoing WTM, London themed on boat races of the state.

"I will definitely visit the boat race next year," Mr Rifai told the Kerala delegation to the WTM, led by Tourism Secretary Shri G Kamala Vardhana Rao.

"We are deeply encouraged by the endorsement of our famous boat races by the UNWTO chief at a significant global stage like the WTM," said Kerala Tourism Minister Shri A P Anilkumar. "It underlines our status as a top tourism destination in the world," he added.

"There is no better way to showcase our culture to a global audience than presenting our boat races, which are closer to the heart of the people of Kerala," said Shri A P Anilkumar.

The 120-sq meter stand of the state tourism department drew a large number of visitors to the world's leading travel and tourism show, attended by more than 5,000 exhibitors from nearly 190 countries. The WTM, London, is being held from November 2 to 5.

Three replicas of the snake boat adorn the Kerala Tourism stand, one of the most-photographed pavilions at the WTM, created with the stunning images of the boat races of the state.

"It's a beautiful stand with the long snake boats," the UNWTO Secretary General said while confessing his plans to visit Kerala next year.

The boat race themed stand of Kerala Tourism was a major attraction on the opening day of the WTM. "We are confident that the tremendous response to our tourism products at the WTM will contribute to the growth of foreign tourist arrivals in our state in the coming months," said Kerala Tourism Secretary Shri Rao

The India Tourism Secretary, Shri Vinod Zutshi launched the brochure featuring Kerala's boat races at WTM.

"As our biggest foreign market, the United Kingdom offers us the best possible global platform to spread awareness about our destinations," Shri Rao added.

Last year, Kerala had received 151,497 travellers from the United Kingdom. Two years ago, the British royal couple, Prince Charles and wife Camilla Parker Bowles, had visited Kerala, watching Kathakali in Kochi and celebrating the 65th birthday of the Prince of Wales at the backwaters resort of Kumarakom. Among prominent British visitors to Kerala include the Beatles legend Sir Paul McCartney.

Kerala Tourism is joined by as many as 10 private sector exhibitor-partners at the WTM London event. The exhibitors from the state are Intersight Tours & Travels, Jayasree Travels and Tours, Kumarakom Lake Resort, Pioneer Personalized Holidays, Ananthara Hotels & Resorts, Somatheeram Ayurvedic Health



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Resort, Spiceland Holidays, The Raviz, Uday Samudra Leisure Beach Hotel & Spa, and Vasundhara Sarovar Premiere.

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