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Articles/features appearing in this magazine are either commissioned or assigned. Nevertheless, other articles are also welcome. A maximum of 750 wordage is appreciated. Such items should be addressed to

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First Floor
Secretariat Annexe
Thiruvananthapuram
PIN 695 001

These may also be e mailed to
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Unused scripts or photographs will be returned if self addressed envelopes having sufficient postage stamps are also sent with the articles.

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CURRENT

The second edition of MCP that started on 18th October in Thiruvananthapuram and ended on 17th December in Kannur had witnessed many such changes.

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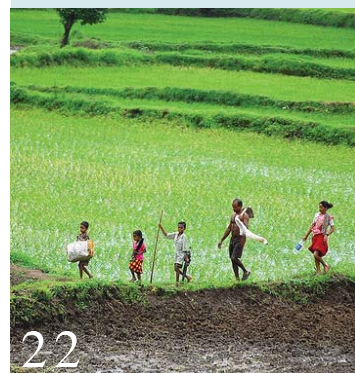


If sample size is very small and not carefully planned and executed, the results obtained may not be reliable. It is with this background that we have to examine various estimates of the number of emigrants from Kerala since 1970.

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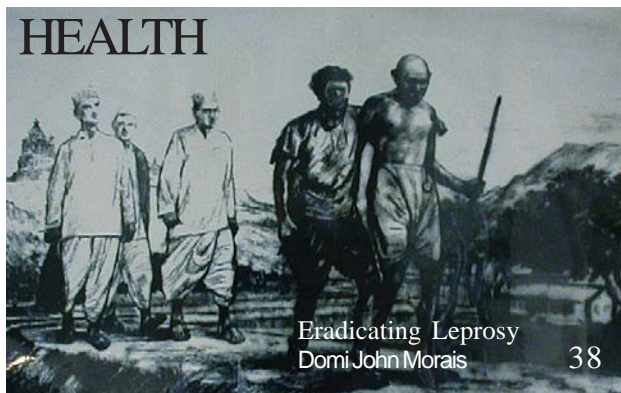
The Global Family Day is celebrated on the first day of the year. What better day to choose for honouring the family than the first of January, when most families have, for centuries, gathered together to usher in the New Year?



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Kerala *Numero uno*

Kerala model development has always been a topic of discussion for economists and policy makers all over the world. Once 'Kerala Model' was followed even by developed countries. Most of our indices in various sectors are higher than that of national average. Most of the state sponsored schemes have attained national attraction. "This is a model for other states to emulate" said UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi after launching the 'Zero Landless' Scheme.

Awards and Recognitions are not new to the UDF government led by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy. UNPSA 2013, IBN Diamond Award, Webretna

Award, etc. are some which need mention. Now Kerala has achieved first position in overall performance in the State of the States Report by the India Today magazine. Last year our state was in second position. And it manifests that, the state is bettering its position from the previous rankings of nine, four and two to *numero uno*.

We had surpassed national average in three key growth indicators: GDP, capital expenditure and consumer market. Moreover we retained our traditional strength in the educational sector also. "With superlative achievements in education, macro

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The subscription amount in cash is received at Information and Public Relations Department, First Floor, Secretariat Annexe, Thiruvananthapuram, PH: 2517036

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FOCUS



economy, agriculture, consumer market and investment over the last year, Kerala emerges as the most improved big state overall,” the survey report says.

Kerala is already in the process of transforming the aspirations of Malayalis, with a vision of long-term perspective. People-friendly decisions, unique welfare schemes which catch national attention, hassle-free administration, etc. are the motto of the UDF government. It is only when the gap between the government and the public is reduced that the people will start believing in the government and its governance. Awards and Recognitions always make everyone more responsible. But according to our Chief Minister, the highest award is “the smile on the face of the person whose grievance has been resolved.”

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Kozhikode

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Kannur

E V Sugathan

Kasaragod

K Abdul Rahman



Union Defence Minister A K Antony inaugurates the Valedictory Session of the 125th Anniversary of Kerala Legislative Assembly.



Ramesh Chennithala sworn in as Home Minister



UAE King gifts book to CM

UAE Prime Minister Vice President and constitutional monarch of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum gifted CM with his book. The book describes the developmental experiences of UAE. The book is a personal complement to the CM, said the King in his message. The King feels that for the development of a country one need to have a vision, a dedicated leadership, effective management and executing committee. The Malayalam version of the book written in English was handed over to the CM by Norka Roots Vice Chairman MA Yousuf Ali.

Hi-Tech Traffic Control Room inaugurated

The Hi-Tech Traffic Enforcement Control Room of Kerala Police was inaugurated by Chief Minister in the presence of Minister Thiruvananthoor Radhakrishnan and K S Balasubramanian IPS, Director General of Police. The launch of the Hi-Tech Traffic Enforcement Control Room of Kerala Police would go a long way in curbing accidents on the national highways in the State, most which are caused because of over speeding, negligence and reckless driving. VIPs should not be spared from penalties for traffic violation, said the Chief Minister.

There were discriminations in traffic rule enforcement. "The public are often disappointed at VIPs violating traffic rules and often going scot free. Rules should be equal for everyone to realise the ideal of road safety and to take common man into confidence," the CM said.

The new traffic enforcement control room receives feeds from 100 cameras installed at various points on six highway stretches in the state. The selected locations witnessed significant number of deaths occurred during the past three years. The



stretches are Kovalam-Kottiyam (NH), Venjaramoodu-Chengannoor (SH), Sakthikulangara-Ambalappuzha (NH), Alappuzha-Changanassery (KSPTA), Thrissur-Kuttiappuram (SH/NH) and Palakkad-Malappuram (SH).

The 24-hour cameras will identify over speeding vehicles, including two-wheelers.

The charge memos sent by the police control room to violators will have photograph, date and time of violation. The fine can be remitted through district payment collection centers in all districts. The Rs 300 fine should be remitted within 15 days, Rs 400 for next 10 days failing which the violator has to face court proceedings.

Six New All-Women Police Stations soon: Home Minister

The state government will start six new women police stations, as part of ensuring more representation of women in the force. The decision was taken at the meeting of senior police officials chaired by home minister Ramesh Chennithala. "As a step towards finding solutions to the various issues faced by women and ensuring them justice, the government has decided to launch six more all-women police stations at Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Thrissur, Malappuram and Kannur. The modalities, including the jurisdiction of the police stations, are being worked out. The police stations will be operational from 1st March" the minister said.

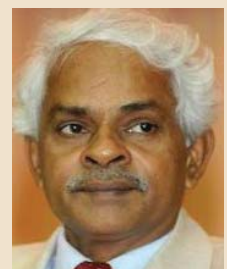
The minister also announced launching of a commando training school with state-of-the-art facilities at Palavel near Nooranad in Alappuzha district to impart training to combat new challenges like the Maoist threat. The government wants to suppress anti-social elements and for that, it is ready to make amendments in law. The police department would strengthen two of its core investigating agencies -- the crime branch and the cyber-crimes section. "Despite limitations, like deficiency of manpower and technology, the crime branch has been doing a commendable job. The government will strengthen this division," the Minister added.

Malayalam will become court language: K C Joseph

Procedures have already been started to make Malayalam the language of the courts in the State, Minister for Culture K.C. Joseph has said while addressing the valedictory of golden jubilee celebrations of the State Institute of Encyclopaedic Publications. Malayalam has already become a world language as there was no place in the world where there is no Malayalee. More than 800 centres are functioning outside Kerala under the Malayalam Mission for Malayalam learning. This is for the benefit of non-resident Malayalees," the Minister added.

7th Pay Revision Commission

Kerala government have constituted the seventh Pay Revision Commission to study and make recommendations on revising the pay and allowances and other benefits of the State Government Employees including teaching and non-teaching staff of Aided educational institutions, local bodies etc. Justice C N Ramachandran Nair (Rtd.) is the Chairman of the commission. The other two members are K V Thomas (Member Secretary) and Adv. T V George (Member).



Zero Landless Project: CM Lauds Film Fraternity's Efforts

The film fraternity has come forward to aid the Zero Landless Project of the state government by organising a mega show on 8th February in Kochi. While inaugurating the logo of the mega event Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said, "The initiative of the Malayalam film fraternity to lend their support to the landless is an eye opener to society. The scheme will be helpful to society as it will serve as an inspiration for others."

The state government has identified the land in its possession. However, it will not be possible to hand over land to all applicants in the first phase. After processing the second phase, land would have to be allocated for at least 2.5 lakh applicants. The government is also planning to obtain land from private persons who are possessing more land, CM added.

Director Siddique will co-ordinate the event. M Jayachandran, Bijipal, Deepak Dev and Gopi Sundar will lead the musical event. The film fraternity also expressed its willingness to conduct a similar programme in gulf countries to aid the government project. The money collected through the event will be utilised to buy land for the landless in Kerala. Cine actors, music directors and singers will participate in the mega show.



CM inaugurated first Soil Museum in India

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy inaugurated the first Soil Museum in India having international standard. The museum has been set up near the Central Soil testing

laboratory at Paraottukonam. Almost all varieties of soil seen in Kerala has been exhibited here. Information Centre, Mini Theatre, water conserving models are also a part of the museum.

The increase of production in agriculture sector can be attained only by knowing the soil in which one cultivates. The soil museum will help to know the soil in a better manner, said the Chief Minister and added that this museum will become the pride of Kerala. The state level inauguration of bio gas plants that is to be installed in selected schools was also carried out by the Chief Minister. Finance Minister KM Mani inaugurated the Soil Information Centre. Minister for Agriculture KP Mohanan presided over the function.

Farming Tradition will be Captured

Only through advancement in the field of agriculture and its growth the state can achieve a comprehensive development, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said while inaugurating the Krishi Utsav at Kanakakkunnu. Agriculture has got prime importance in Kerala. We had farmers who worked devotedly but in recent times this sector faced many hindrances. Only by having

developments in agriculture sector can the state achieve development. The government would do its best to capture the farming tradition, the CM added. Education Minister PK Abdurabb presided over the function. He handed over the report of Karshikasaksharatha-Yuva survey to the Chief Minister.

India International Aqua Show from January 24

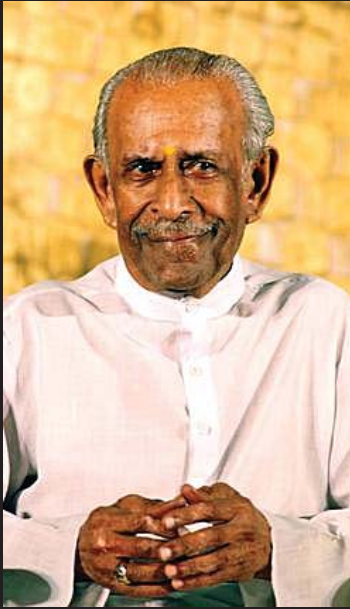
The India International Aqua Show, organised by the State Government will be held at Kochi Marine Drive from 24th January. The five-day event is being organised as part of the efforts to popularise ornamental fish farming and to exploit its wide scope and opportunities.

The aqua show will feature various varieties of ornamental fish, aquariums, aqua foods, medicines and related equipment. The aqua show will also be a venue for the ornamental fish farmers in the state to interact with experts from all over the globe. The show will also feature exclusive fish from Malaysia, Singapore, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand and America. The other states including Maharashtra, Lakshwadweep, Karnataka, West Bengal and Gujarat will also have representation in the show.

CMFRI, CUSAT, NBFGR, CIFT, MPEDA and other national agencies along with Matsyafed will associate with the aqua show. The aquarium equipment from other states will also be displayed in the show.



OBITUARY



Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma

Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma, a witness to the transformation from imperial rule to a democratic polity, passed away. He was 91 and is survived by two children, Padmanabha Varma and Parvati Devi. His wife, Radhadevi, predeceased him. He was also the titular Maharaja of Travancore. The body of Varma was cremated with state and army honours at the premises of Kowdiar Palace.

Uthradam Thirunal Marthanda Varma became head of the royal family after elder brother Sree Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma, the last princely ruler of Travancore, passed away in 1991. Even in his ailing medical condition, he had met Prince Charles during his recent visit to Kerala last month. An avid traveller, Marthanda Varma had visited almost all countries in the West except U.S.A. Switzerland was his favourite country. A Sanskrit scholar, England educated Marthanda Varma was a photography enthusiast and his memoir has a chapter entirely dedicated to royals from different parts of the world he had

photographed. Kerala lost one of the last links with its royal past with the passing away of Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma.

Uthradam Thirunal Marthanda Varma, born as the younger son of Maharani Sethuparvathi Bayi and Ravi Varma Koyi Thampuran on 22nd March, 1922, was educated in the Kowdiar Palace by a group of 14 tutors in various subjects. He later graduated from the then Travancore University with Economics, Politics and History as specialisations in 1943. He was the recipient of the Moncombu Aandi Iyer Gold Medal for the best student in Sanskrit.

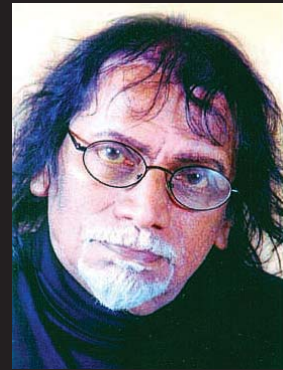


Rosamma Punnoose

First pro tem speaker of Kerala assembly Rosamma Punnoose, the younger sister of Akkama Cheriyan, passed away. She was 100. Rosamma holds many records as a member of the assembly. She was the first MLA to swear in to the state assembly and was also the first MLA who lost the status following a court intervention. She was also the first person to get elected in the first byelection to the assembly in 1958. When she was elected to the assembly from Devikulam constituency in 1957, her husband T P Punnoose was a Lok Sabha member. She was a freedom fighter and had served a three-year jail term during that period.

K P Udayabhanu

Yesteryear Malayalam playback singer, K P Udayabhanu, 77, passed away. Born in Palakkad district on 6th June, 1936, Udayabhanu started playback singing with the film Nayaru Pidicha Pulivaalu (1958) and went on to sing a number of melodies. He is survived by son, Rajeev Udayabhanu. His wife Vijayalakshmi had pre-deceased him.



Although rooted in classical tradition, he chose light music and playback singing as his mainstream. Udayabhanu began his career as an announcer at the Kozhikode station of All India Radio (AIR) in 1955. During the stint at AIR, he became associated with writers and musicians such as P Bhaskaran, K Raghavan, Thikkodiyar, Santha P Nair and K Padmanabhan Nair. This also paved way for his entry into film music. Udayabhanu went on to record many unforgettable melodies and was also a gifted composer.

Songs he sung include timeless classics such as "Kaanana Chayayil" (with P Leela in 'Ramanan'), "Anuraga Nadakathin" ('Ninamaninja Kalppadukal') and "Thaamarathumbee". Udayabhanu also carried out music direction in a few films such as 'Samasya' and 'Mayilpeeli'. His wife Vijayalakshmi predeceased him. He is survived by son Rajeev Udayabhanu.



Mending Lives of

I was surprised to hear from an officer working in the District Collectorate, Kottayam that in his 31 year long career the day that he felt most accomplished was the day of Mass Contact Programme (MCP). The MCP at Kottayam went past midnight and concluded by early morning, the following day. There was heavy rain also. If an officer who had spent 16 hours without any

break or rest in the middle of the common man had found his job most satisfying; it clearly indicates a positive change.

The second edition of MCP that started on 18th October in Thiruvananthapuram and ended on 17th December in Kannur had witnessed many such changes. I was joined by my Cabinet colleagues, elected representatives and government officials; all of

whom worked as a team to make the Jana Samparka Paipadi a massive success. We together dreamt of a goal in finding solutions to the problems of the people on the spot and on the same day. When thousands of them thronged at many of the venues of the MCP, we actually did not bother to take food or rest. Our minds were focused on the means and ways by which the required solace could



Millions

be provided to them. The MCP held in Kottayam was one of the largest mass gatherings the State has ever witnessed. The problems faced by the common man are varied and quite difficult to believe. At the same time MCP showed me the helplessness of human beings. It also brought to light some inspiring stories of compassion and care for fellow human beings.

Binu, native of Adimali, paralyzed fully below the hips, had a gruesome story to tell. He takes care of his aged parents and ailing brother. He is clueless on how to repay the loan amount of one-and-a-half lakh rupees. The students of the Viswadeepthi Public School and their teachers came forward to help him with the loan. Binu was brought to Idukki MCP by the students of this school.

Hearing his grievances and the battle for a new life, he was given 50,000 rupees and a toilet-attached shop near the Adimali Forest station. There couldn't be a perfect example to show care and compassion to a brother like him. Many such people attended MCPs, who were carried on friends and relatives' shoulders and in stretchers and ambulances to get their grievances addressed.

The story of Anju, a native of Punnammottil, Pathanamthitta, studying for B.Tech was not much different from others. Her father is blind, mother a patient and her sister is studying. She found it hard to find a means for living and for continuing her studies. It is because of the kindness of the local people that she has been able to pay her fees in the first two years. She came to MCP when her



life became a vortex of hardships. How can a government remain inactive on such cases? Those who blame that MCP is an extravagant affair should keep in mind that the difference between these people and us is only a thin line.

