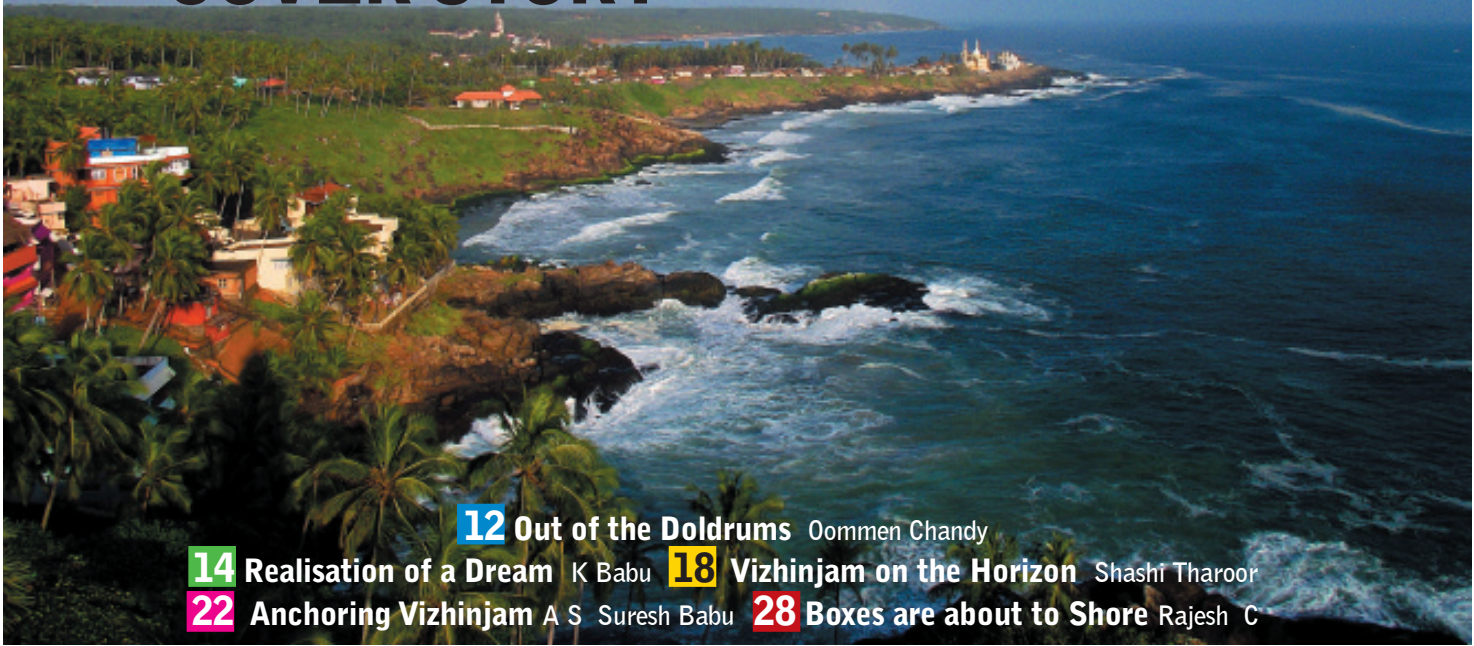


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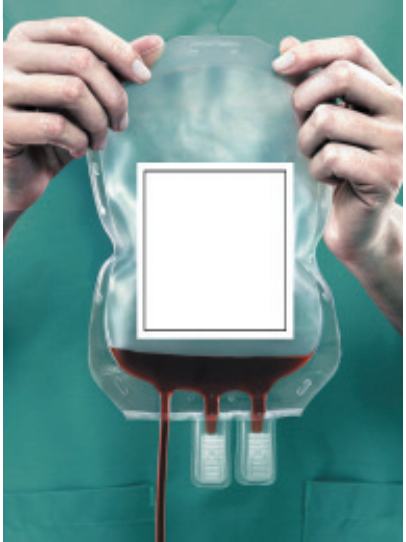


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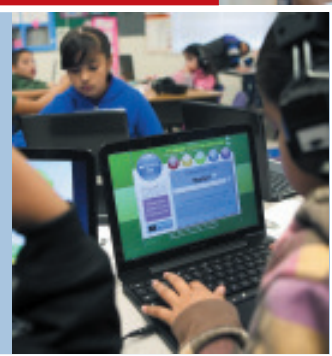
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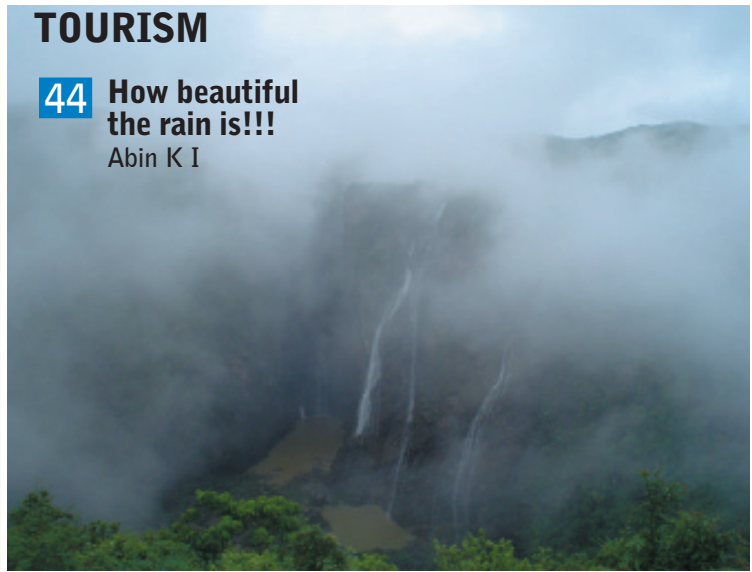
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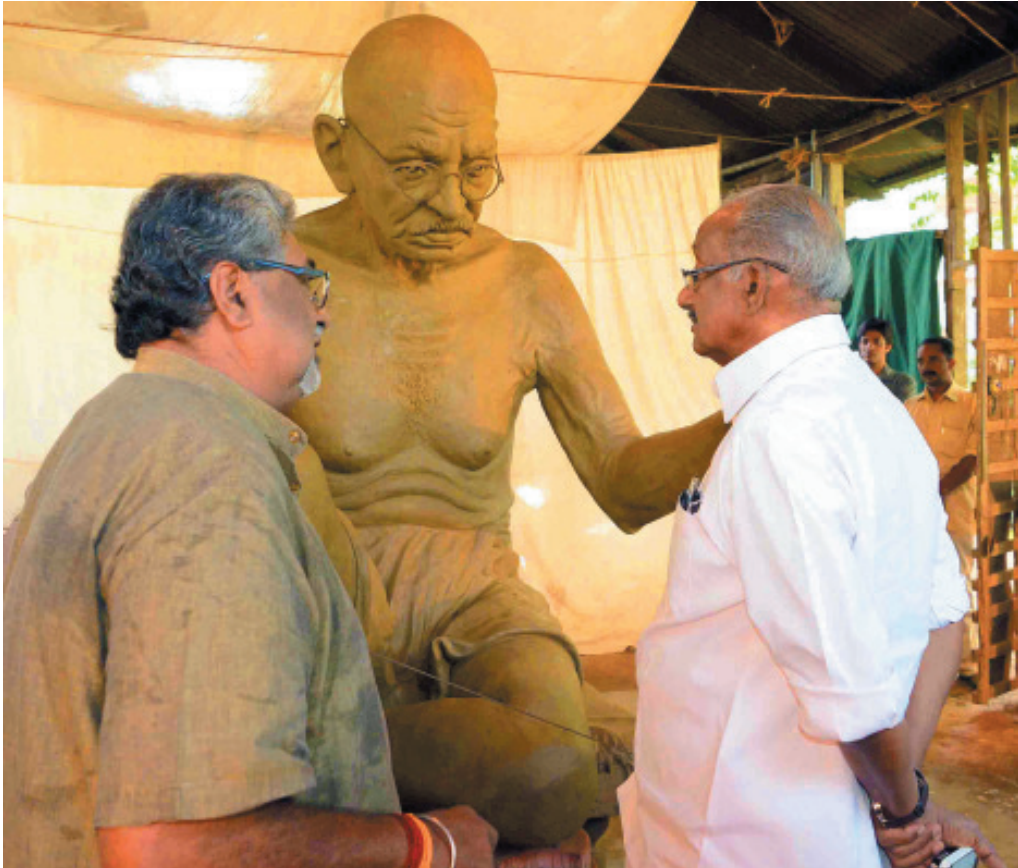
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FOCUS



Adhering to the advice of 'Mahatma':
Cultural Minister KC Joseph looks at the statue of Gandhiji chiselled by Artist M Murali.

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EDITORIAL

Rising up to people's expectations

The realisation of Kerala's dream project Vizhinjam Seaport has reflected the Government's resolve to put the state in a fast forward mode of development. Besides the work for mega projects, the Government during its four years in office have ensured that the needs of the poorest of the poor are taken care of through social security initiatives. The Vizhinjam project sends out a clear signal across the world that Gods Own Country is an ideal investor friendly destination which is now all set to take off in a big way.

Vizhinjam project will be the gateway to Asia throwing up a world of opportunities for the young people besides bringing in profits to the state in a phased manner.

The huge success of chief minister's mass contact programme has yet again proved that the government lends an ear even to the last person in the queue. The huge participation of people could be gauged from the number of petitions which stood at 3,76,772.

On the occasion of the fourth anniversary, the government announced four important schemes; introduction of digital books in schools, insurance cover to Asha workers, renovation of Fisheries colonies and distribution of Welfare Pension through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

Under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, the government has come up with several path breaking schemes and projects. The students entrepreneurship programme has already been emulated as a model. As many as 900 start-up initiatives have been launched with the motive of transforming students from being job seekers to job givers especially in the IT and telecom sector.

On the industrial front also, interest free loans of up to Rs 20 lakh are being given to young entrepreneurs under the aegis of Kerala State Entrepreneur Development Mission.

Kochi metro, light metros in Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode and Kannur airport reflect significant strides taken in air and rail infrastructure sectors. On the road infrastructure front, a road infrastructure company has been formed to elevate the state highways and important highways to international standards.

Health sector has witnessed huge development with four more medical colleges coming in the government sector taking the total number to nine. Karunya benevolent fund is one of most important initiatives of the government to provide helping hand to people suffering from serious ailments. Over Rs 700 crores have already been distributed among 86,876 persons till May 15, 2015.

The closure of 730 bars and 53 outlets of Beverages Corporation is part of Government's bold initiatives to bring down the increasing liquor consumption in the state. It is also a big step towards achieving government's target of phased prohibition.

Every single step taken by the government in last four years has been with the objective of achieving its slogan "development and care."

Mini Antony IAS
Editor in Chief



Subodham project

Kerala government has launched Subodham, a major campaign in to free people away from addiction to liquor, drug and other substance abuse. It was launched by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and Art of Living Foundation founder Sri Sri Ravishankar. It aims to free one lakh people in the state each year from alcohol addiction, through systematic, comprehensive awareness campaigns. It also aims to achieve the ambitious target of making the state totally alcohol free over the next 10 years. The project is supported by the United

Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious leaders and other stake holders are also participating in the project. Under this project, state government also has decided to introduce anti-drug and alcohol awareness content in the curriculum from the academic year 2016. This project is also state government's first step towards 'Punarjani 2030 Project', an initiative to completely eradicate the menace of substance abuse.

Snake Bird day

In a significant move to preserve and protect endangered species, June 22nd is observed as Snake bird Day. It is also known as Indian darter. This was formally announced by State minister for forest Thiruvanchur Radhakrishnan at a function organised by Snake Bird Foundation in Thiruvananthapuram. Snake Bird is a water bird which is also known as Indian darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*). With slender long-neck which is mostly black in colour with silver wing markings, it is listed in the group of threatened species. Because of pollution, drainage, hunting and the collection of eggs and nestlings its getting on the verge of extinction. In India, there are over 1500 snake birds in which majority are found in Kerala. These species usually nests atop tall trees near wetlands. They are largely found in Kottayam, Alappuzha, Wayanad Idukki and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala.

From birth place to battle field



In a befitting tribute to one of the greatest sons of India, the state government accorded a warm welcome to Janmamati Yatra "from janmasthan to yudhsthan" which is carrying soil from Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's birth place Odiya Bazar in Cuttack to his Yuddha Bhoomi in Imphal, Manipur.

Minister for Information and Public Relations K C Joseph inaugurated the

function at the Durbar Hall in Secretariat on 29th June. He recalled Netaji's determination and relentless fight against the British and also highlighted the role played by Vakkom Abdul Khader and Capt Lakshmi Menon in attracting youth from south Kerala to the Indian National Army.

Additional Chief Secretary Nalini Netto presided over the function. PRD secretary

Rani George welcomed the gathering and PRD Director Mini Antony proposed the vote of thanks. Janmamati Yatra is organised by the Utkala Bikas Jubh Parisada (UBJP). Team leader Devi Prasad Prusthi spoke about the importance of the yatra and its mission to spread the works and ideas of Netaji. Prominent INA veteran and freedom fighter K. Ayyappan Pillai offered felicitation.



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy receives the IAS professionals of 2014 at Cliff House.

Fish mart at Vikas bhavan

Matsyafed has started a fishmart at vikasbhavan, Thiruvananthapuram. The stall was inaugurated on 1st July, 2015 by fisheries minister K.Babu.

Various fish products ranging from “ready to cook” to “ready to eat” are for sale at the mart. Fresh fish cleaned and net and chilled fish carries are the major items. Frozen fish, carred fish, fresh cutlets, pickles and dry fish are the various varieties available in the store.



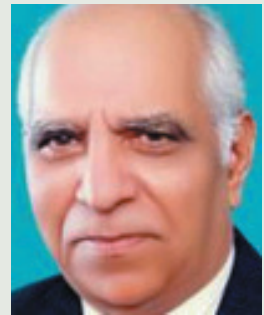
Now Steffi will promote Ayurveda tourism

For Tennis Lovers and players it's mellifluous news. For those love and practise Ayurveda it's a rejuvenation pack. Tennis Legend Steffi Graf has been appointed as Ayurveda brand ambassador by the government of Kerala. The cabinet meeting presided by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy in Thiruvananthapuram took the important decision in this regard.

Steffi is an ardent Ayurvedic fan. Her new venture will promote Ayurveda tourism of Kerala in North America and Europe. The theme of the promotion will be Visit Kerala Destination.



OBITUARY



Visionary technocrat, industry mentor and institution builder KPP Nambiar died in Bangalore on 30th June 2015. KPP Nambiar(86), a native of Kannur in Kerala had been credited with establishing India's first state and electronics venture keltron and India's first IT park Technopark, both in his home state Kerala.

Nambiar who had served as secretary, department of electronics when Rajiv Gandhi was the prime minister, had been the force behind establishing C-DAC, STPI, CEDTI and VLSI Laboratories under the department of electronics. Nambiar had given a new perspective and direction to country's research and development in the area of electronics.

He was awarded Padma Bhushan by government of India for his contributions to the field of technology in 2006.



Health Minister VS Sivakumar with the best Doctors of 2014 at Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram on the Doctor's Day.



Fabulous Four

Digital books in school

School text books in the state are being made interesting and knowledge based employing the tools of Information and Technology. The books to be made available online will have important portions highlighted. Video clips related to specific portions would also be available at the stroke of a mouse click. This is for the first time in the country that classes and explanation from experts from different sectors would be made available directly. IT@school is the implementing

agency for the project. Availability of direct video content will be a new experience for the students. This will also provide an opportunity to students to view and understand about the leading scientists, scholars and educationalists and their work. The digital books will be available on cell phones and personal computer.



Insurance for Asha workers

Insurance scheme has been announced for the benefit of 26,000 Asha workers. While the annual premium is Rs 80, the total cost of the scheme is Rs 20.87 lakh. Rs 2 lakh is insured for accident deaths and total disability, one lakh for partial disability and Rs 10,000 for hospital expenditure, Rs 2000 for education of children and Rs 50,000 for expense of cremation related to natural death.



On its Fourth Anniversary, the Government announced four important programmes.



Fisheries colony Project

Renovation work of 68 fisheries colonies will be taken up under the project. Rs 2 lakhs would be given for converging twin houses into single and total expenditure of the project would be Rs 30 Crore . Besides, Rs 50,000 each would be given for modernisation of 3800 houses. Basic facilities like drinking water, common sanitation, drainage system, anganwadi, library, reading room, electric transformer, high mast light, pathway construction would be completed next year under the aegis of coastal development corporation.

Welfare pensions

Welfare pensions would be disbursed under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Welfare pensions will be deposited directly to the bank account of beneficiaries every month. In the first edition over 3 lakh beneficiaries of local self government will receive April pension directly through bank account. A total of 27 lakh beneficiaries would receive pension worth Rs 2400 crore every year.

The pensions covered under the scheme include old age, widow, physically and mentally challenged, agricultural workers, unmarried people above 50 years of age. In order to receive the pension, the beneficiaries should open account at banks and post offices of their convenience. Those facing crippling disability will get pension through money orders.





