

# A Must-Visit Cultural Experience This Season!

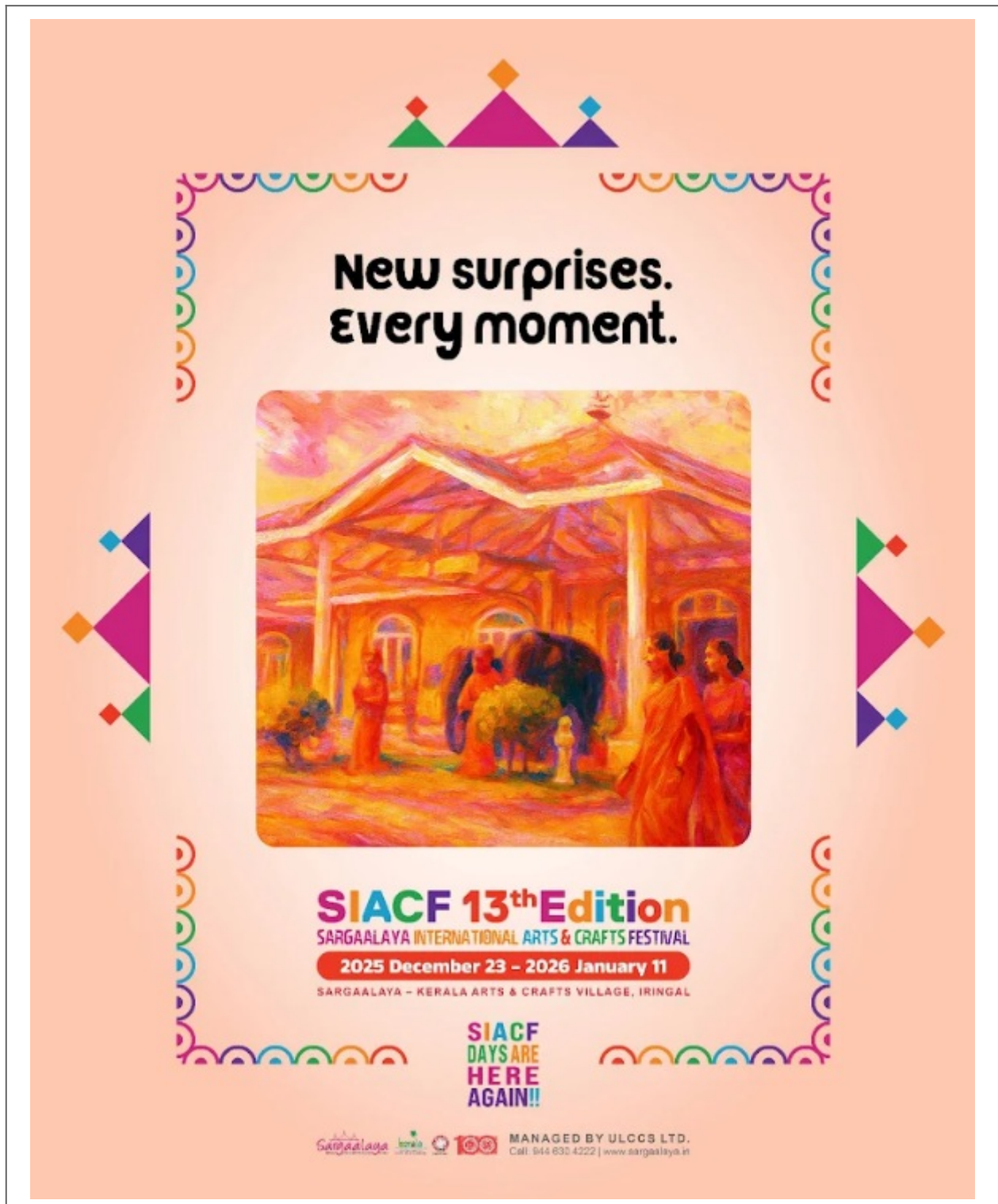
Category: Business

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If there is one cultural destination in South India that deserves a place on every traveller's calendar this season, it

is the 13th Sargaalaya International Arts & Crafts Festival (SIACF). From December 23, 2025, to January 11, 2026, Sargaalaya Kerala Arts & Crafts Village transforms into a living, breathing celebration of art, heritage, flavour, and community—an experience that is as inspiring as it is unforgettable.