It was in Kottayam that a nursing student Meera and his brother Manu were included in the Sneehapoorvam Scheme. Both, parentless, were studying in the sixth standard. It was also decided that the government will bear the educational expenses of the two. On the way to the MCP venue in Kottayam, I was informed of their mother's demise and I visited the home early morning itself. I found them weeping in front of their mother Ani Jacob's body. Their father was died a month ago due to cardiac arrest. Doesn't the government have any role in helping these hapless children?

52 year old Sarada, native of Kumbala in Kasargod District has been running pillar to post to get the title deed of her five cents of land. During this frantic run, her small house, owing to bad weather, became dilapidated. She was forced to move with her three children to another house, which did not have proper windows or doors. She decided to take part in the MCP after she was denied of the title deed, which was earlier sanctioned by the tahsildar in 2011. To her great relief, she was sanctioned with the title deed on the 20th day of the MCP. This kind of frustrations and helplessness came up before the MCPs held in Kerala, which the government was able to give due care and assistance. But some people with vested interests criticized that the Chief Minister was doing the job of Tahsildars and village officers. I still don't understand why there are hurdles that prevent us from helping a fellow citizen in distress.

We criticize the administration without knowing the fact that outdated laws and rules make government officials helpless. In the light of the MCP conducted in 2011, we were able to issue 45 new government orders, which will help in the easy and fast disposal of cases. More such amendments would be made this time too, so as to make governance a hassle-free and result-oriented affair. Providing old-age pension to those who have male children was an example. The most important of all was that the BPL list got expanded, enabling families to avail



free medical care.

More changes would be made in the light of MCP 2013. Some corrective steps have already been taken. In the MCP that was held in Thrissur, I have declared that the income limit would be increased in the case of handicap pension. Grama Sabhas can help the government in identifying eligible persons for welfare pensions. This in turn would make the Grama Sabha more dynamic.

Many local issues have been brought to my attention during MCP 2013. And we were able to find solutions to many. The traffic system in Kannur town was in disarray for many months due to the bad condition of the roads. This was following the construction works for laying pipelines for the supply of drinking water. I received many complaints in this regard from people's representatives during the course of the MCP in Kannur. In the Cabinet meeting held the next day, it was decided to provide Rs 5 crores as immediate financial assistance to Kannur Municipality for road repair. On the basis of the revised proceedings, in the MCP that was held in Idukki District, we announced that the title deed distribution in the district would soon commence. Many new development plans were announced during the MCP in Wayanad District. Many issues that cropped up in almost all the districts were addressed.

MCP gave me the opportunity



We criticize the administration without knowing the fact that outdated laws and rules make government officials helpless. In the light of the MCP conducted in 2011, we were able to issue 45 new government orders, which will help in the easy and fast disposal of cases.

to convince myself that the society still nourishes compassion and brotherhood in spite of the oddities of life. I must also emphasize here that the support rendered by the volunteers comprising Student Police, NCC, Scouts and Guides and the Red Cross was highly admirable. Like this, many such people's hard work without rest and sleep made the Mass Contact Programme a great success.

Unfortunately, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) boycotted MCP. I would term it as their political strategy. But, they should have participated in the

programme. By staying away, they denied themselves ample opportunities for interacting with the common man and for understanding their grievances from close quarters. Many of these people had come to MCP venues on wheelchairs and tricycles. Some have to take ambulance. The protest by LDF supporters caused great difficulties to these people from reaching the venues in time. Some of them were forced to take alternative routes to reach the venues. As politicians and social workers, we should not forget that there is no struggle greater than the struggle

for existence. If we fail to realize this, then the people will make us pay.

It is only when the distance between the government and the public is reduced that the people will start believing in the government and its governance. MCP has enabled in closing this gap. Government officials from all districts of Kerala have worked together for nights and days and stood by the people to resolve their problems. This I believe is the real strength of our democracy.

Mass Contact Programme has helped me to interact with people at the grassroots of the society. If this programme did not have taken place, I wouldn't have got the opportunity to meet these people and they wouldn't have met me either. There is enough scope for changes to take effect in the system. MCP has taught me many things. I am still a student and MCP is my classroom. This is not merely a programme; but a mission. When I am engaged in such a mission, I become one among them.

Mass Contact Programme has helped the government in finding solutions to problems that have remained unresolved in administrative glitches. And at the end of the day, the smile on the face of the person whose grievance has been resolved is what matters to me; and perhaps the greatest of recognitions to the government. ■



Governor's Address to the Kerala Legislative Assembly



Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,

I warmly welcome all of you to the tenth session of the Thirteenth Kerala Legislative Assembly and its first session in 2014. My Government is proud of its accomplishments over the last thirty months. It is delivering commendably on the premises that were made to the people of Kerala when my Government took office. My Government has persevered hard for the social and economic development of our State. Most of the key projects whether in the industrial, agricultural, health, education, infrastructure or information technology sectors, that had gone into dormancy have been revived and put on a fast track.

Alongside, Government has emphasized its commitment to the poor and the marginalized in an unprecedented manner. The outlay on welfare schemes run by Government under its Departments has increased threefold over the last thirty months of this Government. Today, the welfare schemes delivered by the Social Justice, Health and other Departments along with our Local Self Governments form the bulwark of a social defence mechanism for

the common man, truly unique to Kerala. The Karunya Benevolent Fund has been widely acclaimed as a unique model in mobilizing funds for humanitarian purposes and has brought succour to 25000 patients, with Rs.250 cr disbursed to them.

The 'Jana Sambarka Paripadi' (Chief Minister's Mass Contact Programme) has come in for commendation from the United Nations. This programme focuses on goals beyond distribution of financial assistance and has been able to effectively resolve several administrative hurdles and simplify procedures.

My Government has a grand vision of our State based on underlying principles of equity and inclusiveness. Let me assure you that my Government is committed to work unflinchingly towards realizing this. My Government shall meet the expectations placed on it by our people with a performance that is consistent, focused and marked by hard work and dedication. No doubt, this single-minded perseverance will yield rich dividends in time. It is encouraging that there are recent reports, which indicate that the efforts put in by my Government

are bearing fruits and Kerala is poised to emerge as the leader in the country in almost all aspects of socio-economic development.

I am happy to inform this august House that consistent with the development ambitions of our State, the size of the XII Five Year Plan has been pegged at Rs.1.02 lakh crore. This is more than 150% of the previous Five Year Plan. The State Planning Board has prepared the first draft of the PERSPECTIVE PLAN 2030. This plan aims at taking Kerala to the same level as the more advanced Nordic countries by 2040, based on a planned growth rate of 7.5%.

A primary focus of my Government in plan expenditure will be on the quality of the expenditure. A new software 'PLAN SPACE' has been commissioned to monitor both financial and physical progress of implementation. My Government shall ensure that all sections of our society and all regions of the State get the benefit of the development that the State is witnessing now. My Government will design special packages in the Annual Plans for addressing development issues of Wayanad and Kasaragod Districts and the coastal and hill

areas. A High Powered Committee will be constituted to identify problems of the most backward areas and to address them specifically. The State has received an Award of Excellence from the Government of India in October 2013 for its efforts in implementing the Results Framework Document.

My Government considers that infrastructure development is very crucial for attracting industrial investments. KINFRA will forge ahead with the establishment of Industrial Development Zones at Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Kozhikode and Kannur. To encourage the manufacturing of specific high priority electronic products, two Electronic Manufacturing Clusters will be established at Kochi with the assistance of Government of India.

My Government is pleased to inform this august House that the introduction of e-procurement and e-payment in PSUs along with Government Departments has ensured greater transparency and accountability. Last year, PSUs under Industries Department paid Rs. 34 cr. as dividend. More professionals will be inducted into PSUs for



improving managerial efficiency.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have created an accelerated growth in industrial investment and in employment creation. Benefits will be extended to MSMEs in tune with the Public Procurement Policy of Government of India for MSMEs. More multistoried industrial estates will be constructed for MSMEs. A Business to Business Meet will be held at Kochi during 2014 for showcasing and improving the marketability of this sector.

In the traditional sector, Government intends to introduce innovative strategies to brand products from this sector. Availability of funds and raw materials will be ensured for providing more working days to the employees of cashew, handloom, bamboo and handicraft sectors'

My Government has made concerted efforts to encourage the coir industry through the husk Procurement scheme' revival / setting up of defibering units among others. Agencies like Coconut Development Board and Agriculture Department will assist for increasing husk collection and maximizing availability of coconut fibre.

Akshaya centres are the

pride of Kerala IT. My Government has succeeded in bringing public services to the doorsteps of the citizen through 2000 Akshaya centres. E-District project has been rolled out in all 14 districts and 52 lakh digitally signed certificates have been disbursed through these centres. Through the Service Plus software, more than 500 services will be brought under the e-Governance umbrella. This year, Akshaya centres will be providing services in the niche areas of kiosk banking, micro ATMs and retail insurance. Our State leads the country in Aadhaar enrolment. 98% of the people in the State have been enrolled on the Aadhaar platform. All beneficiary

Payments will be paid directly to their Aadhaar linked bank accounts.

The State Data Centre will be cloud enabled. To realize the 'Digital Kerala' goal, National Optical Fiber Network will be implemented giving optical connectivity to all Panchayats. Video conferencing will be used in offices at the taluk level to reduce time delays. E-Office is being implemented in the Secretariat and will be extended to all Directorates and Collectorates next year. My Government will showcase the best of Kerala IT initiatives in the National e-Governance Conference that will be held at Kochi in January 2014.



My Government intends to provide budget support to young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas for setting up new enterprises under Entrepreneur Support Scheme. September 12th will be celebrated as Entrepreneurship Day in the State every year. The Startup Village, launched in 2012 at Kochi as India's first public private partnership model, the Technology Business Incubator, will help incubate thousand startups over the next 10 years. Kerala Technology Innovation Zone will be established at KINFRA Hi TECH Park, Kalamassery under the Technopark TBI.

I am happy to inform this august House that the Smart City project has gained momentum and the master plan of construction of approximately 14 million square feet has been approved. The first block of 6.5 lakh square feet, expected to be ready by March 2015 will provide 12,000 jobs. To bridge the gap for high quality infrastructure, my Government has introduced a new scheme to encourage Private IT and High Tech Parks, as self contained walk-to-work townships.

My Government has built its strategy in agriculture around the

focused implementation of various schemes for Rice, Coconut and Vegetable Development, Soil and Crop Health Management, Agricultural Extension and Technology support. We are beginning to see the resultant benefits in increased production and productivity of food crops. Vegetable Development Programmes will be given greater thrust. My Government will progressively usher in a new approach of crop health management based on building sustainable eco-systems and good plant protection practices. Plant Health Clinics will be established in selected Krishibhavans.

The State Horticulture Mission dedicated to the holistic development of the horticulture sector is implementing the National Horticulture Mission Programme. Hi-tech Farming Scheme launched by my Government has evoked keen interest particularly among the younger farmers and Non Resident Keralites. 14 High Tech Villages are being set up on an experimental basis. My Government intends to establish a Technology Centre with the assistance of the Netherlands Government. To encourage Hi-Tech Agriculture, subsidy and interest subventions on term loans will be made available. Financial assistance will be extended for cultivation in Polyhouses. Farmers adopting Hi-tech practices will be organized into Farmer Producer Organisations to compete in the global market. Open precision farming will be encouraged in banana and vegetables cultivation. Special thrust will be given to the cultivation of 'safe to eat' cool season vegetables in Vattavada and Kanthalloor, the tropical fruit Litchi in Wayanad, Strawberry in Idukki and the Dutch Rose in Munnar.

The Mission will set up nutrighardens in the Attappady Tribal Area, to tackle the prevalent problem of malnutrition in the area. The improved ATMA Plus model of agricultural extension will be adopted. Organic farming will be encouraged in Kasaragod, Idukki and Wayanad to gradually

transform Kerala into an organic State.

Next year, 28 new Soil and Water Conservation projects will be taken up with NABARD assistance for developing 23,023 hectares of land. The Soil Museum, a Reference Centre on soils of Kerala will be dedicated to the people of the State. Eco-restoration project for developing 78 vulnerable tribal habitats will be completed.

Developing self sufficiency and bringing veterinary services to the farmers' door steps will be the main focus areas in the Animal Husbandry sector. To augment meat production, 1000 units with 5-10 male calves fattening units will be established in the State. A new poultry farm and hatchery unit are being proposed at Edavanna in Malappuram District. Two multi-speciality Mobile Veterinary Clinics that can reach the farmer's doorsteps will be established. My Government proposes to establish Livestock Management Training Centres in Kasaragod and Wayanad and an Animal Science Museum at Malampuzha.

My Government realizes the immense promise that the dairy sector holds for the State. A model e-market will be established for trading quality milch animals by farmers directly. Sophisticated milk testing labs will be set up at all the major check posts to ensure quality of milk brought into the State. My Government will institute the Dr. Varghese Kurian Memorial Award in his honour for recognizing the best APCOS and Non-APCOS Co-operative in the State.

My Government has consistently persevered to develop the fisheries sector and help fishermen and women employed in this sector. The Fisheries Department will implement a comprehensive housing scheme for traditional fishermen who neither possess land nor house. Multi species hatcheries will be established to propagate the production of endangered indigenous fish species of Kerala. The State will move forward to achieving self-sufficiency in fish seed production.

My Government is very happy to place on record that one lakh eighteen thousand houses could be completed and thirty four thousand houses are under construction, under the EMS Housing Scheme. About seven thousand houses have been renovated under the Laksham veedu Renovation Scheme. The Grama Yathra undertaken by the Minister for Panchayats has given a much needed impetus to the functioning of the Grama Sabhas. My Government has been able to strengthen the Panchayats by creating over 1800 posts by far the most significant manpower addition in the Panchayats.

Kudumbashree continues its march forward as one of the most acclaimed Self Help Group movements in the world. It has launched an interest subvention scheme, converging Central and State schemes, under which the beneficiaries will get loan @4%. Kudumbashree has launched the Central Aajeevika Scheme under which thousands of jobless rural youths will be able to upgrade their skills.

My Government proposes to take up an empowerment programme for the Panchayats that are financially the weakest to enable them to design and implement remunerative schemes and help them achieve financial self-sufficiency. My Government proposes to conduct an international meet on Local Governance in 2014 to bring together diverse streams of thinking and experience and facilitate adoption of best practices for the next wave of learning and adaptation in LSGs.

My Government has been effectively utilizing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to provide employment to our rural households. In 2013-2014, Government expects to generate 875.57 lakh person days for 17.47 lakh rural households in the State. The emphasis will be on creation of durable community assets. Timely payment of wages to the workers will be ensured through the Electronic Muster and Measurement System. Under PMGSY, 772 out of the 1335 roads sanctioned having a length of 1702 Km were completed.

Considering the urgency to address development issues of the tribal community at Attappady, top priority is given for the early completion of the Attappady Package.

My Government proposes to construct 60,000 houses under Indira Aavaz Yojana. Rs. 50,000 per house will be provided by Government and the balance will be shared by the three tier Panchayats. As part of sustainable income generation for self help groups at least two micro-enterprises in each Grama Panchayat will be supported and each Grama Panchayat will be provided Rs. 2,00,000 each as financial assistance for group economic activity.

The Sewage Treatment Plant at Thiruvananthapuram has been commissioned. Under Jawahar Lal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission, 400 buses allotted will be operated in different Municipal Areas. A new scheme for multi level parking systems in urban areas will be drawn up to mitigate parking problems. The thrust will be on starting new sewerage network which do not have any and complete ongoing works. The water supply and solid waste management projects sanctioned by the Ministry of Urban Development in 22 Municipalities will be expedited. Kerala Urban and Rural Development Finance Corporation has financed more than 815 schemes this year. The second phase of the preparation of Master Plans for all the urban areas of the State will be completed - a step that will significantly help the planned and orderly development of our urban areas. Local development Plans and Integrated District Development Plans will be prepared for all districts in a phased manner.

My Government proposes to implement comprehensive urban projects throughout the State in PPP mode. An Investor's Meet 'Partner Kerala' will be organized to generate substantial investments in urban projects. My Government has established the "Clean Kerala Company Ltd." as a service provider for operating community based decentralized garbage collection and waste

management across all high rise apartments, office buildings and gated private residential communities. My Government aims to extend housing to all urban poor in slum areas.

My Government believes that through concerted action the State can find a lasting solution to the housing shortage estimated at 12 lakh houses. Schemes like the Saphalyam, Giharee, Sowbhagya, Anugraha and Innovative Housing Schemes will be strengthened. The Kerala State Housing Development Finance Corporation will be used to mobilize funds for the housing sector. The construction of the first phase of the Laurie Baker International School of Habitat Studies will commence shortly. My Government is in the process of amending the Kerala Building (Lease and Rent Control) Act. A State Housing Risk Fund will be set up to mitigate credit risks in advancing loans for housing for low income sections.