A CM for Each A CM for All

Chief Minister P. V. Chandy is already one of the three most significant CMs the state has had since its formation in 1956, the other two in the triumvirate being Achyuta Menon and Karunakaran. Of course all our CMs have been good, one way or another: EMS the philosopher and strategist who set the agenda for politics in Kerala in both tenures as CM, Pattom and Sankar -stalwarts of Yesteryears, A.K Antony the epitome of simplicity in personal life, PKV the most soft-spoken Communist in history, CH





the visionary whose term as CM was too short for a man of his stature, Nayanar the lovable hero of the masses, and VS who was a teenage revolutionary in the first half of the last century. Yet the triumvirate stands out for vision and decisiveness. And Oommen Chandy combines in himself the qualities that set apart the other two from the rest of the world plus his own magical charisma.

Achuta Menon was the CM whose term marks the third stage in the history of development in Kerala. Modern Age in Kerala was brought in by Swati Tirunal in the 19th century. English Education, allopathic system of medicine, public library, observatory and genetic up gradation of cattle stock were the highlights of his brief tenure as king. The second stage was the period when Sir CP Ramaswami Iyer was the Diwan. He set up the first hydro electric power plant, the Aluminium Industry which uses so much power that electricity is often reckoned as one of its raw materials, FACT and the rest of the Udyogamandal to take advantage of the new major port in Kochi, Rare Earths and Titanium factories, Travancore University, Manuscripts Library. On the social engineering side he was responsible for the Temple Entry Proclamation. And then came Achyuta Menon who nationalized private forests, gave the land Reforms its present shape and scope, completed Idukki Project, and presided over a government marked by One Lakh Houses Scheme, access to primary health facilities in every Panchayat, Commencement of the electronic age in



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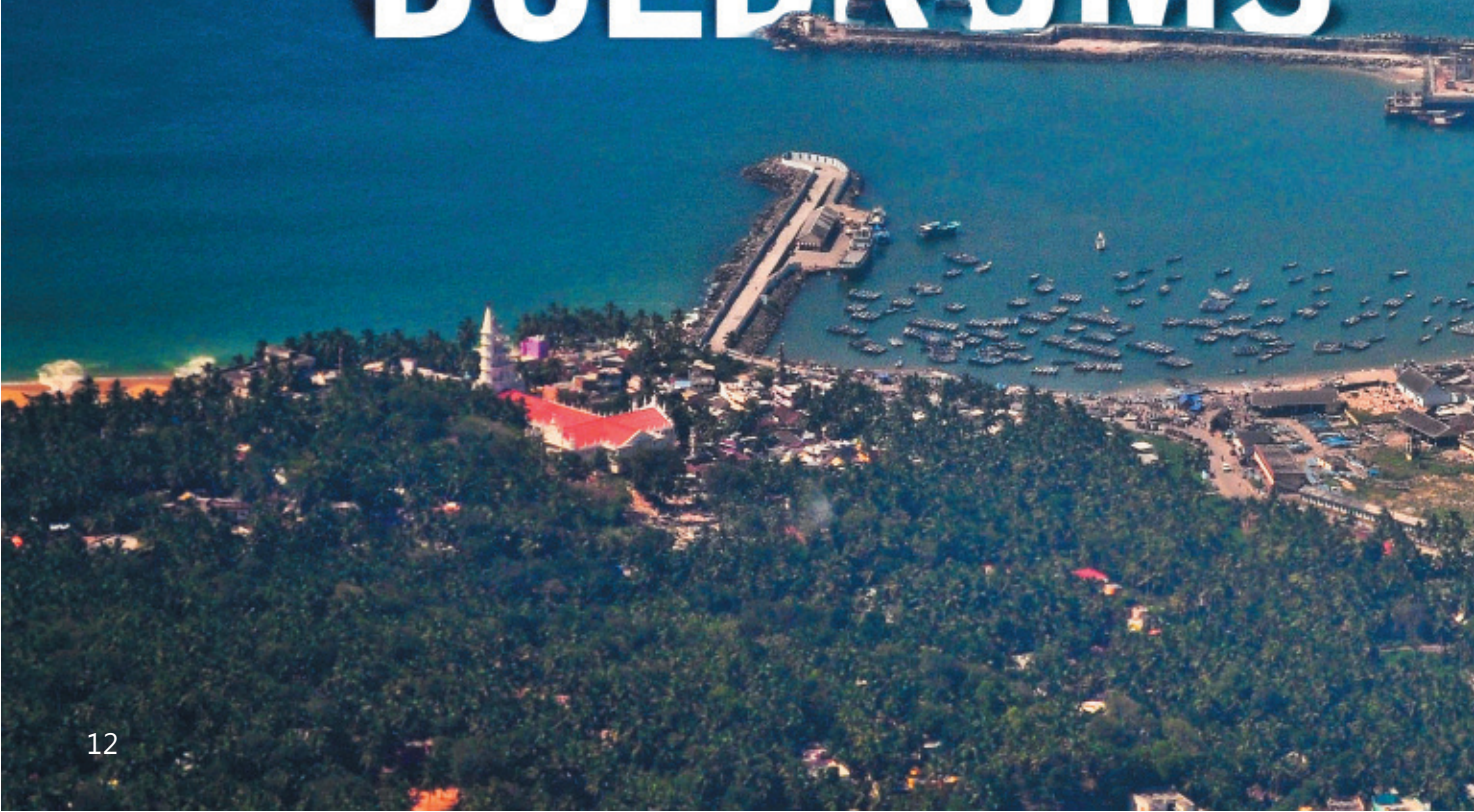


■ OOMMEN CHANDY
Chief Minister



The social development indexes of Kerala are globally acclaimed ones. Our advancements in Education and Health sectors have placed us on a par with Scandinavian countries. This was made possible because of the continuation of the policies by respective governments that came to power in Kerala. Somehow, we did not show the same kind of keenness with regard to our infrastructure base, which was soon identified as one of the crucial hurdles for the State to overcome. And when the UDF government came to power in 2011, this was one foremost thought that led us to identify and launch nine projects. The Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport was one of them. Among the Navaratna projects initiated by this government, Vizhinjam perhaps the one that tested our grit and patience. Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport took its infant steps in 1991. And it was in 1995 that the then government entered into a memorandum of understanding with Kumar Energy Corporation, which did not materialize. Later, in 2005 and in 2008 the government of Kerala tried to engage a partner for developing the port, based on PPP model. This time it was Zoom Developers and Lanco. The government had to drop Zoom Developers due to security reasons, while Lanco withdrew because of legal issues with a co-bidder. And in 2010, the government invited tenders, based on 'Landlord' model, which also had components of PPP. This time too the project did not make any headway because the tender submitted by Welspun was not acceptable

Out of the DOLDRUMS



to the government. Eventually, the UDF government that came to power in 2011 felt that Vizhinjam was fast slipping away. The government's vision for the State's development reaffirmed that Vizhinjam was one of the dream projects that could place Kerala on a course of unprecedented and impressive growth.

In the past three to four years, the government's perseverance and commitment have paid off and have resulted in the launching of path-breaking mega infrastructure projects, including Vizhinjam.

Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport is primarily meant for container transshipments besides multi-purpose and break bulk cargo. As per the revised master-plan, the port can handle mother vessels of 18,000 teu instead of the earlier envisaged 9000 teu.

The total length of the berth has also undergone change from 650 m to 900 m. The very location of Vizhinjam has advantages that include a natural depth of more than 20 m, proximity to international shipping route (20 km) which carry almost a third of the world shipping traffic and minimal littoral drift that saves maintenance dredging. On completion of the port, the reliance

of Indian exporters on foreign ports for transshipment will come down. Situated close to the international shipping line, Vizhinjam will also help to connect luxury liners to the shores of India and provide them with facilities and services of international standards.

All procedures followed by the current UDF government with regard to Vizhinjam government bear the stamp of transparency. The Rs 5552 crore project comprises Rs 4089 crore PPP component and Rs 1463 crore funded work expenditure to be borne by the government. As followed in the previous agreements regarding Vizhinjam the government will be responsible for identification of the required land, associated infrastructure like rail, water and power, which will incur and expenditure of Rs 1973 crore. The latest tender agrees for granting of license to the developer, which is meant solely for the construction and running of the port for a period of 40 years, including the construction period of four years. The government will get revenue share from commercial operations starting from the 7th year and from the 15th year from other operational areas of the port.

Yes, we had to negotiate many delays

and overcome hurdles and controversies. The most decisive tender of Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport was opened on 24 April 2015, which has gone in favour of Adani Ports SEZ. It has been the outcome of transparent and competitive global tender procedures, which materialized after holding road-shows, several pre-bid meetings and by extending the tender submission date several times. The relaxation in Cabotage law is under the consideration of the Central government, which has already given its assurance on viability gap fund of Rs 817 crores.

The people of Kerala invariably feels that it is now or never with regard to Vizhinjam. I do not see any reason for losing it, when parameters influencing the success of the project in the long run are in favour of Kerala. We need to transform Kerala into a destination ideal for investments, nurture inclusive growth and set new benchmarks of development in the country. Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport is all set to become one of those chapters in the developmental annals of Kerala worth revisiting for inspiration. And I am sure that it will be a landmark achievement for our country and a great contribution to the State's economy. ■



K BABU
Minister for Ports,
Fisheries and
Excise

Realisation



The Project got its fresh breather with the current UDF Government coming in power in 2011. The Government followed systematic planning and structured professional approach in taking forward the project activities.

Vizhinjam International Seaport is getting realised. Like every Malayali, I am also extremely happy. Needless to say, this is a dream come true for the UDF Government and the people of Kerala. I am thankful to the Chief Minister, Oomen Chandy for leading and leaving no stone unturned in his tireless efforts for the project. I am thankful to the whole team which worked untiringly for the project in its journey. The project got extended support from all departments of Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Planning Commission and numerous other agencies of Government.

An account of the Past

The State of Kerala has been trying to develop this port for the last two decades and was unsuccessful since then. Preliminary efforts for the project

were taken by the UDF Government led by K Karunakaran in 1991, M V Raghavan, the then Ports Minister worked the initiative. In 1995, Government led by A K Antony and M V Raghavan as Ports Minister, signed a Memorandum of Understanding for development of the Port with Kumar Energy Corporation. But the MoU did not culminate into project realisation. In 2005, tender was floated by the UDF Government for the project in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. Security clearance was denied to the lone bidder, involving a Chinese partner. Again in 2007, tender was floated in PPP mode by the LDF Government and a consortium led by M/s LANCO were the chosen bidder. Due to legal tussle created by an aggrieved unqualified bidder, LANCO backed out from the project.



of a Dream

In 2010, the then LDF Government appointed International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of Worldbank as the Project Consultant. Following the submission of Strategic Option Report on the project by IFC and its approval by Government, Project was bid out on Landlord Port Model with PPP component. The IFC recommendation was in the background of the decreased stand alone financial viability of the project by 2010. Financial viability of the project then decreased with expansion of transshipment capacity at Colombo with Chinese assistance and concentration of Indian transshipment at ports of Colombo, Singapore, Salalah and Dubai. In the then model, investments related to all civil infrastructures and external infrastructure were to borne by

Government of Kerala. The Concessionaire would be responsible for balance investments of superstructure & equipment, operation and maintenance of the port, for which the concessionaire would be eligible for a grant. The then model was designed without central assistance under Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme. The grant quoted by the lone qualified bidder M/s Welspun-Leighton Consortium was unacceptable to Government and the tender process was cancelled in 2012.

Put in Development Track

The Project got its fresh breather with the current UDF Government coming in power in 2011. The Government followed systematic planning and structured professional approach in taking forward the project activities. Professionalism was inducted

into the Vizhinjam team and its operation. Specialists and Professionals from Project organisations and credible experience were brought in with the advent of the project.

The Government acted vigorously for obtaining Environment Clearance for the project. The first significant milestone towards Environmental Clearance could only be achieved with this Government assuming power. Within days of assuming charge, efforts were intensified to approve the Terms of Reference (ToR) for Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Study and the ToR got approved. Following the approval of ToR, a very comprehensive and detailed environmental and social impact studies were conducted for the project over a period of 2 years. The study involved 40 stakeholder consultations among fishermen



community. No other project in the state involved such wide study and stakeholder consultation. Even on a global context, the project is a testimonial for the best practices in Environment protection. Master Plan for the project was prepared with an objective of minimum resettlement and rehabilitation to the local population. The master plan involves various livelihood improvement programmes for the local fishermen. The Project got Environmental Clearance on 3rd January 2014.

Along with Environmental Clearance, the Government also initiated other technical and planning studies related to the project. An integrated Master Plan for the project and Detailed Project Report (DPR) were prepared. The project's design was modified to cater mother vessels with a capacity of 18000 TEU (Twenty foot Equivalent Unit). The Integrated Master Plan, DPR and EIA reports were released by Chief Minister on May 2013.

With a focused approach,

Government increased the pace of land acquisition for the project. Of the total land requirement of 230 acres for the project, 90% of the land stands acquired.

Government also focused on developing the external infrastructure required for the project. Government ensured that the external infrastructure of Water and Power Connectivity required for the project is ready before the construction of the port. Government completed a 3.3 MLD water facility at Vizhinjam. The water facility also serves the purpose of drinking water needs of the local population and fishermen community. Thus this Government fulfilled to the long cherished dream of the local community at Vizhinjam even before the start of construction of the project.

On Power connectivity front, Government started the construction of the transmission lines required for the project catering power requirement of the project in construction and operational phases. Currently 95% of the work stand completed with the

erection of overhead lines and laying of underground cables

The Government has learnt from the failure of past development models. The Government acknowledged that though port is affected with low financial viability due to increased competition from competing ports, the project is highly justified on the basis of large economic benefits it will bring to the national economy and the State's development. The land lord development model proposed by the preceding LDF Government was modified maximising the benefits of VGF scheme of Government of India. The model was modified on the basis of Model Concession Agreement (MCA) for PPP in State Ports published by Planning Commission, Government of India in April 2014. Based on the MCA, Government of Kerala prepared the Draft Concession Agreement (DCA) for the project. The primary objective of the modification is to protect the interest of State along with addressing the stand alone financial viability concerns



was attended by a large number of prospective investors and trade offices.

The entire tender process was conducted by the Government on a fair and transparent manner and adhering to best practices. The tender process culminated with the selection of M/s Adani Ports & Economic Zone Pvt Ltd as the concessionaire.

During the selection process, an all party meeting was conducted on 3rd June 2015. This was based on the decision of State cabinet in the wake of some unwarranted and superfluous allegations levelled then by opposition parties. In the interest of transparency,

has been generated cutting across all the sections of the society. The Project would significantly contribute to economic growth of the state and the nation. This would be the largest external investment the state received ever. Private Sector investment of Rs. 2800 crore along with Rs.800 crore of VGF assistance from GoI will bring a total external investment of Rs.3600 crore to the state in the coming four years. Within a period of 4 years, the state would have a world class port facility. The Project in its initial phase will have a capacity of 10 Lakhs TEU which will be scaled up to 30 Lakhs TEU in subsequent phases. In subsequent phases, it is also envisaged to develop a Cruise Terminal.

Along with Environmental Clearance, the Government also initiated other technical and planning studies related to the project. An integrated Master Plan for the project and Detailed Project Report (DPR) were prepared.

associated with the project. It was alleged that the landlord model of the project was toppled by the current Government. The fact however is that the model was only improvised maximising the benefit of VGF scheme and protecting the state interest.

VGF application for the project was submitted to Ministry of Finance, Government of India on 7th April 2014 and following a rigorous appraisal process. VGF approval and assistance to the tune of Rs. 818 crore was approved by Government of India on 3rd February 2015. This is the first project in State to get assistance under VGF scheme since the inception of the scheme in 2006. This was the result of the untiring efforts of the Government and its team.

Following the recommendation for Environmental Clearance, Government initiated a two stage Global tender process for the project in December 2013. A road show for the project was held on January 2014 at Mumbai. This

all documents related to the bid process were made public. It was explained to the opposition and all political parties that the entire bid process was conducted in a most transparent and fair manner. It was also explained that the development model of the project and the concession agreement for the project is prepared protecting the best interest of the state. It was also made clear that the current development model is far more superior to the earlier development model of LDF Government in protecting interest of the State. In terms of reduced State Investment, higher revenue share etc, this is evident.

Way Forward : Government's Vision

Understanding the merits, wide support favouring the current model

Project when completed will not only meet the transshipment needs of the country but also cater to the growth of coastal shipping in the state. With the development of Cruise Terminal, the project would also contribute to the tourism sector in the state. With the availability of a strategic base in Indian Ocean, the project also assumes importance of a national security viewpoint.

Government will endeavour to complete the balance external infrastructure works of land, power, road and rail connectivity within the stipulated period. The construction of road has already been assigned to the concessionaire. The matter of Rail Connectivity will be taken up under the Sagarmala Scheme of Government of India.

In the first phase of the project, it is envisaged to increase the capacity of the existing fishing harbour at Vizhinjam at a cost of Rs.80 crore. Government is also proposing to develop a Seafood Park at Vizhinjam which would significantly value add the seafood produce of the local fishermen community. Both the measures will significantly improve the life of the local community.

