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Press Release

Caravan Tourism well on track, Rs 3.10 cr earmarked in 2024-25 Budget: Tourism Department

- *Project received keen response; stakeholders taken on board*

Thiruvananthapuram, May 27: Kerala's Caravan Tourism project is well on track having received good response from the stakeholders, the state Tourism Department said today.

An amount of Rs 3.10 crore has been earmarked in 2024-25 budget, which reflects the importance the government gives to 'Keravan Kerala', the caravan tourism project.

As part of the project, the government has provided Rs 97.5 lakhs as subsidy to 13 entrepreneurs who have entered into contract with the Tourism Department for purchasing caravans. Each entrepreneur got Rs 7.5 lakh in this regard.

The Caravan Tourism project was conceived as a key component in the riveting mix that will help define the future of Kerala's fast-growing tourism sector, Tourism Secretary K Biju said.

Its details were worked out after hours of brainstorming involving policy makers, tourism stakeholders and domain experts, who converged on the view that this is an ideal mode to offer the best travel and holiday experience to both domestic and foreign tourists, he said.

"The project launch came with generous incentives and supports for caravan operators as well as park facilitators. It is unfair to dub such an evolving project with immense potential as having run off the track by citing some isolated cases," he added.

Right from the start, the response to the project from the stakeholders have been highly encouraging. The suggestions from their side have been accommodated to make the policy more feasible, sustainable and inclusive, said Shri K Biju.

The channels of communication with the stakeholders are alive, and they are free to engage with the officials without waiting for formal meetings to be convened, he added.

The government has intervened promptly in according clearances for caravan park developers who had run into problems with local authorities. For instance, Kaava Eco Camp, being developed by Mr Sajeer Kurup in Malampuzha, was served a stop memo by the



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Malampuzha Panchayat and the Irrigation Department. But this issue was resolved by the Kerala State Single Window Clearance Board (KSSWCB) chaired by the Chief Secretary. This enabled the developer to restart the work and the park will be ready soon.

Administrative sanction has been given to KTDC for developing caravan parks at Bekal in Kasaragod and Bolgatty Palace in Kochi, the tender process of which has been initiated. Moreover, steps are also on developing caravan parking facilities at the properties of KTDC at Bolgatty, Kumarakom, Thekkady, Munnar and Wayanad.

Also, Tourfed has been asked to submit proposals to formulate caravan tour packages.

“Caravan Tourism is an excellent idea for Kerala. It can offer a safe, affordable and lively travel experience for tourists. This will especially help connect a lot of unidentified and unexplored locations of great scope to allure tourists with major destinations,” said Shri Sajeev Kurup, who is developing a caravan park at Malampuzha in Palakkad district.

The delay in getting local level clearances for developing caravan parks could be overcome if the Tourism Department designates a high-ranking nodal officer to resolve the hitches faced by developers, Shri Kurup added.

“The state needs more caravan parks for the project to materialise as envisaged”, said a leading tour operator, adding “government should market the product among the right target audience outside the state and the country, to generate more enquiries.”

Since the launch of the project, meetings with tourism entrepreneurs had been regularly convened by the Tourism Department to seek their suggestions to improve the project and look into their concerns. The stakeholders had been extremely frank and forthcoming and their views and grievances promptly looked into by the Department.

Based on these interactions, the scope of the project has been widened. These include exploring a hybrid model of caravan tourism providing facilities of hotel along with caravan safari.

Developing Public Private Participation model, having tie-ups with hotels and resorts for parking spaces, utilising the properties of Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), effective inter-departmental coordination to avoid lag in facilitating clearances and incentives, roping in local self-government institutions and linking caravan experience with adventure and sporting tourism with proper safeguards were some of the outcomes of the engagement with stakeholders.

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