My Government will take up the development of undeveloped Scheduled Caste colonies during 2014-15. There will be a special drive for completing incomplete houses taken up under various departmental initiatives. Thrust will be given for providing land for landless and house for houseless. Fifty colonies will be adopted additionally under the Self Sufficient Colony Scheme. There will be a special drive to facilitate students to successfully complete professional degree courses. A Sports College will be started for giving special training for students belonging to SC community who are outstanding in the field of sports.

The Scheduled Tribes Development Department is in the vanguard of implementing welfare and development programmes for the ST community in the State. My Government intends to avail of a loan of Rs. 100 cr. for improving road connectivity to tribal colonies in the State. This year a one-time assistance package for senior citizens and bedridden persons in the community will be implemented. A pilot project of deploying groups of trained



Women Social Workers to assist in de-addiction campaign will be launched.

A program to provide specialized care to 36 ST Communities taking into account variations across communities and geographic locations will be implemented. 1000 new 'Ooruvikasana Samithi' (OVS) will be constituted as Residents Associations. My Government proposes to supplement the existing housing programmes by providing 5000 houses through a loan of Rs. 195 cr. from HUDCO. A Debt Relief Scheme will be formulated for assisting tribal families and 100% ST Kudumbashree Units

My Government gives considerable importance to the welfare of minorities. The establishment of the Kerala State Minority Development Finance Corporation, the Kerala State Commission for Minorities and six new Coaching Centres for youth from minority communities are some of the key achievements in the year. The Kerala Institute of Minority

Studies will be set up at Malappuram in collaboration with the Kerala State waqf Board.

My Government intends to introduce a special assistance scheme for students from backward class communities studying in national institutions like IIT, NIT, AIIMS, IIMs. Under the scheme 'IT for masses', 1000 women will be provided training. The Department for Backward Classes is in its infancy and will be further strengthened this year to take up the challenges of developing the backward classes.

My Government is proposing a new legislation for the registration of migrant workers and providing UID cards with all details. As part of modernizing the Insurance and Medical Services Department an ESI Stores and Inventory Management System will be implemented. My Government proposes to establish the first Safety Institute in the State under the Factories and Boilers Department. The Industrial Hygiene Laboratory will be upgraded to the level of a national laboratory. The

Industrial Training Department has ambitious plans to take up new Skill Development Initiatives, establish new ITIs in linguistic minority areas and launch a Career Development Mission for the trainees to effectively leverage the State's potential in the emerging knowledge economy. New trades will be introduced in ITIs based on job opportunities and market demand.

The Kerala Academy of Skill Excellence has made progress in setting up skill-specific training and placement centres. A core group of trainers will be created, tapping into the skill base of Gulf returnees. My Government will work with the Ministries of External Affairs and Overseas Affairs for protecting the interests of emigrants who take up low-end jobs in the unorganised sector and ensure that they are not exploited by unscrupulous middlemen.

My Government is happy to inform this House that it has launched "Arogyakiranam" a programme aimed to benefit individuals less than 18 years of age with free treatment in government hospitals. This is an innovative and improved version of the Rastriya Bala Swasthiya Karyakram of the Government of India offering free treatment for all medical conditions. Yet another first to its credit, my Government has launched the distribution of over 800 free generic drugs to reduce the burden of healthcare expenditure of the poor. The Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram - scheme for free treatment for pregnant women and newborn up to 1 year was introduced in the State.

My Government has launched an innovative project to screen all newborns for a range of deficiencies in all major Government hospitals. De-addiction centres, anti-tobacco activities and tobacco cessation clinics have been introduced. 27 new dialysis units have been set up in General and District Hospitals. Three versatile projects Jeevani for managing Typo-2 diabetes, Drishti for treating Myopia in school children and Punamava for management of Cardio

Vascular Accident complications have also been started. My Government intends to start Reproductive Medicine Departments for implementing Assisted Reproductive Treatment in all the Government Medical Colleges of the State. This year Regional Spinal Injury Units will be set up in all Medical Colleges to ensure immediate and effective care of spinal injuries.

My Government has initiated steps to start Medical Colleges in 8 out of the 9 districts which do not have any - yet another stellar achievement to its credit in the field of health education in the State. Given the need to combat the high rate of growth of cancer in the State, the Surgical Oncology, Radiotherapy and Radiation Physics Departments of all Government Medical Colleges of the State will be merged and upgraded into mini RCCs for extending tertiary cancer care to the whole population of the State. My Government proposes to establish dialysis units in all Taluk Hospitals with at least 10 beds for a dialysis unit to effectively cater to the increasing number of patients with renal problems. An All India Institute of Homeopathy in the State will be started by upgrading the Government Homeopathy College in Thiruvananthapuram. My Government will endeavour to bring out a comprehensive Public Health Policy.

My Government legitimately prides itself in the concern and commitment that it has shown to the poor and the downtrodden. The Social Justice Department has been a torchbearer for these programmes and is indeed the most visible face of this caring and compassion. My Government is in the process of restructuring the Integrated Child Development Services. An ICDS mission will be set up with a view to resolving programme gaps and operational issues in the implementation of ICDS. Anganwadis will be repositioned as vibrant early childhood care and education centres with adequate infrastructure and human resources. The construction of all Model Anganwadis will be completed in

the coming year.

Given the several instances of child malnutrition reported from Attappadi, my Government proposes to implement an Accelerated Nutrition Programme in Attappadi where nutrition needs of the child and mother through the first 1000 days of the child will be met.

My Government proposes to launch the "We Care" initiative for mobilizing funds for its major social security initiatives. Firms will be empanelled under the project "We Care" and will be entrusted with the responsibility of formulating, designing and implementing various fund raising strategies. Yet another major initiative that will be taken up in the coming year will be to develop a corps of Voluntary Care Workers to take care of beneficiaries under various welfare schemes. The Kerala State Women Development Corporation will open information and assistance centres and help desks in different parts of the State.

My Government has launched the Special Initiative for Disabilities. Under this scheme, hospitals will be supplied sophisticated equipment for early detection of disabilities. The Social Justice and Health Departments will join hands to set up an Early Detection Centre for disabilities in every District. Through the Cochlear Implantation Programme, which has become a model for the country, 200 more hearing impaired children will be assisted. My Government has announced an NGO policy under which, the State will collaborate with accredited NGOs to run homes in all Districts for the aged, disabled, orphans and the mentally ill. The Bill for converting the National Institute of Speech and Hearing, Thiruvananthapuram into a University will be moved in this august House soon. The Kerala State Handicapped Persons welfare Corporation will take up the distribution of motor scooters for the differently abled as one of its main focus areas.

My Government will continue to place emphasis on school education in the State. Added thrust will be given to

teaching communicative English in schools and imparting life skill education for students to better equip them to take on the challenges that lie ahead of them. Special emphasis will be given to the teaching of children with special needs. A "Talent hunt" will be initiated in schools to identify children talented in schools at the lower primary stage itself and groom them as champions. The IT @ School Project will be extended to Higher Secondary Schools with special emphasis on skill upgradation and ICT enabled education. State-of-the-art kitchens will be established in 1000 Government schools. My Government will take up the infrastructure development of 270 Government Higher Secondary Schools. Self-defence training for girls will be introduced in 38 Government Higher Secondary Schools. At the primary education level, teacher training, training for resource teachers, capacity building of SSA personnel will be given focus. UP Schools with 100 students and LP Schools with 150 students will be provided with a Head Teacher. In the academic year 2014-15, the revised curriculum and textbooks will be implemented for selected classes and thereafter, the curriculum and textbooks of other classes will also be revised over two years. The revised curriculum for Pre-primary classes will be introduced. SIEMAT will provide all necessary technical support for the school education system.

The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority is planning to conduct 'NAVAJYOTHI' - a Non Formal Special Education Programme for Attappadi Tribal Area, AKSIIARALAKSHAM - the second phase of the Literacy Programme and ATHULYAM the second phase of the Total Primary Education Programme. The Authority will offer a Higher Secondary Equivalency Programme.

The Public Entrance Examinations Coaching Scheme (PEECS) classes that are being telecast through VICTERS channel to enable all our Higher Secondary Students to get fair and equal opportunity in entrance examinations has been

very successful and 1.82 lakh students have registered in the portal.

My Government is determined to ensure that our students should be provided with all necessary facilities for their higher education. We are committed to increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio by 50 points during this plan period. This year has been a path breaking year for higher education in the State. My Government has announced its historic and bold policy of starting a Government College in every Assembly Constituency that does not have either a Government or an Aided College.

My Government believes that educational autonomy is critical to broad basing quality higher education. To this end, it has carefully promulgated an Ordinance to amend the University Acts in line with the proposal of the Dr. Madhava Menon Committee on Autonomy. As a measure to improve academic quality, three-year Honours Degree Programme has been started in three Government Colleges in the Kerala, Calicut and Kannur Universities. The programme - Fostering Linkages with Academic innovation and Research (FLAIR) - has been well received by the young teachers of our State and will be extended further to Aided Colleges also.

The Kerala State Higher Education Council focuses on its diverse initiatives for educational reform. My Government is in the process of setting up a State Assessment and Accreditation Council. The Council is convening an International Meet on Transnational Education in January 2014 to draw up plans for international co-operation. The prestigious e-Governance project for Universities and the Collegiate and Technical Education Departments will be commissioned in 2015.

The New Heritage Model Reference Block in the State Central Library will be completed in the coming year. The planetarium of the Kerala State Science and Technology Museum will be modernized at a cost of Rs. 12 cr. The Kerala Science City at

Kottayam will be inaugurated shortly. The Regional Science Centre, Chalakkudy will be opened to public this year. The Kerala State Civil Service Academy has earned a commendable reputation as a training institution of choice for the civil services examinations. Two more sub-centres in Palakkad and Kozhikode will be made operational soon.

Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) the signature skill project of my Government is being extended to 450 Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges in the State. Under ASAB my Government has been able to enter into partnerships with twenty four industry partners. My Government has submitted a proposal for availing a loan for the programme from Asian Development Bank. 140 Community Skill Parks one in each Assembly constituency - will be established under the project. These parks will be designed to function as 24x7 centres where students from any institution can enrol in skill courses. My Government intends to submit a proposal to the Centre for setting up a National Skills University in the State.

My Government has approved the setting up of the LBS Integrated Institute of Science and Technology in Malappuram based on the broad recommendations of the Justice Sachar Commission Report. My Government proposes to commence the construction of the Thiruvananthapuram Engineering Science and Technology Research Park in 2014. The first phase of the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) in Technical High Schools and Polytechnics has been approved. My Government has signed MoU with M/s Mercedes Benz India to start an advanced Diploma in Automotive Mechatronics in Government Engineering College, Barton Hill. My Government has entered into an MoU with M/s Bosch Rexroth to set up a Centre of Excellence in Automation Technologies in College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram and a Centre of



Competence in Automation Technologies in Government Polytechnic College, Kalamassery.

A two year Masters Programme will be offered in Translational Engineering in Government Engineering College, Barton Hill, in collaboration with the Columbia University and the University of Montreal, Canada. Government of India have approved the proposal for setting up new community colleges linked to five pairs of Government Polytechnics and Arts and Science Colleges at Attingal, Kottayam, Perinthalmanna, Thrissur and Shoranur.

My Government proposes to conduct the Computer Application Eligibility Test (CAET), an online test to examine the basic Computer Skills needed for an applicant to apply for employment in Government.

The KR Narayanan Institute of visual Arts and Science at Kottayam will be inaugurated and classes shall commence in the next academic year. The Kerala State Council of Science, Technology and Environment has started State-wide activities for capacity building in basic sciences in our educational institutions. The Institute of Basic Sciences named in memory of the great Indian mathematical genius, Srinivasa Ramanujan was formally inaugurated by the Israeli Nobel Laureate Prof. Ada Yonath. An Institute of Centre-

State Technology Partnership has been started in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. My Government will establish a new Centre for Assistive Technologies in collaboration with the National Institute of Technology, Kozhikode exclusively for the blind, hearing-impaired and other physically challenged persons.

My Government has focused on consolidation, protection and rehabilitation of forests, protection of fragile eco-systems and participatory habitat management as the central hub of its forest policy. 700 posts of Tribal Watchers have been created in the Forest Department. 100 check dams will be constructed for ensuring water availability within forests. New eco-tourism projects at Konni and Shendurney will be implemented.

Tribals will be weaned away from their total dependency on forests through training for skill development in diverse areas. Youth from Scheduled Tribes communities living in the forests will be trained and engaged as tourism guides in eco-tourism centres. Though financial assistance from Central Government is now received only for protected Areas, my Government intends to take up specific activities for protection and management of wildlife outside Protected Areas also. Twenty out of the existing 113

forest stations will be developed into Model Forest Stations and ten new forest stations will be formed. To reduce man-animal conflict, a participatory approach will be adopted for power charged fencing by providing subsidy to the owners of agricultural lands on the fringe of forests.

My Government is acutely conscious of the fact that developmental aspirations of a State cannot be realized without adequate availability of power. The unfortunate fact remains that there has been no substantial addition to our generation capacity for the past few years. With the LNG terminal at Kochi now a reality, proposals of power generation using natural gas has brightened. My Government proposes to set up a 400 MW gas-based power plant adjacent to the existing thermal plant at Brahmapuram using natural gas. Steps have been initiated to set up a 500 MW power plant jointly with KSEB and INKEL, utilizing the Pet Coke from the Expansion Project of the Cochin Refinery.

My Government realizes the importance of tapping renewable energy potential of the State. KSEB plans to add 178 MW in hydel capacity through the completion of 13 ongoing projects. It is proposed to install 1 MW grid connected solar power plant in the land available at the 220kV sub-station, Palakkad and a 1.4 MW grid connected solar

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Kochi LNG Terminal dedicated to the Nation

Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh's speech at the dedication of Kochi LNG Terminal

“I should begin by wishing the people of Kerala and Kochi a happy and prosperous New Year.

I am delighted to dedicate Petronet LNG's Kochi terminal to the nation. I have a special attachment to this project as it was one of the two major projects that were announced during my very first trip to Kerala after assuming charge as Prime Minister.

I congratulate the entire Petronet team for successfully commissioning this terminal.

This project has been on the anvil since the year 2005. I am aware that a lot of sustained hard work by several agencies of the Central and State Governments has gone into making it a reality. And today, after 8 years of the start of its implementation, the terminal is ready to fuel Kerala's multifaceted development.

I am confident that in the coming years this terminal will prove to be of immense benefit to your beautiful State and help it in realizing its enormous economic potential. Built at a cost of about Rupees 4500 crore, it will put Kochi on the world LNG map and contribute to making Kerala an industry oriented and investor friendly destination. It will also contribute to our efforts to promote clean energy and reduce carbon emissions. It will help in protecting Kerala's environment, green cover and natural beauty.



In fact the location of this terminal has been chosen so that it can provide the whole of Southern India with a cleaner and greener form of energy. This world class facility is intended to cater to the energy requirements of industries in a diverse range of areas across the whole of Southern India. A whole new industrial corridor is expected to come up along the gas pipeline route. The terminal is also expected to meet the energy requirements for transport and households in cities. It can process as much as 50 lakh tons of Liquid Natural Gas in a year.

Kochi is strategically located on the East-West trade route and a centre for transit and trans-shipment services. The shipping industry too will benefit greatly from this terminal and more as

more ships are mandated to use cleaner fuels like LNG.

Considering its vast potential, it is imperative that the terminal should be utilized to its fullest capacity. I would urge the concerned agencies to do everything possible to ensure this.

I understand that Petronet LNG has already tied up supply of 14.4 lakh tons of LNG per year for the Kochi terminal from the Gorgon project in Australia for a 20 year period. I am told that the company is also at an advanced stage of discussion with other LNG suppliers for long term contracts.

To make full use of the large investment in this project, we need to now focus on increasing the penetration of natural gas in Kerala by augmenting the pipeline network, in a manner similar to what has been done in Northern and Western parts of the country. We also need to explore how industrial units can make greater use of natural gas.

I would urge the State Government and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to pay particular attention to rolling out city gas distribution networks in Kerala so that gas can reach a much larger number of households.

Our country has less than 1 percent of the world's known natural gas reserves. Therefore,

for augmenting the supply of natural gas in our energy mix we must necessarily import natural gas either by setting up LNG terminals or through trans-national pipelines. Import of natural gas and pricing the imported gas constitute challenges that we must meet successfully in the time to come.

Asia has been the driver of the global LNG demand in recent times. It is therefore important that major buyers of LNG in Asia come together to demand a fair pricing mechanism for gas being imported from outside of Asia. I hope to see India contribute towards an effort of this kind in the future.

Today Chief Minister of Kerala, Shri Oomen Chandy and Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Veerappa Moily are both with us. I would like to take this opportunity to urge them to coordinate with all the stakeholders, including the Ministry of Power, to ensure that the full potential of the Kochi terminal is realized. It is my fond hope that we will see this happen without any delays.

