



**Department of Tourism**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Kerala's projects to ramp up tourism in Varkala, Thalassery receive centre's nod;  
total outlay Rs 50 Cr**

- **"A big boost to Kerala Tourism," says Tourism Minister Mohamed Riyas**
- **Projects come under Swadesh Darshan 2.0**

**Thiruvananthapuram, April 23:** In a big boost to cultural and spiritual tourism in Kerala, the Centre has given administrative and financial sanction to the destination development projects submitted by the state government to promote Varkala and Thalassery in a big way under the Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme, having an outlay of Rs 25 crore each.

While Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram district has been included in the 'Culture and Heritage' category, Thalassery in Kannur district comes under 'Spiritual Tourism' category, both as part of the 'Challenge Based Destination Development' initiative under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme.

These projects were cleared by the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee (CSMC) of the Union Ministry of Tourism, which went into the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) submitted by the state Tourism Department.

Welcoming the decision, Kerala Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas said the state government considered these projects as significant since both Varkala and Thalassery hold huge potential to attract domestic and international tourists, considering their social, cultural and spiritual importance.

"Both Varkala and Thalassery are historically, culturally and spiritually important places in Kerala's inclusive and eclectic social ecosystem. Both the places are also known for their natural beauty. Creating sustainable infrastructure, improving quality of services and enhancing the total ambience of these two destinations will further ramp up Kerala's position as a global tourism brand that promises a holistic experience for visitors," Shri Riyas said.

In its DPRs the state Tourism Department tagged the project concerning Varkala as 'Varkala—Dakshin Kashi in Kerala' and that of Thalassery as "Thalassery-the Spiritual Nexus in Kerala."

The project for Varkala envisions major destination development interventions to ramp up facilities in a sustainable, inclusive and smart manner.



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These include development of eco-friendly infrastructure, heritage streets and beach promenade, sustainable waste management systems, tapping renewable energy, digitisation of services and marketing, skilling interventions for marketing and entrepreneurship development and leveraging MSMEs in marketing and branding.

The destination management interventions in Thalassery will cover heritage streets and sites, local shrines including the famous Jagannatha temple, Thazhe Angadi Heritage Precinct revitalization, the traditional martial art centre Ponniyam Kalari, Tourist Amenity centre at Chirakku Kavu Bhagavathi Temple and a Theyyam and cultural centre at Chokli with performance and exhibition spaces. Sustainable infrastructure development, digitisation and marketing and promotion initiatives will also be part of the project.

Recently, the Centre had approved two major destination development projects for Malampuzha garden and recreation park in Palakkad district and Alappuzha as a global water tourism hub under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme for a total amount of Rs. 169.05 crores.

**Ends**