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Press Release

## **Kerala bags 12 National Tourism Awards**

- **Kerala Tourism gets five awards for official entries**
- **Responsible Tourism in Wayanad, Coffee Table book on Spice Route, Sargaalaya Arts and Crafts Village , IT- Social Media/Mobile App among the winners for Kerala Tourism**
- **God's Own Country sweeps through the awards with seven more for private players, including Best Hotel in Five Star and Best Heritage Hotel in Classic categories**

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 30:** Riding on a string of innovative measures, Kerala Tourism walked away with three out of the six National Tourism awards for 2014-15 in the marketing category for states, while it received two more awards, including the one for its Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative in the hilly district of Wayanad that has transformed its economy through intensive participation of the local people.

Hoteliers, tour operators and an Ayurveda Centre swelled the kitty of awards for God's Own Country to 12 by winning seven more, including the Best Hotel in Five Star category and the Best Heritage hotel.

The awards were presented by Lok Sabha Speaker Smt. Sumitra Mahajan in the presence of Union Tourism Minister Dr. Mahesh Sharma at a function at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi today. The awards on behalf of Kerala Tourism were received by Principal Secretary Dr Venu V. and Director Shri U. V. Jose.

Particularly impressive was Kerala Tourism's marketing feat in winning three out of the six awards for the states in the Tourism Promotion and Publishing category, including the one for 'Most Innovative use of Information Technology' — Social Media/ Mobile App.

The Wayanad initiative was selected for the award in the Responsible Tourism category.

Sargaalaya Arts and Crafts Village at Iringal, a small but thriving village in Kozhikode, fetched the award for Kerala Tourism in the Rural Tourism project category.

"The awards are a heartening and robust reaffirmation of our Responsible Tourism initiative, which has emerged as a trailblazing tourism product for the entire country. We also received three national awards for our brilliant marketing initiatives which are designed to woo travellers from both inside the country and abroad," said Kerala Tourism Minister Shri A.C. Moideen.



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Kerala Tourism Principal Secretary Dr Venu V. said winning five national tourism awards and seven for private players is a tremendous feat. "It is a welcome recognition of our pioneering measures, especially our cutting edge marketing techniques and leveraging of technology, to position Kerala as a tourist-friendly destination," he noted.

Kerala Tourism Director Shri U. V. Jose said the national awards have come in the wake of Kerala Tourism winning two PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association) Gold Awards for its brilliant marketing initiatives. "The national awards will further boost the state's profile as a coveted destination for the inbound tourism market," he added.

Kerala and the Spice Routes, a coffee-table book, designed by Stark was a proud winner in the category of Excellence in Publishing in English language. The glossy book provides a sneak-peek to the readers on the rich multiculturalism of the state more than two millennia ago and takes them through the Malabar Coast that was the starting point for Kerala's spice trade with the rest of the world.

'The Great Backwaters', a brochure in German language, was adjudged for the award in foreign language segment. The brochure details out the unique, standalone and once-in-a-lifetime experience of the Kerala backwaters to the international travellers. It targets the growing set of evolved travellers from Germany and other German speaking countries by showcasing the backwaters as a self-contained world with its culture, flora, fauna and way of life.

The third award for Kerala Tourism in 'Tourism Promotion and Publishing' category came for its most innovative use of Information technology for the website designed by Invis Multimedia and social media managed by Stark Communications. Kerala Tourism has 12.8 lakh Facebook followers, the largest figure for any Tourism Board in India.

Private players bagged seven awards: Turtle on the Beach, Kovalam, was the adjudged the best hotel in the Five Star category; Coconut Lagoon, Kumarakom, bagged the award for Best Heritage Hotel in Classic Category; Coconut Creek Farm and Homestay, Kumarakom, was given the award for 'Best Incredible India Bed & Breakfast Establishment' approved by State Governments / Union Territory Administrations' and Somatheeram Research Institute & Ayurveda Hospital Pvt. Ltd, Thiruvananthapuram, was declared the Best Wellness Centre.

Kochi-based M/s Lotus Destinations Pvt. Ltd got the award for "Best Tour Operator promoting Niche Segments other than Adventure and MICE"; M/s Kalypso Adventures (P) Ltd, also based in Kochi, received the award for 'Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent' and Kochi-based M/s Dravidian Trails Holidays Pvt. Ltd got a Third Prize in the category of 'Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent'.