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HUES OF LIFE



**TOURISM-
IT'S MULTIFACETED
AND WITH A LONG
HISTORY**

Explore the Beauty of Backwaters



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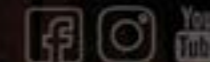
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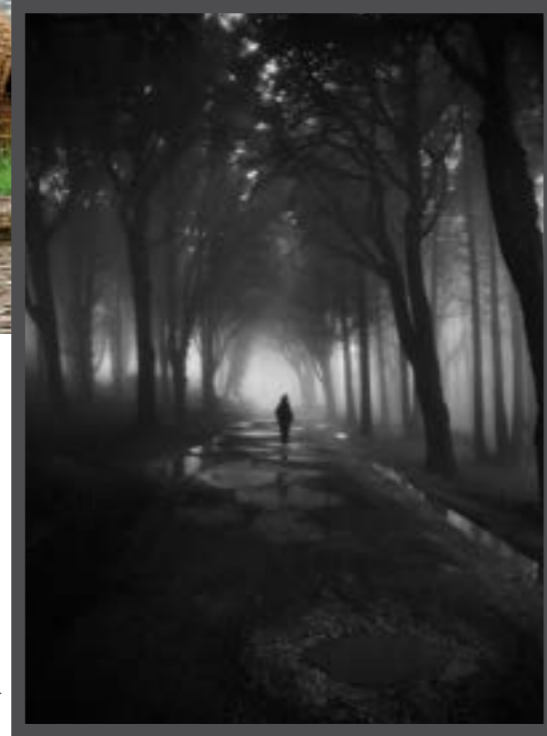
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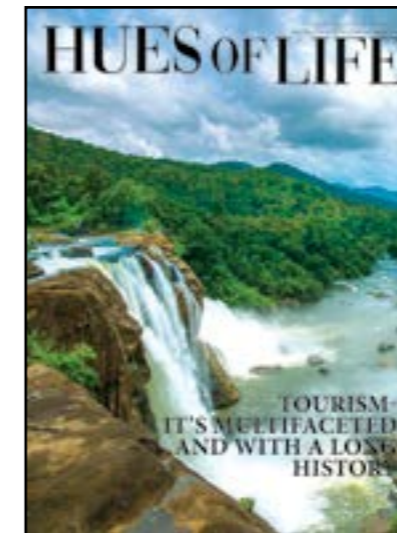
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HUES OF LIFE

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editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

Rejoice.....

Hues of Life, in this blissful edition, has tried its best to offer a handful of resources for everyone who loves to travel. For the past year and a half, we have been going through a period where travel and meetings have almost been completely eliminated from our lives.

Statistics projects that there have been major setbacks in the tourism sector during this period, and the situation has highly impacted the industry than any other. It is to be assumed that the government has realized that it is necessary to bring about a radical change for reviving the same. We are moving towards a stage where we'll have to adjust and live with the pandemic.

Even if an immediate return to those glorious old days of travel & leisure is not possible on a big note, we know that in the tourism sector, there is going to be an opportunity for us to reach across halfway and revive our travel dreams. Get ready to embrace the arrival of caravan tourism in Kerala and explore and unwind with friends and family, soon we are going to see travel as a part of the lifestyle. The caravanning experience will be designed so as to ensure the safety, peace and happiness of each traveller.

For all those young at hearts, explorers & travel enthusiasts, the doors are wide open, so enjoy this paradise to the fullest. Let knowing oneness start with a solo travel to an unexplored wild or a rural destination, keeping your privacy and safety on high priority. It's not just a blissful experience that a solo journey would offer, but it will help you attain immense strength, knowledge & courage, develop and maintain empathy to fellow-beings & nature and get you close to mother earth.

Happy reading

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TOURISM- IT'S MULTIFACETED AND WITH A LONG HISTORY

Viswanath V.

A global phenomenon – Tourism – the beginnings of which cannot be exactly dated; however, it has been in practice for centuries.

It is noted that as early as the 16th century BC, the wealthy classes used to travel for leisure. If we consider the current adventure/exploration tourism, the same form can be seen in 'Description of Greece' written by Pausanias during the 2nd century. The cultural geography of Greece of that time is written in vivid detail. He described the renowned locations as well

as the obscure little things that he found in his travels. In 1336, the poet Francesco Petrarca ascended the windy summit of Mount Ventoux at a height of more than 6000 ft just for the view and wrote about it – whether it was exploration or pleasure is debatable.

The people of Middle Ages also had pilgrimages. Pilgrimages were undertaken to Jerusalem, Mecca, etc. by believers even through the hardships and challenges of travel at that time. The 16th century novel 'Journey to the West' by the Buddhist monk Xuanzang of Tang dynasty is

*In 1897, Mark Twain wrote
But India—that is different. Its
marvels are its own; the patents
cannot be infringed; imitations are
not possible.*





another written document mentioning travels for pilgrimage. It is an account of travelling to Central Asia and Indian subcontinent. Emperor Ashoka travelled extensively spreading the doctrines of Buddha – meanwhile he built better facilities for travellers including resthouses and monasteries. The 17th century onwards arts and literature became reasons for fashionable aristocrats to visit renowned places.

While it was caravans, carts, and even walking the mode of transport on land during Antiquity and Middle Ages, sea voyages provided speed and comfort for long distance wanderers. The hardships and challenges of traveling for pleasure reduced during 19th century with the build-up of a network of railways. The year 1975 saw the American novelist Paul Theroux writing a travelogue ‘The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia’ depicting his journey from London to Southeast Asia and back. During 19th century, Thomas Cook of United Kingdom started offering day trips to local areas and extended vacations to Africa, Asia and other countries in

Europe. This could be said the first official package tour in tourism. It was in 20th century airplanes came in to the picture, allowing interested people to take up exploration across the globe with almost no hassle.

While not officially termed as tourism, several centuries before itself the influx of visitors to India from far off places is noted in different scriptures. Emperors Ashoka and Harshavardhana who could be described as domestic tourists – as per current way of thinking – not only traveled through the country, but had attended to facilities required for travelers. Persians traveling by caravans could be said to be the foremost foreign travelers to India. Chinese Buddhist monks journeyed to India learning about Buddhism.

Erstwhile royal courts of India took efforts to develop roads and inland waterways. The royals traveled with their huge entourage on the rivers and spent holidaying at the hills and other scenic locations. The mass shifting of people from one place to another led to development of places enroute.

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Since independence, successive governments in India have strived to highlight the potentials of tourism in the country. From the Second Five-Year-Plan onwards, tourism has been a component of the planning processes.
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Trade and commerce ensued – the common people too benefited by the journeys that the royals took. Although pilgrimages to religious centers like Kashi and Rameshwaram existed even during the previous centuries in India, the advent of British and the building of railway networks led to increased journeys by people from all strata of society. Hill stations came in to the limelight and building of resorts in scenic locations increased during this time.

Since independence, successive governments in India have strived to highlight the potentials of tourism in the country. From the Second Five-Year-Plan onwards, tourism has been a component of the planning processes. The initial approach by the government was to put the spotlight on select locations and showcase them for the global community. Over the years, various factors of tourism are brought in to focus and action plans are being made and realized to accelerate tourism development.

The thinking has changed to have an all-encompassing development of

locations, be it urban or rural. Circuit routes are formed to allow the tourists to have a wide-angled view of locations and experience them in its entirety. With advanced connectivity, travel bloggers and writers have a free rein to write about their choicest destinations. That means, so far hidden destinations too open up for the tourist. Apart from visiting the beaches and famous scenic spots, the visitors are given a first-hand account of various other destinations to add in to their itinerary.

Economic impact of tourism in each tourist location is huge. The increase in footfalls leads to requirement of improved infrastructure. When this is met, it gives further impetus to the overall development of the area. Across the globe, countries are devising formulas to improve facilities, develop new strategies and streamline processes to support tourism. Although some natural elements has caused tourism sector to face a lull, efforts are on to improve infrastructure facilities and chart out better options for the discerning tourists. The fact is that

irrespective of temporary reversals, Tourism has bounced back and grown leaps and bounds over the years.

Tourism has taken several forms – Adventure tourism, Eco tourism, Health tourism, Heritage tourism, Pilgrimage tourism, Rural tourism, etc. Often it can be seen that several locations can fall in to one or many categories. Traveling far in to the desert and visiting a holy destination, would be it adventure, nature or pilgrimage? Same for a medical facility located beside a beach – would it be eco or health tourism? Hence, if a location is segregated in to one particular form, it does not exactly mean it would not have other attractions. It could be said that the visitor can consider it to be a different form of tourism. It is all up to the tourist to visit and enjoy the destination. They could either stick to the criteria or take in the different facets of the destination and enhance their spectrum of experiences. Almost always, they would have the chance to witness the multifaceted nature of the destination.

