

Kumbalangi tourism plan gets a boost

Staff Reporter

KOCHI: Just as the country's first attempt at establishing a model tourism village almost lost its steam and came to a near stop, Kumbalangi reinvented itself. The village on the outskirts of the city is planning to bring in another wave of development by roping in neighbouring coastal village of Chellanam too into the Sustainable Agriculture Village project.

The project got a boost when M.S. Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, visited the village last week along with Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs K.V. Thomas. The model tourism village project was inaugurated way back in 2005 and the aim was to retain the old world charm to attract tourists from abroad and within the



IDYLIC CHARM: A scene from a Kumbalangi village. —FILE PHOTO

country.

And it did succeed, as those at the Kumbalangi Model Tourism Development Society (KMTDS) claim to have achieved a flow of nearly 6,000 foreign and 10,000 do-

mestic tourists last year. But the development projects as envisaged under the Rs. 25-crore model tourism project were stalled after the initial stages. "The new project will make Kumbalangi village

self-reliant, as goat and poultry farming are being promoted along with honey-bee farming and financial support for micro enterprises. Nearly 100 homesteads are being developed as complete agricultural units," said M.P. Sivadathan, president of KMTDS.

Sixteen different government departments are involved in this agriculture village project, including Department of Fisheries, Coconut Development Board and Horticultural Corporation.

The KMTDS also ruled out any chance of tourism potential of Kumbalangi being affected by bringing in Chellanam to the picture. "On the contrary, it will support the tourism drive, as we can exploit the beach and other features at Chellanam, which are missing in Kumbalangi," said Mr. Sivadathan.