Commitment of this Government under the leadership of Oommen Chandy to transform this dream project into reality is all too evident and the untiring efforts that we senders look bears ample testimony to our unflinching commitment. The stage is now set for this project to take off. ■

COVER STORY

■ SHASHI THAROOR
MP for Thiruvananthapuram
and Director of VISL Board



Vizhinjam is uniquely located close to the shipping routes between Asia and Europe. The key Suez-Malacca shipping lane runs very close to Vizhinjam, some ten nautical miles away, much closer than to any other Indian port.

Vizhinjam is a somewhat sleepy fishing village at the southern periphery of Kerala's capital, Thiruvananthapuram. It is a picturesque place, with an attractive lighthouse, acres of beachfront and a small harbour crowded with fishing vessels.

That is today. But tomorrow it could be the deepest seaport in India and a trans-shipment hub for all of southern India, if not the whole country and the wider Indian Ocean Rim region.

Ships carry 90% of the world's goods across the seas; they are no longer the preferred mode of passenger movement, but when we speak of international trade, we speak of shipping. Mainline container vessels or "mother ships" carry goods to major, deep-water ports, from where they are transferred to smaller "feeder vessels" that take them to smaller, shallower ports,

in a process known as trans-shipment. This enables goods to be transported at the lowest cost to and from relatively shallow ports, which include most of India's existing so-called major ports.

Despite India having enjoyed steady economic growth over the last fifteen years, the vast majority of India's container traffic is either being trans-shipped at ports outside the country, mainly at Colombo (Sri Lanka), Singapore, Port Klang and TanjungPelapas (Malaysia), Salalah (Oman), and Jebel Ali (Dubai), or delivered by smaller, less efficient ships directly to relatively shallow Indian ports. This is because India currently has no major all-weather, deep-water port near the international sea routes to handle large mainline container vessels.

on the Horizon



As a result Colombo trans-ships more Indian goods than all of India's own ports. There is a serious geopolitical angle to being dependent on Colombo for transshipment, since its latest and biggest terminal is now operated by a Chinese firm. India prohibits Chinese firms from investing in or building its ports, but in effect condones the transshipment of the lion's share of our cargo via a Chinese-operated port where Chinese Navy submarines regularly call for re-supply.

Most of the major ships carrying cargo between East Asia and Africa, and between Europe and East Asia, pass directly through or go very near Indian territorial waters. Currently, a significant number of these ships break their bulk at Colombo, Singapore or

Dubai, with the majority of the cargo meant for India or the rest of South Asia.

It doesn't have to be this way. Vizhinjam is uniquely located close to the shipping routes between Asia and Europe. The key Suez-Malacca shipping lane runs very close to Vizhinjam, some ten nautical miles away, much closer than to any other Indian port.

With changing technology, bigger vessels such as the 19,224 TEU MSC Oscar, the 19,100 TEU CSCL Globe or the 18,000 TEU Maersk Triple-E class are becoming popular because of their economies of scale and the consequent reduction in shipping costs. ("Triple E" refers to "Economies of scale", "Energy efficient" and "environmentally improved"; the TEU figure correlates to the number of twenty-foot containers

that can be carried by the vessel.)

Ships of over 18,000 TEUs are the future of sea cargo because they involve lower costs per container shipped. But bigger ships require deeper ports. Typically a vessel greater than 10,000 TEUs in size requires water depth greater than 14 metres to operate safely in. This has to be artificially created through costly dredging in most transshipment hubs across the globe, whereas Vizhinjam has a natural undredged draft of up to 24 meters, perfect for all mother vessels. Ships of up to 20,000 TEU or more can easily berth there from day one.

A few years ago, Kerala tried to break into the trans-shipment market with Vallarpadam terminal in Kochi, which unfortunately has struggled to maintain

N J A M



even 10 meters of depth through daily dredging. It has also struggled with legacy unionization and tariff related constraints on account of it being part of Government of India-controlled Major Port. Since 21st century ports require longer terminals, deeper drafts and bigger “turning basins” than Vallarpadam can provide, the project has not even been able to attract significant direct cargo, far less any transshipment traffic. It’s typical of Kerala’s politics that with Vizhinjam available, decision-makers developed Vallarpadam first.

However, everything that’s wrong with Vallarpadam can and should be remedied at Vizhinjam. It is the deepest natural port in India, with an operating draft of 21-24 metres and minimal littoral drift, which means no maintenance dredging, would be required and O&M [operating and maintenance] costs would be

in the world as efficiently as Singapore, Hong Kong or Rotterdam for decades to come.

India suffers from high logistics costs because of the lack of direct calls by main shipping lines and the lack of a domestic transshipment port capable of handling such giants. We have a 7516.6kilometre coastline and nearly 200 ports, but most – even our 13 so-called “Major Ports” – have depth of between nine to eleven metres. As a result we cannot dock or service any of the bigger ships now plying international waters; they offload our goods in foreign ports. In effect, our economy is helping to pay for ports like Colombo, Salalah and Tanjung Pelapas, while our exports remain relatively uncompetitive and our imports become more expensive. The Indian economy will remain less competitive compared to those of China, Singapore or Malaysia till we have a domestic deep-water

open to vessels of all countries to be viable (as is the case in Colombo), but our cabotage law restricts it to Indian ships operating from Indian ports. Hence, disposing of or suspending this anachronistic law becomes indispensable for the project to be viable.

Some have objected to this request, saying that Indian shipping companies would suffer. Almost all feeder services between Indian ports and foreign transshipment hubs are currently operated by foreign vessels. Thus even if cabotage was relaxed to specifically allow for shipping containers between Vizhinjam (instead of Colombo or Salalah) and Indian ports, Indian vessels will be no worse off than they are now. In fact, the consequent overall growth in container traffic may in fact help the Indian fleet develop itself.

It is a fact that the Colombo port is generating huge profits and thousands



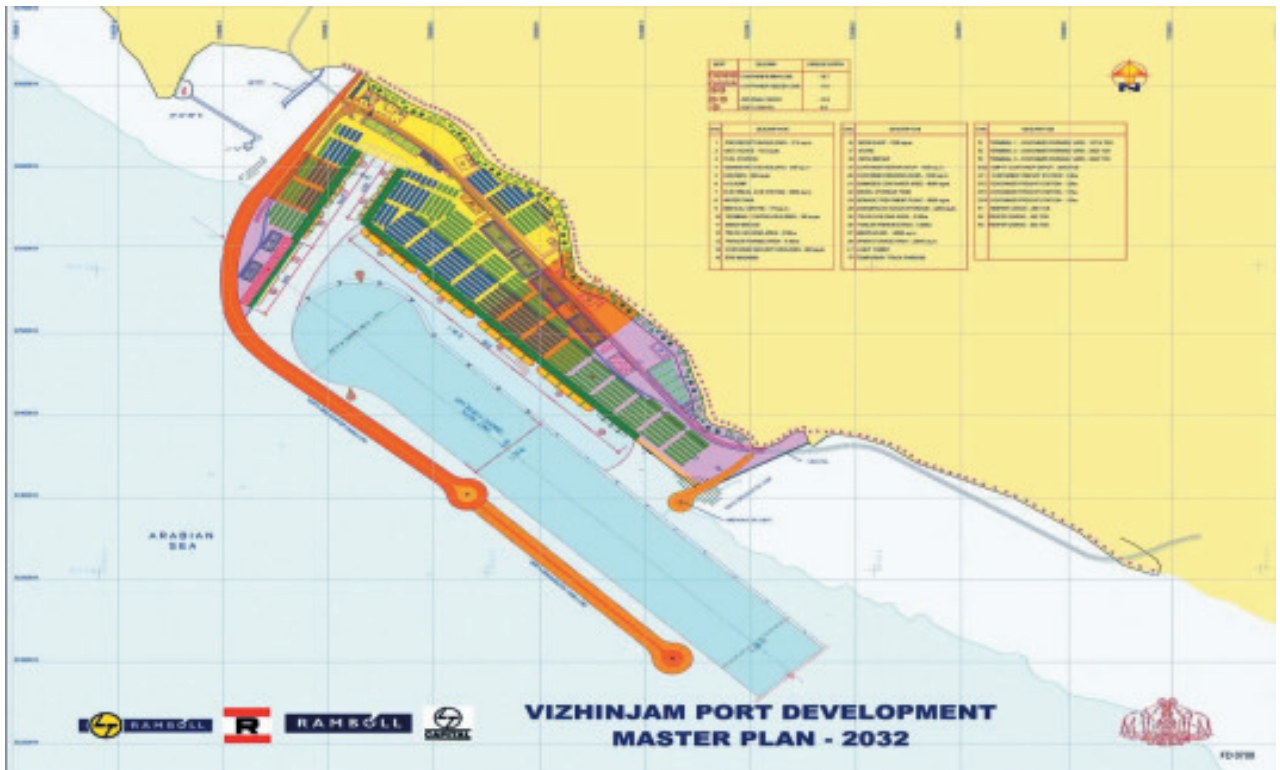
minimized. It is as close to the key shipping lanes as Colombo is, and being a greenfield port, has no legacy unionization issues. In fact its strategic location on the tip of the peninsula provides not just proximity to the international shipping lanes but also equidistance from both West and East Coast Indian ports. Since Vizhinjam would be built from scratch, it has the ability to deploy “best in class” equipment without being burdened by legacy facilities. It can be highly mechanized and have world-class efficiency (given the right operator). Vizhinjam could handle the largest ships

transshipment terminal. Vizhinjam is the most pragmatic and immediate answer.

Vizhinjam does not have enough immediate economic viability as an ordinary port handling domestic cargo, because its immediate hinterland is not a highly developed market nor are transportation linkages currently in place to access far away cargo hubs in Tamilnadu or Andhra Pradesh.(But it becomes very attractive as a trans-shipment port, which is why the Chief Minister of Kerala and I, as the local MP, have appealed to the Union Shipping Minister to relax India’s cabotage laws for Vizhinjam.) Trans-shipment must be

of jobs by trans-shipping goods primarily meant for India – so much so that the Sri Lankans (and the Chinese) have developed a second port for the same purpose at Hambantota. So why don’t we bring the jobs and profits to India by having a trans-shipment port of our own? It would enable rapid development for the entire southern region of the country.

The Vizhinjam project has already received the necessary environmental and Coastal Zone Regulation clearance. It has attracted Viability Gap Funding of Rs 800 crores from the Central Government. The State government has



Vizhinjam.

With each passing year, escalation in project costs, the development of rival ports and competition from existing international ports like Colombo and Hambantota poses serious challenges to the project's viability. So we should all understand that this is a now or never situation.

Many well-meaning liberals are concerned that Vizhinjam would be developed by a company, Adani Ports, whose owner has been reviled by many as a beneficiary of "crony capitalist" practices by the present ruling party in Delhi. But as Deng Xiao Ping had

memorably said, "I don't care if the cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice." Adani Ports is India's leading private sector port developer and operator, and operates India's most sophisticated and fastest growing container port that may soon unseat Mumbai's Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust as India's top container port. Adani Ports won the tender process for Vizhinjam fair and square. Other considerations are frankly beside the point.

If Vizhinjam's only credible bidder is denied this opportunity, Adani Ports will simply move down the coast to where a red carpet awaits them, in Tamil Nadu's fledgling port of Colachel. This would neither be in Kerala's interest nor in the that of the nation, since Vizhinjam is both deeper and better situated than its rival, but capital will flow where it is most welcome and where it feels most secure.

A golden opportunity beckons. From the Vizhinjam lighthouse, the horizon glows at sunrise. If the port is built, the prospects are as stunning as the view.

It is time we put development ahead of politics and embraced the bid in order to develop the project without any further delay, in the best interests of the people of Trivandrum and of India as a whole. ■

already acquired 90% of the land required for the project and begun work on road and rail connectivity. Electrical and water supply lines are being established. The project, with a capital cost of Rs 6647 crore, has been structured as a Public-Private partnership with the State Government as landlord, on a "Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer" basis.

Despite having these advantages, for various reasons, we failed to secure a viable bid to build and operate the port in the last 25 years. The current winning bid, in the fourth bid process over the last decade or so, is the last chance for

A golden opportunity beckons. From the Vizhinjam lighthouse, the horizon glows at sunrise. If the port is built, the prospects are as stunning as the view.

Anchoring Vizhinjam

India's future transshipment hub comes into being

Ports are one of the most crucial links in the development of a country's trade and its economy. As trade is carried primarily by sea-borne vessels, port development gains strategic importance as the key to economic development.

India has approximately 5,423 km long peninsular coastline and therefore has the potential to significantly grow its maritime trade with other countries and as its economy grows. The necessity of developing ports for international trade will also grow. Presently there are 13 Major Ports and 187 Non-Major ports in India. The Major Ports are all Government owned and handle around 64% of India's maritime trade. The country's ports sector has witnessed strong growth over the last two decades with total traffic handled increasing many multitude. The traffic-handling capacity of major ports and non-major ports increased significantly over the years.

Along its coastline of nearly 585 km, Kerala has one major port at Cochin and 17 non-major ports. Vizhinjam is an identified potential site of Government of Kerala for development of a port, primarily catering to

container transshipment. Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd (VISL), a special purpose Government company is the implementing agency for development of this Greenfield seaport at Vizhinjam.

Vizhinjam, its strategic advantages?

The port is located at Vizhinjam (Latitude 8° 22' N, Long 76° 57' E), 16 km south of the State Capital, Thiruvananthapuram.

The port location is well connected with existing rail and road network. National Highway 47 connecting Salem and Kanyakumari is at a distance of 2 km from the project. National rail network connecting the port to other parts of the country is at distance of 12 km. Trivandrum International Airport is at a distance of 15 km from the port.

Due to the following natural advantages, the port has the potential to become the transshipment hub serving the entire Indian Coast:

Closeness to International Shipping route

Vizhinjam project site is closest and deepest location in India to the international



shipping routes. Middle East - Far East shipping route connecting Europe, Persian Gulf to Far East and International Seuz-Far East Shipping route is only 10 nautical miles away from the international shipping route. Because of its closeness to International Shipping route, the location offers significant savings in deviation cost incurred by mother ships.

Natural Draught

The site is endowed with natural depth/draught of 18-20 m. This enables efficient handling of mother vessels. With such deep draught, the port can handle new generation mother vessels of size 18000 to 22000 TEU.

Minimal Littoral Drift

The site has the advantage of minimal littoral drift resulting in limited maintenance dredging during operation. Because of which operation & maintenance costs would be significantly lower. Due to low dredging and its disposal, marine impacts resulting from the project operation would also be minimal.

The Potential Transshipment Hub

A majority of the containers destined to and originated from Indian ports are transhipped through large intermediate transshipment ports. One of the main reasons for such transshipment is the low draught available in Indian Ports, which are unsuitable to accommodate large mother vessels. With the growth of containerised cargo, shipping lines have been increasingly using large mother vessels, due to their economy of scale. Transshipment at foreign ports eventually leads to increase in the logistics cost for containerized cargo destined or originated from India making the Indian imports and exports costlier than other competing countries, besides incurring huge foreign exchange outflow.

From a volume and market share point of view, Vizhinjam Port poses a very good business case. The Indian growth story will provide cargo for Vizhinjam and considerable cargo will flow through Vizhinjam, mainly due to its geographical advantage to the main cargo consuming and generating clusters in India. Currently the majority of India's container traffic is transhipped through ports outside of India. Major share of of India's containerized import/export cargo is transhipped and handled on feeder vessels and only a minor share are coming in directly to Indian Ports by mainline vessels, resulting in higher cost of import/export for Indian citizens and businesses. India's import/export cost per TEU is relatively much higher than many other developed countries in the West and Asia.

Salient Technical Features

The port is primarily designed to cater the transshipment and gateway container business of the region. The port will be developed in multiple phases. Phase-1 of the port will be developed in a period of 4 years and is envisioned to have the following:

Breakwater of total length 3,100m (main breakwater 2,960m with 140m extension for fish landing harbour)

Container berth length of 800m capable of handling up to current largest 18,000 TEU container vessels.

Container Handling/ Berth Capacity of 1 Million TEU per Annum.

Container yard with a width of up to 500m.

Depending on the growth of the traffic, subsequent phases of the port are envisaged to be developed in the following manner:

Phase 2

Construction of berth with length of 400m
Capacity enhancement to 1.5 Million TEU.

Phase 3

Construction of Breakwater extension by a length of 720m.
Construction of berth with a length of 400 m
Capacity enhancement to 2.2 Million TEU.

Phase 4

Construction of berth with length of 400m
Capacity enhancement to 3.0 Million TEU.