CARAVANNING FOR LEISURE

Being a practical means to transport goods to a functional mode of travel to becoming an affordable touristic value addition – Caravans have journeyed a lot.

While hearing the word caravan, many immediately think of film stars and their lush caravans – the moving houses where celebrities rest and travel to movie locations. Caravans have gained much popularity in recent times.

These vehicles that can be used to live, move and relax with the comfort of a family space aims to develop the tourism potential by catering facilities and encouraging tourists to explore the unexplored destinations safely. These luxurious moving palaces with entertainments such as mini theatres and connectivity are going to be the game changer. Caravan tourism is not something we are too familiar with. Caravan rides, once seen only in Hollywood movies



and in European countries, were once a luxury for the affluent but now being made accessible to common folks at competitive rates.

The state government has announced a comprehensive caravan tourism policy. Minister of State for Tourism, P.A. Mohammad Riyaz announced the caravan tourism project on behalf of the state tourism department. It aims to bring about a complete transformation just like the implementation of houseboat tourism three decades ago, which marked Kerala as a global destination in 1990 by providing a unique travel experience for tourists. Caravan Tourism will be formed through public-private partnerships similar to other successful tourism activities in Kerala. With private investors, tour operators, and the local community being invited as the stake partners, the vibrant flagship project led by the Tourism Minister is definitely going to give a remarkable lead for Kerala in the industry. The Minister also unveiled the logo of Caravan Tourism and added that the projects would start soon and will achieve much acceptance in the public. Bharat Stage 6 vehicles will be used as the standard for reducing pollution levels. Caravan Parks would be developed as designated spots for parking the caravans at night after day-long travels. Guests can either stay just overnight or for an extended duration of time.

Many Americans and Europeans who love leisure travel, prefer caravans,

since it gives them mobility as well as a feeling of home. In India, plans on promoting caravans were thought about a decade ago; however, only a few states have made efforts on those lines. The requirement to keep social distance and avoiding public transport in the current scenario has led to a decrease in leisure travel. Caravan tourism would be a fitting solution to tackle this issue. Caravan tourism incorporates all amenities for the travelers and allow them to have a safe journey with their near and dear ones. The need for public transportation and finding accommodation at each spot can be avoided with caravan tourism. States such as Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka has entered caravan tourism to revive tourism. Caravan buses in Bengaluru is one such initiative.

The potential for Caravan tourism is huge in Kerala. The scenic nature and tourism-friendly culture of Kerala gives much scope for Caravan tourism. The caravans will be set up in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the State Department of Motor Vehicles in accordance with the Central Motor Vehicle Act. Tourist caravans will also get relief from motor vehicle tax. The caravan will accommodate all the amenities required for a comfortable stay in the vehicle including driver cabin partition, AC, internet connection, charging systems, GPS, audio and video facilities, dining table, fridge, sofa-cum-bed, microwave oven, toilet cubicle, etc. In the first phase, the custom-built caravans will be provided to passengers

along with the driver and guide. Travel plans are prepared in advance, which could be arranged according to the travelers' convenience. The caravans will be under live surveillance to ensure complete safety of guests.

Caravan parks is to be developed in private, public, or as joint ventures. Caravan Park will be a safe area that offers a stress-free environment for tourists. Surrounding walls, security arrangements, patrols, and surveillance cameras will be set up in the park. There will be effective coordination with local authorities and medical systems in case of emergency medical assistance.

The government has not fixed the fee rates for caravans and parks. Rates would be dependent on various factors. Each caravan park would have at least five parking bays. These parks would be created taking in to account the local heritage and be environment-friendly. It will have water harvesting structures, recreational areas, tourism facilitation centre, and security personnel. Local artefacts and collectable can be displayed in the park as it might be in the prime interest and wishes of the tourists. The Department of Tourism will set up a system to track all caravans. Tourism potential of many rural areas where housing is a major problem can be addressed through Caravan tourism.

Caravan Tourism Policy is bound to open up further tourism potentials in Kerala and Caravanning for leisure would be a safe and happy outdoor experience for the tourists.

Go Solo Traveling

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."

-Helen Keller

Solo journeys are one of those passions that all have in their inner mind. Solo's do provide you with a true experience of just stepping out from your comfort zone and entering a new world.

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."

Helen Keller

Risk or adventure is something one should be identifying upon the thought of going ahead with a solo. There is no risk in planned solo trips if you put aside the misconception that it will be a boring journey and will face dreadful diseases or adverse events. In fact, you are going to embrace the true essence of life, meet wonderful personalities, realize the strength and weakness in you.

With one or two solo trips, even those who despised them can change their outlook not only on travel but also on life itself. Today, it is common for tourists, including women, to go alone not just for exploration but trekking too. In our country many travellers prefer to travel alone as it increases their confidence. It helps you to develop a mindset that can overcome any crisis and helps building a multidimensional approach to the nature and mankind. Just start loving yourself leaving behind the flaws and be more empowered by learning with experiences. Solo trips that are instantly decided do have their own charm. Knowing yourself is the key to the success of these journeys as you can do your travels and stays without or with a booking depending on your choices but the later one is much appreciated as confirmations deliver mental peace helping you attain that charm to its fullest.

Opportunity to meet many other travellers and knowing the local life, culture and food is truly enchanting. Many say that when traveling alone, people in those locations suddenly approach, talk things over, and come forward with help. It's an adventurer spirit that would enable you to go out

hunting for those unexplored and rural destinations, meet new people and take means and measures for a safe and challenging travel plan. Regardless of whether you are bored on the trip or not, a thousand questions will come to mind when you take care of all the needs on your own. In short, there will always be fans of solo trips who are willing to travel according to their own time and convenience and look after only at their own liking, without waiting for anyone's comfort and hustle and bustle. In solo journeys, we are like a broken thread, allowing absolute freedom to make free decisions. It can intentionally take a long time to visit local villages, dedicated museums, or historical monuments if you are on an incredible journey to learn about the culture of a prominent place. When traveling alone, full attention will be on the scenes we see in front of us, so the views there will become an intense experience. The pleasure of just walking around the streets and small villages without knowing the language or the name may not be as enjoyable as going with a group of people but will be a different experience.

There are a lot of things to look out for when going on solo trips that help us find ourselves within ourselves. Solo trips can be done by anyone, regardless of age. But the more responsibilities you have, the harder it will be to travel. The better we plan, the easier our journey will be. Although there are many solo travellers, it is still not very popular in India. For a person to do the very first solo trip, convincing family members is a big hurdle. Therefore, it is important to plan your travels in advance so that the near and dear feel good and give them peace during your travel. We can only move forward if we speak with the assurance that we will return safely. Sharing your travel plan with family and friends is advisable as you can get assured aids if anything goes wrong.

You need to choose the destination and means for travel and stay with an emphasis on your own tastes, only then it becomes a remarkable journey.

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Keeping digital accessories like cam, mobiles & other communication tracking devices with you will help to capture & memorize those precious moments on trips, and will help you know about any ongoing or upcoming incidents on your set destination.

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You can travel to get to know nature better, to understand a new culture or to taste different things. Once you have voluntarily chosen a place, the next step is to choose what you want to explore. We need to choose a place that seems to give us the most happiness. The biggest thing about a solo trip is the understanding of where you are going. Do research on space as needed. This can be easily done today through the internet, travel blogs, books, and searching and connecting with people who have experienced the solos to the said destination. There is nothing wrong with carrying a small note of travel plans, enabling you not to miss out anything during your trip. No guilt for miss outs during a solo. It reveals how good you are at planning, scheduling, time and money management and many more skills.

Book your first day's stay always. The stay of the following days can be decided accordingly if you wish for a challenging exploration. Accommodation based on the budget and comforts to be opted wisely and not limited to hotels or motels, but will include homestays and family-run guesthouses. One of the most important things about solo travel is getting to know different people. You will find friends of the same wavelength on such trips. Getting to know people who are as passionate as you can lead to new opportunities for a new solo trip.

Book a trip from one place to the next. It is best to start the journey alone or in the morning. Traveling at night can save room rent, for a budgeted traveller opting for a public transport system but for self-drives there are always risks involved. It is better to start the journey in the morning and end it in the evening than to go through unfamiliar places at night. The night can be set aside to relax and try different flavours of the place.

