

Kerala Tourism Insights

Vol. No. 1 Issue No. 2
September 2024



A News Journal from Kerala Institute of Tourism & Travel Studies (KITTS)



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PRINCIPAL SPEAKS

Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the second edition of the tourism newsletter of KITTS-Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies. Following the overwhelming success of our inaugural edition, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our readers, faculty, staff, students, and well-wishers who contributed to making it a resounding success. Your support and enthusiasm have inspired us to continue delivering engaging and insightful content.

At KITTS, our mission remains steadfast; to spark a passion for travel and tourism and to provide valuable knowledge that inspires both adventure and personal growth. This second edition is packed with even more exciting updates, expert travel guidance, and features on fascinating destinations from around the world.

We are very grateful to respected Minister of Tourism & PWD and Chairman of KITTS, Adv. Sri. P. A. Mohammed Riyas; Secretary of Tourism and Vice Chairman of KITTS, Sri. Biju K. IAS; Director of Tourism, Ms. Sikha Surendran IAS; Executive Committee Members; General Body Members; and all our stakeholders for their continued support in fostering excellence in tourism education and training.

As we move forward, I hope this newsletter continues to serve as a source of inspiration and valuable information for students, travel enthusiasts, and the broader community. In addition to the exciting updates on the tourism sector, we have also included thought-provoking articles, insightful interviews, and special highlights from recent tourism events and workshops held at KITTS. This issue aims to encourage a deeper understanding of sustainable tourism, responsible travel practices, and the importance of preserving our cultural and natural heritage.

I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the editorial team and contributors who worked tirelessly to bring this edition to life. Their creativity, dedication, and attention to detail have ensured that this publication reflects the vision and standards of KITTS.

Together, let's keep exploring new horizons and celebrating the beauty and diversity of travel. I hope that this newsletter not only informs but also inspires each one of you to be more curious, compassionate travelers.

Happy reading, thinking, and exploring!

Warm regards,

Dr. B. Rajendran

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Tourism Minister's Message

I am delighted to know that KITTS is launching the second edition of its newsletter. Let this be the main source of tourism-related information for all societal segments.

Kerala has always had to deal with natural disasters that are out of our control, but we have always bounced back and triumphed over every setback. We are extremely saddened by the damage caused by multiple landslides and flash floods in Wayanad. Still, we need to get over the catastrophe. In order to help the people and mitigate the effects of the disaster, we did everything within our power. We now have a

duty to encourage travel there.

Further, we are committed to promoting tourism to the next level. Intensive marketing campaigns are being implemented. In keeping with that, I am happy to announce Kerala Tourism's major campaign, "#EntaeKeralamEnnumSundaram", which aims to ignite and raise awareness of our tourism sector. The "ItsKeralaSeason" campaign, which is being promoted outside of Kerala, seeks to attract a maximum number of tourists to our state. Together, let us boost tourism in Kerala and elevate Wayanad tourism to new heights.



Editorial

Let's forge cultural understanding and promote harmony

UN Tourism advocates for fostering global peace through the transformative power of tourism on World Tourism Day



Dr. Dileep M.R. Director, KITTS

It was an year ago, the UN Tourism urged every tourism stakeholder to promote Green Investments. The theme of World Tourism Day (WTD) celebrations in 2023 was Tourism and Green Investments. The theme highlighted the intersection of tourism and environmentally conscious financial initiatives. The World Tourism Organisation, the current UN Tourism, initiated World Tourism Day to underscore the significance of tourism as a key player in global economic advancement. Certainly, Tourism is a key player in the Global Economy.

This year, UN Tourism proposes the theme 'Tourism and Peace' through which it would like to reiterate the significance of tourism's potential to foster global reconciliation and peace amidst ongoing conflicts, migration challenges, and social inequalities. It aims to showcase tourism's role in bridging cultural divides and promoting peaceful interactions.

Tourism has long been celebrated for its ability to broaden perspectives and build understanding across cultures. Tourism, with its inherent diversity and inclusivity, creates opportunities for people from different backgrounds to connect and build relationships, fostering tolerance and harmony. Research indicates that countries with robust, responsible tourism sectors tend to experience greater stability and tranquillity.

Travel offers transformative educational experiences and promotes a more conscious approach to global interactions. The rising demand from newer generations for sustainable and respectful tourism practices highlights a growing awareness of the need for responsible travel. WTD 2024 will celebrate the contributions of younger generations in shaping tourism as a force for good. The UNWTO Concept Note emphasizes investing in youth, providing educational opportunities, and encouraging their involvement in the tourism

industry to drive social change and peace.

Kerala's rich history of international engagement and cultural exchange is indeed impressive. Its role in fostering global understanding and promoting cultural interaction is well-recognized. Additionally, Kerala's approach to tourism highlights its commitment to sustainable practices that benefit both the local population and the broader global community.

Tourism in Kerala not only showcases its unique heritage and landscapes but also plays a significant role in addressing social and economic challenges. By creating job opportunities and supporting local businesses, tourism helps to reduce disparities and improve the quality of life for residents. This focus on sustainability and local empowerment can contribute to greater social stability and economic resilience. Let all the stakeholders in the tourism sector in Kerala, and India at large, join hands to promote cultural understanding and peace beyond borders through tourism.

WTD plays a crucial role in guiding the tourism sector towards sustainable and inclusive practices. This World Tourism Day, let's embrace the opportunity to support a more inclusive, understanding, and peaceful world through the power of travel.

New Academic Block of KITTS inaugurated

Shri P A Mohamed Riyas, Minister for Public Works and Tourism, Kerala emphasized that tourism is poised to become a major contributor to Kerala's economic growth during the inauguration of the new Academic Annex Block of Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS), the Department of Tourism's premier human resource development institute in Thiruvananthapuram on August 29, 2024.

