



Photo : HARI S KUTTIPIURAM

The newly passed Kerala Self Financing Professional Colleges Act by the Assembly was a stern step against commercialisation of education. However, the Act, which envisages merit and social justice in higher education could not be fully implemented due to the intervention of the courts, some matters could be implemented through negotiations. The new Act has been implemented in the professional colleges under the control of Government and in the cooperative sector.

Passing the Line of

V S Achuthanandan
Chief Minister

Just in one year, the LDF Government could lay the foundation for a comprehensive development of the State. The Government has come into power through a very strong electoral contest. The publicity was that the contest was in between the champions of development and those against it. We, even marked as anti progressive by the rightist, have come into power securing 98 seats out of 140.

The reason for alleging us anti progressive was that we protested the profit making by selling out the land, water and Nature. Our protest and struggle against the exploitation mafia was termed as anti developmental. Allegations raised against the proposed Smart City were the most important among them. We said that the Smart city project should be proceeded retaining Infopark. And ensure fair value for the land and reject the condition restricting other IT parks in Ernakulam. Those opinions for the larger interest of the State have been termed as anti-developmental and Smart City became the catchphrase in the contest.

When the LDF Government completes its one year, the environment for the integrated developmental advance of the State is set ready. Everything has been cleared for establishing Smart City in Kochi. The Government has taken pains for the last ten months to materialise the project, protecting the State's best interests. Acquisition of land required for the project is almost completed. Changes favourable to the State could be effected in the stance of the Tecom Company. They agreed to give four times the amount (Rs.104 crore) fixed by the former Government as land value. The Government retains the Infopark. The condition restricting IT parks in Kochi has been given up. Now The Tecom has agreed to provide 26 per cent share to the State Government, 16 per cent in the beginning and 10 per cent as and when the project commences as against nine percent offered earlier. The Government gets the chairmanship of the Director Board and better participation in the administrative committee. Above all ninety thousand plus employment avenues are assured as against the thirty three thousand employment avenues proposed earlier. The Smart City contract can be signed and the construction work for the project can be commenced soon.



Scrimmage

Within the last one year, giant leap has been marked in the IT sector. An IT conglomerate comprising more than eight lakh square feet area at Thejaswini building in Technopark has been commissioned. In the Infopark in Kochi, the construction of a building comprising four lakh square feet is about to be started. In Thiruvananthapuram, five hundred acres of land is going to acquire for establishing a new IT park to baptise as Technocity. Steps are taken to start satellite

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IT parks at various district headquarters. The aim is to generate two lakh employment avenues and the activities are going on at a quick pace.

The Legislative initiatives during the past ten months have brought about a sea change in the field of development and welfare activities of the State.

Some way the agriculture sector was helped tide over the crisis. The Agricultural Debt Relief Act passed can be viewed as the continuation of the Land Reforms Act. The pitiful condition of committing suicide by the farmers, disappointed due to debt trap was existed here. The statistics brought out by the media and agricultural organisations werethat about 1500 farmers had ended their life due to indebtedness. So far, as per the approved official records the Government has written off the entire debts of around thousand farmers who committed suicide and disbursed Rs. 50,000 each to their destitute families. Declared moratorium for agricultural loans; and the Agricultural Debt Relief Act will come into force when the moratorium is over. This Act is widely accepted as a model for the whole of India. In order to save the worst affected paddy sector, the State Government ordered procurement of paddy at a rate of Rs. 8.50 per kg, which is Rs .2.70 higher than the support price declared by the Central Government. Now the farmers are happy and there was record production in the last season.

The one-year's administration enabled to rejuvenate the agricultural sector. Ours is a land, which comprises about 7.5 million farmers and 2.5 million agricultural labourers. Along with this, it should be specifically mentioned that the agricultural labourers' pension overdue for two years have been disbursed.

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Government has written off the entire debts of around thousand farmers who committed suicide and disbursed Rs. 50,000 each to their destitute families. The Government has declared moratorium for agricultural loans. The Agricultural Debt Relief Act will come into force when the moratorium is over.

sector. With the one year's rule it could head on with firm decisions to liberate education sector from commercialisation

The Shops and Establishment Labourers' Welfare Act gives solace to one million families in the unorganised sector. This Act ensures permanency in employment, pension and other benefits. Likewise, the Act providing pension and welfare fund for diary farmers was also passed.

Steps taken for commencing the new international terminal at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, aircraft maintenance unit, the renovation of Thiruvananthapuram and Kochuveli railway stations, approval for the railway multiple unit in Kollam, railway boggy building unit at Autocast, Cherthala, sanction for Indian Institute of Science Education Research Institute in Thiruvananthapuram etc. could be achieved through the continuous efforts of the Government in one year.

The two most essential projects marked for the comprehensive development of the State are the Vallarpadam Transhipment Container Terminal Project and the Vizhinjam Transhipment Container Terminal Project. There existed an impasse for the

acquisition of land for rail connectivity of the Vallarpadam Project. The State Government tried to remove all obstacles and the environmental clearance has been made available. Thus the first international transhipment container terminal is going to be a reality. As part of this, the road and rail construction works were inaugurated by me weeks before. The contract for the implementation of the Vizhinjam Project had been done with a Chinese company. Quoting security reasons, the Defence Ministry rejected sanction. However, the State Government is going ahead with the scheme.

The Global Investor's Meet relates to Vizhinjam project held recently was an enthusiastic experience. There were dozens of companies from within the country and abroad shared their views. We expect the construction can be started within 18 months.

Steps for the Kochi metro rail, suburban train at Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode are in the pipeline.

Closed industries and locked out tea plantations were opened. Filled up the vacancies by waiving appointment ban and thereby postings have been given to

twenty thousand plus persons.

There were thousands of posts kept unfilled in the Health Department during the previous regime which disrupted the public health system and the caused the spreading of diseases like Chikungunea and viral fever. The Government has intervened and appointed doctors and para medical staffs

spraying of Endosulfan and financial assistance has been given to the tune of Rs.50,000 each to the families of 140 persons who succumbed to endosulfan and a rehabilitation package is approved for thousands of other victims.

The companies including Tata and Harison Malayalam exploit the State's wealth by giving a nominal lease amount

companies have encroached thousands of acres of land. The Government has initiated strict measures to recover the lands. Urgent steps are taken for survey and demarcation of the land under TATA, using modern technology. Strict action is taken to recover Kovalam Palace and prevent encroachment at Kovalam in the guise of tourism.

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CONSOLING CHIEF MINISTER:

urgently. New public health policy is being implemented.

The previous Government neglected the Endosulfan issue of Kasaragod. But, the present Government banned the

for the tens of thousands of acres of land they possess. There are allegations that through unholy means they took possession or sell out the land before the expiry lease tenure. Further these

Now Kerala is rushing towards an investment friendly, corruption free, hassle free environment for the integrated development. Henceforth it is the period of progress and prosperity for the State. ■

Everything has been cleared for establishing Smart City in Kochi

The Agricultural Debt Relief Act; the continuation of the Land Reforms Act



Photo : HARIS KUTTIYURAM

LDF Trophy

*Leading Journalist
Leela Menon
Evaluates the
debut year of
VS Achuthanandan
Ministry.*

Stilling the lurking apprehensions in Kerala psyche, the LDF Government has donned the development mantle, discarding its anti-development facade through a smart move to usher in the Smart City and show the green flag for the Vizhinjam Project.

Though the United Democratic Front claims that the Smart City is their baby, there is no gainsaying the fact that the Left Front successfully demolished the myth that the Left victory would

strike the death knell for Smart City and block the development trajectory of Kerala. Job-hungry educated Kerala youth were anxiously anchored to the idea of the Smart City that would usher in a rush of job opportunities for Kerala. It is to the LDF credit that the Rs.1500 crore Smart City deal was struck with better conditions than was conceived by the previous regime.

For an impartial observer, many signs like the decisive steps taken to end the strike by heavy vehicle owners without

Under the Left dispensation, Kerala is actively lobbying for the benefit of the State, in crusading for the Kannur airport, to prevent Tamil Nadu's hegemony over our waters, as well as for the Vizhinjam project, almost abandoned by the Centre earlier, apprehending Pakistani intrusion.

much heartburn to the common man has been welcome. Though at the outset police atrocities did cause concern, of late the scenario has been peaceful and the Judicial Commission has almost given a clean chit to the police, asserting that the deaths in police custody were not due to police torture but due to other reasons.

Chief Minister Achuthanandan had been an ardent crusader against the Smart City and the encroachments in Mathikettan as also the ADB Loan but he is evolving into a rational; and pragmatic ruler, still retaining his crusading profile by championing the cause of environment and assuring that any decision on Pathrakadavu would only be after due consultations. With its small resource base and sunk as the State is in financial doldrums the ADB loan move cannot be faulted. The Lucky VAT lottery was another creditable attempt to mobilise additional revenue. It has also lobbied hard for the Vallarpadam LNG Terminal and a larger portion from the Kayamkulam Thermal Station.

The understanding between the Dubai-based TECOM and Kerala Government ensures that the Infopark remains with the Kerala Government and assures a 26 per cent stake for the Government, with chairmanship and director board membership, apart from creation of more job opportunities.

It underscores the fact that the Left Front has abandoned the stigma of private investment, conceding the inevitable role of foreign capital for the industrial development of Kerala, which is indeed a welcome trend.

Under the Left dispensation, Kerala is actively lobbying for the benefit of the State, in crusading for the Kannur airport, to prevent Tamil Nadu's

hegemony over our waters, as well as for the Vizhinjam project, almost abandoned by the Centre earlier, apprehending Pakistani intrusion. That Vizhinjam scheme is very propitious for the State is driven home, despite Tamil Nadu concentrating on Rameswaram scheme.

Kerala stepped into history when on April 5, 1957 the Communist Party came to power through popular mandate. Land Reforms was another historical milestone. It could be said that it is stepping into history again with the Marxist-led front signing the Smart City Deal. In fact the VS Government could be said to be heralding a new development dawn for Kerala.

The State does need development that is not detrimental to environment, thickly populated as it is, sans urban-rural divide. IT development and Tourism are the only avenues, which can ensure this, and the Left Front is promoting both.

With the signing up of the Smart City deal Kerala would be speeding up a new trajectory of growth and development, falling in line with the rest of the country. Though it has many miles to go to ensure quality of life for the people by ensuring quality in education, roads etc, the State has quantitative achievements sans



Photo : HARIS KUTTIPIRAM

quality now. In view of the emerging skilled manpower shortage globally Kerala has played a timely card to update its IT skills to benefit the people.

In fact Kerala's Tourism, IT and Information Technology Services are its trump cards. Both tourism and IT are job generating sectors. Even now Kerala is a major player in the tourism sector with the National Geographic Channel hailing it as one of the 50 Must See destinations in the world. The State accounts for 11 to 12 per cent of the 2.4 million tourist arrivals in the country apart from 56 lakh domestic tourists. However it needs to be said that State has to correct its soiled image in sewage and waste management in view of the emerging tourist high.

Kerala's coalition politics and change of regime every five years apart from patronage politics has generated a rivalry that is defeating the State's development. Both the Right and the Left parties should forget politics where welfare and progress of the State matters. ■

LDF Government has donned the development mantle



new direct new

M A Baby
Minister for Education and Culture

There are many defects, both in system and in the content of our educational system, which need serious intervention. It is the responsibility of a Government to strive for achieving the goals of education, which aims at the comprehensive development of the new generation.

It is a historical fact that the left governments since the formation of Kerala have taken steps to attain this goal and this helped much for the progress of the society. The 1957 EMS Government's Education Bill, the 1987 Nayanar Government's Total Literacy Campaign, the child friendly and activity oriented curriculum revision of 1996 are some of the examples.

These activities ensured universal and free education as envisaged in the Constitution. Thus the State achieved cent percent enrolment of children in schools. Reaching school is not the matter, but should get quality education for all. The fundamental aim of education to make a person competitive to lead a life, which is satisfactory, productive and socially acceptable can be materialised only through it. The present LDF Government's mission is reorganising our general education thoroughly by ensuring qualitative growth along with quantitative growth suitable to this.

Along with that we are facing yet another threat. General education is a social activity. But in this era of globalisation, education is more and more commercialised and it can be bought as any other service. A situation in which education changes from being a social activity to a private affair. The social aims thus collapse. The ultimate result will be the loss of social control and denial of education to the common people. For that same reason, the Government is committed to change this situation.

In short, the immediate responsibilities of LDF Government when it assumed power were as follows:

1. To perpetuate education as a social activity by protecting equality and social justice.
2. To increase the quality standards of general education and higher education competing with the real educational goals.

In the past one year it could be possible to lay foundation for that and to start certain things. A nutshell version of the same is given below:

There are so many local bodies and academic institutions which interfere in education. But the former Government took no step to ensure the effective coordination of them. The result of that were repetition, over expenditure, aimlessness etc. We gave priority in the first year to solve this and ensure joint action of local self Governments, various departments, self governing bodies etc that interfere each schools. The practice was that Sarva Siksha Abhiyan organised projects and demanded 25 per cent from the local self-government institutions for the execution.

ion initiatives



Inter-relationship

Local self government institutions and various agencies under government are involving in general education. But the former Government had not taken any step to ensure the effective coordination of them. Duplication, over expenditure, aimlessness etc were the result. We gave priority in the first year to solve this and ensure joint action of local self Governments, various departments, self governing bodies etc that get involved

in each schools. The practice was that Sarva Siksha Abhiyan organised projects and demanded 25 per cent from the local self-government institutions for the execution. As against this, local self government institutions envisage projects with the help of SSA from this year onwards. Activities have started for the same jointly by Local Self Government Department and Planning Board.

A working programme has been prepared jointly to coordinate works in

directorates of General Education , Higher Secondary, Vocational Higher Secondary, SCERT, SIET, CEAMAT, district/block/grama panchayats.

Various committees

So many changes in academic and non-academic level are required for ensuring quality. For giving suggestion, various committees are constituted or reconstituted and began functioning. KER revision committee is one among them. A committee headed by former



Organised a higher education council for clear vision of modernisation

chief secretary C.P. Nair, Kerala Education Advisory Committee reorganised with Prof. M.R. Raghava Variyar as chairman, the committee headed by Dr. N.A. Kareem to determine minority educational institutions, committee chaired by General Education Secretary for giving advice for new educational institutions and upgrading the existing ones have been appointed. Government have received reports of the last two committees.

Modernisation of curriculum

The modernisation of existing curriculum was started during 1997-98. Now Central Government have formed a National Curriculum Framework 2005 as a guideline for modernisation of curriculum and asked the states to modernise the school curriculum. Preliminary activities have started under the guidance of SCERT. Based on the suggestions of focus groups on different subjects, projects are envisaged to create a new school curriculum and textbooks and teachers' help books for half year's classes. An approach document is prepared based on this.

It is decided to give it a final shape after having wide discussions at panchayat level.

Other programmes

Last year many programmes have been envisaged to boost the standard. Work is in progress under the leadership of panchayats, district panchayats and diet, focused on the student to increase standards of 104 schools which stood back in 2006 SSLC examination. To lessen the tension of SSLC Examination, reduced the number of papers from 13 to 10. Examination time has shrunk to 17 hours. To evaluate according to curriculum, the responsibility to conduct examinations up to 7th standard has been given to SSA. Orders issued for making teaching of mother tongue compulsory up to fourth standard. Direction has



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This policy made our educational sector so dirty.

The dream of education of so many Rajanis crumbled down.

To change such a situation is the declared aim of LDF Government.

It was to fulfil this goal that government brought the legal amendment to bring social control over professional colleges, immediately after taking power.

been given to issue question papers in Malayalam also for public exams of plus two schools. Steps have completed to create a democratic forum to conduct school parliament elections in plus two schools. Students will be given representation in youth festival committees. Fifty per cent representation to girls in school election.