Next are the things to take care of. The most essential of these are medicines. Take medicines for headaches, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and other ailments that we may have in common during the journey. Understand the favorable climate and culture of the place you are going to and consider the comfortable and appropriate dress because you might not want to hurt the sentiments of the local community. Keeping digital accessories like camera, mobiles and communication tracking devices with you will help to capture and memorize those precious moments on trips, and will help you know about any ongoing or upcoming incidents on your set destination. Mobile charger and power bank, flashlight, a knife and water should be always with you. If you book travel and suitable accommodation in advance, you only need to have money for food and groceries. Travel with an open mind and enjoy the journey. It will be very useful for you to keep the important

contact numbers in your personal diary in case you miss your cell phone. If you intend to use the ATM card on the go, do not keep too much money in that account. All you have to do is ask your friend or family member to transfer money to that account as and when needed. Ensure mobile connectivity when arriving at a new location. Again, update your family or friends at regular intervals about where you are on the trip, where you are visiting, and where you go.

One of the most important things on every trip is getting to know the local vibes. Interact with the people at the place of travel without any prejudice since there is no one else who can help us by telling us the local places and places to see. Often, such conversations give rise to new knowledge about their culture or place. But it is better not to interact with strangers to a certain extent. If you plan your trip in such a way that you can reach your destination before sunset, you will have time to rest as needed. Share your experiences and failures when you return. It will benefit those who are preparing for the next trip.

Living and enjoying to the fullest is your responsibility. Don't spare your dreams, wish to travel, do not postpone it until tomorrow because planned solo trips are very likely to happen. The rest of our imaginations bloom in the solo journeys and those trips are one that anyone can fully realize if they plan carefully.

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ESTABLISHING PATHS FOR LITERACY AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The world celebrated Literacy Day on September 8th. As in every year, events were conducted to create awareness on education, existing status was analysed, debates and seminars were conducted on new strategies required to reach those still not under the literate segment. In all this, the driving force has almost always been the government in each nation and state. The initiatives by the government of Kerala over the years have had a profound impact for the State achieving the highest literacy rate in the country. Being a significant socio-economic factor, the rate of literacy has huge impact in the development of the State. To build on the highest literacy rate and achieve greater heights in terms of overall development, Kerala government and the Ministry of General Education has put in place several programmes.

Minister V. Sivankutty has been involved in the socio-political developments of the State for decades. This gives him a good understanding of the necessities in the educational sector and enables him to chart out programmes to take the literacy movement in Kerala to higher levels. Since becoming the **Minister for General Education, Shri. V. Sivankutty** has worked towards establishing appropriate methods and easing of processes to achieve education for all. Speaking to **Hues of Life**, the Minister shares his views and reveals few initiatives of the government towards advancing literacy.

Programmes charted out for Neo-Literates

There are two main programs for Neo literates: (1) Equivalency Program. Through this neoliterate can participate in the fourth Equivalency course. Then there is the opportunity to study up to 7, 10, + 2 equivalency course. (2) Social Literacy Program. These are awareness classes on the Indian Constitution, gender equality, environment and health. In addition, cultural events like Kalothsavam are organized for the learners.

Steps taken to ensure secondary level education to the whole of Kerala

Schools in the state have not been able to open for 'One and half years' since the Covid 19 restrictions came into force across the State. However, the state government has started using its own education channel, Kite- Victers, to start and transmit digital classes for children and kept them engaged in learning.

According to the new changes, all teachers are being trained on a regular basis and action is being taken without any compromise in the matter of filling



up of teacher vacancies. The public examinations in the secondary section have been conducted in compliance with the Covid 19 regulations and the results have been published. Online classes are being expanded using the G-Suite platform to facilitate more communication between teachers and children.

As a measure of ensuring quality, all the secondary classrooms in the state have become high-tech. The State has always focused on providing quality secondary

education to the children in accordance with advancements in the Society.

Akshara Sagaram Project

Akshara Sagaram is a Coastal Literacy Project launched by the Literacy Mission with the financial assistance of the Department of Fisheries. So far 8539 people have achieved literacy.

ICT-enabled education supporting schools in Kerala

Through innovative approaches in school education such as making Information Technology a compulsory subject in school curriculum (2003) and adoption of FOSS (Free and Open Source Software) in Education (2006), the ICT-enabled education (2010) has transformed the entire teaching and learning process in schools in Kerala.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE)(www.kite.kerala.gov.

in), a State Government enterprise is the implementation agency for ICT-enabled education in the State. The recently implemented Rs.793.50 Cr KIIFB funded Hi-Tech projects have equipped the State schools with latest ICT gadgets including Broadband internet connectivity. Over 45000 classrooms of Standards 8 to 12 have been made Hi-Tech and similarly Hi-Tech Labs have been setup in 11275 Primary schools. Teachers and Students effectively utilize the Samagra Resource Portal (www.samagra.kite.kerala.gov.in), a digital repository of ICT contents for Standards 1 to 12 covering all subjects, wherein most of the contents are made by teachers themselves. Rigorous trainings for teachers through KOOL (KITE's Open Online Learning-MOOC model training platform) and for students through the Little KITE IT Clubs ensure that they are made champions of ICT and are updated with latest trends in educational technologies. Necessary support and monitoring mechanisms including eGovernance applications are also in place to ensure that all process in

ICT-enabled education are undertaken as envisaged.

Approaches taken to enhance career-oriented Skills in youngsters



The Government of Kerala has taken various measures to enhance the career-oriented skills in our youngsters. We are planning to coordinate the efforts of skilling by various ministries especially labour and education for ensuring Quality skilling in the State.

We have Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence (KASE) under Department of Labour and Skills, Vocational Higher Secondary education (VHSE) under Department of General Education and Additional Skill Acquisition Program (ASAP) under Higher Education.

KASE, the State Skill Development Mission of Government of Kerala is implementing various skill development initiatives in Kerala to help develop an industry-ready workforce. It works through different models such as:

- a. Centres of Excellence through International Skill Training and Employability Programme (iSTEP) a public-private initiative. The CoE will be managed by the operator and respond to market forces in designing and implementing courses such as Nursing, Oil rigging, Security personel, etc.
- b. Community Skill Parks—Kaushal Kendra's are community skill-training hubs focusing on the rural population.
- c. KASE provides accreditation from the Government of Kerala to organisations conducting skill-training courses.
- d. Skill Training Certificates – Skill Development Programmes through which it plans to provide skill development and career guidance to young people. The programme seeks to identify the areas of interest of participants in the first phase and train them in the second phase.
- e. Construction Academy—Indian



Institute of Infrastructure and Construction (IIIC): An academy for developing skill sets in infrastructure and construction sector, by KASE. The institution plans to provide courses on construction engineering and management that are of international standards; it will also offer skill training in masonry, plumbing, electrical and other technical jobs. This training is expected to make people employable.

VHSE – In case of Skilling, there are revolutionary changes happening in the General Education system. National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF), a Government of India initiative has been implemented successfully at HSS level in our State from 2018 onwards. We are appreciated by MoE in this regard. Our NSQF system is now escalated all over the state with 48 job roles from 21 sectors in 389 Government/ Government Aided VHS schools. Thus we are ensuring that more than 30000 students of 1100 batches in each year are getting quality skilling in addition to their general HSS course.

We are implementing this system in a remarkable way, where the intermediate private agencies such as Training Service Providers were completely eliminated. Rather we have real industries as our training partner.

Apart from specialized job roles at HSS level, we are planning (through Curriculum revision) to begin with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school and then the quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into higher secondary level. The student who completes the higher secondary course will also be competent in any one of the relevant skilling area according to her/

his choice. It should be demand driven too.

This would lead to emphasizing the dignity of labour and importance of various vocations involving artisanship. For that, we are planning to set up Skill Development Centers (Model work sheds / Skill labs and incubation centers) in a hub and spoke model which will allow other schools to use the facility.

We would like to develop an effective and scientific convergence in the skill eco system so that we can utilize the resources maximum. This includes the trainers and other infrastructures.

We have very good career guidance and counseling system in our general education system, especially at HSS level (both HSS & VHSS wings). Now we are planning to develop a comprehensive career planning cum guidance programme to our high school children too.

The Additional Skill Acquisition Program approach ensures that graduates are market-ready for industry jobs and meet demand in India's Kerala state for a skilled workforce. Now it became a self-sustaining company with a revenue model of offering consultancy services to different parts of the Country. Every year, about 30,000 students from General Education and Higher Education in Kerala join the 80 skill courses offered under the ASAP program across 23 sectors; the program has so far trained over 200,000 students.



OUTDOOR

ALAPPUZHA DELIGHTFUL LAND AND LAKE



Rich in diverse landscapes and beauty, Kerala is one of the best places to visit during any climate. Alappuzha, the Venice of the East, is a favorite destination of domestic and foreign tourists alike.