Minister Riyas highlighted Kerala's untapped potential in the tourism sector and noted that innovative projects are being implemented to fully harness this potential. Currently, tourism accounts for nine percent of the global economy, and in Kerala, the hospitality industry contributes 10 percent to the state's GDP. With the World Tourism Organization predicting significant growth in the tourism sector, the number of tourists globally is expected to reach 11.1 trillion in 2024.

"The tourism sector is undergoing remarkable

changes and is emerging as one of the world's top employers," said Shri Riyas. "Key drivers of this growth include MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), destination weddings, experiential responsible tourism, and food-adventure tourism."

The Minister also announced plans to develop KITTS into a center of excellence for tourism human resource development, with the new Academic Annex Block playing a vital role in this transformation. Several additional projects are in the pipeline to further enhance KITTS as a leading institution in tourism education.

"The new academic block is designed to prepare KITTS students for success in diverse fields, from digital marketing to tourism start-ups," he said. "We must maximize both job opportunities and business potential in this sector."

The event was presided over by KTIL Chairman Shri SK Sajeesh, with KITTS Principal

Dr. B Rajendran delivering the welcome address.

Other notable speakers included Department of Tourism Additional Director (General) Shri Vishnu Raj P, IAS; KITTS Director Dr. Dileep MR; Habitat Technologies Chairman Architect G Sankar; and Kumar Group Total Designers Vice-Chairman Shri Sasikumar. KITTS Assistant Professor Dr. Saroop Roy BR and College Union Chairman Anan J were also present.

The new academic block, which spans approximately 9,000 square feet, was constructed within the Thycaud Residency Compound at a cost of Rs 3.22 crore. It features six classrooms, an online test center, and faculty rooms dedicated to MBA courses, Digital University programs, and various diploma courses, marking a significant step toward upgrading KITTS into a globally recognized tourism academic research and training center.



“Tourism and Peace” will be the theme of World Tourism Day 2024

As we gear up for World Tourism Day on September 27th, UN Tourism has officially announced the theme of this year's World Tourism Day, “Tourism and Peace” and the global celebration will be held at the Paragraph Freedom Square, a Luxury Collection Hotel, in Tbilisi, the capital city of Georgia.

Since 1980, World Tourism Day has been held on 27 September which marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Statutes of the United Nations World Tourism Organization in 1970, paving the way for the establishment of UNWTO five years later. Recently UNWTO adopted its new identity as “UN Tourism”.

Pursuing peace is a continuing endeavour and progress through tourism is more relevant than ever. Tourism can play a vital role in fostering peace and understanding between nations and cultures and supporting reconciliation processes. Moreover, tourism is linked to the building blocks of peace- such as social justice, human rights, economic equity, sustainable development, and broad-based democracy with the capability of non-violent conflict resolution. Tourism's biggest strength, besides being an economic powerhouse, brings people together in non-adversarial circumstances.

Tourism has the potential to contribute to peace in many ways and these need to be appropriately explored and assessed. Tourism as an instrument for peace needs to be peace-sensitive and needs to be understood from both- the supplier's and consumer's side- not as an isolated peace strategy, but as part of social transformation towards a culture of peace.



tourism is aware of the economic and social forces and thus social responsibility. It aims to contribute within the limits of the opportunities but is aware of the power of alliances to the democratisation of society, f international relations and the world system as such.

Moreover, tourism provides a fertile ground for innovation and entrepreneurship. By encouraging creative solutions and new business models, tourism can drive economic growth and provide unique opportunities for young talent. Supporting entrepreneurial initiatives in tourism can lead to sustainable development and create platforms for innovative peacebuilding strategies. The future of tourism lies in the hands of young people. By investing in youth, providing education and training opportunities, and encouraging their active participation in the

tourism sector, we can harness their potential to drive social change and promote peace. Young talent brings fresh perspectives, creativity, and energy that are essential for the continuous evolution of tourism as a force for good.

World Tourism Day 2024 aims to explore the intersection of tourism and peacebuilding, highlighting how travel, cultural exchange and sustainable tourism practices can contribute to conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the promotion of peace worldwide.

By bringing together stakeholders from across sectors and disciplines, the conference aims to generate innovative ideas, strategies, and collaborations to harness the transformative power of tourism in building bridges, fostering dialogue and promoting peace and reconciliation.

International travel will fully rebound by 2024

A full recovery in international tourism is expected this year, with arrivals rising 2% over 2019 levels, according to current trends. International tourist arrivals reached 97% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2024. According to UN Tourism, more than 285 million tourists travelled internationally in January-March, about 20% more than the first quarter of 2023, underscoring the sector's near-complete recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

The Middle East has shown the strongest growth, surpassing pre-pandemic levels significantly. Europe, the Americas, and Africa are also seeing impressive recoveries, while Asia

and the Pacific are catching up but still lagging behind in terms of receipts.

Yet UN Tourism also recalls the need to ensure adequate tourism policies and destination management, aiming to advance sustainability and inclusion, while addressing the externalities and impact of the sector on resources and communities.

The sector's recovery is evident in both the volume of arrivals and financial receipts, although some regions have not fully matched pre-pandemic economic performance. International tourism receipts reached USD 1.5 trillion in 2023, meaning a complete recovery of pre-pandemic levels in nominal terms, but 97%

in real terms, adjusting for inflation. Despite the recovery, challenges such as economic pressures, climate change, and geopolitical tensions could affect future growth and travel patterns. Tourists are expected to continue to seek value for money and travel closer to home in response to elevated prices and the overall economic challenges, while extreme temperatures and other weather events could impact the destination choice of many travellers.

It's crucial for governments and tourism managers to balance the expansion of the sector with sustainable practices and community well-being to ensure long-term benefits.