Coming year proficiency year

To boost these activities, programmes are envisaged foreseeing the coming year as proficiency year. The aim is to ensure 200 school days. Formulated joint, extensive programmes like child census and tracking a project to follow up children of the state in their educational

development, curriculum revision, panchayat school complex, improving academic system, special programmes for 104 schools, research activities in 100 panchayats, vitalization of teachers, management training, improving mid-day meal, study of the special school children, 'My tree' project, mutual relationship of CSASS and educational agencies etc. are being envisaged.

Professional education

The last government gave all support to the traders of education by creating a situation where money replaces merit and social justice in higher education. This policy made our education into chaos. The higher education dreams of many a Rajanis were crumbled down. Changing



of such a situation is the proclaimed aim of LDF Government. It was to fulfil this goal that government made amendments to bring social control over professional colleges, immediately after taking power. But they were questioned in the court and judgement was favourable to the private professional

colleges. Anyhow, the activities of Justice P.A. Muhammed Committee, constituted according to the above law, are going on. Nevertheless, the examination and

significance of coaching centres unapproachable to the ordinary people.

Higher education

There are many problems in the Higher Education sector. A higher education council is constituted to get a clear vision on the modernisation of education for five years and to lead the activities. College Union election could be conducted in a democratic way, obeying Supreme Court order.

Cultural arena

Government have the wisdom that literary work means not just art and literary activities, but deep intervention in all cultural spaces of the people. Cultural changes favourable to market and communal forces are occurring in the society. This does not happen spontaneously. Firstly, forces of globalisation try to cultural seasoning for bringing the land under their control, by replacing human values with money for their market economy. Government alone cannot resist the cultural colonisation. Activities have started to

Lalithakala Academy, Sahitya Academy, Chalachitra Academy etc. have become more popular and vigorous. Activities ceased, are going on with a war footing for declaring Kerala Kalamandalam a deemed university. Bala Sahitya Institute, Bhasha Institute and Sarwavnana Kosham have also started very wide and attractive programmes. Attempts are there to popularise Vailoppilli Sanskrithi Bhavan, by making it the centre of coordinating all cultural activities. Book Mark and Film Development Corporation, which were in great loss, are on a revival mood. All cultural institutions through out Kerala are also engaged in vigorous activities. Golden Jubilee of Kerala state formation, resurrection programme against suicide of farmers conducted in Wayanad, united Kerala's first government's golden jubilee celebration etc took place as part of this. New programmes have started in Museum, Zoo, Archives and Archaeology Departments.

Let it be briefed that during the last one year, in educational and cultural



All cultural institutions through out Kerala are also engaged in vigorous activities.

valuation for private professional colleges could be done transparently and justly. Online counselling in allocation for the first time in India is an achievement. The entrance examinations are made scientific and modernised so as to nullify the

bring up a cultural gathering to resist it.

New waves could be created in the art and cultural field by now. All cultural institutions, which were defunct these days, have become vibrant. The activities of Sangeetha Nataka Academy,

fields, could lay foundation for reformation and make new movements based on clear vision. Our aim is to raise the roof from this basement, ensuring massive participation and cooperation of the people. ■

Coming year is proficiency year



Powering Empowerin

A.K Balan

Minister for Welfare of scheduled and Backward Communities and Electricity

Electricity for the society is like oxygen to life. Without electricity life of people or development of society will not move on. Unfortunately the power sector was stagnant for five years during previous Government's time. Then only 26.6 MW of electricity could be generated additionally.

Removing the lethargy that gripped the power sector, the present Government is moving towards self-sufficiency in power sector. Kerala has made great progress in power sector in the last one year. Works are going on in full swing aiming at 500 MW electricity additionally. As part of this, the construction of Pallivasal Extension Project with a capacity of

Efforts are on to strengthen the distribution sector. During the last year, more than four lakh electric connections have been given. To ensure better service new offices have been opened in the backward areas. They include 17 section offices, four subdivision offices and five division offices. This Government aims at Total Electrification of Kerala at the earliest. Kannadi Gramapanchayath, in Palakkad district, has become the first total electrified village.



Kerala and g the weaker



60 MW was begun on 26 December 2006. Works are going on at a fast pace. Moreover the commissioning of the Neryamangalam Extension project is expected this year.

With a view to enhance the transmission network a total of 22 substations have been set up. These include five 110 KV, fourteen 33 KV and three 33 KV substations.

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Necessary sanctions for R.G.G.V.Y, which is a Central Scheme for rural electrification, have been obtained and work has been started. Electrification of half the villages in seven districts in the northern Kerala has been taken up under this scheme.

Materials required for the KSEB are purchased now from the Public sector Undertakings. This enabled the United

Electricals, Traco Cables, and Keltron to function smoothly.

Hydel Tourism sector witnessed resurgence with the implementation of a string of new projects. Hydel Tourism Malabar circuit has been started at Banasura Sagar in Wayanad and a Hydel tourism centre has become operational at Lower Meenmutty in Thiruvananthapuram.

Welfare of scheduled and backward communities

There are many schemes for the Scheduled and Backward communities, but they have not produced the desired results. Exploitation by middlemen and long delay in plan implementation are the main reasons for this.

Taking this into account, Review Committees have been formed at state and district level to chalk out new schemes and oversee their proper implementation and these committees have already started functioning. The Government implements action plans for

Removed the lethargy gripped the power sector



All the Scheduled cast and Scheduled tribe students who opted for the self financing courses in the State Universities, institutions under the control of the State and Central Governments and State controlled cooperatives institutions have been given concessions including fees charged by the institutions.

providing land, house, water and light for all Scheduled Caste people within next five years.

In the last one-year many noteworthy things have been introduced for the welfare of the scheduled and backward sections of the state.

When this government took charge educational aid meant for the Scheduled Caste, OBC, OEC, SEBC, and for the economically backward among the Forward Castes amounting to Rs 40.84 crore was in arrears. The arrears due to the scheduled caste students and sixty percentage of the amount due to others have been distributed by this Government.

The arrears due to the scheduled tribe students amounting to Rs. 3.51 crore have been distributed completely. Stipend for the current year was given at the beginning of the academic

year itself.

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Mess charge in the pre-metric hostel run by the department has been increased from Rs 500 to Rs 700 and for the post metric hostel from Rs 700 to Rs 900.

Mess charge and uniform allowance for Model Residential School have been raised from Rs 700 to Rs 900 and for plus two students to Rs 900.

All the OEC students who get admission under SEBC quota through entrance exam will get all the benefits given to the scheduled community students.

All the scheduled caste and tribe students who get admission for engineering courses under lateral entry scheme will get educational aid including fees as decided by the K.T Thomas commission with retrospective effect.

Schemes worth RS. 1,61,34,202 for the renovation 34 pre metric hostels out

of 91 under the department for the development of scheduled caste have been approved .

45 premetric hostels out of 198 under the department for the development scheduled tribe are being renovated spending an amount of Rs 5 crore.

Projects worth Rs. 9,30,76,785 have been approved for providing drinking water to 88 scheduled caste colonies. Work on the drinking water scheme meant for the scheduled tribes in 10 panchayats is in its last phase.

An amount of RS. 25.25 crore have been earmarked for completing the work on 4685 houses approved by the previous Government. A total of 3500 houses sanctioned from 2001 were completed this year. Construction works of 6600 houses are at various stages of completion. The previous UDF Government could complete only 1300 houses.

For providing home an amount of 35 crore has been sanctioned for 5000 homeless among the scheduled caste to the tune of Rs 70000 per person. The work of these houses has been entrusted with the Housing board and State Nirmithi Kendra.

For Primitive Tribe people 1350 houses are nearing completion. Preliminary work has been started for a model tribal village at Neryamangalam. 2578 acres of land has been distributed among 2627 tribal people who are landless and title deeds for the land have been issued.

The approved agency, UPASI has been entrusted with the task of preparing report after conducting necessary study for opening and renovation of the closed Priyadarshini tea plantation in Wayanad.

A comprehensive health care programme for tribal people, with the Government bearing all expenses related to treatment, laboratory tests, scanning, travelling expenses to hospital, has been implemented. This project is put in place with an expenditure of RS 10 crore. ■





Forest Conservation *Stern Action*

Binoy Viswom
Minister for Forest

The world now recognises that the conservation of forests, which are qualified as the mother of river and the source of life, is not just the need of the present, but is essential for providing habitable earth to the generations to come. Even the latest studies on climatic change reveal that our future will not be secure. Money became important and nature is benumbed before greed and pride of human being who makes everything scapegoats for money. We have to toil hard to take the hands of nature towards immortality.

To conserve forests and trees is one of the major concerns of this Government. And hence the administration of the Forest Department is carried out with vigil and caution.

The equation existed in the Forest Department earlier was the relation of mafia, corruption, stealing etc. The Government took a Herculean task to correct this. Alienation of forestland was a phenomenon of the past. Those who behind the curtain were more powerful. Stringent measure has been taken to stop all these. With transparent and stern steps and the participation of the public, the Government is going ahead.

The forest lobby claims that they could even create or destroy Ministers and easily enter into administration and manipulate them by interfering in politics. I feel pride that I could free the Department from the clutches of such mafia.

The Government has to face looting of forest including Sholayoor in the very beginning. This Government

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Stringent measures against forest mafia



'My Tree' project, with the help of Education Department envisages environmental awareness and love towards trees among school children. Nurturing of the sapling is ensured and for that a special handbook will be issued to all students freely. Also reached an understanding to give grace mark to those who nurture the trees well.

promulgated an ordinance amending the 6th section of the Planting of Trees in Non Forest Area Act 2005, which can be misused for looting. Then there was a wide propaganda against the ordinance, terming it anti-farmer. But it lost edge. Stern stance could be taken against mafia.

Government took stringent measures to stop plundering of sandalwoods. Strong interference is made, by deploying rapid action force at Marayoor, building iron fence of 17 kms. around sandalwood reserves, establishment of five district stations on inter-State basis, public participation for the protection of

as reserve forest. Steps were taken against selling lease land given to Harrison Plantation.

However the Department is sympathetic towards ordinary farmers who build up their lives in association with forest. Compensation for rosewood and teak as per the Wayanad Colonisation Scheme was Rs.4500 per cubic metre for the farmers. On the long pending demand of farmers the Government hiked the price to Rs.10,000.

The decision to give timber to tribals for 25 per cent of the market price for building homes and steps to make

sandalwood, flying squads at Kothamangalam and Munnar and monitoring from the office of the Minister.

Reducing the rate of loss of sandalwood from eight to .02 per day is worth mentioning. This is an all time record too. We could seize sandal worth Rs.30 lakh. The Government is going ahead to establish a sandalwood factory to deter the mafia. Besides, to make the lives of the people of Marayoor better, welfare projects with the help of Agriculture Department, National Tribal Mission and other available agencies are started. Administrative sanction has been given to establish eco-tourism projects worth Rs.50 lakh.

440 hector land at Vagamon has been declared

available reed and bamboo to SC STs and those who make a livelihood using forest resources are evidences of the Government's commitment to the weaker sections. To form a company, 'Vanashree' like Kudumbashree for producing and marketing new products using raw materials from the forest is on the agenda.

With the help of Tourism Department, Forest Department is establishing 56 eco tourism projects, which generates hundreds of job opportunities.

To prevent illegal encroachment and conserve environmentally important region Kurinjimala Sanctuary has been declared. Kottaakkampoor and Vattavada villages of Devikulam Taluk came under the sanctuary of Neelakkurinj (Strobilanthes Kunthiana) which blooms once in 12 year.

Vembanad Conservation Reserve to save Vembanad Lake and the echo system of the region including Pathiramanal is under the active consideration of the Government.

The Government could establish good relationship with Central Forests and Environment Department. Central Government accorded sanction for Parambikkulam – Anamala Inter State Tiger Reserve, linking Aanamalai - Indiragandhi Wild Life Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu. With this, support of strong laws to conserve 472.74 sq. km. forest including Parambikkulam, Chinnar and Eravikulam is available. A project with the Central aid of Rs.49.21 lakh and Rs.51.25 lakh for the development and conservation of mangroves at Kannur and Vembanad region respectively is envisaged. The regional headquarters of wildlife crime records bureau to prevent crime including export of wildlife, based on the newly passed law by parliament, will be established in Kochi. Central Cabinet has approved that in principles. Also could make sure to arm State Forest Protection Force to safeguard Marayoor Sandalwood forest. During this period so many projects submitted by State Forest Department for conserving biodiversity, including sacred grove conservation, have been approved by the Centre.

First time in Kerala a conference of Forest Ministers of South India has been held in Thiruvananthapuram on

November 3 and 4, 2006 in which a joint declaration for ensuring cooperation of the States for forest and wildlife conservation has been taken.

The long-pending issue of giving land to the development of Sabarimanla, has been solved by providing 110.5 hectares of land at Nilakkal and 12.675 hectares at Periyar Tiger Reserve to Devaswam Board. Forest Department got 305 acres as alternative.

Immediately after getting power, all vacancies in Forest Department have been reported to PSC. In the field of social forestry popular projects, never seen before, are introduced.

'My Tree' project, with the help of Education Department envisages environmental awareness and love towards trees among school children. Nurturing of the sapling is ensured and for that a special handbook will be issued to all students freely. Also reached an understanding to give grace mark to those who nurture the trees well.

Forest Department is getting ready to execute 'Theeravanam Project'

(Coastal Forest) in which trees are planted in the coastal area, which is scientifically proved as the best way to protect coastal area from natural calamities. Fisheries Department will help the project. When the trees are felled down a percentage of the price will go to the preserver. Along with this, a project to plant trees along the riverbanks, with the help of local self-government institutions is also underway.

Forest Department has also started a big project to plant trees on the sides of the roads (Vazhiyora Thanal) with the help of headload workers, taking a new mission with a message, 'Labourer a shade in the street'. Fruit-bearing trees and shade trees will replace harmful trees like acacia on the street.

One among the 19 environmental hot spots in the world, Silent Valley, is not just a place to conserve lion-tailed macaque. On the other side it also includes the conservation of river Kunthi, which is a source of drinking water. The Government has decided to materialise the demand for Silent Valley Buffer Zone by providing budget allocation.

A comprehensive and scientific forest policy is indispensable to ensure conservation of forests. A draft Forest Policy has been submitted before the public and discussions are going on. The Forest Policy will be in force within three months.

The Forest Department is carrying out its historical duty by ensuring the forest areas indispensable for the existence of flora and fauna not to shrink anymore and creating greenery in other areas also. Don't have the opinion that everything is completed. Though stern steps have taken to avoid a darkened future. Definitely have the strong feeling that there is much more to go ahead.

As Robert Frost says,

"The woods are lovely dark and deep
But I have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep,"

there is a long distance to pass before a sound sleep. So many promises are there to keep. Let us do yeoman service for this. Each moment we hesitate, we are approaching danger. Don't forget it. ■

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Public Dist More

C. Divakaran
Minister for Food & Civil Supplies

Soon after taking over charge by the LDF Government, we have taken very effective steps to strengthen the public distribution system in the State. The quality and quantity of the ration articles improved for attracting more cardholders to rations shops. The percentage of APL cardholders utilising the ration shop is now 15 per cent as against the three per cent at the time of UDF Government. Kerala was considered as a rice consuming state and food habits of Keralites have changed. In order to cope with the change of food habits, the Government have decided to convert wheat into Atta and distribute through rations shops @ Rs.11 per kg. Due to the reduction of wheat it is now restricted to 5 districts of the state.