Houseboat trips are a must for tourists visiting this place. Houseboats, like houses made on top of the boats, are so popular and enjoyed by most of the tourists. Enchanting experience of exploring the serenity and beauty of the backwaters while savoring the local delicacies is one of the reasons why Alappuzha has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Kerala.

Many have suggested that a houseboat trip is a must if you want to enjoy the beauty of the backwaters, and not being able to board a houseboat in Alappuzha at least once is considered a huge loss. Luxuriously moving houseboats, a very common sight among the tourist calendar of Alappuzha itself is an eye-soothing affair. Another attraction is the delicious dishes available on houseboats. Fish and Kappa are some of the delicacies that are cooked from the lake while travelling. In this way, many of the flavors fill everyone's stomach and keep the travellers more relaxed throughout the journey. You can experience the rural life and its beauty wading through the canals of Kuttanad. The coconut groves and paddy fields and the magnificent view of the Vembanad backwaters shining like gold in the sunset is all one could dream for. One can experience this dream-come-true beauty of nature on this journey through the largest lake in Kerala. Alappuzha-Kochi & Alappuzha-Kumarakom are the major cruise routes one could cherish other than the day trips on a Kettuwallam.

Promoting waterways and boat trips is the Nehru Trophy Vallamkali (Boat Race) that happens on the second Saturday of August every year. Travelers from far and near



jot down this date in their calendar every year, so as to experience this event.

One can also visit Pathiramanal Island which is situated in the middle of Vembanad Lake and can be reached in half-an-hour time from Alappuzha town by a motor-powered boat. Pathiramanal, a small island, is home to hundreds of migratory birds. Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary and Pathiramanal are not to be missed by visitors. Famous for its natural beauty, this place is also a popular tourist destination. Pathiramanal is located east of the Kayippuram boat jetty and west of Kumarakom. This beautiful island attracts tourists on a backwater trip. You can enjoy the beauty of the forest through the cobbled paths where the mangroves and the wild plants stand together. It is a place where tourists can relax and have a beautiful view of the greenery. Thanneermukkom bund, a system of building a barrier to keep saltwater away, can be found near the island. Thanneermukkom offers a wide variety of delicious local food. Here you will find a good deal of food that combines unique cuisines.

Alappuzha, which is known for its lakes, beaches, and houseboats has many more places to visit. Marari Beach in Mararikulam is another important destination. It is one of the most beautiful beaches in Kerala and is

located 11 km north of Alappuzha. This is a resort beach that can be visited in all weathers. However, the best time to visit is during the winter. The main attraction of the place is the coconut groves that grow long across the sea. As it is a relatively peaceful beach without crowd, you can enjoy the sunset views well. Mararikulam, a place famous for its delicacies, is easily accessible by road and rail.

Krishnapuram Palace showcasing the architectural excellence is located about 47 km south of Alappuzha. There is also a museum here that houses precious archeological collections. The palace was built in the 18th century by Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma, the ruler of Travancore. Krishnapuram Palace is one of the important tourist attractions of Kayamkulam and the palace is located at a distance of 3.5 km from Kayamkulam town and is currently under the protection of the State Archaeological Department. Built in Kerala style of architecture, the palace houses artifacts found in various parts of the country. Gajendra Moksham, the second-largest mural found in Kerala, is housed in this palace. Beautiful gardens and murals attract visitors every time. Revi Karuna Karan Memorial Museum known for the antique collections, Thakazhi Museum and Smrithy Mandamapam, Vijaya Beach

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Alappuzha, which is known for its valleys, lakes, beaches, and houseboats has more places to visit. Marari Beach in Mararikulam is another important destination. It is one of the most beautiful beaches in Kerala and is located 11 km north of Alappuzha.

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Park, etc. are few of the day spots in Alappuzha. Kuttanad the Rice bowl of Kerala will be a wonderful experience for a drive-through on any rainy day.

Whether day trips or extended visits, Alappuzha gives tourists a delightful experience.



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RANJITH AMBULANCES - PATIENT-CENTRIC SERVICES

The commendable handling of situations in a calm and confident manner by an ambulance driver plays a significant role in saving someone's life. However, ambulance drivers are people who are deliberately forgotten by many of us when it comes to appreciating the health sector. Ranjith Ambulance and Mobile Mortuary Service has been delivering state-of-the-art ambulance facilities to every nook and corner of Thiruvananthapuram for years. Manjith, a native of Akkulam, started serving as an ambulance driver soon after finishing his schooling. He bought an ambulance and started working at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College. It was not an easy job as there were enough ambulances serving in the Medical College itself. Manjith states that the foremost concern for the driver should be reaching a place on time when they are called for and not money. Sometimes it could be patients going for a check-up, or people who are in critical conditions. Ambulance services

should be able to adapt to any situation. As per the government rules, a mortuary van is needed to transport dead bodies. In Kerala, the body can be carried by any ambulance other than the ICU ambulance.

Ranjith Ambulance and Mobile Mortuary Services started its administrative and booking office in 2005. The facility grew since then adding more ambulances to its service across Thiruvananthapuram, in addition to the Medical College. At that time there were about more than thirty '108' ambulances in the area. Manjith's services were the first to set up D-Level Advance Life Support Ambulance in Thiruvananthapuram in 2013. The ambulance was set up in Chevy-Tavera, which enabled travel through small alleys and narrow ways that supported patients from interior locations. But when it came to setting up an ICU ambulance, a larger vehicle was mandatory and in 2016 they had ambulances set up in

Traveller. The big vehicle accommodated machinery and equipment and can seat one or two bystanders with enough space for a nurse to sit properly and safely. The required revolving seat next to the patient for a Doctor or Medical Assistant was also availed in the big vehicle. Not long after a new ambulance with high-tech equipment joined their fleet to service the public with most modern features. All types of ambulances including Basic life support and advanced life support are available under them. At present their service owns and operates 22 ambulances, including AC and non-AC. It currently has three offices at Akkulam, Chakka, and Trivandrum Airport.

As per Mr. Manjith, an ambulance driver's hand, foot, eye, and mind must function more efficiently than any other driver. As he drives the ambulance, he must consider the safety of the patient in the vehicle as well as the safety of the occupant of the road, the safety of the vehicles behind the ambulance, the safety of oncoming vehicles and people, and the safety of those crossing the road. With such responsibilities, an ordinary driver is often reluctant to become an ambulance driver. Not all ambulance drivers are outstanding drivers. As each new driver arrives at the Ranjith Ambulance Service, he is given optimum training in their standard operations protocol which exactly defines when and where to use the siren and how to navigate on busy roads and of course how to deal with the patients. It is only through experience that a driver can become a socially-committed and efficient driver. The driver should control the vehicle, while taking note of the severity of the patient's illness in the ambulance and the mental state of those accompanying him.

Manjith's entry in to the field of ambulances was not taken lightly. He was looked upon only as a competitor who would eat in to their profits. The others did not think about how a new person's entry in to healthcare sector would be beneficial to patients. Keeping in mind of these challenges,



Manjith strived hard to provide efficient ambulance services to patients as well as build rapport with other ambulance drivers. Over time, Manjith has won the confidence of everyone through his diligent approach to his services. The industrious pursuit led to the establishment of a well-equipped ambulance service range that caters to patients across Kerala.

Manjith's ambulance services attend to the patients with service as top-most priority in all cases. It is not money that drives them. According to Manjith, the first goal is to get the patient to the hospital, and whether he will be paid or not is a distant second. The private ambulance services in Kerala had carried a high number of patients during the pandemic, supporting the

society to meet the crisis head-on. In Thiruvananthapuram, the vehicles of Ranjith Ambulance Service were in the forefront of these operations. Manjith currently holds the position of District President of the Ambulance Owners Association and Secretary of the Ambulance Employees Union. Ranjith Ambulance and Mobile Mortuary Service won the 2020 Metro MSME Award in the Best Enterprise category in Emergency Vehicle Management and the 2020 Topgear Eminent Service Award in the Best Emergency Fleet Management category. These awards acknowledge the services that this establishment has given to society for quite some time.

📞 9387822267

🌐 www.ranjithambulance.com



CROWD FORESTING- MIYAWAKI AFFORESTATION PROJECTS TO SUPPORT NATURE

Forests provide a healthy environment to the planet with increased relative humidity of air and improving the fertility of soil. Working towards establishing such a healthy green environment for the future generations is Crowd Foresting - a joint initiative of Invis Multimedia and Nature's Green Guardians Foundation and Culture Shoppe.

The term 'Crowd Foresting' is coined by banding together 'crowd funding' and 'afforestation', as per the Managing Director of Invis Multimedia Mr. Hari M. R.