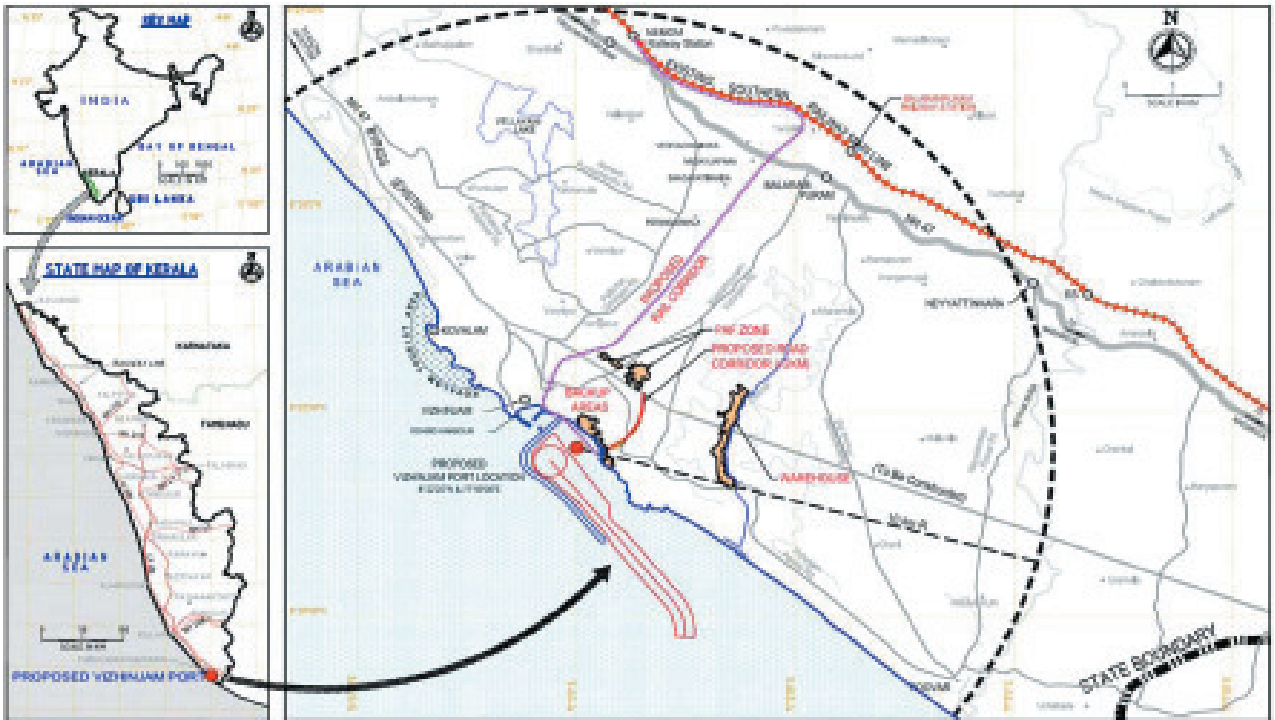


Figure 1 : Project Location

The Vizhinjam port has potential to become a world class transshipment hub primarily for Indian Sub Continent cargo (ISC) servicing entire India. The port will face competition from Colombo for the transshipment cargo. Though gateway traffic will be limited in the initial years of operation, the same will grow up in future with the port induced development of hinterland and expansion of hinterland.

Development Model

Many of the large infrastructure projects though economically justified, often fall short of financial viability because of its long gestation period and inability to levy high user charges or tariffs. Vizhinjam’s case is also similar. Vizhinjam in its initial years will face stiff competition on pricing with the existing terminals of Colombo, Salala, Singapore and Dubai. The competition is intense with Srilanka developing container capacity of Colombo and Habantota manifold in the last decade.

Such infrastructure project though financially unviable, will require private investment and private efficiency for its success. Government of India, in order to make such projects bankable devised Scheme and Guidelines for Financial

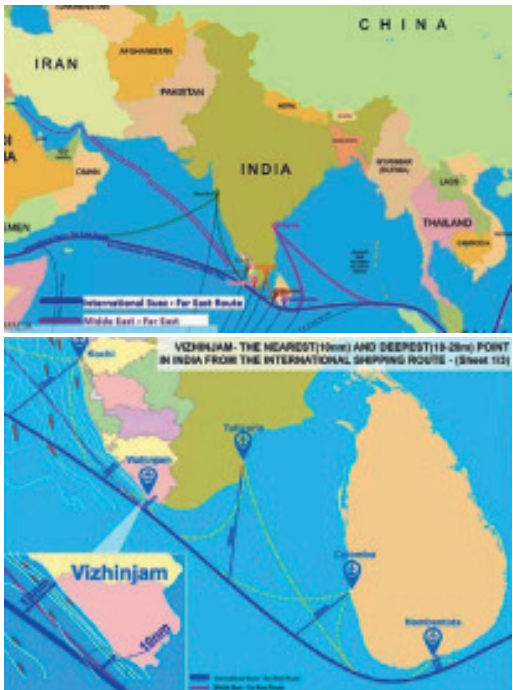


Figure 2 : Proximity to International Shipping route

Support to Public Private Partnerships in Infrastructure (Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme). VGF scheme allows a grant of up to 40% of capital cost. Vizhinjam in its initial phase also require such financial assistance and investment from Government of Kerala for its successful implementation.

Considering the economic importance of Vizhinjam and understanding its viability concerns,

Government of Kerala devised the current “Landlord Port Model” in 2013. Though there have been some variations in the terms of the model drafted in the present model from the previous one, the overall concept and principles of the proposed model remains the same. The model has been modified for availing assistance from Government of India under Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme detailed above. For framing the development model and concession agreement for the project, the State adopted Model Concession Agreement for Public Private Partnership in State Ports published by Planning Commission, Government of India.

Under the current model, the project will be developed in landlord PPP mode on design,

build, finance, operate and transfer (“DBFOT”) basis. The private partner/ concessionaire is selected on the basis of a competitive global bidding process.

The selected concessionaire will design, finance, construct and operate the Port for the determined concession/ license term of 40 years which include 4 year construction period.

- Under the land lord PPP model, the land will be owned by the GoK.

- The Port assets that will be developed thereon by the concessionaire shall be transferred back to the GoK at the end of the concession period.
- The GoK will fund towards construction of pre identified funded works, i.e. breakwater and fishing harbour for Phase 1 of the Project.
- Concessionaire will levy and collect tariff from Users for the use of all infrastructure at the Port and the provision of cargo handling services and other ancillary services to Users. The GoK will notify the tariff set for vessel and container handling related services, which will be the ceiling.

The estimated project cost for Phase 1 of the project is Rs. 5552 crores. This comprises of Rs. 1463 crore of Funded Work and Rs. 4089 crore of PPP component. The Funded work which involves construction of breakwater and a

fishing harbour will be funded by Government of Kerala and constructed by the private partner. For executing the PPP component, quoted grant of Rs. 1635 crore will be provided to the private partner. Of which the first 20% (Rs.818 crore) will be provided by Government of India under VGF scheme and the balance 20% (Rs.817 crore) will be provided by Government of Kerala. Of the total quoted grant of Rs.1635 crore, Rs.1227 crore (30% of the PPP component) will be provided as "Equity Support" during construction stage and Rs.408 crores will be provided as "O&M Support" during operational stage.

Beside the above, GoK will also be responsible for external infrastructure which includes acquisition of land, water, power and rail connectivity. The estimated cost of external infrastructure is Rs. 1973 crore. Of which Rs.630 crore stands expended for acquisition of land,



Figure 3 : Transshipment and Hub Container Ports serving ISC region

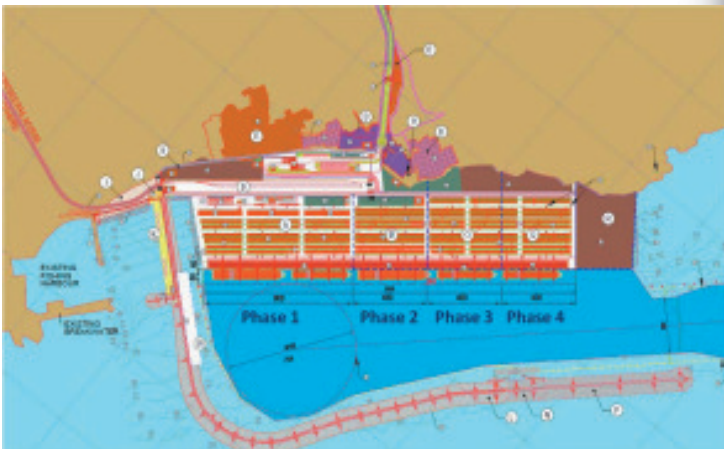


Figure 4 : Project Layout



"Vizhinjam Port is a strategic location which can be used as a transit-hub for the Middle East and Far East countries to the Western countries. This will have a great impact on India's particularly Kerala's development and economy. This is a hope for our future generation as this will open up many training and employment opportunities".



Yusuff Ali M.A.
Managing Director
Lulu Group International

The trade and industrial sector of Kerala is looking forward for the Vizhinjam Port with great expectations. Kerala Chamber of Commerce and Industry has the opinion that the port will nurture the coming generations with its immense potential. We congratulate the Chief Minister and the Government for taking a strong stand to realize the dream, though in late hours. We believe that it is the result of the project that matters, not the agency that implements it.



Mathew Kuruvithadam
Chairman, Kerala Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The impact of Vizhinjam on the whole of Kerala especially the southern part, will be very very high both in terms of economic impact and the multiplier benefit. This probably is a project that has been followed every process and procedure and has done in the most transparent manner.



Because the Adani Group has taken on the project, Vizhinjam could end up becoming the mother port for several ports within the country

Dr. G Vijayaraghavan
Founder CEO, Technopark

This is an important development for Kerala. With this, Kerala will get back the status as an important gateway by sea and will economically benefit with many new jobs created.



Kris Gopalakrishnan
Former CEO, Infosys



Our hardship are at an end

Yes, we are welcoming Vizhinjam. We have gone through hardship. Now the ships of hopes are coming to us. It will transform all our lives and our children in the short future. Bravo, the government of Kerala. All credits go to the state government.

Elsie, Jenette, Amalodbhava, Thankamma
Selling their fishes.

Not only to Vizhinjam but to the whole of Kerala

Vizhinjam project will eventually meet all the job opportunities of the Keralites, I presume. Now Vizhinjam will be the gateway to innumerable opportunities to the unemployed in Kerala. All credit goes to Chief Minister Oommen Chandy for his brave heart to implement this project.

Christadima, Shop owner



water and power connectivity and other studies for the project.

Beside wide economic and social development envisaged from the project, the State would also be generating direct income through Revenue Share envisaged in the Concession Agreement. The state would accrue revenue share starting from 15th year of operation. The share would be 1% in the beginning and will be incrementally increased annually by 1% subject to a ceiling of 40%.

For facilitating integrated development of the project as well as improving its financial viability, the concessionaire is entitled to undertake Port Estate Development. Port Estate Development is other commercial

activities resultant of port induced development and economic activity of the area. Port Estate Development is limited to 30% of the site provided for the project and all the investment required for the same shall be borne by the private partner. The private partner will mandatorily share 10% of the revenue from Port Estate Development from 7th year of operation of port.

Development Status

Environmental Clearance

Following the last bid attempt in 2010-11, efforts were intensified for obtaining environmental clearance of the project. Terms of Reference for EIA study got approved in July 2011. A very comprehensive and detailed

Now Im in the dusk my life. But I am glad to see the dawn in the horizon. A new dawn for children. Generations yet to come will be grateful to Chief Minister Oommen chandy and his government for this bold step.

Sakhariyas, a native

We are youngsters. And we want the port. There will be no compromise on that.

Paniyadima and friends



environmental and social impact studies involving the following were conducted over a period of 2 years.

- Publishing of Draft Environment Impact Assessment Report on May 2013.
- Conduct of Public hearing on June 2013.
- Conduct of more than 40 stakeholder consultations among fishermen community.
- Comprehensive Environment Management Plan and Local Area Development Plan were devised based on study and public consultations.

Following the comprehensive studies and its appraisal by Ministry of Environment & Forest Government of India, the project received Environment Clearance from the ministry on 3rd January 2015. Master Plan for the project was prepared with an objective of minimum resettlement and rehabilitation to the local population. The project is widely supported by the fishermen and local community.

Land

The land requirement for the project

including road connectivity is about 220 acres. Of which 90% of the land area has been acquired and purchased. Land acquisition for road connectivity already stands completed. Land required for rail connectivity will be acquired after finalisation of Detailed Project Report for Rail Connectivity.

Power and Water

Power requirement for port during first phase of operation is about 35 MW @ 220 KV. The construction and installation work for the transmission lines and underground cables are in active progress.

Construction and installation required for a requirement of 3.3 MLD of water stands completed at a cost of Rs.7.3 Crore. The installation also serves the purpose of drinking water facility for the local fishermen community in the region.

Road and Rail Connectivity

Acquisition of land required for road connectivity stands completed. The construction and development of the

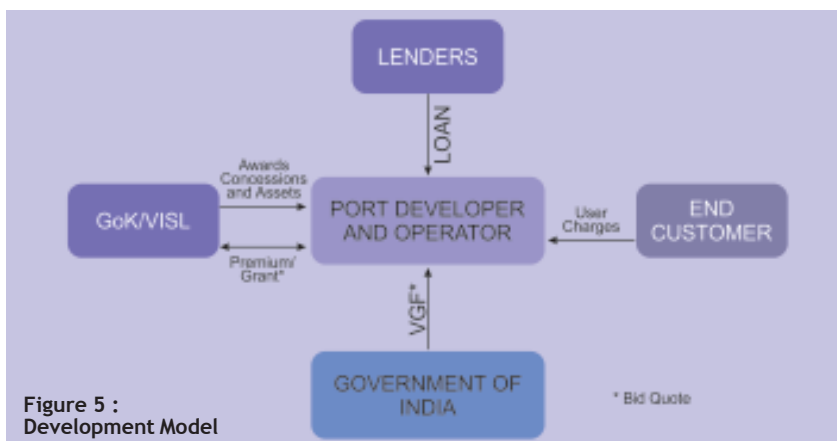


Figure 5 : Development Model

for in-principle approval of VGF was submitted to Ministry of Finance, Government of India on 7th April 2014. Following the appraisal process which involves scrutiny by Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Planning Commission and Ministry of Shipping, the proposal got “In-Principle” approval of Ministry of Finance, Government of India on 3rd February 2015. Under VGF, Government of India will provide a viability gap funding assistance of Rs.818 Cr (20% of PPP Component

Role of VISL/GoK

- Prepare a long term master plan and Detailed Project Report
- Provide licence and right of way for site/land to private partner for development on long term concession.
- Environment Clearance.
- Provision of Power and Water Connectivity.
- Funding for Breakwater and fishing harbour.
- Rail Connectivity

Role of Private Partner

- Development of Port including Dredging & Reclamation, Container berths, Super Structure Development and Equipment.
- Construction of breakwater and fishing harbour on VISL/GoK funding.
- Operation and Maintenance of the Port for the concession period.
- Capacity Augmentation through Phased Development.

Project Element	Funding by	Cost in Rs.Cr
Funded Work Breakwater and fishing harbour	GoK/VISL	1463
PPP Component Dredging & Reclamation, Berths, Terminal Superstructure, Terminal Equipment and Road Construction	Private Partner Grant of Rs. 1227 crore (Equity Support) and Grant of Rs. 408 crore (O&M Support)	4089
Total		5552

road connectivity will be the responsibility of the private partner selected.

A draft Detailed Project Report (DPR) for rail connectivity has been prepared by M/s Rail Vikas Nigam Limited. As per the draft DPR, rail connectivity with a length of about 12 km will connect the port to the existing rail route connecting Kanyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram at Nemom.

Land acquisition for the rail connectivity will be initiated after finalisation of DPR. The rail connectivity is proposed to be completed on 2021 after start of commercial operation of the port.

Viability Gap Funding

With the environment clearance and revised development model, proposal

(Rs.4089 Cr.). Vizhinjam is the first port project in the country and first project in the state to receive VGF approval from Ministry of Finance.

Selection of Concessionaire

Following the recommendation for Environmental Clearance, Government initiated a two stage Global tender process in December 2013. The entire tender process was conducted by Ports Department, GoK and Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited (the implementation agency) on a fair and transparent basis, following national and international best practices and guidelines. An Empowered Committee headed by Chief Secretary was constituted for conduct of bid process and evaluation of bids. The bids were called on the basis of the lowest grant/

highest premium offered. Following the tender process, M/s Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone Ltd. has been chosen.

Development of Vizhinjam Seaport is of great national importance. Majority of Indian transshipment is currently handled by foreign ports. The Project would shift these operations to India and thus generate large savings in foreign exchange to the national economy. The port has the potential to become the transshipment hub serving the entire Indian Coast. ■

The writer is Managing Director & CEO, Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited



Six decades ago, S.S. Fairland, the container ship, sailed off from Port Elizabeth of USA to Rotterdam in Spain. It carried goods enclosed in identical steel boxes that had provisions to attach hooks to safely unload with pulley-blocks and transport through rails or trucks from seaport without opening the boxes. Invention of such simplicity revolutionized the trade and commerce between continents in the postcolonial world.

The 6 decades that followed since that event has been slapped with a complicated label: Globalization. The much more

fitting name of the world in the last half century would have been 'containerization' not just because the size of containerships and volume of containers in number never stopped multiplying. The containerships transported simply everything worth a sale, from agricultural products to finished goods from factories.

Counting containers is now considered as the simplest way to scale the industrial development of a region for its capacity to import or export the finished goods. In the initial days of containers, the largest containerships were built

with a capacity of 1000 TEUs (or a unit space of Twenty Foot Equivalents). Now the biggest cargo ship MSC Oscar (South Korea) carries 19,224 Containers and manages a wider logistic channel around the world, all by itself.

