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SWAGAT

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE FEDERATION OF KERALA HOTELS ASSOCIATION

BI-LINGUAL BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION

HERITAGE IN TOURISM

KERALA'S RICH HERITAGE
CAN PLAY A BIG ROLE IN
TOURISM

VIZHINJAM SEAPORT

A MARITIME GAME CHANGER

ROBOT KITCHENS

INTEGRATION OF AI IN THE
FOOD AND BEVERAGE
INDUSTRY CAN WORK
WONDERS FOR THE
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



KERALA TOURISM ALL SET FOR A QUANTUM LEAP

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FEDERATION OF KERALA HOTELS ASSOCIATION

Mission and Vision

To strive for the betterment of Hotel Industry and secure a dominant role as a contributor to sustainable tourism development by ensuring employment generation, economic prosperity and social development; achieve greater standards for the hospitality industry, especially for hoteliering and create a positive public image for the entire hotel industry within and outside the State.

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Swagat is the official organ of the Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA). Swagat is a bi-lingual, bi-monthly publication. We welcome comments and opinions from our patrons. We also welcome articles in English and Malayalam on diverse aspects of the tourism industry. Please send original photographs, or photographs with copyright, along with articles. Collections of photographs for photo essays are also welcome. Publication of articles and photographs will be strictly according to the discretion of the Editorial Board. Only soft copies of articles may be sent. The mail ID is fkhamagazineswagat@gmail.com.

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Navigating challenges, Seizing opportunities

The hospitality industry in Kerala, particularly the hotel sector, faces a complex landscape of challenges and opportunities. Kerala tourism has certainly bounced back from the debilitating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the hotel sector is yet to fully recover from the many complexities thrown up by the long shutdown. If the industry is able to put the bitter experiences of those dark days behind it, it is only on account of the support being extended to us by the Government of Kerala.

Endowed with natural beauty and a rich cultural legacy, Kerala attracts tourists globally, creating a healthy demand for quality accommodation. The last few years have seen the hotel industry rising to this challenge, investing heavily in accommodation facilities and offering many frills that travellers from near and far expect from a robust industry. The hygiene and safety standards that the pandemic forced upon populations everywhere are now part of the Kerala hotel industry's playbook.

We have joined the current trend of offering eco-friendly and sustainable hospitality to attract environmentally-conscious travellers. We have also embraced technology, from tie-ups with online booking platforms to contactless check-ins, for operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. As a result of all this, Kerala today has the highest number of 3-Star and 5-Star hotels in the country and is perhaps the only State to offer top-of-the-line accommodation facilities, food and beverages, even in small towns.

All this has, of course, brought in additional operational complexities, not to speak of the heavy cost burden on the hotel owners. The industry has been only happy to adapt to the new normal, but this cannot continue without the government meeting some of our key demands. We have for long been demanding 'industry status' for tourism. This would make the processes and procedures for setting up ventures and running them smoother and give the sector better and easier access to much-needed finance from banks and other sources. It is also our demand that we should be given interest and power subsidies.

The present practice of collecting the Turnover Tax (ToT) at different points is a major headache for us and we would urge the government to collect ToT at the first point. We also feel strongly that greater transparency in grant of licences and collection of taxes can be brought about by shifting both the processes to online platforms.

We are an industry where many players with different levels of financial capabilities operate. However, we are collectively conscious about our corporate social responsibility and we have done our bit in this direction with several CSR initiatives like substantial contribution to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund (CMDRF), provision of ambulances and, to top it all, setting

up the FKHA Institute of Hotel Management (FKHA-IHM) in 2019 to groom a new generation of hospitality professionals.

With the FKHA-IHM, our endeavour has been to make a dent in the unemployment scene in the State by creating professionals who can join the job market at a higher level of the value chain. Our training is not only free of cost, but we pay each student a stipend and we provide 100% placement to the successful students in the star hotels owned by members of the FKHA.

In-service training is also being offered to staff of various hotels, who have long experience, but not the necessary qualifications to move up the job ladder. Those who complete our courses are being offered promotions with higher pay packets. We are happy to state that around 500 students have passed out of our six centres and are employed gainfully in hotels and resorts within and outside Kerala, and abroad.

We see all this as our stakeholder responsibility and hope that the weighty burdens that we have taken upon our shoulders would be reciprocated equally by the administration.

Swagat, the magazine that you hold in your hands, is our latest initiative to connect better with our patrons, peers and the government. We hope that this bi-lingual bi-monthly magazine would provide all friends and patrons FKHA in the tourism industry and beyond an ideal opportunity to work with us to take Kerala tourism to greater heights of glory.

Happy check-ins!



V. Sunil Kumar
President, FKHA
& Editor, Swagat

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Kerala tourism is back on the growth trajectory after the debilitating two pandemic years. Several initiatives have been launched and several more are in the works to keep up the growth momentum and ensure a big leap forward in the coming few years, says **Tourism and Public Works Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas**

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INTERVIEW



KERALA TOURISM ALL SET FOR A QUANTUM LEAP

Tourism Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas

Interview: Asokan Pallickal

On the cards

- Tourism Investor Meet
- Women's Tourism Network
- More Adventure Tourism Projects
- Tourism-Public Works Design Policy
- Single-Window System for tourism
- Conversion of RT Mission into Society

Kerala tourism is back on the growth trajectory after the debilitating two pandemic years. Several initiatives have been launched and several more are in the works to keep up the growth momentum and ensure a big leap forward in the coming few years, says Tourism and Public Works Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas in an exclusive interview granted to Swagat. Excerpts from the interview:



Swagat: Kerala's strength lay in its huge potential for experiential tourism. How pivotal is experiential tourism to our gameplan?

Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas: We have certainly placed a high premium on experiential tourism. Our goal is to give visitors to Kerala an immersive experience of the rich palette of sounds, sights, tastes and fragrances that our State has to offer. Our food, crafts, artforms, festivals and the very breeze have something unique about them.

We are promoting all these through and in conjunction with the Responsible Tourism Mission, which has grassroots units focused on each of the specialty that Kerala has on offer. This means tourism entrepreneurs have several opportunities awaiting them across the State.

We have clearly taken some major strides in promoting Responsible Tourism (RT). What more can be done to curate our RT products better at the micro level?

Responsible Tourism is one of the corner stones of our tourism promotion efforts. Kerala is today a global model in RT. We could also create new models in experiential tourism using RT as a platform.

One of the key components of this is the umbrella 'Street' initiative. We have rolled out art street, water street, food street and other similar open space projects to promote local area tourism. We will get foreign tourists to these locations as part of tour packages so that they also get to experience these at the grassroots.

These venues and experiences will also be linked to the Farm Tourism,



“

We have now turned our attention to Adventure Tourism. We have chalked out several plans on that front. The Glass Bridge at Wagamon has proved to be a big draw with adventure seekers. Within weeks of its inauguration, around 30,000 people have experienced the thrill of walking on the Glass Bridge.

Agri Tourism initiatives and the Women Tourism Network. We are also trying to groom a strong and diversified branded souvenir tourism segment.

In a major endorsement of the sustainable and women-inclusive initiatives successfully promoted by the Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM), we have bagged the Global Responsible Tourism Award 2023.

This award has been instituted by Responsible Tourism Partnership and International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) in the best for local sourcing, food, and craft category.

The State's RT Mission was selected for the award, the most valued honour being given for sustainable and inclusive tourism initiatives, for linking women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to tourism activities and for ensuring effective marketing of indigenous products.

We are planning to convert the Responsible Tourism Mission into a Society and take up more projects across the State.



Youth, adventure seekers, professionals, students and artists are looking for newer experiences every time they visit Kerala. What do we have to offer there?

Covid-19 was a huge dampener for two years. When this government came to power, our primary task was to rejuvenate tourism and instil confidence in the tourism sector. With this end in view, we devised several new projects and programmes. Key among these was Caravan Tourism. The younger generation received it with open arms.

We have now turned our attention to Adventure Tourism. We have chalked out several plans on that front. The Glass Bridge at Wagamon has proved to be a big draw with adventure seekers. Within weeks of its inauguration, around 30,000 people have experienced the thrill of walking on the Glass Bridge.

We have already installed Floating Bridges in five coastal districts. Similar bridges would come up in four more districts in the coming six months. A Surfing Academy would come up at Beypore very soon and proposal for a Kayaking Academy is also in the works.

An Adventure Park has been set up at Akkulam in Thiruvananthapuram. One oft-heard complaint about Kerala was about the absence of night life in our cities. We have made a beginning on that front in Thiruvananthapuram.

Professionals, especially those in the IT sector, can have 'workations' of a lifetime in the facilities that the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) has readied for them. Kerala has already become an excellent wedding destination thanks to the strenuous efforts we have made to promote the idea in a big way.

Students are also being brought into tourism promotion activities by enlisting their participation in

Tourism Clubs. The idea is to use the services of the Tourism Clubs in the upkeep of local tourist spots and the students local level tourism ambassadors.

What are we doing to make our tourism sector women-friendly?

We are keen to attract women travellers and are preparing several women-friendly tourism projects. The emerging trend in tourism is that of women setting out on their own, individually and collectively, to enjoy their weekends and long-distance travel.

We have done a close analysis of this trend and we are working on

several initiatives to promote it to the maximum. We have drawn up a project to promote women-friendly tourism and destinations that are best suited for individual and group women travellers.

The project is being implemented by the Responsible Tourism Mission, primarily by linking women travellers and women entrepreneurs. The network thus created is being highlighted as part of our safe travel promotions. The goal is to make this a vertical that would be either owned or operated or facilitated by women.

Stays will be arranged at homes, homestays, serviced villas or resorts.



“

We are ready with several new projects to attract youngsters. Caravan Tourism is already here. We plan to give a big push to Heli tourism and Cruise Tourism in the coming days which, we are confident, would tourism earnings to the next level.

all of which would be owned or supervised by women. The travellers would be able to experience ethnic cuisine and use autos and taxis operated by women to move around. They would also have the services of Community Tour Leaders and Women Story Tellers to take them through the rich tourist bounty that Kerala has. We are constantly working to improve on all this.

We must raise the standard of our public and tourist infrastructure to world standards to make a real breakthrough here...

Absolutely! We need to craft a diversified product and offer world-class facilities for our guests. Our overall goal is to nurture a healthy tourism culture. We also wish to make it a popular enterprise where everyone gets to play a role.

We have already initiated steps to leverage the latent strengths of the private and cooperative sectors to make this happen. We are working

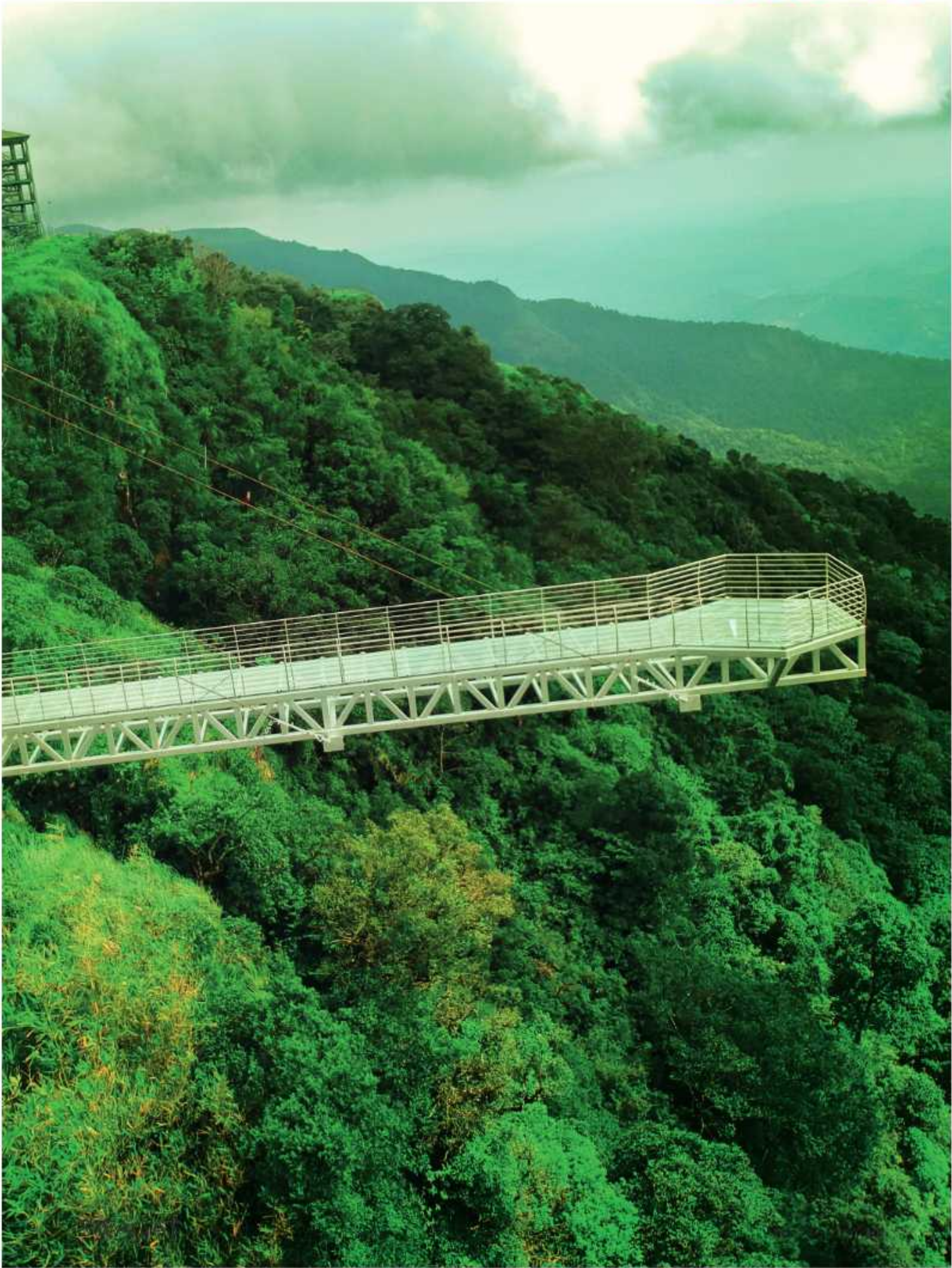
on a Tourism-Public Works Design Policy as part of this. It is important to have built up structures that reflect the Kerala idiom of architecture.

The 132-year-old Feroke Bridge across the Chaliyar River is currently under renovation and would be inaugurated in 2024. Work on another bridge at Aluva is set to commence in 2024, both projects being implemented in cooperation with the public and private sectors.

MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions) had gone away from Kerala in recent times. What are we doing to bring MICE back into play?

MICE tourism is gaining in strength, though slowly. Several international conferences have returned to Kerala. G20 Sherpa Meetings had played a big role in this. Big ticket players in the tourism sector have also begun to look again at Kerala. We expect the pace of such happenings to intensify in the days to come.







There was talk about a Kerala Tourism Regulatory Authority some time ago. Is it still on our agenda?

Oh, yes! We have not gone back on that proposal. We are working on it.

There is this view that majority of tourists who come to Kerala are backpackers. We need people with greater spending power to visit the State. What are we doing about this?

We have fashioned out several projects with this goal in view. Caravan Tourism is already here. We plan to give a big push to Heli tourism and Cruise Tourism in the coming days which, we are confident, would tourism earnings to the next level.

There has always been a low-intensity negative campaign against Kerala in some corners outside Kerala. How are we combating it?

We are not bothered about negative reportage on Kerala. We are alert to every emergency

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We have been able to resist all negative campaigns thanks to people's unity. We are organising a structured marketing campaign to promote Kerala. We will continue to do that. We are also adding to our bouquet of tourism offerings.



and our tourism sector has made massive gains in the post-Covid months, so much so that the Tourism Minister of BJP-ruled Goa had gone so far as to say that Kerala should be a model for all States when it comes to tourism promotion.

If you look closely, you will see that domestic tourist arrivals have made a quantum leap during the first six months of 2023. We are poised to set new records in domestic tourist arrivals this year.

See, this is also getting reflected in global perceptions about the State. Kerala is the only State in India to be included in the 52 'must-see' destinations in the world listed by New York Times. The world gives this recognition to us also because of the social harmony here.

We have been able to resist all negative campaigns thanks to

“
*T*ourism has an important role to play in the State economy. When the State economy registered a surge in activities and revenues post-Covid-19, a key contribution came from the tourism sector. The State Finance Department has made a special mention of this. Remember, we did this despite foreign tourist arrivals not reaching former highs.





people's unity. We are organising a structured marketing campaign to promote Kerala. We will continue to do that. We are also adding to our bouquet of tourism offerings.

Tourism's contribution to the State GDP is only 10% now. What are our plans to attract more investment into the sector and raise tourism's contribution to the GSDP?

Tourism has an important role to play in the State economy. When the State economy registered a surge in activities and revenues post-Covid-19, a key contribution came from the tourism sector. The

State Finance Department has made a special mention of this. Remember, we did this despite foreign tourist arrivals not reaching former highs.

Our goal is to make tourism the bedrock of local economies. Tourism must touch the lives of the people. It should become their key money earner. Projects being implementing through the Responsible Tourism Mission will play a major role there.

We are planning a major Tourism Investor Meet to lift the level of private investment in the tourism sector. Going forward, we wish to

ensure private sector participation and more investment so as to raise tourism sector's contribution to the State GDP from the present 12% to 20% by the turn of the decade.

Tourism Department is also geared to give all assistance to young entrepreneurs with interesting ideas to come on the scene and capitalise on these opportunities. One of the goals that we have set for the next Kerala Travel Mart is to make experiential tourism, where new and young entrepreneurs have a big role to play, an integral component of our tourism bouquet.



Several States have granted 'industry' status to tourism. What are we planning to do?

We are already working on several incentives on par with the industrial sector so that tourism sector is put on a firm footing. Our discussions with the Industries Department on this is ongoing. We are also planning to introduce a Single Window System for the tourism sector.

The Business Jet Terminal, commissioned recently at CIAL, is in every sense a game-changer. But we need to link up our destinations with it. What steps are we contemplating to ensure that?

The Kochi airport has made a huge difference for our tourism sector. In that sense, the Business Jet Terminal is a major asset for us. As it is, major players in the tourism sector are plugged into the Nedumbassery international airport. What we need to do is to strengthen these ties. We are also going to open up the Heli Tourism sector. CIAL will have a major role to play there.

What we have in Kerala in the main is resort-centric tourism. Hotels play an equally important role, employing tens of thousands of youngsters. What can be done to ensure that hotels, which have fine facilities, get the importance they deserve?

We are committed to taking everyone along. Our projects are geared to that end. We will onboard all players in the hospitality business in our scheme of things.

Where do we go from here?

As a society, we are great hosts. Our people have adopted the idea of people-centric tourism in a big way. This was the key factor cited by New York Times when listing Kerala as the 13th 'must-see' place on the face of earth. We can only move forward from there.

Asokan Pallickal is Editorial Coordinator, Swagat.



ഫെഡറേഷൻ ഓഫ് കേരള ഹോട്ടൽസ് അസോസിയേഷൻ സജീവം, പ്രതിബദ്ധം

സ്ക്വാഡ്രൺ ലീഡർ കെ.ബി.പത്മദാസ് (റിട്ട.)
ജനറൽ സെക്രട്ടറി FKHA

കേരളത്തിന്റെ വികസനത്തിന് ഊന്നൽ നൽകുന്ന പുതിയ വളർച്ചാ മേഖലയായി വിനോദ സഞ്ചാരത്തെ കാണുന്നു എന്നാണ് 2017 ലെ വിനോദ സഞ്ചാര നയത്തിൽ സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാർ പറയുന്നത്. ആ നയത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വിനോദസഞ്ചാര മേഖലയിൽ പുതിയ പദ്ധതികൾ ആവിഷ്കരിച്ച് സംസ്ഥാനം അതിവേഗം മുന്നേറുകയാണ്. സംസ്ഥാന വരുമാനത്തിന്റെ പത്ത് ശതമാനത്തിലേറെ ടൂറിസം മേഖലയിൽ നിന്നാണ്. വിദേശനാണു്യം നേടി തരുന്നതിൽ മുന്നാം സ്ഥാനത്താണ് ടൂറിസം. 2020-21 സാമ്പത്തിക വർഷത്തിൽ ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ വളർച്ച കൈവരിച്ചത് ടൂറിസം മേഖലയുടെ ഭാഗമായ ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായമാണ്. പതിമൂന്നാം പഞ്ചവത്സര പദ്ധതികാലത്ത് സേവന മേഖല മെച്ചപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന് ലഭ്യമായ ഹോട്ടൽ - റിസോർട്ട് മുറികളുടെ എണ്ണം ഇരട്ടിയാക്കണമെന്നും വിനോദ സഞ്ചാര നയത്തിൽ പറയുന്നു.

കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാമ്പത്തിക വളർച്ചയിൽ വലിയ സംഭാവന നൽകുന്ന മേഖലയാണ് ടൂറിസത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായ ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായം എന്ന് ഈ വസ്തുതകൾ അടിവുമാക്കുന്നു. ഈ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യങ്ങൾ നിലനിൽക്കുമ്പോഴും കോടികളുടെ മുതൽമുടക്കും ആയിരങ്ങൾക്ക് നേരിട്ടും, അതിലേറെപേർക്ക് പരോക്ഷമായും തൊഴിലും നൽകുന്ന ഈ വ്യവ

സായം ആശങ്കകൾ നേരിടുന്നു. വിനോദസഞ്ചാര സംരംഭങ്ങളിൽ ഏറെയും സർക്കാർ നിയന്ത്രണത്തിലാണ്. സ്വകാര്യ സംരംഭങ്ങൾ കുറവാണ്. എന്നിരുന്നാലും സ്വകാര്യ സർക്കാർ-സ്വകാര്യ സംയുക്ത സംരംഭങ്ങളെ സർക്കാർ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായത്തിൽ മുതൽമുടക്കിയിട്ടുള്ളവരിൽ ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷവും സ്വകാര്യ സംരംഭകരാണ്. വിനോദ സഞ്ചാര മേഖലയിൽ സ്വകാര്യ സംരംഭങ്ങളെ സർക്കാർ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുമ്പോൾ അതിന്റെ ഭാഗമായ ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായത്തെ അവഗണിക്കുകയാണ്.

ഏതൊരു വ്യവസായത്തെയും പോലെ മുതൽ മുടക്കിനനുസരിച്ച് പ്രതിഫലവും മാനുഷമായ തൊഴിൽ സാഹചര്യവും ഉണ്ടാകണമെന്ന് ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നവരാണ് ഈ രംഗത്തെ സംരംഭകർ. എന്നാൽ മറ്റ് വ്യവസായ രംഗത്ത് മുതൽമുടക്കുന്നവരിൽ നിന്നും വ്യത്യസ്തമായാണ് ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായം നടത്തുന്നവരെ പൊതു സമൂഹവും ഭരണാധികാരികളും കാണുന്നത്. മറ്റ് ഏതൊരു ബിസിനസ്സ് സംരംഭം പോലെയും നിയമപരമായ ചട്ടക്കൂടിനകത്തു നിന്നും സർക്കാർ കാലാകാലങ്ങളിൽ പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുന്ന ഉത്തരവുകൾക്ക് അനുസൃതവുമാണ് ഈ വ്യവസായം പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത്. അതുകൊണ്ടു തന്നെ മറ്റ് വ്യവസായങ്ങൾക്ക് ലഭിക്കുന്നപരിഗണന ഈ വ്യവസായത്തിലും ലഭിക്കണം എന്ന് സംരംഭകർ

ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നത് സ്വാഭാവികം. പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും - ടൂറിസം ഒരു പ്രധാന വ്യവസായമായി കേരളത്തിൽ വളരുമ്പോൾ. ഈ സ്വാഭാവിക നീതി ഉറപ്പാക്കാനും വ്യവസായത്തിന്റെ പുരോഗതിക്കും നിലനിൽപ്പിനും മൂലംകൊണ്ട സംഘടനയാണ് ഫെഡറേഷൻ ഓഫ് കേരള ഹോട്ടൽസ് അസോസിയേഷൻ (FKHA).

കേരളത്തിലെ 800 ൽ അധികം വരുന്ന സ്റ്റാർ ക്ലാസ്സിഫൈഡ്, ഫെസിലിറ്റി ഹോട്ടലുകളെ പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന സംഘടന ഇന്ന് എഫ്.കെ.എച്ച്.എ ആണ്. 1991 ൽ കേരള ബാർ ഹോട്ടൽസ് അസോസിയേഷൻ എന്ന പേരിലാണ് സംഘടന രൂപംകൊള്ളുന്നത്. 2018 ൽ സംഘടനയുടെ പേര് ഫെഡറേഷൻ ഓഫ് കേരള ഹോട്ടൽസ് അസോസിയേഷൻ എന്ന് പുനഃനാമകരണം ചെയ്തു. സ്റ്റാർ ഹോട്ടലുകൾ, ഹെറിറ്റേജ് ഹോട്ടലുകൾ തുടങ്ങി കേരളത്തിലെ ഹോട്ടലുകളിൽ ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷവും ഈ സംഘടനയുടെ കീഴടക്കിയിലാണ് അണി നിരന്നിട്ടുള്ളത്.

ആയിരങ്ങൾക്ക് തൊഴിൽ നൽകുക മാത്രമല്ല സർക്കാരിന് വരുമാനവും നൽകുന്ന വ്യവസായ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങൾ കൂടിയാണ് ഹോട്ടലുകൾ. ഉല്പാദന മുതൽ കർപ്പൂരം വരെയുള്ള നിരന്തരപരമായ സാധനങ്ങളുടെയും നിരവധി വ്യവസായ-വാണിജ്യ ഉല്പന്നങ്ങളുടെയും വലിയ ഉപഭോക്താക്കൾ കൂടിയാണ് ഹോട്ട

ലൂകൾ, നിരവധി ചെറുകിട ഇടത്തരം വ്യവസായങ്ങളുടെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്കും, നിലനിൽപ്പിനും ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായം ഉത്തേജകമാകും. എന്നാൽ ഒരു ദശാബ്ദക്കാലമായി ഈ വ്യവസായം പ്രതിസന്ധിയിലാണ്. 2011-16 കാലത്തെ സർക്കാരിന്റെ ഈ വ്യവസായത്തോടുള്ള സമീപനവും, പ്രളയത്തിന് പുറമെ കോവിഡ് വ്യാപനത്തെ തുടർന്ന് ഒരു വർഷത്തോളം ഹോട്ടലുകൾ അടഞ്ഞുകിടന്നതും സൃഷ്ടിച്ച പ്രതിസന്ധി വളരെ വലുതാണ്. ഈ പ്രതിസന്ധിയിൽ നിന്നും വ്യവസായം ഇപ്പോഴും പൂർണ്ണമായും കരകയറിയിട്ടില്ല.

ഈ വ്യവസായത്തിനുള്ളൊക്കുന്ന ഓരോ പ്രശ്നവും സർക്കാരിന്റെയും, ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട അധികാരികളുടെയും ശ്രദ്ധയിൽപ്പെടുത്താനും, അവയ്ക്ക് പരിഹാരം കാണാനും സംഘടന സജീവമായി ഇടപ്പെടുന്നു. സാമൂഹിക പ്രതിബദ്ധത ഉയർത്തിപ്പിടിക്കുന്ന സംഘടന കൂടിയാണിത്. നമ്മുടെ സംസ്ഥാനം പ്രതിസന്ധി നേരിട്ട ഘട്ടങ്ങളിലെല്ലാം സഹായഹസ്തവുമായി ഈ സംഘടന മുന്നിൽ നിന്നു. ഓഖി, പ്രളയം, കോവിഡ് തുടങ്ങിയ പ്രകൃതി ദുരന്തങ്ങളെ അതിജീവിക്കാൻ സർക്കാർ നടത്തിയ എല്ലാ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലും സംഘടന പങ്കാളിയായി. മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിയുടെ ദുരിതാശ്വാസനിധിയിലേക്ക് മുന്നേ കോടിയോളം രൂപ സംഭാവന നൽകി. കോവിഡ് പ്രതിരോധ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് അഞ്ച് ആംബുലൻസുകളും, മറ്റ് രോഗപ്രതിരോധ സാധനങ്ങളും സംഭാവന നൽകി. സംസ്ഥാനത്ത് വിവിധ സന്നദ്ധ സഹായ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ സംഘടന ഇപ്പോഴും സജീവമായി ഇടപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

പ്രൊഫഷണൽ പരിശീലനം നേടിയ ജീവനക്കാർ ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായത്തിന്റെ സുഗമമായ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിനും, സംരംഭത്തിന്റെ വിജയത്തിനും അത്യന്താപേക്ഷിതമാണ്. എന്നാൽ ഈ വ്യവസായത്തിൽ തൊഴിലെടുക്കാൻ പ്രൊഫഷണൽ പരിശീലനം നേടിയവർ കുറവാണ്. അത് പരിഹരിക്കുന്നതിനും, സാമ്പത്തികമായി പിന്നോക്കം നിൽക്കുന്നതും, ഈ രംഗത്തേക്ക് കടന്നുവരാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നതുമായ ഉദ്യോഗാർത്ഥികളെ കണ്ടെത്തി പരിശീലനം നൽകുന്നതിനുമായി ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് ഹോട്ടൽ മാനേജ്മെന്റ് (IHM) എന്ന പേരിൽ ഒരു പരിശീലന കേന്ദ്രം സംഘടന ആരംഭിച്ചു. 2019 ൽ ആരംഭിച്ച ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ടിൽ നിന്നും 500 ഓളം യുവതി-യുവാക്കൾ ഇതിനകം പരിശീലനം നേടി കേരളത്തിലും മറ്റ് സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലും, വിദേശത്തുമായി തൊഴിലെടുക്കുന്നു. സാമൂഹ്യ പഠനവും, 4000/- രൂപ സ്റ്റൈപ്പന്റും, വിജയകരമായി കോഴ്സ് പൂർത്തിയാക്കുന്നവർക്ക് സർക്കാർ അംഗീകൃത ഡിപ്ലോമയും, സംഘടനയിൽ അംഗങ്ങളായ സ്റ്റാർ ഹോട്ടലുകളിൽ 100% പ്ലേസ്മെന്റും ഉറപ്പ് നൽകുന്ന രീതിയിലാണ് കോഴ്സ് രൂപകല്പന ചെയ്തിട്ടുള്ളത്.



തിരുവനന്തപുരം, കൊല്ലം, കോട്ടയം, എറണാകുളം, തൃശ്ശൂർ, കോഴിക്കോട് എന്നീ ആറ് ജില്ലകളിൽ സെന്ററുകൾ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. നിലവിൽ ഹോട്ടലുകളിൽ ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്ന പ്രൊഫഷണൽ പരിശീലനം നേടിയിട്ടില്ലാത്തവർക്കായി ജോലിയൊടൊപ്പം പഠിക്കാവുന്ന സ്റ്റാഫ് എംപ്ലയ്മെന്റ് പ്രോഗ്രാമും ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് നടത്തുന്നു. രാജ്യത്തു തന്നെ ഈ രംഗത്തെ മറ്റൊരു സംഘടനയും ഇത്തരം ഒരു ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് നടത്തുന്നില്ല. ടൂറിസം, ഹോസ്പിറ്റാലിറ്റി മേഖലകളുടെ പ്രചാരണത്തിനായി ഇപ്പോൾ ആരംഭിച്ച സാഗത് മാസികയും, പാചക കലയെ പരിചയപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന് തുടങ്ങുന്ന യൂട്യൂബ് ചാനലും സംഘടനയുടെ മറ്റ് രണ്ട് സംരംഭങ്ങളാണ്.

കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാമ്പത്തിക വളർച്ചയിൽ വലിയ പങ്ക് വഹിക്കുന്ന ഈ വ്യവസായം നിരവധി പ്രശ്നങ്ങളിലൂടെയാണ് കടന്നുപോകുന്നത്. കോവിഡ് കാലത്ത് എർപ്പെടുത്തിയ പല നിയന്ത്രണങ്ങളും ഇപ്പോഴും തുടരുന്നു. ബാറുകളുടെ പ്രവർത്തന സമയത്തിൽ വരുത്തിയ മാറ്റം, മദ്യത്തിന്റെ വില്പന അടിക്കടി വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്, ഒന്നാം തീയതിയിലെ ഡ്രൈവേ, ലൈസൻസ് ഫീസ് വർഷംതോറും വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്, ബെവ്കോയിൽ നിന്നും ആവശ്യത്തിന് മദ്യം ലഭിക്കാത്തത് തുടങ്ങിയവ ഈ വ്യവസായത്തിന് ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുകൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്നു. കെട്ടിടം, വൈദ്യുതി,

വെള്ളം എന്നിവയുടെ വലിയ തോതിലെ നികുതി വർദ്ധനവും സാമ്പത്തിക പ്രതിസന്ധി ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നതാണ്. കോടികൾ മുതൽ മുടക്കി ആരംഭിക്കുന്ന ഹോട്ടലുകൾക്ക് സമീപം ബെവ്കോ ഓട്ട്ലെറ്റുകൾ ആരംഭിക്കുന്നതും ഈ വ്യവസായത്തിന് തിരിച്ചടിയാണ്.

ടൂറിസത്തെ വ്യവസായമായി സർക്കാർ അംഗീകരിച്ചിട്ടില്ലാത്തതിനാൽ പുതിയതായി ആരംഭിക്കുന്ന ഹോട്ടൽ സംരംഭങ്ങൾക്ക്, സർക്കാർ വ്യവസായ മേഖലയ്ക്ക് പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുന്ന ആനുകൂല്യങ്ങളൊന്നും ലഭിക്കുന്നില്ല എന്നത് വേദകരമാണ്. അതോടൊപ്പം നിലവിലുള്ള ഹോട്ടലുകളുടെയും, പുതിയതായി ആരംഭിക്കുന്ന ഹോട്ടലുകളുടെയും ക്ലാസ്സിഫിക്കേഷൻ നടപടികൾ സമയബന്ധിതമായി നടപ്പിലാക്കാത്തതും ഈ വ്യവസായത്തിൽ നിക്ഷേപം നടത്തുന്നവരെ ആശങ്കപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതാണ്.

എന്നിരുന്നാലും ഈ വ്യവസായത്തോടും, സംഘടനയോടും സർക്കാർ പൊതുവെ അനുകൂലപൂർവ്വമായ സമീപനം സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നു എന്നത് ആശ്വാസകരമാണ്. ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായത്തിന്റെ നിലനിൽപ്പിനും, സുഗമമായ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിനും സംഘടന എന്ന നിലയിൽ അതിന്റെ സാമൂഹിക പ്രതിബദ്ധത ഉയർത്തിപ്പിടിച്ചും എഫ്.കെ.എച്ച്.എ. സജീവമായി നിലകൊള്ളും.



Kerala Tourism to open Destination Wedding Centre in Thiruvananthapuram



Kerala Tourism would open a brand-new venue for Destination Wedding in Thiruvananthapuram on November 30.

The centre, the first to be owned by the Tourism Department, is coming up at the Sanghumukhom Beach Park, located adjacent to the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport. Simultaneously, Sanghumukhom would get a night life street and a food street.

An amphitheatre that can accommodate around 300 people has been developed at the Beach Park for use as destination wedding venue. It is being implemented by the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) at an estimated outlay of Rs. 3 crore.

The first destination wedding would take place at the venue immediately after its inauguration by Tourism and Public Works Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas. A sea-view café with Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) zones is also being planned at the beach which is a favourite getaway of the residents of the city.

All the major tourist destinations in Kerala are already destination wedding venues. Against around 100 weddings that used to take place annually at these venues, the State is now playing host to 300 to 400 destination weddings, the Tourism Minister said.

Kerala Tourism plans microsites to promote pilgrim tourism



Kerala Tourism is all set to come out with a set of microsites to promote the state's rich and diverse heritage, highlighting features of important places of worship.

As part of this a microsite that provides a wide range of information in different languages on Sabarimala will be unveiled. The revamped microsite on the hills-shrine in Pathanamthitta district will have comprehensive information in five languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu.

The Rs 61.36-lakh project will also feature e-brochures on pilgrimage to the hill-shrine, 160 km north of the state capital. The site will also carry a promotional film. Lakhs of pilgrims visit the Ayyappa temple annually and the project is aimed at making their trips hassle-free.

The renovated site will provide the pilgrims with additional information on the temples the pilgrims can visit after worshipping

at Sabarimala, their travel routes and the rituals to be followed.

YouTube videos will further substantiate the details, authorities said, pointing out that the efforts were aimed at boosting Kerala's reputation as a major pilgrim tourism state.

The site will provide information on not just the routes, but the transport facilities and lodging facilities in the vicinity of the temples, thereby wooing a greater number of pilgrims.

The microsite will also show details of the latest information on Sabarimala darshan, the topographical specialities of the hill-shrine, its cultural values and traditions. All these can enable prospective pilgrims to chart their itinerary.

The Tourism Department sanctioned Rs 61.36 lakh for the microsite on Sabarimala on October 16, after the Working Group concerned approved the project. Earlier, Tourism Department had sanctioned Rs 60 lakh for an Augmented Reality Heritage Tour of the famed Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in the state capital.



Kerala Tourism bags Best Stand Award at WTM London

Kerala Tourism's pavilion has won the best stand award at the just concluded WorldTravel Market (WTM) in London, besides basking in the limelight right from day-one at the leading international travel and hospitality fair that began on November 6.

Kerala also stood out with its unique products on display at the show with travel and tourism industry majors from around the world, showing keen interest in the state as an all-season experiential tourism hub attracting visitors from niche markets across continents.

"It's really a big recognition for Kerala to win the award at one of world's largest tourism fairs. This is one of the latest in a series of international honours that came by Kerala in recent months," Tourism Minister P A Mohamed Riyas said.

"Kerala made a big impact at WTM 2023 where visitors to our stand, mostly representatives from global travel and hospitality majors, showed keen interest in our products and initiatives," said State Tourism Secretary K Biju, who led the state's delegation to WTM.



The Kerala Tourism pavilion, which stood on a 126 sq m space, was themed "The Magical Everyday", celebrating the festivals of Kerala. The central attraction of the stand was the huge 'Kettu Kala' - a gigantic effigy of a pair of bulls.

The Tourism Secretary received the award on behalf of Kerala Tourism. Also, on November 7, the show saw the trailer launch of Car and Country's next leg, featuring Kerala. Two Keralites - Deepak Narendran and Ashique Thahir - are at the wheels in this edition, along with Freddie Hunt, a professional racing driver and son of the legendary James Hunt, the 1976 F1 World

Champion.

Trade partners from Kerala to WTM 2023 were Abad Hotels & Resorts, Alhind Tours and Travels, Cosima Travel and Trade Links, Crowne Plaza Kochi, Intersight Tours and Travels, Kerala Tourism Development Corporation, Pioneer Personalized Holidays, Santa Monica Tours and Travels, Spiceland Holidays, Tamara Leisure Experiences and Xandari Resorts.

The Kerala pavilion at World Travel Market 2023, London was conceptualised and executed by Stark Communications, Kerala Tourism's marketing agency.



**Confederation of
Indian Industry**

India Hospitality Fair 2023

05- 07 December 2023

Venue: Goa

Organisers: CII, Chennai

The hospitality sector exhibition aims to showcase the growth potential and opportunities within India's hospitality industry, highlighting its integral role in the country's tourism sector. The exhibition will bring together industry stakeholders, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers to foster collaboration, innovation, and growth in the hospitality sector.



**India International
Travel Mart**

India International Travel Mart Hyderabad 2023

01-03 December 2023

Venue: Hitex Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad

Organisers: Sphere Travelmedia & Exhibitions Pvt. Ltd.