Let me end by extending my best wishes for the success of the Kochi LNG terminal, which has the potential to transform the economy of this region.

Thank you. Jai Hind.” ■





Investment Opportunities in the States

Speech of the Chief Minister on the occasion of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2014

Aoutset let me express my pleasure and privilege to be here at the Pravasi Bharathiya Divas. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has organized this years event in a befitting manner in recognition and appreciation of the constructive, economic and political role played by Indian Diaspora. In the present globalized world, such interactions can be mutually rewarding in economic, social, cultural and other spheres of life. I hope this event would go a long way in helping to build a better and fruitful relationship between the Government of India and the Pravasi community.

Long before globalization Kerala was connected to the rest of the world. This continues till date and millions of Malayalees are living abroad, sustaining our economy.

I am happy that States are given a space to present their investment opportunities. Kerala has invested heavily in education and enrichment of human resources. No State has earmarked as much as 40 percent of its annual budget for education. Eventually Kerala has become a human resource hub which cater to the needs of other countries. Kerala is very much indebted to the Non-Resident Keralites for their contribution to the all round development of Kerala. According to latest reports the foreign remittance to Kerala has exceeded Rs.75,000 crores. They not only fetch money but also share their ideas and inspire us to think in a world class manner. We are giving emphasis on health, higher education, infrastructure and information technology. It opens, splendid avenues of opportunities.



Health and Higher Education is our traditional strength. We had achieved 100% literacy way back in the early nineties itself. We take great pride in our better than national average primary health care and higher health index. However, this is not enough. We need to provide quality higher education and world class health care to everyone. This goal is to be achieved with public private partnership and we are willing to adopt policy that helps investment in this sector. Since the goal is also to make it affordable to the poor, we plan to have more hospitals, medical colleges and Centres of Higher Education in the government sector, too.

We want to build better infrastructure to take care of energy and transportation needs of the state. We should be able to move people and goods throughout the state in the most convenient, cost efficient and environmentally friendly way. For this we are building railways, improving highways, introducing waterways, coastal shipping, networks and harbouring infrastructures, sea-planes and also building airports and sea-

ports wherever possible. Given the geographical advantages of Kerala infrastructure in all modes of transportation- air, water and land can be developed easily. Similarly, we need to create or tap energy from all possible sources, be it solar, hydel, wind, gas, tidal or any other source within or outside the state. In effect a large scale public private campaign to improve facilities for generation and transmission of energy and for goods and people's movement, from and within the state is one of my top most priorities in the State.

Kerala is one of the most fast growing IT destinations in India. I am pleased to inform you that all the giant IT operators are now in Kerala and recently, TCS has decided to open their global training centre in Kerala. We are promoting the youth entrepreneurs by earmarking one percent of our budget estimate. This has resulted in the setting up of many start ups in Kerala. This dream, of turning Kerala's youth from job seekers to job givers, is one of most cherished goals and the State Government will take all necessary steps to turn this dream into a reality.

The Government of Kerala has undertaken several policy measures and incentives for attracting investors into the State. As a result, Kerala is becoming one of the most preferred investment destinations of the nation. The public private partnership route would offer attractive opportunities in Kerala for prospective investors and financiers and we welcome you in a wide range of activities. I also take this opportunity to promise you that our Government, is very happy to be of any assistance to any of you who may be in need of any such assistance at any time while in India or at your place of work.

The global economy is at a stage of profound transformation. Kerala is a part of the shifting global economic landscape, and its economic weight is set to increase in the years ahead. I invite you to join us in our socio-economic transformation as partners in progress.

Before conclude, I would like to remind this gathering a very important and pertinent point- You are the ambassadors and flag carries of our country and our culture. Your honesty, law abiding and hard working nature have made lasting impression about our countrymen among other nations. As this Pravasi Bharathiya Divas rightly propagates, you are the Bridges of the World. I know that, across the years you have been holding close to your hearts our culture, language, emotions and sentiments. I appeal to pass over it to the next generations too. Our value based culture will keep your head held high anywhere and everywhere.

Thank you. Jaihind!!



Many attempts have been made to define 'family' but no definition has succeeded in including everything that the idea of the family suggests. The famous American comic poet Ogden Nash's definition, 'A family is a unit composed not only of children but of men, women, an occasional animal and the common cold' may bring a smile to your lips, but there is a lot of truth in it. With the perceptiveness that is the hall mark of a humorous writer, he has brought into the description the parents, children, pets and of course the illnesses that are a natural result of living in close and loving contact with one another. What, anyway, does a cold matter when the family can sneeze happily together?

The part played by the family in the general well being of man can never be underestimated. But unfortunately, in the modern age, it is often either taken for granted or ignored, with rather unhappy consequences. In developed and in many developing countries, advancement of one's career has taken precedence over the idea of marriage and procreation, with the result that late marriages, nuclear families, conscious decisions of not having children, single parenthood and increased divorce rates have helped weakened the fabric of the family. The socialisation of children has suffered. In underdeveloped countries poverty and disease have resulted in unhappy families.

As the concept of the family broke down, countries became uneasy with one another. 'What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family,' said Mother Theresa, and rightly so, for she understood the part by family in contributing to harmony in the world. In recognition of this, two special days have been set apart for celebrating the family – The Global Family Day and The International Day of Families.

The Global Family Day is celebrated on the first day of the year. What better day to choose for honouring the family than the first of January, when most families have, for centuries, gathered together to usher in the New Year? The day was first observed in the US on January 1,

There's Nothing like a Family





Since sharing is something you generally do with families, the day also came to be celebrated as Global Family Day. It is a day to help unite local, national and global communities. Families meet to decide how they can work towards strengthening familial bonds and then work to make the world a better place.

2000 after a long campaign for One Day in Peace. The American writer Robert Silverstein and UK's regional coordinator Chris Hildred wrote letters to leaders all over the world to help declare January 1, 2000, as 'One Day in peace, January 2000'. The response from quite a few countries was heartening. The Dalai Lama wrote, 'I support your project World Peace 2000 firstly because peace is essential if we are to hope for a happier world in the future and secondly because every effort must be made by as many individuals as possible. I wish you success in your noble task.' The American writer and social activist Linda Grover also took a lead role in the initiative and campaigned hard for the day of peace and family.

The campaign resulted in a UN Resolution for the Millennium celebration themed 'One Day in Peace' and a joint US Congressional Resolution inviting 1st January to be celebrated as the day of peace and sharing. The idea was to go one step at a time. If the whole world can live in peace for one day, then one can inch forward to work towards achieving more days of peace and finally of making peace last every day of the year. It is a

utopian idea, but one that is well worth experimenting with. Since sharing is something you generally do with families, the day also came to be celebrated as Global Family Day. It is a day to help unite local, national and global communities. Families meet to decide how they can work towards strengthening familial bonds and then work to make the world a better place.

The International Day of Families, held on May 15 every year since 1994, has similar but more detailed objectives. It celebrates the importance of families to people, societies and cultures all over the world. It aims to continue the work started in 1994, declared by the United Nations as the International Year of the Family. This was a response to changing social and economic structures which have affected and still affect the structure and stability of family units in many regions of the world.

The symbol of the International Day of Families is a solid green circle with an image in red inside that represents a heart and a house, indicating that families are the nucleus of society and offer a stable and caring home for people. The heart stands for life and vitality and is linked to



the home which symbolises love, togetherness, co operation and security. The open ended nature of the design hints at the complexity inherent in the structure of the family.

Identifying the truth that stronger families would be the 'most effective preventative measure against instability, crime, juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol addiction, and lack of care for dependent family members, children, the aged and the disabled,' the United Nations, in 1994, identified some key issues to be addressed. They include emphasising the importance of the family's role in the moral

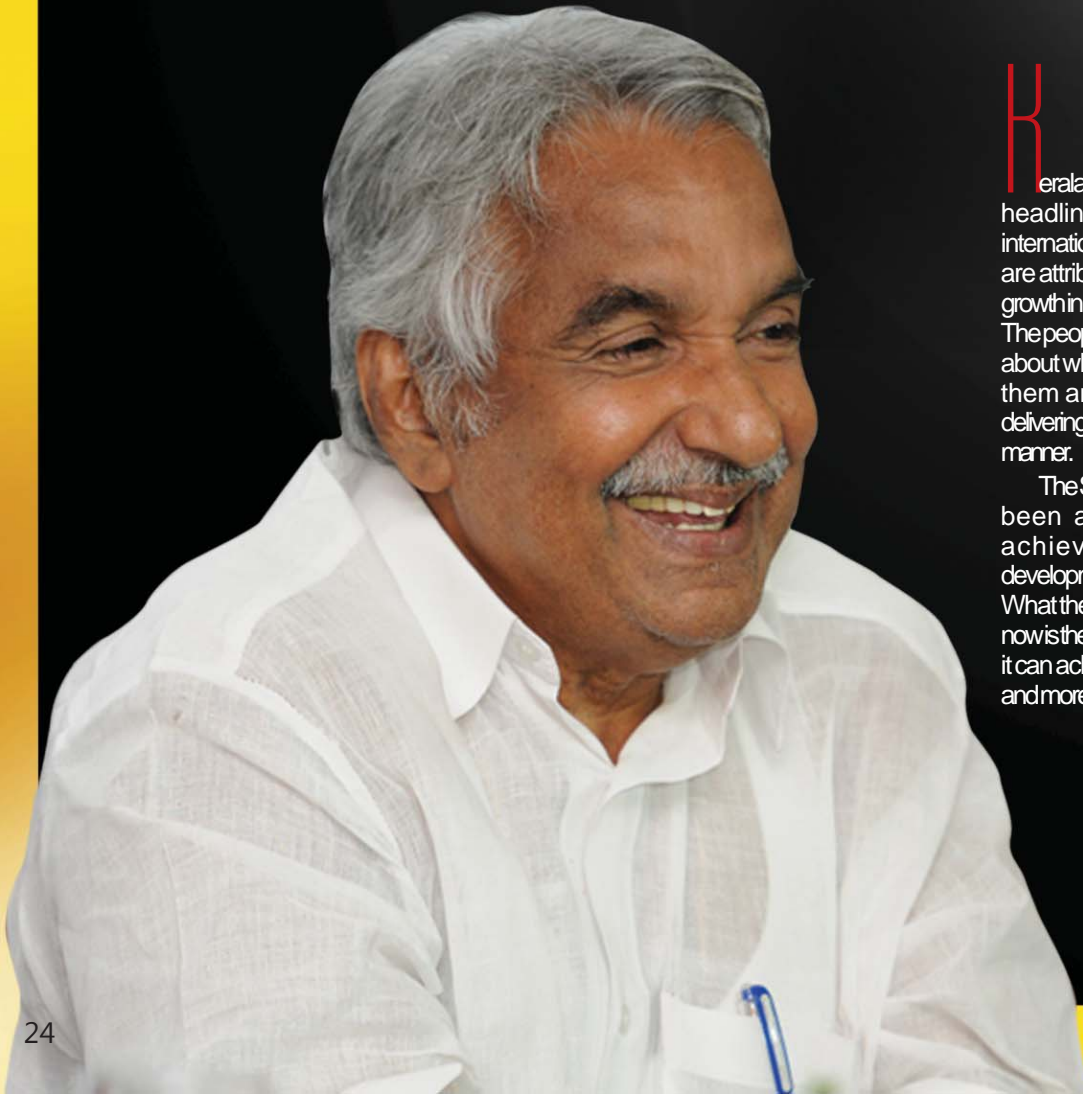
strength of society, enhancing the family's role as the main welfare institution in society, balancing individual freedoms with a sense of personal responsibility for families, helping women and men combine family and vocational responsibilities, developing policies based on an accurate assessment of dominant and newly emerging family patterns and models, supporting better integration of services, encouraging family planning, preventing family violence and recognising the crucial role of non-government organisations in

Continued on Page 43



State of

The result of the 12th India Today State of the States survey brings much charm to Keralites. Kerala bags its first place in overall performance among the states.



Kerala is currently occupying the headlines in the national and international level for reasons that are attributed to unprecedented growth in welfare and development. The people of Kerala are optimistic about what is happening around them and the government is delivering the goods in a time-bound manner.

The State, to a great extent has been able to translate its achievements in human development to economic growth. What the State is looking forward now is the way and means by which it can achieve faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth for taking

the States

WHY No.1

10% rise in GDP. 3 per centage higher than the National Average

30% rise in capital expenditure while national average is only 5%

35% rise in number of two wheeler owners while national average is 15%

4:100 - Teacher-Pupil ratio has doubled from 2:100.

the State's economy and society to greater heights. Kerala is already in the process of transforming the aspirations of Malayalis, with a vision of long-term perspective.

The result of the 12th India Today State of the States survey brings much charm to Keralites. Kerala bags its first place in overall performance among the states. The performance of the state is much improved in most of the sectors. The fast moving performance of the state can be attributed singularly to the triumph of the will of our Chief Minister Oommen Chandy.

This year the survey had underscored Kerala's achievement in both economic growth and human development. The state has emerged number one in three key growth indicators: GDP, capital expenditure and consumer market. It is a fact that we had

surpassed national average in these three main indicators. It has also retained its traditional strength in the educational sector. "With superlative achievements in education, macro economy, agriculture, consumer market and investment over the last year, Kerala emerges as the most improved big state overall."

The report says, "While Kerala achieved 10 per cent growth in GDP which is three percentage points higher than that of the national average, it had a 30 per cent rise in capital expenditure as against the all-India average of just 5 per cent. The state, that has been placed first in the country in per capita consumption expenditure for the past few years, witnesses a 35 per cent increase in people own two-wheelers as against the national figure of 15 per cent. The slump in the Indian economy had barely any impact on Kerala. During

2011-12, Kerala's GDP grew by 9.5 per cent while India's total GDP grew 6.5 per cent. Certainly, the jump in foreign remittance from Rs.50,000 crore in 2011 to Rs.65,000 crore in 2012 on account of a steadily growing dollar has driven key sectors of the state economy."

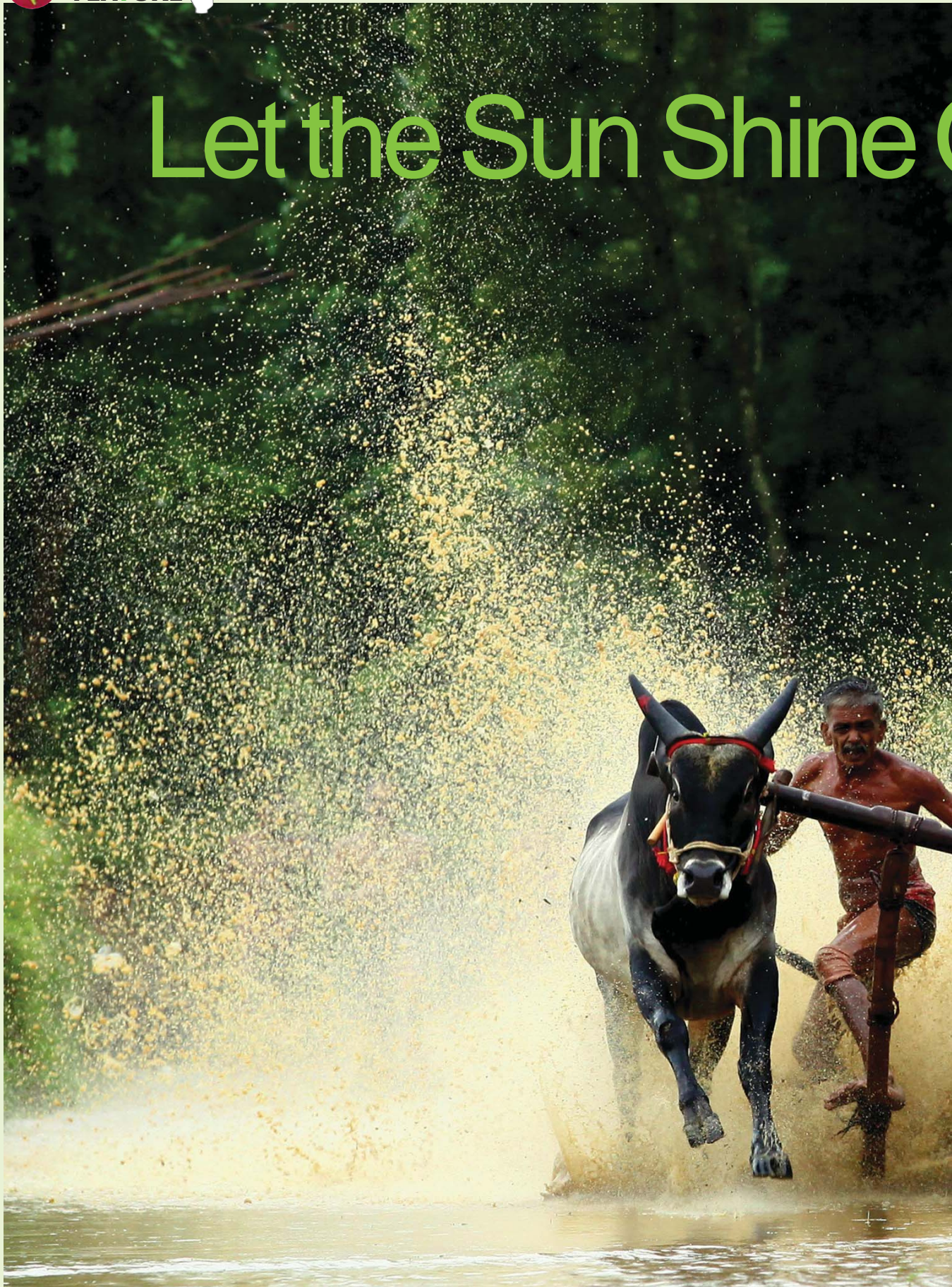
As per the survey there is significant growth in the education sector as well. "The teacher-pupil ratio doubled from two teachers every 100 pupils to four, when most other states showed negligible improvement." Moreover the report mentions that no other state in India earmarks as much as 40 per cent of its annual budget for education as Kerala does. In most of the sectors our state has improved fairly well. For instance, in agriculture Kerala has made a leap to 3rd position from 4th last year.

