



Department of Tourism

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PRESS RELEASE

Kerala Tourism conferred PATA Gold Award 2024 in Bangkok

- **Tourism Director receives the award for Digital Marketing campaign**

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 28: Kerala Tourism was presented the globally acclaimed Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award 2024 for its online contest 'Holiday Heist' in the Digital Marketing Campaign category, at a splendid function in Bangkok today.

Tourism Director Smt Sikha Surendran received the award at a function held during PATA Travel Mart 2024, at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC) in the Thailand capital. The award was presented by Mr. Peter Semone, PATA Chair in the presence of Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director, Macao Government Tourism Office and Mr. Noor Ahmad Hamid, PATA CEO.

Kerala Tourism was the only destination from India to bag the PATA Gold award this year.

A jubilant Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas said "this year's PATA Gold Award for Kerala's Digital Marketing campaign is a reaffirmation and celebration of our ingenious planning to create out of the box strategies that trigger visitors' interest in the state's unique offerings."

Noting that Kerala has been making consistent efforts to craft pioneering products of touristry appeal to attract visitors from India and outside, Shri Riyas said "Holiday Heist was a one of its kind initiative to tempt tourists to Kerala's prime destinations at incredibly low prices."

'Holiday Heist', the month-long ground-breaking campaign conceived and executed by Kerala Tourism's branding and marketing agency, Stark Communications, was launched in July 2023 to woo tourists through an engaging and thrilling bidding game on the Tourism department's WhatsApp chatbot Maya. It became a phenomenal hit with travellers making uniquely lowest bids for visiting Kerala's spectacular destinations.

Tourism Secretary Shri K Biju said Holiday Heist was a trendsetting online campaign which bolstered Kerala's reputation as a must-see tourist destination. "This is evident from the fact that the campaign witnessed over 80,000 bids, 5.2 lakh conversations, 45 million impressions, and 13 million video views," he pointed out.

Tourism Director Ms Sikha Surendran said Kerala Tourism has been receiving the PATA Award over the years in different categories. "This year's award is particularly satisfying as



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it celebrated Kerala's ingenious digital tourism marketing campaign, setting a new standard for creativity and securing massive engagement with visitors.”

The month-long campaign revolved around the concept of 'lowest unique bidding', challenging participants to secure tour packages with their lowest and distinctive bids. Some participants, through their ingenious bids, secured tour packages worth over Rs 30,000 for a mere 5 rupees.

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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