



Department of Tourism

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Press Release

Kerala Tourism signs MoU with KSUM for tech integration of projects

- **Caravan parks, startup pods and tech based sanitary solutions initial priorities**

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan. 22: In a country first initiative, Kerala Tourism department today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) to leverage innovative solutions for enhancing tourism experience by onboarding the state's flourishing startup ecosystem.

Tourism Director Smt Sikha Surendran and KSUM CEO Shri Anoop Ambika signed the MoU, in the presence of Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas, at a function held at Mascot Hotel.

"By integrating innovative ideas and technology from the state's robust startup ecosystem, the state can accelerate the growth of the tourism sector, especially in the context of the state's focus on increasing the foreign tourist footfall," said tourism minister Mohamed Riyas.

"This financial year will see technology dominated innovations in tourism sector and this MoU will act as a catalyst in that direction," he added.

The collaboration is set to bring about a major transformation in the state's tourism sector which will enable a far more hassle-free travel experience and increase the tourist footfall in the state.

The partnership will also help develop attractive tourism products and present them across the globe with the help of innovative ideas and technologies.

The MoU aims at setting up an innovation centre which is also the first such initiative in the country.

One of the key objectives of the partnership is the promotion of caravan tourism, by establishing modern, well-equipped caravan parks, to attract both domestic and foreign tourists by offering a unique travel experience in line with global trends.

It also seeks to promote Workation/Startup Pods, blending scenic accommodations with co-working facilities, to cater to the growing demand for remote work opportunities in picturesque settings.



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This MoU with KSUM is a significant step towards integrating tourism sector with tech-based solutions, said Smt Sikha Surendran.

“Many ideas are under consideration of the Tourism Department to ramp up the state’s tourism sector. Our top priority is to provide tech-based solutions to address issues in tourism sector in areas like basic amenities, security and enhancing tourism experience,” she said.

A literature circuit where tourists can experience destinations linked to Malayalam literary classics is under consideration since many of these have been translated into global languages, she added.

Addressing the students of Kerala Tourism Club and Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies (KITTS), present at the function, Shri Anoop Ambika said “We should think about out of the box ideas which can be developed into viable products in tourism, that are unique to Kerala and add value to Tourism sector.

“We are planning on three projects initially, Caravan trails, an app where everyone can pitch in with less explored places in a region which has the potential of tourism for the benefit of caravan tourists. Secondly, the startup pods which aim to attract tech-crowd by providing fully facilitated pods in scenic locations to promote better workation experience. The third is to find tech-based solutions for better public restroom facilities,” said Shri Anoop.

Shri S K Sajesh, Chairman, Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Ltd (KTIL), Dr Dileep M R, Director, Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS), P Vishnuraj, Additional Director (General) and Dr. Manoj Kini, Managing Director, KTIL attended the function.

Shri Sajesh mentioned how the cutting-edge technologies like VR and AI can be integrated into tourism for better experience.

Dr. Manoj Kini said it is important to create interpretation centres where the tourists can have vivid glimpses into the cultural context of tourist destinations and products.

The partnership between Tourism Department and KSUM also underscores the importance of sustainable solutions by focusing on eco-friendly sanitation systems and deploying tech-enabled cleaning mechanisms.

It also envisions introduction of AI-powered multilingual information kiosks to provide seamless and accessible assistance to tourists for a well informed and convenient travel experience.



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Central to the agreement is the establishment of the Freedom Square, which will serve as a hub for collaboration, fostering innovation and entrepreneurial growth.

The creation of a Hospitality and Tourism Innovation Centre is another key feature, aimed at nurturing innovative solutions tailored to the tourism sector.

This centre will act as a catalyst for startups to develop and deploy technologies that enhance operational efficiency and customer engagement within the industry.

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