Tourism plans align 'Viksit Bharat 2047' target, and New marketing campaign soon... says Suman Billa IAS

Interview with Suman Billa IAS, Additional Secretary,
Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

Q: As the new Government is in place, what are *the strategies being taken up to promote tourism in the country?*

Ans: Government's strategy to bolster the tourism sector in the post-pandemic era is ambitious and multi-faceted, reflecting a long-term vision towards making tourism a cornerstone of the national economy by 2047. Keeping in mind the 'Viksit Bharat 2047' agenda of the Government, we are planning and strategies are being formulated for the next five years to create a stronger tourism sector. It's like a Business plan kind of strategy: Where are we now? And where we will be in 2047? This involves setting a comprehensive roadmap that outlines specific milestones and objectives for the next five years and beyond. Encouraging private sector investment in tourism infrastructure is a priority. Special attention is given to creating and upgrading facilities in both popular and emerging destinations. Also, emphasis is on creating high-quality, sustainable jobs in the tourism sector. Moreover, efforts are in place to enhance India's visibility as a premier tourist destination through global marketing campaigns and international collaborations. With a surge in domestic tourism, targeted campaigns are being launched to encourage travel within India, highlighting lesser-known destinations and experiences.

Strong collaboration between the government and the tourism industry is essential. Joint efforts are focused on setting and achieving ambitious targets, improving service standards, and driving innovation. Initiatives are being introduced to promote sustainable tourism practices, ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of environmental and cultural preservation. By focusing on investment, infrastructure, job creation, promotion, and collaboration, India aims to position itself as a leading destination.

Q: *Are we facing difficulty to chase the progress China could make over the years?*

Ans: NO. It's true that China has made significant strides in tourism, both domestically and internationally, leveraging its rich history, diverse landscapes, and growing economic



clout. The rise of other Asian countries like Vietnam and Cambodia in the tourism sector is also noteworthy. They have been capitalizing on their unique cultural and natural attractions, which is helping them gain prominence on the global stage.

India, while having entered the international tourism scene relatively late, indeed holds substantial untapped potential. The country boasts a vast array of attractions, from historical sites and cultural festivals to diverse landscapes and wildlife. With ongoing investments in infrastructure, marketing, and hospitality, India is well-positioned to make significant progress in tourism.

Q: *Incredible India campaign really lifted Indian tourism to a greater extent. Do we have any new campaign to promote tourism at the international level?*

Ans: Yes, the "Incredible India" campaign has indeed made a significant impact on promoting Indian tourism globally. With the evolving goals under the 'Viksit Bharat 2047' vision, there's a new campaign on the horizon that aims to build on the successes of its predecessors while addressing contemporary trends and opportunities. It was in my period last time, 'Incredible India 2.0' campaign was initiated, which marked a shift from generic promotions

undertaken across the world to market specific promotional plans and content creation. The campaign focused on digital and social media and the promotion of Niche tourism products, including yoga, wellness, luxury, cuisine, wildlife etc. Now the scenario is different and thus the focus also will be aligned to the trends.

Q: *What are the priorities of tourism development currently?*

Ans: Currently, the focus on enhancing tourism development is both comprehensive and strategic. Building and upgrading world-class infrastructure is crucial. Public-private partnerships are often key to achieving this, as private industry can bring in investment, expertise, and innovation. Ensuring that tourism facilities meet international standards is vital. This involves not just the physical infrastructure but also service quality. Competing effectively on the international stage requires unique and high-quality offerings, which means investing in training for staff, improving amenities, and maintaining high standards. Effective marketing strategies are essential for attracting tourists. Other priorities include marketing, job and income creation from tourism and unlocking the vast tourism potential of the country. Identifying and promoting lesser-known or emerging attractions can help spread tourism benefits more evenly and reduce the strain on popular destinations. An increasingly important priority is ensuring that tourism development is sustainable. By focusing on these priorities, you can work towards creating a robust tourism sector that not only attracts international visitors but also supports local communities and promotes long-term growth.

Q: *Human Resource Development is crucial in the progress of tourism. What are the plans for developing HR to cater to the requirements of burgeoning tourism sector in the country?*

Ans: To effectively develop human resource in alignment with the burgeoning tourism sector, a multifaceted approach is essential. Developing a comprehensive HR Development policy specifically tailored to the tourism sector is in the anvil. This policy should outline the strategic direction, goals, and mechanisms for

Kerala Travel Mart set to surpass past records, Minister Riyas

The 12th edition of Kerala Travel Mart (KTM-2024), scheduled in Kochi from September 26 to 29, is all set to surpass past records going by the stakeholders' response, including the turnout of domestic and international buyers, Tourism Minister Shri. P A Mohammed Riyas said.

Unveiling the salient features of the four-day biennial event at a press conference here, Shri. Riyas said KTM has made a mark over the last 24 years as a strong model of government industry partnership, contributing significantly to Kerala tourism's growth. "KTM has over the years contributed significantly to market Kerala's vast tourism potential in other states and abroad," the Minister said.

While KTM is making hectic efforts to see the event a resounding success, Kerala Tourism is also mounting campaigns focusing on domestic and international markets, he said. In the prevailing circumstances, these campaigns will also give prominence to Wayanad, devastated by the recent natural disaster. The social media campaign with the catch word "Ente Keralam Ennum Sundaram" (My Kerala is ever beautiful)

is part of this campaign, he said.

The Minister also launched the mobile app for KTM 2024 at the Press Meet. The App can be downloaded from Google Play Store for Android users as well as from Appstore for iOS users.

Tourism Secretary Shri. K Biju IAS, Tourism Director Smt. Sikha Surendran IAS, KTM Society President Shri Jose Pradeep, KTM Society Secretary Shri. Swaminathan S, KTM Society past presidents Shri. E M Najeeb and Shri. Baby Mathew Somatheeram were present.

Organized by Kerala Travel Mart Society, KTM's upcoming edition has already received a huge response from stakeholders. The domestic buyer registrations alone has crossed 2,035 for the first time in the history of Asia's largest tourism event, doubling the hitherto highest total of 1,305 in 2018. As for foreign buyers, the number is 808, from 76 countries.