Space, time and resource constraints limit the ability of individuals to create forest on their own. The common folks who want to create natural forests can take up the revolutionary concept of Late Prof. (Dr.) Akira Miyawaki in afforestation.

The Miyawaki method to create forests was invented by the Late Prof. Miyawaki, who was a Japanese botanist and ecologist. By this method, random trees would be planted in close quarters in small pits so as to enrich the land. Plants and trees found normally in the respective region only are used as a basic principle. Dense mini-forests are created by planting domestic species within small areas of land using Prof. (Dr) Miyawaki's model of afforestation. Climate change mitigation is targeted by this method. This method of

establishing forests requires less time than a normal process of afforestation – almost 80% to 90% reduction in time in many cases.

The very first attempt by Crowd Foresting was in a water-scarce and rocky terrain at Puliarakonam. The area was transformed in to a green zone by using the Miyawaki afforestation method. The success of this attempt gave support to Mr. Hari M.R.'s recommendation to create more mini forests in other areas.

Prof. Miyawaki's afforestation model enables growing a 30-year-old forest in 7-8 years and a 100-year-old forest within a span of 25-30 years. It should be noted the average growth of trees is about 4 metres per year. The Miyawaki mode speeds up the process of afforestation. Land destroyed by natural calamities and man-made mistakes can be restored back using this method and achieve natural vegetation. The frequent flood, landslips and soil erosion that has been occurring in Kerala denotes the increased significance in implementing this model across the State. It could hold a major space in the initiatives to rebuild Kerala.

About 45 micro-forests and more than 48000 plants are planted across Kerala by Crowd Foresting until now, with the numbers growing on a daily basis. The goal of this initiative is to plant

10 million saplings between 2020 and 2030, and achieving a minimum success rate of 60%. 462 saplings of 120 species were planted in 5-cents of land at the palace grounds of Kanakakunnu as per Miyawaki method. This was done on behalf of Kerala Tourism. Miyawaki micro-forests would also be created at 22 tourism spots across 12 districts in Kerala as part of a Kerala Tourism project.

Crowd Foresting has successfully established Miyawaki Forests in several other places across the State such as in Suvarnodyanam Biological Ecotourism Park near Nedumbassery Airport for the Kerala Forest Department, EMS Academy campus at Vilapilsala in Thiruvananthapuram, Chalai School, CUSAT campus, Bekal Fort, Naval Base in Kochi, Munakkal and Shankumukham beaches. Crowd Foresting team has also created a large number of front-and-backyard mini-forests and fruit and flower gardens for individual home owners across Kerala.

Exclusive online training programs on Miyawaki Afforestation Model to simulate natural forests are offered by 'Crowd Foresting'. The program is entirely based on the internationally renowned botanist Late Prof. (Dr.) Akira Miyawaki, former Professor Emeritus, Yokohama National University, Japan. This self-paced training for fast-paced creation of forests is conducted via online video streaming sessions.

The baseline of Crowd Foresting is 'Climate change mitigation through afforestation with public support using Miyawaki method. The popularity of this technique is growing due to the large number of successful Miyawaki afforestation projects to increase green spaces and energize the environment.





KERALA TOURISM- A MIX OF URBAN AND RURAL EXPERIENCES

Arural undertone and family-friendly environment has made the vibrant little State of Kerala one of the top ten tourist destinations in Asia. Tourists from across the globe come to Kerala in search of this atmosphere. Once they reach here, they find it easy to adjust and become a part of our environment.

There must be a fundamental change in entrepreneurship to bring about such changes in our tourism practices as well. More and more tourists need to be given the opportunity to experience life in Kerala. Climate, natural beauty, and biodiversity are important features of Kerala. Apart from enjoying the high ranges, forests, hills, and the serenity of the coast for a few hours, there

are a lot many reasons why tourists spend more days in Kerala. Law and order in Kerala provide a sense of security to tourists. We have the first tourism police system in the country. Literacy, improved health, and quality of life in the State have also gained international attention and are benefiting the tourism industry. Though Kerala has fewer palaces and forts than other parts of India, we have several structures that can be listed as heritage sites in various regions. More than just buildings, tourists are learning more about us than we do about our culture, arts, and traditional occupations. We have festivals and art forms that we can be proud of. Ayurveda, Kalarippayattu, and traditional art forms are other attractions in Kerala. Foreign travelers are interested in exploring and knowing them. It can be seen that during trips

through the villages of Kerala, tourists ask about village life, art, customs, and delicious food. Places like Athirampuzha and Kuttanadu, which were famous for their inland tourism. These natural beauties of Kerala once also had great commercial importance. New models of inland tourism are being created as boat jetties and canals are made navigable. Good quality accommodation also is increasing with the increase in tourist arrivals.

Changing with the times and the preference of travelers, Kerala has developed new tourism initiatives. In addition to resorts and hotels, the popular home-stay system is also focused on to create more accommodation. Tourism department is providing all support to showcase the potentials across the State to visitors. Each part of Kerala has its own characteristics and their tourism potential is beyond our imagination.

Situated at an elevation of 3,400 ft above sea level, Gavi in Pathanamthitta is one of the pleasing destinations in the country. The main attraction of this place is trekking through the jungle for many kilometers. Many tourists do not know much about Anayadikuthu Falls in Idukki, Keralakund Falls near Silent Valley, Karlad in Wayanad and Palakkad Thatt in Kannur. The Western Ghats region, which is included in the World Biodiversity List, the Vembanadu backwaters on the Ramsar list and fallow lands, the rural biogas fields, hill slopes, wetlands, and evergreen forests have opened up great potential for Kerala in the field of eco-tourism.

Eco-tourism also paves the way for adventure tourism, including trekking, mountaineering, and tree-climbing. Kerala is the first state in India to have comprehensive Adventure Tourism Safety and Security Regulations. The Safety and Security Regulations cover 31 of the most popular adventure tourism activities in Kerala. Fifty important centers in the state are on the process to become world-class adventure tourism destinations. The decision has been taken to turn Varkala, Kappil, Vagamon, and Muzhappilangad into adventure tourist destinations. The government also considers setting up adventure parks in every district.

Unique farming practices in the State can be showcased to the travelers through Farm tourism. Health tourism is another fastest-growing industry in Kerala. Tourists seek various Ayurvedic treatments such as Panchakarma. This treatment is traditionally done during the monsoon season. Even though it's off-season for tourism, monsoon season would be the ideal time to get health tourists. Luxury hotels and home-stay systems can co-exist to provide appropriate accommodations for tourists as per their preference. The immense potential of eco-tourism lies also in the scenic beauty of Western Ghats.

Under the auspices of the government several infrastructure development projects are being envisaged, which would benefit the tourism locations. The

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wide range of tourism products available in Kerala such as houseboats, rural shelters, ayurvedic resorts, home-stays, health tourism, farm tourism, adventure tourism, and backwater tourism can be further promoted with proper infrastructure. Improving domestic and international transport would determine tourism growth in Kerala. The realization of National Waterways in its entirety would initiate the tourists to rely on waterways and reduce road traffic. The use of waterways and coastal roads will alleviate traffic congestion. Already houseboat trip through the Vembanad Lake is a favorite of foreigners visiting Kerala. The transformation of traditional boats into houseboats was an important step in this direction. Backwater food, canals, and canal habitats provide a unique experience for tourists. Private entrepreneurs have entered this field with a competitive nature. Taking advantage of these possibilities, we can



make our rural areas a part of tourism. Small enterprises should be given maximum encouragement. In addition to taking steps to ensure the participation of local bodies in tourism development, small-scale initiatives to ensure hospitality and hygiene will also benefit the locals. Introducing famous festivals like Thrissur Pooram as part of tourism will also help in attracting foreign tourists. Art and cultural exhibitions such as Kathakali, Kalaripayattu, the boat races of Alappuzha's cultural heritage, and Onam-the national festival of Kerala, should be more effectively linked to tourism. Tourists should also be given the opportunity to participate in activities including farming. Not only foreigners but also local tourists are attracted to this region. Such areas should be able to expand into a weekend getaway. Through this, we can also develop an agricultural lifestyle through tourism.

