

Report

“CM Pinarayi Vijayan invites global business fraternity to engage with Kerala”

Projecting Kerala as an attractive business-friendly destination with robust economic fundamentals, Kerala Chief Minister Shri. Pinarayi Vijayan invited the global investor community and industry stakeholders to do business with the southern coastal state and accelerate its growth across various sectors, especially manufacturing and services segments.

“Kerala is ready for investments and open to business,” Shri. Vijayan told at the Diplomats Meet on **‘Vyapar 2017’**, jointly organised by the Kerala Government and FICCI at Federation House, New Delhi on 15 November 2016 evening.

Unfolding an impressive array of advantages and opportunities for business leaders before a high-profile gathering of foreign diplomats, the Chief Minister said the state’s galloping economy, industry-friendly laws, abundant power and skilled manpower made Kerala an ideal business hub. “Kerala has already demonstrated its economic heft in highly specialised sectors like tourism, healthcare, information technology, food processing, among others. We have a clear agenda for development, a knowledge-based economy and highly skilled manpower. These are all incentives for businesses to invest in the state,” he added.

Department of Industries and Commerce, Govt. of Kerala along with FICCI as the Trade & Industry Partner, is organising **‘Vyapar 2017’**, the sixth edition of Kerala B2B Meet, at Bolgatty Island Resort in Kochi from February 2 to 4 next year. “It will showcase Kerala’s business potential and manufacturing competence to the trading and outsourcing community in India and elsewhere. It will enhance the competitiveness of SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) in Kerala and provide a platform for marketing their competencies,” Shri. Vijayan told the gathering.

Showcasing the robustness of Kerala’s SMEs, he said a wide variety of segments ranging from Handlooms and Textiles to Ayurveda Therapies, Herbal Medications and Traditional Handicrafts, fall into this sector having the potential for generating employment and economic growth. The B2B Meet would boost the branding of Kerala’s native products, improve their marketability and mobility in the global market and give the state’s manufacturing sector access to large markets outside its borders, he noted.

The Diplomats Meet registered the attendance of Ambassadors, High Commissioners and members of the Diplomatic corps of around 30 countries, including Japan, Russia, the UAE, Poland, Malaysia, Turkey, South Korea, Cuba, Nepal, Bulgaria, Rwanda, Tunisia, Bhutan, Mauritius, Gabon, Belarus, Nigeria, Venezuela, Sri Lanka, Angola, Vietnam and Kazakhstan.

Delivering the keynote address, Shri. Amitabh Kant IAS, CEO, Niti Aayog, referred to India Today's State of States 2016 report, which described Kerala as 'the safest, healthiest, most environment-friendly'. The state also topped in three categories — law and order, health and environment.

"Kerala offers a unique model of sustainable development. Its high quality of physical life surpasses even in many countries of Europe. The state has invested heavily in education and health; its urban growth rate is 6.49% as compared to the national average of 4.04%. The state's IT parks, connectivity with India and the outside world through rail, roads and airports, startups, complete broadband connectivity, India's first defence park, strong diaspora, tourism, strong leadership - all these factors make Kerala a sound business proposition," he said.

In his introductory remarks, Shri. Paul Antony, Additional Chief Secretary, Dept. of Industries, Govt. of Kerala, said the B2B Meet would offer a string of opportunities for the business fraternity from both India and outside to productively engage with Kerala through business and investments.

"Kerala offers phenomenal investment and business opportunities. Its 100 per cent literate population, business-savvy and dynamic Malayali diaspora, the cosmopolitan flavour, skilled workforce, large consumer base, thriving industries and sound infrastructure make the state a competitive business destination in the country," he added.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Shri. Onkar Kanwar, Past President, FICCI, said the recent initiatives of the Kerala government like restructuring of Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board and comprehensive plan for making it a waste-free state, would give an impetus to Kerala's pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development.

"Kerala's natural resources, a thriving diaspora, high literacy levels and social indicators rank it much ahead of other Indian states. The state has a strong foothold in various sectors such as rubber, coir, spices, handlooms, fisheries, agro-food processing, bamboo, cashew and tourism. The immense opportunities, coupled with well-structured policies and business-friendly approach of the Kerala Government, make the state one of the most attractive business destinations in India," noted Shri. Kanwar, who is also CMD of Apollo Tyres Ltd.

In his concluding remarks Shri. M. G. George Muthoot, Chairman, FICCI Kerala State Council, said '**Vyapar 2017**' offers exciting opportunities for investments and businesses in the state. "Kerala is an investor-friendly state and the Government is offering a lot of facilities to industries. The B2B Meet is just the beginning, and business leaders need to leverage the huge opportunities being offered by the state," he pointed out.

Smt. Nalini Netto IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Govt. of Kerala; Shri. Dinesh Sharma IAS, Special Secretary, Dept. of Economic Affairs, Govt. of India; Shri. Manoj Joshi IAS, Joint Secretary, Dept. of MSME, Govt. of India; Dr. M. Beena IAS, Managing Director, KSIDC, Govt. of Kerala; Shri. P. M. Francis IAS, Director (Industries & Commerce), Govt. of Kerala and Shri. Puneet Kumar IAS, Additional Resident Commissioner, Kerala House, New Delhi were among those present at the meet.

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