India International Travel Mart Hyderabad is a leading travel-trade exhibition that aims to create a dynamic platform for businesses across India's major cities to connect and collaborate. IITM events offer a chance for tourism professionals to interact with potential clients and showcase diverse destinations and industry sectors.



Food Kitchen & Hospitality Expo 2023

09-10 December 2023

Venue: Dr. TMA Pai International Convention Centre, Mangaluru

Organisers: ZMZ Events, India

Food, Kitchen and Hospitality Expo will be the annual premium trading platform for the industry professionals, stakeholders to network and promote the latest products and services with an opportunity to source and connect with local, regional and international suppliers, distributors and manufacturers of food, beverages, food service equipment, hospitality design and technology products.



Restaurant Awards 2023

05 December 2023

Venue: ITC Kohenu, Hyderabad

Organisers: Restaurant India

Restaurant Awards 2023 is the top honour bestowed upon the greatest in the industry who have tirelessly dedicated their lives walking an extra mile to raise the bar of the Food & Beverage Sector.



centre for innovation
in science & social action

Global Ayurveda Festival 2023

01-05 December 2023

Venue: Travancore Convention Centre, Thiruvananthapuram

Organisers: CISSA

GAF 2023 A Platform to Celebrate India's Healing Wisdom – is being organized from 1st to 5th December at Greenfield International Stadium, Kariavattom Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, with the focal theme: "Emerging Challenges in Healthcare & a Resurgent Ayurveda".



Metro Food Awards 2023

20 December 2023

Venue: Thiruvananthapuram

Organisers: Metro Mart

Embark on a journey of culinary distinction with the Metro Food Awards 2023-2024 where excellence takes center stage! The prestigious Metro awards spotlight and honor outstanding achievements in the food and beverage sector, providing a distinguished platform for brands and restaurateurs to showcase their culinary prowess.

HERITAGE IN TOURISM

Kerala as a cultural region with a vast and diverse heritage holds immense potential for heritage-focused initiatives in tourism for the greater benefit of all stakeholders. writes,

Dr. Manoj Kumar Kini



Kerala has had many significant milestones in history marked by places and events since prehistoric times like the ancient burial sites. Later on, the development of the societal structure and traditions that were religiously followed,

Kerala's heritage is a tapestry woven with historical, architectural, artistic, and culinary threads, making it a compelling destination for travellers seeking a deeper connection with the past.

Walk down any street in Kochi, particularly on the west side, and you are certain to run into a pillar here or a façade there or, still better, a temple, mosque or church steeped in history. Time has still not erased the many imprints of a syncretic culture that flourished here decades and centuries ago.

Kochi's architectural styles, ranging

from Portuguese, Dutch, and British influences, tell the story of the many cultures that have shaped the region over centuries. The historic Mattancherry Palace, also known as the Dutch Palace, is a prime illustration of this colonial architecture.

Moving inland to the picturesque town of Thrissur, the Thrissur Pooram festival stands out as a vibrant display of the state's cultural heritage. This grand celebration, with its mesmerizing display of caparisoned elephants, traditional music, and spectacular fireworks, offers a glimpse into Kerala's age-

old traditions and customs.

Further north in the Malabar region, the centuries-old art form of Theyyam takes centre stage. This ritualistic performance showcases the state's indigenous beliefs, vivid makeup, and intricate costumes, allowing tourists to experience the spiritual and artistic heritage of the area.

Down south, the tranquil city of Thiruvananthapuram amazes you with the opulent Padmanabhaswamy Temple, a treasure trove of Kerala's religious and artistic heritage. The temple's stunning architecture, intricate sculptures, and legendary treasure vaults make it a testament to the state's spiritual and historical legacy.

There is a lot else—the mystifying variety of images at Edakkal, the rich performance legacy of the Kerala Kalamandalam, and the indigenous and subtly nuanced

Kerala architectural charm of the Cheraman Mosque and the Padmanabhapuram Palace, to name a few.

Kerala as a cultural region with such vast and diverse heritage holds immense scope for heritage-focused initiatives and potential for capitalisation of the rich heritage for the greater benefit of all stakeholders involved. With such an elaborate history and legacy as that of Kerala, it is extremely pertinent that sensitive and collaborative heritage practices and initiatives are in place.

Kerala has had many significant milestones in history marked by places and events since prehistoric times like the ancient burial sites. Later on, the development of the societal structure and traditions that were religiously followed, are all part of the lineage and heritage that has contributed to the growth of Kerala. Kerala is also greatly blessed by its geographical attributes that are also instrumental to its place on the heritage map of India. The Western Ghats is one of the designated UNESCO Heritage spots and the only one from Kerala, for its unique wealth of endemic species and biodiversity.

Owing to its very strategic location right at the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent Kerala has always maintained a position of power and attention from around the world by means of trade. This has greatly influenced the historical and cultural landscape of Kerala in comparison to other Indian states.

This has also resulted in the assimilation of a lot of tangible and intangible heritage within the boundaries of Kerala during different periods. This trend of commerce and subsequent invasions and settlements from outsiders had also resulted in the formation of very diverse and sometimes polarizing cultural aspects through the length and breadth of Kerala. This is also the

prime reason why heritage focused studies and initiatives are all the more important in a state like Kerala.

Present status of heritage

Kerala has and always had immense potential in the tourism sector as is evident from the average tourist footfall of 1,95,74,004 during the pre-pandemic and 53,29,727 during the post-pandemic period. There still exists numerous aspects of historic importance in Kerala which are not explored enough or brought into the limelight sufficiently to exponentially add to the growth of tourism in Kerala.

Despite Kerala being a treasure trove of historical sites, architectural monuments and heritage sites there is very little effort at efficient and productive harnessing of this legacy. There are still numerous vaults of valuable historical heritage that are waiting to be discovered and explored and even more which have been discovered but not been explored and some even exploited to the verge of detriment.

Heritage conservation and capitalisation is a tight rope that needs to be tread with the utmost caution, especially in a cultural climate like that of Kerala, which is a boiling pot of innumerable ideologies and beliefs. There are



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immense opportunities just lying around every corner which can be harnessed for avenues including tourism from a purely financial point of view.

Kerala as a state that experiences heavy tourist flows during vacation season still needs to upgrade itself when it comes to heritage tourism, be it cultural, geographical or historical. Even though there is quite a handful of projects that are making their name known in the domain of heritage tourism like The Muziris Heritage Project, Thalassery Heritage Project etc, there is still a lack of adequate drive in the desired direction to incentivise and energize the scenery of heritage perception and understanding.

Initiatives like this will not only help capitalize our resources but also assist in sensitizing and educating a wider audience about the relevance and pertinence of our historical past. And this in turn will result in a higher reverence for one's past and lineage which is always welcome.

Different subdomains of heritage

When heritage is discussed, it is important to demarcate the different domains and subdomains of heritage. Heritage can be broadly categorized as Cultural, Natural and Built. Further, Cultural heritage is divided into intangible and tangible heritage.

As the name suggests, intangible heritage will include all the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. Also called living cultural heritage, it is usually expressed in one of the following forms:

oral traditions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO). Kerala is blessed with immense cultural wealth and therefore a lot of cultural heritage; tangible and intangible.

Kerala is known for its unique practices and traditions that have been followed for ages; the Theyyam in North Kerala and Koodiyattom in central Kerala are brilliant examples that show the manifestation of centuries-old beliefs and traditions that are still followed today. Likewise, there are many such practices and art forms that can be witnessed in various parts of Kerala.

Tangible heritage on the other hand includes all the physical entities that involve and are part of our culture, it could be artifacts, paintings, sculptures, etc. Kerala has a very dynamic history prehistorically as well during the medieval ages where it has had constant interactions with travellers and explorers worldwide. This has invariably added to our wealth of tangible heritage as well.

Natural heritage refers to natural features, geological and

physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation of natural beauty (UNESCO).

For Kerala, Western Ghats is the prime example, which has been added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites due to its position as one of the world's eight "hottest hot spots" of biological diversity. This will not only bring recognition but also attention and precaution to the numerous destructive "interventions" that are being proposed in the Ghats region.

Built Heritage means those buildings, artifacts, structures, areas and precincts that are of historic, aesthetic, architectural or cultural significance. It must be recognized that the cultural landscape around a heritage site is critical for the interpretation of the site and its built heritage and thus is very much an integral part of it (INTACH).

How heritage plays a role in place making

Placemaking can be called the heart of Heritage Conservation to an extent because a place is often signified in the human mind

Kerala is known for its unique practices and traditions that have been followed for ages; the Theyyam in North Kerala and Koodiyattom in central Kerala are brilliant examples that show the manifestation of centuries-old beliefs and traditions that are still followed today.



because of one's past experiences there. Our shared connections with a certain building or space allow us to attribute some value and significance to it. Therefore, the root of heritage and heritage conservation is always our living connection to the past, a place is never just a piece of land, it is a convergence point of our fondest memories and cognisance.

Donovan Rypkema, an advisor to Global Heritage Fund, describes 'place' as "the vessel within which

the 'spirit' of the community is stored." Place is the product of the numerous users it has had over time, the environment and their shared history.

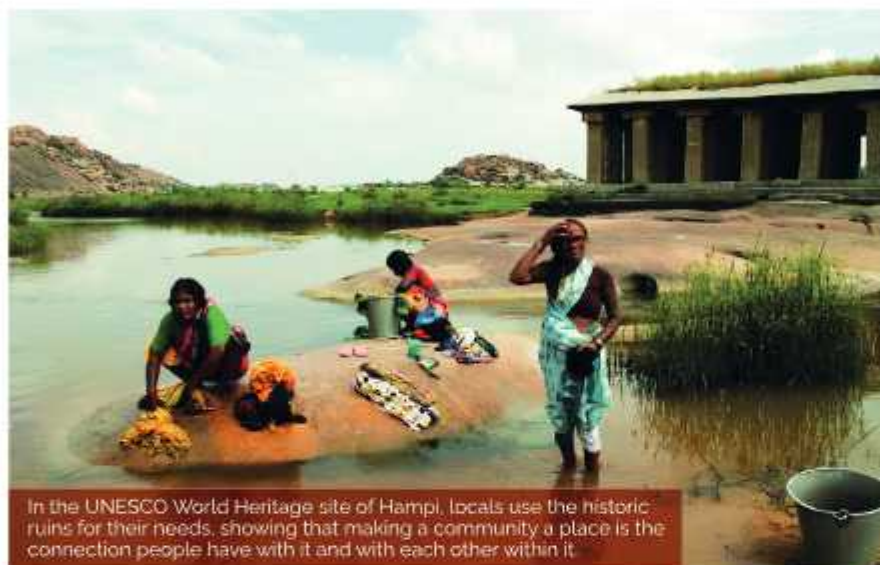
Historic buildings and sites are significant due to the deep connections people have with them. These connections are rooted in their cultural significance. This is the driving force behind why a location becomes a place and why a place becomes a cherished heritage site.

The root of heritage and heritage conservation is always our living connection to the past, a place is never just a piece of land, it is a convergence point of our fondest memories and cognisance.

In heritage, it is essential that the 'place' is imbued with a communal spirit as well as look into the past to reinstate the glory with a step forward to concur to the modern needs and requirements so as to render it more sustainable and productive. Placemaking as a process is a unique opportunity for heritage sites and built heritage to interlock itself with modern development.

There is no point in just warding off the public from heritage sites if the intention is the reinstatement of their past as these very people are the principal ingredient that has added value to any of these sites. Therefore, it is only self-explanatory how placemaking and heritage are intertwined and almost complementary to each other.





In the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hampi, locals use the historic ruins for their needs, showing that making a community a place is the connection people have with it and with each other within it.

For this to happen, the future has to be one of integrated development, where any or every development project must be organic and in harmony with its context, not held in isolation. When any new development is carried out in isolation, it results in resistance from the community and, will, will tamper the longevity and sustainability of the initiatives.



Ways to use heritage in creative tourism loops or circuits

A smart way to incorporate heritage organically is to integrate it into tourism loops and circuits. This is a tried and tested format and has been proven successful. A tourism circuit is defined as a route that consists of three or more destinations that should not be within the same village or town and should also not be too far away places.

The tourism circuit will have a well-defined entry and exit point. A particular circuit route may take

one or more days to finish; there are tourism circuits that can be finished in one day and circuits which take even more days to cover. The circuits will be based on themes or on effective transport connectivity.

We already have such circuits in the Thalassery heritage project like the Folklore circuit, Harbour circuit etc. These play a very pivotal role in making the general public familiar with these spots without them being overbearing on their trips. These kinds of circuits also ensure a more organized and efficient way around such sites of importance so that the visitors don't lose their

patience trying to find their way around or paying at each point. This also saves a lot of time and energy for them.

Such integrated loops ensure a steady flow of visitors to the spots and, since they are organized trips, there are fewer chances of vandalism or damage at the sites. 'The development of an integrated tourism circuit' is the key to bringing a region on the global tourism map. There is a need to club collectively and exhibit to the world, a complete package that consists of unique strengths and attractions of various destinations.

Even around a well-known tourist location, there are a range of attractive and unknown destinations in the rural locality. If these places are developed and brought into the tourism map, it can bring a huge development in the social and economic status of that place.

Another such example is the hop-on-hop-off tourist buses that are prevalent in most European nations and in major tourist spots like Goa in India. These are a fun way to incorporate interested tourists to sightsee in the comfort of designated buses that will ferry them to and from such spots. Though it demands higher infrastructural requirements, it is a viable option to include and integrate heritage spots onto the popular tourist maps.

This could also be adopted to waterways in the case of Kerala, where we have very well-connected inland water bodies. It would be an incredible opportunity to showcase our natural heritage of such a unique interconnected network of backwaters and initiate a heritage circuit in the process. It could greatly energize tourism in districts with functional waterways.

Integrating heritage with technology

Experiential tourism is a form of tourism in which people focus on experiencing a country, city or particular place by actively and meaningfully engaging with its history, people, culture, food and environment. People create meaning through direct experiences.

The experience includes the people met, the places visited, the activities participated in and the memories created. It draws people into local nature, culture and history besides being a quite low impact, low volume, and high yield approach to tourism. It helps to render a very personal, unique and individual experience for each visitor.



Memorable visitor experiences are a shared outcome of the interaction between the visitor and the experience provider. It allows for greater reflection of values and interests for the visitor and aids their personal growth and a sense of accomplishment.

The desired outcome of experiential tourism is to achieve a complete

participatory experience that provides new knowledge and authentic experiences. Such opportunities encourage the meeting and coming together of different cultures, their problems and potential. Cultural elements are shared in an atmosphere of traditional ways of life.



When we promote integrated development in heritage conservation strategies, we should also strive to explore the opportunities that we have at hand by virtue of all the technological innovations today such as virtual reality, interactive technology, etc.

When we promote integrated development in heritage conservation strategies, we should also strive to explore the opportunities that we have at hand by virtue of all the technological innovations today such as virtual reality, interactive technology, etc.

Advances in technology, in all of its many forms, frequently have direct and lasting impact on tourism. Especially in the case of Intangible heritage, it has regionality and therefore its protection and inheritance face many challenges that can be resolved by integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

In recent times, studies have shown that a vast majority rely on the internet to access travel

information. The union of tourism and the ICT, which can be called eTourism, has opened new doors and insights into the changes in the tourism sector and how the sector should adapt itself to these technologies for better results.

One of the prime examples of ICT is Virtual Reality. VR already has various uses within the tourism sector. As VR technology continues to evolve, there is little reason to doubt that it will become more prevalent throughout society, in general, and the tourism sector in particular.

VR's applications for the tourism sector are numerous and its implications for the sector are significant, so tourism researchers and professionals should gain a

greater understanding of VR to best prepare themselves to face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that VR presents. It would be a great advantage in the tourism sector in different aspects including planning, management and marketing.

The list of heritage sites and objects that can be accessed virtually is constantly expanding and countless heritage sites and objects from around the world already have been digitized as 3D virtual models, although many are not available to the public.

Besides those that have already been discussed, some of the other countless examples of heritage sites and objects that have been rendered as 3D models include Michelangelo's statues of David (Callieri et al., 2004). Rendering such sites and objects as virtual 3D models can function as a valuable tool for heritage preservation because such virtual models can contain extremely precise and accurate datasets that, theoretically, can be stored indefinitely.

The tangible and intangible heritage of Kerala is a vast treasure trove yet to be explored and experimented, especially using tourism as a tool to generate economy and interest, promoting conservation and preservation. The Government is aware of this and here's hoping that we will be able to achieve the same with the Government's new initiatives in the tourism sector.

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കോതമംഗലം വഴി കാനഡയിൽ നിന്നും നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്വന്തം മന്ദാകുന്ദി

മേരി സാമുവൽ

മുൻ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലേക്കായായി അറബി ഡാനിയൽ, അറബി വാക്കർ, അബ്ദുസാലൂദ്, ഗ്രേൻഫീൽഡ് എന്നു തുടങ്ങി നാവിന്റെ വിജാതിരി ഇളക്കുന്ന മട്ടിലുള്ള ആവൃന്ത പേരുകൾ വാഴുന്ന വരേണ്യ മദ്യങ്ങളുടെ ഇടയിലേക്ക് അവതരിപ്പിക്കുകയാണ് അലസഗാമിനിയായി ഒരു മന്ദാകുന്ദി.

മലബാറി വാറ്റ് എന്ന മുഴുവൻ പേരു കൂടി പറയുമ്പോഴാണ് മന്ദാകുന്ദിയുടെ മലയാളിത്തം തെളിയുകയുള്ളൂ.

അവതരിപ്പിച്ച് മുന്നവർഷത്തിനുള്ളിൽ തന്നെ യു.എസ്.എ. സ്പിരിറ്റ്സ് അവാർഡിൽ സാക്ഷാൽ റെമി മാർട്ടിനെ വരെ പിന്തള്ളി 89 പോയിന്റോടെ സിൽവർ അവാർഡും കാനഡയിലെ ബെസ്റ്റ് മദ്യമെന്ന ഖ്യാതിയും മന്ദാകുന്ദി സ്വന്തമാക്കി കഴിഞ്ഞു. കാനഡയിലെ ഒന്റാറിയോയിൽ നിന്നിറങ്ങുന്ന മന്ദാകുന്ദി മറ്റൊന്നുമല്ല, 27 വർഷം മുമ്പ് കേരളത്തിൽ നിന്നായിട്ട് അതേ നാടൻ വാറ്റു തന്നെ.

ആനയെപ്പോലും മയക്കാൻ പോന്ന 'ആനയെക്കി'യുടെയും, ശിരസ്സിൽ കൂടും കൊണ്ടിടുന്ന അനുഭവം സമ്മാനിക്കുന്ന 'വെട്ടിമുസി'ന്റെയും, അടിച്ചാൽ

പാമ്പാകുന്ന 'മകുടി'യുടെയും, അകത്തു ചെന്നാൽ ആകെയും നശിച്ചുപോകുന്ന 'മണവാട്ടി'യുടെയും കുടുംബക്കാരെ, 'കട്ടലോക്കൽ' എന്നാണ് മന്ദാകുന്ദിയെ നിർമ്മാതാക്കൾ വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുന്നതു തന്നെ.

കോതമംഗലം ചേലാടു സ്വദേശികളായ അബീഷ് ചെറിയാൻ, സഹോദരൻ എലിയാസ് ചെറിയാൻ, മുവാറ്റുപുഴക്കാരനായ സരീഷ് കുഞ്ഞപ്പൻ എന്നിവരാണ് മന്ദാകുന്ദിയുടെ ഉപജ്ഞാതാക്കൾ. ഇറ്റാലിയൻ കനേഡിയനായ ഡോൺ ഡിമോന്റെ എന്ന മാസ്റ്റർ ബ്രെൻഡർ കൂടി ചേർന്നപ്പോൾ മന്ദാകുന്ദി യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമായി.