Very serious and effective steps are being taken to prevent diversion of ration articles. Checking squads have been constituted with the co-operation of departments like Police, Legal Metrology, Revenue under the leadership of District Collector in each district, besides the existing system in the Civil Supplies Department. Ration Adalaths are being conducted in all districts to hear the complaints directly from the public and taking remedial measures on the spot by the District authorities. The consumers, the distributors of ration articles, the LPG and Kerosene dealers, representatives of Consumer organizations and officials of the Civil Supplies, Legal Metrology, Revenue Departments are the participants in the ration adalaths and the functioning seems very fruitful in settling the grievances of consumers immediately.

In Kerala there are 14,93,061 Below Poverty Line (BPL) and 5,95,800 Annapoorna Anthya Yojana (AAY) and 47,85,578 Above Poverty Line (APL) and 44,980 Annapoorna cardholders. Government is distributing 35 kg. of food grains to APL card holders and 25 kg. food grains to BPL and AAY card holders and 10 kg. of rice free of cost to Annapoorna card holders. The Government of India have made

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Ration System

Effective

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APRIL 2006

Item	Category	Requirement (MT)	Allotment (MT)	Shortage (MT)
Rice	APL	129210	113420	15790
	BPL	28368	26566	1802
	Annapoorna	450	309.63	140.37
	AAY	20855	20855	----
Wheat	APL	38284	37325	959
	BPL	8958	8865	93
Sugar		4470.34	4103	367.34
Kerosene		29959.69 (KL)	23146 (KL)	6813.69 (KL)

a drastic cut in the allocation of wheat from 2006 June and again made reduction in the allocation of APL rice for the distribution in April 2007. Following are the item wise details regarding the requirement, receipt and shortage of ration articles allotted by the Government of India for the Public Distribution System. (See the table)

Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation

The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation is incorporated with the mission to provide essential commodities

Serious and effective steps to prevent diversion of ration articles

to the reach of everyone at competitive prices and in acceptable quality by effective market intervention operation, and is being fulfilled through the network of about 2500 outlets such as Maveli Stores, Labham Markets, Sabari Super Markets and ARD Sabari Stores in the state. State Government decides the price of major items sold through the outlets every month after considering the open market price. The main objective is to maintain steady supply line at affordable prices in order to prevent black marketing, hoarding, private profiteering and artificial price rise.

The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation popularly known as 'Supplyco' is distributing all articles required for the consumers besides the distribution of essential commodities through Public Distribution System (PDS). At present Supplyco is catering the needs of only 20 per cent of the consumers. The intention of the Government is to enhance the capability of Supplyco to meet the needs of 50 per cent of the consumers. For that special efforts are being made to

Supplyco is planning to introduce huge expansion scheme in the coming four years. Government propose to make it the largest retail chain in India.

strengthen the Corporation by opening new outlets and converting the existing ration outlets as ARD Sabari Stores. The Corporation is at present having about 2,500 outlets. Government is planning to convert 500 ration outlets into ARD Sabari Store during the current year itself. Government is also planning to open nearly 100 Maveli stores during the current year. The turn over of the Corporation for 2005-'06 was Rs.704 crore. The same has increased to Rs.1011 crore during 2006-'07. The target for 2007-'08 is Rs. 1300 crore.

The Civil Supplies Corporation is also doing paddy procurement and distribution of ration sugar, running of petrol pumps, distribution of articles for noon feeding of children of 12,000 schools besides the market intervention scheme. Supplyco is planning to introduce huge expansion scheme in the coming four years. Government propose to make it the largest retail chain in India. This will also be effort to block the challenge put forth by national and international retail companies such as the

Reliance, Tata and Walmart. One Supplyco outlet in one kilometre distance is the target to achieve within four years and the present turn over of Rs.1000 crore is expected to be increased to Rs. 3000 crore in 2010-'11.

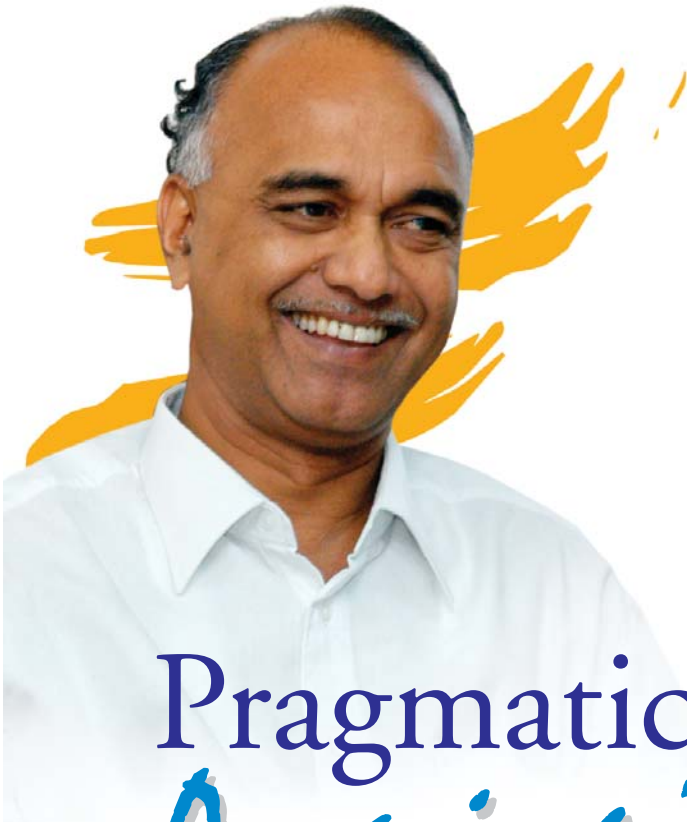
Supplyco has already laid the foundation stone for two hypermarkets, one in Thiruvananthapuram and the other in Ernakulam. A hypermarket in Kottayam is going to be constructed. Through this hypermarket all the consumer items, from vegetable to gold, can be made available under the same roof. These three hypermarkets can start functioning during 2008-'09. Government also propose to start one hypermarket in each district within the next four years. This will be an effective step against the multinational retailers.

Supplyco is also intending to start stretch retailing scheme. Within the next four years one 'mini maveli' store per maveli store will start functioning to provide essential requirement to all the needs like marriage, festival, special events etc in a panchayat. Self-employment can be provided for women above 35 years age with driving license by engaging them in this purpose.

Supplyco is going to start Market Intelligence Cell. The Market Intelligent Cell will analyse the prices all over India. It can make buffer stock of commodities based on price and data analysis of the items. Thereby Supplyco can prevent artificial price rise and scarcity. Through the operation of MIS, Supplyco can monitor production, supply, open market price and give early warning on price increase of any commodity and ensure buffer stock.

The Civil Supplies Department is committed to achieve the above objects and intervene in the market for controlling price rise of essential commodities so as to maintain an effective public distribution system in the State. ■





Pragmatic Policies *Amazing Turnaround*

Elamaram Kareem
Minister for Industries and Commerce

Left Democratic Front Government has made its vision clear in the industrial sector and its pragmatic policies started yielding commendable results. The Government has succeeded in making the State into an investor-friendly destination and investors are confident to set up projects in Kerala. The negative perception about Kerala's workforce has been disproved and the result is evident through out the State.

I believe one year is a short period to evaluate performance of a Government, which has a five-year tenure. However, one year is sufficient for a Government to set its direction. I am proud to say that within the short span of time, the Left Democratic Front Government has made its vision clear in the industrial sector and its pragmatic policies started yielding commendable results. The Government has succeeded in making the State into an investor-friendly destination and investors are confident to set up projects in Kerala. The negative perception about Kerala's workforce has been disproved and the result is evident through out the State. Global players like Aditya Birla Group and Tata have evinced interest in setting up units in the State.

The measures the Government taken to revive and revitalize the State-owned public sector units have yielded encouraging results. Without pumping fresh resources and recruit additional staff, the new Government could viably run most of the PSUs. It reflects reversal of the policies of the former UDF Government. The previous Government had constituted an Enterprises Reforms Committee (ERC) with an intention to either shut down or sell out loss making PSUs. Some of the units were closed down in core sectors and thousands

Succeeded in making the State into an investor-friendly destination

of workers became jobless. As soon as the LDF Government assumed office, it rejected the recommendations of the ERC and decided to revive and restructure PSUs. While the previous Government earmarked just Rs. five crores for PSUs in the budget for 2006-2007, we revised it and provided Rs.53 crores. As per the statement of accounts as on 31st March 2007, twenty two PSUs registered net profit and two units posted operating profit. It is to be noted that hardly twelve PSUs posted profit and the rest were in deep red during the UDF tenure. The turnaround is amazing in the history of public sector units.

According to the evaluation conducted by the Public Sector Restructuring and Internal Audit Board (RIAB), 22 PSUs registered profit to the tune of Rs.129.55 crore during 2006-2007, whereas the aggregate profit of 12 companies that posted profit during 2005-2006 was Rs. 62 crore. While 30 units incurred loss during 2005-2006, the number has been reduced to 20. While, PSUs altogether incurred a net loss to the tune of Rs. 63 crore during 2005-2006, PSUs registered net profit amounting to Rs.92 crore during 2006-2007 wiping off the loss. Judging by any standard the result is praiseworthy.

Most of the PSUs are showing a positive trend. A model example is the dramatic resurgence of United Electrical Industries, Kollam, which produces electronic energy meters for the State Electricity Board. The United Electrical Industries had been manufacturing 18,000 meters for the last many years and has been struggling hard even to pay salary and meet other expenses. The result

While the neo-liberal policies inflicted heavily on indigenous industries, the present Government left no stone unturned to protect and nurture the traditional sector, the MSMEs and the SLPEs through a well-structured policy and programme. At the same time large-scale investments from private entrepreneurs, NRIs and NRKs are also encouraged on a mutually beneficial terms for economic growth and gainful employment.

of the restructuring initiative is incredible as the company manufactured 1,50,000 meters in March 2007 breaking all the records. The LDF Government takes pride in showcasing the success story of the UIE as a dynamic model for the public and private sector to emulate. I believe that our State-owned companies can do wonders, meeting all the social obligations, if the workers are motivated, management is made professional and policy framework is pro-active. In the current fiscal the Government intends to focus on modernisation and expansion of our PSUs.

The LDF Government's policy to

synergies the PSUs with Central PSUs is expected to bring in a sea change in the functioning of the companies. The Indian Railways have already announced its proposal to invest in the State-owned Autokast Limited, Cherthala, to manufacture passenger bogies. The Railways, it is expected, would invest Rs.80 crore initially in the passenger bogie project. It is for the first time that such an investment from Railways is coming to Kerala.

The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has already finalised a proposal to have joint venture with the State-owned Transformers and Electricals Kerala Limited (TELK), which will double the production. The State Government has decided to hand-over Kerala Hitech Industries Limited (KELTEC) to Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and a nod from the Union Government is expected. Following are the advantages of KELTEC being a unit of the DRDO: 1) Kerala will have the first Defence production unit in Kerala 2) Additional investment between at least Rs.100 to 200 crore initially 3) Plans to make KELTEC a unit of BrahMos, a joint venture of Government of Indian and Russia, to manufacture BrahMos





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supersonic cruise missiles. Since BrahMos is a company it will generate tax revenue to the State unlike an ordnance factory

4) By locating a unit of BrahMos here, other State-owned PSUs like KELTRON, KEL, Steel Industrial and Forgings etc. could benefit by way of manufacturing sub system of components on a long-term basis.

The Government is also making efforts to have a tie-up between State-owned Steel Complex Limited and Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).

The dying traditional sectors got a lease of life immediately upon the LDF assuming power. The impact of new policy is visible in coir, cashew and handloom, which recorded an unprecedented production and sales. The

campaign initiated by the Government appealing people to wear khadi or handloom at least once in a week is well received. An increase in sale by four folds posting revenue of Rs.200 crore a year is expected. Over one million school students would wear handloom uniform in the next academic year.

The Government recognises the critical importance of infrastructure for the development and growth of industries. The previous UDF Government as well as the Union Government grossly neglected the infrastructure needs and failed to bring in any considerable investment in any area. To meet the pressing requirement of certain vital sectors, the Government has floated a dedicated infrastructure

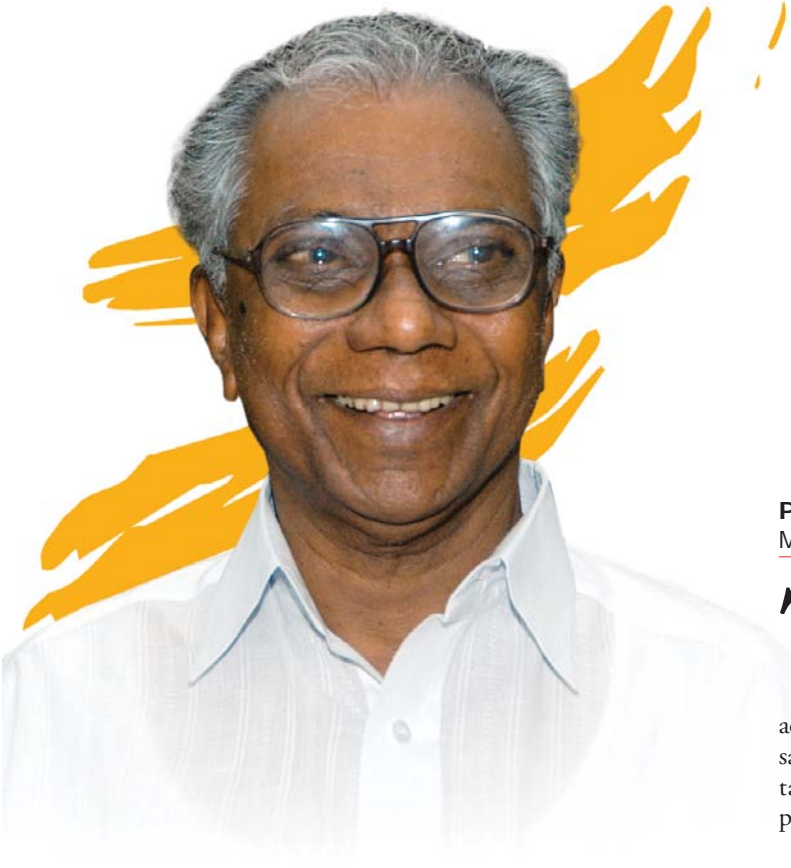
company, Infrastructures Kerala Limited (Inkel), with private participation, to create world-class infrastructure facilities for industries. The response from non-resident Keralites to support the venture and to invest in the company is tremendous.

The Government expects other avenues of growth with the commissioning of mega projects like Vallarpadam International Container Terminal at Kochi, LNG terminal at Kochi, Gas pipeline project of GAIL, GAIL's petro-chemical complex, BPCL-Kochi Refineries expansion plan and Vizhinjam Deep Sea port in Thiruvananthapuram. These mega projects altogether will bring in investment to the tune of Rs.25,000 crore.

The Government is happy that Grasim Industries of Aditya Birla Group has decided to set up a knowledge based industry, including an IT park, at Mavoor in Kozhikode, where Grasim's Pulp and Fibre units existed. I feel, Birla Group's decision to set up an industry in Mavoor is a clear indication of Kerala's investor-friendly climate. A Malaysian company has decided to set up a Satellite City including a medical city at Kinaloor in Kozhikode. Shobha Group is already in the process of setting up a Hitech City in Kochi with an investment of Rs.5000 crore. The Government has plans to set up two Electronic Hubs, one near Kochi and the other near Thiruvananthapuram. State-owned KINFRA would set up a Spices Park in Idukky and a Food Processing Park in Wayanad with the assistance from Commerce Ministry. The Spices Park would be a joint venture of KINFRA and Spices Board.