Spotlight should be trained on the Malabar region to further realize the tourism potential of Malabar region. Steps should be taken to expand such possibilities by bringing in a special

package for the development of tourism in Malabar. Tourists visiting Kerala should be made to realize the potential of tourism in North Kerala. North Kerala ranks third among the top-ten tourist destinations. The landscape is the main attraction of the place. Kannur, Thottada, and Bekal are the important places in North Kerala. Tourists state that the sea here is very tempting and the low-budget home-stays are great. Muzhappilangad Beach, the only drive-in beach in Kerala, is one of the most popular beaches in Kannur. This beach is located at a distance of 1-km from NH 17 between Thalassery and Kannur. The 4-km stretch of beach is the best beach to enjoy sea breeze while driving. The width doubles as the sea recede. The presence of windmills on the beach gives it a special charm. At the same time, the beauty of the backwaters of North Kerala is once again capturing the world's attention. Apart from the beaches and lakes, Wayanad's wildlife sanctuaries, peaks, and theyyam are also worth a visit.

There's a lot more tourism attractions across Kerala. Efforts are on from the government side as well as from the

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Spotlight should be trained on the Malabar region to further realize the tourism potential of Malabar region. Steps should be taken to expand such possibilities by bringing in a special package for the development of tourism in Malabar.
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private players' side to put the spotlight on these destinations. All-in-all, visiting Kerala during any time of the year would give a lot for the tourists to enjoy and experience.

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other parts of Kerala, providing excellent service to many corporates and leading companies in the Technopark for all their travel needs with best-in-class facilities. Southgate helps companies to control their transportation cost by providing IT solutions to optimize vehicle utilization. Their expertise in scheduling and vehicle allotment enables them to cover varied shifts across vast pickup and drop-off locations.

Deployed on a contract and on-call basis, Southgate offers unlimited options to facilitate each of its customers' personal

travel and corporate trips. The team operates as a convenient car rental service in Thiruvananthapuram. Two of their three offices are open 24 hours a day. Southgate is the only 24-hour travel service in Thiruvananthapuram. More than thirty-five employees work full-time on a shift-basis in these offices. Southgate also has the largest number of contracts with government agencies out of the 3 agencies in Thiruvananthapuram approved by the Government of India. Southgate has over 20 years of service experience. Southgate is far ahead of many others in the number of vehicles

and selection of luxury cabs. More than fifty vehicles in their fleet are registered in the years 2018 and 2019. Their own travel management software is used to schedule and maintain operations. Having their own backyard garage and workshop for instant troubleshooting assists them in keeping their vehicles in appropriate condition. Southgate's other services include serviced apartments and the QFit Transformation Studio Health and Fitness Club.

Launched in 1999 with a Maruti 1000, the triumphal progression has now reached to more than 100 vehicles. Southgate's hallmarks are its best-in-class vehicles – a luxury spectrum that has vehicles ranging from Swift to BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, Audi, Toyota Corolla, Innova Christa (top end) and Volkswagen Beetle. As one of the leading car rental services in Kerala, Southgate Travels offers all vehicle types – luxury cars, people carriers, mini vans, automatic cars – at unbeatable prices. Southgate does not retain any

vehicle more than two years old. They also ensure that the GPS tracking system in their cabs goes through a thorough inspection after each trip. The facility is staffed by trained personnel, including operations, customer service and drivers who excel in comfort and safety. The Southgate team is careful to ensure that it meets the needs of each customer. They always maintain a certain number of vehicles so as out-of-schedule requirements do not to interfere with the smooth running of operations.

Southgate's growth as a company has been accelerated by its unparalleled customer-driven focus. The first of the business ethics they follow is the determination to create a legitimate working environment for employees and partners without worries. Their work ethic, support and intellectual investment have quickly brought Southgate to the list of recognized travel brands in Kerala. Today, Southgate transports more than 1,500 Technopark employees to and from their work every

day.

“With us, you enjoy the finest driving experience. Our cars have comfortable seats, a lot of legroom, and added safety features. Our foremost concern: safety of every customer. We run a strict background verification check for drivers,” says Niyas Ali, Chief Executive Officer, Southgate Travels.

The vehicles are ideal for business purposes and for every occasion where the first impression matters. People hire them for weddings and stylish holidays. As above said, Southgate maintains a reserve fleet to face operational challenges. The investment in a robust TMS (Transport Management System) allows customers to track vehicles on a real-time mode. Southgate's applications ensure that the drivers maintain high security standards stipulated by regulatory authorities. Southgate has also received accolades from their esteemed customers in different audits, a testimony to their service standards.



WAYANAD- NATURE LOVER'S DELIGHT

While Kerala traditionally has a proud legacy of being God's own country, Wayanad gives an angelic heaven of sight to visitors. It is said that 'Vayal Nadu' (land of fields) undoubtedly became Wayanad. Soochippara Falls, Edakkal Cave, and Pookodu Lake are some of the prominent places in Wayanad that are geographically unique. Muthanga and Tholpetty in common are two important wildlife sanctuaries located in Wayanad. Uniquely situated amidst snow-capped mountains, lush forests, hills, pristine lakes, and pleasant valleys, this blessed land opens its windows to beautiful scenery. Wayanad stands out on the tourist map as it generously offers a distinct variety of rare sights to those who cross the border. What makes Wayanad a tourist

paradise is the scenic beauty of the place. Wherever you turn, you can feel the heart of Wayanad – vast areas of green land with grassy hills and slopes.

Wayanad Pass

Wayanad pass, also known as Thamarassery Pass is one of the principal attractions of the land. It is a popular



destination among travellers. The pass becomes more beautiful during the monsoons. Starting from the foothills near Thamarassery, the 12-km long road has nine hairpin bends. The dense forest on both sides of the road attracts tourists. The Thamarassery Pass was built by the British. It was the indigenous aborigines who showed the British engineer the right way to Wayanad.

It is said that the British engineer killed an aboriginal man named Karinthandan, who showed him the way, in order to gain fame for this invention. When we reach Lakkidi about 700 meters above sea level where the road ends, we can see a chained tree. It is believed that the spirit of Karinthandan began to disturb the travelers and that an exorcist overthrew it and chained it to this tree. This road was built to reach Wayanad on horseback and later became a vehicular road.

Kuruwadweep

When tourists reach Wayanad, they prefer visiting Kuruwadweep at first. Kuruva, the lush green forest island that spreads over 950 acres has been



considered one of the best places to provide fresh air. The archipelago with its many small islands and the Kabani River adds to the beauty of the place. It is located at a distance of less than 20 km from Mananthavady. Riding in a coracle wearing a life jacket through the flowing water is exciting and adventurous. During good summers, we can walk to many places to reach the next island and there are some wooden bridges to cross the river. Apart from visitors, only monkeys can be seen in this uninhabited island. You can spend considerable time away from the hustle and bustle of the city life and enjoy the beautiful scenery.

Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary

Located on the road from Sultan Bathery to Mysore, Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary shares borders with two neighboring states of Kerala – Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The place where the three states meet is called the Triangle Point. The sanctuary is home to many species of rare birds. Deer, elephants, wild buffalo, and tigers can be seen in the extensive forests here. The shrubbery of Muthanga is a vast forest area. Here the forest areas of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka merge with the Wayanad forest. These are the tiger sanctuaries at Bandipur in Karnataka and Mudumalai in Tamil Nadu. Wayanad-Bandipur-Mudumalai National Park covers an area of over 2500 sq. Km and is spread over three states. Muthanga is also a wildlife tourism area with many animals, both small and large. Keralites as well as tourists from outside the State visit Muthanga to experience the wildlife. There are accommodation

facilities and wooden huts for tourists. The nearby village of Chundale is also part of the sanctuary. There are Adivasi huts at Muthanga and Chundale which provide facilities for trekking in the forest. As a tourist, everyone can feel the wild without the busy interruptions of the world outside.

Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuary

A pleasant trip through the forest on Tholpetty-Thirunelli Road will be a different experience. Tholpetty can be reached by traveling 26 km from Mananthavady on the Kattikulam Road. Rain and snow are a delight. The herd of elephants, which stand like rocks in the pouring rain makes a remarkable sight. Kabini valley is also a sight to behold. Wayanad is one of the largest elephant sanctuaries in the Western Ghats. Muthanga and Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuaries in Wayanad are popularly known as Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. In some places, there are large trees and grasslands and in some places, the forest is so dense with plants and vines that you can't see much into it. Deer, various monkeys, birds, and mountain goats can be seen in this wildlife sanctuary.