'മലബാറി വാറ്റ്' എന്നു മാത്രമായിരുന്നു ആദ്യത്തെ പേരാണ് അബീഷ്. അയർലന്റിൽ നിന്നുള്ള മലയാളി ദമ്പതികൾ 'മഹാറാണി' എന്ന പേരിൽ ജിൻ ഇറക്കിയത് ആയിരക്കണക്കിന്, ആൺപേരുകൾ വാഴുന്ന മദ്യലോകത്ത് 'മഹാറാണി' വേറിട്ടുപോയി തോന്നി. ആ ചുവടുപിടിച്ചാണ് മന്ദാകുന്ദിയുടെയും പിറവി.

ലോകത്തെവിടെയും മലയാളി സാന്നിധ്യമുണ്ട്. മലയാളിയുടെ മത്സാസകതിയും ലോകപ്രശസ്തമാണ്. പക്ഷേ മദ്യലോകത്ത് വേറിട്ടു നിൽക്കുന്നൊരു മലയാളിപ്പേരില്ല. അങ്ങനെയൊരു ലക്ഷ്യം കൂടിയാണ് മന്ദാകുന്ദി സാർഥകമാക്കിയത്. അങ്ങനെ മുന്നവർഷം കൊണ്ട് സായിപ്പിനെ കൊണ്ട് മലയാളം പറയിപ്പിച്ച ആദ്യത്തെ നാടൻ വാറ്റായി മന്ദാകുന്ദി മാറി.

അവതരിപ്പിച്ച് മുന്നവർഷത്തിനുള്ളിൽ തന്നെ യു.എസ്.എ. സ്പിരിറ്റ്സ് അവാർഡിൽ സാക്ഷാൽ റെമി മാർട്ടിനെ വരെ പിന്തള്ളി 89 പോയിന്റോടെ സിൽവർ അവാർഡും കാനഡയിലെ ബെസ്റ്റ് മദ്യമെന്ന ഖ്യാതിയും മന്ദാകുന്ദി സ്വന്തമാക്കി കഴിഞ്ഞു.

കോവിഡ് കാലത്ത് ആലോചിച്ച പല ബിസിനസ്സുകളിൽ ഒന്നായിരുന്നു ഇത്. 2005ലാണ് അബീഷ് കാനഡയിലെത്തുന്നത്. മെക്കാനിക്കൽ എഞ്ചിനീയറിങ്ങ്, ഇൻഷുറൻസ്, ബിസിനസ്, ഫാഷൻ ഡിസൈനിങ്ങ് തുടങ്ങിയ മേഖലകളിലെല്ലാം മാറി മാറി ജോലി ചെയ്തു. ഇതിനിടെ സഹോദരൻ എലിയാസും ജോലി അന്വേഷിച്ചു കാനഡയിലെത്തി.

ജോലി അന്വേഷണത്തിനിടയിൽ എലിയാസിന്റെ പോബി വിവിധതരം മദ്യം രുചിക്കലായിരുന്നു. പല ബിസിനസ് ആശയങ്ങൾ ആലോചിക്കവേ എന്തുകൊണ്ട് മദ്യം തന്നെ ആയിക്കൂടാ എന്ന വെളിപാട് ആദ്യമുണ്ടായതും എലിയാസിനു തന്നെ. വിശദശൈത്യത്തുന്ന ഏതൊരു നാട്ടിൻപുറത്തുകാരനും ഗൃഹാതുരയായി മനസിൽ സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്ന തനി നാടൻരുചി കളോടും തനിമയാർന്ന വാറ്റിനോടുമുള്ള ഇഷ്ടം കൂടി ഇങ്ങനെയൊരു ചിന്തയ്ക്കു പിന്നിൽ ഇല്ലാതില്ല.

ചെറിയ അളവിൽ മദ്യം ഉത്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ക്രാഫ്റ്റ് ഡിസ്റ്റിലറി സ്വന്തമായി തുടങ്ങാനായിരുന്നു ആദ്യത്തെ പ്ലാൻ. എന്നാൽ ലൈസൻസ് അടക്കമുള്ള ഔദ്യോഗിക കടമ്പകൾ കടന്നുകിട്ടാനുള്ള പ്രയാസമോർത്തപ്പോൾ ഡിസ്റ്റിലറി കരാറിനെടുത്ത് ആരംഭിക്കുന്നതാണ് സാക്ഷ്യമെന്നു മനസ്സിലായി. അങ്ങനെയാണ് ഡോൺ ഡിമോന്റെയുടെ ഡിസ്റ്റിലറിയിലേക്കെത്തുന്നത്.

മറ്റു പല ബിസിനസുകളും ചെയ്ത ശേഷമാണ് ഡോണും ഡിസ്റ്റിലറി ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത്. എന്നുതന്നെ മുമ്പാണ് ആളുകൾ ക്ലിഷ്ടപ്പെടുക എന്നു തിരിച്ചറിയാനൊരു സവിശേഷമായ കഴിവുള്ള ആളാണ് ഡോൺ. മദ്യപദാർത്ഥങ്ങൾ അറിയാവുന്ന ആൾ എന്നു വേണമെങ്കിൽ പറയാം. ഇരുപതും അമ്പതും വർഷം പഴക്കമുള്ള വിസ്കി മുന്നിൽ കൊണ്ടുവെച്ചാൽ അത് മണത്തും രുചിയ്ക്കും നോക്കി കൃത്യമായി പഴക്കം വരെ നിർവ്വചിക്കാൻ മിടുക്കുള്ള വർ ഈ രംഗത്തുണ്ട്. അത്തരത്തിലൊരു മദ്യവിദഗ്ദ്ധനാണ് ഡോണും.

മുഖർസംഘം പാഞ്ഞതനുസരിച്ച് മനാകിനിയുടെ രസക്കുട്ട് ബ്ലേൻഡ് ചെയ്ത ഡോൺ പാഞ്ഞതു: 'സംഗതി കൊള്ളാം, ധൈര്യമായി മുന്നോട്ടുപോകാം,' പിന്നെയും ചേരുവകൾ ചേർത്തും കുറച്ചും പലവട്ടം വാറ്റിയതിനൊടുവിലാണ് മനാകിനിയുടെ പിറവി. മലബാറിന്റെ വീര്യം വാറ്റിയ സത്തിന് 'മലബാറി വാറ്റ്'ന് പേരുമിട്ടു.

പോട്ട് സ്റ്റിൽ പ്രോസസിലൂടെയാണ് മനാകിനി ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നത്. കലം വെച്ചുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന ആ പഴയ നാടൻരീതിയുടെ വ്യാവസായിക നിർവ്വചനമാണ് പോട്ട് സ്റ്റിൽ പ്രോസസ്. ഫ്ലേവറുകൾ കുറച്ചുകൂടി മികച്ചതിൽക്കൊണ്ട് ഈ രീതിയാണ് നല്ലതത്രെ. ഡബിൾ ഡിസ്റ്റിലേഷൻ കൂടിയാവുമ്പോൾ പഴയ പെരിയാറ്റിലെ തെളിനീരു പോലെ സുന്ദരമായ മനാകിനി റെഡി. ഒന്നടിച്ചാൽ ആരും 'മഞ്ഞ്ജള മധുവാണി'യായി ഗാനം മുളിപ്പോകും.

വാറ്റുണ്ടാക്കൽ അത്ര ആനന്ദകരമായൊരു മെല്ലെയാണ് അബീഷിന്റെ അഭിപ്രായം. നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളായി നമ്മുടെ കാർന്നോന്മാർ ഉണ്ടാക്കിപ്പോന്നിരുന്നതാണ് വാറ്റ്. മികച്ചതിനും വാറ്റുണ്ടാക്കാൻ അറിയാമായിരുന്നിട്ടും നമ്മൾ വിദേശി ഇനങ്ങളെ വരേണ്യന്മാരായി കണ്ടു. മുന്തിയ വില കൊടുത്തു വാങ്ങി മേനി കാട്ടി. അതേ ഗുണമുള്ള നാടൻവാറ്റിനാകട്ടെ മറ്റൊരു മറ്റുയുടെ അതേ അവസ്ഥ. പട്ടച്ചാരായം എന്ന അവസ്ഥയുമാ!

നാട്ടിൽപുറങ്ങളിൽ കല്യാണങ്ങൾക്കും മറ്റു വിശേഷ അവസരങ്ങളിലും പ്രത്യേകമായി വാറ്റുന്ന പതിവുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. നെല്ലും ശർക്കരയും പഴങ്ങളുമെല്ലാം ചേരുന്ന വാറ്റിന്റെ വീര്യത്തിനു മുന്നിൽ വിദേശി വമ്പൻമാർ പോലും മുട്ടുമടക്കും. അന്നാർക്കും അതിനൊരു പേരു കൊടുത്ത് വ്യവസായമാക്കാൻ തോന്നിയില്ല എന്നുമാത്രം. അവരത് ചെയ്തിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ നൂറും ഇരുന്നൂറും വർഷത്തെ പാവവും പറയാവുന്ന മദ്യ ലേബലുകൾ കേരളക്കരയിൽ നിന്നും ഉണ്ടായേനെ.

ആ കീഴ്വഴക്കമാണിപ്പോൾ മനാകിനി ലംഘിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. അന്തർദേശീയ ലൂക്കിൽ ഇറങ്ങുന്ന മനാകിനിയുടെ കുപ്പിയിൽ മലയാളത്തിൽ 'നാടൻ വാറ്റ്' എന്ന്



ആലേഖനം ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. കൂടാതെ ഹിന്ദി, പഞ്ചാബി, തെലുങ്ക്, തമിഴ് ഭാഷകളിലെ പേരും കാണാം. കാനഡയിൽ മനാകിനിയുടെ ആരാധകർ ഇന്നാട്ടുകാരാണ് എന്നുള്ളതാണ് കാരണം.

ആദ്യമിറങ്ങിയ മനാകിനി ഒറിജിനലിനു പുറമേ മൂന്ന് ഫ്ലേവറുകളിൽ കൂടി മനാകിനി ലഭ്യമാണിപ്പോൾ. ജിഞ്ചർ-കാർഡമം സ്ക്വെസ്ഡ്, പൈനാപ്പിൾ-മാംഗോ ഫ്ലേവേർഡ്, പിന്നെ ആരാധകരുടെ നിരന്തരമായ അഭ്യർത്ഥന മാനിച്ച് പുറത്തിറക്കിയ 65% ആൽക്കഹോൾ അടങ്ങുന്ന 'മലബാറി 65'.

ഗുണനിലവാരത്തിൽ ഒരു വിട്ടുവീഴ്ചയുമില്ലാത്ത മനാകിനി നീറായടിക്കാനാണ് ഏറ്റവും ബെസ്റ്റ് എന്നാണ് അബീഷിന്റെ അഭിപ്രായം. നാരങ്ങനീരും പുതിനയിലയും സോഡയും ചേരുന്ന കോക്സിലായും മനാകിനി കസറും, നിലവിൽ കൊച്ചി വിമാനത്താവളത്തിലെ ഡ്യൂട്ടിഫ്രീഡ് ഷോപ്പിൽ മാത്രമാണ് നാട്ടിൽ മനാകിനിയുടെ സാന്നിധ്യമുള്ളത്. ഈ വർഷം അവസാനത്തോടെ ബാംഗ്ലൂർ, ഹൈദരാബാദ് എയർപോർട്ടുകളിലെ ഡ്യൂട്ടിഫ്രീഡ് ഷോപ്പുകളിലും മനാകിനി എത്തും; ഇറക്കുമതി അനുവദിച്ചാൽ നമ്മുടെ ബാറുകളിലും.

മദ്യ ഉപയോഗത്തിൽ നമ്മൾ മലയാളികൾ മുമ്പിലാണെങ്കിലും എങ്ങനെ മദ്യപിക്കണമെന്ന കാര്യത്തിൽ നമ്മളിപ്പോഴും പിന്നിലാണെന്നതാണ് സങ്കടകരമായ കാര്യമെന്ന് അബീഷ് പറയുന്നു. കാനഡയിൽ ഹോട്ടലുകളിൽ മദ്യം വിളമ്പുന്നതിന് സ്കാർട്ട് സെർവ് സർട്ടിഫിക്കേഷൻ വേണം. സർട്ടിഫിക്കേഷൻ നൽകുന്നതിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി പലതരത്തിലുള്ള ബോധവൽക്കരണം നൽകും. അതിഥി അമിതമായി മദ്യപിക്കാതെ നോക്കേണ്ട ഉത്തരവാദിത്തം വിളമ്പുന്നയാൾക്കാണ് എന്നുള്ളതാണ് അതിൽ പ്രധാനം.

അതിന് പല തന്ത്രങ്ങളുമുണ്ട്. അതിഥി 'മടാമടാ' കൂടിക്കുന്നയാളാണെങ്കിൽ

ഭക്ഷണത്തെ കുറിച്ചു സംസാരിച്ചോ മറ്റൊന്നെങ്കിലും തരത്തിൽ ശ്രദ്ധ മാറ്റിയോ തന്ത്രപൂർവ്വം മദ്യപാനത്തിന്റെ അളവ് കുറയ്ക്കുക, എന്നിട്ടും ഭക്ഷണമെങ്കിൽ രേഖിളിനടുത്തേക്ക് വരാതെ മാറിനിൽക്കുക അങ്ങനെ പലതുമുണ്ട്. അമിതമായി മദ്യപിച്ച് വാഹനമോടിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചാൽ അധികൃതരെ വിളിച്ചറിയിക്കണമെന്നുള്ളതാണ് അവിടത്തെ ചട്ടം. ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ പോകുന്നത് ഹോട്ടലിന്റെ ലൈസൻസായിരിക്കും.

മദ്യം ഭക്ഷണത്തിന്റെ കൂടെ വിളമ്പുന്നൊരു പാരമ്പര്യമാണ് വിദേശീയർക്ക്. അവിടെ സോഷ്യലൈസ് ചെയ്യാനുള്ള മാധ്യമമാണ് മദ്യമെങ്കിൽ നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടിൽ ചിലർ മദ്യപിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ ആന്റി സോഷ്യലായിക്കളയും! ഓരോ ഇനം ഭക്ഷണത്തിനൊപ്പം ഓരോ തരം മദ്യം എന്നുപോലുമുണ്ട്. ഉദാഹരണത്തിന് സ്റ്റീക്കിനൊപ്പം റെഡ് വൈൻ ആണ് ക്ലാസിക്ക് കോമ്പിനേഷനുകളിലൊന്ന്. അല്ലാതെ നിൽപനായും നോൺസ്റ്റോപായും കൂടിപ്പിക്കി ആമാശയം തന്നെ കത്തിച്ചു കളയേണ്ട ഒന്നല്ല മദ്യം.

പക്ഷെ മുന്നും പിന്നും നോക്കാത്ത ആ പഴയ പരുക്കനടിയിൽ നിന്ന് വേണ്ട വീധം കൂടിക്കാൻ മലയാളി ശ്രമിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നാണ് മനാകിനിയുടെ തലതൊട്ടപ്പന്മാരുടെ അഭിപ്രായം. മനാകിനിയെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്തത്തോടെ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുക എന്നൊരോർമ്മപ്പെടുത്തൽ കൂടി ഡെബ് സൈറ്റിൽ ഇവർ ചേർത്തിട്ടുമുണ്ട്. മലയാളികൾ ഉത്തരവാദിത്തമുള്ള കുടിയന്മാരും കൂടിക്കാരിക്കളുമായി പരിണമിക്കുന്നതിനൊപ്പം മനാകിനി ഇനിയും വിശാലമായ മേച്ചിൽപുറങ്ങളിലൂടെ വിജയശ്രീലാളിതയായി ഒഴുകട്ടെ. ഇനിയും കൂടുതൽ പിൽഗാമികൾ ഭൂലോകമറിയുന്നവരായി ഉണ്ടാവട്ടെ. ചിയേഴ്സി!

തിരുവനന്തപുരം ആസ്ഥാനമാക്കി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന സ്വതന്ത്ര മാധ്യമ പ്രവർത്തകയാണ് മേരി സാമുവൽ.



KOCHI

The Dream City

Mohan Kakkanadan

“Your state is so stunning, so why do you choose to reside in this urban jungle?” My friend Pragya from Mumbai inquired when she returned from her one-week sojourn in Kerala.

The serenity of Kerala's lush green landscape and the breathtaking beauty of its pristine beaches captivated her, leaving her in awe. From the moment she landed at the Nedumbassery airport, she was fascinated by the pacifying beauty of the land.

Her Uber ride to Kochi, stay at the Bolgatty Palace, the relaxing boat rides on the Vembanadu Lake, and explorations of the Vypeen Islands via the Goshree bridges—

all cemented her love for this enchanting place. She found solace in the tranquillity of Broadway, a welcome respite from the bustling chaos of Bhendi Bazar.

Like many Keralites living in the diaspora, I too have just one response to her question: it's for the job. But I could tell from her expression that she wasn't convinced.

The twin cities of Ernakulam and Kochi serve as the Gateway to the spice-rich land of Kerala. While many visitors swiftly depart for the rural expanses along the Western Ghats, numerous cultural attractions in this city make staying worthwhile.



Explore the vibrant streets of Mattancherry, Jew Street, Broadway, and Marine Drive in Kochi, or discover the lush green landscapes of Kumbalangi, Kadamakkudy, and Kakkathuruthu. The scenic splendour of Kerala is sure to leave you enthralled.

Cultural Cauldron

The ancient and tranquil village of Kochi gained prominence with the arrival of Arabian traders. Until the 13th century, Muziris, the southern capital of the Chera dynasty, served as the primary port for overseas trade. However, when it was submerged due to a natural calamity, Kochi rose to prominence.

Around 30 different immigrant populations from diverse nationalities, speaking over 16 languages, have their homes in Kochi. They have seamlessly integrated with the local

community, making Kochi a unique hub of cultural diversity, says Bony Thomas, an artist-cum-researcher of Kochi's cultural heritage and the author of the book "Kochikkar."

Kochi drew the attention of the Arabs, Jews, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and the British, each leaving a lasting imprint on its history. Some turned invaders, while some others were just traders. The Portuguese built their fort and churches, which were destroyed

by the Dutch when they came in by the 17th century; the Dutch forts became just history when the British razed them in the 18th century.

Adding to this rich cultural tapestry, people from nearly every state in India found their homes in Kochi, including the Gujaratis, Marwaris, Kashmiris, Tamils, Kannadigas, Tulu Brahmins, Kutchis, and Rajasthani communities.

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Culinary Diversity

Culture and food are intricately connected to each other, with cuisine serving as a powerful reflection of a society's heritage, traditions, and values. Food is not merely sustenance; it is a form of communication, a celebration of identity, and a gateway into the heart of a culture.

In essence, culture and food are like two sides of the same coin. Food is a living expression of culture, and culture is nourished and enriched by the food it produces and consumes. Exploring the culinary traditions of different cultures can be a delicious journey of discovery, offering insights into the history, values, and way of life of people from all corners of the globe.

Kochi is not different; it serves diverse types and flavours of food; vegetarian and non-vegetarian from all over the world. Arabic, North Indian, Continental, or European

"Though many are traditional, a lot have come from immigrant communities. Goans brought prawns, shells, and crabs to the dining table while masala dosa and chappati came from the Tulu kitchen; papads came along with Gowda Saraswat Brahmins; Kochi



is a melting pot of cuisines," says Thomas.

In every corner of the world, you'll find culinary traditions that have been passed down through generations. These traditions encompass not only the ingredients and cooking techniques but also the rituals, customs, and stories surrounding food. For example, the spicy curries of India tell tales of a land rich in spices, where regional variations reflect the diversity of its people.

Food also plays a central role in social gatherings and rituals.

Whether it's a family gathering for a festival dinner, a traditional tea ceremony, or a lavish wedding feast, food is used to bring people together, strengthen bonds, and mark significant life events. These shared meals create a sense of belonging and reinforce cultural values.

Delightful Eateries

When Kochi expanded into its twin city, Ernakulam, modernity made swift inroads. And the globalization of food in recent decades has led to the fusion of culinary traditions from across the world. In multicultural societies, we can find an exciting blend of flavours and ingredients that reflect the diverse backgrounds of the residents. This fusion is not only a testament to the adaptability of food but also a jubilant celebration of cultural exchange.