Kerala's development has been hailed and recognized

universally many a time. People friendly decisions are coming day by day. The UDF government which is moving fast with the motto "Development and Care" has undertaken a mission to ensure that each and every citizen of our state is benefited. The India Today survey establishes the fact that most of the projects launched by the present UDF government have found their targets. Planning with a clear vision, dedicated service, time-bound completion of projects etc. result into awards and achievements. Close observation shows that there has been an awakening in all sectors such as Health, Information and Technology, Revenue, Human resources Development, Social Security, Sustainable waste management... the list goes on. In short the change is already much visible. No doubt there are many that can be learnt from Kerala! ■



Let the Sun Shine



Over Our Paddies

Misty paddy fields studded with glittering dewdrops which absorb and reflect the golden rays of emerging sun is a common charming scene in the dawn for any person in our rural ambience. This energising scene slowly fades with the farmers and labourers entering the field for their daily chores. Every year the second day of February is observed as World Wetlands Day. This is not only to commemorate the Ramsar Convention on wetlands but also to remind us about the need for conserving our precious wetland habitats. Like any other natural ecosystem wetlands are also important. Harbours diverse life forms; wetlands do exist around us in a variety forms like marshy pastures, lakes, reservoirs paddy fields etc.

Land reclamation by filling, over exploitation of natural resources and indiscriminate waste dumping and pollution are the main threat faced by our wetlands. This year the theme for World Wetlands Day is closely bound to our day to day life: 'Wetland and Agriculture'. Rice is the staple food for nearly 3 billion people worldwide and represents about one-fifth of global calorie consumption. At least 100 Ramsar Sites around the world include rice-field habitats for flora and fauna. Further the year 2014 has been designated by the United Nations as the International year of family farming.

Like other creatures on earth human beings were also leading a wandering-gathering life. But slowly the nomadic life evolved into a settled mode and agriculture was instrumental in leading man to great civilizations. From that age onwards wetland served human beings with the land, water and manure necessary for farming. This historic association between agriculture and wetlands continues till date. Globally today 70% of fresh water resources are currently being used for agriculture, and the anticipated global population hike will make further demands on our capacity to produce food. Thus wetlands and water will continue to be threatened to meet the increasing demand for food production. Wetlands generate a huge variety of plant, animal and mineral products used and valued by people all over the world. The harvesting and use of these products is carried out at all sorts of intensities and scales from low intensity subsistence users to intensive commercial exploitation. The most important wetland product at a global level, fish happens to be the major sources of protein for one billion people and accounts for at least 15% of animal protein in the diets of a further two billion.

Wetlands play an important role in the topography of Kerala and could be seen in diverse kinds. Blessed with monsoon and





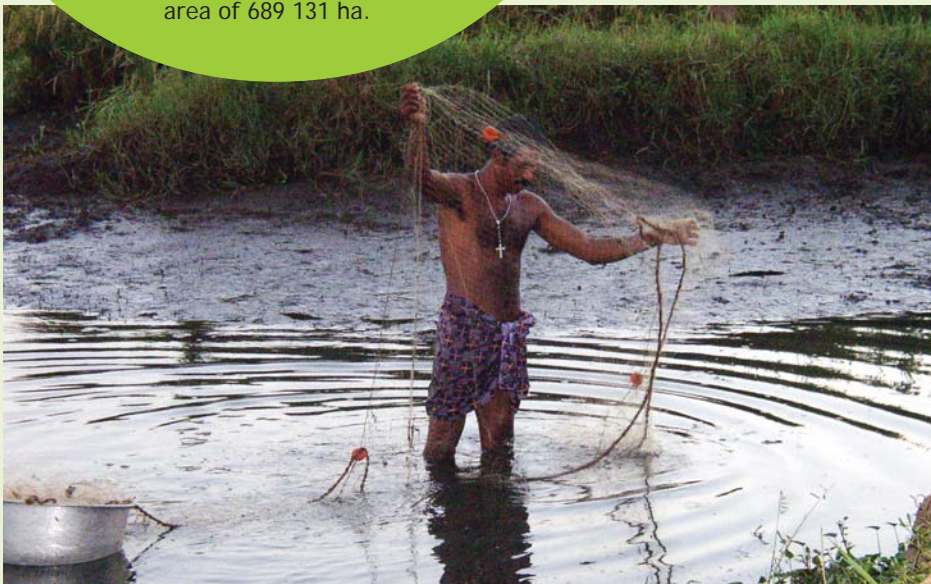
WWD (World Wetland day)

Second February every year is World Wetlands Day. This marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands - the "Ramsar Convention"- on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar. WWD was celebrated for the first time in 1997. The Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that embodies the commitments of its member nations to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the "wise use", or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories. Upon joining the Ramsar Convention, each member is obliged to designate at least one wetland site as Wetland of International Importance -popularly known as Ramsar Site. India is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention and has designated 26 Ramsar Sites covering an estimated total area of 689 131 ha.

44 rivers this land is rich in the number and area extent of its wetland habitats. This variety of wetlands ranges from the low laying paddy fields of Kuttanad, the Kolefields of Thrissur region, the pokkali fields, and the paddy fields of Wayanad and Palakkad districts. A good number of wetlands are being modified and utilized for the cultivation of paddy and vegetables, for poultry (mainly ducks), aquaculture and other crops

too. The paddy fields in plains are mostly floodplains and deltas whereas those in midland and high ranges are modified valleys. They are important argo-ecosystems and unique in their edaphic and physiographic features and functional in delivering ecosystem services. Most of them are identified as important habitats of wetland birds hosting both native and migratory species and populations. Due to the area extent and dependence by people; these wetlands are very important for Keralites. But the increasing population, new trends and technologies in farming exert great pressure upon these wetland ecosystems. The Ashtamudi Wetland, Sasthamkotta Lake, and Vembanad-Kole System are the three Ramsar Sites in Kerala and a lot of agricultural fields could be found associated with these three wetland ecosystems.

The threats to our rice fields include inappropriate water management, introduction of invasive alien species, use of high levels of harmful agricultural chemicals, and the conversion to non farming land uses. Similar to species extinction the complete loss of typical habitats (ie;





as many again indirectly.

Managing land and water to create multifunctional agro-ecosystems helps to provide diversity and resilience for livelihoods and maintain a balance between provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural wetland ecosystem services. For several animal species, cereal fields and straw can serve as feeding grounds, nesting area, observatory perches or places of refuges against predators. Research has estimated the major pressure affecting farmland biodiversity today relates to changes to traditional farming practices within the agricultural landscapes. Restoring wetland functions and securing water

Habitat extinction) also threatens life and land filling can result in such a situation. This in turn hampers the proper hydrological regime of the region concerned. Biological invasion mediated by human beings also poses a main threat. Alien species like Tilapia (fish) and Eichhornia (water hyacinth) entering and spreading in our wetlands are examples. Invasive alien flora and fauna can marginalize and completely displace the native species from their natural habitat. Excessive exploitation of natural resources is another major threat. These include fresh water, clay, sand, fishery resources, shells etc without any regulation.

The cause of threats faced by our wetlands today are not acute but could be traced back to history including changes in packages and practices recommended for agricultural operation, changes in socio-cultural practices, developmental activities, land reforms and policy decisions coupled with many region specific developments. Only systematic and scientific methods of assessments spanning reasonable time frame we will be able to reveal the exact effect of these

paradigm changes. However recent development in rules and regulations like The Kerala conservation of paddy land and wetland Act, 2008 (Act 28 of 2008), The Kerala protection of river banks and regulation of removal of sand Act, 2001 (Act 18 of 2001), The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 etc are pivotal in the conservation efforts to retain our wetlands in their natural ecological state.

Apart from these the safeguard of environment and our natural assets are reiterated in the relevant parts of the Constitution of India like the Directive Principles of State Policy and the fundamental duties of the citizen. Worth mentioning is The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and its subsequent amendments which in general are helpful in enforcement activities. But mere conservation awareness may not be effective to achieve the desired goals of long term sustainability and profitability of wetland based agriculture. The peasant community should be equipped and empowered properly to retain them in the agricultural sector. Farmers should be encouraged to follow eco friendly farming practices like organic cultivation

Wetlands

Wetlands include paddy fields, lakes and rivers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands and peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, near shore marine areas, mangroves and coral reefs, and man-made sites such as fish ponds, reservoirs, and salt pans. Wetlands deliver a wide range of ecosystem services that contribute to human wellbeing. These include provisioning services such as food, fresh water, fibre and fuel; regulating services such as water purification and waste treatment, climate regulation, retention of soils and sediments, protection from storms and floods; supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling (nitrogen, phosphorus and carbon); and cultural services such as aesthetic and spiritual values, education and recreation.

so as to promote and retain the natural ecosystem balance. Strategic initiatives are required in this direction. For example in East Calcutta wetlands the city's waste water is treated and used for pond fish cultivation and agriculture. The wetland provides about 150 tons of fresh vegetables daily as well as some 10500 tons of fish per year. The latter provides livelihood for about 50000 people directly and

allocations to maintain the ecological character of wetlands can be viewed as investments in the natural infrastructure that wetlands provide for agriculture. Since global food demand is projected to increase and land availability is limited, making smart use of resources has become a priority of the present. ■

The writer is Sr. Wildlife Assistant, Pambikulam Tiger Reserve

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power plant on the roof-top space available in buildings of KSEB. Every effort will be made to tap wind energy potential at Ramakkalmedu and Attapady without any adverse impact on tribals and ensuring benefits to them.

On the transmission side, it is proposed to construct one 220 kV sub-station, six 110 kV sub-stations and twelve 33 kV sub-stations. The focus on the distribution side will be on improving service quality. The capacity addition plan for the year 2014-15 includes 3000 km of 11 KV line, 4560 km LT line, 4000 distribution transformers, 4500 km of single phase to three phase conversion and 5700 km of re-conductoring works. Demand Side Management activities in mitigating the demand supply gap and improving the energy conservation awareness will be taken with increased vigor. KSEB proposes to start the second stage of 'Labhaprabha' for giving rewards for energy saving to the consumers.

The Kerala State Power and Infrastructure Finance Corporation Limited has been given the mandate to provide finance to the institutions in the State that are engaged in supplying/manufacturing of power related equipment/accessories and for the installation of power related equipments. To comply with the Central Electricity Authority Regulation, 2006, existing laboratories will be upgraded to National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) standards and new regional laboratories will be set up at Wayanad, Idukki and Alappuzha Districts.

My Government also proposes to install off-grid Roof Top Solar Power Plants in individual houses and institutions, domestic biogas plants, solar home lighting systems and distribute solar lanterns on a significant scale this year.

My Government accords prime importance to the timely completion of major infrastructure schemes in the

water resources sector. During the coming year, flood embankment schemes for controlling flooding and saltwater intrusion in major rivers, schemes for strengthening and improving the flood embankments and retaining wall for controlling erosion of sides in the bottom depth of rivers will be taken up. Runoff River Mini Reservoirs will be set up in 4 rivers to conserve water for summer seasons. A scheme for maintenance of 209 Lift Irrigation Schemes under Malabar Irrigation Package is also envisaged. This year the Ground Water Department proposes to take up construction of 40 artificial recharge structures for conservation of ground water.

The Kerala Water Authority will complete 2 major water supply schemes under NABARD, 57 schemes under ARP/NRDWP and 5 schemes under Technology Mission among others. Implementation of a Revenue Information System along with call centres, help desks, any time payment message services, GPRS based palm held machine are part of the plans for making Kerala Water Authority more customer friendly. The Kerala Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency proposes to expand Jananidhi Programmes to 65 panchayats.

My Government intends to introduce a new Medical and Health Insurance Scheme for police personnel. District Dispute Redressal Forums will be set up in all the districts for amicable resolution of various disputes through mutual consent of all parties. A 200 bedded Multi Speciality Hospital will be set up in Kottayam to cater to specialized medical needs of policemen and their families. A special recruitment drive to appoint 250 Sub Inspectors and 1000 Women Police Constables will be launched to meet the legal stipulations on having Women Police Officers in all police stations. 24x7 High Tech CCTV Surveillance System for better detection and enforcement will be installed in all Municipal Towns/Cities in Kerala in key locations. The widely acclaimed community policing and 'Janamaithri Suraksha' schemes will be extended to 52 more

police stations. A Cyber Police Station will be opened in the Info Park premises in Kochi so that quick, efficient and effective response to cyber crime is ensued.

The State is fully geared to face any challenge posed on account of the reported extremist movements in some parts of the State. A special force to deal with increasing extremist activities in the State will be created. The Student Police Cadets Scheme, that is creating waves of changes in attitudes and perception of our children in schools will be brought under a new Directorate.

The Prisons Department has mobilized Rs.22 cr. by sale of goods produced by the inmates. Under the scheme, for modernisation of prisons, the construction of New Blocks in District Jails at Kollam and Pathanamthitta will be completed in 2014-15. The Kerala Fire and Rescue Academy will launch new courses in the Academy for various stakeholders including industrial workers, employees of petrol pumps and security employees of multi-storied buildings. My Government proposes an insurance scheme for Fire and Rescue personnel who constantly face high risks of accidents as part of their job.

2014 is the Golden jubilee year of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau and is an occasion for my Government to reaffirm its resolve to offer good governance for all, founded on principles of integrity and transparency. Two more Vigilance Courts will be established for the speedy disposal of trial cases.

My Government is legitimately proud of its flagship programme - the Zero Landless Kerala - 2015, which envisages distribution of 3 cents of land to all eligible landless families in the State by the year 2015. The first phase of the programme was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chairperson of UPA Smt. Sonia Gandhi, on 30th September, 2013 at Thiruvananthapuram where Pattayams for the landless families of six Districts were

distributed. Kannur District became the first District in India without landless families. Distribution of Pattayams in eight Districts has been completed.

Re-survey will be resumed in the State during this year. IT enabled services will be utilized for updation of land records and for redressal of complaints regarding survey and land records. Institute of Land Development and Management will be developed into a National Centre of Excellence. A task force of women volunteers for disaster management will be constituted in all Districts.

As part of the Service Delivery Improvement Programmes undertaken by the Department, the project for networking all the Sub Registry Offices in the State is in progress. With this, more technology based service deliveries will be possible from the Sub Registry Offices. The goal is to facilitate online mutation after registration of a deed with the involvement of Revenue and Survey Departments. Provision will be made for the registration of a document in any Sub Registry Office in the State.

My Government accords great priority to the development of Sabarimala. Rs. 65 crores have already been allocated for the implementation of the master plan for this region. An Action Plan will be drawn up for the preservation of the assets of the temples of our State. My Government is developing a master plan for the Guruvayur temple and will implement it in collaboration with the Devaswom Administrative Committee. A committee will be constituted to study the problems faced by the employees working in the temples particularly those in the Malabar region. My Government will continue its efforts to protect and conserve the invaluable assets of the Sree Padmambha Swami Temple.

My Government has assiduously pursued the task of containing the price line on essential commodities through strategic market interventions. 13 essential commodities are being supplied through maveli

stores and super markets. 16 stores, 3 medical shops and one new super market were opened this year and 4 stores were converted to supermarkets. As a part of its declared policy of opening maveli stores in all panchayats, 65 new stores will be opened. Maveli stores with a turnover of over 10 lakhs will be converted to supermarkets. Ten supermarkets will be upgraded to international standards and 10 more mobile maveli stores will be started.

The passage of the National Food Security Act in October 2013 that ensures food and nutrition security for all people of our country has been no doubt the most commendable historic step in recent times. As a part of Food Security Act, my Government proposes to construct godowns at District/Taluk Headquarters. My Government intends to implement end-to-end computerization of Public Distribution System for the entire State to ensure a transparent, efficient and citizen responsive Public Distribution System based on AADHAAR authentication. Direct transfer of cash subsidy for kerosene will be implemented as part of the end-to-end computerisation of PDS.

