

## Casino Royale: It's a Deal if Kerala Plays its Cards Right

By SOVI VIDYADHARAN

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Soon Kerala could join Las Vegas and Macau as a hot destination for gaming activities such as poker, bridge and fantasy games if the state government gives its nod for a proposal by the All-India Gaming Federation (AIGF).

A delegation of AIGF met Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Nalini Netto and suggested amendments to a government notification on gaming activities issued in 1976. The notification had exempted rummy, dart, ball throw and shooting from the penal provisions of the Gaming Act. The AIGF wants the government



to widen the ambit of the notification to include poker, bridge and fantasy games.

"If it happens then playing poker, bridge and fantasy games for stakes or real money will be legal and immune from any criminal liability. For a state like Kerala, where tourists flock in large numbers, gaming avenues can be an added attraction," Roland Landers, CEO of AIGF, told *The Sunday Standard*.

Though playing such games is widely considered as 'gambling', the AIGF officials vouched that these are 'purely skill games.' The state promised that it would consider updating the list after consulting the Law Department.