Containers through ships, as of 2012, moved almost 93% of the total non-bulk cargo. China is the largest exporter of manufactured goods, with about nine of the top 20 busiest ports in the world. Shanghai port alone manages container traffic of 33.62 million TEU of cargo, which accounts for about 26% of the container transshipment from

China. While Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, Mumbai (JNPT) handles about 56% of the total container shipment in India, which is just 4.11 million TEU in 2013. At the same time Colombo port handles 4.31 Million TEU of container traffic and it is a step ahead of JNPT. Sri Lanka effectively taps the sub-continent's market potential and grows at a rapid pace though the country has very meagre capital goods imported for domestic consumption or exported out of the manufacturing sector.

On the other side, seaports such as Singapore (world's



The proposed Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport is India's key for dominating the world trade and commerce arena. It's a corridor that opens to a mammoth market.

second busiest seaport), Dubai International Deepwater and Rotterdam of Spain are the business centres shaped over the years because of the maritime traffic and strategic importance of the location in the logistics management of the goods. The demand for goods in these countries is considerably negligible. These ports handle container transshipment along with excellent hub and feeder services. Ports of Hong Kong and Busan of South Korea are the places you will encounter with skills and innovations in the field of Shipping and Containerisation.

International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport is India's key for dominating the world trade and commerce arena. It's a corridor that opens to a mammoth market. Situated at the most strategic location in just few kilometres from the international waters, reliability of the ocean currents, natural depth, the limitless number of berthing spaces for huge mother containerships and above all our educated young population which could offer excellent hub services on par with other international seaports.

The world trade has come this far in just 50 years. It is

predicted that the Industry will shift its gears in few years and trigger the fourth Industrial revolution in manufacturing. Commonly termed Industry 4.0, it is originally coined by heavily industrialised countries in Europe like Germany and Sweden.

The first industrial revolution was a period in which fundamental changes occurred in agriculture, textile, metal based manufacturing, economic policies and transportation during the late eighteenth century. The phenomenon was an outcome of the invention of steam power and breakthrough scientific inventions of that century. The second Industrial revolution electrified the manufacturing sector and multi fold increase in manufacturing recorded during the latter half of the 19th century. The third industrial revolution automated the manufacturing sector through Information Technology and the support services to backup trade, commerce and logistics emerged at this time.

Industry 4.0 is expected to transform manufacturing from head to toe through cyber-physical systems. Through a new concept popularly known as Internet of Things, the smart factories at this age could effectively connect with the logistic chain which will include the far ends such as consumers and products. This industrial internet will respond to market fluctuations effectively and alter the manufacturing cycle automatically to attain efficiency. It is predicted that industry 4.0 will produce

about three fourth of all the connected devices such as cars, mobile phones, health equipments, electrical and electronic devices etc. by 2025. And it is expected to have a 36% annual growth.

"Industry 4.0 is unique as for the first time in contemporary industrial history we preconceived an industrial revolution. It is evident that the tenure of last revolution has been diminishing. It is more important that the fourth version is likely to unravel much faster compared to previous ones." Muthukumar Viswanathan, Practice Director - Industrial Automation & Process Control and Measurement & Instrumentation, Frost & Sullivan notes. The Huffington Post, leading consulting firms such as Accenture and SAP has predicted that India will attract more FDIs in just 5 years what China has accumulated in 20 years, if we maintain an ideal atmosphere for manufacturing.

India's advantage is its enormous skilled workforce and our democracy. China's shrinking labour arbitrage and strengthening Yuan against the US Dollar have encouraged investors to look for more cost effective destinations like Indonesia and Vietnam. Few manufacturers like Havells, Godrej, and Bosch have shifted units to India. However, the good days for India won't come without major initiatives like Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport and giving more thrust to infrastructure and connectivity. ■

The writer is Assistant Editor, I&PRD

A Centre of Excellence par excellence

Palakkad gets crowned with IIT



Education is strictly not a subject for dinner conversation of elite, nor is a matter for prime time news analysis but an object of reciprocity with the fellow beings. Educated people, who have competence and skill, sense of direction and a social purpose, can transform the world. Technological education is not an isolated sector but a field that deserves and demands great social concern and support and backing. Technological education and



the institutions of technology are producing scientific community to yoke its findings for public good. Technological education without the complement of humanistic studies will be imperfect, lop-sided and deficient. This was an appeal by the visionaries of our past including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and S. Radhakrishnan whose birthdays are celebrated as Children's Day and Teacher's Day respectively in our country. The IITs and NITs and many institutions of par excellence in India are supposed to engage in nation building process to take India to the heights of Knowledge and its circulation.

The Indian Institutes of technology (IITs) have the rare standing of being beckoned as quality institutions in the pursuit of higher education and research at the international level. Kerala is always hailed for its progress in education and modernising innovations in other fields of social advancement, but it was absolutely heterotopia in the field of technological education even though we have excellent talents in the any field of science and technology as our kids are performing greatly in national and international competitive examination and institutions where their potential and caliber are required. Finally Kerala's dream of having a top-level technical education institution comes true when the Indian Institute of

Technology Palakkad begins its programmes this month. The relatively old institutions – IITs Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Guwahati, Roorkee and Varanasi have fine infrastructure in terms of equipments and faculty to boost up our students potentials. The recently started IITs in Bhubaneswar, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, Patna, Ropar, Rajasthan, Mandi and Indore are at various stages of development. One of the objectives of our IITs is to reach global standards in research particularly in engineering and technology. Studies are made in IITs in certain areas of basic sciences and humanities as well.

IIT Palakkad, which is starting its academic functioning from a temporary campus placed in the Ahalya Integrated Campus, Kozhippara, Palakkad is projected to have a definite growth trajectory. It is indisputable that this institute adds value to industry and business enterprises. Also, they promote entrepreneurship and innovation. The collaborative environment involving industry and academia naturally enriches research experience. Palakkad IIT definitely changes the education sector of our state as it offers more insights into the various disciplines concerning science and technology. This can offer a space to create wealth, living standard, It can promote the

The Indian Institutes of technology (IITs) have the rare standing of being beckoned as quality institutions in the pursuit of higher education and research at the international level.

participation of Kerala in making policies of technology in India. For this we have to restructure our economic and educational fields of our State.

With this premier institution, Kerala can encourage its subjects to acquire global capital especially in technology related fields in India and overseas. Palakkad with this IIT and proposed AIIMS can build up and education and technology hub amidst its status as the granary of Kerala. In the post modern era of Knowledge economy and information networks the ma(e)n who is in control of the production and distribution of knowledge will be the winners. The developments in education in India increased the global demand for Indian technology professionals which further maximizes the possibilities of Palakkad IIT. It enhances the





When education goes digital

Imagine a platform where anyone, be it someone who is the subject expert or someone who has the practical knowledge in a particular field, can contribute educational content for the benefit of school students. Imagine further that a forum where eminent scientists, educationalists provide direct experience to students through their own classes – It may be Dr G.Madhavan Nair explaining details about 'Chandrayaan'; or Number theory by Manjul Bhargava; or Stem cells research by a scientist; or conventional agricultural methods by a farmer. And we are not talking solitary learning or a distance-learning programme, but something called Digital Collaborative Textbook.

In a major initiative that may revolutionize the general education sector, Government of Kerala has launched Digital Collaborative Textbook ('DCT'), the first of its kind in the country, to make curriculum more interesting and effective. DCT, an

exchange rate between educational capital, economic capital and cultural capital. combined technology and humanities as both are for the society.

The rhetoric of the benefits of technology however, immediately begs the question of what proportion of this institute. IIT, Palakkad must be a center of excellence which can offer maximum but equal benefits to each sections of our society. As this is an institution in Kerala, the authorities should not entertain those unfortunate incidents and policies to deorganize students group as happened in IIT, Madras and caste discrimination happened in Bombay IIT. Democratic ideals of discussion, protest and open criticism are part of an education system which

IIT Palakkad is dedicated to create an environment wherein students and faculty can dream, think and innovate to create a better future for the world. Mentored by the experienced minds at IIT, Madras, the academic programs at IIT Palakkad are designed to bring out the best out of every student. During the formative years, most of the courses at IIT, Palakkad will be handled by experienced faculty from IIT, Madras. Care is being taken to make sure that, in the coming years, the faculty will remain a mix of young and experienced.

IIT, Palakkad offers B.Tech in Civil Engineering,



Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. All branches will have a common curriculum for the first semester. Branch change rules will be the same as those in IIT, Madras.

IIT, Palakkad is committed to creating well-rounded personalities. The curricular and extra-curricular programs are designed keeping in mind the overall development of a person. A year long life skills course and exposure to basic

education platform of IT @ School, is a viable solution that allows people around the globe, share their knowledge related to a particular topic ranging from programming to sociology to science and the arts.

Know how it works

At the normal level, the DCTs are e-books in which ordinary textbooks are scanned and uploaded. But, a plethora of information, contributed by different people including experts in different subjects makes them unique.

Under DCT, contents are based on 'hardspots', relatively tough spots or spots requiring more detailing by clicking on these hardspots, related explanation with video, animation or other relevant details are provided. The eminent experts who wish to contribute their explanations against an identified hardspot can send in their explanation video or audio, can then become a part of school textbooks. Thus DCT differs from the other conventional website or textbooks, where textbooks are scanned

and uploaded without any 'change' from the original format.

The contents are collected in the primary server of IT @ School project and are verified by an expert team of teachers authorised by SCERT, Kerala. Out of the content submitted, only the ones which meet a certain quality threshold are submitted for uploading which is done by 'Academic Centre' of IT @ School. This make DCT inimitable from the so called content delivered portals in the internet where majority of materials are not fully authorized.

If a student seems to be struggling with a particular topic - Earthquake, say - the book will slot in additional explanations and answers from experts or someone's direct experience. Thus, DCT delivers content from people who have first-hand knowledge - like real doctors, scientists, economists, screen writers, police officers, and military veterans and allows for multi-modal, personalized, accessible and interactive learning.

There are 60,000 teachers handling same subjects in similar classes across the state. It is difficult for a teacher to impart various aspects of the same content to different students with the different level of explanation. Moreover, there will be variety of explanations and different opinions. With DCT, any teacher can put their own explanation against a hardspot so that the student community will be benefitted with vivid, self-explanatory and authentic explanations.

DCT would be made available in computers and mobile phones. Having access to the right content in the right format anytime and anywhere in the world is the speciality of this initiative. What DCT excels at is hunting down the relevant information that makes learning approach unique. The Department hopes that this will come a long way in the field of education by being effective for all categories of students as well as teachers. ■

The writer is Executive Director, IT @ School, Kerala

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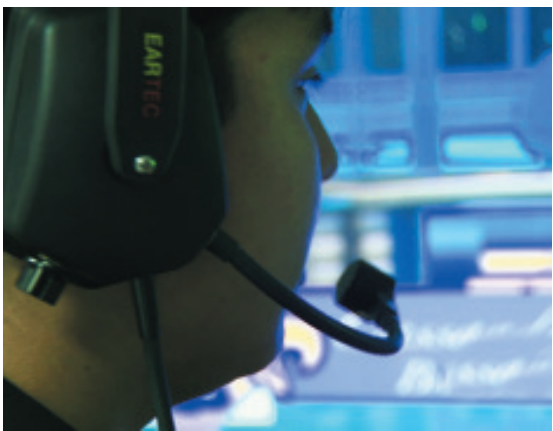
engineering and design principles through hands-on training during the very first year are some of the main features of the programme.

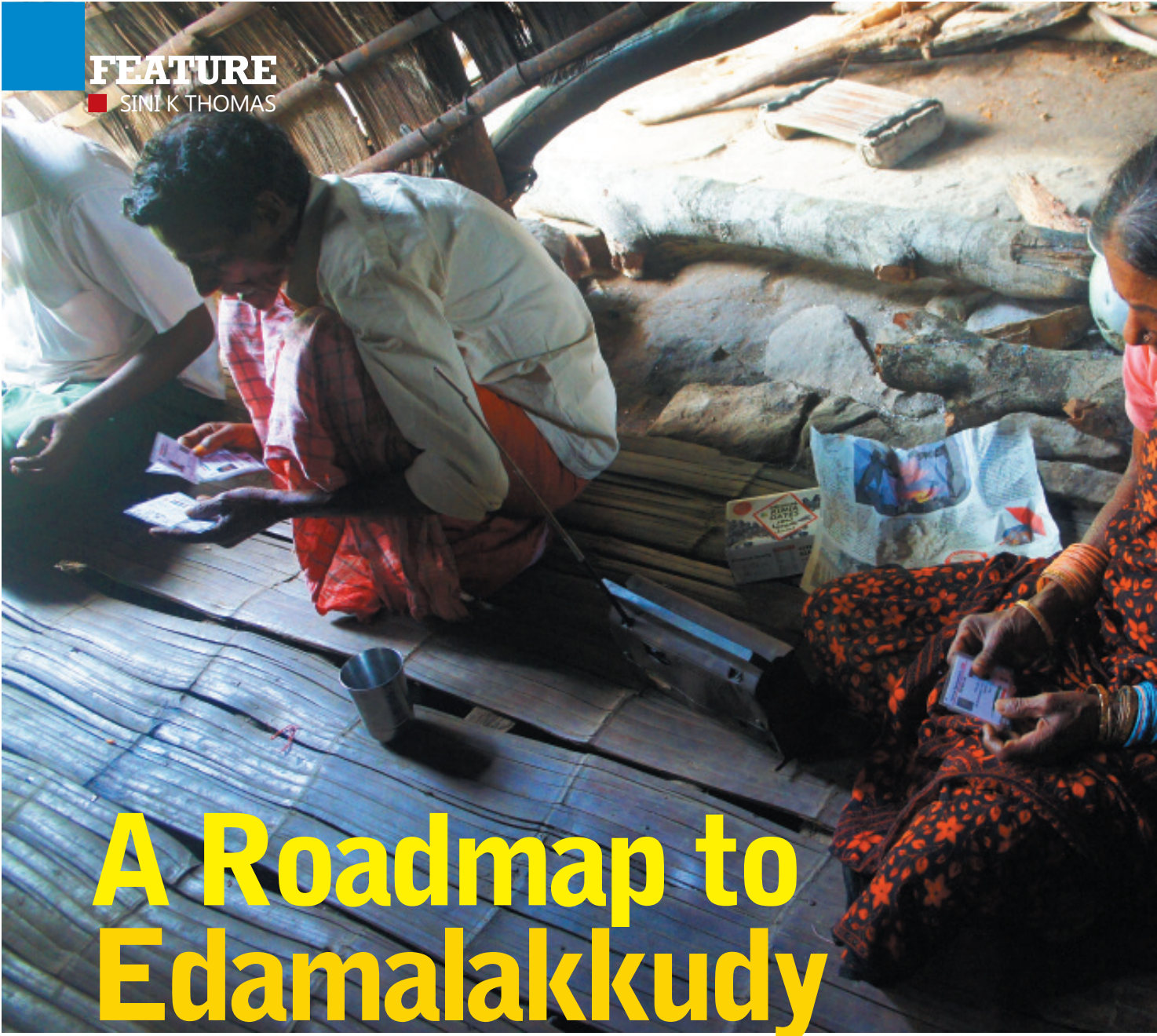
The temporary campus set up in the sprawling Ahalia Integrated Campus, Kozhippara, Palakkad have all the facilities required for hassle-free academic environment. A 55,000 sq.ft. academic building, which will house six class rooms, a seminar room, an auditorium, library, a eighty-seater computer room, faculty offices and cafeteria are already available. For the curious, this building will also house a dedicated innovation lab. All class rooms and seminar halls will be video-enabled and connected through National Knowledge Network to IIT, Madras and other established IITs.

Palakkad is the only district in the State that cannot yet boast of an institution of higher education like NIT, REC, IIM or a medical college.

Being an agrarian economy, the transition from an agrarian economy to that of a manufacturing economy and then to a service sector economy would have to be smooth. For its socio economic development such an institution of excellence in higher education is crucial. Palakkad is centrally located and is easily accessible by rail, road and air. The Calicut International Airport is only 3 hours away and the Cochin International Airport 2 1/2 hours away from Palakkad. Also the Coimbatore Airport is only 1 hour drive from Palakkad. The NH - 47 passes through Palakkad thus providing excellent road connectivity to all major location in India. Palakkad being the Divisional Headquarters of the Southern Railway, offer excellent rail connectivity as major trains pass through this important station. ■

The writer is Acting Director, IIT Palakkad





A Roadmap to Edamalakkudy



Funds are not a crisis in Edamalakkudy since last four years that the government of Kerala had been showering special concern to this India's first tribal grama panchayat in Idukki district. A most recent addendum to this is a package of Rs. 23.32 crore declared by Chief Minister Oomman Chandy in his mass contact programme conducted in Thodupuzha on May 30th for development activities by various government departments in Edamalakudy which has become a natural habitat only for Muthuvan tribe.

Why any development project for this panchayat becomes important is a question of relevance that can be answered by its geographical features. India's first tribal panchayat is remotely located in the reserve forest; 18km away from pettimudi, a tea plantation area of Munnar grama panchayat which is the boundary where all kinds of transportation ends. Three or four front gear jeeps are allowed to enter upto Idalipara recently only if the weather condition is good. Any reasonably heavy rain fall can cause erosion



of the existing road. The panchayat has a dispersed settlement of 27 kudis each has 25 -40 families. A population of around 2600 people walk kilometres everyday to reach another kudi where no road connectivity is possible. Head load workers have to walk from pettimudi or from Idalipara if they are fortunate for a good weather which increases the material cost. The entire settlements are in the hilly region that aggravates the difficulty.