There will be 344 stalls under eight categories at the event, which KTM Society is organizing with support from other agencies of the state as well as industry, besides assistance from the state Tourism Department.

The entire event is being considered a "total digital revolution" as the organizers have come up with software that ensures the smooth conduct of B2B meetings. KTM 2024 will be organised by strictly adhering to the green protocol.

The run-up to KTM-2024 will see a pre-mart tour from September 22 to 26, involving media persons, vloggers and influencers. There will also be a five-day post-mart tour across Kerala from September 30 for select buyers of KTM-2024.

The 12th KTM will also accord special focus to Kerala as a wedding destination. Its abundant beaches, backwaters, forests, tea gardens and lush greenery make God's Own Country an ideal tourist destination. The state also is reputed for its cultural and culinary richness besides strong infrastructure and transportation facilities.

Cruise tourism is another area where the 12th edition of KTM is giving focus. Authorities are optimistic about roping in potential buyers from this segment as well. The 11th KTM in 2022 facilitated more than 55,000 business interactions in its three days.



enhancing skills and competencies relevant to the industry. Essentially we have to ensure state-of-the-art training facilities and trainers that meet international standards. By this, we can go for the agenda skilling in India focused on preparing the workforce for global opportunities in the tourism sector.

Q: Enhancing destination competitiveness is a priority of tourist destinations. In this regard, what are the practices India would like to have now?

Ans: To enhance destination competitiveness while addressing the challenges of infrastructure development, sustainable practices, and carrying capacity, India can adopt several strategies. On one side we have the challenge to develop infrastructure for the growing need of Indian Tourism. On the other hand, the destinations are to be developed adhering the principles of Sustainable development. We are looking at the carrying capacity issues now. Some of the hill stations face the challenge of carrying capacity

issues even now. Of late, overcrowding is a major concern in the global tourism. We have to step up to ensure that the destinations are developed and maintained sustainably. Quality tourism is a priority. We have to develop alternative tourist destinations as well. It is a priority to promote lesser-known destinations and off-the-beaten-path locations to distribute tourist traffic more evenly. Limiting the tourist inflow into the attractions is one of the major issues that we are planning to implement.

Kerala to ensure Green Tourism Destinations by early next year

Kerala to promote “Green Tourism Destinations” targeting “Malinya Muktham Nava Keralam”: Biju IAS, Tourism Secretary.

“We are truly fortunate to live in a place rich in naturally beautiful things. In order to draw more tourists and preserve Mother Earth, it is our duty to encourage clean and green surroundings” says Tourism Secretary Biju K IAS. To promote sustainable tourism and preserve its natural beauty, the Kerala Tourism Department plans to identify some destinations in the state as “Green Tourism Destinations” under the “Malinya Muktham Nava Keralam” scheme Kerala, which deserves the epithet of ‘God’s Own Country’. Renowned for its pleasant climate, backwaters, Ayurveda, stunning beaches, and rich cultural heritage, which form the foundation of its thriving tourism industry, Kerala is adopting several sustainable development schemes to put the state on the ecotourism map.

The ‘Green Tourism Destinations’ initiative aims to transform tourist centres into green



destinations that prioritise sustainable waste management, hygiene, and environmental conservation. This project is part of “Malinya Muktham Nava Keralam,” a campaign aimed

at making Kerala a garbage-free state early next year. Maintaining cleanliness and attractiveness is crucial for attracting tourists to Kerala’s tourism destinations, which is in line with the state’s larger plans for sustainable development. “We aim to transform all major tourism destinations into ‘Green Tourism Destinations’ by next year beginning. Ensuring cleanliness and lush green environment is not only the responsibility of the authorities. Rather it has to be taken up as the priority of everyone, including the visitors, residents and industry professionals. We are at a crucial juncture of promoting tourism in a sustainable manner. Let’s join hands and work hard to promote the tourism in the state sustainably”, Biju K adds. Current plans prioritize maintaining a litter-free environment and are in the process of developing strategies to promote destinations in a sustainable manner.

All set to welcome new tourist season, foresee record arrivals: Sikha Surendran IAS, Tourism Director

Kerala Tourism is gearing up for a vibrant new tourist season from October to March, with expectations of record-breaking arrivals. Sikha Surendran IAS, Tourism Director, highlighted that extensive marketing efforts, both nationally and internationally, have been undertaken to attract more visitors. Enhanced facilities, cleaner destinations, and new, engaging packages are part of the strategy to boost tourism.

Despite the recent setback of a catastrophic landslide in Wayanad, the tourism sector is recovering well. She noted an increase in domestic tourism, with the first quarter of 2024 seeing 5,037,307 domestic tourists, compared to 4,936,274 in the same period last year. The state’s diverse tourism offerings—including houseboats, caravans, plantations, wellness holidays, adventure tourism, and responsible tourism practices—continue to attract interest. The rise of Adventure Tourism and innovative



Responsible Tourism practices has added significant value to Kerala’s overall tourism package.

Oflate, Kerala has recently been honoured with two major awards, highlighting its commitment to responsible and innovative tourism. The

International Centre for Responsible Tourism, India Chapter, awarded Kerala the Gold Award for 2024 for its Responsible Tourism project in Beypore, Kozhikode. This achievement marks the third consecutive year Kerala has received this recognition, underscoring its ongoing dedication to sustainable and inclusive tourism practices.

In addition, Kerala Tourism has earned the prestigious Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award 2024 for its inventive digital marketing campaign, ‘Holiday Heist’. This award further establishes Kerala’s prominence in global tourism, showcasing its creativity and effectiveness in engaging potential visitors through innovative online strategies.

Sikha expressed confidence in Kerala’s ability to attract even more visitors this year, thanks to ongoing innovative marketing and promotional strategies that have successfully established Kerala as a “Must See” destination.