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Efforts to have a tie-up between Steel Complex and Steel Authority of India



Labour Excise

P.K. Gurudasan
Minister for Labour and Excise

The Left Democratic Front Government in Kerala is completing one year in office. One year in office is certainly too short a period for any Government to fulfil all its obligations to the people. However, the achievements made so far in the labour front have been of great satisfaction and pride as the benefits of the various initiatives taken by the Government reached the common man, particularly the toiling workers.

The first thing the Government did after assuming office was to give out pension arrears of agricultural, cashew and handloom workers as also the arrears under various Welfare Fund Schemes. The plantation sector was facing serious crisis and the Government sanctioned Rs. 90 lakhs for the repair of the 'Layams' of the closed plantations. Negotiations are going on in the right direction for the re-opening of the 22 closed tea plantations. The Kochin - Malabar and Bonakkad Tea Estates have already been opened.

The Cashew sector, which employs more than three lakh workers, has faced serious set backs during the last 40 years. It is the Government's resolve to resurrect and rejuvenate the industry. With this aim in mind, a senior IAS Officer has been appointed as Cashew Special Officer with head quarters at Kollam. Shortage of raw cashew nuts and shortage of working capital are the main problems facing the industry. As against 1.25 MT of raw cashew nuts produced in the State during Nineteen Seventies, only 58,000 MT is produced now. However, the public sector KSCDC could provide 199 days work and Capex provides 177 days work in the Cashew factories during the year. The Government have introduced various steps for increasing production and to bring more areas under cashew cultivation with Central Assistance. For this purpose a committee has already been set up under the Cashew Special Officer.

There are about 38 lakh unemployed persons registered in the Employment Exchanges. The Government has spent Rs. 49.57 Crore for the payment of unemployment assistance, which was due for 13 months. At least, 7300 persons could be given employment through Employment Exchanges. Orders

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Welfare Ensured More Vigilant



have been issued to allow renewal of lapsed registrations with effect from 1st January 1990.

Inspecting Officials of Labour Commissionerate and Directorate of Factories and Boilers are maintaining strict vigil in the enforcement of statutory provisions, guiding working conditions and safety standards of industrial establishments and also on payment of statutory dues to the workers. The Directorate of Factories and Boilers have conducted several awareness camps at important growth centres in Kerala on industrial safety and occupational health. The Labour Commissionerate has started negotiations with Trade Unions and representatives of Management for identification and control of occupational health hazards among the plantation and beedi workers in the State.

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Several measures are being taken to identify critical gaps in the health care delivery system at ESI hospitals and dispensaries and initiated action to plug these gaps. The hospitals and dispensaries in ESI sector are provided with important equipments and steps are being taken to

raise the quality of service. Particular attention is being taken to clear the arrears of medical reimbursement claims.

The commencement of Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishment Workers Welfare Fund Board-2007 has been a milestone. About 10 lakhs workers in the

Sanctioned Rs. 90 lakhs for the repair of the 'Layams'

unorganised sector will get benefit under the scheme.

The world is witnessing technological advancements in all the fields. The ITIs under the Labour Department have also to equip themselves in tune with these changes. New courses have been started and out-dated courses discontinued in some of these institutions. Eight ITIs have been upgraded as Centres of Excellence. During the next year 13 more ITIs will be upgraded. The functioning of the Overseas Development Employment and Promotion Consultant (ODEPEC) has been reorganized. 176 persons were provided overseas employment during the year.

The Government is committed to eradicate illicit liquor. The illicit liquor mafia have strong inter-state links and our excise Department has to keep a constant vigil to check the menace. Thanks to the coordinated efforts put in by the Excise Department and with the help of police, illicit liquor worth crores of rupees has been seized.

Indeed, the policy of the Government is not to encourage liquor but to make them aware of the ill effects of liquor consumption. In this endeavour the Government enlisted the co-operation of NGOs, Trade Unions, Political parties etc. While discouraging liquor



consumption, the Government wants to resurrect and protect the traditional toddy industry in view of its potential to provide employment to a large number of people.

While admitting that we could not rise up to the level of expectation of the people, the Government have been able to do a lot of things during the short span of one year. The Government need the support and co-operation of every citizen to fulfil the promises given to the people. Let us march ahead for a better tomorrow. ■



Law and Or Tourism se

Kodiyeri Balakrishnan
Minister for Home and Tourism

It is a pleasant surprise that the arrival of the first anniversary of LDF Government is in continuation of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the first Communist Government of 1957. What made the 1957 Government a global centre of attraction are the steps introduced for the persistent development of Kerala society. The present Government led by V.S. Achuthanandan is the continuation and timely developmental form of that Government. The Government is committed to materialise the promises made one year earlier when LDF faced election, step by step. Any person who inspects the last one year's activities of the Government cannot ignore the changing activities and developmental projects that are genuine and standing on the part of the people. The Government are going ahead by organising time-bounded projects for the political, social and cultural development of the State and stopping the earlier custom of their premature death in the knots of red tape, and taking stern stance against corruption.

It is not just a claim but a reality in front of us that this Government could enhance the law and order situation of Kerala, which was crumbled down during the tenure of the earlier UDF Government. The strong interference and relentless vigil of police alone could make this possible. The past experiences that police was used to handle political opponents like enemies and letting out savage torturing methods against people's agitations have become horrible memories only. By bringing back the awareness that maintaining law and order and investigating criminal offences are the primary as well as the most important responsibility in the police force, it could be possible to reduce criminal offences



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Pains have taken to discriminate crime investigation and maintaining of law and order. As the first phase, this is implemented in the cities Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode.

Duty shift of eight hours to police was set up. In the beginning this was implemented in 17 police stations.

Forty four police stations were computerised last year with the state of the art facilities such as DNA analysis, cyber forensic, brain finger printing etc.

In the coming year, entire police stations in Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Thrissur and Kannur districts will be computerised. Reception counters are arranged in police stations.

Order Safe Setting trends

and to give protection to the life and wealth of the citizens. To improve activities of police, public help was sought out. Kerala could put forward the new model of community policing in which civilians and police join hands to keep law and order. As part of this, joint patrolling was introduced in cities in alliance with residents associations. Ensuring sufficient vigil in their own area by analysing situation jointly by the people and police authorities makes community policing fruitful.

Refinement of police is a matter of deliberation in both proper and improper times. But it was this Government, which started fruitful steps for that. Pains have taken to discriminate crime investigation and maintaining of law and order. As the first phase, this is implemented in the cities Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode. Duty shift of eight hours to police was set up. In the beginning this was implemented in 17 police stations. Forty four police stations were



Joint patrolling in cities in alliance with residents associations

computerised last year with the state of the art facilities such as DNA analysis, cyber forensic, brain finger printing etc. In the coming year, entire police stations in Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Thrissur and Kannur districts will be computerised. Reception counters are arranged in police stations. Direction has been issued to make available the service of women constables in these counters to the maximum. This was done to make police stations a centre where petitioners including women can enter without fear as in any other Government service providing centres, by shifting it from its traditional characteristics.

The Government is very attentive in the welfare of the police force. To increase the self-confidence of police, timely promotions have been implemented.

Ordinance has been issued as

fundamental changes from the law passed by earlier UDF Government. If the old Goonda Act was envisaged as a weapon against political opponents, the new law covers sand, blade, CD, rent collecting mafia under it.

Recommendations of jail committee regarding prisoners eligible for relaxation in punishment and release have been submitted to the Government. Steps have been taken to conduct video-conferencing in jails to avoid delay in trials. Steps have taken to operate sub jails at Hosdurg, Chittoor etc. and open jail at Cheemeni.

Construction of six fire stations in the State has been taken up. Two of them have started functioning. The construction of Viyyur Fire Service Academy at Thrissur is almost completed.

In tourism, it was nothing but a giant

tourism sector. It was by envisaging better tourism projects and its effective implementation we could win the National award for the Best Tourism State. The State Government's approach of Responsible Tourism targets to make available the benefits of tourism to the local people, workers of traditional handicrafts and individual industrial labourers. This Government have started 131 new projects. Approval is received from Central Government for projects worth Rs.37 crore. Kerala Tourism, which was limited to Kovalam, Kochi and Kumarakam, could be extended to all over Kerala. Special attention has been given to Malabar, which is backward in tourism. The projects namely Bakel, Valiyaparamba, Ranipuram, Muzhuppilangad, Pazhassi, Thalasseri, Pookkodu, Thusharagiri and Dharmadam are implementing as part of Malabar Tourism Project. It was this Government, which released from curse the Swapnanagari project in Kozhikode, which had been ignored for about two decades. Steps have been taken for land acquisition for the project, which is renamed as Sarovaram. My village tourism-friendly village project is being implemented with the aim that at least one project of the Tourism Department will be in all Grama panchayats and municipalities. Government have been extending special interest in the fields of Cultural Tourism, Health Tourism, Farm Tourism etc. In order to avoid off-season in Kerala and to attract tourists in rainy season, Monsoon Tourism Packages have been envisaged.

Construction of Kerala House in Mumbai has been completed and business started. Steps have taken to construct Chennai Kerala House. New Classification system has been introduced to home-stay project. Second phase of Vazhiyoram project declared. Made KTDC profitable. The pay revision of KTDC staff implemented. Accelerated the activities of KITS and Food Craft Institute. Thus, pages will not be sufficient if the fruitful activities this Government has taken in tourism sector are listed out. Tourism Sector is showing the trend of daily development. In this background each person related to tourism is indebted to act with more responsibility and efficiency. ■



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antecedent to the comprehensive reformation of Police Act. The legislation to prevent antisocial activities is a solid evidence for the strong determination of the Government to suppress Goonda-Mafia groups. The new law has

leap that took place last year. An increase of 22.37 per cent in foreign tourists and 5.41 per cent in domestic tourists than the previous year has been recorded. World Travel and Tourism Council figures show that Kerala is first in the growth of



Keen on Infrastructure Development

T U Kuruvilla
Minister for Public Work Department

In order to expand National Highways 47, National Highways 17 from the existing two lanes, additional land acquisition will be taken up with the help of Government of India. Steps will also be taken for the improvements of NH 47, NH 208, NH 212, NH 213, NH 220 and NH 49. Construction of new bye-passes in Thripunithura, Muvattupuzha and Kothamangalam with the help of National Highway Authority of India will be taken up.

Government assigns top priority for the quality of the National Highways, State Highways and Major district roads. Therefore improvements of overall network quality and road safety has been given due priority during the year. Improvements of Internal connectivity and Interstate connectivity may lead to higher economic growth by promoting tourism and Interstate trade.

The total length of road under PWD wing comes to 14235 kms. About 4235 kms work has been arranged under KSTP, NABARD, CRF schemes etc. A new project is being prepared to take up the balance 10,000 kms road under heavy maintenance scheme within next four years. Long term maintenance for five years are also included in the heavy maintenance contract, so that the cost of repair in subsequent years can be reduced. In 2007-08 Rs. 320 crore is ear marked in the budget for maintenance of PWD roads. Out of this, Rs.160 crore will be set apart for long-term heavy maintenance contract. The additional amount required will be met for this project by availing loan from the funding agencies.

Along with the tendering for construction of roads, tender provisions also will be made for repair and maintenance of roads on a long-term basis. There is a delay of two-three years for payments of bills in PWD, which result in much increase in

Action will be taken to implement High way Protection Act

the tender excess. Action is being taken to clear the existing arrears even by availing loans from financial Institutions.

By strengthening the Vigilance wing of PWD the over all working quality of department will be improved. Three Executive Engineers are posted recently in the intelligence wing.

Present facilities in PWD Rest houses are not satisfactory. Land available in the premises of Rest houses will be utilised in a better way. There is a proposal for Private participation on BOT basis. Fifty percent of rooms will be retained in Government custody for official purposes as well as to allot to low income group people. The activities of DRIQ Board will be strengthened and equipped to play more important role in design and quality control.

In order to reduce cost of

construction of roads and reduce environmental pollution, use of plastics in road construction could be explored.

In order to protect the road network immediate action will be taken to implement High way Protection Act.

PWD Code and Manual will be

All the major buildings such as civil stations, hospitals and court buildings will be completed in a time bound manner.

revised and published during this year incorporating current technology.

All efforts will be made to complete the first phase of KSTP expeditiously and also to start the second phase in consultation with the World Bank. Administrative sanctions for 137 works costing to Rs.90 crore were issued last year. These works will be arranged along with other schemes included in the budget.

The development of Kakkanad Thankalam road, Nedumbassery Kodaikanal road, Kollam Sabarimala road, Coimbatore Pollachi, Parambikkulam vazhachal and Bhoothathan kettu Sabarimala will be taken up this year.

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The Kerala Road Fund Board will be positioned to play more effectively in the development and maintenance of major roads particularly roads in major cities apart from completing the Thiruvananthapuram city roads improvement work in hand.

All the major buildings such as civil stations, hospitals and court buildings will be completed in a time bound manner.

The work of nine Railway overbridge will be completed during this year and works for 15 numbers will be started.

Availing Central Road Fund, development of more roads will be ensured. More bridge and road projects will be taken up under NABARD assistance.

Steps are taken up to improve the functioning of Kerala State Construction Corporation and Roads and Bridges Development Corporation Limited. ■



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New fleet on the Road

Mathew T Thomas
Minister for Transport

This Government has spared no effort within their reach to help tide over the nonplus and unpleasant situation faced by the KSRTC.

As a first step the Government has sanctioned Rs.72 crore to the Corporation at various occasions.

Government has decided to replace 1000 unserviceable buses by new ones built by the State of the Art technology. The first lot of 400 buses will be on roads shortly.

When this ministry assumed office, KSRTC, the lone Government institution, which caters to the needs of the passengers in our state, was reeling under heavy pressure from various corners. Its fiscal condition was such deplorable that MACT claims, pension benefits of employees etc were pending for long. When this Government assumed power the accumulated loss of the corporation was Rs.1500 crore and total debt was Rs. 2650 crore. At one stage, the oil companies even threatened to stop fuel supply for want of settlement of huge amount due to them. Sanctioning of several uneconomic routes by the previous Government foreseeing the assembly election further debilitated the Corporation, which was already ailing due to mismanagement of resources and wasteful expenditure.

This Government has spared no effort within their reach to help tide over the nonplus and unpleasant situation faced by the KSRTC. As a first step the Government has sanctioned Rs.72 crore to the Corporation at various occasions. Government has decided to replace 1000 unserviceable buses by new ones built by the State of the Art technology. The first lot of 400 buses will be on roads shortly. Another notable achievement is the opening of a new sub depot at Thalasserry.

Driving licences are being despatched by post

Austerity measures have been adopted to make KSRTC viable and more passenger-friendly. Introduction of AIMS (Accident Information and Monitoring System) and ETM (Electronic Ticket Machine) have proved effective. The Corporation has sanctioned two instalments of DA arrears to its employees and pensioners.

With a view to strengthen the service operation in Waynad sector, KSRTC has introduced services from Kozhikode to Sultan Bathery at 10 minutes interval and to Mananthavady at 20 minutes interval which were wholeheartedly welcomed by the public. A new incentive scheme has been introduced with a view to motivate crew to bring more income on an experimental basis and results are positive. It is decided to make all the operating units as Profit Centres.

To increase the non-operating income, steps were taken to start Courier services. And new Shopping complexes will be constructed at important places. About 1000 workers were newly recruited through Kerala Public Service Commission/Employment Exchange and under dying in harness scheme.

As a measure to make KSRTC a healthy organisation training is being imparted to all categories of staff. The training to drivers has already been started and positive results have been noticed, especially reduction in accident rate and improvement in KMPL (Kilometre per litre). KSRTC has taken every possible effort to re-organise schedules and thereby reducing the consumption of HSD oil and as a result EPKM has been enhanced. It has been decided to procure good quality items and centralised purchase system is in the anvil. Consequent to the purchase of good quality pre-cured tread rubber, the life of re-treaded tyre have been increased resulting in a saving of Rs. five crore annually.