The land marking changes in the development pattern of Edamalakudy started with the historic visit of Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes P.K. Jayalakshmi on 2nd and 3rd April in

The land marking changes in the development pattern of Edamalakudy started with the historic visit of Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes P.K. Jayalakshmi on 2nd and 3rd April in 2012. A large number of media accompanied and attended the press conference conducted in the panchayat office within the forest.

2012. A large number of media accompanied and attended the press conference conducted in the panchayat office within the forest. An amount of Rs.10.35 crore has been earmarked as the initial investment for infrastructure development especially the development of road and housing making an unknown land scape a focal point of many government departments. Hence, a share of infrastructure and other kinds of development by various departments has quickly started in Edamalakudy. Following this, many departments and government agencies such as Kudumbasree, BSNL, IT Mission,

Akshaya etc have started implementing their projects in the panchayat.

As the proposal reads the district administration is looking forward to a perspective plan of sustainable development in the panchayat where all departments have their own stake under the umbrella of the district administration. The District Collector of Idukki V. Ratheeshan is of the opinion that any development in the panchayat should be in synchronisation with the nature, eco-system and the environment. "We need to have a holistic approach and perspective for the development of Edamalkudy. Unlike other grama panchayats we cannot implement ordinary rules and measures that we apply to the main stream society. Any implementation of rules and regulations and any development

(NOFN), which was inaugurated by the Union Minister for Communications and Information Technology Ravi Sankar Prasad in 2015 January. Eight blocks and 52 grama panchayats were connected through NOFN and the tribal panchayat through very small Aperture Terminal (VSAT). Thus the panchayat office of Edamalakkudy became the first 'telephone exchange' as the villagers call it. Thus India's first tribal panchayat became part of the nation's first district with complete rural broad band coverage. The BSNL initiative made the whole panchayat connected to the rest of the world through mobile phones.

Another successful governmental intervention was completed by Akshaya Centre, Idukki, under the leadership of its asst. district co-ordinator Saboor Beevi who had conducted two

Vijayan with the support of his staff. This marks a commendable job that visiting each houses in each kudi require a more healthy physical condition and mental capacity to brave a tough terrain, changing climate, no facility for food and more over attack from blood sucking leeches and poisonous snakes and other wild animals. The panchayat's deputed last grade servant Georgekutty's service to number the houses is remarkable as the then special officer recalls it.

Despite its traditional roles the panchayat administration also had included distribution of cots in the scheme and completed delivery of one cot to each family. The only lagging point is a lack of vision in such distribution that for instance, even a single *valapura*, where women have to stay during menstruation, do not have a single cot. The government sponsored *valapura* which is in better condition than other also does not have cots. The reason is that cots were distributed as per the house numbers but *valapurai* was not a numbered one.

A post office was set up in the panchayat recently and thus the first post master and post man who were selected from the educated youth of the panchayat were appointed by the postal department after a test and the interview. The educated people who have completed education need to be identified for exclusive government services within the panchayat to avoid the issue of estrangement from both the ends.

Ending the social isolation of the people in the panchayat needs a careful approach. The 'sons of the forest' who are untouched by an urban acculturation, a process of cultural and psychological change that happens while meeting two cultures, in this case an urban floating tourist-culture of Munnar, the settlement has the purity of a pilgrim place. Hence women are in saris with a hair style called 'konda kettu', marriage follows after 'kuravanoli' a teasing game by the bride and her friends, funerals maintain a unique culture of Muthvan's agricultural imprints, day-to-day life showcase an age old tradition of carrying a sickle and a radio, which is an instance to enculturation accepted even by elders. ■

The writer is Assistant Editor, I&PRD



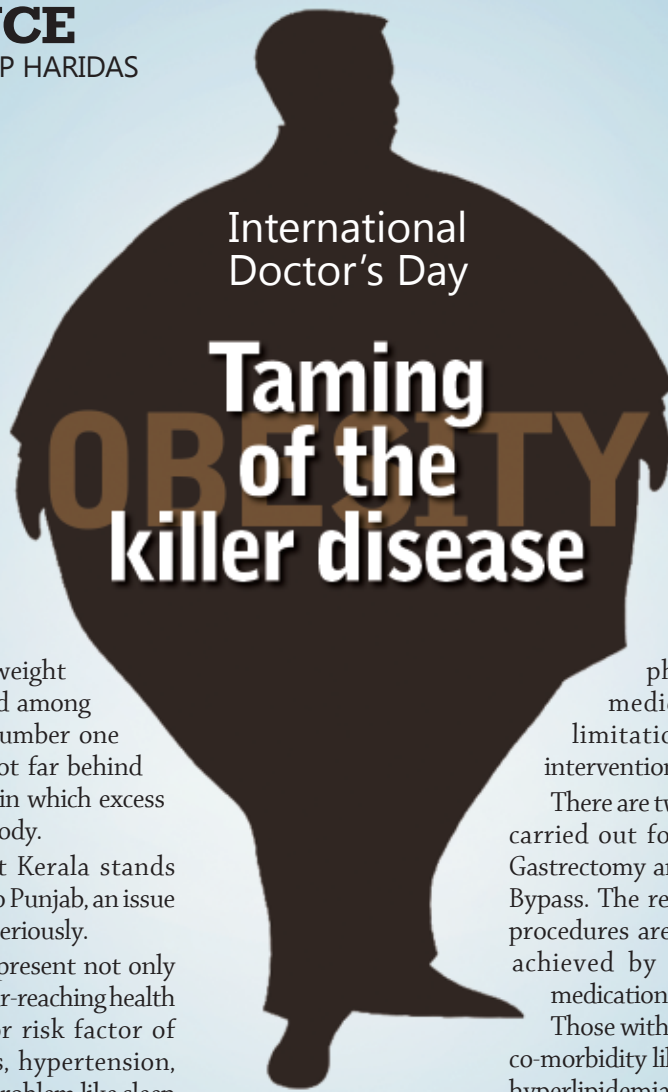
plans should come within the boundaries of Indian Forest Act," says the district collector.

Hence, as per the rules the land documents or *pattayam* cannot be given to the people of the panchayat that it is a forest land. The district administration looks for an option of issuing "kaivashavakasa rekha" or right of regards of ownership. The district collector adds: "The major problem with the panchayat is its social isolation that has a direct proportion to its social, educational and economic development. A road construction is in the pipeline along with e-connectivity at the first level which has already started."

The latest among such a remarkable initiative is the one by the IT Mission and BSNL to connect the Idukki district to the National Optic Fiber Network

successful camps in 2013 and 2014 at Edamalakkudy with 'crew and cameras' to distribute Aadhar cards. The panchayat is a complete Aadhar card holders' panchayat now. The installation of VSAT enables Akshaya to offer its other services to the panchayat such as delivering e-certificate and other services here. It is about to start a new centre in the coming August in the panchayat. KSEB also has done a primary inspection to install electric posts in panchayat to provide electricity.

The panchayat administration has taken an initiative to distribute solar lamps and solar mobile chargers to each family that would open up a new window to the world. The entire houses in each 'kudi' are numbered, a hard task for the panchayat administration initiated by its first special officer K.



International Doctor's Day

Taming of the killer disease

OBESITY

I need to shed my weight soon' is a phrase often heard among the people in Kerala. The number one state in literacy, Kerala is not far behind obesity, a medical condition in which excess fat gets accumulated in the body.

Statistics indicate that Kerala stands second in obesity, next only to Punjab, an issue that needs to be considered seriously.

Overweight and obesity present not only cosmetic problems but have far-reaching health implications and is a major risk factor of diseases including diabetes, hypertension, heart problems, respiratory problem like sleep apnoea, joint pains, acid reflex, infertility, sexual dysfunction and so on.

Obesity is a killer disease. Obesity is the manifestation of the imbalance between energy intake and energy output and its effects on causing chronic conditions including hypertension and diabetes are often underestimated.

Persons with a body mass index (BMI) of 25 to 30 are overweight while those with BMI of 40, 50 and 60 are respectively referred to as 'morbid obese', 'super obese' and 'super super obese'. BMI, commonly accepted as a reliable indicator of body fatness, is calculated from a person's height and weight.

Obesity is not an immediately lethal disease, but certainly in due course. The problems of obesity can be addressed through a tailored programme of dietary,

physiotherapeutic methods, medications, although with limitations and finally surgical interventions laparoscopically.

There are two latest surgical procedures carried out for BMI below 50 is Sleeve Gastrectomy and above 50 is Mini Gastric Bypass. The results and benefits of these procedures are excellent. The weight loss achieved by diet, exercise and some medications is generally not sustainable.

Those with BMI above 35 and one with co-morbidity like diabetes, hypertension or hyperlipidemia certainly need weight loss surgery.

Sleeve gastrectomy works by restriction of food intake due to reduced size of the stomach. Mini Gastric Bypass works by restriction of food as in sleeve gastrectomy and also by reducing absorption of food in the upper small bowel region.

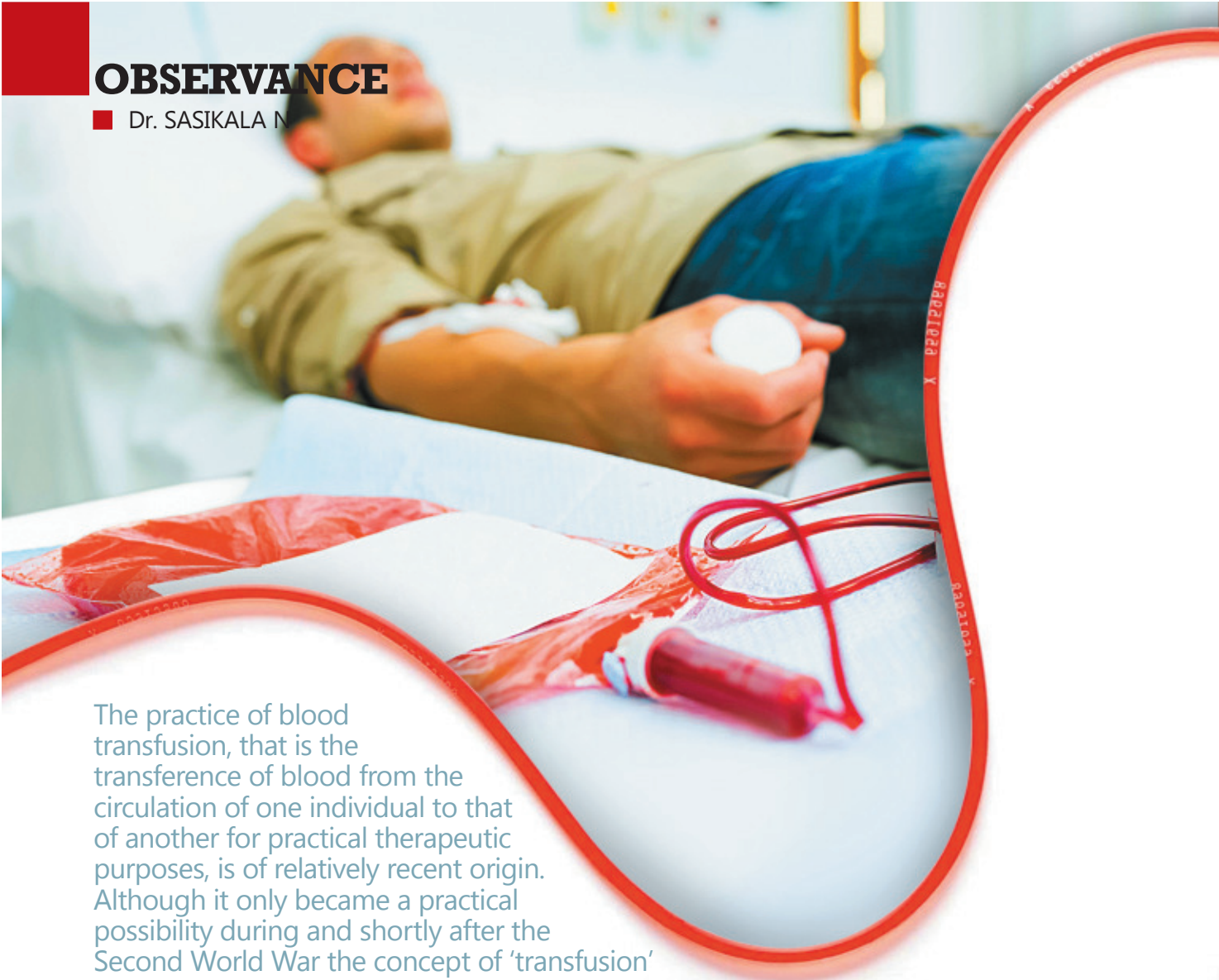
In India obesity is on the increase and world over for that matter, especially in children and adolescents. This needs to be halted for a developing country like India.

The awareness among public and medical personnel needs to be improved and also the available technological advancement in correcting obesity surgically is to be highlighted. ■

Surgeon sans comparison



Dr KP Haridas M.S, F.R.C.S- Padmashree award winner. Dr. K P Haridas, an eminent and exceptional personality in the world of healthcare, has been serving the society in a variety of ways for over 4 decades. Not only is he a well-known and highly successful surgeon in India, but is also the founder of one of the most prestigious hospitals in Trivandrum, Kerala. Dr. Haridas is the recipient of the Life Time Achievement Award from Lord Swraj Paul at the British Parliament on the 10th July 2014.



The practice of blood transfusion, that is the transference of blood from the circulation of one individual to that of another for practical therapeutic purposes, is of relatively recent origin. Although it only became a practical possibility during and shortly after the Second World War the concept of 'transfusion' has a longer history. The idea though of the theoretical beneficial effects of blood transfusion has been recognised for over three centuries.

Thank you for saving my life

It focuses on thanking blood donors who save lives every day through their blood donations and strongly encourage more people all over the world to donate blood voluntarily and regularly with the slogan "Give freely, give often. Blood donation matters."

Every year June 14, countries around the world celebrate as World Blood Donor Day. The event first established in the year of 2004, initiated by World Health Organization, International Federation of Redcross and Red Crescent societies. June 14 is

the birthday of Karl Landsteiner who is the father of Blood grouping systems.

World Blood Donor Day is one of the eight official global public health campaigns marked by WHO, along with World Health Day (April 7), World No Tobacco Day (May 31), World Malaria

Every year there is a theme for Blood Donor Day campaign

- 2015 Thank you for saving my life
- 2014 Safe blood for saving mothers
- 2013 Give the gift of life: Donate blood
- 2012 Every blood donor is a hero
- 2011 More blood, more life
- 2010 New Blood for the World
- 2009 Achieving 100 per cent non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components
- 2008 Giving blood regularly
- 2007 Safe Blood for Safe Motherhood
- 2006 Commitment to Ensure Universal Access to Safe Blood
- 2005 Celebrating your gift of blood
- 2004 Blood Saves Lives. Safe Blood Starts With Me



The objectives of this year's campaign are to

- Thank blood donors for their life-saving donations;
- Promote regular voluntary unpaid blood donation;
- Create wider public awareness of the need for regular donation because of the short shelf-life of blood components and to encourage existing and potential donors to donate blood at regular intervals
- Focus attention on donor health and the quality of donor care as critical factors in building donor commitment and a willingness to donate regularly; and
- Persuade ministries of health to show their appreciation of regular voluntary unpaid donors and provide adequate resources to provide quality donor care.

Day (April 25), World Immunization week (last week of April), World Tuberculosis Day (March 24), World Hepatitis Day (July 28),and World AIDS Day (December 1).

The campaign aims to highlight stories from people whose lives have been saved through blood donation, as a way of motivating regular blood donors to continue giving blood and people in good health who have never given blood, particularly young people, to begin doing so.