A major initiative that my Government has taken to ensure that all disadvantaged sections in our State gets adequate access to food grains has been to declare the ration cards of all tribal families as falling under BPL category. Registration of farmers for paddy procurement has been fully brought under the online computerized system. A Food Safety Survey will be conducted by the Council for Food Research and Development. As part of its efforts to ensure consumer protection, my Government has initiated action for standardization and discipline in weights and measures for packaged commodities also.

My Government realises that a well maintained road network of good quality is critical to the economic growth of the State. Performance guarantee for five years will be made mandatory for heavy maintenance works. Sustainable and Planned Effort for Effective Infrastructure

Development, Kerala (SPEEID KERALA) has been initiated for constructing flyovers, bridges and roads in selected areas in the State for projects of nearly Rs.10,000 cr.

Needless to say, it is critical to develop our National Highways which carry 40% of our total vehicular traffic. Work will be started in the coming year on the NH Bypasses at Kollam, Alappuzha, Kozhikode and also on the proposed hill highway. My Government propose to start the widening of Karamana-Kaliyikkavila stretch during this year. The 6 laning works of Mannuthy-Valayar stretch of NH is in progress. Three roads, 42 km in length have already been completed under Sabarimala Heavy Maintenance Scheme. The Kozhikode City Road Improvement Project will commence this year. City Road Improvement Projects will be taken up in Kottayam, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kannur and Kollam. Under the State Road Improvement Project, 551 km roads will be upgraded to international standards. Construction of 15 Road Over Bridges is in progress. The second phase of Kerala State Transport Project approved by the World Bank has already commenced. My Government has accorded sanction for the Mono Rail Project at Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram. New companies - the Pratheeksha Bus Shelters Kerala Ltd and Ashwas Public Amenities Kerala Ltd. have been set up for providing public utilities like toilets, eateries and shopping facilities alongside the roads in our State.

With nine out of fourteen districts of our State bordering the sea the immense potential of the maritime sector cannot be overemphasised. I am happy to inform this august House that the Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport Project has received environment clearance. Global tender for operating the Seaport was floated within a day of receiving this clearance.

A systematic process of developing the master plans of 10 non-major ports has been initiated. For the first time in

India, an incentive for passenger and freight movement has been announced for the promotion of coastal shipping. The Coastal Shipping Project was flagged off at Kollam Port in November 2013. A new Hydrographic Survey Institute at Emakulam has been inaugurated.

My Government will implement several vital projects under the strategic initiative for coastal shipping. Plans have been developed to shift 50% cargo and passengers in phases by 2030 from road and rail to coastal shipping by developing the Vizhinjam, Kollam, Kodungallur, Bepore and Azhikkal Ports. A marine bypass from Kodungallur to Emakulam will be created. To ensure peaceful labour relations, a "NIL strike agreement" for five years will be entered into in 10 non-major ports. My Government proposes to establish the "West Coast Maritime University" next year. Thousand boats in the Vembanad and Kochi lakes will be listed in the "safe boat list" on the websites of Tourism and Port Departments. The Kerala Maritime Board will be formed during the course of the year.

My Government has declared Harbour Engineering Department as a service department to Fisheries, Port and Tourism Departments for the construction of all marine structures. The Department has been empanelled by the Government of India as a technical consultant for undertaking consultancy services in other maritime States also. My Government will complete the work of the fishing harbours at Muthalappozhy, Chellanam, Chettuva, Koyilandy, Thalai, Cheruvathoor and Kasaragod, FLC at Munakkakadavu in 2014-15. Investigation studies for the construction of seven new Fishing Harbours are progressing and will be completed during 2014-15. In the coming year 300 km of coastal roads will be upgraded. Upgradation works supported by the National Fisheries Development Board will be completed during 2014-15. Investigation works for the construction of Fishing Harbour

at Pozhiyoor and the second stage development of Neendakara, Thottappally, Puthiyappa and Moplaby will be initiated during 2014-15. A special drive to upgrade fishing harbours to EU standards will be launched.

My Government has been working systematically to give a major fillip to the Tourism sector which remains among the major contributors to the economic base of the State. The stress will be on improving basic amenities for tourists and exploring new marketing potential. More than 40 new destinations will be developed. Marketing activities will be redefined to leverage on the internationally recognised "Spice Route". New international markets will be tapped into through the "Visa on arrival" facility. Responsible Tourism initiatives will be expanded to more areas. Grand Kerala Shopping Festival will be strengthened by ensuring the participation of more entrepreneurs locally throughout Kerala. The "Waste free Tourist Destination Campaign" will be extended to more areas with support of local Self Government Institutions as well as institutions willing to work on PPP mode. My Government will initiate a new project to conserve traditional snake boats. As part of the strategy for developing backwater tourism and high range tourism, Green Tourism Circuit at Ilaveezhappoonchira and the Alappuzha backwater tourism project will be implemented.

My Government intends to acquire necessary land in Muttathara and Pettah villages to complete the expansion of the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport. All required environmental clearances for the Kannur Greenfield Airport have been obtained and a second bank loan of Rs. 310 cr. is being arranged for financing the project. The tender for financing the work has been floated. My Government is hopeful that the first flight to the airport can land in December 2015. Preliminary work for setting up helipads in all the ten districts that do not have an airport facility will be started. My Government shall complete the expansion of the Calicut

Airport and ensure compliance with prescribed technical standards.

I am happy to inform this House that the prestigious Kochi Metro Rail Project is progressing on track and formal financial closure of the project is expected to be reached very shortly. KMRL has also initiated the setting up of a Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority for upgrading and coordinating different urban transportation modes in Kochi, with a commuter-centric focus. The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation is doing its best to tide over financial difficulties on account of the unprecedented fuel price rise. The accent this year has been on modernization and modernizing fleets. 10 new high tech Volvo buses for the inter-State sector will be introduced. The landmark commercial complexes at Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode will be inaugurated shortly. Construction of 7 shopping complexes in bus stations will be started. For improving fleet efficiency, GPS will be introduced in KSRTC buses, A new bus terminal will be started at Thevara in Kochi city.

In the Water Transport sector, emphasis will be on providing safe cruising for boat passengers. Well equipped rescue boats will be procured. A new tourist boat service interlinking Alappuzha, Kumarakom and other tourism destinations will be introduced. A dry dock will be constructed at Thevara.

As part of the key initiatives identified for strengthening enforcement mechanism and improving safety on our roads, the Motor Vehicles Department intends to initiate several steps for capacity building including procuring modern equipment like Radar based systems, Interceptors, Simulators, Vehicle Tracking Systems, Driver Testing Tracks, Computerized Vehicle Testing Stations and Check Post Modernization.

My Government has set apart funds this year for the development of facilities at the Thrissur, Ernakulam North, Emakulam South, Kottayam, Kollam and Kozhikode Railway

Stations. The alignment of Ankamali - Sabari line has been finalised. For setting up the Rail Coach Factory at Palakkad, 239 acres of land have already been handed over to Railways. My Government proposes to hand over the land for the Wagon Coach Factory at Alappuzha to Railways, free of cost. A Detailed Project Report is under preparation for a suburban Railway project between Thiruvananthapuram - Chengannur-Haripad sector and Railways has been approached for their participation and assistance in implementing this project which will significantly improve mass transport facilities in the State.

Considering the important role played by the co-operative sector in Kerala, a State Co-operative Policy will be formulated. Providing assistance for starting well equipped Medical laboratories at District/ Taluk level, extending interest free loans for installing biogas waste disposal plants, strengthening of SC/ST Societies and strengthening Education/ Health/ Marketing and Processing Societies are some of the major initiatives proposed in the sector.

I am happy to inform this House that the preparations for the conduct of 35th National Games in 2014 are progressing fast. 25 infrastructural projects are progressing in 7 Districts from Thiruvananthapuram to Kannur. They include Pre-fabricated Games Village of 3 lakh Square feet at Menamkulam, Thiruvananthapuram, a Green Field Stadium at Karyavattom and two Green Field stadia at Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode. Under Sports Minister's Infrastructural Leap to Excellence 'SMILE' programme, 101 places have been identified under this project for extending quality modular sports facilities. This project will be expanded and implemented in more places in the coming year. The Rajiv Gandhi Academy for Aviation Technology will start new courses in aviation and other aircraft related maintenance. The Sports and Youth Affairs Department proposes to implement a new

scheme for school children called 'Play for Health' to initiate them into sports and games. The Kerala State Sports Council will take up several key infrastructure projects like construction of Centralised Sports Hostel Building at Thiruvalla and a Synthetic track at Kottayam.

The Kerala State Youth Welfare Board is implementing the State Youth Policy. The Board's new initiatives include the Entrepreneurship Development Programme and Jeevadayini - the comprehensive blood donation programme. The Board will launch e-saksharatha - a comprehensive e-literacy campaign throughout the State. The Yuva Karma Sena will be revived to develop a select dedicated band of youth volunteers who will be trained in disaster management, first aid and community work. Yuvakarshika clubs will be launched on pilot basis in five Districts to join hands with the Agriculture Department and agencies like Horticulture Mission and National Medicinal Plants Board.

My Government will take steps to renovate Museum Galleries in Padmanabhapuram Kottaram, Thakkala, Krishnapuram Kottaram, Kayamkulam and Sakthan Thampuran Museum, Thrissur. Intermediate repositories will be established as per the instruction of the Indian Historical Records Commission to preserve records of local interests. It is proposed to construct an art gallery to accommodate the very rare and unique works of legendary painter Raja Ravi Varma and other famous artists from India and abroad.

The Parliamentary Affairs Department is an important link between the Legislative Assembly and Government for official business in the Assembly. Special focus will be given to the activities of the Institute of Parliamentary Affairs which serves as a seminal agency in generating new ideas and concepts for the healthy development of parliamentary democracy and for training different stakeholders. The Institute proposes to launch a

new light and sound show in the old Assembly Hall for commemorating notable events and characters in our history.

Protection of the environment is a bounden duty of any Government and my Government is taking a series of measures for this. Steps will be taken to ensure the participation of local communities for protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas. The Biodiversity Board will be supported for creating a Local Biodiversity Fund for biodiversity conservation.

The Gadgil Report and the Kasturirangan Report on ecological prescriptions for the Western Ghat region have created misgivings in the minds of people who have settled in these areas. My Government is determined to ensure that the legitimate interests and legal rights of the people who have settled there will be protected.

To make the legal services in Government more efficient and transparent, my Government shall expeditiously complete its two e-governance projects namely the modernisation of the Law Department and the Court Cases Monitoring Solution for Law Offices. My Government as part of the State Litigation Policy, proposes to appoint Nodal Law Officers in the remaining six District Collectorates as well. The Kerala State Legal Services Authority continues to provide yeoman service by providing legal education and relief to needy sections. The seventeen mediation centres already started across the State reflects this commitment.

My Government is committed to the welfare of Non-Resident Keralites. Major welfare schemes like Santhwana (NORKA Minister's distress relief fund providing financial assistance), Karunya (assistance for bringing back mortal remains of NRKs who die abroad), Swapnasaphalyam (scheme for providing air tickets to NRKS in distress) have been of immense help to NRKS. The NORKA Business Facilitation Centre will be strengthened for providing assistance to NRKS in

investments. My Government has drawn up a comprehensive rehabilitation package for Keralites returning consequent to the imposition of Nitaqat Rule in Saudi Arabia. My Government will constitute the Chief Minister's Global Advisory Council of Non-Resident Keralites on similar lines of Prime Minister's Global Advisory Council to draw upon the experience and knowledge of eminent Keralites in diverse fields across the world.

The Information and Public Relations Department has successfully widened its role from solely that of a media management service provider to actually integrating such activities fully to channel assistance and relief to people. The new programme 'NavaKeralam' for discussing developmental priorities of Government is being telecast through Doordarshan. A watchdog mechanism will be set up to ensure that all cases in 'Sutharya Keralam' are followed through. The Kerala Press Academy will be upgraded into a Centre of Excellence.

My Government proposes to interconnect the 214 Treasuries in the State to pave the way for Core Banking facilities for providing quality services to the public, especially senior citizens and pensioners. Net banking and Mobile Banking services will be extended to the general public. Treasuries in the State will switch over fully to online mode for the payment of salary. Alongside, more services from the Treasury Savings Bank will be offered for account holders. The Treasuries will facilitate electronic transfer of funds from the Government upto the Sub Treasury Level in the coming year.

The Commercial Taxes Department is taking steps to work with the Central Board of Direct Taxes and Directorate of Foreign Trade to improve information flow and tax collection efficiency. Several systemic improvements are being implemented in Valayar and other check posts to remove delays and improve revenue collection. Using RFID technology, vehicles



crossing the border check posts will be tracked. Kerala has been selected as a pilot State for roll out of the GST Network.

The Excise Department has progressively shed its image of being a merely revenue earning Department and has now taken up steps to make people aware of the detrimental effects of drugs and liquor on society. Working alongside with agencies like Kudumbashree, NSS, Student Police Cadets and Residents Associations, the campaign against drugs and alcoholism will be expanded. A new scheme to assist Government and Non-Governmental De-addiction Treatment Centres has been announced. A special Task Force has been created for the Attapady region. In the coming year, the emphasis will be on modernizing the Department, setting up two mobile liquor testing laboratories in Ernakulam and Kozhikode, installing vehicle scanners at check posts. State Excise Academy and Research Centre (SEARC) will be upgraded as a National Level Training Institute.

My Government has been able to galvanise the Lottery Department into a significant

resource generating vehicle. Sales have touched the unprecedented figure of Rs.2700 cr. during the year 2012-2013. The much lauded Karunya Benevolent Fund Scheme is being broadened to bring private hospitals also under its reach. My Government will spare no efforts in taking stringent action against illegal lotteries from outside the State. The State and District Level Monitoring Committees have been vigilant in this regard.

The Legal Metrology Department will take up the second phase of the computerization of the Department. Machines for testing gold purity will be procured. LPG Pump Verification Kits for the verification of Auto Gas distribution pumps will be installed to cater to all Districts in Kerala. The Printing and Stationery Departments will be modernised. Paper Testing labs will be upgraded to improve efficiency and transparency in procurement of paper.

This year, Institute of Management in Government has set up the Centre for Land Governance in collaboration with Government of India. The

Institute has signed a MoU with United Nations Environment programmes on training in Sustainable Development. The Institute will work as a source group for the implementation of the Right to Services Act. Training programmes under the State Training policy will focus on service delivery aspects of each Department. The Induction training for new recruits will be extended to all Departments and will be made mandatory for declaration of probation.

My Government gratefully acknowledges the fact that the credit for the success of its programmes, to a great measure, goes to our employees who have rallied behind my Government. A contented workforce is a sine qua non for successful implementation of the programmes and priorities of Government. My Government has announced the pay Commission for the employees of the State Government and bodies under it.

My Government has always welcomed any constructive criticism on its functioning. At the same time, one cannot but comment on increasing fissiparous tendencies to resort to subterfuge and insinuations for political advantage even on matter where the honourable courts of the land have not seen it appropriate to intervene. My Government has handled all such agitations in the highest democratic traditions, as any elected Government should even though on many occasions, such agitations have grossly breached the bounds of dignity and order and have even endangered lives and compromised the rights and freedom of people. Expressing dissent is an inalienable right of a human being. But, needless to say, freedom without restraint is a sure recipe for chaos and disaster. It is again well worth remembering that these are difficult times when the fabric of secularism in our country is increasingly being threatened.

Let us stand united with solidarity and pledge that we shall strive to take Kerala forward in its journey towards social and economic development.

JAI HIND ■



The Emigrants of Kerala

After independence migration from Kerala to other states and Union Territories in India and to countries outside India has become a way of life to a large number of educated youths. Migrants to the rest of India are known as out-migrants and those outside the country is known as Emigrants. Till 1970's nearly 80 per cent of the migration was to other parts of India. The hike in the oil prices during 1973-74 and afterwards led to considerable increase in the revenue of Gulf region. The heavy investment to build social and economic infrastructure facilities in these

countries generated great demand for skilled and unskilled workers from abroad. India became an important supplier of labour force and within India Kerala state became the most important supplier. As a result the relative position of out-migrants and emigrants changed drastically. While emigrants constituted 31 per cent of the total migrants in 1977, the proportion increased to 41 per cent in 1980 (Department of Economics and Statistics). Based on a sample survey carried out by the Centre for Development Studies the proportion of emigrants to total

migrants increased to 66 per cent in 1998 to 71 per cent in 2011.

Number of Emigrants

Information relating to the number of emigrants and other details can be collected either through census or through sample survey. In a census all the units in the population are enumerated and as such the data obtained will be more reliable. But census is a time consuming and costly affair. Hence sample surveys are conducted to estimate the number of migrants and other details. If sample size is very small and not carefully

planned and executed, the results obtained may not be reliable. It is with this background that we have to examine various estimates of the number of emigrants from Kerala since 1970.