The same happened in the case of Ernakulam. In contrast to other regions in Kerala, this city, which proudly embraces a blended culture, underwent rapid changes. The heartbeat of Ernakulam lies in its eateries, scattered far and wide, they can be found everywhere. Neat and tidy delightful places that offer a memorable dining experience that extends beyond just the food.





CSI Heritage Bungalow, Fort Kochi

In summary, the hotel business in Kochi has evolved to meet the demands of a growing number of tourists, both leisure and business travellers. With its mix of cultural attractions, natural beauty, and economic opportunities,

These places have thoughtfully designed ambience, striking a balance between comfort and aesthetics. The lighting sets the mood. The menu is well-curated, featuring a variety of dishes that cater to different tastes and dietary requirements, always prepared with fresh, high-quality ingredients.

The flavours will tantalize the guest's taste buds. Each plate is a work of art, with attention to detail in every arrangement, garnish, and colour choice. With immaculate

table settings, spotless cutlery and glassware, the city restaurants compete with each other to retain their guests. Also, most of them offer reasonable prices.

Hotel business in Kochi has seen significant growth and transformation in recent years. Being a popular tourist destination and a major economic hub in South India, it has a flourishing hotel industry in the region.

The influx of tourists has driven the demand for various types

of accommodations, such as luxury hotels, boutique heritage properties, mid-range hotels, and budget-friendly accommodations, catering to different traveller preferences. Many offer conference facilities to cater to the needs of professionals and conferences. Some have packages that include sightseeing and cultural extravaganzas to enhance the overall visitor experience.

In summary, the hotel business in Kochi has evolved to meet the demands of a growing number of tourists, both leisure and business travellers. With its mix of cultural attractions, natural beauty, and economic opportunities, Kochi continues to be a dynamic and thriving destination for the hospitality industry.

There is a popular adage in Malayalam: "Kochi kandavanu achi venda", which means "One who has seen Kochi will even leave his wife." So immersive is a Kochi experience.

Mohan Kakkanadan : currently settled in Kochi, is a former Assistant Editor, The Economic Times, Mumbai.



FKHA-INSTITUTE OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT A BOON FOR KERALA'S YOUTH

Kiran Kumar

Hospitality is part of a larger enterprise: the travel and tourism industry, of which hotels form the major part. The main attraction of a hotel is not only its amenities, but the kind of service it provides to delight its customers.

Providing great hospitality leads to an experience that encourages the guests to return and recommend the business and place. Trained staff is one of the biggest assets of any hotel or restaurant. Off late, the hotel industry has been facing challenging times to get professionally trained and educated staff.

Every industry faces a major challenge when it comes to getting trained personnel. Although there are several institutes to train personnel for the hospitality

industry, their induction into the industry is a tough process because of their unfamiliarity with the real-life situations in the industry.

A person would normally take several weeks and months to get integrated into the system. An ideal solution for this is to have an in-house training centre to produce the best of talents suited for the hotel industry, but that is not something that individual players can do or even dream of.

The Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA), the umbrella organisation of 800-plus classified and facility hotels, classified and approved restaurants, resorts and heritage hotels operating in Kerala, has now succeeded in breaking this logjam by establishing an Institute of Hotel Management.

Although the key motivation for setting up the Institute was to bridge the demand-supply gap, at the operational level, it has become a social responsibility initiative to provide employment to youngsters from poor families. Set up in 2019, the FKHA-Institute of Hotel Management now has six centres across Kerala.

The centres, located at Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Kozhikode, now has combined student intake of 300 for its various courses. The FKHA-Institute of Hotel Management offers:

- One Year Diploma Course in Hotel Management, which is open to students who have completed SSLC or equivalent and are looking for a career in the hospitality industry.
- Staff Empowerment Programme, known by the acronym STEP, joining which the unqualified but experienced staff of hotels affiliated to FKHA get the opportunity to secure a Diploma in Hotel Management. The course is offered as a combination of online and offline modes.

The FKHA-Institute of Hotel management is an authorised training centre of STED (Scientific and Technical Education Development) Council), which is an autonomous body approved by the Government of India to provide skill advancement training and career courses all over the country in 400 plus job-oriented categories.

All courses under STED are designed to train the students to be employable on completion. The One-year diploma programme for SSLC completed students is uniquely designed to attract the best talents for a fast-track career in the hotel industry. More than 400 students have already passed the course and are well placed in the industry. At present, the 5th batch of students are undergoing the classes and training.

Highlights of the program include:

- Course with nil fees and monthly stipend.
- Training facility in star hotels with free food and accommodation.
- Monthly stipend of Rs.4000/-
- Qualified and experienced faculty
- Practical oriented curriculum
- 100% placement after the course in star hotels affiliated to the Association.

staff in each centre. The centre works under the district FKHA office under the guidance of the State President and General Secretary of FKHA. Even during covid time, classes were conducted online and all efforts were made to keep the Institutes running. The passed-out students are now working at various hotels of FKHA and other hotels in India and abroad.

Each year, the pass-out students are presented the certificates by a Minister of the Kerala Government



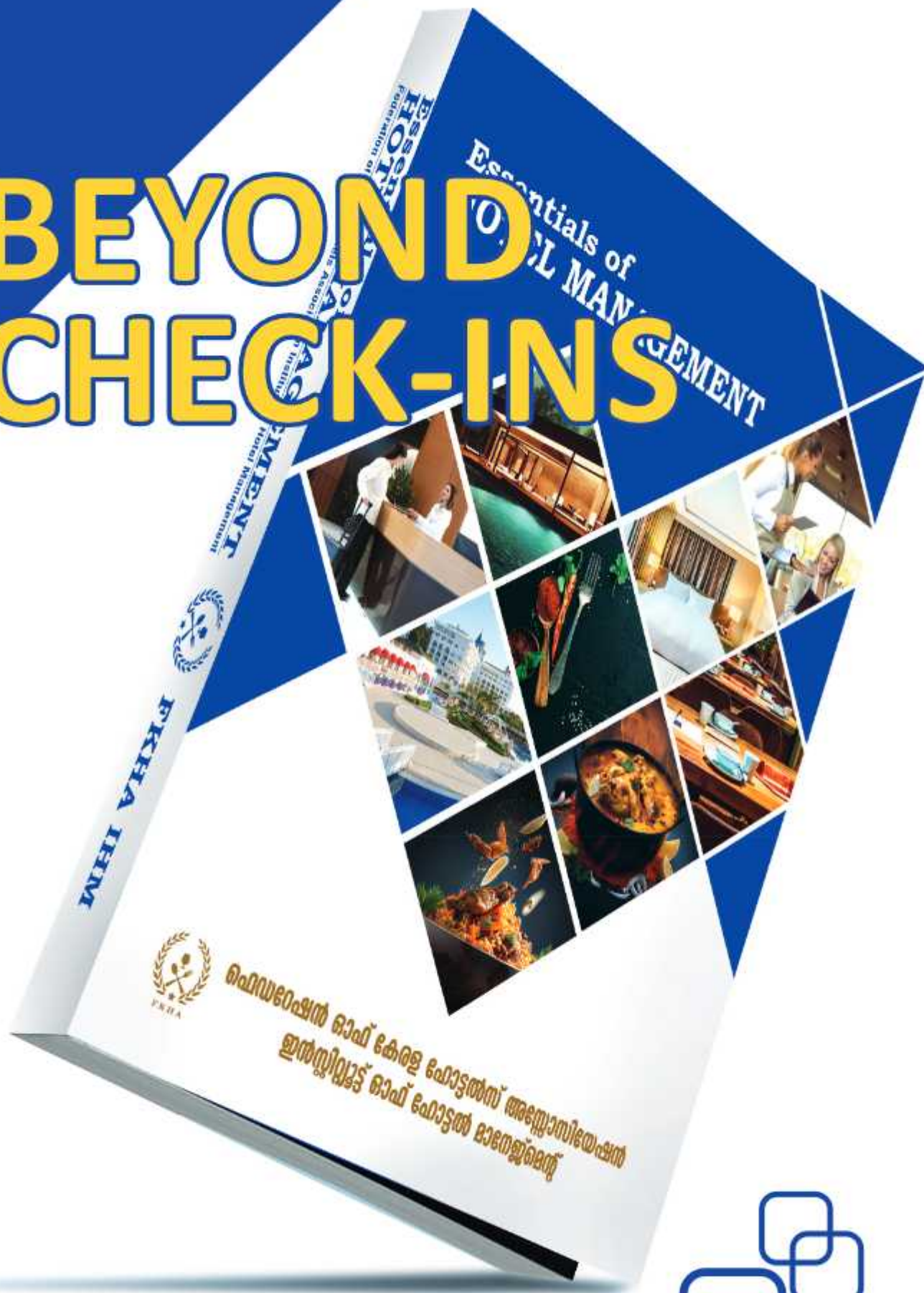
More than 400 students had enrolled for the STEP programme started in October 2022 across the six centres. Existing staff with good experience, but no qualification have found this course a golden opportunity to get qualified and get rewarded by the hotel they work for with an additional increment or promotion. The course for the next batch of this programme will start shortly.

The Institute of Hotel management is run professionally with qualified

at a grand convocation ceremony. The students from all centres are part of this programme during which the inauguration of the new batch also takes place. The initiative of FKHA in setting up the institute has been appreciated widely. Efforts are on to add additional courses and start training centres in all districts of Kerala.

Kiran Kumar is Principal, FKHA-Institute of Hotel Management.

BEYOND CHECK-INS



SWAGAT

ESSENTIALS OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT

Asokan Pallickal

The FKHA-Institute of Hotel Management, which now has six teaching centres in Kerala, is a unique experiment. The Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA) set it up primarily as a corporate social responsibility initiative, though it also serves to bridge the gap in the demand and supply of trained staff in the hotel industry.

But that is only half the story. As soon as they decided to set up the institute, the FKHA office-bearers and faculty found that teaching and learning at the institute can happen effectively only if there was a comprehensive textbook on hotel management.

The normal thing to do in such a situation is to look around for a textbook that comes as close as possible to what is sought to be taught. But the FKHA would have none of it. The FKHA office-bearers thought it wiser to prepare a textbook in-house. A team of FKHA-IHM soon began work on such a book.

They found that though there was a lot of knowledge and experience with the industry veterans, there was no textbook that reflected their vast and updated knowledge about the art and science of hotel management. The team began working on the textbook drawing upon the wisdom and knowledge of the veterans.

The outcome of their collective effort is a worthy compendium of information about diverse areas of the hospitality industry titled 'Essentials of Hotel Management'.

The textbook contains elaborate notes on Tourism Management, Front Office Management, House Keeping Management, Food and Beverage Service and Food Production. Text and notes relating each of these subjects have been prepared by experts in the respective fields, which has made this a quality reference book.

This professionally curated book, with easy-to-understand notes, pictures and charts, has been written in simple language. The FKHA-IHM originally published it in English in 2021. Seeing its usefulness and popularity among the students, Malayalam translation of book was released in September this year.

Hospitality industry has no borders. Therefore, each student of hospitality management should be trained to take up professional assignments in different parts of the world. Keeping this in view, the FKHA-IHM has created a world class learning environment, where

students can develop from entry level staff to a manager.

All the students enrolling for the programmes of FKHA-IHM are given the textbook, which takes a deep dive into the art and science of hotel management. It is a guide for both the students and the teaching faculty of the institute.

The efficiency of the course is such that no student who has passed out of the FKHA-IHM remains jobless today. They are capable of functioning confidently in a multi-cultural and global environment and have been in great demand from the industry within Kerala and India and abroad.

A fair share of credit for this should go to the textbook 'Essentials of Hotel Management', which is a veritable hoteliers' playbook.

Asokan Pallickal is Editorial Coordinator, FKHA Swagat Magazine



Robot *Kitchens*



Integration of AI in the food and beverage industry can work wonders for the hospitality industry and its patrons

Staff Writer

Imagine getting into a restaurant where food and beverages are primed to your taste and health without your telling the captain what you want or what you wish to avoid, all in elaborate detail...

Or an eatery where food is presented with that little flourish that you have always loved, or with that little nuance in the use of a particular ingredient...

Well, if either or both of these happen every time you reach the

place of your choice, rest assured, you're seated where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is part of the playbook.

We are talking here about how automation will allow the restaurateurs or smart kitchens to provide a diverse and personalized menu, making it easier for consumers to find products that align with their tastes.

It is not just about food that is served, but how grains and greens

reach your table in the right mix, without wastage, and adding efficiency and value to the entire chain that branches off from your dinner table—to the kitchen, to the supermarket, to the cold chains, to the warehouses, and to the farms...

It's a slow start in India, but the global food and beverage sector, a major component of the hospitality industry, is gradually embracing the wave of artificial intelligence (AI) and technological advancements.

With the AI market in the food and beverages sector projected to soar to USD 35.42 billion by 2028, growing at a compelling CAGR of 38.30%, the industry is at a crossroads of innovation and tradition.

Automated Kitchens

Moley Robotics has ushered in the era of the domestic robot kitchen, capable of replicating Michelin-starred recipes with the precision and finesse of human hands. This robotic workforce doesn't seek to replace kitchen staff but rather assists them in maintaining

consistent high-quality standards and safety protocols.

By automating repetitive tasks, it frees up front-end staff to focus on customer interactions, streamlining the dining experience. Moreover, the introduction of robot kitchens promises a substantial reduction in labor costs.

We are talking here about how automation will allow the restaurateurs or smart kitchens to provide a diverse and personalized menu, making it easier for consumers to find products that align with their tastes.

AI- designed recipes

Recipes designed by AI are user-friendly and can help chefs step out of their usual cooking routine. The recipes are quantitative and can help chefs create dishes like a pro. Chef Watson by IBM is an excellent example of AI in culinary.





It is a supercomputer that uses data science, computing, and machine learning to make cooking faster, easier, and more delicious. It can help chefs in their kitchens by suggesting recipes and ingredients, and telling them what to do without revealing their secrets.

Safety and Quality

Artificial intelligence has been able to improve the safety and quality of food products by ensuring that they are manufactured correctly. AI machines can scan, inspect, and monitor for any errors in a product. By reducing human errors and increasing standards, artificial intelligence improves the overall quality of food products. Additionally, AI can help identify potential food safety hazards and correct them before they cause any harm.

Reducing wastage

Environmental consciousness is a driving force for change in the F&B sector. AI-driven demand

forecasting analyzes historical data, events, and seasonality to predict future customer demand, mitigating overproduction and waste.

Material management solutions, coupled with predictive analytics, track real-time inventory levels, minimizing deadstock and spoilage. This approach aligns with the industry's growing commitment to sustainability.

Food waste is a big problem in the food industry, costing companies crores of rupees each year. AI can help reduce food waste by identifying and solving problems early: reduce food waste by enabling retailers and restaurants with limited resources to evaluate the quality of their food and determine if they need more or less, which saves them money.

Demand forecasting

Predictive analytics not only reduces wastage but also anticipates consumer preferences,

enabling informed decisions on inventory levels and production schedules. Chefs and managers can optimize menus based on historical data, digital ordering modules, and external factors, ensuring a more satisfying dining experience. Analytics also guide effective pricing strategies, maximizing profitability and preparing for seasonal shifts in demand.

Predictive maintenance

Predictive analytics extends its benefits to operational continuity by identifying potential machinery failures and facilitating timely maintenance. In an industry where occupational injuries are a concern, this approach creates a safer work environment, boosting both efficiency and employee well-being.

Transparency and accountability

As transparency becomes paramount, AI-powered algorithms scrutinize supplier data, certifications, and compliance records, ensuring that ethical

claims are verified. Analyzing large datasets related to product suppliers aids businesses in making informed decisions, fostering accountability in sourcing practices.

Smart Farming

Artificial Intelligence has already begun to play a major role in ushering in smart farming to improve yields and optimize growing conditions. AI is becoming increasingly handy for farmers to detect plant diseases and pests and also read environmental conditions like humidity, temperature and soil properties.

While satellite imagery and drones are already out there in a big way, sophisticated sensors could be the next thing in smart farming. By understanding which factors impact food quality, AI can optimize growing conditions for crops. This can help farmers produce perfect quality food while reducing waste.

Supply Chain Management

AI is gaining in popularity in supply chain management in the food industry. Not just malls or huge supermarkets, but even grocery stores, coffee shops and restaurants can now have software to automate their inventory control. As the world becomes more connected, demand-supply chains and delivery food chains can be streamlined as historical data is shared between different companies and organizations for greater efficiency.

Balancing tradition and innovation

While AI and robotics introduce efficiency, traditional kitchens' emotional touch raises concerns among both employees and guests. Striking a balance is crucial; businesses must gauge their audience's readiness for a tech-driven dining experience.

Additionally, the investment in robotics may impact costs, prompting businesses to reassess

AI is gaining in popularity in supply chain management in the food industry. Not just malls or huge supermarkets, but even grocery stores, coffee shops and restaurants can now have software to automate their inventory control.



pricing strategies to maintain accessibility without compromising quality.

The integration of AI in the food and beverage industry requires a nuanced approach. Rather than a complete transition, gradual adoption aligned with budgetary constraints allows for smoother financial management. AI should

be seen as a complementary tool, enhancing the service element without overshadowing the human touch that defines hospitality.

Ultimately, successful AI adoption is about managing the tool judiciously, ensuring that it aligns with the industry's ethos and enhances, rather than replaces, the human experience.



വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ ഗിരിശൃംഗങ്ങൾ

പി.കെ. ശ്യാംസുന്ദർ

കണ്ണൂരിന്റെ രഹിതയാ
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ചെയ്യുന്നത്. തളിപ്പറമ്പ് ശ്രീകണ്ഠാപു
രം പത്യാമ്പുർ ഗ്രാമപഞ്ചായത്തിൽ
ആണ് കുന്നത്തൂർപാടി; സമുദ്രനിര
പ്പിൽ നിന്ന് 3000 അടി ഉയരത്തിൽ.

ഈ രണ്ടിടങ്ങളിലേക്കും ശ്രീ
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ലക്ഷക്കണക്കിന് ഭക്തരാണ്.
അവർക്ക് പുറമെ മുത്തപ്പൻ ഐതി
ഹ്യത്തിന്റെ ചരടുപിടിച്ച് ശാക്തിക

ആചാര-ആരാധനാ രീതികളെക്കുറിച്ച്
പഠിക്കാനും വടക്കൻ കേരളത്തിന്റെ
സാംസ്കാരികതനിയെക്കുറിച്ച്
അറിയാനുമെത്തുന്നവർ വേറെ.

ഒരർത്ഥത്തിൽ ഒരു വിമത ദൈവമാ
ണ് ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പൻ. നിഷ്കളങ്കരായ
ഭക്തരുടെ ദുഃഖങ്ങൾക്ക് അറുതി
യുണ്ടാക്കിയും അതേസമയം തന്നെ
തന്റെ ശാക്തിക സ്വഭാവത്തെ കാരോ
ചലനത്തിലും അരക്കിട്ടുറപ്പിച്ചുമാണ്
മുത്തപ്പൻ അവതരിക്കുന്നത്.

കിഴാള സംസ്കൃതിയുടെ കരുത്തും
പ്രാകൃത ആചാരങ്ങളുടെ പെ
രിമലയും ഒരേപോലെ ദൃശ്യമാ
കുന്ന വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ ഈ ഗിരി
ശൃംഗങ്ങളിലേക്കുള്ള സഞ്ചാരം
കേരളത്തിൽ നിലനിൽക്കുന്ന വിശ്വാ
സ-ആരാധനാ വൈവിധ്യത്തിലേക്ക്
കൂടെയുള്ള സഞ്ചാരമാണ്.



പറശ്ശിനിക്കടവ് ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പൻ ക്ഷേത്രം

ഭക്തർക്ക് നേരിട്ടുള്ള അനുഗ്രഹവർഷം, പരാതിയും പരിഭവവും കേട്ട് ഉള്ളറിഞ്ഞു ഉള്ള സാന്ത്വനം.

