



Department of Tourism

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PRESS RELEASE

Kerala Tourism's 'Holiday Heist' campaign on Maya ChatBot wins PATA Gold Award

Thiruvananthapuram, July 19: Kerala Tourism has won the coveted Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award 2024 for its online contest 'Holiday Heist' in Digital Marketing Campaign category, marking a big endorsement of its innovative initiatives to attract visitors.

'Holiday Heist', the month-long ground-breaking campaign was launched in July 2023 to woo tourists through an engaging and thrilling bidding game on the Tourism Department's WhatsApp ChatBot Maya. Right from the start, it turned out to be a resounding success with travellers from across the country making a whopping 80,000 bids to visit the state's prime destinations at unbelievably low prices.

The bidding game, conducted in July 2023, also generated over 45 million impressions besides amassing a formidable 13 million plus video views.

The first-ever initiative of its kind in the country, some lucky participants, through their ingenious bids, managed to secure tour packages worth over Rs 30,000 for a mere 5 rupees.

Interestingly, throughout the campaign period, 'Maya', the Kerala Tourism ChatBot, witnessed a remarkable 5.2 lakh interactions, bubbling with shared enthusiasm, dreams, and aspirations as participants bonded over their love for travel in and exploration of God's Own Country.

The unique game revolved around the concept of 'lowest unique bidding', challenging participants to secure incredible tour packages with their lowest and distinctive bids. Unlike traditional auctions, strategic thinking and creativity were at the forefront, celebrating the uniqueness of each player.

The exciting campaign was powered by 'Maya', Kerala Tourism's official WhatsApp ChatBot (reachable at 7510512345). Throughout the campaign period, Maya daily unveiled new tour packages for 30 days, providing participants fresh chances to triumph in each day of July last year.

The PATA Gold Award 2024 will be presented to Kerala Tourism at a function to be held at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand on August 28.

Terming 'Holiday Heist' as a milestone in tourism marketing by tourist destinations of the country, Tourism Minister Shri P. A. Mohamed Riyas said the innovative campaign redefined



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tour package promotions, besides inspiring strategic thinking, creativity and kindling the spirit of adventure.

“The award is a vital recognition of Kerala Tourism’s aggressive promotional campaign, through which we were able to woo back tourists post-pandemic era. We have to keep up the momentum of growth by introducing brilliant and novel concepts like this in the sector,” he said.

Shri Riyas said the campaign also had instilled huge confidence among stakeholders with its phenomenal response from visitors.

Tourism Secretary Shri K Biju said the campaign played a key role in ensuring a massive uptick in the number of domestic tourists.

Tourism Director Smt Sikha Surendran said it is significant this global honour has been bestowed on Kerala Tourism at a time when the state witnesses a sharp increase in arrival of holiday-makers from all key markets around the world.

Set up in 1984, the PATA Grand and Gold Awards recognise the finest contributions from the travel industry in the Asia- Pacific region with the winning projects consistently creating benchmarks for excellence and creativity.

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