As a separate census is a costly affair, an attempt was made along with the first Economic Census of 1977 to estimate the number of emigrants and out-migrants in the State. This census revealed that out of the total 4.32 lakhs migrants of Kerala 1.35 lakhs were emigrants. Again in 1980 along with the census type Housing and Employment

Survey carried out by the Department of Economics and Statistics showed that out of the total 5.08 lakhs migrants 2.08 lakhs were emigrants. Out of the emigrants 1.86 lakhs (90 per cent) were in Gulf countries. Much of the Gulf migration is chain migration, triggered off by the presence of friends and relatives at the designation point. The district-wise distribution of emigrants to Gulf region indicated that Thrissur District contributed the largest share

followed by Malappuram and Thiruvananthapuram. These three districts accounted for 50 percent of the total number of emigrants.

During the three decades after 1980, various agencies have estimated the number emigrants based on sample surveys. The most important among them is the Kerala Migration Survey conducted by the Centre for Development Statistics (CDS) in 1998, repeated in 2008 and 2011 also. These surveys are based on

15000 households from a universe of 78 lakhs households. As per these surveys the estimated number of emigrants from Kerala increased from 13.6 lakhs in 1998 to 22.8 lakhs in 2011. The total amount of remittances in 2011 was estimated approximately Rs. 50,000 crores and this constituted about 18 per cent of the gross state domestic product.

In the context of the policy measures of "Saudization" and "Nitaqat" to increase the proportion of native workers in the labour force of Saudi Arabia large number of Keralites were forced to return to Kerala. In order to take suitable policy measures for the welfare of emigrants and returnees government needs reliable official statistics of emigrants. So the Kerala Government authorized the Department of Economics and Statistics to conduct a census of emigrants along with the 6th round of Economic census. The census was carried out during

May-June 2013 and the results were published in November 2013.

Results of the Census 2013

The Kerala Pravasi (Emigrants) Census 2013 revealed that 1625653 persons from 1161308 households of Kerala are living in foreign countries. Malappuram district accounted for 18 per cent of the total emigrants followed by Thrissur with 11 per cent and Kannur and Kozhikode each with 10 per cent. These four districts accounted for about 50 per cent of the total emigrants from Kerala. Idukki district has the lowest number of emigrants with only one per cent followed by Wayanad district. While Mooniyur panchayat of Malappuram district has the maximum number of emigrant households, the newly formed tribal panchayat of Idukki district, Edamalakkudi, is the only panchayat in the state without an emigrant household. United Arab Emirate (UAE) with 5.7 lakhs emigrants accounted for 35 per cent followed by Saudi Arabia with 28 per cent. There are 78357 emigrants in USA and 45264 in U.K. Gulf countries accounted for 88 per cent of the total emigrants. Out of the total emigrant 14.27 lakhs are working emigrants. Among them women constitute only 7 per cent. Nearly 60 per cent of the working female emigrants are in the nursing profession. Around 20 per cent of female nurses are in UAE and 13 per cent are in U.K. Among the emigrant doctors, 25 per cent are in U.S.A and 20 per cent are in Saudi Arabia. About 46 per cent of teachers working in Gulf countries are woman. Among the emigrants engaged in diving profession 40 per cent are in Saudi Arabia. Around 25 per cent of the emigrants with more than 10 years of duration in foreign countries are from Malappuram district. ■

The writer is Former Director of Economics and Statistics

If sample size is very small and not carefully planned and executed, the results obtained may not be reliable. It is with this background that we have to examine various estimates of the number of emigrants from Kerala since 1970.



Electronic tongues measure grape ripeness

Electronic tongues can help grape growers as they offer detailed information on the degree of grape maturity and this could improve competitiveness. In a study, researchers applied electronic tongues developed in lab to measure the maturity of eight different types of grapes. The results confirm the usefulness of these devices for controlling grape maturity and, therefore, evaluate the most appropriate time for harvesting. The tongues are cheap and portable. Producers also highlight the potential usefulness of the tongue to perform analysis on the fruit at the premises where the product is taken. The researchers are currently working on new applications of electronic tongues in the sector. Specifically, they evaluate their use to control the fermentation of grapes in vats.



Breastfeeding reduces rheumatoid arthritis

In a significant new study of over 7,000 older Chinese women published online in the journal *Rheumatology*, breastfeeding - especially for a longer duration - is shown to be associated with a lower risk of rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Specifically, it showed that women who had breastfed their children were around half as likely to have RA, compared to women who had never breastfed. This is the first study to demonstrate a link between breastfeeding and lower risk of RA in a Chinese population, where breastfeeding was common practice and more prevalent than in many Western populations. More importantly, replication of the association between breastfeeding and lower risk of RA in a different population reinforces the need for further research to understand the hormonal mechanisms involved in the onset of RA.

Temperature influences tree height

The bigger the tree, the more carbon it stores. Studies explore global variance in tree height has identified temperature as the most important factor behind the tallest species. Height gives canopy trees, the focus of much forest carbon research, a competitive advantage as they can place leaves at higher light levels while suppressing their competitors. Height also allows for wind-dispersed pollen and fruits to travel further. The research examined

the temperature-driven physiological model of tree height in order to explain the thermal climates in which the tallest individuals of the tallest tree species grow. The tallest specimens of the world's nine similar tree species were found to grow in climates with an unusually small seasonal temperature variation, which accounted for only 2.1% of global land area.



Saudi Arabia's First dinosaurs identified

Dinosaur fossils are exceptionally rare in the Arabian Peninsula. An international team of scientists from different universities and the Saudi Geological Survey have now uncovered the first record of dinosaurs from that country. The study shows that the dry desert was once a beach littered with the bones and teeth of ancient marine reptiles and dinosaurs.

A string of vertebrae from the tail of a huge "Brontosaurus-like" sauropod, together with some shed teeth from a carnivorous theropod represent the first formally identified dinosaur fossils from Saudi Arabia, which were found in the north-western part of the Kingdom along the coast of the Red Sea. The remains were discovered during excavations conducted by a team of scientists working under the auspices of the Saudi Geological Survey, Jeddah. When



these dinosaurs were alive, the Arabian landmass was largely underwater and formed the north-western coastal margin of the African continent.

The teeth and bones are approximately 72 million years old. Two types of dinosaur were described from the assemblage, a bipedal meat-eating abelisaurid distantly related to Tyrannosaurus but only about six metres long, and a plant-eating titanosaur perhaps up to 20 metres in length. Similar dinosaurs have been found in North Africa, Madagascar and as far away as South America.

Dogs sensitive to Earth's magnetic field

A team of researchers in the Czech Republic has found that dogs can now be added to the list of animals that are able to sense and respond to the Earth's magnetic field.

Researchers describe field experiments they conducted which indicated that dogs prefer to defecate while in a North-South stance relative to the Earth's axis, during times when the magnetic field is calm.

When the magnetic field was not calm, the dogs showed no such preference, suggesting that when there is a clear magnetic field, dogs can feel it, and for unexplained reasons, prefer to align themselves in a certain posture. The team also found that freedom was a factor.

Dogs on leashes didn't appear to have as much of an inclination to align themselves in any particular direction as did dogs which were allowed to roam free in a field as they did their business.

Their study also found that the dogs tended to intentionally avoid crouching in an East-West, alignment, perhaps finding it the most uncomfortable of all.



Genetic discovery helps grow bigger fruits

Researchers have announced that farmers can now accomplish the growth of bigger fruits without sacrificing the nature of the plants. Studies have revealed one genetic mechanism for hybrid vigor, a property of plant breeding that has been exploited to boost yield since the early 20th century. Teasing out the hidden qualities of involving just one gene has provided the scientists with means to reduce the length of time that bushy tomato varieties can produce flowers. In these plants, longer flowering time substantially raises fruit yield.

Scientists have identified a rare example of hybrid vigour involving a genetic defect in the gene that makes florigen, a hormone that controls the process of flowering and flower production. The mutation dramatically increases tomato yields in bush tomatoes. Scientists have found that bushy plants a mutation in one of the two copies of the florigen gene, postpone the moment when they stop producing flowers. This, in turn, leads to many more fruits overall. The discoveries lead to an exciting prediction: that it may be possible to fine-tune florigen levels to increase yields even further.





Eradicating Le

Leprosy is one of the world's oldest and most dreaded diseases that has tormented humans throughout history, leaving lasting impressions on religion, literature and art. It has been synonymous with stigma and discrimination due to the hideous deformities it produced, mystery around its transmission and lack of any effective remedy till recently. Al-Bukhari's Muslim Hadith (volume 1, 2.443) documented Prophet

Mohammed's apparent dread of leprosy in his statement "Escape from the leprosy the way you escape from a lion". In addition to the physical effects of the disease's, patients have also suffered severe social stigma and ostracism from their families, communities, and even health professionals to such an extent that leprosy has been known since ancient times as "the death before death". Armauer Hansen, the discoverer of

Mycobacterium leprae once commented "There is hardly anything on earth, or between it and heaven, which has not been regarded as the cause of leprosy; and this is but natural, since the less one knows, the more actively does his imagination work".

We have indeed come a long way from the era when there was scanty or little information bordering on ignorance about the disease, on magnitude of the problem, intense negative image



prosy

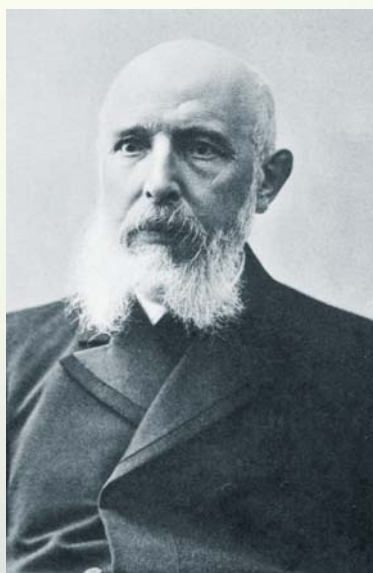


which led to prevention by segregation of patients and lack of organised services. At the First International Congress in Berlin in 1897 it was agreed that "Leprosy was incurable". However, discovery of *M. leprae* by Armauer Hansen, use of chaulmoogra oil in treatment of leprosy generated hope that leprosy is treatable. Discovery of dapsone in 1941 and later implementation of multi drug treatment (MDT) in 1981 changed the entire scenario. Although much remains unknown about the disease transmission and pathogenesis, tremendous advances have occurred in understanding the pathogenesis and treatment of the disease.

In the past two decades, marked success of combined efforts from the World Health Organization (WHO), Central and State governments, health professionals, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in identifying patients with leprosy and providing effective treatment to them has resulted in near elimination of leprosy. MDT has been the main weapon against leprosy since its inception in 1981 and by 2005, the prevalence in India was less than 1/10000. This was a landmark achievement in the

history of leprosy in India. By the end of 2010, the prevalence had come down to 0.69/100007. In this context, it must be pointed out that cases of leprosy are not uniformly distributed but tend to cluster in certain localities, villages or taluks. Hence, while the country as a whole has eliminated leprosy, two States, Bihar and Chattisgarh are yet to achieve elimination (with a prevalence rate of 1.12 and 1.94, respectively). Of the total of 640 districts, 110 districts still have prevalence rates between 1 and 2/10000, while in 530 districts, elimination has been achieved

These statistics have generated substantial hope that leprosy can be eradicated one day. Leprosy is one of the few chronic illnesses that meet the demanding criteria for possible elimination, i.e. it can be diagnosed by practical and simple diagnostic tools or by clinical signs alone, availability of an effective modality to interrupt its transmission in the form of MDT and a single significant reservoir of infection, humans. However, despite all the encouraging parameters which are sustainable, leprosy eradication seems a distant possibility considering the current scenario. New cases continue to occur in almost all endemic countries and



Armauer Hansen

high-burden pockets exist against a low-burden background. The number of new cases detected during 2011, as reported by 105 countries, was 219,075 and India topped the list with its contribution of 58.1 per cent to the pool. Moreover, leprosy in children and new cases with grade 2 deformities have still not changed significantly over the years. Intensified and focused activities with MDT have reduced the leprosy burden but sustaining the same level of focus and commitment will be a challenge, especially in low-resource settings where equity of access is an issue.

History of leprosy and stigma

In India, the Laws of Manu (1500 BC) mention various skin diseases translated as leprosy. The Laws prohibited contact with those affected by leprosy and punished those who married into their families. Ancient Indian society marginalized those with leprosy because of several factors: its chronic, potentially disfiguring nature; inconsistently effective therapy; association with sin; and the fear of contagion. The Mosaic Law stated illness to be a punishment for sin and leprosy was considered to be the punishment for the most heinous sins or crimes. A purification

Unfortunately, social stigma, alienation, and violence against sufferers of leprosy are attitudes that have continued through the ages up to the 20th century and these still exist, though in a diluted form. Stigmatizing attitudes have even been incorporated into modern law, as demonstrated in India where the Motor Vehicles Act of 1939 forbade the granting of drivers' license to leprosy sufferers and, until recently, the Indian Christian, Muslim, and Hindu Marriage Acts included leprosy as grounds for divorce.

Treatment of leprosy

Prior to the age of antibiotics, leprosy was treated with

treatment began in the 1940s, when Dr Guy Faget of the National Hansen's Disease Center (renamed the Gillis W. Long Hansen's Disease Center in the 1980s) in Carville, Louisiana, showed remarkable benefits of Promin in treating the disease. This discovery was heralded as "the miracle of Carville" and marked the onset of the first real hope that leprosy could be successfully treated and cured. Further work on limiting the toxicity of treatment led to the use of dapsone, which was broadly used as long-term monotherapy until 1970s. Introduction of dapsone simplified the treatment by

safe and practicable combined drug regimens effective in curing leprosy and preventing drug resistance under field conditions.

In 1981, WHO took a monumental decision and recommended MDT for leprosy. Later, six case series assessing the effects of WHO MDT (monthly supervised rifampicin 600 mg and clofazimine 300 mg, plus daily unsupervised dapsone 100 mg and clofazimine 50 mg) for 24 months supported the 1981 WHO recommendations. By 1985, these recommendations were adopted by almost all countries.

The requirement in the new millennium is for a single MDT regime of a duration that is acceptable for all categories of leprosy. This will make errors of classification in the field irrelevant and minimize the operational and logistic difficulties of maintaining adequate supply line of drugs.

Leprosy control/eradication programme in India

The first attempt to deal with leprosy as a public health problem was taken up in 1952 by the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation (GMLF), an institution started under the Gandhi Memorial Trust. At that time, the only method to deal with the disease was to isolate leprosy patients in "leprosy homes" "sanatoria" or "asylums", however, such places were very few and inadequate. Dapsone was the new drug that had just been introduced. A field study was piloted at GMLF which envisaged identification of all leprosy patients in a fixed geographic area, followed by domiciliary treatment with dapsone.

Rigorous health education was carried out to explain the true facts about leprosy. For the first time in a leprosy campaign, a house-to-house survey was carried out, and every man, woman and child was examined for signs of leprosy. That was the beginning of the SET (Survey,



ceremony and four sacrifices were essential before readmission to society was allowed. Taboos, such as Chinese and African legends associating leprosy with necrophilia and incest, constituted a major action framework during the Health Protection era. The legacies history in relation to leprosy control were largely negative, with erroneous knowledge about etiology of leprosy resulting in stigmatization and social exclusion of those diagnosed with the disease.

chaulmoogra oil, an extraction from the seeds of *Hydnocarpus wightiana*, with some limited success. Therapeutic trials were launched with sodium chaulmoograte in late 1915 and introduced in India during British Empire. As one American leprosy sufferer remarked: "Chaulmoogra oil was to be taken internally, externally, and eternally". *Hydnocarpus* and chaulmoogra oils retained their place in the British Pharmacopoeia till the 1940s.

The modern era of leprosy

paving the way for ambulatory treatment and changed the face of leprosy dramatically.

The initial enthusiasm of finding a cure for leprosy was dampened by relapses and emergence of drug resistance to dapsone in the 1970s up to 19 per cent of patients. The surveys sponsored by "Therapy for leprosy" (THELEP) and others also proved that the epidemic of dapsone resistance was sabotaging the entire leprosy control efforts. Thus, there was a need for dear and urgent need for

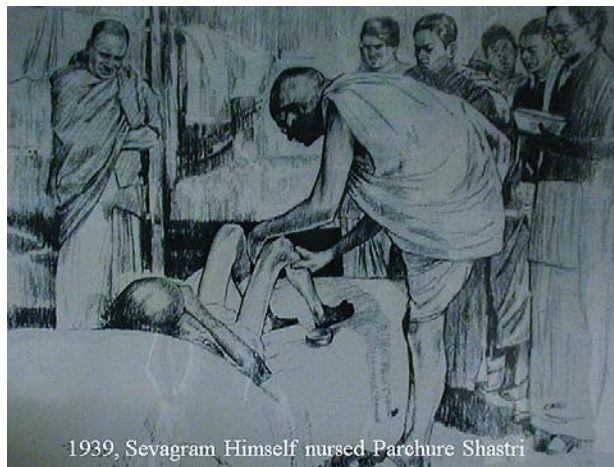
Education and Treatment) programme of GMLF. The National Leprosy Control Programme (NLCP) was started in 1955 and the SET method became the standard procedure for leprosy control in the entire country. Later, the WHO also endorsed the method, and it was adopted the world over.

