



Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan to Inaugurate Kerala Travel Mart in September - KTM has a key role in scaling up global appeal of Kerala Tourism: Minister P C Vishnunadh



Chief Minister Shri V D Satheesan will inaugurate the 13th edition of the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), the country's largest tourism and hospitality sector business event, on September 24 in Kochi, Minister for Tourism and Culture Shri P.C. Vishnunadh announced at a press conference here today.

The upcoming edition of KTM assumes added significance since it is the first major tourism sector event after the new government came to power in the state.

The grand inaugural ceremony will take place at the Grand Hyatt Convention Centre in Bolgatty, while the B2B meets and other proceedings of the event will be hosted at the

Sagara and Samudrika Convention Centres at Willingdon Island, Kochi. The business meets of the mart will be held from September 25 to 27.

The minister said that the government is preparing a framework to implement the proposal announced in the recent state budget to grant industry status to Kerala's tourism sector.

He said KTM can serve as a major platform to reposition and strengthen Kerala's tourism brand in an increasingly competitive global market. "Kerala tourism competes with other countries, not with other Indian states," he noted.

The minister also stressed the need to rebrand Kerala's Ayurveda and wellness tourism offerings to ramp up their relevance and appeal.

Shri Vishnunadh noted that inbound tourist arrivals to Kerala have continued to grow despite the conflict in the Middle East. He highlighted a rise in visitors from Arab countries, many of whom are drawn to Kerala's monsoon tourism experiences.

The Minister added that the Tourism Department is focused on showcasing Kerala's core strengths, including its rich cultural heritage, performing arts and cuisine. "These are areas where Kerala enjoys a unique advantage and faces little direct competition," he said.

All-time record in buyer registrations

With nearly three months still left for the event, KTM has already secured an all-time record of 2,360 buyer registrations. This includes 610 international buyers and 1,750 domestic buyers. Media interest for the event has also scaled up, with 117 media registrations received so far, comprising 60 international and 57 domestic media houses.

The mart will feature 366 sellers (exhibitors) along with 25 delegates across various sponsorship and government stalls.

The three-day event will encompass business meets, policy-making conventions, and focussed seminars led by national and international industry experts. The post-event tours are scheduled to take place from September 28 to October 3, organized across twelve distinct geographic tracks. A dedicated pre-mart tour program will also be conducted specifically for invited foreign and domestic journalists.

A defining feature of this edition is its complete transition into a fully digital ecosystem. All core procedures at the mart, right from user registrations to business-to-business (B2B) meetings, will be entirely digitized using brand-new software and a dedicated mobile application.

As part of introducing innovative tourism products, the Wedding and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) Conclave, recently organized by KTM in partnership with the State Tourism Department, achieved massive success. The conclave concluded with major announcements, including the upcoming formation of the Kerala Convention Promotion Bureau and a dedicated sector-specific policy.

Tourism Secretary Shri K. Biju noted that KTM has the potential to expand into a global trade fair with participation from all nations. He added that such a transition will unlock massive global avenues for tour operators and tourism business enterprises based in India.

Tourism Director Smt M. Anjana said the event offers a prime opportunity for all active stakeholders in the industry to closely study the latest emerging trends in the tourism market.

The press conference was attended by Tourism Additional Director Smt Sreedhanya Suresh, KTM President Shri Jose Pradeep, Secretary Shri S. Swaminathan, former presidents Shri Baby Mathew, Shri Abraham George and Shri E.M. Najeeb, Treasurer Shri Jibran Asif, and Joint Secretary Shri Jobin Joseph.

The executive office-bearers added that active, aggressive campaigns are currently underway under the leadership of KTM to attract more foreign buyers from untapped global markets to Kerala, while simultaneously identifying fresh buyers from traditional markets to participate in the upcoming mart.

Website: www.keralatravelmart.org