Design policy will strengthen tourism in state: Minister Riyas

The comprehensive design policy being implemented in the state will strengthen the tourism sector significantly since it envisages to turn public spaces and physical assets sustainable, durable and aesthetically appealing for visitors and local community, Tourism Minister Mr. P A Mohamed Riyas said.

The Minister was speaking after inaugurating the works to beautify the space under the railway overbridge near SN College in Kollam on July 20, to turn the neglected site into a pleasing public amenity. The launch of the project also marked the integration of tourism schemes with the innovative design policy.

"This project shows how unused public spaces could be creatively transformed into spaces for relaxation and entertainment for local people as well as tourists," Mr. Riyas said.

There are many unutilised spots like this across the state which could be turned into people-friendly spaces by leveraging the Design Policy for planning and development, he said.

The project will be completed before the year-end and handed over to the city as a New Year gift in 2025, Mr. Riyas said.

Since unused places are shunned by the general public, they tend degenerate into frequents of anti-social elements, drug peddlers and garbage dumping grounds. This social menace could be tackled by turning such spots into public parks or sports grounds. Implementation of the Design Policy will secure this goal, the Minister said.

Presiding over the function, Mr. M Noushad MLA, said innovative projects of Tourism Department have imparted a fresh momentum to the tourism sector in the state.

The project being inaugurated will be completed within the time-frame set for it since



all the procedures to start the work have been completed, Mr. Noushad said.

Mayor Mrs. Prasanna Earnest; Mr. S.K Sajeesh, Chairman, Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Ltd (KTIL); Mr. Devidas N IAS, District Collector, Kollam; Mr. Vishnu Raj P. IAS, Additional Director (General), Kerala Tourism; Mr. Jyothish Kesav, Secretary, District Tourism Promotion Council, Kollam; Dr Manoj Kumar K, Managing Director, KTIL; Municipal Councillors Mr. AK Sawad and Mr. Sajeew Soman were also present.

The Rs two-crore project, which has secured administrative sanction of the Tourism Department, will lead to the development of a

70-cent site. The recreational facilities in the site will benefit the youth, children and the elders alike.

The plan envisages walking tracks, street furniture, food kiosks, courts for games such as badminton and basketball, a chess block, skating area, open gym and yoga-cum-meditation centre.

The blueprint for the project is drawn up by KTIL and Habitat Group has been selected as the Project Management Consultant. Kollam Municipal Corporation is entrusted with the management and maintenance of the facility in association with DTPC and departments concerned.

KTDC: Revamped facilities attract more guests

KTDC is facing a facelift as many of its properties are revamped to the next level. Consolidating Kerala's standing as a fast-emerging hub of destination weddings and MICE tourism, Samudra Kovalam, the beach side resort of the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) re-opened after adding a whole range of world class features as part of the first phase of its renovation. The current round of renovation has added another 40 rooms and

turning the property and its surroundings into an ideal locale for high-end weddings and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tourism. A newly renovated destination property joins the resort line-up of Kerala Tourism Development Corporation, the official host of Kerala and the largest public sector hotel chain. KTDC hotel, formerly known as 'Tamarind Kollam' is renovated and rebranded as Aqua Land. The state government is making

all efforts to ensure that beach tourism projects align with prevailing demands by leveraging the immense possibilities of this niche segment and improving the standard of hospitality, said Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas. He was speaking after opening the renovated Samudra Kovalam, the beachside resort of Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) in Thiruvananthapuram, which now flaunts a whole range of world-class features.

Tourism Emerging as Kerala's Key Growth Driver, Minister Riyas

Special efforts for State's tourism marketing and uplifting Wayanad tourism

Interview with Shri. PA Mohammed Riyas, Minister for Tourism and Public Works

What are the priorities of tourism development in the state?

Kerala's tourism sector indeed has remarkable potential for growth, and we are focusing on harnessing that. Embracing emerging trends like MICE, destination weddings, and experiential responsible tourism can position Kerala as a global leader in diverse travel experiences. Also we give emphasis on adventure tourism which is very promising.

Kerala Tourism is taking efforts to market it internationally and that could attract a wide array of adventure enthusiasts from around the world. Additionally, integrating responsible tourism practices is crucial. As global awareness about sustainable travel increases, tourists are more likely to choose destinations that prioritize environmental conservation and community welfare. Kerala's commitment to these principles can set it apart as a destination that values both its natural beauty and cultural heritage. We are on a strong path to leveraging its unique assets and adapting to evolving trends in tourism.

What is the focus of Kerala Tourism to attract both domestic and foreign tourists?

Kerala's proactive approach in leveraging both traditional and digital marketing strategies is successful. By maintaining a strong presence in international and domestic markets, Kerala Tourism is well-positioned to attract a diverse range of visitors. The focus on social media with campaigns like "Ente Keralam Ennum Sundaram" and "#ItsKeralaSeason" is particularly strategic. Social media platforms are powerful tools for reaching potential tourists, allowing for real-time engagement and broader reach. Highlighting Kerala's beauty and diverse attractions through these platforms can effectively counter any negative impacts from recent events, such as the natural disaster in Wayanad. This holistic approach can help reassure potential tourists that the state is open and welcoming, and that there are plenty of other captivating destinations to explore. Moreover, campaigns that emphasize Kerala's unique offerings—such as its natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and adventure tourism—can draw attention and inspire travel. By highlighting the ongoing recovery and the beauty of the entire state, these campaigns can help restore and boost tourism across all regions.

Kerala has taken a grand stride in terms of woman-friendly tourism. What is the current status of it?

With regard to women-friendly tourism, we are far ahead and is gaining momentum in

Kerala with government initiatives turning the entire state into a safe, clean and comfortable destination for women to travel solo or in groups. Kerala has set another successful model by promoting women-friendly tourism in partnership with UN Women. It has become a global trend for women to travel on their own or with friends, colleagues or family members, especially after the Covid pandemic. When hosts are also women, they feel more comfortable. This model also opens plenty of economic opportunities for women.

