

The colossal vessel!

The longest snake boat in the world was unveiled at Aries Vismayas Max – the major attraction of Travancore Treasures and the exclusive tour connecting prominent film tourism destinations in Thiruvananthapuram city.

Aries Guinness Chundan, longest steel-made snake boat in Kerala, is all set to enthrall tourists once again. The 143.25 feet-long boat built at a cost of INR 15 lakh in 2006, is reincarnating as a major attraction under the aegis of **Indywood Film Tourism**- a novel concept to brand India in global tourism map by blending the immense potential of entertainment and tourism.

Sohan Roy, Chairman & CEO, Aries Group, officially inaugurated Aries Guinness Chundan on July 31 at a function held at Aries Vismayas Max studio.

VISUAL EXTRAVAGANZA

The eleven-year-old Aries Guinness Chundan, one of the flagship projects from Aries Marine and Engineering Services, stormed into the Guinness Book of World Records for carrying 141 rowers and being the longest, fastest, safest and cheapest ever snake boat made of steel. It was featured in the Limca Book of World Records and Asian Book of Records as the longest steel-made snake boat.

The snake boat conceived by Naval Architect Sohan Roy became a prominent shooting location for more than hundred movies including Oscar qualified DAM999, short films, advertisements, music albums, etc. due to its incomparable beauty and 24x7 availability.

PUNNAMADA'S PRIDE

The snake boat is a tribute to people of Punnamada, where the famous Nehru Trophy Boat race is conducted. "At that time Punnamada was lacking a snake boat in annual water regatta. Most of the snake boats were from other parts of Alappuzha and the region was ruling the race. As people from Punnamada cannot afford the huge expense of constructing a snake boat and maintain it properly, we decided to build an exclusive snake boat for the citizens

of Punnamada without costing anything on its maintenance for more than a decade. And we titled our snake boat as Aries Punnamada Chundan because it was initially operated and managed by the people of Punnamada," Roy said.

SETTING NEW TRACK

The entry of Aries Guinness Chundan became a turning point in the history of Kerala Tourism and it could have set new benchmarks in snake boat construction and race if it was not officially banned from taking part in Nehru Trophy Boat Race due to unforeseen reasons. Aries Group also has the credit of launching Safe Botel, first of its kind, the unsinkable houseboat in India. This partially solar-powered steel houseboat with eco-friendly features played an instrumental role in framing very strict norms for boats operating in the backwaters of Kerala especially emphasising the safety of the passengers.

ARRAY OF HURDLES

Roy added that the snake boat was launched surpassing lot of hurdles including – lack of local infrastructure facilities at Punnamada, raw materials, trained manpower and approvals. "We faced lot of hurdles during construction. But, determination, dedication and unity of our team led by traditional Thachan (carpenter) Babu helped to launch the boat with unique features in record time."

UNIQUENESS

Another highlight is ladies can enter this snake boat. Normally, ladies are not allowed in traditional snake boats as per Thachan Sastra. "But, lot of foreigners including ladies used Aries Guinness Chundan for the first time to experience the beauty of sailing in snake boat and to explore exotic locations in Alappuzha. Currently we are trying to build four same-size steel snake boats to conduct weekly and annual league races promoted by various corporate brands for the promotion of Indian Tourism," said Roy. ▲