## **13th Sargaalaya International Arts & Crafts Festival (SIACF) begins from December 23, 2025, to January 11, 2026**

Recognised as South India's premier crafts festival, SIACF 2025 is expected to welcome over two lakh visitors, making it not just an exhibition, but a cultural phenomenon. Organised by Sargaalaya Kerala Arts & Crafts Village and managed by the legendary **Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS Ltd.)**, the festival continues to set benchmarks in responsible tourism and cultural excellence.

### **Where the World's Crafts Come Together**

What makes SIACF truly extraordinary is its global soul rooted in Indian tradition. The 2025 edition brings together nearly 200 master artisans from 18+ Indian states, alongside celebrated craft practitioners from Belarus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Russia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Taiwan.

Walking through SIACF feels like travelling across continents—each stall revealing a story, a heritage, and a human touch that no machine can replicate. For anyone who values authenticity, craftsmanship, and cultural depth, this is an experience that simply cannot be missed.

### **An Immersive Festival, Not Just an Exhibition**

SIACF 2025 is thoughtfully curated to offer far more than shopping. Visitors are invited to explore beautifully designed Handloom and Craft Theme Arenas, with special emphasis on Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged products, making it a rare opportunity to witness India's protected craft legacies under

one roof.

With over 100 exhibition and trade stalls, including works by National and State Award-winning artisans, the festival offers an unparalleled chance to engage directly with creators and take home pieces of living heritage.

Adding depth to the experience are the Tourism Expo and Tourism Talk Shows, where ideas, innovation, and the future of creative tourism come together—making SIACF equally compelling for professionals, students, and cultural thinkers.

### **Fashion, Flowers, Food & Festivity**

From elegance on the ramp to colour in full bloom, SIACF 2025 celebrates lifestyle in its most artistic form. Handloom Fashion Shows and Children's Fashion Shows bring textiles to life, while the Flower Show adds a visual spectacle that delights all ages.

No visit to SIACF is complete without indulging in the much-loved Kerala Food Festival—a culinary journey through authentic local delicacies, enriched with regional flavours from states like Rajasthan. Daily live cultural performances by renowned artists ensure that every evening at Sargaalaya feels festive, soulful, and memorable.

For those who enjoy leisure amidst nature, pedal and motor boating along the serene Moorad River offers a refreshing pause—making the festival a perfect blend of culture,

relaxation, and adventure.

## **A Festival That Makes a Difference**

Beyond its beauty and scale, SIACF stands out for its purpose. As a flagship rural tourism initiative, the festival plays a crucial role in empowering artisans, sustaining endangered crafts, and contributing meaningfully to the local economy.

This vision is strengthened by the support of the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, NABARD, the Ministry of Textiles (through the Development Commissioners of Handicrafts and Handlooms), and the Indian Institute of Handloom Technology, Kannur—ensuring that every visit directly supports livelihoods and cultural continuity.

## **The Perfect Family & Travel Recommendation**

Whether you are a culture enthusiast, a conscious shopper, a family looking for a meaningful holiday outing, or a traveller seeking authentic Kerala experiences, SIACF 2025 is an unmissable recommendation. It is rare to find a destination that seamlessly brings together craft, cuisine, learning, entertainment, and nature—yet Sargaalaya does so effortlessly.

*“Sargaalaya is not just a craft village; it is a celebration of human creativity and shared heritage,” says **Team Sargaalaya**. “Every visit helps preserve living traditions while empowering rural communities through responsible tourism.”*

## **About Sargaalaya Kerala Arts & Crafts Village**

Set across 20 acres in Iringal, Kozhikode, Sargaalaya Kerala Arts & Crafts Village is a flagship initiative of the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, established in 2011. Developed on a Responsible Tourism model, it provides a permanent creative home for over 100 master artisans and features 27+ eco-friendly cottages, live craft demonstrations, and cultural spaces.

Recipient of the National Tourism Award for Best Rural Tourism Project, Sargaalaya is widely regarded as one of Kerala's most enriching cultural destinations.

### **Sargaalaya Arts and Crafts Village: Towards a Global Cultural and Experiential Destination**

Sargaalaya Kerala Arts and Crafts Village at Iringal, near Vatakara in Kozhikode district, is envisioned to be developed as a globally benchmarked cultural, experiential, and interpretative destination for Malabar. The proposed development reimagines Sargaalaya not merely as a craft village, but as an integrated cultural institution that interprets regional heritage, nurtures creativity, produces knowledge, and anchors a wider tourism ecosystem across North Kerala. The focus is on creating a living cultural landscape where heritage, contemporary practice, tourism, and community livelihoods intersect.