Thusharagiri Falls

Thusharagiri is a waterfall that starts in the Wayanad hills. Thusharagiri, which means snow-capped mountain, is located in the foothills of the Western Ghats. In this scenic waterfall, the view of the water falling in several layers is breathtaking. The river Chalipuzha joins two streams that originate from the Western Ghats. The river splits

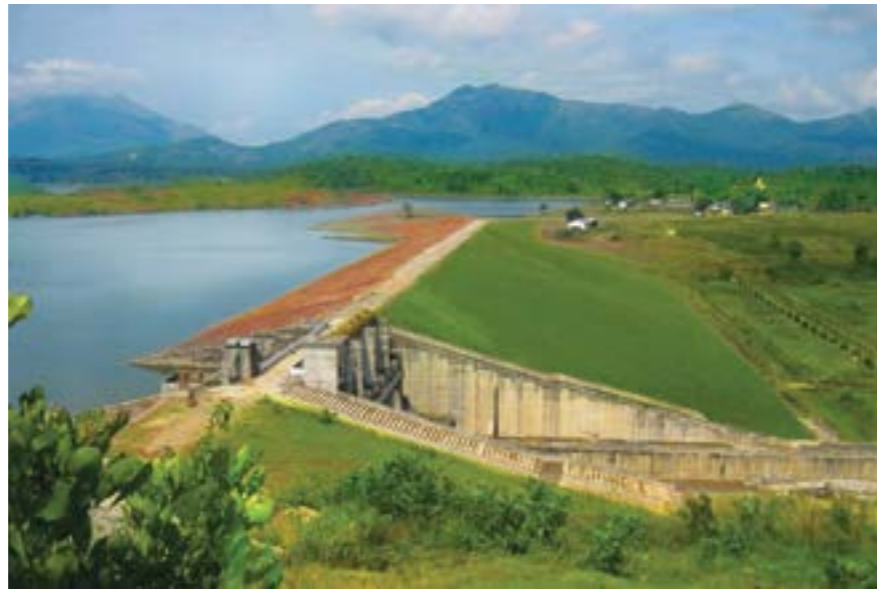
into three and turns into waterfalls. Thusharagiri can be reached by traveling 55 km from Kozhikode via Thamarassery and Kodancherry. It is only 6 km from Wayanad.

Neelimala

Neelimala is one of the most visited hill stations in Wayanad. Neelimala Viewpoint is one of the most popular destinations for sports and adventure lovers. Apart from trekking, there is also the possibility of an overnight camp. Meenmutty Falls can be seen from here along with the view of many mesmerizing waterfalls and lush green forests. There are many creative activities here that will amply satisfy the adventurers. The main features are trekking and climbing through the coffee plantation. During the monsoon season, the view of the snow-capped mountain is breathtaking.

Chembra Peak

Chembra Peak, located at an elevation of 2100 m above sea level, is the highest peak in the Wayanad district. This peak is located close to the town of Meppadi. Chembra is the catchment area of Chaliyar and Kabani. It is a popular destination for nature lovers and adventure climbers. The Forest Department has made it possible for tourists to visit this place. Climbing is allowed only with guides authorized by the Forest Conservation Committee. Above the peak is a heart-shaped natural lake known as Hridayasarassu. Hridayasarassu is a spectacular sight



and there are also many Neelakurinji plants here. Chembra Peak is located 14 km west of Kalpetta. Direct access to Chembra Peak is possible only with the official permission of the Meppadi Forest Office.

Banasuramala

Banasuramala is the second largest mountain in the Wayanad district after Chembra. Banasura Sagar Dam is located in the foothills of the steep hills at an elevation of 6,732 ft above sea level. Fortified on all four sides, this is a place of adventure, beauty and legend. Situated in the north-western part of Wayanad, Banasuramala is rich in medicinal plants. Manikkunnu, Chembra Peak, Thariyodumala, Sugandhagiri Hills, and Brahmagiri Hills to the southeast – all make a visit to Banasuramala rewarding. Banasura Hill is a great gift of nature with its many hills, dense forests, and streams. Katukunnu, Saippukunnu, and Banasura hills, etc. are the important hill stations. Many

people come here to enjoy the beauty of these hills. The wind that blows the herbs and the streams that creep into the freshwater give a new experience to the incredible journey. You have to cross steep cliffs, dense grasslands at one height, and huge tree roots.

Banasura Sagar Dam

Banasura Sagar Dam is a dam across the Karamanthodu River, a tributary of the Kabini River. The small islands add to the surrounding magical views. Many people start trekking to the Western Ghats from the Banasura Sagar Dam. The dam is located in the Western Ghats, in the village of Padinjaraathara, 21 km from Kalpetta. It is the largest earthen dam in India and the second largest in Asia. The world's first floating solar field was established at Banasura Sagar. There are also facilities for adventurous trekking to the beautiful hills nearby.

Meenmutty Falls

Meenmutty Falls is the second largest waterfall in Kerala. It is a beautiful waterfall that cascades down the greenery of the Wayanad Hills. Here the water falls from a height of 300 meters in three layers. Climbers have to take separate routes to reach these three levels. Meenmutty Falls can be seen from Neelimala near Vaduvanchal. Situated 29 km south of Kalpetta, this waterfall is a popular destination for adventurous climbers. Meenmutty, Soochippara Falls, and Kanthappara Falls supply water to the Chaliyar. The road between teak forests and tea gardens from Kalpetta to this waterfall is beautiful. Another Meenmutty waterfall in Wayanad originates from



the Banasuramala and flows through the gorges and falls into the foothills. Tourists can enjoy a short trek here. This is where the trekking to Banasuramala begins. This waterfall is located at a distance of 2 km from the Banasura Dam.

Soochipara Waterfalls

In many places, the waterfall of Soochipara, falling from a height of 100 to 300 feet, is breathtaking. You can swim and bathe in the small lake where the water comes down. Beautiful views of the Western Ghats and the stream below can be seen from the cliffs at Soochipara. Located at an altitude of over 200 m, is a popular destination for adventurous climbers. Adjacent to this three-tiered waterfall, there are facilities for adventurers for white water rafting and swimming. There is also a swimming pool where even small children can swim. The scenery around the falls is beautiful. Soochipara Falls is one of the three waterfalls in the Meppadi region that can be easily reached during the monsoons. Situated at a distance of 22 km south of Kalpetta, the view of the Western Ghats is breathtaking.

Iruppu Waterfalls

The beauty of Iruppu, which cascades down from the Western Ghats, is breathtaking. It is a beautiful waterfall that starts from the Brahmagiri Hills on the border of Wayanad and ends in a small village called Kurichi. Iruppu Falls is located at a distance of 36 km from Mananthavady.

Kattukunnu

The Kakkayam Dam, Water in Banasura Sagar as well as the southern part of Wayanad district can be seen completely from Kattukunnu, situated at an elevation of 4,000 ft above sea level. Situated in the Brahmagiri Hills near the Banasura Sagar Dam, this windswept hill station is one of the lesser-known tourist attractions of Wayanad. No other mountain in Wayanad is so beautiful that it evokes all the beauty of nature. The trek to the hill starts from the Forest Office at Meenmutty Falls, which is 20 km west of Kalpetta.



Edakkal Caves

Inscriptions believed to be dating back to the Stone Age civilization are found in the Edakkal Cave. These are the oldest inscriptions found in Kerala. This natural cave was created by a huge rock that fell and got fixed in the crevasse on the top of a large rock that fell from Ambukuthimala at an altitude of about 4,000 feet above sea level. Inscriptions referring to one of the oldest dynasties in Kerala are reminiscent of the earliest examples of world sculpture. Ancient paintings and later inscriptions can be seen. It is located at a distance of 25 km from Kalpetta.

Pookode Lake

Pookode Lake is the highest lake in Kerala. It is surrounded by dense forests and majestic mountains and is located at an elevation of 2100 ft above sea level. There are paddle boats for riding on the lake and has a walkway prepared for walking around the lake. Covering an area of 13 acres, the lake has a maximum depth of 6.5 meters. Sree Narayana Gurukul near the lake is full of beautiful trees. Sightseeing attractions are simply great in these areas because of the brooding silence that prevails everywhere.

Kurumbalakotta Mala

This is a place where you can see the full beauty of the early morning sunrise. Once you reach the top of the mountain, you can see nothing but a valley covered with visible clouds below. Kurumbalakotta has not found

a place in the regular trekking trails of tourists. Therefore, there is no definite way to go to the top of the mountain. It is said that this hill was once the fort of some Kurumbapalakan or king and the king built a fort here in the middle of Wayanad to know about the movements of the enemy. On one side of the Kurumbalakotta hill, there is a moat made of rocks. You have to climb through steep cliffs to reach it. Anyone who can walk a short distance can climb this hill without any effort.

Kaduvakuzhi

Kaduvakuzhi Viewpoint is a small hill rising high in the pleasant natural beauty of Wayanad. The main feature of the place is a cave entrance on the side of the mountain and an adventurous descent into the deep depths through it. You can also see beautiful views from the top of the hill. There is no better place to watch the sunset in Wayanad. From the Ambalavayal-Karappuzha road, take a short right-turn to reach here. The road ends at a distance of about 200 m from Kaduvakuzhi. From there, you can walk down the hill to the destination. From the outside, it looks like a gap between the rocks, only people with experience and safety equipment including lights and ropes can descend gently into Kaduvakuzhi. Take special care to ensure safety to self as the possible risk is very high. Kaduvakuzhi is ideal for a short trek in a short period of time.