24 മണിക്കൂറും തുറന്നിടുന്ന മടപ്പുര. മുത്തപ്പന്റെയും തിരുവപ്പനയുടെയും നിറഞ്ഞൊട്ടം. ഇതാണ് കണ്ണൂരിൽ നിന്നും 19 കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലെ കണ്ണൂർ-തളിപ്പറമ്പ് റൂട്ടിൽ ധർമ്മശാലയിൽ നിന്നും നാലുകി ലോമീറ്റർ ദൂരത്തിൽ സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്ന പറശ്ശിനിക്കടവ് ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പൻ ക്ഷേത്രം.

ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലുള്ളത് മഹാവിഷ്ണുവിന്റെയും പരമേശ്വരന്റെയും വിഗ്രഹങ്ങൾ. അവർക്ക് തൊട്ടുമുന്നിലായി നായയുടെ വിഗ്രഹവും, നായ്ക്കൾക്ക് ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ എപ്പോഴും സൈദ്ധ്യവിഹാരം.

ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ ദിനം തോറും എത്തുന്ന ആയിരക്കണക്കിന് ഭക്തർക്കല്ലാം പയർ പൂഴുങ്ങിയതും തേങ്ങാപ്പൂവും ഉണക്കമൽ സുത്തിന്റെ കഷണവും ചായയും, ഊണ് വേറെയുമുണ്ട്. ചൂട്ടു മീനും മാംസവും കള്ളും മുത്തപ്പൻ ഇഷ്ട വിഭവങ്ങൾ എന്ന് ഐതിഹ്യം.

ആ ഐതിഹ്യത്തിലെ മുത്തപ്പൻറെ കഥയിങ്ങനെ: പയ്യാവൂർ ശിവക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ ശിവഭക്തനായ പാടിക്കുറ്റി അമ്മയ്ക്ക് സന്താനഭാഗ്യമുണ്ടായില്ല. ആ അമ്മയ്ക്ക് സപ്തമത്തിൽ ശിവ ഭഗവാന്റെ അനുഗ്രഹവർഷത്താൽ പച്ചതെങ്ങാലയിൽ തീർത്ത കൊട്ടയിൽ ഒഴുകിയെത്തിയതാണത്രേ ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പൻ.

വളർന്നപ്പോൾ ആ കുട്ടി മറ്റു സമുദായത്തിലെ കുട്ടികളുമായി കൂട്ടുകൂടി.

അവർക്കൊപ്പം മത്സ്യമാംസാദികൾ കഴിച്ചു. കള്ളും കുടിച്ചു. ഒടുവിലാണ് അച്ചനമ്മമാർക്ക് ഇത് സാധാരണ കുട്ടി അല്ലെന്ന് മനസ്സിലായത്. പാവപ്പെട്ടവരെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുകയാണ് തന്റെ അവതാര ലക്ഷ്യം എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞ് കുട്ടി കാട്ടിലേക്ക് യാത്രയായി. ആ യാത്ര അവസാനിച്ചത് വളപട്ടണം പുഴക്കരയിലെ പറശ്ശിനിക്കടവിലാണ്.

ആ കുട്ടിയെ ഒരു നായ പിന്തുടർന്നിരുന്നു. പറശ്ശിനിക്കടവ് വരെ തനിക്ക് കൂട്ടുവന്ന നായയെ തനിക്കൊപ്പം ധന്യനാക്കി മുത്തപ്പൻ. അങ്ങനെയൊന്നത്ര ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ നായ്ക്കൾക്ക് സൈദ്ധ്യവിഹാരം നടത്താനും നായയുടെ വിഗ്രഹം ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ വരാനും കാരണം. മുത്തപ്പന്റെ അനുഗ്രഹം തേടി എത്തുന്നവരിൽ എല്ലാ മതവിശ്വാസികളുമുണ്ട്. എല്ലാവരുടെയും ദൈവമാണ് അവർക്കുമുന്നിൽ കൺകണ്ട ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പൻ.

മുത്തപ്പൻ ദേവസ്ഥാനത്ത് ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പൻ എന്ന ശൈവ സങ്കല്പത്തിലായി ഷ്ഠിതമായ ദൈവരൂപത്തെയാണ് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നത്. വെള്ളാട്ടം, തിരുവപ്പന എന്നിങ്ങനെ രണ്ടു പ്രധാന അനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങൾ ഈ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ പ്രധാന വഴിപാടാണ്. ദിവസവും രാവിലെ രണ്ട് തെയ്യവും കെട്ടിയാടും. പൂലർച്ചെ 5.45 മുതൽ 8 വരെ വെള്ളാട്ടവും തിരുവപ്പനയും. പിന്നീട് വെള്ളാട്ടം വൈകിട്ട് 6.30 മുതൽ വീണ്ടും കെട്ടിയാടും.

തുലാമാസം 1 മുതൽ വൃശ്ചികം 15 വരെ (നവംബർ-ഡിസംബർ) തിരുവപ്പന ഇല്ല. ഉത്സവം വൃശ്ചികം 16-നു തുടങ്ങി 20ന് അവസാനിക്കും.

മുത്തപ്പൻ വെള്ളാട്ടം, കലശം വരവ്, കഥകളി, വെടിക്കെട്ട് എല്ലാം ഉത്സവനാളുകളിൽ ഉണ്ടാവും. തിരുവപ്പന, വിളക്കും മാലയും, കദം കലശം, ഊട്ടും വെള്ളാട്ടം, പയംകുറ്റി വെള്ളാട്ടം, പയംകുറ്റി, ചോറുണ്ണ്, തുലാഭാരം ഇവയാണ് പ്രധാന വഴിപാടുകൾ.

നായാട്ടിനിറങ്ങുന്ന ഒരു താഴ്ന്ന ജാതിക്കാരന്റെ മകൻ എന്ന സങ്കല്പവും ശൈവസങ്കല്പവും കൂടി ചേർന്ന ഈ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ ആരാധനാക്രമത്തിന് ശുദ്ധസാത്വിക ഭാവമല്ല ഉള്ളത്. ശാക്തിക ആചാര-ആരാധനാ രീതികളും കളക്ട്, മീൻ, ചെറുപയർ പൂഴുങ്ങിയത് എന്നിങ്ങനെ പ്രസാദവസ്തുക്കളും അടങ്ങുന്ന ക്ഷേത്രമാണിത്.

വെള്ളാട്ടം ആടയാഭരണങ്ങൾ ഏറെ ഇല്ലാതെ ദൈവവചനങ്ങൾ വായ്ത്തൊടി പോലെ ഉരുവിട്ട് ദർശനം നടത്തുന്ന രീതിയാണ്. തിരുവപ്പനയിൽ കൂടുതൽ അലങ്കാരങ്ങളോടെയാണ് ദേവന്റെ പ്രതിനിധി പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടുക. വെള്ളാട്ടം ദ്രുത ചലനങ്ങളോടെയുള്ള നൃത്തരൂപത്തിന്റെ സ്വഭാവമുള്ളതാണ്. തിരുവപ്പനക്ക് ദർശനം നൽകലാണ് പ്രധാനം.

കുന്നത്തൂർപാടി

വിളിപ്പാൽ വിളിപ്പാറത്തുള്ള ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പനെ കാണാൻ കണ്ണൂരിലേക്ക് വരണം. പശ്ചിമഘട്ട മലനിരകളുടെ ഭാഗമായ ഉടുമ്പ മലയിലാണ് കുന്നത്തൂർ പാടി പ്രകൃതി തന്നെ ഒരുക്കിയ മടപ്പുര അഥവാ ശ്രീകോവിൽ. ഇതുതന്നെയാണ് ക്ഷേത്രം. ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പന്റെ ആമുഖസ്ഥാനമായ കുന്നത്തൂർ പാടി.

സമുദ്രനിരപ്പിൽ നിന്നും 3000 അടി മലമുകളിൽ, കൊടും കാടിനു നടുവിൽ, മഞ്ഞും മഴയും പെയ്തിറങ്ങുന്ന, ആനയ്ക്കു പുലിയും മേയുന്ന ഇടത്താണ് കുന്നത്തൂർ പാടി.

തളിപ്പറമ്പ് ശ്രീകണ്ഠാപുരം പയ്യാവൂർ ഗ്രാമപഞ്ചായത്തിൽ ആണ് കുന്നത്തൂർപാടി. ധനു മാസം രണ്ടിനാണ് ഇവിടെ ഉത്സവം തുടങ്ങുക. ഡിസംബർ 18ന് തുടങ്ങി ജനുവരി 16 ന് ഉത്സവം അവസാനിക്കും.

പാടിക്കുറ്റിയമ്മയുടെ യാത്ര പറഞ്ഞു പിരിഞ്ഞ മുത്തപ്പൻ യാത്രയ്ക്കിടയിൽ ചെന്ന് ചേർന്ന സ്ഥലമാണ് കുന്നത്തൂർ പാടി. അവിടുത്തെ വനംഭംഗി കണ്ട് കൊതിച്ച മുത്തപ്പൻ അത് തൻറെ ആമുഖസ്ഥാനമാക്കി. പ്രകൃതിദത്തമായ അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിൽ മതി തനിക്ക് ഉത്സവം എന്നായി മുത്തപ്പൻ. കൊഴിഞ്ഞ ഇലകൾ, പാറക്കല്ല്, മല, വന മരങ്ങൾ... തനിക്ക് ഇവ മതി.

ധനുമാസത്തിലെ ഉത്സവകാലത്ത് കാടിനു നടുവിൽ ഉള്ള ഒരു ഗുഹയുടെ അരികിൽ തുറസ്സായ സ്ഥലത്ത് ആണ് ഉത്സവം. താൽക്കാലിക ഞമടപ്പുരണ്ടുതന്നെ ശ്രീകോവിൽ. ഒരു കല്ലും പാറക്കല്ല് കൊണ്ടുള്ള പീഠവും ചെളി കൊണ്ടുള്ള പീഠവും. മടപ്പുരക്ക് മുന്നിൽ രണ്ട് പന മരങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ട്. തിരുവൻകടവ് എന്ന നീരുറവയും.

ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിലെ വിവിധ കാലഘട്ടങ്ങൾ ഉത്സവകാലത്ത് കെട്ടിയാടും. വർഷങ്ങളായി എസ്.കെ. കുഞ്ഞിമാ മൻ നായനാർ ആണ് കുന്നത്തൂർപാടി മാനേജിങ് ട്രസ്റ്റി. എല്ലാവർഷവും ഉത്സവം ചിട്ടയോടെ നായനാരുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നടത്തുന്നു. ഉത്സവകാലത്ത് വൈകിട്ട് 7 മുതൽ 12 വരെ താഴെ മടപ്പുരയിൽ ഭക്ഷണമുണ്ട്.

കർണാടക മലനിരകളാണ് അതിർത്തി. കൂടക് തൊട്ട പ്രദേശമാണ്. ഉത്സവകാലത്ത് കൂടകിൽ നിന്നടക്കം വനപാതയിലൂടെ ഭക്തർ എത്തും. ഉത്സവകാലത്ത് ചില ദിനങ്ങളിൽ രണ്ടു ലക്ഷം പേരാണ് കുന്നത്തൂർ പാടിയിൽ എത്തുക.

ഉത്സവം കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ പാടി പൊളിക്കും. പിന്നെ ആർക്കും പ്രവേശനമില്ല. ആനയും പുലിയും മാത്രം മേയുന്ന വനമായി കുന്നത്തൂർപാടി മാറും.

മലയാള മനോരമ മൂൻ പ്രാദേശിക ലേഖകനും കണ്ണൂർ ആസ്ഥാനമായുള്ള സിൽ ടിവി സൂപ്പർ എഡിറ്ററുമാണ് പി.കെ. ശ്യാംസുന്ദർ





Henry Baker Junior

Whispering Stones, Misty Memories

Giji K. Raman

The St. George Church at Pallikkunnu, nestling the Munnar hills, is a quaint Gothic-style structure that has stood witness to the emergence of tea plantations in Munnar and has many tales to narrate about the lives led by the Europeans in this outback of India some 150 years ago.

It's early evening. The air is nippy. You have sauntered into the courtyard of this British era church, not knowing what to expect there, but certain in your mind that you want some peace and quiet, away from the crowded streets and the normal go-to places of Munnar hill station. You have come to the right place, for silence here is breached only by the rustle of the Cypress leaves and whisper of the breeze blowing from afar. You are in the courtyard of the St. George CSI Church at Pallikkunnu, built over 150 years ago by CMS

missionary Henry Baker Junior, to meet the ecumenical needs of the British, Scottish and Irish planters who had made present-day Peerumedu (then known as Peermade) taluk their adopted home. Located by the side of today's Kottayam-Kattappana State Highway, it was originally known as CMS Church Azhutha, but soon the Britishers began referring to the hillock on which it is located as Church Hill. That name stuck, and, when the Britishers left, the name reincarnated in its Malayalam avatar as Palli-Kunnu (Church-Hill).

The church is a quaint Gothic-style structure, made with stone and surkhi (finely powdered burnt clay mixed with lime and water) with woodwork that is minimal to a fault. The church was built in 1869. Neither its exterior nor its interior is exuberantly ornate like its counterparts in Europe. Located, as it is, atop a hillock, the church almost seems to grip the ground with its exterior buttresses.



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The walls are double-layered to keep the interiors warm even during the coldest months. The altar has glasswork typical of the Gothic style, but in a highly pared down manner. The pews, baptismal font and pulpit also speak of the modest scale on which it was conceived, probably because it was originally meant for the sparse population of Europeans who lived in Peermade and Munnar at the time. The church is still mostly covered with tiles that had been brought from the kiln in Malabar, then owned by the Basel Mission Society. Save for a few, these are still intact.

The church originally followed

the Anglican service, which was attended only by the Europeans. However, three years after its establishment, the need to cater to the spiritual quests of the indigenous populace became evident to the Europeans. Thus, the church doors were thrown open to the local people, majority of who had been brought in from Sri Lanka and present-day Tamil Nadu, with a few from Kerala, to work in the tea and rubber estates.

The service for the Europeans remained an exclusive affair even after the church was made accessible to Tamil and Malayali labourers. The first one to perform the service in the two indigenous languages was Rev. Fr. Nallathampi, a Trichy native, who was specially brought for the purpose. The Europeans continued to be members of the church well after India became independent and the church continued to have its English service till 1984.

Although the Europeans are long gone, the British continue to have a big stake in the church. Although the laws seem to be a little vague

there, the present authorities of the church say that the British High Commission is the true owner of the European cemetery forming part of the church premises.

The 15.62 acres of land on which the church is situated was a virtual gift from the Travancore Royal Family. The then Diwan of Travancore T. Madhava Rao handed over the land to Henry Baker Junior for a royal sum of 12 annas per acre. Legend has it that the church was built at a cost of Rs. 800.

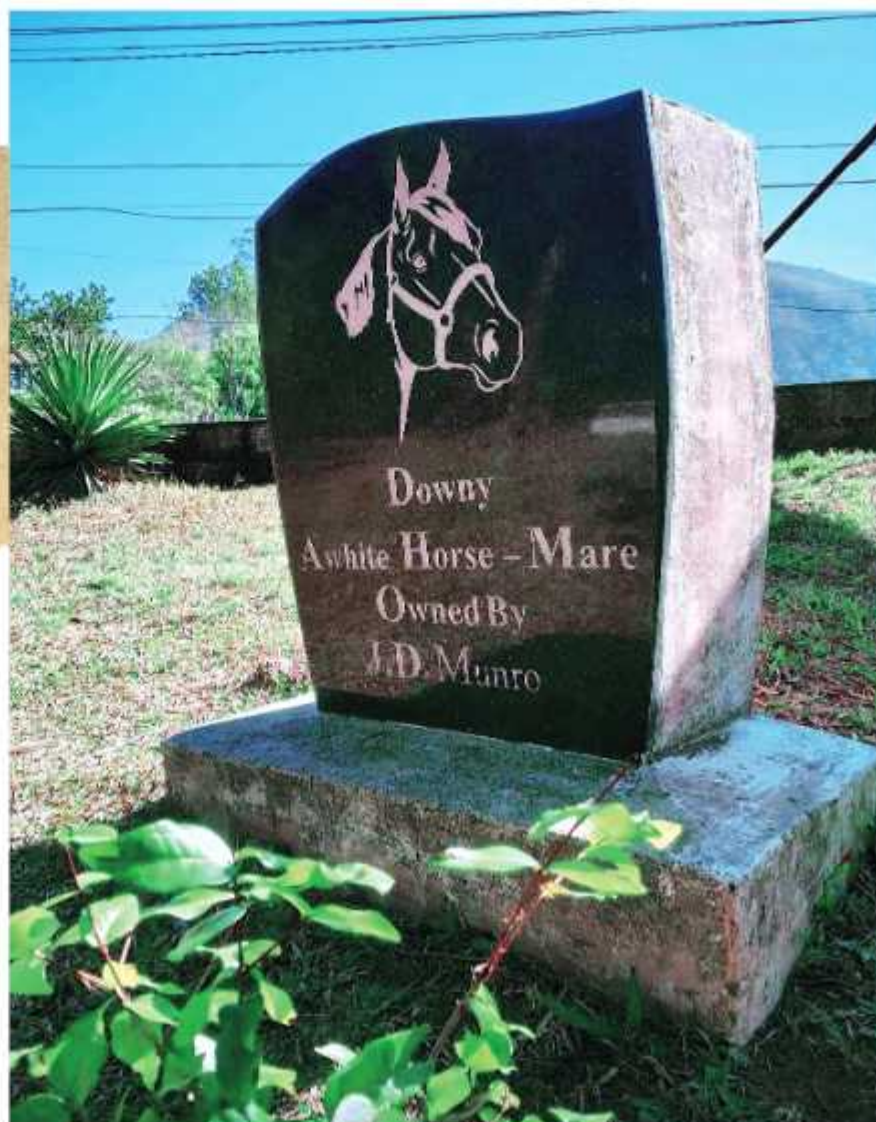
The land for the cemetery was gifted by wife of the planter who owned neighbouring Ashley Estate. She did so on the condition that no Indian would be buried in the European cemetery. But, the European masters of the 47 estates in the area decided to dishonour her condition on one occasion: when Rev. Fr. Nallathampi breathed his last. He now lies at the very entrance to the European cemetery, the only Indian to be honoured thus by the western planter community.



There are just 34 tombs in the cemetery and what would strike any visitor to the cemetery is the tomb of a horse, a white mare named Downy. And there lies a tale.

There are just 34 tombs in the cemetery and what would strike any visitor to the cemetery is the tomb of a horse, a white mare named Downy. And there lies a tale. She belonged to John Daniel Munroe, nephew of Col. John Munroe, a tall figure in Travancore history. Known popularly as just Col. Munroe, he became Resident of the East India Company in Travancore from 1810 and later the Diwan of Travancore. His influence over the Travancore and Cochin sovereigns were so overwhelming that he could do much to bring about social reform in Kerala.

His nephew J.D. Munroe was the first European planter to raise the scale of tea cultivation in Munnar to what should be rated as a global scale. He was all over the place—



planting, harvesting, processing and sending the tea to various destinations in Europe. And he rode on Downy as he went round the

tea plantations. When she died, the tradition of not burying an animal in the burial ground of human beings was thrown to the winds. So, even today, the headstone of the white mare is a prominent presence in the cemetery. And, located right next to it is J.D. Munroe's own headstone—that was his last wish.

The youngest to have a tombstone at the cemetery is Albert Spearmint, who was born on June 13, 1906, and died on September 19 in the same year. Local church historians would tell us that the cemetery was for long rated as the most beautiful cemetery garden in all of Asia. The passage of time has inflicted some damage to the tomb of Downy, but it remains a symbol of the inexplicable bond between an adventurous man and his inseparable companion.





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J.D. Munroe was married to Henry Baker's daughter Henrietta and was very much around when the Church flourished as the spiritual sanctuary of the Europeans who had left their far away homes to conquer new frontiers with rare grit and determination. Till the Covid-19 pandemic hit, descendants of those who lay buried in the European

cemetery used to come to the church to trace their lineage and offer prayers for the dead.