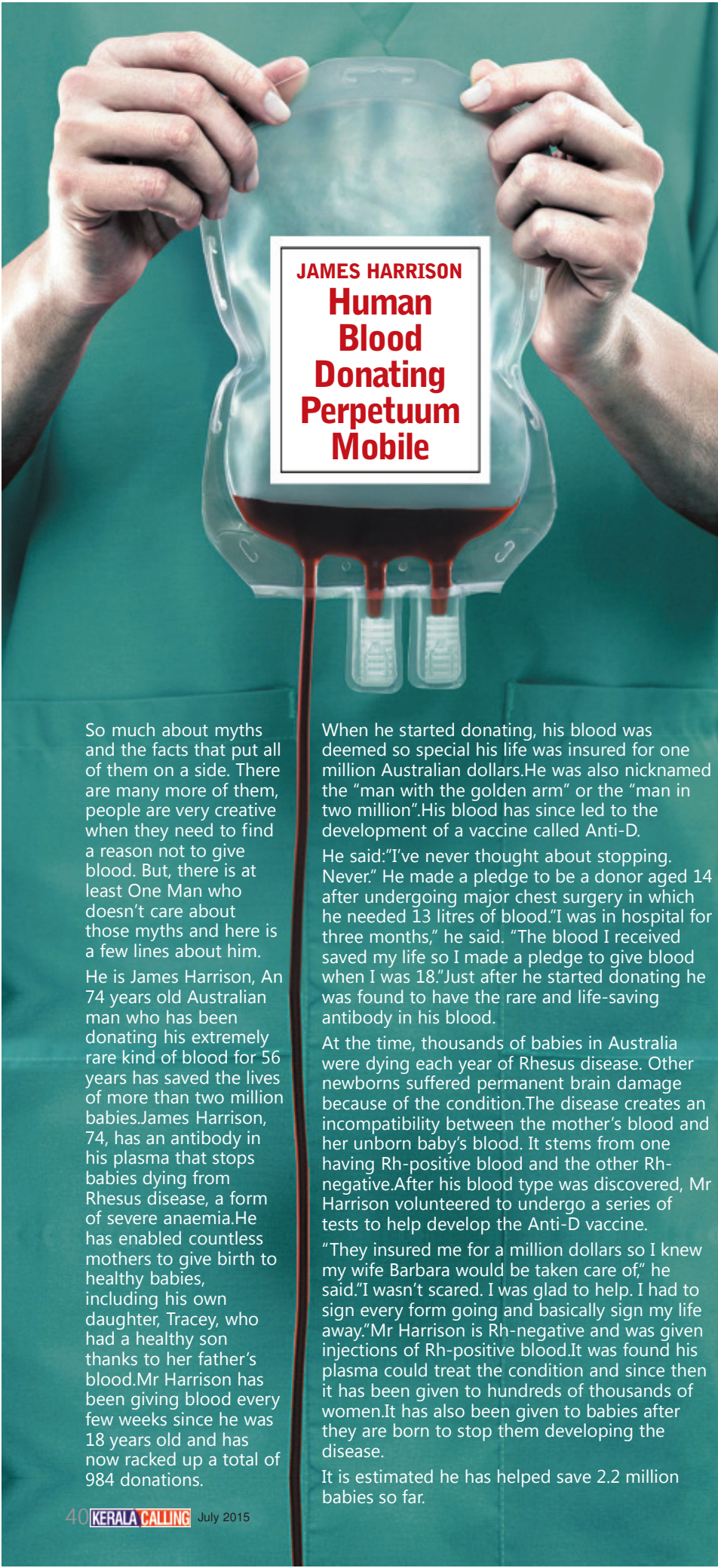
Youth has the potential to become a driving force behind motivation for blood donation. Club 25 is an International youth oriented social club, which aims to donate a minimum of 20 times within the age of 18 - 25 years.

June 14 is the birthday of Karl Landsteiner who is the father of Blood grouping systems.

Background

Every year, on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The event serves to thank voluntary unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood and to raise awareness of the need for regular blood donations to ensure quality, safety and availability of blood and blood products for patients in need. On remunerated Voluntary Blood Donors are considered as the safest source of blood as they have low prevalence of TTIs (Transfusion Transmissible Infections) like HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Malaria and Syphilis.

Transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year. It can help patients suffering from life-threatening conditions live longer and with higher quality of life, and supports complex medical and surgical procedures.



JAMES HARRISON
Human
Blood
Donating
Perpetuum
Mobile

So much about myths and the facts that put all of them on a side. There are many more of them, people are very creative when they need to find a reason not to give blood. But, there is at least One Man who doesn't care about those myths and here is a few lines about him.

He is James Harrison, An 74 years old Australian man who has been donating his extremely rare kind of blood for 56 years has saved the lives of more than two million babies. James Harrison, 74, has an antibody in his plasma that stops babies dying from Rhesus disease, a form of severe anaemia. He has enabled countless mothers to give birth to healthy babies, including his own daughter, Tracey, who had a healthy son thanks to her father's blood. Mr Harrison has been giving blood every few weeks since he was 18 years old and has now racked up a total of 984 donations.

When he started donating, his blood was deemed so special his life was insured for one million Australian dollars. He was also nicknamed the "man with the golden arm" or the "man in two million". His blood has since led to the development of a vaccine called Anti-D.

He said: "I've never thought about stopping. Never." He made a pledge to be a donor aged 14 after undergoing major chest surgery in which he needed 13 litres of blood. "I was in hospital for three months," he said. "The blood I received saved my life so I made a pledge to give blood when I was 18." Just after he started donating he was found to have the rare and life-saving antibody in his blood.

At the time, thousands of babies in Australia were dying each year of Rhesus disease. Other newborns suffered permanent brain damage because of the condition. The disease creates an incompatibility between the mother's blood and her unborn baby's blood. It stems from one having Rh-positive blood and the other Rh-negative. After his blood type was discovered, Mr Harrison volunteered to undergo a series of tests to help develop the Anti-D vaccine.

"They insured me for a million dollars so I knew my wife Barbara would be taken care of," he said. "I wasn't scared. I was glad to help. I had to sign every form going and basically sign my life away." Mr Harrison is Rh-negative and was given injections of Rh-positive blood. It was found his plasma could treat the condition and since then it has been given to hundreds of thousands of women. It has also been given to babies after they are born to stop them developing the disease.

It is estimated he has helped save 2.2 million babies so far.

It also has an essential, life-saving role in maternal and child care and during man-made and natural disasters.

However, in many countries, demand exceeds supply, and blood services face the challenge of making sufficient blood available, while also ensuring its quality and safety. In India the annual requirement is about 12 million units, but our annual blood collection is only 9 million units. An adequate supply can only be assured through regular donations by voluntary unpaid blood donors. WHO's goal is for all countries to obtain all their blood supplies from voluntary unpaid donors by 2020.

Today, in just 62 countries, national blood supplies are based on close to 100% voluntary unpaid blood donations, with 40 countries still dependent on family donors and even paid donors.

Who can donate blood?

The popular misconception that a person becomes weak by donating blood is wrong. All healthy males and females between the age of 18-60 years, of body weight > 45 kg, haemoglobin > 12.5 g/dl and normal body temperature can donate blood. Males can donate blood at an interval of 3 months and females at 4 months interval. One donation can save a minimum of three lives through blood component transfusion (packed RBC, Platelet concentrate, Fresh Frozen Plasma).

Benefits of blood donation

There are several benefits of blood donation. Donating blood improves overall cardiovascular health as blood donated regularly helps males in particular to reduce the amount of iron in the blood which can reduce the chance of heart attacks. Additionally, it can also lower the risk of severe cardiovascular events such as stroke. Blood donation enhances the production of new blood cells as new cells are produced by the marrow within 48 hours of donation, and all of the red blood cells the donor loses during donation are completely replaced within one to two months. Blood donation has also been seen to lower risk of cancer including liver, lung, colon, stomach and throat cancers.

Blood donation has other obvious

benefits like receiving a free prior health screening plus mini blood test. Blood is also tested for some major diseases and the donor is immediately informed in strict confidentiality if any of these tests show positive results. A blood donor by his donation saves many lives and gives hope to many whose situation may otherwise be hopeless. Blood donors give such patients a second lease of life. By donating blood one impacts not only the patient whose life may depend on it, but also all those who depend on that patient. The entire community will benefit from the spirit of generosity.

The importance of Voluntary Blood Donation

Many anonymous blood donors save lives every day through their blood donation. Voluntary blood donors are the cornerstone of a safe and adequate supply of blood and blood products. The safest blood donors are voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors from low-risk populations. Despite this notion, family/replacement donors still provide more than 45% of the blood collected in India. One of our key strategies to enhance blood safety is to focus on motivating non-remunerated blood donors and phasing out even replacement donors, retaining safe regular repeated blood donors. .

A pleasant environment in the blood bank, good donor care, polite and effective communication between staff and donors are all important factors for the retention of blood donors. A guideline designed to assist those responsible for blood donor recruitment and implement a programme to improve communication with blood donors has been developed. World Blood Donor Day is celebrated to fulfil the need of blood transfusion and blood products transfusion to the needed person anywhere in the world. This campaign saves more than millions of lives annually and gives a natural smile on the face of blood receiver.

Blood cannot be manufactured artificially, so voluntary blood donation remains vital in health care system.■

The writer is Addl. Professor, Dept. of Transfusion medicine, GOVT. TDMCH, Alappuzha

Contd. from Page 11

India with the establishment of the first Public sector organization KELTRON in the field, Kerala Agricultural University and many centres of excellence like the Centre of Development studies, Sri Chithra, CESS, CWRDM, KFRI..

Karunakaran was a man of action and quick decisions. Once convinced he left no stone unturned to accomplish the objective. CIAL is an example. The civil airport at Kochi was a distant dream, but once he was convinced by his friend the great Industrialist C.V Jacob, his favourite Minister T.M Jacob and his favourite IAS youngster V.J Kurian he took over the project as his own. The only PPP model that we had till then was collaboration with Taj in the tourism sector, but CIAL went farther with the share holding base expanded to include the common man in the Malayali diaspora. The result is there for all to see: that is what one may call visible history. Kaloor stadium which put Kerala on international sports map is another example. Karunakaran was not a great institution builder but he was a great Chief Minister with his decisive style and abundant common sense.

It is to this august company that Oommen Chandy has now graduated. He combines in himself the vision of Achuta Menon, the decisiveness of Karunakaran and adds to it his compassion and pragmatism to make available to the common woman the benefits due. His tenure will be remembered for the development initiatives. Vizhijam port, Kochi Metro, Kannur airport. Establishment of KUFOS and the nurturing of KVASU. A medical College in each district, like Achuta Menon's programme of a Medical Centre in each Panchayat.

Yet he will be remembered by myriad woman and men for the touch of humaneness that marked their meeting him. His programme of Janasamparkam may not enter the annals of Indian history but its impact will not be missed in all "his stories" and all "her stories". That Kerala addressed to him 198028 grievances on line shows that confidence people have in him, and that he redressed

128176 of them shows the concern.

The Janasamparkam or Mass Contact Programme is not merely about redressal of grievances although 376772 petitions make no joke. Nor is it merely distributing to the needy the taxpayer's money although Rs 101.87 Cr is no tamasha. In every district he addressed common problems, and problems of common interest. In Kannur it could be development of the Ship-maintenance unit at Azhikkal and in Palakkad it could be solar lighting for 13 settlements; in Idukki it could be tourism in Munnar or cancer care facilities in remote hills.

Kerala is a small state but because of its topography and habitat pattern the problems people face are almost as varied as if the state were of subcontinental dimensions. Yet this one man finds time to meet all kinds of people, the urban city dwellers and the famished subjects of the tribal king Kozhimala Raja alike, the fisherfolk along the beaches and the teagarden labour in the high ranges, the kannadigas in Kasergode and the Tamils in Devikulam, a CM for each and a CM for all.

I am 75. I still work a minimum of ten-eleven hours every day and travel

2-3000km every month. Yet I am amazed by the way our CM, almost my age, not much younger, works and runs. Like a Phantom he is now seen at Hosdurg in the north and now at Amboori in the south, travelling like the loyal lieutenant of Lord Rama, hop step and jump style. And like a fairy he makes chariots out of pumpkins ensuring all the time that the chariots are not reversed in to pumpkins at midnight. I worked for Government for almost four decades, July 1962 to September 2001. I am afraid I never toiled so hard, I am sure I never saw a politician who worked so hard.

True successor to Achuta Menon the Institution builder and to Karunakaran the man of quick decisions and quicker actions. Oommen Chandy is a remarkable man and a remarkable CM. May his tribe increase.■

The writer is Former Member IAS and Eminent writer, columnist

World Population Day and Kerala

In the context of World Population Day, we have to give attention not only to the theme announced by the UNDP, but create our own themes to solve our emerging problems. We should be active till the achievement of each and every goal for the welfare of the whole community is attained.

World Population Day is a great global event being observed annually on July 11th to recall the attention of the general public towards the world wide population trends and related issues like poverty, starvation, malnutrition, diseases, illiteracy, lack of health care and other social and economic injustice. It was first proclaimed in 1989 by the United Nations Population Development Council in commemoration of the day when world population reached 5 billion people in July 11th 1987. Each year, there will be a different theme focuses on an issue with the global population and suggesting remedial measures to combat with those issues. For the last two decades or more, the themes covered many a area mainly relating to the impact large population has on environment and development with a goal of socio-economic welfare of individual families. Population never becomes a problem. It will be due to the existing socio-economic imbalances and the ignorance and irresponsibility of the general public that the issues related needs a concern. So, a day to remind the



consequences of population growth has of great appreciation. Many organizations [governmental and non-governmental] observed World Population Day by arranging special campaigns and programmes. But, unfortunately, majority of the issues pointed out are unattended especially in less developed countries due to the lack of proper monitoring and evaluation.

Kerala also has given due importance to the observance of World Population Day. From the inception of the event, almost all the themes were earmarked and attempted to popularize among the public. In Kerala, the demographic transition is more dynamic. Kerala reaches almost the final stages of demographic transition with low birth and death rates, low infant mortality rate, below replacement level of fertility, active implementation of family welfare policies, high life expectancy, high literacy rates, better communication programmes, better accessibility to health facilities, universal child immunization, ante natal and prenatal cares and institutional deliveries. According to the 2011 Census, the annual growth rate of population of Kerala is only 0.49 percent though there is regional variation of 1.34 percent in Malappuram to 0.3 percent in Pathanamthitta. The female dominated state has a sex ratio of 1084 females for every 1000 males. This is one of the most crowded states with 860 persons per square kilometer. Recently, the speed of urbanization in Kerala is very high showing 47.7 percent of the population is urban. The literacy rate is very high as well. More than 90 percent of both males and females are literate. Unfortunately, the work participation rate is only about 35 percent.

The Sample Registration Report of 2013 showed that the crude birth rate [CBR] of Kerala is 14.7 births per 1000 population with a Total Fertility Rate [TFR] of 1.8. The crude death rate [CDR] is 6.9 deaths per 1000 population with an Infant Mortality Rate [IMR] of 12

infant deaths among every 1000 live births. Kerala shows a long life span of 72 years for men and 78 years for women. Thus, demographically Kerala mirrors some of the developed countries. All these pave the way for attaining population stabilization in the near future.

The Human Development Index [HDI] and the Gender Related Index [GRI] – the two important indicators of social development – have the highest values in Kerala. The Demographic Investment – for education and health – calls for long run economic benefit nevertheless increase the cost of rearing children. This ambition for better physical quality of life will indirectly help the parents to prefer ‘small family norms’

Social and Economic crisis in Kerala

Kerala is facing with the issue of so called ‘population ageing’. It is a process by which the proportion of old people increasing more rapidly than the proportion in the other age segments. These changes happen mainly due to the decline in fertility and mortality. The demarcation of the aged from the rest of the population is generally by 60 or 65 years. They are considered economically unproductive. In India Kerala has the highest proportion of aged population nearly 17 percent. The old dependency ratio in Kerala is increasing. Here, the elderly faces a lot of problems, mostly health and economic problems. So physical and financial support are the prime need of the aged. The living arrangements of the elderly keep them in loneliness. The conditions of aged women especially widows are getting worse and worse. The expenditure incurred on the part of the government for social security measures and different old age pension schemes are increasing day by day. As these are unproductive expenses, the financial burden on the part of the government is mounted up. Age related diseases raise the health expenditure too.

Another important problem is the ever mounting unemployment especially educated unemployment. In Kerala educated are always job seekers and not job creators. As educated prefer white collar jobs, the skilled and semi skilled workers are the in-migrants from other states of India. The highly professionally qualified emigrate to other countries for better jobs and better incomes. All these hinder the economic progress of the state. The negligence of agricultural sector along with the conversion of agricultural land for construction purposes force the state to depend other states for food materials. It is also a financial burden on the part of the government.

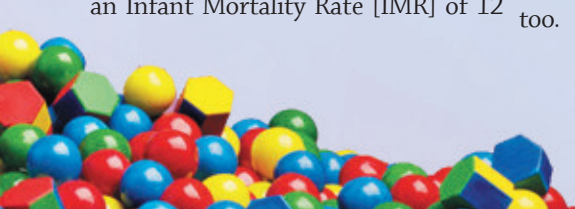
Recently, the health sector of Kerala needs wide attention. The environmental hazards pave way for many communicable diseases. The unhealthy surroundings with waste dumping in foot paths and water currents recall diseases like dengue fever, chikun guinea etc. The fast food habits of the young make them victims of serious communicable diseases from a very tender age.

These are only some of the serious problems faced by the people of Kerala. No states can exist as a perfect one in all aspects. But we can do for the betterment. Nobody can blame the ruling authorities for all these problems. People should be act accordingly for the development of the state. Everyone should do their duties without blaming others.

Work seriously and have an eye for societal development. It will surely enhance the happiness.

In the context of World Population Day, we have to give attention not only to the theme announced by the UNDP, but create our own themes to solve our emerging problems. We should be active till the achievement of each and every goal for the welfare of the whole community is attained. ■

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How beautiful the rain is!!!

**Kerala becomes the cynosure of Monsoon
Tourism**

So once again it is raining. The earth gets wet and the minds get rejuvenated. Gazing at the incessant rain brings back a lot of memories that we fondle very much. Across the window pane it pours and pours. And, we step into the rain. Into the endless memories. And, into our childhood.....

Whether it is manmade or natural phenomena, Kerala has been a tempting for the globe trotters across the world. One of these is undoubtedly Monsoon. For Monsoon is always beautiful and in Kerala it is extra ordinarily beautiful.

A seasonal shift in the prevailing wind direction that usually brings with it an unusual kind of weather. Monsoon can be defined thus.