By organising 'Service Pension Adalath' long pending cases were settled and it helped to reduced court cases. Inspection and Audit wings were



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strengthened to check the losses of ticketless passengers and other expense.

Motor Vehicles Department

After computerising its 54 out of 60 field offices of the department under the "FAST" (Fully Automated Services of Transport) project the Learners licences, Driving licences, Registration Certificates, permits and other documents are being issued in laminated format. The delay in issuing these documents has been considerably reduced.

In order to gear up road safety measures, six fully automated and computerised Speed Tracers mounted on vehicles have been introduced.

In order to lessen the inconveniences of vehicle operators, application for interstate permits are being received and despatched by Post. Driving licences are also being despatched by post.

An overall increase in the collection of Motor vehicle tax, compounding fee etc has increased to Rs. 700.23 crore during 2006-07 as against Rs.621.92 crore during 2005-06. The compounding fee collected during 2006-07 have been to the tune of Rs.17.77 crores as against Rs.11.72 crores during 2005-06 showing an increase of 20.72%.

State Water Transport

With a view to revamp the department and to make boat services more effective and passenger friendly the Government accorded administrative sanction to purchase eight new boats, to repair nine boats in private workshop so as to clear the backlog in boat repairing and to hire in 10 boats to ensure smooth boat services while defective boats are withdrawn.

Printing & Stationery

The Printing Department caters to the printing needs of various Departments and Quasi Government institutions.

The Department has acquired enormous development in its units. During the last financial year the Department purchased machineries amounting to Rs. 2.15 crore and the same have been installed government presses. It is after the lapse of several years that orders for printing 13 lakhs of text books have been entrusted with this department which were completed within the time limit.

Government presses are now in a

position to undertake all printing works of Government and various Departments of the Government. In the last one year of the ministry there was a boost in the appointment of staff through PSC to this Department.

Kerala Transport Development Finance Corporation

KTDFC, a non banking financial company registered under the Reserve Bank of India, started business during 1992. Its authorised and paid up capital are Rs.50 crore and 43.83 crore.

KTDFC has notable achievements in the first year of the present ministry. During this financial year an amount of Rs.13,000 lakh has been granted to KSRTC and Rs.13.20 lakh has been granted under SRTO (Small Road Transport Operators) scheme. Also Rs.1081.71 lakh has been granted to individuals for the purchase of vehicles. Besides an amount of Rs.197.57 lakh has

activities, the Corporation has opened new branch offices at Thiruvananthapuram, Thiruvalla and Trichur. The commissioning of 'Trans Towers' - a ten-storied office cum shopping complex at Vazhuthacaud, is another remarkable achievement KTDFC made this year.

Kerala Books and Publication Society

The KBPS is functioning as a Government undertaking under the printing department, which achieved

text books for the schools. The society also took up printing of Lucky Vat Card introduced by the Government and completed printing of 300 lakhs lucky vat scratch card required by the 'Taxes Department'. KBPS was able to fulfil the requirements of the commercial taxes department for their new and novel project, by supply scratch card, danglers, flex, posters, stickers etc in time.

The offset printing press of KBPS at Kakkannad had grown into a fully equipped print house which is truly

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been granted under personal loan scheme. Under housing scheme an amount of Rs.1258.76 lakh has been granted. The company has launched a special vehicle loan scheme for MLAs at reduced interest rate in July 2006. An amount of Rs.140.18 lakh has been granted under this scheme.

As part of expansion of business

many goals like higher productivity, modernisation and economic growth. Though the society suffered loss and economic hardships during the previous years, there is a sudden recovery from the hardships. The Society is now self sufficient in all respect.

During April 2007 KBPS has completed printing 110 lakh copies of

dependent to Government Departments undertaking etc to reproduce any print materials required by them in good quality and promptness.

The Government have streamlined plans to bring up KBPS as a new generation Public sector Undertaking that set an example to other Government institutions and Public undertakings. ■

The first lot of 400 buses will be on roads shortly



Prosperity

Mullakkara Retnakaran
Minister for Agriculture

When the present LDF Government assumed power, the State economy in general and the agricultural scenario in specific were in a very precarious situation. Debt - ridden, grief stricken farmers, farmers suicides, fall in prices of agricultural produces, anti-farmers import policies, general recession in agricultural front etc had led to acute agrarian crisis which the new Government has to take over. The situation was the most miserable that Kerala has ever experienced.

The new Government's foremost task was to try the level best to set right this deplorable situation. At this outset of one fruitful year of governance, I would like to share with you the moments of pride we had in taking the right and timely farmer friendly policies and decisions.

From the very beginning itself, LDF Government was keen and committed to point out the important issues crippling our farm front to the union Government thereby giving strident expressions to the voice of farmers in Kerala. The consecutive visits of central planning commission team, Union Agricultural Minister Sarad Pawar, members of the National Commission of farmers to Kerala and visit of high-level delegation of Ministers to Delhi during the initial periods, could showcase the real situation of State before Central policy makers. As a result, unlike in the previous years the Government has succeeded in securing a relief of Rs. 765 crore package for Kasaragod, Wayanad and Palakkad district.

It was really a Herculean task for the new Government to protect the farmers in distress due to the crash in price of agricultural produces and consequent indebtedness. The Government is all set to rehabilitate the dependents of farmers who committed suicide. Immediate orders were issued to write off agricultural loans in this regard. Their dependents were given an assistance of Rs. 50,000. One-year moratorium was granted on farm loans. The Government also offered interest waiver on farm loans.

For the first time in India, Agricultural Debt Relief Commission was constituted in the State to look into the grievances of debt-ridden farmers and to take steps to free them from the trap. The commission has powers to intervene and prevent exploitation of farmers by marginal forces and to declare a region or crop as distressed. Depending on the nature of the loan, crop loss and financial position of the borrower, the commission would take appropriate steps to free the farmers from debt. Rs.160 crore has been allotted in the budget for this purpose.

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Regenerated



Agricultural adalats will be organised in all Krishi Bhavans to redress farmer's grievances. The district agricultural officers, representative of the Director of Agriculture, and the Panchayat President would hear the complaint at Krishi Bhavans. This would be the first time that Karshaka adalats are being organised in the country.

A toll free help line (1800-425-4718) had been set up in the office of the Minister of Agriculture so as to help farmers to raise their grievances and register them at Minister's office.

To control the soaring vegetable price, two lakh kits worth Rs.20 each were distributed to public for Rs. nine through Hortcorp outlets. This was extended to major districts and Taluk headquarters that helped a lot in combating price rise. It is also decided to extend Hortcorp stalls to rural areas. It is this timely intervention of Government that has enabled to control vegetable prices.

The Government has launched the harithasree programme on the auspicious occasion of 'Pathamudayam' to promote

vegetable cultivation and to make the State self sufficient in vegetable production. Idukki, Wayanad and Palakkad districts have been declared as organic farming based vegetable districts. A target of 15 lakh tones of vegetable production through 2000 Harithasree and 5000 farmers self help groups involving two lakh farmers is aimed at. The vanasamrakhshana samithis too will be roped in for this project in Munnar. The production and marketing will be networked so that the farmers and consumers satisfy their demands reasonably.

As part of the initiatives to encourage organic farming in the state, 100 organic villages would also be set up. Like wise, Kerasree scheme project for coconut, Keralasree for paddy and Kissan sree to provide security to the farmers are on the anvil. To augment the new zeal and zest in drawing policies and revamping farmer friendly strategies 2007-08 is declared as Haritha Varsham and Department of Agriculture has been renamed as Department for Agriculture and Farmers welfare.

The Government could streamline time bound procurement and marketing

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system of paddy. The civil supplies corporation has procured paddy for a competitive price of Rs.8.50, which brought smiles back to the face of paddy farmers. Modernised rice mills will be established at Thakazhi, Vaikom and Alathoor. The UDF Government was once decided to close down these mills.

To protect the fast dwindling paddy farming areas in the State, a legislation to protect paddy cultivation and prevent reclamation of paddy fields will be enacted. Already group farming and participatory projects were revived and initiated for promoting rice cultivation. The Government is in the process of settling the outstanding dues of paddy procured during UDF regime. Rs 12 crore has been disbursed to the paddy producers' co-operatives, Padasekhara Samithis and Co-operative banks.

Government could also initiate copra procurement through Kerafed with the support of the Department of Agriculture, Market fed and VFPCCK. Coconut procurement was also initiated through Kerafed Societies.

The LDF Government is always keen and committed towards farmers and agriculture sector, which is considered vital for State's security and social stability. As part of the continuing efforts of Government towards this end, steps were taken to revamp Agriculture Department and related agencies, to fill the vacancies and to root out corruption in the department.

Assistance of Rs.50,000 was given to dependents of endosulfan victims. Strict measures were taken to restrict the usage of endosulfan. Natural calamity assistance was distributed to farmers who suffered extensive crop loss during last South West monsoon.

Schemes like sustainable development of Rice based farming systems giving thrust to group farming and fallow land cultivation, Coconut

based farming systems, Small farm mechanisation, Organic farming promotion schemes, Management of yellowing of Areca nut and Coconut, Vision 2010 programme focussed on value addition and post harvest management, opening of tender coconut parlours, starting of sales outlets and micro enterprises for promoting processing and value addition implemented by department of agriculture and activities of State Horticultural Mission, and those of other Agencies like VFPCCK, HortiCorp, KAICO, Oil Palm India Limited have helped to regain the enthusiasm and energy in farm sector.

Entry of women and youth into agriculture could make a qualitative change in this sector. Women in agriculture schemes and the agriculture in school programme were extended with this farsighted vision of Government.

The need of the hour is to build a Kerala brand in agricultural products that could be sold in global market. For equipping our farmers to compete with the global market and to address the gap in agricultural information flow and transaction management, the Government has set up virtual university for agricultural trade and e-Krishi project. E-Krishi project enables farmers to sell

their produces through Internet. www.e-krishi.org is the revised web portal. The farmers can reach e-Krishi trade centre through the toll free number 1800-425-1661. This would also facilitate to set up fairly large network of farmers by giving them instant access to a lot of information useful to them including market, demand, price, best practices and expert advice on quality improvement.

This year's State budget is also aimed at the strengthening and revival of agricultural sector. The budget lays stress on increasing rice production, procurement and marketing, watershed management, coconut development, relief to distress farmers, and writing off loans, Agricultural debt relief commission, product procurement, producer marketing companies and irrigation schemes.

Government has also urged the Centre for a change in the import policies towards revival of agricultural sector. The cut in import cess had a direct hearing on agricultural sector. Owing to the flaws in the new import Policy framed without taking State into confidence farmers suffer a huge loss. The State Government urged centre to increase the import duty of coconut oil to 300% and to retain the import subsidy of pepper.

The wishes and aspirations, the problems and prospects, the agonies and anguishes and the frustrations and fulfilments of the farmers of Kerala will be appreciated, accepted and imbibed by the Government. The Government is committed to go to any extent to eradicate the evils that have crippled the farm front and to provide solace to farmers. The views and priorities of Government on protecting farmer's rights are learned and farsighted and all those provisions and recommendations for the benefit of farmers will be fully operational in the coming years. ■



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Decentralisation *Rewritten*

Paloli Muhammedkutty
Minister for Local Self Government

The LDF Government has the aim that local self-government institutions should be changed into a third tier of authority like that of Central Government or State Government. A rewriting of the existing administrative system is needed to materialise this goal. This is a process, which has to face so many challenges. The Left Democratic Front Government expressed political will to take the bull by the horns.

The changes in the society made by the brave reformations of the first ministry headed by EMS, is part of history. All the left Governments came into power after that led our State to prosperity by introducing many novel projects, following the steps of the first government. Decentralisation is the very important among them.

It is said that the Five Year Plans laid the foundation stone of the development of India. But, though so many Five Year Plans have completed, there occurred no substantial change in the lives of crores of poor people. Neither could bring the basic amenities like water, light, road, educational institution, hospital etc. into the villages of India. Almost all projects that were executive-centred had been failing. In this circumstance the LDF tried to seek out alternatives. Government made out that if power, planning and money reach the lower tier, localised development could be materialised. The success of the experiment based on that is what is seen in the local self-institutions.

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Government's decision to restart the people's plan movement is generally accepted

Government is committed to arrange all basic facilities to local self-government institutions for working independently, as they are the third tier of power. The Government desires that Grama Panchayats and Corporations should financially stand on their legs.

Last year, 37,69,403 families became members of Kudumbashree through 1,79,403 ayalkkootas (neighbours' gathering). Rs.826 crore thrift was deposited through them.



this caused the best panchayati raj system in India come into existence in Kerala. The past UDF Government made little contribution to the strengthening and continuation of this. Instead, they took many steps, which weakened decentralisation. The Left Front came into power again is restarting that process. Government has appointed a consultative committee headed by V.J. Thankappan, who is the forerunner of the panchayats raj. It is expected that the consultative committee will give suggestions needed for making decentralisation permanent.

Government is committed to arrange all basic facilities to local self-government institutions for working independently, as they are the third tier of power. The Government desires that Grama Panchayats and Corporations should financially stand on their legs. For that Government has taken suitable action by now. The last UDF Government took many decisions that would cut off the income of local self-government institutions. They are being corrected one by one. Besides, Government is taking steps that include tax reformation to increase the own income of local self-government institutions.

Government's decision to restart the people's plan movement, which trumpeted transformation in villages, is generally accepted. Like the 9th plan, the 11th Five Year Plan should also be made

a large popular gathering. The Government desire to bring in some fundamental changes in 11th Plan. Emphasis is given to both production sectors including paddy cultivation, and giving houses to the homeless. Importance will also be given to improve the quality of public utility systems.

Intension is there to lessen the number of small projects and to give priority to joint ventures. Government's vision is that the plans of the local bodies should be in accordance with the comprehensive district plans. Ten years have been completing since the decentralised plans began to be implemented. In this circumstance, the Government believe that it will be helpful in the future activities to evaluate the experience of ten years. Government have entrusted an expert committee headed by Dr. M.A. Umman for this purpose. After getting the report of Umman Committee, changes will be introduced, if needed, in the implementation of decentralised planning.

Though the authority has been handed over, the interference of local self-government institutions into health and education sectors are too limited. These things were discussed many times with Health Minister and Education Minister. On the bans of that Government have taken decisions which will make

fundamental changes in the education and health sectors. Many other suggestions are under the active consideration of the Government.

Proud is there to state that Local Self Government Department has bagged record achievement in getting Central projects. Projects worth Rs.1037 crore are approved just for Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme alone. This can be seen as a historical achievement. Considerable achievements could be obtained in Prime Minister's Village Road Development Project and Job Assurance Project.

It is a grant success that job assurance project implemented as a model against the age old concept that Urban Development Department cannot execute any project without corruption. The increase in giving jobs to adivasi families, especially to women is notable. In the current year, job assurance project starts in Idukki and Kasaragod districts also.

The biggest problem Kerala faces is pollution. At present, there is no system to culture filth in scientific way. Because of this, the epidemics, which we say banished, are raising their heads one by one. Attempts are on progress to bring

the Clean Kerala Project aiming at to make Kerala completely clean, to victory. It is a recognition to the activities in this field that in the current year 205 Grama panchayats and six Block panchayats are awarded Nirmal National Award. The greatest problem cities face is solid waste refining. Government believe that a solution can be worked out by decentralised system.

What the Left Front Government desired when it formulated 'Kudumbashree' (Prosperity of the family) in 1998 was 'absolute sweeping off of elementary poverty' from our State. Now Kudumbashree has grown into the largest women empowering project in India itself. Last year, 37,69,403 families became members of Kudumbashree through 1,79,403 ayalkkootas (neighbours' gathering). Rs.826 crore thrift was deposited through them. It

health, education and cultural fields by hands.