Of all the three churches built by Europeans in Idukki district, including the one at Munnar and the other at the Peerumade Tea Company Ltd, the Pallikunnu church stands out as the most beautiful one without any damage, thanks to the keen attention to its upkeep from the CSI Church authorities.

The church still uses the furniture that had been in use during the Raj. No additions have been made to the main structure which, when viewed from above, resembles a cross. In keeping with the

protestant tradition, there is no curtain separating the altar and the laity. The pulpit is reserved for the Vicar or the Bishops who lead the mass, but a rostrum is available for the laity to interact with the small gathering that the church can accommodate on matters of faith and spiritual practices.

"We have kept the window panes, doors and altar intact. The annual maintenance is done without causing any damage to the church structure or to the furniture," said Vicar of the church Liju Abraham. The window panes were imported at the time of construction of the church and the furniture are made of teakwood," he pointed out.

The church has an elaborate record of who died when and due to what cause.

Inside the church, there are memorial plaques for many European planters who had died in the Pallikunnu area. And nobody has had to go empty-handed. The church has an elaborate record of who died when and due to what cause. In fact, the church also has records of burials made elsewhere in Munnar before the St. George Church was built.

The four sides of the church have similar appearance, but there are



two main entrances marked with decorative work on the doors. The road laid by the British was originally to the right of the church. This was a road from Kuttikkanam

to Karinkulam Chappath, which was built by them to move tea and all that they needed to sustain their lives in the plantations. It is still the arterial road connecting the tea plantations and labourers' colonies. Anyone travelling through this road can enjoy a veritable visual feast as its two sides are dotted with waterfalls and rolling hills.

Compared to the new settlement areas in the high ranges in Munnar and neighbouring areas, development work has not altered the landscape in Pallikunnu dramatically. A new bus route has cut the church land into two, but without affecting the church and European cemetery which still remain as one parcel.

When there were no other churches in the area, the St. Francis Church had to do service for 1500 families. But, with construction of new churches, it now only caters to the spiritual needs of 150 families. Still, a brand-new church has been built right next to the European church. That is where the normal church services are held these days.





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The British church is still kept open for anyone who wishes to see and enjoy its heritage value.

The British church is still kept open for anyone who wishes to see and enjoy its heritage value. Jeneesh V, member of the church committee, recalled that a team from the CSI Church in Chennai, where Henry

Baker Junior was buried, was on a visit to the heritage church last year and that many in the U.K. still keep the church in their memories.

As night falls on a full moon day, the heritage church, located atop a hillock and with white exterior, would be all aglow, radiating an ethereal charm. Listen carefully, and you might hear it narrate many a tale about men, women and children who came to this faraway land to build a home away from home, about lives that bloomed

here and the many memories that lay buried in the European cemetery.

Step out ever so lightly, for you have just seen, hard and experienced the poignant history of a bunch of people who came to this land of opportunities, built their own small empires, and left behind a church that breathes history.

Giji K. Raman is former Correspondent of The Hindu



The Transformative Power of Yogasanas for cardiovascular well-being

In an era where sedentary lifestyles and stress take a toll on heart health, the ancient practice of Yoga emerges as a beacon of holistic well-being. The profound benefits that specific yoga poses, or yogasanas, offer for cardiovascular health are many. From the grounding Tadasana to the invigorating Setu Bandhasana, these poses contribute to improved circulation, reduced stress, and strengthened cardiac muscles.

As we navigate the complexities of modern life, discovering the therapeutic potential of yogasanas unveils a path to a healthier heart—a journey grounded in ancient wisdom and supported by contemporary scientific understanding.

Yogasanas play a crucial role in promoting cardiovascular health by enhancing circulation, reducing stress, and improving overall well-being. Here are five yogasanas specifically beneficial for heart health.

Tadasana (Mountain Pose)

Tadasana is a foundational pose that focuses on alignment, balance, and deep breathing. By grounding the body and promoting steady inhalation and exhalation, Tadasana helps calm the nervous system, reducing stress and anxiety. Stress management is vital for heart health, as chronic stress can contribute to cardiovascular issues.



Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose)

This asana involves lifting the hips toward the ceiling while lying on the back. Setu Bandhasana strengthens the chest, neck, and spine, stimulating the heart and improving blood circulation. It also engages the legs and buttocks, promoting overall cardiovascular fitness.



Trikonasana (Triangle Pose)

Trikonasana involves a deep stretch of the torso, promoting flexibility and strength. This pose opens up the chest and enhances circulation, helping to reduce blood pressure. The elongation of the spine also improves nerve function, contributing to a healthier heart.



Utkatasana (Chair Pose)

Utkatasana is a powerful pose that engages the entire body, including the heart. By strengthening the legs, back, and core, it promotes overall cardiovascular fitness. Additionally, the deep knee bend in this pose enhances circulation and activates the cardiovascular system.

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Bhujangasana involves arching the back while keeping the lower body grounded. This pose strengthens the muscles of the chest and back, improving posture and increasing lung capacity. The controlled expansion and contraction of the chest in Cobra Pose enhance respiratory function, supporting cardiovascular health.



Incorporating these yogasanas into a regular practice can contribute to a healthier heart by reducing stress, improving circulation, and enhancing overall cardiovascular function. As with any exercise regimen, individuals with pre-existing health conditions should consult with a healthcare professional before starting a new yoga practice.



VIZHINJAM SEAPORT

A MARITIME GAME CHANGER



Located just 10 nautical miles away from the international shipping route and having a natural draft of 23 to 27 metres with minimal littoral drift, Vizhinjam is expected to be a maritime gamechanger for India. No other Indian port, public or private, has the depth required to accommodate ultra-large cargo vessels of the kind that the Vizhinjam International Transshipment Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport would welcome to its berths barely a year from now.



N. Vijayagopalan

Big ticket infra projects are easier said than done. Quite literally so. But, once they are done, they bring about a paradigm shift in the geographies where they are located. Thiruvananthapuram, the Kerala capital, is poised at the cusp of such a major shift, with the Vizhinjam International Seaport (VIS) fast getting ready for commissioning.

Located just 10 nautical miles away from the international shipping route and having a natural draft of 23 to 27 metres with minimal littoral drift, Vizhinjam is expected to be a maritime gamechanger for India. No other Indian port, public or private, has the depth required to accommodate ultra-large cargo vessels of the kind

that the Vizhinjam International Transshipment Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport would welcome to its berths barely a year from now.

The port is being developed by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ), India's largest port developer with footprint across the Indian seashore. It is being built in the landlord model with a Public Private Partnership (PPP) component on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis. It has been designed to primarily cater to the transshipment and gateway container business with provision for a cruise terminal, liquid bulk berth and facilities for additional terminals.



Project at a Glance

Location	Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
Coordinates	8°22'25"N 76°55'17"E
Status	Under development, Phase 1
Concessionaire	Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Ltd. (AVPPL)
Concession Period	40 years (2015 – 2054)
Draft	18m natural, scalable to 20m

Capacity

Phase 1	1 Million TEUs (by 2023)
Phase 2	2.5 Million TEUs
Phase 3	3.3 Million TEUs
Terminal Area (Phase 1)	80 hectares
Quay Length (Phase 1)	800 meters

Connectivity

Road	4 lane NH-66
Rail	Proposed dedicated freight corridor
Air	16 kms from Trivandrum International Airport

Project Cost & Funding Pattern

Project Cost	Rs.8505 crore
Govt of Kerala	57%
Govt of India	11%
Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Ltd	32%
Employment	-5,500 direct jobs

Source: Website of Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited

Project Progress at a Glance

Container Berth	82.53%
Dredging & Reclamation	68.51%
Container Yard	28.57%
Buildings	90.59%
Project Equipment	61.48%
Breakwater	68.03%
Gate Complex & Road Development	51.8%
Utilities & Others	58.19%

Source: Website of Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited

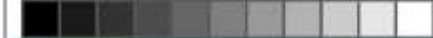


APSEZ has proven expertise in building, operating and maintaining world class port infrastructure. It currently operates ports in Mundra, Hazira, Tuna-Tekra (Kandla) and Dahej, in Gujarat, Dhamra in Odisha and also has specialized coal handling facilities in Mormugao in Goa, Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. It is also setting up a container terminal at Ennore in Tamil Nadu.

Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited (VISL), an SPV created by the Government of Kerala, has been actively involved in the execution of the port project. All the civil work viz., construction of basic infrastructure like breakwater, quay wall, dredging, reclamation, rail and road access to the port are being carried out by VISL.

Port Operation will be through the PPP model for an agreed concession period. The container yard, terminal buildings are being developed by APSEZ, which is

The first phase of the Rs.8,505 crore mega infra project, which began in 2015, is expected to be completed by May 2024 and when fully realised, the port will have the capacity to cater to 75 per cent of India's container transshipment needs. The port will be able to handle container vessels with up to 24,000 TEU capacity. Around 800 metres of berth and nearly 3,000 metres of breakwater are being readied as part of the first phase of construction.



The Vizhinjam Port welcomed the first ship, 'Zhen Hua 15', coming from China with cranes for the port's operations, on October 15, with a ceremonial reception. With the docking of the first ship, the under-construction Vizhinjam International Seaport, passed a significant milestone in India's maritime history. The port is expected to commence commercial operations from May next year.

also tasked with the purchase and operation of the cargo handling equipment.

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The Port offers large scale automation for quick turnaround of vessels with state-of-the-art infrastructure to handle megamax containerships. Its capacity in phase 1 is to be 1 million TEUs and in subsequent phases, another 6.2 million TEUs will be added.

APSEZ hopes to attract around 50 per cent of the ships passing through the international channel to Vizhinjam when the port is fully commissioned.

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Once fully operational, the port will open up a sea of direct/indirect business and job opportunities for the state. Real estate price of the region has shot up as business entities from across the country have started exploring

opportunities for investment.

Industry experts expect the Vizhinjam port to open up a plethora of direct and indirect business and job opportunities across sectors such as warehouses, cargo handling, logistics, transportation, dredging, cargo handling, fuel supply, spare parts and crew change. It will also draw more export and import-oriented business not only to Kerala but also to the adjoining regions of Tamil Nadu. The arrival of cruise ships will be a boost to the tourism and hospitality industry as well.

Once fully commissioned, the port can directly compete with neighbouring ports like Colombo in Sri Lanka, Jebel Ali in Dubai and Singapore which handle a major share of the international transshipment needs currently. It will enhance India's ability to handle gateway and transshipment





cargo and at the same time establish a strong supply chain network in Kerala. At present, around 3 million TEUs of cargo containers bound for India are transshipped annually at ports like Colombo and Singapore currently, a statistic which can be cut back significantly through the emergence of the Vizhinjam port.

The port will have the capacity to handle cargo of 1 million TEUs by the end of phase-1, which will rise to 3.3 million TEUs by phase-3. It also enjoys good connectivity through the four-lane NH66 and the international airport in Thiruvananthapuram, located just 16 kms away. There is a proposal for a dedicated railway freight corridor which will deepen the supply chain network.

Though the port is now about to be commissioned, the journey for those behind it has not been easy.

Initially planned to be completed in just 1,000 days when it commenced construction in 2015, the port project has suffered major delays due to various reasons.

Cyclone Ockhi caused severe damage to the two dredgers that had been deployed as part of the port project. The very severe cyclonic storm along with the heavy rainfall in 2018 that caused massive floods in Kerala resulted in the work on the port remaining suspended for months. Subsequently, in 2021, Cyclone Tauktae in the Arabian Sea triggered massive tidal waves that broke off a portion of the breakwater, a critical component of the port in Vizhinjam. The Covid-19 pandemic that lingered for nearly two years was also a major factor contributing to the delay.

If the natural disasters weren't enough, in 2022, the port project was beset with massive protests by

local fisherfolk who were worried that the breakwaters erected as part of the project was causing sea erosion in the surrounding villages, leading to loss of sustenance, lives and property. The agitation was finally called off when the government assured the fishers that their concerns would be addressed in all seriousness.

The Vizhinjam waters have now calmed down and work is apace at the port site. The project is backed by a solid consensus and that should augur well for the much-awaited project which is certain to become a maritime gamechanger for India.

N. Vijayagopalan is a former banker and currently Executive Editor, Executive Knowledge Line Magazine



EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM



In recent times, there has been a notable shift towards adopting more sustainable and responsible practices within the global tourism industry, spurred by a growing environmental consciousness. This shift has given rise to the concepts of ecotourism and eco-friendly hotels, both of which play pivotal roles in encouraging responsible and environmentally conscious travel.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism represents a form of nature-based tourism that places significant emphasis on minimizing or eliminating the impact on the environment, benefiting local communities, and safeguarding natural resources. It prioritizes the protection of ecosystems, wildlife, and cultural heritage, fostering positive interactions between tourists and local communities.

Promoting responsible transportation, waste reduction, and energy conservation during

travel, ecotourism also serves as an educational platform. Tourists are encouraged to learn about the environment, conservation efforts, and the importance of sustainable practices.

With the escalating challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, there is a pressing need for the travel industry, policymakers, and travelers to collectively embrace this transformative approach.

Eco-Friendly Hotels

Eco-friendly hotels, also known as green or sustainable hotels, are establishments that integrate environmental sustainability and social responsibility into their day-to-day operations. These hotels adopt a holistic approach to minimize their carbon footprint, conserve natural resources, support local communities, and enhance guest experiences in an eco-conscious manner.



Key features

Energy Efficiency: Implementation of energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems to reduce electricity consumption.

Water Conservation: Adoption of water-saving measures, such as low-flow toilets and showers, along with rainwater harvesting for non-potable uses.

Waste Reduction: Introduction of recycling programmes, composting, and policies to minimize single-use plastics.

Sustainable Materials: Utilization of sustainable, locally sourced materials for construction and furnishings to minimize environmental impact.

Green Certifications: Seeking certifications like LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) to showcase commitment to sustainability.

Responsible Tourism: Offering educational opportunities for guests to learn about local ecosystems, cultures, and traditions.

Eco-Friendly Amenities: Providing biodegradable or locally sourced in-room amenities and reusable water bottles to reduce single-use plastic waste.

Eco-Conscious Dining: Prioritizing organic and locally sourced ingredients, offering vegetarian and vegan options, and minimizing food waste.

The benefits of opting for eco-friendly hotels are manifold, including reduced environmental impact, cost savings through energy-efficient practices, appeal to eco-conscious travelers, positive brand image, a closer connection with nature, support for local communities, educational opportunities for guests, and improved health and well-being due to the use of natural materials and organic products.



However, challenges such as the initial investment for eco-friendly technologies, balancing guest comfort with sustainability, guest education, vulnerability of ecotourism destinations to climate change, and the importance of government support and regulations remain.

In essence, ecotourism and eco-friendly hotels present an optimistic outlook for the travel industry and the planet by encouraging more responsible and environmentally

conscious travel. By choosing to stay in eco-friendly hotels, travelers can relish their vacations while minimizing their ecological footprint and actively contributing to responsible tourism.

Embracing this sustainable approach can pave the way for a future where travel becomes a powerful force for environmental and social regeneration, leaving destinations better than we found them.

Careers in Travel & Hospitality

TeamLease EdTech, India's leading provider of learning and employability solutions, has come out with many insights in its comprehensive Career Outlook Report HY2, 2023.

This report delves deep into India's fresher job market, casting a spotlight on the meteoric rise of dynamic sectors, with Travel and Hospitality as one of the sought-after sectors. TeamLease EdTech presents the top 5 job roles poised to shape

the careers of Indian freshers within the vibrant Travel and Hospitality domain.

This report reveals some interesting insights about the job market and states that intent to hire freshers in the Travel and Hospitality Sector stands at 15% for HY2 (July-December, 23).



Hiring Trends - Job Roles

F&B Associate:

The role of Food and Beverage (F&B) Associate takes precedence as an attractive job opportunity within the Travel and Hospitality sector. Freshers interested in this role can consider enrolling in a "Certificate course in F&B Service."

Travel Consultant:

The demand for Travel Consultants is on the rise, reflecting the resurgence of the tourism industry. Aspiring Travel Consultants can enhance their prospects by pursuing a "Certified Travel Counsellor" course.

Event Coordinator:

Event management is a thriving sector within Travel and Hospitality. Freshers aspiring to excel in this role can opt for a "Diploma in Event Management" to gain comprehensive training.

Junior Chef:

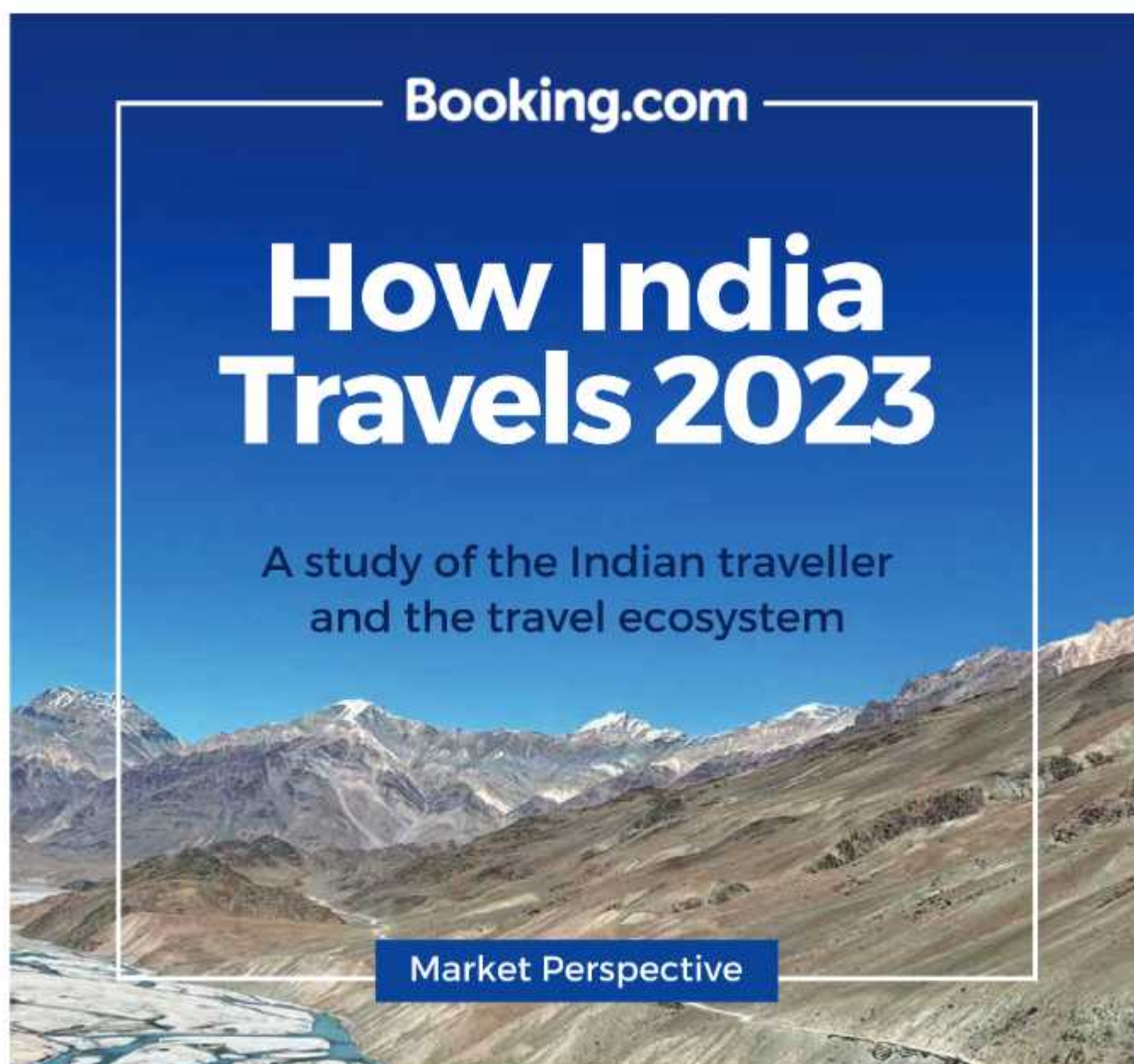
The culinary arts continue to offer promising career paths. Freshers interested in becoming a Junior Chef can enroll in a "Diploma in Culinary Arts" program.

