



Department of Tourism

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PRESS RELEASE

Kerala Tops 2013-14 National Tourism Awards with 10 Honours

4 Titles to Kerala Tourism, 6 to state's private entrepreneurs

New Delhi, Sep 18: Imaginative ventures backed by precise execution enabled Kerala to bag the largest number of honours at the 2013-14 National Tourism Awards distributed today, as President Shri Pranab Mukherjee conferred the southern state's tourism ventures with a total of ten titles.

While the Kerala Tourism Department got four awards in categories ranging from literature to cinema to IT to a pioneering project involving local people, the state's private entrepreneurs in the industry got six.

Kerala Minister for Tourism Shri A P Anilkumar received the National Tourism Awards for Excellence in Publishing Foreign Language, Best Tourism Film, Most Innovative Use of Information Technology and, fourthly, for its success in Responsible Tourism Project. The function held in the national capital was attended, among others, by Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture Dr Mahesh Sharma.

While it was a German brochure kit headlined 'Eat Shop Trek' aimed at wooing the tourists of that Western European country that won Kerala Tourism the award for Excellent in Publishing Foreign Language, a movie titled 'The Great Backwaters of Kerala' earned recognition as the Best Tourist Film. The portal www.keralatourism.org won the award in the category for the Best Website, even as its novel Thekkady initiative enabled it to share the top honours for the much-touted Responsible Tourism Project which encompasses all forms of tourism that seek to minimize negative economic, environment and social impacts.

In the private sector, the awardees were: Dravidian Trail (in Foreign Exchange Earnings), Coconut Creek Farm (Bed & Breakfast), Coconut Lagoon (Heritage Classic Category), Marari Beach Resort (3-star hotels), Vivanta By Taj, Kumarakom (4-star) and Somatheeram Research Institute & Ayurveda Hospital (Wellness Centre).

Minister Anilkumar, after receiving the award, said Kerala has submitted to the Centre a multi-project plan worth Rs 568 crore that aims to boost the state's tourism profile. In a proposal submitted to the Union Minister for Tourism, the state has sought the clearance of a Rs 283-crore Pilgrim Tourism Circuit (with focus on Anantha Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Thiruvananthapuram), a coastal tourism project of Rs 108 crore, an eco-tourism project of Rs 77 crore (of which Rs 52 crore is for Vagamon-Thekkady and the rest Rs 25 crore for Gavi in Pathanamthitta district) and Rs 100 crore for Nila Tourism Project.

"Of this, the Centre has assured the clearance of Rs 100 crore for the Pilgrim Tourism Project," the minister added.

The 1981-founded Kerala Tourism, which is headquartered in the state capital Thiruvananthapuram, is a government organisation that undertakes policy formulation, implementation of projects and marketing of 'God's Own Country' as a tourist destination.

Kerala Tourism Secretary G Kamala Vardhana Rao said the establishment has been consistently striving to position the state as a global destination with a focus on sustaining and preserving the land's nature,



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culture and tradition. “We have managed to make the destination a known brand in key source markets,” he added.

As for the German-language brochure, it describes new experiences in Kerala, by showcasing its variety mouth-watering cuisine, adventure trails and shopping opportunities. It features a Kerala Culinary Trail that takes readers on a journey to discover the historical, geographical and cultural facets of Kerala’s rich cooking tradition. The Kerala Adventure Trail takes readers across the hills and mountains, beaches and backwaters, tropical rainforests and grasslands to present the intense e counters with nature possible only in God’s Own Country. The Shopping Trail unearths the shopping delights, throwing light on the variety of souvenirs and products available in the state.

The award-winning film, which had also won the Golden City Gate Award 2015, in Berlin showcases typical Kerala life around the backwaters: fishing, toddy tapping, farming and boat-racing—all around the ubiquitous presence of water. With its perspectives, shown across three different topographical variations commonly visible in the backwater world—the river network, the lakes and the islands—the film brings life in its freshness around these diverse terrain. The cinematography of ‘The Great Backwaters Film’ was done by the world’s finest aerial photographers from Finland and was captured on a remote-controlled, highly-sophisticated and custom-designed helicam. A 100-member crew and cast including three cinematographers and a director worked for several weeks on water and land to complete the movie.

The brochure and the film was conceptualized and designed by Stark Communications, the marketing and communications agency of Kerala Tourism.

A senior Kerala Tourism official said the target audience has been of the 30-45 age-bracket international travellers with a passion for enriching and meaningful experiences—originating from European nations such as UK, France and Germany.

The Kerala Tourism website, which was re-launched in 2013 with a responsive design optimised for viewing on multiple devices, including mobile phones and tablets and constantly updated since it went online way back in end-1998, disseminates useful information to travellers around the world. Designed by Invis Multimedia, it entertains a two-way process and keeps track of the varying interests of modern-day travellers, by regular online user-friendly interactions like emails, message board, tour planner, online audio-visual galleries, video quizzes, live webcasts, e-books and e-newsletters.

Today it is available in 11 international languages and 10 Indian languages besides English. The site offers 1,500 images and 3,300 videos. There are more than 100,000 pages. This website is an online encyclopaedia on Kerala, with special focus on travel-oriented content. Kerala Tourism’s initiatives have made website and monthly email newsletter a central axis of information dissemination. Since the variable cost involved in the use of email newsletter or accessing website is minimal, it has reduced the cost of service to a negligible level.

This is for the seventh time Kerala Tourism got the National Award for the Most Innovative Use of Information Technology / Website / Portal.



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Responsible Tourism, which has Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies as the nodal agency, is an initiative Kerala Tourism first implemented at four destinations: Kovalam, Kumarakom and Wayanad besides Thekkady. Among these, Kumarakom was already been honored with UNWTO Ulysses Award in 2014 for Innovation in Public Policy and Governance Award. It also bagged the national award for rural tourism. Other significant destinations now pursuing this initiative include Kumbalangi in coastal Ernakulam, besides Vythiri and Ambalavayal in Wayanad and Bekal in Kasaragod district upstate.

The spirit of Kerala's Responsible Tourism propels on the availability of plenty of natural resources, skilled manpower, supportive entrepreneurial community, strong local-self-governments, civil-society organizations, multitude of micro enterprises, streams of professionals and academicians, responsible media and responsive tourism industry. All of these provide the state an ideal setting to implement and practise it.

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