Monsoon Tourism provides unlimited fun and excitement for the tourist and it allows them to explore the natural beauty of Kerala with a feel of adventure and recreation. Kerala Tourism is the pioneer in implementing the concept of Monsoon as a tourism product which was started in the year 2005 and is gaining more attention and popularity year after year. The purpose of this innovative concept is to counter the seasonality nature of the industry during the months from June to September by offering attractive rain based packages. Kerala with its diverse offerings is rated as a complete monsoon tourism destination in the country.

Monsoon
embraces
Kerala twice a year
the Southwest
monsoon or
Edavappathi (IN June) and
Northeast monsoon or Thula
varsham (In mid October). The mellifluous
music of incessant rains, cascading waters, the
sights of various shades of green laced by
sparkling drops and the overflowing rivers and
backwaters lure tourists from far and near to
the state. Monsoon is one of the unique selling
propositions (USP's) and much sought after
products of Kerala Tourism.

The Incredible Influence of Monsoon Tourism

During 2004-05 Kerala Tourism launched an innovative concept. The concept of monsoon tourism was a novel initiative towards promoting the state as a monsoon destination. It was an effort targeted at making the state a year round tourist destination. The brilliant combination of Ayurveda and the serene, breathtaking backwaters of Kerala worked miracles in promoting Monsoon Tourism in Kerala. Hats off to the Kerala

Tourism
Department
for
tapping
every
opportunity to
make Kerala in
the centre of the
world.

Well, when our efforts to bring foreigners to our country, domestic tourists should not be forgotten. For keeping them in mind, The 'Dream Season' campaign was launched in 2007 under Private-Public-Partnership (PPP) model. This was to transform the traditional off season from April to September into a season of opportunity by targeting domestic tourists. The Kerala tourism development corporation also promotes monsoon tourism in a big way through their hotels by offering attractive packages of various durations and costs. And, the result was tremendously successful. The State got transformed into a year round tourist destination and it benefitted the tourism service providers like travel agents, tour operators, house boat operators, hotels, resorts, ayurvedic centers, home stays and tree huts. And, what's more!

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) already mentioned that monsoon tourism is an ideal way of providing a booster dose to the tourism industry during lean months (from June to August).

Normally, the monsoon season was considered as a lean one for state's tourism industry because during that period tourist influx is found very low. Hotel and Resort occupancies fall normally by fifty per cent or even lower and revenues of travel and domestic tour operators shrink drastically. CII strongly believes that the state have greater scope for developing monsoon tourism because of the availability of intense rainfall from southwest monsoon and the luxuriant greenery.

Monsoon and Kerala
It is just like a riddle wrapped in mystery yet mystic. When Monsoon rains over Kerala, It blossom's into its full beauty. The wellness packages are already attracting an increasing number of foreign tourists to visit the state during the monsoon months from June to September. Let me discuss the uniqueness of monsoon tourism in Kerala.

Availability of ample rains

The state is blessed with heavy showers especially during the months from June to August and July receives maximum rainfall. The sight of Monsoon clad in the tropical greenery of Kerala is exhilarating. Kerala remains unchallenged in this aspect. June and July are now seen as standout months in terms of the

potential for tourist arrivals from the neighboring and northern states of the country. Many choose to visit the state in the monsoon season to enjoy the romantic milieu of the tropical rainy season. The scorching heat in north India forces domestic tourists to visit Kerala during the rainy months.

And, these are the must see monsoon tourism spots

Monsoon tourism is catching up in a fast pace in destinations like Wayanad, Athirapilly, Fort Kochi, Ashtamudi, Kumarakom, Kuttanad, Munnar, Thekkady, Vagamon, Gavi, Bekal etc. The swiftness of waterfalls in Athirapilly and Wayanad are very strong during the monsoons. A cruise through Vembanad or Ashtamudi backwaters is an ideal option to spectacle the village life during the monsoons. The egg hills and pine forest of Vagamon are also ideal spots to visit during the rains. The prominent destinations Munnar and Thekkady are ideal for taking monsoon photographs based on nature and wildlife. A visit to the paddy fields submerged in water is a must see sight in Kuttanad. The main attraction of Kochi during monsoon is the boat ride to all the islands through the backwaters. A train journey from Shoranur junction to Nilambur covered by teak trees and village greenery is one of the best options to enjoy and experience monsoon tourism in the state effectively with ease. Bike ride through the curved roads of Athirapilly, Mannarkkad and Wayanad passes are a thrilling adventure for the tourist during the monsoons.

Packages offered

Kerala with its diverse offerings is rated as a complete monsoon tourism destination in the country. Tourists who visit the state mainly for rejuvenation during monsoon season want something exceptional and they want to experience the entire destination. The Kerala Tourism Development Corporation is promoting monsoon tourism through its attractive packages linking various destinations scattered in different regions of the state. The packages are available at prime properties like Bolgatty in Kochi, Tea County in Munnar, Aaranya Nivas in Thekkady, Waterscapes in Kumarakom, Samudra in Kovalam etc. Rainplus

Ayurveda and backwaters is a unique an innovative package offered during the monsoon season by resorts and home stays in particular. Several Ayurveda based packages were designed by resorts, spas and other Ayurvedic centers to attract tourists for rejuvenation therapies (wellness) at discounted rates including accommodation. Tailor made and readymade packages offered at reduced and reasonable rates give a new demand for monsoon tourism products and services. 2015-16, being the visit Kerala year provides attractive packages and offerings to entice visitors to the state during the monsoons.

For the newlywed...

The house boat ride in the backwaters and canals of Alappuzha, Kumarakom, Ashtamudi and Munroe Island continues to be the big attraction for domestic travelers from north India preferably those who come to enjoy honeymoons. Many corporate groups are also booking houseboats to conduct MICE events during the monsoon. Foreign tourists are also keen to take a cruise in the houseboats and shikaras to watch the rains and taste the local cuisines. Tree huts and Home stays of Wayanad attract hordes of honeymoon tourists in particular during the monsoons. Waterfalls are at its majestic best during the monsoons and driving holiday is a good option to enjoy monsoons at its very spirit. Visits to tea estates and spice gardens in Munnar are also preferred by the tourists during the rains.

Splashing in the rain!

Kerala Tourism has identified several festivals including snake boat races and Ox races held between June and September months as part of promoting monsoon tourism. The pioneer destination of monsoon tourism in the state is Wayanad and the initiative was taken by a group of resort operators in the district. Being a heavy rainfall receiving district the Wayanad Tourism Organization (WTO) in association with the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) started the concept of Splash Tourism at Kalpetta during the year 2009. Various outdoor & indoor activities like mud football, archery, adventure activities like rafting, trekking, village & tribal visits, competition in indigenous farming like ploughing, planting of paddy and fun filled events like

climbing the slippery tree, catching crabs and elephant rides were held. Tourism seminars are organized as part of this stunning event. The prime aim of this event is to tap and promote the monsoon tourism potentials of Wayanad and it has been the only region in the state to launch such a dedicated and colorful event like SPLASH. SPLASH is aimed at giving tourists a firsthand experience about the lifestyle of the tribal communities in Wayanad. The seventh edition of Splash will be held during the second week of July at Wayanad. The festival had already made significant impacts for the industry with the participation of tourism stake holders from the state and outside.

Shoot the rain!

Shoot the Rain is another monsoon based soccer tournament conducted by Tourism Professionals Club, for the travel and hospitality industry held during the month of June at the Parade Grounds in Fort Kochi. Malabar river festival started during 2013 is another prominent festival held during the monsoon season at Thusharagiri in Kozhikode. White water rafting and Kayaking are the highlights of this river festival. The festival is an initiative of Department of Tourism under the support of Kerala Adventure Tourism Promotion Society (KATPS) in association with District Tourism Promotion Council. The aim of the festival is to promote the sport of whitewater kayaking in South India and display the incredible, unexplored rivers that Kerala has to offer the international paddling community.

Quality Ayurvedic / Health Tourism products

Monsoon is the ideal time for rejuvenation therapies and an attraction for tourists as they combine travel and ayurvedic treatments. During the monsoon the atmosphere remains dust free and cool, opening the pores of the body to the maximum making it most receptive to herbal oils and therapy. Demand for ayurvedic treatments coupled with organic food is high during the monsoon season due to its quality and ideal climatic conditions. One of the major advantages of health tourism in Kerala is its superiority, cost effectiveness & diverse forms of treatments available. Panchakarma is



one of the most sought after treatments preferred by the health tourist visiting Kerala during the monsoons. Besides Ayurvedic treatments Kerala is also offering other health tourism products like yoga and meditation which is increasingly popular as a non surgical treatment for various ailments among foreign tourist.

Russia is an emerging market for Kerala's health tourism with chartered flights operating to the state. The tourism industry is also getting repeat health tourist arrivals from Russia as many come frequently for genuine Ayurvedic treatments. Tourist from Arab, Middle East and European countries are also arriving in groups during the monsoons. German tourists are involved in the Ayurvedic treatments and are coming in significant numbers to the state during monsoons. On an average a health tourist spends a minimum of two to three weeks for rejuvenation therapy during monsoons in the state.

Traditional Ayurvedic / Health Resorts

Kerala is rated as the home of authentic ayurveda and its global capital. The state is having traditional Ayurvedic centers ranging from small to big which cater the requirements of all forms of health tourist. Ayurvedic centers are classified into green leaf and olive leaf

by the department of Kerala tourism in order to ensure the standards of quality in treatments offered. Availability of trained physicians and wide variety of herbs are the hall mark of Kerala Ayurveda. Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala is the pioneer centre for ayurvedic treatments in the state. Somatheeram Ayurvedic resort located in Kovalam is known as the world's first Ayurvedic resort. Kairali Ayurvedic Health Resort Palakkad, Chingoli Krishnendu Ayurvedic Resort Harippad, Punarnava Ayurveda Hospital Kochi, Kadavu Resort Kozhikode, Marari beach resort etc are offering authentic ayurvedic treatments through their attractive wellness packages.

Innovative Marketing & Promotional Campaigns

Monsoon season is marketed as the dream season by Kerala Tourism. The state has been aggressively marketing the monsoon tourism from its inception stage onwards. The innovative measures, strategies and marketing campaigns adopted by the Department of tourism (DoT) and Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) through their websites & brochures to promote monsoon tourism are of high standards which enable the state to become the trendsetters in monsoon tourism. Many attractive and unique

advertising campaigns are done in both visual and print media including in leading national newspapers and travel magazines that are promoting value for money monsoon packages of Kerala tourism. The marketing and promotional campaigns are also done through organizing road shows and participating in travel marts held at metropolitan cities, tier two cities inside the country and in the major tourist generating markets abroad. Events like shopping festival, sea food festival and folk dances are also held during the monsoon season to attract tourist.

Kerala is a popular monsoon tourism destination in the southern markets especially for weekend breaks. Tourists from states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are increasingly frequenting the state during the monsoon months. The domestic tourists from Northern and Western markets of India prefer taking the circuit tours of the state during monsoons. The attractive deals and innovative products and services offered during the monsoon season have helped the state to attract hordes of foreign tourists to the state. A visit to Kerala during monsoon is an enchanting experience which is unparalleled. ■

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Ray of hope for Kuttiattoor Mango



Seven thousand households. Ten thousand mango trees. Five tonnes of mango production. That is, a wealth of minimum 15 Crore Rupees. But for some reasons, most of these fruits go back to the soil, unharvested!

This is the tragedy of Kuttiattoor panchayath, of Kannur district. Comprising of two villages – Kuttiattoor and Maniyoor, its famous Kuttiattoor mango trees have now spread to 5-6 neighboring villages as well.

According to local lore, a gentleman from a Nambiar household brought five

mango saplings from the king of Neeleswaram. Two established households, Kavu Illam and Chakothe Tharavad, were the first to plant them. The mango variety was named the Nambiar manga (mango). Later, it was renamed the Kuttiattoor mango.

The Kuttiattoor mango has a thin skin, is fibrous and moderately sweet in taste. Season begins in March and ends in May. The fruit is marketed in nearby towns and cities like Thaliparamb, Thalasseri, Badagara and Kannur. When the season begins, the mango costs Rs 100 per kg. During the peak season, the

price of the Kuttiaattoor mango drops to Rs 50 or even Rs 30 per kg.

"We growers end up getting a paltry 20 per cent of the actual value of our mangoes," says B. Krishnan, Secretary of the Kuttiaattoor Mango Growers Committee. "It is the pattakkars (crop contractors) who dictate terms. More than 100 such middlemen operate here."

Since trees laden with fruit are a challenge to harvest, the tree owner has to hire a harvester. If at all available on time, they charge 1000 to 1,500 Rs per day. "So most homes give their trees on crop contract for a small amount of money," says Krishnan. A tree that was given on a crop contract of Rs 20,000 a decade ago is still talked about. It has become a local legend.

Gopalan Nambiar, 70, of Veshala hamlet, has 40 Kuttiaattoor mango trees, around 30-40 years old, on his two acres. He says yields are lower this year because of unseasonal rain. "The crop contractors pay me Rs 10,000 when yields are good. This year the mango crop is not that good. I guess I will get Rs 2,000," he says. But his total mango crop this year won't be less than two tonnes. "Out of all the mangoes I have eaten," says V.V. Jobi, "the ones from Veshala are the most superior."

Strangely, mango trees thrive here though the topsoil is not more than six inches thick and the subsoil is hard. A

five-year-old Kuttiaattoor tree flourishes in front of the panchayat office. Gopalan's biggest tree has grown to a height of 20 metres and covers about 120 square feet. Locals recall an old tree that had occupied about 0.05 acres.

Prabhakaran, a retired teacher and social worker, recalls giving one of his trees on a crop contract of Rs 15,000 about 20 years ago. E.K. Chandrahasan sold four of his trees, that were perhaps 200 years old, for Rs 2 lakh four years ago. "This is nothing," he says, smiling. "The oldest tree that we had in Chathoth Tharavad — it might have been 300 years old — fetched us nearly Rs 1 lakh

The Kuttiaattoor mango is poly-embryonic. By and large, this variety is an alternate bearer. Some trees yield fruit on different branches with a one-year gap in between, thus ensuring fruit every year.

decades ago. Of course, we didn't use the money for ourselves. We donated it to a temple."

The Kuttiaattoor mango is poly-embryonic. By and large, this variety is an alternate bearer. Some trees yield fruit on different branches with a one-year gap in between, thus ensuring fruit every year.

"A house without a mango tree is very rare in our panchayat," says Prabhakaran. "If we get a fair price for our fruit, these trees are enough to take care of a family's annual expenditure." The Kuttiaattoor trees are deeply appreciated by the villagers. "This mango tree is a great asset of ours," says Chandrahasan. "Which other variety can provide you with so much fruit without





asking for attention or expensive inputs?"

But due to shortage of labour, the absence of a farmer-friendly supply chain, a marketing set-up and so on, until last year a major part of the harvest was going waste. This year, the problem seemed to worsen. The crop contractors lost interest because the Kerala government came down heavily on chemical ripening of fruit with calcium carbide after the media highlighted the issue. A lot of mangoes remained unsold.

To turn the situation to their advantage, last year the Kuttiaattoor Mango Growers Committee decided to sell chemical-free mangoes directly to consumers. It got good response. This year the committee began work a bit earlier. They procured 15 tonnes of unripe mangoes. After ripening, they were left with 10 tonnes as the rest had got spoiled. But their total turnover was Rs 5 lakh.

A second initiative also holds out hope for farmers. Three years ago, a food processing unit was started by the Kannur Krishi Vijnana Kendra (KVK)

with financial help from the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana. The Kuttiaattoor Mango Growers Committee is running the unit which produces squash, jam and pickle from Kuttiaattoor mangoes. Its total processing capacity is 15 tonnes, which is very little when compared to the whopping quantity of wastage.

A team of scientists from the Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR) visited Kuttiaattoor in the second week of April after they heard of the plight of the Kuttiaattoor mango farmers. Dr M.R. Dinesh, Principal Scientist and Head, Division of Fruit Crops, said the fruit had good potential. It could be processed or eaten fresh.

Since the Kuttiaattoor mango is harvested right at the start of the season, it has two advantages. Most mango-processing units lie idle in April, waiting for raw material to come in. Linkages can be made with such factories. The mangoes can be quickly sold there. Thanks to the Kuttiaattoor mango, processing factories can begin work one-and-a-half months earlier.

Second, since the Kuttiaattoor mango

harvests early, it escapes the possibility of being attacked by fruit flies. Dr Dinesh also says steps need to be taken to prevent the fruit from rotting during ripening. Currently, nearly half the crop goes waste.

It is also suggested that a local farmers organisation could pack the mangoes in two-kg cardboard boxes, branded 'Kuttiaattoor mangoes', and set up a stall on the National Highway which is about an hour from Kuttiaattoor. IIHR sources said such a strategy had worked in Chittoor. "They sold 2.5-kg boxes for Rs 80. The farmers are very happy now."

Kuttiaattoor panchayath has now taken initiative to rope in scientists and development agencies to popularize and create better market for Kuttiaattoor Mangoes. A survey of existing trees in each ward is over. Efforts to register this mango variety for GI have started.

If things are handled in a serious way with active people's participation, lady luck would start smiling at Kuttiaattoor Mango from next season onwards. ■

The writer is Editor, Adike Patrike