Town and Country Planning Department was a department, which was moving in wrong direction due to misrule. Government could give a new sense of direction to this department, which was dipped in corruption from head to toe. The Town and Country Planning Department is conducting prestigious activities as the nodal agency of UIDSSMT scheme, intended to the urban infrastructure development. The contribution given by Town and Country Planning Department to check the wrong tendencies and illegal building constructions in the field of house construction sector are worth mentioning.

The sustainable urban development project with the help of Asian Development Bank in five corporations

is about to start this year itself. Government were willing to receive this loan just because they expressed willingness to change so many conditions that are against the people. The challenge in front of the Government is to help corporations to complete this time-bounded as this is the project that received so many criticisms. Government hope that target of sustainable urban development project can be achieved with the cooperation of ruling committees of corporations.

Government are of the view that agencies, which interfere in the local self-government institutions need not kept alive. It was on the basis of this that Kerala Urban Development Project and four developmental authorities, which were not working, were stopped. But fixing

of KSUDP as the coordinator of urban developmental projects is helpful to corporations.

Government desires to make Local Self Government Department on the go and to stop inefficiency, delay and corruption by conducting incessant discussions with the employees and their organisations. The new croteropm for transfer of staff has been declared on the basis of this. There is no doubt that it will be a pleasant thing to the staff who have the past experience of issuing transfer by bidding.

The target for the 2006-2007 year Plan was fixed to 80 per cent. But we could achieve 87 per cent of the target. The joint effort of staff and elected ruling committees helped to achieve this target.

The local self-government institutions can take a decisive role in the development of the State. Government have taken the Herculean task of integrating people's assemblage and the possibilities of local self-government institutions. The goal of the Government is to strengthen the 1223 local self government institutions in various tiers to the maximum. Amalgamation of Rural Development Department with Local Self Government Department is by giving top priority to this aim. Handling over of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) to district panchayats is also with the same aim.

An action plan will be envisaged by the Government to strengthen village committees and ward committees. There are so many responsibilities local self-government institutions have to dispose of. The workload of local self-government department is increasing day by day. On the basis of this, strengthening of the administrative set up of local self government departments is inevitable.

The primary and the biggest award constituted by Central Government has been won by the Panchyatati Raj system in Kerala. Government are trying to uphold the achievement obtained and to gain new achievements by conceiving lesson from the experiences.

To utilise the unlimited possibilities of decentralisation to the maximum is the goal ahead of the Government. ■



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could also be possible to give loan to the tune of Rs.2075.

Now Kudumbashree is targeting not just economic improvement. Kudumbashree has the sublime objective of bringing up the poor in taking their

Importance will also be given to improve the quality of public utility systems



Water Safeguarding

N.K. Premachandran
Minister for Water Resources

Water is a prime natural resource, a basic human need and a precious national asset. The planning, developing, conserving and managing of which should be on an integrated and environmentally sound basis, keeping in view the socio-economic aspects and needs of our State. Realising the importance and scarcity of fresh water, it has to be treated as an essential environment for existence of life. It is one of the most crucial elements in developmental planning.

It will be improper to analyse the performance of Water Resources Department from the viewpoint of one year achievements. The problems and issues plaguing the sector are the result of years of neglect, haphazard planning and unrestrained exploitation. Recognising this fact right from the start, Government initiated efforts to articulate its objectives through a comprehensive "Water Policy" so as to establish a resource based and participatory approach to water management. The Policy envisages a set of initiatives ranging from setting up micro watersheds to institutional mechanisms. It will be finalised shortly.

The safety issues of certain Dams have created anxiety in our society. To address these issues the Government strengthening the Dam Safety Authority by inducting technically proficient experts. The authority inspected three Dams and furnished recommendations on two Dams.

Another important problem being faced is the seemingly intractable issues of sharing river waters with neighbouring States. The Mullaperiyar Dam issue has raised much concern within the State. We were able to put forth the genuine concerns on raising the Dam height and the Supreme Court, acknowledging these apprehensions, directed that to settle the issue through discussion between the States. We have relied on a detailed Environmental Impact Study of the area, which will be submerged if the Dam height is raised as well as the seismological data to forcefully voice the objections. The alternative option to build a new dam downstream is considered actively and budget allocation has been provided.

We are aggrieved by the award of the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal. Government seeks to assess the award on the

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the Elixir



The Kerala Water Supply & Sewerage Act 1986 providing Kerala Water Authority with powers to check pilferage and take action against cases of water thefts is going to be amended.

Under the Farmers' Rehabilitation Programme, schemes for augmenting the irrigation potential have been prepared targeting farmers of Palakkad, Wayanad and Kasargode.

basis of our requirements. Towards this end, we have constituted an Expert Committee to study the specifics and give detailed recommendations so as to present our case appropriately. The process of filing a Special Leave Petition

in this context is in the final stages of preparation.

Government is in the process of finalising the constitution of River Basin Authorities for planning and implementing water resource based

interventions for the rivers.

A legislation seeking to integrate various Acts pertaining to the licensing of boats and river vessels plying within the State is in final stage.

The Kerala Water Supply & Sewerage Act 1986 providing Kerala Water Authority with powers to check pilferage and take action against cases of water thefts is going to be amended. Special anti-theft squads have been formed for enforcing these measures. Legislations to control unauthorised usage of drinking water, fitting of suction devices in the distribution lines to augment water off take and such other unlawful activities are also in the pipeline.

The amended provisions enable KWA to diversify its activities. Action has already been initiated to establish a PVC pipe manufacturing unit at the Premo Pipes, Chavara. KWA also plans to set up bottled water manufacturing units at Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikkode. Implementation of these initiatives will be commenced this year itself.

In physical terms, Kerala water Authority has notched up several

Chamravattom Regulator-cum-bridge project has got momentum

achievements in the past one year. 78 water supply schemes, including 26 major ones, benefiting six lakh people have been completed. Completed 223 water supply schemes for rural schools, 50 'Swajaldhara' and 947 'Varsha' schemes. Sanction for four new major projects have been obtained under Accelerated Rural water Supply Scheme-Technology Mission. The efforts of KWA were also instrumental in getting schemes sanctioned under JNNURM programme. Under this, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram will get benefited with investment of Rs.582 crore for water supply and sanitation. The tendering process in respect of long term works under ADB and World Bank Assurances are nearing completion.

Moorkhanad Water Supply scheme is the other major achievement. This project had been lying in the doldrums for a long time. During the last one year, we could catalyse the activities to an

witnessed progress. The Groundwater Directorate could install 897 borewells. As part of the drought relief measures, 216 bore wells with hand-pumps were constructed. Under the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Scheme, 138 bore wells were completed.

Besides this, GWD succeeded in completing 16 artificial water recharge projects. In Rainwater Harvesting 85 projects completed.

Many new initiatives have been taken up in the Irrigation sector. Chamravattom Regulator-cum-bridge project has got momentum. We propose to implement the project directly and the budget provision is made.

Under the Farmers' Rehabilitation Programme, schemes for augmenting the irrigation potential have been prepared targeting farmers of Palakkad, Wayanad and Kasargode. Assistance for 130 schemes under Minor irrigation for an amount of Rs.27 crore as well as assistance



advanced stage. The same was the case of HUDCO aided Kochi project. Both the projects are to be completed this year itself.

Revenue Adalats are being arranged district-wise. Six districts were covered, and out of 2800 complaints received, 2025 were settled at the Adalat.

It is a matter of great pride, and immense satisfaction, to kick-start the construction of the much-delayed JBIC assisted water supply scheme. Out of the 23 modules, 20 contracts have been awarded - 15 in the last one year. The construction phase, inaugurated on 27th March 2007, includes five packages worth Rs.2600 crore. Perhaps the largest single project implemented in this sector, the JBIC scheme is expected to benefit 41 lakh people in the State.

Groundwater sector too has

from Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme for major projects totalling Rs.228 crore have been sought.

The Twelfth Finance Commission has awarded Rs.175 crore as grant-in-aid for Coastal Zone Management covering nine districts. Rs.225 crore have also been awarded for works related to inland waterways and canals. All these are the results of strenuous efforts on the part of the Department.

We are observing 2007 as "Water Literacy Year". As the adage goes "Nature provides for our needs, but not our greeds". It is high time spread the message "Preserve water; secure our future". I hope that all sections of society will join in this endeavour, and ensure a sustainable future for our generations to come. ■



Revenue Department is on its path of total revamp. Several steps have already been initiated for improving delivery of service, speedy and transparent disposal of cases eliminating corruption and malpractices and to make officials more accountable. Computerisation of all the village offices is the first one among such projects. Kottayam district becomes the first district in India where all Village Offices are computerised. This programme is going to be implemented in other districts.



Revamping Revenue Administration

K.P.Rajendran
Minister for Revenue

Revue Department plays a vital role in the administration of the State. Generally, Revenue Department deals with the issues related to land, maintenance of documents, protection of public land, collection of land revenue etc. Today, the Department is shouldered with a multitude of activities and responsibilities. Right from the Village Offices to the District Collectorates, the Revenue Department is dealing with nearly 150 subjects concerning common man such as issuance of various certificates, maintenance of land records collection of land revenue tax and cess, collection of revenue recovery, settling land survey disputes, land reforms, conduct of election process, handling of law and order situation, calamity relief and rehabilitation, disaster management and mitigation programme and so on. In short,

the department is directly or indirectly involved in all situations of the day-to-day administration of the State. It also co-ordinates activities of various departments and developmental programmes of the State.

For the past one year the Revenue Department is on its path of total revamp. Several steps have already been initiated for improving delivery of service, speedy and transparent disposal of cases eliminating corruption and malpractices and to make officials more accountable.

Computerisation of all the village offices is the first one among such projects. Kottayam district becomes the first district in India where all Village Offices are computerised. This programme is going to be implemented in other districts.

The Revenue Department has established a 'Land Bank' which comprises Government land, poromboke land, resumed land from encroachers, bought-in-land, time expired and cancelled lease land etc. The land so pooled in the 'Land Bank'



The department already conducted Pattayamelas in 10 districts and about 20,000 pattas have been issued through these Melas. Pattayamelas of the remaining districts are on. It is expected that 10,000 more pattas could be issued.

Government constituted a State Disaster Management Authority

will be used for setting up infrastructural facilities for public use and for distribution among the landless people.

The re-survey, which started during the year 1966, still remains incomplete. Though it is a massive and time consuming exercise only 45 per cent of the villages have been surveyed so far. It may take decades to complete the re-survey if we follow the present mechanism. Hence the Government has decided to adopt new technologies including satellite and remote sensing developed by agencies like NRSA and ISRO and to complete the work within three years.

The constitution of Farmers' Debt Relief Commission, which is first of its kind in our country, is another achievement that the Department could accomplish. The Commission headed by Justice K.A. Abdul Gafoor has been functional. The Commission has elaborate powers to adjudicate disputes between farmers, debtors and creditors and to pass awards binding on both parties, waive interest, reschedule loans, order loan moratorium, recommend

declaration of distress affected areas or crops or persons, recommend the Government to take over the entire or partial debt of farmers etc.

In the recent past, our state has faced various disasters. The Tsunami of 2004 and various other calamities like drought, flood, land slide, tremors etc., which caused deaths and loss of property have compelled the State to focus on disaster mitigation. Government constituted a State Disaster Management Authority.

A special drive was taken up in every district for the distribution of Pattas to the landless through Pattayamelas. The department already conducted Pattayamelas in 10 districts and about 20,000 pattas have been issued through these Melas. Pattayamelas of the remaining districts are on. It is expected that 10,000 more pattas could be issued. Similarly, land distribution to tribes will be accelerated.

The previous United Democratic Government neglected the victims of Tsunami who were in the relief camps. But this Government has taken measures to rehabilitate the affected people.

Government sanctioned Rs. one lakh each to the kin of the deceased in connection with the second anniversary of Tsunami in addition to the earlier financial assistance. Government secured three schemes with financial assistance of Rs.16 crore under Prime Ministers Child Assistance Scheme which provides financial assistance to those children who lost their parents in Tsunami to the tune of Rs. 51,000 as fixed deposit till they become major and a special scholarship of Rs. 300 per month to meet school expenses. Apart from the above, an insurance scheme for the residents of coastal regions in nine districts has been introduced through the United India Insurance Company, which would be beneficial to more than 1,58,000 people.

To rehabilitate the Tsunami victims and to enhance standards of living of the coastal people, Government succeeded in getting projects worth Rs.1442 crore from Government of India. Government has started its implementation.

A new scheme 'Kera Kedaram' (Coconut Grove) and 'Nadan Manthoppu' (Mango Orchard of local varieties) has been launched to coconut cultivation, fruit trees and medicinal plants in all vacant lands of the office premises of the Revenue Department. Taluk Development Committees have been constituted, which include people's representatives and officials. Help Desk set up in the collectorates renders help to the public especially students for higher studies.

Presently Village Offices issue certificates for specific purpose. This causes much hardship to the individuals, as they have to approach revenue authorities for each certificate. Hence Government has decided to extend validity of certain common certificates to a period ranging from one to three years.

The Government is taking every effort to eliminate corruption that exists among a few officials and to make the department more vibrant and serviceable to the public. ■



The Government has decided to extend validity of certain common certificates to a period ranging from one to three years.



New Hopes in Fisheries Sector

S. Sharma

Minister for Fisheries and Registration

Coastal areas lack the basic infrastructure facilities when compared to rest of the State. Provision for total housing, safe drinking water, sanitation and electricity, creation of alternate income generating activities through value addition are some of the key areas, which need emphasis for the development of coastal area.

The L D F Government is committed to the sustainable development of fisheries and welfare of fishermen community. With this aim in view the Government has formulated and implemented various programmes. In the context of Tsunami that inflicted untold miseries to the coastal community, the LDF Government has taken keen interest to introduce legislation for Debt Relief to Fishermen with the ultimate aim of relieving them from the clutches of moneylenders and financial institutions. This legislation will bring them back to life and restore their livelihoods with the support of TEAP and TRP projects implemented at a cost of Rs.162.82 crore. A total of 18 projects have been started implementation for the restoration of livelihoods of coastal community. Development of micro enterprises (400 units), vehicle for fish marketing (150 units), working capital for revolving fund (80 units), Fish Kiosk (45 units), Sea Food Kitchen (25 units), mussel farming (32 units), Dressed Dry Fish (60 units), Ornamental Fish production (30 units) are some of the programmes under implementation. Production and marketing of value added fish products will be encouraged and the quality of such products will be ensured by introducing a system of branding and certification. 25,000 persons will get employment by the implementation of these projects.

The fisherwomen engaged in fish vending are exploited heavily by middlemen. In order to relieve the fisherwomen from the burden of cutthroat interest rates, the Government has formulated a programme

Five fishing harbours are under various stages of construction

to give interest-free loans. An amount of Rs.5000 will be given to each fisherwoman as working capital through commercial banks. They have to repay the loans in 12 equal instalments. 40,000 fisherwomen will be benefited by the scheme.

Coastal areas lack the basic infrastructure facilities when compared to rest of the State. Provision for total housing, safe drinking water, sanitation and electricity, creation of alternate income generating activities through value addition are some of the key areas, which need emphasis for the development of coastal area. With this aim in view the Fisheries Department has signed an agreement with National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) Hyderabad for the preparation of a master plan for the Integrated Development of coastal villages at a cost of Rs. 3000 crore by mobilising funds from various sources including the grant sanctioned under 12th Finance Commission.