What are the strategies to instil the spirit of tourism among the youngsters?

Students are tomorrow's leaders. We are keen to inculcate the spirit of tourism among students of Schools and Higher Education Institutions. Tourism Clubs are already active in the state. It is significant that youngsters become promoters of Kerala tourism by joining the campus tourism clubs. The youngsters shall be the brand ambassadors of Kerala tourism, and tourism clubs set up to promote youth participation in the tourism sector have a significant role in creating a tourism culture in Kerala to tap the global potential of this vital sector. A very comprehensive plan is being formulated to have increased role and activities for Tourism clubs and the initiative will be inaugurated next month.

What role the Design Policy will have on tourism?

Indeed Kerala's comprehensive design policy aims to enhance the state's tourism sector by transforming public spaces into sustainable, durable and visually appealing areas for visitors and the local community. The attractiveness of public places and tourist attractions will be multiplied through implementing the design policy principles. The urban tourism will certainly have enhanced appeal among tourists. Moreover, it will supplement the efforts of the state's tourism to promote sustainable tourism. The current development is not just a local improvement but a model for future projects across the state, aiming to create engaging and sustainable public spaces for all.



Kerala Tourism to develop young ambassadors through Tourism Clubs: S.K Sajeesh, Chairman, KTIL

Kerala Tourism is embarking on an exciting initiative to rejuvenate its tourism clubs under a new nodal agency, Kerala Tourism Club. This effort, spearheaded by S. K Sajeesh, Chairman of KTIL and the board of tourism clubs, aims to cultivate young ambassadors of Kerala Tourism by establishing clubs in colleges across the state. According to Sajeesh, this new strategy is expected to spark fresh tourism trends and deepen students' interest in travel, recognizing that youth are a vital and dynamic segment of the population.

The core objective of the Kerala Tourism Club is to promote and advance tourism through student engagement. By joining these clubs, students will have the opportunity to enhance their soft skills and apply innovative ideas to foster a responsible tourism network. College



clubs will be encouraged to adopt nearby destinations and engage in activities related to management and environmental stewardship.

Destinations that are managed exceptionally well will be honoured at both district and state levels. Additionally, there will be various workshops, competitions, seminars, and events organized at district and state levels.

The official framework and operational details of the Kerala Tourism Club will be revealed by Sri. P A Muhammed Riyas, Minister for Tourism and Public Works, by October. This initiative is designed not only to boost the travel and hospitality sector but also to broaden students' horizons, offering them practical experience beyond theoretical knowledge. It aims to foster financial independence and self-sufficiency from a young age. Sajeesh highlighted that involving youth in tourism management is expected to lead to more sustainable and effective tourism practices in the future.

Fort Kochi to get a facelift, new waste management plan in the pipeline; Vishnu Raj IAS, ADG-Tourism

Fort Kochi, with its rich history and vibrant cultural scene, is indeed a jewel of Kerala. As it faces challenges with waste management, a comprehensive approach is being planned to make it litter-free. Fort Kochi indeed stands as a vibrant testament to India's diverse heritage. Its evolution from an early European settlement to a contemporary hub of art and culture highlights the dynamic nature of cultural preservation and innovation. Along with the monumental architecture and vibrant, multicultural atmosphere of the "Jew Town" and various places of worship, Fort Kochi has managed to preserve its past while embracing modernity. The fishing villages and their traditional practices add a layer of authenticity to the experience, showcasing a living heritage that continues to thrive amidst change. The Kochi-Muziris Biennale is a significant addition to this rich legacy, positioning Fort Kochi as a center of contemporary art on a global scale.



The proposed community-driven initiative has several key strategies and practices to ensure its success and sustainability in addressing Fort Kochi's waste management and

plastic pollution crisis and to modernise the destination. Infrastructure investment, system for interdepartmental coordination and that with stakeholders, and a single command point stationed in Fort Kochi itself to manage the affairs are essential elements of the new plan. Fort Kochi area shall be segmented into units/streets or better management. The plan is to incorporate all the good efforts being done by various agencies and stakeholders under a community driven scheme with proper planning and timely assessments. The key to its success lies in the day-to-day ownership and active participation of local residents. By fostering a collective commitment to a clean and healthy environment, the program aims to instil a sense of responsibility and enhance the city's overall cleanliness. A shared dedication to maintaining a neat and healthy Fort Kochi will ensure the program's long-term effectiveness and sustainability.

Kerala is a futuristic tourism destination: Shri Riyas

By implementing novel tourism initiatives and introducing products on the lines of emerging trends, Kerala has turned out to be a futuristic tourism destination by attracting visitors from across the globe, Tourism Minister Mr. P A Mohamed Riyas said.

Mr. Riyas was speaking during his interaction with Mr Abel Despaigne, Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of Republic of Cuba in India, on Kerala Tourism, at Thiruvananthapuram on July 02.

Introducing the unique attractions of Kerala Tourism, Mr. Riyas noted that the state's verdant coastal areas, picturesque backwaters and misty high ranges make Kerala the most preferred destination for tourists.

"Being an all-season tourism destination is one of the stand-out features of Kerala. Initiatives like Responsible Tourism (RT) project, experiential tourism concepts and sustainable approaches have helped attract tourists to the state," he said.

Elaborating on the features of other major attractions like Ayurveda wellness tourism, Caravan Kerala and adventure tourism, Shri Riyas said the state has registered a substantial increase in tourists' arrival from other states and abroad.



Mr Despaigne, who is on a nine-day visit to Kerala, said Cuba is giving huge prominence to mutual cooperation with Kerala in the tourism sector.