Business Development Executive:

The Travel and Hospitality sector offers various business development opportunities. Aspiring professionals can equip themselves with essential skills through a "Business Strategy Development Course."

(Courtesy: TeamLease EdTech)

India set to become fourth largest global spender on travel: Booking.com



It is India's time in the global travel market

India is fast emerging as a powerhouse in the travel sector, captivating millions of travellers with its myriad cultures, breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

The country became the leading market in Asia to post recovery in tourism expenditure in 2022, reaching 78 per cent of 2019 levels as against 52 per cent recovery recorded by the Asian market as a whole.

Indian travellers are foodies

The report says that Indian travellers are great lovers of food. As many as 44 per cent of the respondents to the survey, on which the report is based, say that their travel decisions are shaped by the potential for great culinary experiences.

As many as 80 per cent of them chose restaurant and room service as important features for an enjoyable stay.

The report says that Indian travellers' interests are shaped by TV shows and Indian cinema, with more than half of the travellers indicating that they would choose a destination showcased in a show or a movie.

Social media also influences travel behaviour. In 2022, 91 per cent of Indian travellers turned to YouTube for travel inspiration, followed by Instagram, which holds the interest of 85 per cent of Indian travellers.

Mega events such as the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, diplomatic meetings like the G20 Summit 2023, music concerts and many more such happenings exert a pull on the travellers, acting as compelling catalysts for their journeys.

The number of aggregate trips by travellers in India is expected to increase from 2.3 billion in 2019 to 5 billion in 2030, according to a report titled 'How India Travels' by online travel platform Booking.com.

The report, prepared by Booking.com with McKinsey & Company as the knowledge partner, says that against 150 billion dollars spent by Indian travellers during the pre-Covid period, which placed the country in the sixth position in travel spending, the total spending would jump to 410 billion dollars by 2030. That would make India the

fourth largest global spender on travel.

The report says that the strong recovery in India will be on account of a strong economy, a growing middle class and travel-loving youth driving more tourism revenue in India than ever before.

"The Indian traveller is willing, eager and confident to keep going, travelling near and far in the search for new experiences," said Santosh Kumar, Country Manager, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia, Booking.com.

Kochi 9th among new destinations

One key finding of the study is that while metros have remained top destinations, Tier 2 and 3 cities such as Varanasi, Coimbatore and Kochi are gaining in popularity. Kochi has been listed as the 9th major emerging travel destination in the country.

Several other lesser-known destinations are also now capturing the interest of travellers seeking a one-of-a-kind experience. Cities

such as Varanasi, Gurugram and Coimbatore are increasingly showing up in bookings with remarkable growth.

While old favourites like Manali, Shimla and Lonavala remain popular among hilly destinations, off-beat locations like Panchgani, Madikeri and Mount Abu are topping the charts on growth in demand in 2023.

Word of caution

The report is also noteworthy for the alert that it gives to the hotel industry. There is a surge in demand for alternative accommodation options, such as hostels, campsites, vacation rentals, and chalets, the report says. The growth of average daily rates (ADR) for these alternative accommodations outpaced traditional hotel and managed chains, indicating a shift in travel preferences.

In 2023, for every night booked at a camp, three nights were booked at villas and 14 nights were booked

at guest houses. The growth in weekend bookings for alternative accommodation in top leisure and business cities such as Varanasi, Goa, Bengaluru and Delhi are 4 to 5 times higher in 2023 than in 2022.

Indians are increasingly looking overseas for their next vacation with new destinations in Vietnam, Indonesia and Nepal entering the top ranks. This is being facilitated by rising air connectivity, greater awareness, easier bookings and easier availability of visa, the report says.

Old and new favourites

Cities remain high among the top 10 most booked domestic destinations. The popularity of urban destinations is also attributable to in-city weekend getaways.

Top 10 cities by domestic bookings, H1 2023 and H1 2015¹

● 2023 ○ 2015 ★ New entrant

	2023	2015
New Delhi	1	2
Bengaluru	2	3
Mumbai	3	1
Chennai	4	4
Pune	5	7
Hyderabad	6	5
Gurugram	7	9
Jaipur	8	6
Kochi	★ 9	12
Kolkata	10	8

¹ Travel intermediary aggregated data

The globe-trotting Indian

Top 10 outbound cities by booking, H1 2023 and H1 2015¹

● 2023 ○ 2015 ★ New entrant

	2023	2015
Dubai	1	1
Bangkok	2	3
Singapore	3	2
London	4	5
Paris	5	6
Ho Chi Minh City	★ 6	-
Ubud	★ 7	-
Hanoi	★ 8	-
Phuket	★ 9	-
Kathmandu	★ 10	-

¹ Travel intermediary aggregated data

Indians are increasingly looking overseas for their next vacation with new destinations from Vietnam, Indonesia, and Nepal entering the top ranks. Increasing air connectivity, greater awareness and visa ease, are facilitating this.

Approximately 60 countries provide easy visa access for Indians, primarily in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The impact of recent Tax Collection at Source (TCS) on foreign travel is yet to be determined.

SWAGAT

Hotel industry to contribute Rs. 1.5 lakh crore to GDP by 2047: HAI report



The Indian hotel market has significant growth opportunities and is poised to contribute Rs. 1.5 lakh crore to the country's GDP by 2047, up from Rs. 65,000 crore in 2022, says a report by the Hotel Association of India (HAI).

The report forecasts that the hospitality industry would grow by at the rate of 11%, 13%, and 15% in the short, mid, and long term. This would include aspects of services from corresponding industry verticals such as food and beverages, salon and spas.

The direct contribution of the hotel industry alone to the GDP was Rs. 40,000 crore in 2022 and is expected to reach Rs. 68,000 crore by 2027, and 1 lakh crore by 2047.

Favourable policies and ease of doing business will play a key role in the way tourism shapes up, according to Madan Prasad Bezbaruah, HAI's secretary general and former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism.

"Different states have different policies when it comes to tourism, while some have given the sector an industry status, others have not. We do not understand why because it doesn't cost the States

money to do this," he says.

The report also makes a strong pitch for grant of infrastructure status to hotels which, it says, will facilitate availability of long-term loans at competitive interest rates thereby boosting the industry's growth.

Attractive investments through tax breaks, lenient land use rules, and provision of cash flow assistance to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and other infrastructure investments, including covering aviation programmes, regional tourism packages, business tourism grants, etc., will also be of great help for the sector.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism has drafted the National Tourism Policy 2023 incorporating suggestions received from Central Ministries, State Governments/UT Administrations and Industry Stakeholders.

The key strategic objectives of the Policy are:

- To enhance the contribution of tourism in Indian economy by increasing the visitation, stay and spend and making India a year-round tourist destination.

- To create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in tourism sector and ensure supply of skilled work force.

- To enhance the competitiveness of tourism sector and attract private sector investment.

- To preserve and enhance the cultural and natural resources of the country.

- To ensure sustainable, responsible and inclusive development of tourism in the country.

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has launched the 'Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dhरोhar, Apni Pehchaan' project for developing tourism amenities at heritage/natural/tourist sites spread across India for making them tourist friendly, in a planned and phased manner.

The project aims to encourage companies from public sector, private sector, trusts, NGOs, individuals, and other stakeholders to become 'Monument Mitras' and take up the responsibility of developing and upgrading the basic and advanced tourist amenities at these sites as per their interest and viability in terms of a sustainable investment model under CSR and other funds.

MoT Launches Travel for LiFE Initiative for a Sustainable Future



The Ministry of Tourism has introduced the Travel for LiFE initiative, unveiling a booklet on World Tourism Day to underscore its commitment to a sustainable, resilient and inclusive tourism sector.

During the global launch, MOS outlined five TravelForLife pledges, marking a significant stride toward a more eco-friendly and responsible future in tourism.

Gujarat's Dhordo Recognized as UNWTO's Best Tourism Village 2023



Dhordo village in Gujarat has achieved international acclaim by securing a spot on the list of 54 best tourism villages announced by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed delight at Dhordo being recognized as the "best tourism village." This accolade acknowledges Dhordo's capacity to host international events, as

demonstrated during the G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting.

The UNWTO's Best Tourism Villages 2023 award recognizes villages leading in nurturing rural regions, preserving landscapes, upholding cultural diversity, and celebrating culinary traditions. This initiative, part of UNWTO's Tourism for Rural Development program, promotes sustainable tourism practices.

Food Sector's Remarkable Growth Trajectory in India



Recent reports on India's food sector project it to become one of the world's largest, with an output expected to reach \$535 billion by 2025-26, generating 9 million jobs. The sector is expanding at a CAGR of 11%, with the food processing sector contributing 32% to the total industry. India's food sector attracted \$4.18 billion in foreign direct investments between April 2014 and March 2020.

Key growth drivers include an innovative, competitive food sector driven by technology and talent. Embracing technology and innovation is expected to lead to transformative changes in managing natural assets, food production, and distribution. The government's liberalization of the food industry is aiding substantial growth, and further initiatives could accelerate this trend.

HRAWI's 73rd AGM: Pradeep Shetty Re-elected as President



During the 73rd Annual General Meeting, Pradeep Shetty, Director of Maharaja Hotels, was re-elected as President of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI).

Shetty, with over a decade of active membership, brings significant experience to the role. The new term also includes Nirav Gandhi as Sr. Vice President, Chetan Mehta as Vice President, Jimmy Shaw as Hon. Secretary, and Paramjit S. Ghai as Hon. Treasurer. Gurbir Bedi takes charge as Jt. Hon. Secretary.

FSSAI Urges Against Using Newspapers for Food Packaging

The CEO of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, has strongly urged consumers and food vendors to cease using newspapers for packing, serving, and storing food items. Rao highlighted the serious health risks associated with this practice, aiming to alert stakeholders to the dangers.



Impact of AI on Hoteliers' Paid Search

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is making a significant impact on the hospitality industry, particularly in paid search. Google's AI-powered Performance Max ads have shown increased conversions, and Goibio in India experienced a 25% increase in hotel transactions with Smart Bidding. Adopting AI into the tech stack requires understanding its potential benefits and areas for improvement.

IndiGo's Heritage Flight to Khajuraho: Unlocking Wonders

IndiGo, India's favoured airline, initiated operations in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, starting October 10, 2023. Becoming the 80th domestic and 112th overall destination in the extensive 6E network, the new daily flights connecting Varanasi and Khajuraho, along with the one-stop daily flight between Delhi-Khajuraho via Varanasi, not only offer expanded travel options but also unveil exciting opportunities for exploring the beautiful temple towns of

Khajuraho and Varanasi.

Khajuraho, with its ancient roots and medieval temples built by the Chandela Dynasty, is a popular tourist destination. Renowned for intricate and sometimes provocative sculptures, the temples are categorized into Eastern, Western, and Southern groups.

The Western group includes prominent temples like Lakshmana, Matangeshwara, Varaha, Kandariya Mahadev, Chitragupta, Parvati,

Vishwanatha, and Nandi, situated near the archaeological museum. The Eastern group comprises Vamana, Javari, and Parsvanatha Temple, while the Southern Group encompasses Duladeo and Chaturbhuja Temple.

Apart from the temples, Khajuraho offers attractions like Panna National Park, Raneh Waterfall, Kalinjar Fort, Dhuhela Museum, and the Archaeological Museum of Khajuraho.

Decoding GST for Hospitality: HRAWI Seminar in Nashik

The Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) (HRAWI) orchestrated an insightful seminar titled 'Simplifying GST for the Hospitality Industry' at The Emerald Park in Nashik on October 9.

Gathering key stakeholders from the hospitality sector, the event delved into critical aspects of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework affecting hotel and restaurant businesses. With a commitment to fostering understanding and compliance, the seminar covered diverse GST facets, including recent updates, best

practices, and effective navigation of the regulatory landscape.

Attended by 26 hospitality professionals, the seminar, inaugurated by Sanjay Chavan and Shridhar Shetty, President and General Secretary of the Association of Bar Hotels and Restaurants, Nashik, provided practical insights through real-world scenarios and case studies applicable to attendees' businesses.

The main speaker, CA Jinit Shah, illuminated the complexities of GST and its practical implications for the hospitality sector. Through

interactive sessions, attendees directly engaged with Shah, clarifying doubts related to GST compliance.

Shah's expertise offered specific insights for hotels, breaking down room tariffs and discussing applicable GST rates. Practical scenarios, including the provision of extra beds, use of hotel utilities, and consumption from in-room mini-fridges, were addressed, providing actionable solutions for seamless GST compliance.

Ministry of Tourism Launches Special Campaign 3.0 to Drive Cleanliness and Address Pending Matters



The Ministry of Tourism is actively engaged in Special Campaign 3.0, a comprehensive initiative encompassing the Ministry itself, India Tourism domestic offices, and the Institute of Hotel Management. The preparatory phase commenced on September 15, 2023, focusing

on identifying targets for various campaign activities. The primary phase of the campaign initiated on October 2, 2023, and will continue until October 31, 2023.

Special Campaign 3.0 emphasizes addressing public grievances, handling references from Members

of Parliament, conducting cleanliness drives, and streamlining administrative processes by eliminating pending matters.

The Ministry has meticulously outlined targets for these activities and is dedicated to achieving them during the campaign period. The progress of the campaign is closely monitored and regularly updated on the SCPDM Portal, hosted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

Enthusiastic participation is observed from all Autonomous Bodies and Subordinate Offices, actively engaging in cleanliness campaigns and working towards reducing pending matters.

Students from IHMs, Yuva Tourism Clubs, and stakeholders in the tourism sector contribute to the cleanliness campaign, aiming to create hygienic environments within offices, institutes, and tourist areas. The campaign's efforts and achievements are being actively promoted on social media platforms to raise awareness about Special Campaign 3.0 among the general public.

International Tourism Festival in Mumbai in January 2024



After months of planning, the Maharashtra government has scheduled a nine-day International Tourism Festival in Mumbai from January 20 to 28, 2024. This annual event, inspired by the Dubai International Festival, aims to promote international tourism and will be overseen by a dedicated foundation responsible for planning and decision-making.

Reliance and Oberoi Hotels to Manage Three Hotels in India and U.K.



Reliance Industries has joined forces with Oberoi Hotels to jointly manage three hotels in India and the U.K. This collaboration includes the Anant Vilas Hotel in Mumbai's BandraKurla Complex, Stoke Park in the U.K., and a project

in Gujarat. The move follows Reliance Industries Chairman MukeshAmbani's acquisition of a controlling stake in Mandarin Oriental New York in 2022 and Stoke Park in 2021.

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GAF- 2023



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM TO HOST GLOBAL AYURVEDA FEST IN DECEMBER

- EMERGING CHALLENGES IN HEALTHCARE & A RESURGENT AYURVEDA THE THEME OF FIVE-DAY EVENT
- CM SHRI PINARAYI VIJAYAN CHIEF PATRON, UNION MINISTER SHRI V MURALEEDHARAN CHAIRMAN OF ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The fifth edition of the Global Ayurveda Festival (GAF 2023) will be held in the state capital from December 1 to 5, focusing on projecting Ayurveda's huge potential in addressing the health challenges of the present world and setting a platform for global networking of Ayurveda practitioners and stakeholders.

The focal theme of the GAF 2023 is "Emerging Challenges in Healthcare & A Resurgent Ayurveda," Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri V Muralaeeharan, who is the Chairman of the Organising Committee, told a press conference.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala Shri Pinarayi Vijayan is the Chief Patron of the Organising Committee, which has 200-plus members from all segments of Ayurveda.

The biennial event is being organized by the Centre for

Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA) in association with Ministry of Ayush, Government of India; Department of Ayush; Government of Kerala; Ayurveda fraternity represented by AMAI, AMMOI, AHMA, KISMA, ADMA, Viswa Ayurveda Parishad and 14 other Ayurveda Associations at the Greenfield International Stadium, Karyavattom.

The conclave will witness convergence of many top scientists, including Nobel Laureates, 7,500 delegates from 75 countries. Over 750 research papers will be presented at various sessions of the meet, besides 750 poster presentations on the sidelines.

It is significant to note that GAF 2023 is happening in the backdrop of the Union Government making major efforts to position Ayurveda as a holistic system to address grim health challenges staring at humanity, Shri Muralaeeharan said.



It is the largest event in the country in Ayurveda, he said.

Shri Muraleedharan said the event will also seek how to present Ayurveda effectively in the tourism sector, which can contribute immensely to the development of Kerala. "Already, Ayurveda is an important segment in tourism in Kerala. Ayurveda accounts for a substantial portion of the revenue generated by the tourism sector," Shri Muraleedharan said.

He recalled Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was the Chief Guest at the valedictory function of the third edition of the GAF held in Kozhikode in 2016. Shri Modi also inaugurated the fourth edition of the event held virtually due to the pandemic.

"Ayurveda has already started transcending its native borders. In India, it has been firmly established as a strong and effective segment of our health care sector. It's time that Ayurveda was promoted globally in a systematic and

scientific manner. The primary focus of the conclave will be on this vital aspect," Shri Muraleedharan said.

The event will provide a platform to tell the entire world about the time-tested ancient system of medicine and wellness, facilitate collaborative research initiatives, formalise partnerships and firm up policies, the Minister added.

GAF Working Chairman Dr C G Gangadharan said GAF 2023 will explore possibilities of increasing investment, export and trade in Ayurveda sector with the support of industry associations. Participation of Ambassadors of these nations in India will be ensured at GAF as part of its global promotion, he said.

A major highlight of the GAF is the Arogya Expo with around 500 stalls that will bring together businesses, organisations and other institutions from across the globe to showcase their products, services, and technologies related to Ayurveda. Ayush clinics, Medicinal plants and

Education expo will be part of it.

The expo will offer a unique opportunity for visitors to explore and experience the world of Ayurveda, including Ayurvedic medicines, herbal products, wellness services, and Ayurvedic equipment. It also will facilitate interactions among exhibitors and visitors, providing a space for networking, collaboration and sharing of knowledge and expertise.

As a prelude to the GAF, Grand Kerala Ayurveda Fair (GKAF) will be held in all districts of Kerala from November 1 to 30. GKAF will bring together all Ayurveda institutions, associations and organizations to highlight the strength of the system before the public. Various activities and competitions will also be organized in school-college and resident association levels. It will be a mass contact programme with everybody connected to Ayurveda in the state participating to make Ayurveda a people-friendly one.



MILLETS THE WONDER FOOD

Millets, often referred to as ancient grains, are a group of small-seeded grasses that have been cultivated for thousands of years and are gaining renewed attention for their impressive health benefits. These nutrient-rich grains, including varieties like sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, and foxtail millet, offer a plethora of advantages for human health.

First and foremost, millets are a powerhouse of nutrition. Packed with essential vitamins and minerals such as iron, magnesium, phosphorus, and B vitamins, they contribute to overall well-being and play a crucial role in maintaining healthy bodily

functions. The high fibre content in millets aids digestion, helps prevent constipation, and promotes a healthy gut, reducing the risk of gastrointestinal issues.

One of the standout features of millets is their low glycemic index, making them an excellent choice for individuals managing diabetes or looking to regulate blood sugar levels. The slow digestion and absorption of sugars from millets help in preventing sudden spikes and crashes in blood sugar.

Millets are also a boon for those aiming to maintain a healthy weight. The combination of fibre, protein, and complex carbohydrates in millets provides a sustained release of energy, keeping you full

and satisfied for longer periods. This can be particularly beneficial for weight management and preventing overeating.

In addition to being gluten-free, millets are rich in antioxidants that help combat oxidative stress and inflammation in the body, contributing to the prevention of chronic diseases. These grains have also shown potential in reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases by helping to control cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

Incorporating millets into your diet can be a delicious and nutritious way to enhance your health. From porridges and pulavs to bread and pancakes, there are numerous ways to enjoy the versatility of millets while reaping their health benefits. As a sustainable and eco-friendly crop, millets offer not only a boost to personal health but also contribute to the well-being of the planet.



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