The LDF Government has given utmost importance for the welfare of fisher folk by enacting the Kerala Fishermen's and Allied Worker's Welfare

Cess Bill with enabling provisions to collect cess from various market intermediaries including exporters. Such an enactment will help to collect an amount to the tune of Rs.10 crore per year, which will empower the Board to implement various welfare schemes more effectively.

The Fisheries Department in consultation with the State Insurance Department has drafted a new scheme to introduce a comprehensive insurance package called Matsyasuraksha for the fishermen and their families. For the first time in the history of Kerala the State Government has provided free ration to the families of fishermen and allied workers, who lost employment due to ban on trawling, through the public distribution system.

Besides, various new programmes such as Aqua Technology Park at Kodungallor near Nedumbassery airport, oceanarium at Puthuvypin in an area of 60 acres, Pre-processing centre at Neendakara are under various stages of implementation. Theravada programme in association with the Forest Department with provision to rehabilitate 10,000 fisher folk families, fisheries package at a

cost of rupees three crore for the suicide affected Palakkad, Wayanad and Kasaragod districts, establishment of coastal knowledge centres one each in nine marine districts, strengthening of Matsyabhavans by the redeployment of staff to facilitate single window services to fishermen, registration and licensing of fishing boats, deep-sea fishing project at a cost of Rs. 400 lakh, value addition at a cost of Rs. 100 lakh, one paddy one fish at a cost of Rs. 100 lakh in Thrissur district and coastal Pura at a cost of Rs. 100 lakh in Kasaragod district are some of the programmes started implementation during 2006-2007.

LDF Government is committed to the development of fishing harbours and landing centres in the coastal area. At present there are 13 fishing harbours and 25 Fish landing centres in the State. Out of this five fishing harbours are under various stages of construction. The Government have accorded administrative sanction and started construction of a new fishing harbour at Koyilandy at an estimated cost of Rs35.48 crore. Administrative sanction for the construction of a new fishing harbour at Thalai at a cost of Rs 19.26 crore has been obtained from Government of India and the construction will be started this year itself. Detailed project reports for the construction of fishing harbour at Chettuva in Thrissur District and Cheruvathur in Kasaragod District have been submitted to Government of India for sanction. Investigation sanction has been accorded for establishing a mini fishing harbour at Chethi in Alappuzha District.

Realising the importance of ensuring quality for increasing export of marine products and considering the fact that our fishing harbours are not up to international standards, the Government has taken up upgradation and maintenance of the existing fishing harbours at Neendakara and Beypore at an estimated cost of Rs.8.95 crore and Rs.2.73 crore respectively.

I would like to express my satisfaction that the efforts put in by the Department of Fisheries during the last one-year in alleviating the miseries of fishermen community have started yielding good results. ■

The Fisheries Department in consultation with the State Insurance Department has drafted a new scheme to introduce a comprehensive insurance package called Matsyasuraksha for the fishermen and their families.





Health Services

care for all

As our promise to the people in election manifesto, we are trying to rebuild and strengthen the public health system. There are some improvements seen in the field though it has still to become perfectly all right. I can assure that the world-renowned Kerala model public health system can be re instated soon.

P.K Sreemathi Teacher
Minister for Health

When the LDF government came into power, public health system was totally in a miserable condition. Corruption and anarchism prevailed everywhere. Poor patients were unable to get good treatment at Govt. hospitals. As our promise to the people in election manifesto, we are trying to rebuild and strengthen the public health system. There are some improvements seen in the field though it has still to become perfectly all right. I can assure that the world-renowned Kerala model public health system can be re instated soon.

We are trying to get more facilities in medical colleges also. When we came into power, our application to increase seats in

Gov. Medical Colleges was rejected by the medical council of India. Then we approached the Supreme Court and increased 50 seats each in kottayam and Thrissur medical colleges. In fact it is equivalent to starting a new medical college.

After a long period of 27 years we could start two nursing colleges in Government sector at Alappuzha and Thrissur. The developmental activity of Rs 100 crore under Prime Minister's special scheme has been started in Thiruvananthapuram medical college. IMCH in Kozhicode medical college got Rs 50 crore for developmental work after a painstaking attempt of State Government and Health Department. Shifting of Alappuzha medical college hospital to Vandanam was a herculean task. Yes, we have done this.

When we came into power National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was really in darkness. We have remoulded and

Women under BPL get Rs 700 in villages and Rs 600 in cities for their first two deliveries



More than 500 doctors have been appointed for rural service under NRHM. Another 500 asst. surgeons were appointed through PSC. And the Government has implemented compulsory rural service for medical graduates and postgraduates.

Women under BPL get Rs 700 in villages and Rs 600 in cities for their first two deliveries. More than 20,000 thousand women received the benefit.

changed it as a System acting very dynamically in our day to day health field. Woman-Child health programmes and National eradication programmes are under NRHM. 20 lakh rupees are given to each of 115 community health centres, 10 crore and 37 lakh are given to PHCs for buying drug kits. 5094 sub centres are given Rs 10,000 each.

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Government has decided to reschedule the OP time in Govt. Hospitals as 8 am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm. It might be very comfortable for rural workers who were not able to reach hospitals in early morning. Health Department has more plans for the development of Ayurveda and Homoeopathy sector also.

Social Welfare Department is also my portfolio. We have started more than 1500 new 'anganwadis' through which 3000 women got job. 'Take Home Ration' programme has been started in 34 blocks to solve the nutrition problem of children aged between six months and three years. The honorarium of anganvadi workers and helpers are also increased. The Government decided to make the service of those anganvadi workers and helpers who have more than six months service as permanent. As part of activating 'Prevention of Domestic Violence Act-2005' the Government posted 14 district protection officers.

Now a days senior citizens in our society are facing dreadful situation. Nuclear family system is creating old age homes. Our Government is ready to take care of these aged human beings. We have increased their pension from Rs135 to 245.

This Government is more committed to the welfare of the weaker section. ■

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Co-operatives

Service Oriented

G Sudhakaran

Minister for Co-operation, Coir and Devaswom

As a result of the sincere efforts of the co-operators, the co-operatives could mobilise more than Rs.1260 crore as deposits. Opened 7,51,969 new accounts, enrolled 4,02,373 new members in different societies and recovered Rs. 561 crore as overdue loans. During the period of this campaign, agricultural credit of more than 500 crore was disbursed at a lesser rate than the Central rate.

It is only less than one year since the LDF Government came to power and during this short span of time much have been done to unravel the problems prevailed in Co-operative sector and also to energize the system to be more advantageous to the society. The Co-operative credit sector was characterised with wide spread corruptions and misappropriations leading to a pitiable position by which the resources of the Co-operatives were looted by the undesirable elements of a political party in power during the last five years under the disguise of being the leaders of the co-operative movement in the State. The management of the Kerala State Co-operative Bank which is the apex institution was transformed into an abode of corruption. Seven separate corruption cases in KSCB have been registered with Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau. The first and foremost duty of the Government was to regain the lost confidence due to the irregularities.

As a prelude to curb corruptions District and State level monitoring committees have been constituted. Actions are being taken on the basis of interim reports.

A series of relief measures have been declared by the Government to the members of the co-operatives, especially, farmers. The Government recognises the difficulties

It is proposed to provide Marriage loans at low rates for poor families

experienced by the agriculturists in getting timely credit at concession rate and considering the situation, a policy decision has been taken to reduce interest on agricultural credit. The rates are reduced from 8.5% to 5.5% on agricultural loans upto Rs. one lakh and upto three lakhs rate reduced to 6% i.e., 1% to 1.5.% less than the rate ordered to be charged by NABARD.

This Government has done all possible measures that a farmer friendly Government can take. One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme was extended and the borrowers were benefited more than 150 crore by way of interest relief. Agricultural loans availed by those farmers who committed suicide in between 1.1.99 and 31.7.06 due to debt trap were written off. Interest in any loans shall not be recovered more than the limit of principal.

In order to make all the credit co-operatives financially strong, a new scheme "Sahakarana Nikshepam Keraleeyam" was launched.

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The Common brand name for the Coir products of Kerala was designed and launched; 'Kerala Coir-The Golden Yarn of Gods Own Country'. This will definitely help to explore new horizons of global market for Kerala Coir Industry.



members in different societies and recovered Rs. 561 crore as overdue loans. During the period of this campaign, agricultural credit of more than 500 crore was disbursed at a lesser rate than the Central rate.

The co-operatives in Kerala proved that they could extent other services too. The co-operatives successfully implemented a new scheme 'Sahakarana Vipanam Keraleeyam' which enabled to check the soaring prices of essential commodities.

When 'Chikkungunia', hit the State, the Government granted permission to the co-operatives to spend Rs.5,000 to Rs. 10 lakh to take preventive measures.

It is decided to establish professional institutions in all assembly segments and as a beginning, the State Co-operative Union has started the preliminary works to establish a college for MBA, MCA etc. near Neyyadam, Thiruvananthapuram. Intensive Training Programmes for the employees of the Co-operative departments and co-operatives have also been started.

It is proposed to provide Marriage loans at low rates for poor families. A State level organisation has been registered with its head quarters at Alappuzha.

Co-operative department auditors will be brought under a separate Directorate in order to ensure that the audit of accounts is completed concurrently and efficiently.

A Police officer not below the rank of the Director General of Police will be immediately appointed as provided in the KCS Act in order to prevent the corrupt practices if any followed in co-operatives.

On the whole, the Government is having a vision - A vision to make the Co-operative movement in the State vibrant and innovative, to make them capable of meeting all the needs of the society and to face challenges that may erupt from the capitalist and imperialist forces.

To spin new life in coir sector

The LDF Government proved its commitment to 4 lakh coir workers out of which 80% are women. In order to

months pension during Vishnu. The balance will be released before next Onam. The benefit Schemes to the coir workers were enhanced three times. The total Government assistance to Coir Worker's Welfare Fund Board during this year was 919 lakh, which is evertime highest since the inception of the Board.

The Coir Co-operative sector, the backbone of the traditional coir industry, was in the verge of liquidation due to the anti workmen attitude of the UDF. The LDF Government announced a scheme to revive the sick coir co-operatives by providing financial assistance towards working capital and fixer capital. A financial assistance of Rs. 16.57 crore was provided to primary Coir co operatives and Rs. 3.25 crore to Product manufacturing societies.

A crash Programme has been mooted for establishing de-fibering mills in hinterlands for maximum husk utilisation. The Co-operatives, and units set up by the LSGs were provided with financial assistance up to 75% of the

off accumulated loss of Coir Co-operatives. In addition to this, steps were taken to convert Government loans and institutional finance availed of on Government guarantee to share capital. Thus the Co-operative coir sector will be benefited to the tune of Rs.100 crore.

A scheme for distress relief has been announced through Kerala State coir Corporation and Coirfed, and accumulated stock of coir and coir products amounting to Rs.860 lack have been procured from Coir spinning and production sectors.

To liberate the Gods and Deities from looters

It was a shame for a State like Kerala with cent percent literacy and rich history of social reformation movement, that the temple administration of the State were under the control of criminal syndicates without any control or intervention of the Government. The Devaswoms laws of the State were outdated as there was no political discussion for the last six decades on this issue. This Government

created an environment of consensus among devotees that the Government intervention is necessary in the Devaswom affairs to end the looting of Devaswom assets. The Travancore- Cochin Devaswom Acts were amended and it was widely accepted and applauded. The enactment of Malabar Devaswom bill is on the anvil. The corrupted Devaswom Boards of Travancore and Cochin were dissolved and the culprits booked under vigilance enquiry.

The LDF Government also succeeded in resolving the issues related to Sabarimala Master Plan, and 305 acres of revenue land was transferred to Forest Department for afforestation in lieu of forest land provided for Sabarimala development. All the disputes between the Travancore Devaswom Board and Ecosmart were also settled under the aegis of the Government. ■



A crash Programme has been mooted for establishing de-fibering mills in hinterlands for maximum husk utilisation.

ensure welfare of the labourers in this sector budgetary support of Rs.51 crore was provided. The old age pension to the coir workers was in arrear for 31 months during the UDF tenure. The LDF Government released 12 months pension within a month of its assuming office. Further two instalments were given in connection with Onam and six

project cost. This will definitely enhance the fibre production of the State.

The Common brand name for the Coir products of kerala was designed and launched; 'Kerala Coir-The Golden Yarn of Gods Own Country'. This will definitely help to explore new horizons of global market for Kerala Coir Industry.

The Government proposes to write



Financial Management

Cautious Steps

Dr TM Thomas Isaac
Minister for Finance

On the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the United Kerala, the Left and Democratic Government is putting forward a new agenda for the development of the State. Kerala has been moving forward more or less along the course charted in 1957. As a result, so many changes have taken place in Kerala. The world also has changed. An action plan has to be developed for a changed Kerala in this changing world. The main components of such a programme are as follows:

- i) Protection of agricultural and traditional sectors;
- ii) Upgradation of the general standard of social infrastructure in education, health and welfare.
- iii) Focusing on IT, tourism, light engineering, etc, where we have good competitive advantage.
- iv) Providing physical infrastructural facilities for the aforesaid growth sectors;
- v) Removing the backwardness of outliers such as scheduled tribes, dalits, fishermen, etc, ensuring gender justice and protection of the environment.
- vi) Democratic decentralisation of power, other administrative reforms and eradication of corruption.

In short, our agenda is equitable,

sustainable and rapid economic growth. I would like to underline "rapid economic growth" as the new factor in this composition.

The State Government will have a major role in implementing the new development strategy. But there are two hurdles. Firstly, ours is a rusted administrative machinery. The second is the financial constraints of the Government.

The officially approved fiscal alternative at the National level as a

remedy is not acceptable. Government have no intention of reducing the revenue deficit, either by weakening interventions in developmental areas or by curtailing expenditure on social welfare. We are also not to resort to plan cut as a short cut to tide over financial crisis.

The revenue receipts in the year 2007-08 will be Rs.21446 crore. The revenue expenditure will be Rs.26697 crore. The reluctance to compress expenditure in an anti-people manner as in the early years of the UDF rule is the reason why there is increase in deficit in the year 2007-08, despite ensuring high level of growth in revenue receipts. The revenue deficit for the year 2007-08 is Rs.5251 crore. This is 20 per cent of the revenue expenditure and 3.41 per cent of State Domestic Product. Fiscal Deficit is Rs.7425 crore. The proportion of State Fiscal Deficit to State Domestic Product is 4.84 per cent. No doubt Kerala has the highest deficit level among all states in India.

The revenue receipts in
the year 2007-08 will be
Rs.21446 crore.

The revenue expenditure
will be Rs.26697 crore.

There is no need for grave concern at the current high-level deficit.

The Government has a clear fiscal vision.

It is targeted to bring down the revenue deficit considerably from the next year onwards and further down below 1 per cent by 2010-11. 2010-11 will be the first year of the 13th Finance Commission.



There is no need for grave concern at the current high-level deficit. The Government has a clear fiscal vision. It is targeted to bring down the revenue deficit considerably from the next year onwards and further down below 1 per cent by 2010-11. 2010-11 will be the first year of the 13th Finance Commission. Steps have already been taken to ensure a more legitimate share from the Finance Commission. If we are able to rectify even partially the awful setback meted out by the 11th and 12th Finance Commissions, we will be able to eliminate revenue deficit by 2010-11. A substantial increase in Central receipts is a pre-condition for the elimination of

revenue deficit. A political consensus in the State is expected on this issue.

The main point of action to eliminate revenue deficit is to ensure a substantial increase in revenue receipts. Our own revenue receipts have to increase by about 20-25 per cent per annum. Thus, the revenue receipts of the State will increase to more than 16 per cent of the State Domestic Product by 2010-11. In 2006-07 this was only 13.5 per cent. At the same time, the expenditure in 2006-07 and 2007-08 is at record levels due to implementation of pay revision and arrear payments. This comes to more than 19 per cent of the State Domestic Product. If we are cautious against new

additional revenue expenditure, the above rate will naturally come down to 17 per cent by 2010-11. The main way out to reduce expenditure is to check corruption and profligacy.