Commenting on the historical importance of the political and cultural exchanges between Kerala and Cuba, Mr Despaigne said this cooperation has to be extended to other sectors, including tourism.

During his presentation on Cuban tourism, Mr Despaigne said that, like Kerala, his country's tourism activities are mainly focused on the landscape adjacent to the sea.

Mr. K Biju IAS, Kerala Tourism Secretary, who presided over the function, said possibilities of collaboration with Cuba in the tourism sector will be examined as the state is eager to associate with the island nation in North America.

Ms. Sikha Surendran IAS, Kerala Tourism Director who made a presentation on the salient features of Kerala Tourism, said Kerala is forging ahead with its activities by giving thrust to experiential tourism through innovative modules, including agri-tourism and RT.

Tourism Additional Director (General) Mr. Vishnuraj P IAS proposed a vote of thanks.

Kerala Tourism's guest houses to get facelift

The guest houses under the Tourism Department are set to get a major facelift with the state government giving nod to the proposals for renovation works as part of a project to upgrade and improve amenities at these prime properties, running into around Rs 28.5 crore.

The interior furnishing of the new block at

the guest house at the scenic Ponmudi will be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 99,90,960. The Tourism Department aims to complete the works at this property in December.

The government has approved the proposal for the renovation of Yathri Nivas located on the premises of the guest house in Kozhikode at a cost of Rs 9 crore.

Yathri Nivas at Devikulam, opened in 2014, will get a makeover at a cost of Rs 98 lakh. The works at this property include renovation of building, office room exterior, kitchen, staffroom, electrification and landscaping.

A Rs 10,39,52,619 worth project has been got approval for the

conservation, repair and restoration works in the heritage wing at the guest house in Kollam. It is expected to be completed in 18 months.

The government has given administrative sanction for Rs 6,50,00,000 for the renovation works of the iconic Kerala House in Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu to spruce up the facilities considering the prominence of the property. This project will be completed in 18 months.

"These are prime properties of Kerala Tourism Department, which have a steady footfall of visitors. The renovation project will add new features and make the stay in these guest houses more comfortable and pleasant," said Tourism Minister Mr. P A Mohamed Riyas.

"The work will be completed within the time-frame set for each one of them," he added.

A building for staff room and car parking cum drivers' room will come up at the guest house in Kozhikode. Administrative sanction has been given for Rs 66,00,000 to implement the project that also includes other general upgrading activities at the facility. It will be completed in 12 months.



Kerala Tourism Wins PATA Gold Award 2024 in Bangkok

Kerala Tourism has been honored with the prestigious Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award 2024 for its innovative online contest 'Holiday Heist,' in the Digital Marketing Campaign category. The award was presented at a grand ceremony in Bangkok on August 28, 2024.

Tourism Director Smt. Sikha Surendran accepted the award during the PATA Travel Mart 2024 at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC) in Thailand's capital. The award was presented by PATA Chair Mr. Peter Semone, in the presence of Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director of the Macao Government Tourism Office, and Mr. Noor Ahmad Hamid, PATA CEO. Notably, Kerala Tourism was the only destination from India to receive a PATA Gold Award this year.

Expressing his delight, Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas stated, "This year's PATA Gold Award for Kerala's Digital Marketing campaign is a testament to our creative and strategic efforts to spark visitors' interest in the state's unique offerings." Shri Riyas highlighted that Kerala has consistently developed innovative tourist products to attract both domestic and international visitors. He added, "Holiday Heist' was a groundbreaking initiative designed to entice tourists to Kerala's prime destinations at incredibly low prices."

The 'Holiday Heist' campaign, launched in July 2023, was conceived and executed by Kerala Tourism's branding and marketing agency, Stark Communications. The month-long campaign engaged travelers through a thrilling bidding game on Kerala Tourism's WhatsApp chatbot,



Maya. It quickly became a massive hit, with participants placing uniquely low bids to win travel packages to Kerala's spectacular destinations.

Tourism Secretary Shri K Biju emphasized that 'Holiday Heist' was a trendsetting online campaign that bolstered Kerala's reputation as a must-visit tourist destination. "The campaign attracted over 80,000 bids, generated 5.2 lakh conversations, received 45 million impressions, and garnered 13 million video views," he noted.

Tourism Director Ms. Sikha Surendran expressed her satisfaction with the award, noting that Kerala Tourism has received PATA Awards in various categories over the years. "This year's

award is especially gratifying as it recognizes Kerala's innovative digital marketing campaign, which set a new standard for creativity and achieved significant engagement with visitors."

The 'Holiday Heist' campaign centered around the concept of 'lowest unique bidding,' challenging participants to win tour packages by placing the lowest and most distinctive bids. Some participants managed to secure packages worth over Rs 30,000 for as little as 5 rupees.

Established in 1984, the PATA Grand and Gold Awards honor the finest contributions from the travel industry in the Asia-Pacific region, with winning projects consistently setting benchmarks for excellence and creativity.

Kerala Wins ICRT Gold Award for Beypore Responsible Tourism Project

For the third consecutive year, Kerala Tourism has been honored with the prestigious Gold Award from the International Centre for Responsible Tourism, India Foundation (ICRT India). This year, the award recognizes the Comprehensive Responsible Tourism (RT) project in Beypore, located in Kozhikode district.

The award was presented to K Rupeshkumar, CEO of the Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society (KRTM Society), by Shri Satpal Maharaj, Uttarakhand Minister for Tourism and Culture, during the ICRT conference held in New Delhi.

Kerala Tourism received the award in the

"Employing and Upskilling Local Community" category, highlighting the successful implementation of initiatives in Beypore that enhance the area's tourism potential while creating jobs and empowering the local community, especially women.

Kerala Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohamed Riyas remarked that the state's Responsible Tourism efforts are effectively leveraging its vast potential in travel and hospitality to benefit local communities. "Consistently winning international accolades helps us stay aligned with global tourism trends, enabling us to adapt our industry to meet new demands. Our success is evident in our world-class products," he said.