The development places strong emphasis on immersive visitor engagement through interactive craft zones, daily demonstrations, curated workshops, and guided interpretation. Craft spaces will be reconfigured to allow larger visitor participation, supported by a central craft emporium and dedicated workshops that enable skill development, innovation,

residencies, and fair market access for artisans. These interventions ensure that crafts remain dynamic, living practices rather than static displays.

At the heart of the project is the Cultural Experience and Interpretation Centre, conceived as the primary narrative anchor for Malabar. Through curated exhibitions, multimedia installations, immersive digital environments, and interactive archives, the centre will present Malabar's maritime history, social reform movements, resistance traditions, ecological knowledge, and cultural pluralism, offering visitors a coherent entry point into the region's layered cultural landscapes.

A series of thematic developments will structure the expanded Sargaalaya ecosystem. The Literature City will position Malabar as a living literary landscape through writers' retreats, multilingual libraries, translation and publishing labs, literary residencies, and immersive experiences linking literature with place, memory, and social history. The Kalari Village, rooted in the martial traditions of Kadathanad, will integrate training, performance, research, wellness, and interpretation through traditional arenas, therapy centres, and an interactive martial arts museum.

The project places strong emphasis on the documentation and preservation of performing arts, supported by digital archives, performance-capture studios, and immersive experience centres for art forms such as Theyyam, Kathakali, Kalaripayattu, and Mappila songs. A Living Heritage Programme will support artists through apprenticeships, fellowships, residencies, and contemporary collaborations, ensuring continuity alongside creative evolution.

Sargaalaya is envisioned as a year-round cultural destination with robust performance infrastructure, including open-air amphitheatres, indoor auditoriums, flexible venues, and artist residency facilities. Regular performances, curated weekend programmes, and four large-scale annual cultural productions will ensure sustained activation. A flagship attraction, Malabar Symphony, is proposed as a large-scale light-and-sound hybrid immersive storytelling experience narrating Malabar's maritime history, resistance movements, ecological consciousness, and cultural evolution. Conceived as a thirty-five-minute production staged twice daily, Malabar Symphony is proposed to be developed in collaboration with leading national and international artists, with concept and direction by Revathy, screenplay and narrative by Shankar Ramakrishnan, music composition by A.R. Rahman, sound design by Resul Pookkuttu, technical direction by Alphons, theatre direction by Royston Abel, animation and visual effects by Aravind, and voice performances by distinguished artists including Mammooty, Manju Warrier, Parvathy Thiruvothu, Anoop Menon, Sayonara Philip, and Prithviraj Sukumaran.

A dedicated Children's Cultural and Experiential Zone will offer play-based learning rooted in Malabar's cultural narratives and ecological contexts, integrating creative activity spaces, nature-linked exploration, and water-based learning experiences. Complementing this are structured workshops and creative learning programmes across crafts, music, theatre, movement, painting, and visual arts, catering to students, artists, tourists, and cultural professionals.

The development adopts a hub-and-spoke tourism model, positioning Sargaalaya as the central orientation and

interpretation hub for integrated cultural, riverine, coastal, literary, martial, and culinary circuits across Malabar. River-based journeys and water experiences will function as experiential corridors, foregrounding ecology, heritage, and local livelihoods.

The ecosystem further includes curated food tourism and culinary experiences, including festivals and a floating restaurant rooted in Malabar cuisine; a handloom, design, and retail zone supporting innovation and contemporary applications of traditional textiles; a vibrant flea market strengthening the informal cultural economy; and facilities for social, cultural, and community events, conferences, exhibitions, destination weddings, and themed cultural ceremonies.

To enable deeper immersion, the project proposes on-site accommodation and stay facilities designed in harmony with the landscape and local architectural traditions, supporting multi-day cultural tourism, artist residencies, research stays, and family travel. Through this integrated approach, the upcoming phase of Sargaalaya positions culture as core infrastructure for development, envisioning a globally relevant model for experiential, responsible, and knowledge-driven cultural tourism that interprets Malabar for contemporary and international audiences.

**Website:** [www.sargaalaya.in](http://www.sargaalaya.in)

**Instagram:** [Sargaalaya – Kerala Arts & Crafts Village Iringal](#)

**About ULCCS Ltd.**

Founded in 1925 by social reformer Vagbhatananda Guru, the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society Ltd. (ULCCS) is among India's most respected worker cooperatives. With 18,000+ employees, 7,500+ completed projects, and global recognition—including a World No. 2 ranking in the Industry & Utilities sector by the World Cooperative Monitor for 3 years—ULCCS stands as a UN-recognised model for ethical, inclusive, and quality-driven development.

If you are looking for one unforgettable cultural recommendation this season, SIACF 2025 at Sargaalaya is it.

