

## PRESS RELEASE

### **World champions, top international and Indian kayaking athletes to participate in 6th Malabar River Festival and first World Kayaking Championship**

- *Event to be held at Thusharagiri in Kozhikode from July 18 to 22*

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 3:** Coming out from the grip of Nipah infection, Kozhikode will host the 6th edition of Malabar River Festival (MRF) in which Olympians, world champions and top athletes of the Indian kayaking community will display their dexterous paddling expertise to vie for top honours and handsome cash prizes.

Billed as the largest white water kayaking in Asia, this year's event, which will also have the distinction of being the first World Kayaking Championship, is to be held at Thusharagiri in Kozhikode from July 18 to 22 in which 25 teams from around the world will participate.

With Rs 15 lakh as sweepstake, the high-octane event is being organized by the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) Kozhikode under the aegis of Tourism Department of Kerala. Madras Fun Tools, Bengaluru will provide technicalities of the event supported by GMI Kozhikode. Further, District Panchayat, Thiruvambady and Kodencherry and Chakkittapara Grama Panchayats are actively supporting the event.

Some of the top athletes participating in the kayak world championship are Nutria Newman - French Olympic team and current world champion; the 2015 world champion Gird Sera soles (Spain); Vávrahradilek (Czech Republic) - the London 2012 Olympics silver medallist; Dane Jackson - US Men's Freestyle team and Red Bull athlete; and Nick Troutman - Canada men's freestyle team.

Confirmations of participation have already come from 15 of the world's best kayaking athletes from around 20 countries such as Germany, Italy, France, Spain, England, Scotland, Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, Czech Republic, Austria, the Netherlands, USA and Canada.

Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran said the government had already declared Kozhikode free of the Nipah virus, and it would immensely help in organising this year's MRF.

"The main idea behind this event is to showcase the beauty and the potential for thrilling and adventurous water sports activities in Kerala. The event promises to be a truly global spectacle with new race formats and categories, and is poised to attract attention from adventure sports enthusiasts from across the globe and give them an adrenalin rush," said

"Our intention is to make kayaking and other water-based adventures mainstream popular sporting activities to woo the growing breed of outdoor enthusiasts and also advertise to the world the wonderful white water potential that exists in the region," he added.

Kerala Tourism Secretary Ms Rani George said the MRF, which made its debut in 2013, is one of the biggest adventure sporting events in India. "Over the last five years it has become a truly spectacular eyeball-grabbing event for the adventure tourists not only in India but also abroad. We need to leverage its potential for Malabar tourism and monsoon tourism in Kozhikode."

This year's championship in some of the most scenic rivers of Kerala will feature events for beginners and intermediate kayakers and a special category of prizes for the best paddlers of

the Indian subcontinent. To be held across different locations in Kozhikode district, it will have three International Canoe Federation (ICF)-approved competition formats: Freestyle, Slalom and Extreme Slalom while the Team Race World Championship will be the culminating event.

“We are confident of putting up a great show and look forward to hosting all the national and international athletes and film crews. We are also keen to invite the locals and adventure sports enthusiasts from all over India to witness this spectacular sporting event which began five years ago,” said Shri P. Bala Kiran, Director, Kerala Tourism. “This year’s event will be bigger, better and harder in view of the fact that it has evolved into the first World Kayaking Championship.”

Shri Bala Kiran said water-based adventure sports would spur tourism in the state by wooing the younger generation who are thrill-seekers. “We want to re-brand Kerala as “The Land of Adventure” by offering adventure activities and water-based tourism. In particular, we would like Kozhikode to be recognized as a major kayaking destination,” he added.

Film crews from Germany and France will provide live coverage of this event on social media. Olaf Obsommer, who is the organiser of the Adidas Sick line World Championships, will lead the German film crew. He will also tour some other locations in Kozhikode district to create a documentary of their travels that will be showcased on adventure sports film festivals in Europe and USA.

Well known international outdoor brands Woodland and GoPro are the sponsors for the championship in which the international paddlers will be competing on some of the most challenging rapids in the country.

A large number of athletes, including World Champion Sam Sutton, have recognized the potential of kayaking in this region and even termed it as the “Next Kayaking Mecca”.

More details about this festival are available on the website: [www.malabarfest.com](http://www.malabarfest.com) and on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MalabarFestival>.

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