Thus, we are committed to eliminate revenue deficit by 2010-11, by matching revenue receipts and expenditure. To achieve this objective, it is not intended to reduce the revenue deficit mechanically at a uniform rate each year. For reasons already mentioned, this fall can be perceived only after 2007-08. In such a context, when there is no revenue deficit, a high fiscal deficit is not a matter of grave concern.

But the perspective of the framework



The main point of action to eliminate revenue deficit is to ensure a substantial increase in revenue receipts. Our own revenue receipts have to increase by about 20-25 per cent per annum.

Comptroller and Auditor General has submitted a comprehensive report on the irregularities of public works in the past

Revenue receipts have to increase by about 20-25 per cent per annum

of the fiscal reforms approved by the Government of India is different. Even if more time is required for eliminating revenue deficit, they are adamant in sticking to the target of fiscal deficit at any cost. It is worth remembering that although the Planning Commission is in favour of extending the period for achieving the target for eliminating revenue deficit for effective implementation of the Plan Schemes of the 11th Five Year Plan for two or three years, they are not in favour of taking such a stand in the case of fiscal deficit.

Once revenue deficit is eliminated, then the borrowings would go towards capital expenditure for creating assets. What is the problem if new assets are created against these borrowings? What is the significance of fixing a mechanical ceiling for fiscal deficit at two per cent of

In the post-independent era, the alternate Governments that came to power in Kerala kept up this tradition even within the capitalistic framework. As pointed out already, the first Government of EMS Namboodirippad was a decisive milestone in this process.

in the past. Rectification measure are being undertaking to ensure that they are not repeated. An overhauling of the drug purchase system has also been initiated. The impact, when the budget process is completed, would have a tremendous effect on increasing the efficiency of public expenditure.

Thirdly, despite the severe pressures, Kerala has been successful in resisting the attempts to reduce its borrowing ceilings. On the basis of the new fiscal perspective and taking into consideration the recommendations of the Finance Commission, it is intended to amend comprehensively the Kerala Fiscal Responsibility Act and the Kerala Ceiling on Government Guarantees Act.

In the 20th century, Kerala has treaded a comparatively better development path for the welfare of the people, from within the capitalistic developmental frame works. Despite all the limitations of capitalism, this provided to the people of Kerala a standard of living that similarly placed people of other areas are deprived of. The so-called 'Kerala Model of Development' has evolved through people action starting from movements for social reforms and civil



the State Domestic Product, as was done in Kerala or three per cent as suggested by the Central Government? For ensuring the giant leap in the development of Kerala, large scale investment in infrastructure is essential. Only the neo-liberal doctrine, that leaves all these to market forces, cutting down the role of Government in the economy, can uphold such a mechanical ceiling as sacrosanct. There is no dispute as regards the need for bringing down the revenue deficit considerably or its eliminating in altogether. For this, a realistic time schedule has to be prepared. But there should be freedom to borrow for capital expenditure as a requirement for rapid development.

Is the new fiscal policy of the state government practical? The achievements of the first year of the government are to

give a positive answer to this question. Most important achievement is the record increase in the VAT revenue collection. In 2005-06 VAT tax revenue was Rs.2950 crore. In 2006-07 it increases to Rs.4500 crore. The target for the current year is Rs.6000 crore. Doubling of the VAT tax within two years would be an all time record. Including the VAT tax, the tax revenue is expected to increase by 25 per cent during the current year. Steps have also been taken to ensure that there would be substantial increase in the revenue from excise stamp duty and non-tax revenue.

Secondly, strong measures have been adopted to put an end to corruption and extravagance. On the request of the Government, Comptroller and Auditor General has submitted a comprehensive report on the irregularities of public works

liberties during the colonial era. Even within the colonial framework, the imperialistic forces could not totally ignore the demand from the people. In the post-independent era, the alternate Governments that came to power in Kerala kept up this tradition even within the capitalistic framework. As pointed out already, the first Government of EMS Namboodirippad was a decisive milestone in this process. Though it cannot be claimed that we have succeeded bringing about a fundamental transformation of the social system, it is our experience that we could provide better life to the citizen of our state. It is in this tradition of engagement with the world reality, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary, this Government is taking steps to commence and implement the new developmental agenda. ■



A Golden leap to the Victory Stand

M. Vijayakumar
Minister Law and Parliamentary Affairs

The Government of Kerala is moving ahead with a clear vision and definite agenda of developments. The people from all walks of life disliked the former government and dethroned it with an endorsement of historic mandate to the present government. The Government is aware of its duties and responsibilities. As soon as the government assumed power, it began healing measures for the wounded sections like farmers, labourers, students, employees and the destitute. The process is going on.

As far as my portfolios are concerned, I am of the view that these are the most neglected departments in the past. The problems in these departments are very serious and need care of both the people and government at large. I am going to appoint a Law Reforms Commission to codify and reform the laws and another Commission to study the problems of sports fields.

I am proud to list some of the salient achievements of my departments:

Law

It may be noted that the contributions made by the first Government in Kerala in the arena of law are praise worthy. Though 50 years have elapsed since then, no earnest efforts have been made from any part to codify the numerous laws or make them transparent. This Government has set up a Law Reforms Committee to revamping and unify the laws. It has attached momentous attention to maintaining law and order, which is the indicator of good governance. Steps to break and open up nexus between some dangerous mafia and some sections of the society and departments have also been successfully

Steps to break and open up nexus between some dangerous mafia and some sections of the society and departments have also been successfully initiated. Government is committed to set up a corruption free judiciary either. In a short span Government have done many things.

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initiated. Government is committed to set up a corruption free judiciary either. In a short span Government have done many things.

Provided rupees two crore from Legal Benefit Fund for the social security of the Advocates and Advocates' clerks.

Decided to set up Litigant Bench for the clients in every court.

The Human Rights Commission is legally and properly re-organised by including Justice Dinakaran, Rtd. Chief Justice of the High Court.

Launched permanent Lok Adalat in Thiruvananthapuram for the first time for speedy disposal of the service sector cases such as Post And Telegraph, Power, Transport, Water Supply and Railways.

Allotted Rs. one crore for the construction of the Court Complex at Thiruvananthapuram. The Chief Minister laid its foundation stone.

Introduced an online system linking the office of the Minister with the offices of the Advocate General, District Government Pleaders, Kerala House and Supreme Court to monitor the disposal of the cases.

Sports

The scenario of sports is lamentable. The former government has shattered the basic structure of the sports council and the sports department to meet the selfish motives. Kerala is the breeding ground for sports talents. But the state lacks adequate infrastructure facilities. We require spacious playgrounds, synthetic tracks, floodlit stadiums, swimming pools and well-equipped training centres. Talents are to be identified in the budding stage and to be motivated, trained so as to enable them to compete with the persons of national and international standards. The programmes and preparations for the same are afoot. The Government is considering seriously for the appointment of a Sports Commission to prepare a detailed report in the matter. Also, the Government is proposing to locate funds to the Tune of Rs.500 crores in State budgets during the 11th Plan period. Rapid attempts have also been made to set apart a certain percentage of plan funds of L.S.G's entirely for Sports development.

"Sports to all and health to all" is the slogan of the Government. To construct

a playground in a ward and a stadium/ swimming pool in a Panchayat is the corner stone of the sports policy of the Government. The following activities have been implemented in the sports sector.

- Kerala State Sports Council, misled and corrupted by the former Government, has been reconstituted democratically.
- Steps to decentralise the Sports Council up to Panchayat level.
- Renovation and Reconstruction of High Altitude Training Centre at Munnar, District Sports Complex at Attingal, International Swimming Pool at Pirappancode, which were discontinued, have been re-started.
- Allotted funds for the modification of Jimmy George Stadium.
- Agreement with Kerala Water Authority to revamp

the swimming pool at Vellayambalam.

- Launched Sports Lottery, to mobilise resources for the comprehensive development of sports, which collected Rs.15 crore.
- Reconstructed the professional football teams of Kerala Police, KSRTC, KSEB and Titanium which were lying neglected.
- Decided to set up major sports projects /schemes such as Sports Complexes, Indoor Stadiums, Football Academy, Swimming pool etc. at district level.
- Government is striving for making Kerala as the Sports Capital of India.

Youth Welfare Board

- Re-organised Youth Welfare Board democratically.
- Conducted Keralolsavam massively and popularly with the support and cooperation of sports and youth clubs, voluntary

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organizations, local bodies etc.

- Introduced a new scheme 'Yuvasakthi' combining the schemes 'Yuvakarma' and Employment Training.

Ports

Kerala is poised for a giant leap in development. The Vizhinjam International Transshipment Terminal, which is the long cherished dream of the State will be materialised soon.

- Renovations of some other ports are already under way.
- Decided to set up a Mareena- cum- Cargo port having facilitates of motorboats, yachts, water sports, water-park, health club and cottages at Alappuzha with public-private participations.
- Requested the Central Government to declare Kollam Port, neglected for a long time, as a major port.
- The Prime Minister has consented in principle to include Azheekkal port under National Maritime Development Programme. Quick actions have been taken for its realization.
- Efforts are being taken to make the dredger, TSD Sindhuraj, operative.
- To generate employment opportunities in the Coastal area, Maritime Institute will be set up at Valiyathura in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Manjeswaram in Kasaragod.

Railway

As far as Kerala is concerned, the Railway Budget for 2007-2008 is a reflection of the combined efforts taken by the Chief Minister, the Minister for Railways in Kerala and MPs from the State. The Chief Minister had convened a meeting of Ministers, MPs and the

officials of the Southern Railway to discuss Railway development in Kerala. Recently, they also met the Prime Minister and Minister for Railways and submitted detailed m e m o r a n d u m . Consequently, in 2007-2008 Rail Budget, we have derived more benefits and allocation compared to previous years. Doubling of eight lines, electrification of two lines, extension of some existing routes, frequency enhancement of three trains, new survey for Thalassery- Mysore, Nilambur Nanjangode rails, possibility study for Kumali - Dindigal route, introduction of Gareebi Rath are major achievements.

The coach factory at Cherthala will certainly boost industrialisation in the State. Yet, we have not got the due. The long pending demand for a separate Railway Zone has not been realised. Kerala, being a consumer State needs more passenger Trains and Goods Trains

Metro Rail

The Government is actively planning for the implementation of the proposed Kochi Metro Rail Project. It is a prestigious project of the State. Every

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body knows that Kochi is a city of narrow roads, which are choked with vehicles. Adequate flyovers and over bridges are to be constructed to meet transporting needs of the growing population and to lessen the traffic congestion in the city. The proposal for Metro Rail Project in the city will relieve the traffic problems. No doubt, the development of infrastructure will boost trade and industry. A special officer has been appointed for its implementation. It is targeted to be completed by 2011.

Parliamentary Affairs

- Steps taken to shift the Parliamentary Affairs Institute from the rental building to the old Legislative Assembly Hall, which is preserved as a historical monument.
- A 'Chair' has been set up for study and research on Parliamentary Affairs in the University of Kerala.

Other Items

- Action taken to establish a hanger unit and International Terminal in Thiruvananthapuram Airport. The Chief Minister has laid the foundation stone, the cost of which is estimated to be Rs. 245 crore.
- Actions for Kannur Airport are in full swing.
- Government is committed to elevate

Rajeev Gandhi Aviation Academy to a Pilot Training Institute of International Level. Two flights have been procured for giving Pilot training to youths.

- Eventually, it may be mentioned that the Government has performed only a small number of its committed agenda. We have a long way to go. This Government will fulfil all of its promises during its tenure itself. ■



Beholding State's Interest

Dr.S. Babusundar

The signing of the MoU for Smart City marks the beginning of a new era in the development of Kerala. It definitely put an end to the hue and cry from many corners lamenting and dubbing Kerala as an Industry unfriendly State. It is truly a proud achievement for the entire people of Kerala led by one of the great son of Kerala –V.S. Achuthanandan, our Chief Minister and the Minister handling the portfolio of Information Technology.

For many reasons, Information Technology based industries are the ideal industry for a state like Kerala. It is the most eco-friendly industry and the one suited for the State with the highest percentage of literacy. In my opinion, this industry suits best with Keralite's way of life.

Kerala in general and Kochi in

particular have a significant location advantage in the Internet connectivity map of the world. Unfortunately, Kerala could not exploit this location advantage to the maximum extent, in the past. The IT infrastructure that is envisaged in the Smart City will be comparable with the best in the world. Definitely, Kerala is going to become the chosen destination of the world for its IT needs.

The Smart City is expected to create more than one lakh new jobs in the first stage and around five lakh jobs directly and indirectly in the last stage, would provide critical infrastructure for IT services and IT-enabled service companies.

The Smart City gives a great opportunity for Kerala to compete with Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in Information Technology. It would definitely take Kochi ahead of Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad. It is sweeter to note that Kerala has bagged the Smart

City when the other contenders for the prestigious project like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have offered a number of incentives, including free land, to the Dubai Internet City (DIC). According to the Smart City plans, it requires another 300 acres to set up project where IT majors in Dubai are expected to move in along with the DIC. I wish that Kerala Government would snatch this opportunity also without compromising with the interest of the people of the State, as is done at present. It is pertinent to note that the State had lost several opportunities of having manufacturing units of several industrial majors of the world. Recently we lost a huge investment from Nokia, the telecom major of the world.

It is heartening to note that slowly but steadily Kerala is changing its posture from a consumer state to a production centre. In the long run, the IT and the tourism industries are the key sectors for

a sustainable development of our state.

The approach of the Government of Kerala on development activities is welcomed by all the sectors: the entrepreneurs, the technocrats and financial investors. This Government had augmented the prospect of Kerala as the chosen destination of investors. No wonder, the NRIs and the North Indian investors are largely made their presence felt. The type and the standard of infrastructure that are coming up in Kerala will turn the State into a truly developed one in a short span of five to 10 years.

There are a few sectors, which demands priority attention of the Government. The foremost one is the efficiency of the Governance. It is high time that the entire gambit of services should migrate to e-governance without any shy or fear. I am sure that some of the measures taken by the Government are sure indicators of their intentions in this aspect, but it need to be accomplished in war footing.

The energy sector needs massive investment and initiatives from the Government. If pure energy is not made available at cheaper rate, the investors will have to turn to alternate means for generating energy and this would in turn result in environmental degradation.

Towards general infrastructural

The Smart City initiative is going to be the turning point in the all around development of this beautiful State. Let us all join hands in congratulating the team behind this move for all their efforts in bringing Smart City as a people friendly initiative.

improvements, public transport and road conditions will have to be improved and provided at international standards.

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team behind this move for all their efforts in bringing Smart City as a people friendly initiative.

■ The writer is Controller of Examinations and Professor and Head, Dept. of Computer Applications, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi – 682022.



Smart City: creating a lakh job opportunities





No Compromise

whether in power or not

Photos : G Pramod, K Hariharan Nair





Identity becomes the soul

Genuine buyers of property in the State will no longer have to suffer about the veracity of the title deed registered in the Sub Registrar Office. It has been made mandatory to affix the passport size photographs and thumb impressions of persons who sell and buy on the first page of the deed.

The official seal of the Sub Registrar will be affixed over the photograph. The Government has issued a notification in this regard.

The Government has initiated this step in order to curb the increasing menace like impersonation, sale of property with the help of forged documents and binami business.

Both the sellers and buyers will have to produce any photo identity card issued by the Government like voter identity card, passport, driving licence, PAN card or ration card.

Government employees can present their official identity card for this purpose.

LIFE & LINE

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