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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Kerala tops the list as the ‘Most Welcoming Region’ in India**

- **Three Kerala cities feature among the top five most welcoming cities**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Jan. 31:** Kerala has topped the list as the ‘Most Welcoming Region’ in India, according to a survey conducted by leading digital travel platform Booking.com.

Announcing the recipients of its tenth annual Traveller Review Awards, the travel platform said the results were based on more than 232 million verified reviews from real travellers.

Kerala was followed by Goa, Puducherry, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh as the ranking took into account the hospitality, friendliness and welcoming staff of these regions as well as health and hygiene in view of the evolving status of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three cities of Kerala – Mararikulam, Thekkady and Varkala – also feature among the top five ‘Most Welcoming Cities’ in India with the first two positions going to Palolem and Agonda (both in Goa). All these cities reveal the liking of domestic travellers for coastal getaways.

Kerala Tourism Director Shri V R Krishna Teja said the awards are both timely and significant as these are based on verified reviews from millions of real travellers. “We have launched several big-ticket projects, including ‘Keravan Kerala’ that seeks to tap the potential of little-known destinations. These awards will spur us to act with renewed vigour,” he noted.

Among the recently launched projects by Kerala Tourism are the creation of a ‘bio bubble’ mechanism, ‘Keravan Kerala’, the biodiversity circuit, the Malabar literary circuit, Agri-tourism Network, in-car dining. Plans are also underway to develop Beypore as a model Responsible Tourism hub which would bring to world attention the heritage of the ancient port town.

The awards also highlighted hotels as the most welcoming accommodation type by Indians followed by homestay, resort, guesthouse and apartments.

The 2022 Most Welcoming Regions on Earth include Gorenjska (Slovenia) followed by Taitung County (Taiwan) and Tasmania (Australia). India (9062) ranked ahead of Colombia (8082), New Zealand (7355), Taiwan (7350), and Chile (7267).

Ritu Mehrotra, Regional Manager, South Asia at Booking.com said, “As travel dynamics continue to change, it’s heartening to see the love travellers have expressed for the destinations as recognized by Booking.com’s Traveller Review Awards 2022”.