Anti-Narcotics

Orientation Session on the ill effects of Drug Abuse was provided to newly admitted students of FYUGP Programme by Shri. Vignesh Viswananth, Vimukthi Mission Co-ordinator, Thiruvananthapuram on 9th July at KITTS campus. This was followed by an Awareness Drama against Drug Abuse, Paadam Onnu Oru Madhyapaaniyude Aathmakadha organised by Janamaithri wing of Kerala Police on 6th August 2024. Students also took a pledge against the usage of narcotics was conducted on 16th August 2024 to mark the fourth anniversary of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan, an initiative that embodies the collective commitment to create a drug-free India, empowering youth to lead healthier, more productive lives.

Yuvajanotsavam Programme by Asianet News

The Asianet News Channel organized the Yuvajanotsavam Programme at KITTS campus on 8th August 2024. The discussion focused mainly on the landslide at Wayanad. Other areas of discussions included Mullaperiyar Dam issue, Vinesh Phogat losing medal at Olympics, Tourism in general, Drug Abuse in campus, Modification of vehicles etc. The programme was telecasted in Asianet News Channel on 10th August 2024.



Anti-Ragging

A pledge on Anti - Ragging was taken by students on 12th August 2024 at the Academic Block as the day is observed as Anti-Ragging Day. The Principal of the institute delivered the pledge, which was repeated by students. The institute has taken an earnest effort to make all the students fill Anti Ragging Undertaking online in the Anti-ragging website.



National Sports Day

National Sports Day was celebrated at KITTS on 29th August, in order to honour the legacy of Major Dhyan Chand and underscore the importance of physical fitness and sportsmanship among people of all. Sports competitions such as Chess, Carroms, Skipping Rope, Basketball shoot and Football Penalty shoot was organised

Har Ghar Tiranga

Har Ghar Thiranga, a campaign that started under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to encourage people to bring the Tiranga (National Flag) home and to hoist it to mark India's independence was celebrated with students of KITTS taking Tiranga Pledge at the campus on 14th August 2024. Teachers and students also celebrated our Independence Day on August 15th. at KITTS Campus.

National Space Day

KITTS organized an exhibition on National Space Day at Residential building on August 23, 2024. The event aimed to inspire students and attendees to develop deeper insights on the field of space science and space tourism. The exhibition featured various informative displays, models, and presentations that highlighted the significance of space exploration and technological advancements.

Sustainable constructions: The need of the hour in tourism sector



Dr. Saroop Roy B.R.

Tourism happens in many eco-sensitive areas susceptible to natural disasters. Natural disasters occur due to natural calamities as well as human interventions. We have limited control over natural activities and therefore human interventions in these areas need to be limited to conserve it. The significance of sustainable constructions in tourism destinations need to be seen in this context. Sustainable construction in tourism can help reduce the environmental impact of the industry while also value the local community. According to UN Tourism, tourism and construction play key roles in a circular economy framework that supports sustainable development. Embracing circularity in sectors like tourism and construction requires systematic tracking of environmental and social impacts.

The first aspect to be considered for sustainable constructions is careful choosing of the sites. The needs of the local community and alternative uses for the land have to be considered while doing the selection. The selected land has to be managed in ways that minimize negative environmental impacts, preserve ecosystems, and avoid over-exploitation.

Green building designs that reduce energy consumption, promote sustainability, and minimize environmental impact have to be incorporated in sustainable tourism constructions. They integrate a range of strategies and technologies to conserve resources while enhancing the health and comfort of occupants. In Green building designs, use of local materials is given importance for construction. Prioritizing locally sourced materials and products support local economies and reduces transportation emissions. Utmost care is also given to avoid wasting natural resources like timber, sand,



stone, and gravel. Green buildings use advanced heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) systems, lighting, and appliances that consume less energy compared to conventional systems. They often incorporate renewable energy sources such as solar panels, wind turbines, or geothermal systems to generate power on-site. By using better insulation materials and ensuring buildings are airtight, energy loss is minimized, which reduces the need for heating and cooling. Automated lighting, temperature control, and energy management systems help optimize energy use based on real-time needs. Green buildings are often designed to take advantage of natural airflow and daylight, reducing the reliance on artificial lighting and air conditioning. Usage of LED lights and appliances with 5-star energy rating are incorporated to make the operations highly energy-efficient. Green buildings often include systems to reduce water usage, such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling, which in turn decreases the energy needed for water heating and treatment. Low-flow toilets and showerheads that reduce the amount of water used per flush or shower are also encouraged. Green building designs also encourage recycling, reducing waste generation, and managing materials through circular processes to minimize environmental impacts.

The facilities that need to be provided in the site varies with the geographical terrain and climatic conditions of the area. For example,

swimming pools, especially in landslide-prone areas, can indeed contribute to ground instability if not carefully managed. The cumulative weight of the pool structure and water can put additional pressure on the soil, especially in areas with loose or weak ground materials. Leaks in swimming pools, even minor ones, can infiltrate the ground, weakening the bonds between soil particles, which leads to instability and a higher chance of ground movement. Without efficient drainage systems, excess water from rainfall or pool overflow can puddle in the soil, adding further stress and potentially creating a landslide hazard. In some areas, specialized engineering methods like retaining walls and controlled water diversion might also be necessary to enhance slope stability.

Sustainable construction models also need to ensure that tourism activities envisaged do not harm local wildlife and ecosystems, and promote the protection of natural habitats. Practices that reduce carbon emissions and promote resilience to climate change also need to be incorporated in their designs. It is also important to conserve the local culture and traditional values that contribute to inter-cultural understanding and creating job opportunities that are sustainable, fair, and contribute to local community well-being. By integrating these factors into a circular economy model, both tourism and construction can significantly reduce their environmental footprint while promoting long-term sustainability.

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