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**Press Release**

**Winners of Kerala Tourism's 3rd International Painting Competition announced**

- **Painting competition helped propagate Kerala's brand as an international tourist destination: PA Mohamed Riyas**
- **The competition received 57,308 entries from 132 countries.**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 4:** Kerala Tourism has announced the winners of the 3rd International Online Painting Competition for Children, which received 57,308 entries from 132 countries.

Works of Steven David (Bangladesh), Madhuri Singh (Rajasthan) and Varnana Ratheesh (Kerala) were adjudged as the best in the three respective categories - foreign countries, other Indian states, and Kerala - in the competition themed "Kerala's Village Life."

Winners and their families will enjoy a five-day tour of exotic Kerala destinations and receive prizes at the end of it in the state capital.

The competition for children aged 4 to 16 was part of Kerala Tourism's campaign to make the southern state a global tourist destination. The campaign attracted remarkable participants, with 46,066 children from 132 countries submitting entries. Among these, 4,620 entries came from abroad, 46,464 from other Indian states, and 6,224 from within Kerala.

"The response to the competition for students was tremendous. It allowed us to showcase Kerala's diverse and rich cultural heritage as a tourist destination," stated Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohamed Riyas.

The minister also mentioned that the competition theme, 'Kerala's village life,' helped highlight the positive aspects of tourism for children.

"Kerala has received numerous global awards for promoting responsible tourism in rural areas," he added.

Nika Hristic (Serbia), Martin Lambev (Bulgaria), Irina Barabanova (Russia), Maxsetova Almira (Uzbekistan), Liliana Brito Sanchez (Cuba), Sinali Peiris (Sri Lanka), Alexander Metzger (Germany), Kariyawasam Idipalage Senudi (Sri Lanka), Zhiyu Ye (China), Chloe Marsh (UK) were the ten winners from foreign countries.



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They will have the opportunity to stay for five days in Kerala and visit tourist spots with two family members.

Winners from Indian states include Dolbee Rani Parida (Orissa), Kritika Kushwaha (Maharashtra), Skanda R, SB Shrivantika, and Dhiya H (Tamil Nadu). They will also have the opportunity to stay with their families and explore tourist attractions in Kerala for five days.

The winners from Kerala are Jaganath KM, Malavika VP, and Sahasra Vinu. They will receive booking coupons for a two-day stay at one of KTDC's premium hotels.

Tourism Secretary K Biju said the overwhelming participation of contestants from India and abroad is a testament to the excellence of Kerala's tourism sector.

Tourism Director Sikha Surendran said the campaign used 24 languages, 14 of which were foreign, and is estimated to have reached around seven million people.

Promoters who facilitated significant participation will also receive awards. Notable international promoters include Nafisa Tabassum Authay (Bangladesh), Lyceum International School (Sri Lanka), Cernea Caterina Eugenia (Romania), Ann Rozenkova (Russia), and Di Coke (UK). Those from India who will be recognised include Dr C Senthil Kumar, Arunachalam N (Tamil Nadu), Ponam D Thakkar, Dijo John (Karnataka), and Prasad Dattatray Chavan (Maharashtra). They will also be invited to visit Kerala for five days.

Additionally, 22 foreign children, 30 from India and 20 from Kerala will be awarded consolation prizes.

A screening committee selected the best paintings, which then went to an expert judging panel. Finalists were chosen from 2,000 paintings in the first round, and 103 prizes, including consolation prizes, were up for grabs.

The first edition of the competition in 2014 attracted 4,169 participants from 37 countries. In the second edition, held in 2018, this number grew to 48,390 from 133 countries.

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