The list of attractions goes on, as Wayanad opens up myriad possibilities for nature lovers.

SAVEBOX – THE FIRST BIDDING APP IN KERALA



SaveBox a bidding app allows customers to bid on a variety of electronic appliances, gadgets & many more at a remarkable gain. The main feature of SaveBox – the first bidding e-commerce company in Kerala – is that every day offers would be presented that would enable customers to buy quality products at low prices. Swathiq Rahim, a young entrepreneur from Thrissur started SaveBox in 2017. After completing his education at Thrissur Model Boys Government School, he obtained his LLB from Udupi Law College in 2012. Swathiq's father Poonam Rahim, who had his own studio business, was a 16-mm gauge distributor in Malayalam cinema for 40 years. However, the son never saw cinema as his area of business, even though he had a lot of filmy connections.

Like his peers, Swathiq followed the trend of going to the Gulf and getting a job. In 2013, he arrived in Qatar at the age of 22 and began his ties with China by managing the China import section of a company named Quality Group. But with business ideas in mind, Swathiq's goal was not to work consistently under a company. So 2 years later he bid a warm goodbye to Qatar and returned to his homeland. He moved to Dubai at the

age of 24 with an event management business as it was a high-potential field at that time. Launched as the Dubai edition of a local event management company, the project was named Oscar Event Management. Despite huge growth in the early days, the economic downturn in Dubai also affected the event management sector. When it was time for his wedding, Swathiq had to return home. Later, instead of staying in Dubai, he transplanted his business to Kerala.

Swathiq launched a new project in Foshan, China – Kevo-SaveBox Import & Exports (including the name of his sponsor). It was in 2017, Swathiq settled in Kerala and started imports and wholesale distribution of electronic gadgets all over Kerala. This business led to the idea of e-commerce and moving from B2B (business to business) to B2C (delivering products and services directly to customers). There was no e-commerce brand entirely from Kerala during those days. SaveBox e-Commerce was born as Kerala's own e-commerce company.

Swathiq designed a website for his project with a mere cost of rupees 15,000. The beginning was simple but managed to market the brand in a big way. Information about the new venture reached people through Facebook pages of Swathiq's celebrity friends. Eighteen celebrities including Manju Warrier, Aju Varghese, and Suraj Venjaramoodu have promoted the arrival of SaveBox. On June 22, 2018, SaveBox e-Commerce was launched as a huge event at Thrissur Lulu in the presence of over a thousand people including 18 celebrities including actor Jayasurya. Jayasurya was the first person to announce the upcoming venture and it was he who inaugurated the project.

Swathiq did face a lot of difficulties

with the technology and had problems with the website's capacity to field the flow of inquiries, as it was a simply-built website. High number of customers and multiple selection of products gave Swathiq had put Swathiq in a difficult situation. However, the non-technical infrastructure facilities were commendable. The delivery arrangements with the Travellers and Boleros were all very precise. Swathiq took extreme efforts to safeguard the credibility of his company, so much so that even a product worth Rs. 200 was delivered at a cost of Rs. 1,000. The expectation was to overcome the hassles in the long-run and turn around to profitability. However, the break-out of the pandemic drastically hit the venture again. 2020 March 23rd was a black mark for all of us since it was the first day of lockdown. SaveBox also stopped the activities and had a liability of 2.90 crore at that time. At the age of 28, Swathiq was forced to stop the project with a huge liability and many remarked that he would not rise again.

Despite all these problems, Swathiq remembers that it was actor Jayasurya who gave him mental strength like an elder brother during all those times. Later, the field was ready for his return. Swathiq, the son of a father who promoted touring cinemas in festival seasons, had great experiences of bidding since he was a child. He converted that nostalgia into an app. There was no other investment in hand other than a few good people holding him tight and the marketable media.



Although the marketing methods were correct, it was through traditional business that he came to know and understand exactly what startups were.

The first lesson he learned was not to start with small things or compromise. Swathiq decided that a startup must start with a wide range of experienced people, and have state-of-the-art technology and application. He decided to travel with people who are more efficient and talented in these areas. Swathiq has appointed Murali Mohan, a former techie, as his vice president, and invited Jeemon Pully, former Media Head and Director of Byju's app. He joined the team of SaveBox as Director in IT and R&D. His experience and knowledge was of benefit to the new institution. These adventures happened while Swathiq had only a big question mark to the future.

When the authorities were approached for a live auction license, they were told there was no such license. He then went to Delhi and spent three or four months waiting for a new application for a new business and obtaining a

license. Thus he began the SaveBox Bidding App as Kerala's First Bidding App under a consortium named SaveBox Concepts Pvt. Ltd. In 16 December 2020, SaveBox app was launched with a spoof ad for the renowned movie 'Lelam' with Aju Varghese and Gokul Suresh. The advertisement became an instant viral hit as it crossed 3 million views in 48 Hours. Within the same 48 hours, a milestone of 50K app downloads, and within a week, 100k+ downloads were achieved. 3 lakh+ downloads in android and iOS within 10 month was also a notable achievement for a comparatively new venture.

From 10 am to 10 pm, various auctions starting at just Re.1. Every auction is an event. If the iPhone is at the 10 a.m. event, it may be the laptop at 11 a.m. If you pay Rs. 100, you can bid 100 times and the price of the product goes up when all the people who have downloaded this app bid for every one rupee. The auction ends when the boundary figure below the MRP is reached. The time it takes for one person to bid is 30 seconds. If the next person

does not bid, the person can call earlier and get the product. Customers receive the auctioned items through the app at the bidding price, and not for the total amount spent at one rupee per auction. After deducting the amount spent on the auction, the final bid amount is paid for the product. Products can be purchased through SaveBox's own e-commerce without losing a single rupee spent on the auction.

SaveBox was the winner of Metro MSME Awards 2021 for the Best Emerging Startup as well as for The Entrepreneur award. Leads Management College's Best Startup Award was also achieved by the same SaveBox. Swathiq Rahim got listed in Incredible 100's list by Samrambham Magazine in 2021.

Venture capitalist firm called 'One Capital' invested in SaveBox by purchasing the stakes in 2021. SaveBox Bidding app Version 2.0 is launching on November 15th with Brand Ambassador 'Jayasurya' with an outstanding spoof ad. A new concept of 20-20 bidding will be included in Version 2.0, as it gives 20 min bid event for each product, and will have a 20-second countdown. The bid winner will also have reseller options. SaveBox Express Logistic Startup is launching in December and SaveBox E-shops will be active in main cities of Kerala by 2022 and expand to other cities later. The startup supporting firm JustStart will also be launched in January 2022.

Swathiq says that whatever business venture a person gets into, he needs to learn it thoroughly and should gather experience. Through his success, the young entrepreneur tells us that when connecting traditional business with the tech world, precise outlines should be set to become successful.



BACK LOBE

Can Kids, who are being taken to their ancestral homes for school vacations, called Tourists? There are many stories and films where protagonists tend to reminisce about their childhood and the visits to their grandparents' place. Many movies have shown children having a great time during their holidays at their old family homes.

What feelings would they have gone through?

Almost always, a visit to ancestral homes is not a surprise visit. It is planned in advance.

Positive expectations are built up before the trip. Children start counting the days for the trip and become excited.

Once they reach their ancestral homes, these kids could be taken for strolls through the surroundings by the parents telling their own nostalgic past.

The kids play to their complete satisfaction. Maybe visit a temple or church and pray. If there's a pond or lake nearby, they are taken for swimming. Local delicacies are prepared and served. Fruits and vegetables, direct from source, are given. Of course, the children also get to breathe fresh air and relax.

The kids are pampered – it will be by the grandparents or in their absence the parents. I wonder whether we can compare these parents'/ grandparents' role to a guest relation manager's role.

Isn't all the above similar to tourism? – Tourism being a process to spend time away from home for recreation, relaxation and pleasure.

In this age, where children move out of their family homes searching better prospects, these nostalgic vacationing is all that links the grandkids to their past.

So what does it mean?

It means hold on to your ancestral properties. Do not sell, redesign or do anything other than maintenance.

It would be your kid's chance to experience a happy vacation without any resort charges. It would be your chance to indulge in pleasant memories of the past.

It could also be leased out for near and dear ones to experience a happy vacation.

Think Homestead tourism!

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