

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

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TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala Tourism's responsible tourism model at Kumarakom, linking local community to the hospitality industry, has won the national award for the best rural tourism project.

Kerala also bagged honours in three other categories at the National Tourism Awards for 2011-12. The best wellness centre award went to Somatheeram Ayurveda Resort at Chowara near Thiruvananthapuram, while Pioneer Personalised Holidays won in the best approved inbound tour operator and travel agent category. Kumarakom picked up two more awards for Vivanta by Taj in the best four star hotel category and Coconut Creek Farm and Home



**CENTRAL RECOGNITION**

Stay, Kumarakom for bed and breakfast establishment.

Kerala tourism secretary, Suman Billa, received the award for the best rural tourism project from President Pranab Mukherjee at a ceremony held at the Vigyan Bhavan on Monday.

Launched in 2008, Kerala Tourism's pioneering responsible tourism model in Kumarakom, forged partnerships with Kudumbashee to sell fruits and vegetables to tourists in kiosks run by its units and with hotels and restaurants in the area to buy produces from the local community.

Besides bringing economic benefits to the local community, the Kumarakom model has also ensured eco-friendly practices in disposing of waste.