The Enhanced Global Strategy for further reducing the disease burden requires endorsement and commitment from everyone working towards the common goal of reducing the disease burden due to leprosy and its detrimental physical, social and economic consequences to move closer to achieving the common dream of "world without leprosy".

National Leprosy Eradication Programme

In 2005, the Government of India took another major step towards expansion of the NLEP. Leprosy work, which had been carried out so far as a vertical programme, was integrated into the general health services. There were no more special leprosy clinics. All hospitals, dispensaries and PHCs had to treat leprosy patients. Further, the field staff of PHCs had to take up case finding and follow up along with their regular duties. This era was also significant for leprosy control in the use of culturally appropriate depictions of people living with leprosy for leprosy fundraising and public awareness campaigns. Integration of leprosy into the general health service has greatly enhanced the scope of leprosy service. By integration, discrimination against leprosy has been set to be removed and the patients have access to the services of ophthalmologists, surgeons, physiotherapists, and general physicians.

There have been remarkable achievements in several aspects of leprosy control within a span of 4 to 5 decades, however, these need to be put into perspective in relation to the possibility of



1939, Sevagram Himself nursed Parchure Shastri



1917, Champaran (Bihar) Escorts his follower, a leprosy patient to the camp



1932, Yeravada Jail Time of ending fast. Parchure Shastri a leprosy patient, chanting prayers

The initial enthusiasm of finding a cure for leprosy was dampened by relapses and emergence of drug resistance to dapsone in the 1970s up to 19 per cent of patients. The surveys sponsored by "Therapy for leprosy" (THELEP) and others also proved that the epidemic of dapsone resistance was sabotaging the entire leprosy control efforts.

eradicating the disease and prevention of its resurgence. Although elimination of leprosy has been achieved, new cases continue to occur and this will be seen for some more years. We need to be vigilant and see that the disease does not reappear in the community. The initial fall seen in the Annual New Case Detection Rate (ANCDR) was not seen, subsequent to 2005, and it has more or less remained at the same level. This is a warning sign, and an indication that there should be an active thrust to identify new cases. It is important to identify any hidden infective source cases, trace and treat.

Continuing challenges of leprosy in the post elimination era

The gray areas in leprosy control are the role of close contact transmission, the speed of transmission, and the extent of contagiousness during the incubation period. Research addressing these questions is essential to narrow down the uncertainty regarding the impact of MDT-based control. In the present times, the diagnosis and treatment of leprosy are relatively easy and most endemic countries are striving to fully integrate leprosy services into existing general health services. Most of the previous highly endemic countries have now reached elimination. However, the major problem in leprosy eradication is the delay between the onset of disease and its detection. Leprosy is a quiescent disease and hence there may be substantial delay before the patient seeks treatment. It is possible that close contacts of a leprosy patient become infected rapidly.

We need simple and effective screening test to identify individuals or populations with subclinical disease or asymptomatic infections to decrease the delay between onset and detection. In the absence of effective screening tools, the early treatment of the disease

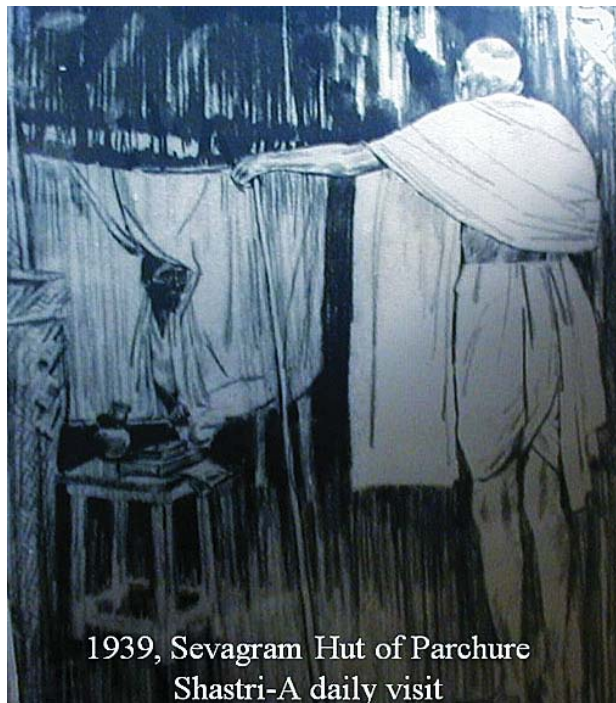


depends primarily on either self-identification by the patient or a high index of suspicion by the clinician when evaluating a patient with a skin lesion associated with sensory loss.

Stigmatization of leprosy and its impact on elimination

From antiquity to modernity, Indian society has treated leprosy as a stigma; a response shaped by both inadequate scientific knowledge and cultural attitudes. Leprosy is still called kushta in most Indian languages, as it was in Sushruta's time. The word itself still evokes fear and aversion, despite Mahatma Gandhi's efforts to destigmatize the disease. India's future challenges in leprosy control include multiple systems of medicine, stigma, and educational knowledge gaps. Integrating leprosy care into the general health systems seem to have decreased the stigma associated with leprosy due to family counselling and community outreach.

Efforts to decrease health inequity due to poverty, especially in rural areas with



1939, Sevagram Hut of Parchure Shastri-A daily visit

Mahatma Gandhi's dream of "Empowerment of People Affected by Leprosy," can only be fulfilled by removing the stigma associated with leprosy and giving them equal rights. We have won the battle but the war is still on and there is a need for research on early diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

limited access to health care, may help in leprosy control. However, if cultural beliefs are not addressed, increased availability may not translate into an appropriate increase in utilization. Cultural aspects of leprosy affecting its control include traditional medicine and stigma. Sustaining the gains made so far and further reducing the disease burden in India require an innovative, holistic approach that includes ongoing education, efforts to identify interventions that dispel stigma, and the inclusion of non allopathic practitioners in disease control programmes 1967.

Sustaining progress and future efforts

Although in the last two decades, the reported global prevalence of active leprosy infection has dropped by almost 90 per cent; yet a parallel drop in the incidence or new case detection has not been seen. From 1994 through 2011, the NCDR has persistently been more than 10>100,000 new cases annually. The last three decades brought a tremendous and hard-earned success in fighting leprosy,

thanks to the impressive co-operation of various highly committed actors from civil society, government, and the private sector. As the last mile is always the hardest to go, a fresh and future-oriented debate about sustainability is highly desirable at this point in the campaign against this disease.

The key approach to sustainability has been integration of the delivery of leprosy services into basic health and primary care. Sustainability is fundamentally an ecological concept, but when applied to health care, it tends to largely focus on financing. We want to ensure that leprosy funds do not find their way to assisting other programmes. Integrated programmes often become what has been termed 'combined vertical programmes' rather than truly integrated. However, many previous vertical programmes like leprosy are trying to integrate into the weak, fragile infrastructure of primary health care. Integration can only be successful if the primary health services are strong or competent enough to cope with this integration.

Leprosy (or Hansen's disease) is one of the oldest and notorious, but least understood diseases of man which continues to be a challenge to health worldwide, with about 250,000 new cases being currently detected every year. A third of newly diagnosed patients have nerve damage and might develop disabilities, although the proportion varies according to several factors, including level of self-care. Leprosy was not a specified disease in the Millennium Development Goals, but improvements in other areas these cover, such as education and levels of poverty will help leprosy patients and services.

Mahatma Gandhi's dream of "Empowerment of People Affected by Leprosy," can only be fulfilled by removing the stigma associated with leprosy and giving them equal rights. We have won the battle but the war is still on and there is a need for research on early diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. There is a need to sustain and provide quality leprosy services to all persons through general health system, including good referral system. Efforts need to be made to reduce deformity through early detection, self care, physiotherapy and reconstructive surgery and developing sound surveillance systems.

Hopefully, the progress made to date will be maintained rather advanced through the application of the sustained political will of governments, ongoing research into basic understanding of the disease and improved treatments or vaccines. The most important step in eradication of any communicable disease is to knock out the last case. This can be achieved essentially by community participation for which vigorous information, education, communication (IEC) activities are required. It is only the enlightened public that can provide the solution to any social or public health problem. ■

The writer is Dy. District Education Media Officer, DMOH, Kottayam

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family support.

Since 1994, governments all over the world have sought to put in place schemes that enhance the value of the family and have to a great extent succeeded. Measures dealing with education, equal opportunities for women, care for the lonely and the aged, nutrition and care for children have been more successful than certain others.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and it offers a chance to take another look at the importance of families and refocus attention on their role in development. It is time to 'take stock of recent trends in family policy development, share good practices in family policy making, review challenges faced by families worldwide and recommend solutions.' Rapid socio-economic and demographic transformations have resulted in making it more difficult for families to fulfil their responsibilities. The intergenerational bonds that held families together in the past are growing weak and that makes it more difficult for families to reconcile work and family responsibilities.

The preparations for the twentieth anniversary will therefore bear these trends in mind and focus on exploring policies that confront family poverty, ensure work-family balance and advance social integration and intergenerational solidarity. Governments, civil societies, academic and private sectors will play key roles in seeking to achieve this through schemes, activities, conferences and other initiatives.

In a world that is 'progressing' at a frantic pace, there is always the fear that the family as a unit can disintegrate. So it is heartening that efforts to prevent this are being put in place by the United Nations, the governments and other organisations. But ultimately it is the individual who must recognise the fact that if he is to be a well adjusted, happy and social being, he cannot live in isolation. As Alex Haley, the author of the famous novel Roots, put it, "In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future." ■

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Not every footstep

can lead you through the right path



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NFSA

A vital step to Vitality

It will be a cliché if it is stated “we cannot exist without food”. But it is a fact and none will oppose it. Perhaps, the gravity of the problem cannot be explained by words, but has to be experienced by self. It is not amenable to any explanation. Words are inadequate to explain the feeling of hunger. It is the most basic feeling in man, nay, in every living being. It has no face of any caste or sect. It has no gender also. It has the feeble and feckless face of a hapless man. The most seething problem India has been facing is nothing but ensuring food for the hungry. The policy makers also face this challenge. Here arises the significance of the enactment of the ‘National Food Security Act, 2013’.

The National Food security Bill was introduced in the Parliament and passed by both houses. Since the President has given an assent on September 2013, it has become an Act now. Being a vital problem, the effort to ensure food for the majority of the population is essentially a matter to be appreciated and applauded. The primary debate preceded the enactment is on the cost of the National Food Security Act and its impact on the economy. The estimated cost of the implementation of the provisions of the Act ranges from 1 Lakh crore to 3 Lakh crore per year. A balanced evaluation by experts says that the expected cost will remain within the proposed limit of Rs. 125,000 crores as given in the financial memorandum of the bill.

Brazil is the predecessor of India in this regard. It is the first country that made food a right. The world popular programme ‘Form Zero’ is only a part of the Brazilian ‘Zero Hunger Programme’. Hunger, being a universal phenomenon and problem, is being treated by the international community with such seriousness. Lakhs of people including children die every year due to the lack of food or malnutrition. That is why the UN gives prominence to the right to food. In its International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11 specifically recognises it as “the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and malnutrition.”

Article 21 of the Constitution of India deals with ‘Protection of life and Personal Liberty’. Its horizon is wide and has been widened by the Apex court of India in many landmark cases. Hence, for being able to protect lives of the people, the government shall endeavour and ensure a hunger-free society. Here, the National Food Security Act is a complementary and corroborative one to the constitutional provision guaranteed under Article 21. The Act is introduced as “An Act to provide for food and nutritional





security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”.

As has been said, the Act intends to ensure adequate food for the majority of the people at affordable prices. The Act proposes to cover 75 percent of the rural population, and 50 percent of the urban population with an entitlement of 5 Kg per person per month of food grains at issue prices of Rs. 2 and 3 per Kg for wheat and rice respectively. Besides, the poorest households will receive an additional 10 Kgs of food grains per household to protect their existing allocations. The state wise inclusion ratios are determined by the Planning Commission based on a national level cut-off for per capita consumption to cover 75 percent and 67 percent of rural and urban population respectively.

The government has to depend on PDS (Public Distribution System) to

implement the provisions of this Act. Here, the government is bound to ensure the effectiveness of the PDS. Instances are there for being doubtful about the efficacy of the Public Distribution System. The examples of excess leakage of grain during the period 1993-1994 and 2004-2005 make one sceptic about the efficiency of the PDS. 28 percent of the grain was leaked in 1993-1994 and 55 percent was leaked in 2004-2005 periods. However, we need not be pessimistic of this system. PDS has overcome its drawback to a considerable amount. Most states have taken steps to improve its efficiency and functioning and some even reverted to near universal PDS. Leakage has reduced, and there is strong reason to think that this is related to the improvement in access.

If we examine the overall performance of the PDS, the national percentage of households accessing PDS cereals, that had declined from 27 percent in 1993-94 to 24 percent in 2004-2005, increased to 39

percent in 2009-2010 and further to 45 percent in 2011-2012. Along with this, grain leakage which had jumped from 28 percent in 1993-1994 to 55 percent in 2004-2005, reduced to 40 percent in 2009-2010 and further to 35 percent in 2011-2012. This shows that problem is not with the system but in its implementation and any system can be corrected if will so.

A significant feature of this Food Security Act is that while it seeks to provide food grain to households, it intends to provide cooked meals to children, elderly people and pregnant woman. Besides, it allows government to pay cash when unable to provide food. Here, the authorities are to be cautious to see that the Programme is not deviated from its proclaimed intention to ensure food in an overt manner or direct nutrition to cash transfer programme.

The data from Socio – Economic and Caste Census SECC 2011) can be relied on. It can be used to fix the exact criteria for the identification of the real beneficiaries of this

programme. Along with this, the criteria put forward by Chatisgarh Food Security Act can be taken into account. It proposes some criteria—excluding income tax payees, household having a house in urban areas which has a carpet area of more than one thousand square feet, and households in non-scheduled areas who hold more than 4 hectares of irrigated land or more than 8 hectares of non-irrigated land etc.. Considering the social, political and geographical conditions of the concerned states, criteria can be fixed more accurately.

Limitations may be there, quite natural, in a country where population is vast, resources are scarce and interests are different. Notwithstanding, it is a big leap and will be a great solace to the hungry if implemented properly. Hence, efforts are to be made to implement the FSA in an effective way to root out the evil of hunger so that a hunger-free society can be ensured. ■

The writer is a freelance journalist



Peacock tailed Plant Calathea

The plant with bold, decorative markings of its thin delicate leaves resembling a peacock's tail is an attractive house plant perfect for home or office. Scientifically christened as *Calathea makoyana*, the plant got its nick name Peacock plant as it resembles the real Peacock bird, very decorative and showy. It is a species in the genus *Calathea*. The exquisite patterned handsome leaves are the real attraction for

tropical gardeners and indoor plant lovers. On the first sight this may look like a fussy plant but once we have mastered care and feeding of the Peacock plant it will certainly reward us with strikingly beautiful leaves, which are purple underneath with green stripes on top. Native to the jungles of Central and South America the plant is very much suited for our gardens also. Due to its unique feathery leaf colour

patterns Peacock plant is a favourite decorative indoor plant too.

The plant grows to a height of 45 cm tall. The leaves with its vivid shades of green and maroon are carried very proudly like the Peacock's tail feathers. This can be described as an evergreen rhizomatous perennial plant forming clumps of elliptic leaves and seldom spikes of small purple and white flowers which are not





showy. The surface of the leaves is glabrous. The foliage usually rises from a central rosette.

For successfully growing this plant, first of all locate an indoor or outdoor area that receives filtered sunlight. Avoid planting the plant in full direct sunlight, since it can burn the tender leaves and also cause mottling or fading of the leaves. Regarding the growing medium or potting mixture use loose, loamy soil that is mixed with organic manures like leaf manure, peat or well dried cowdung. A loose and light well-aerated open soil mix allowing free drainage is always recommended. Place some crocks at the bottom of the pot. The plant can be watered regularly and also mist-spray the leaves. Do not allow the Peacock plant to dry out.

Place the plant on or near pebble trays or water source to maintain humidity which it relishes very much. Since Calathea loves high humidity the leaves show brown tips when

humidity is too low. Peacock plants are usually propagated by removing small plantlets growing from the base of the mother plant by gently separating its roots or rhizomes in summer, as close to the middle as possible with a sharp knife. Old plants can be removed from the pot carefully dividing it and each section is planted individually. Give any fertiliser mixture in a much diluted dose once in a month to enhance growth. Don't give it a strong feed frequently. Organic foods like dried cowdung, vermicompost, bone meal, leaf manure and neem cake are also beneficial for the plant. As the plant grows it is important to prune it to improve its overall health as the dead leaves stagnate growth which leads to the further dulling of colours. If we remove the dead leaves in time it will help in regeneration of the plant and will keep it healthy.

When grown indoors, place the plant by a window where it

gets bright indirect light. Anyway they are a great choice for a shady room. Peacock plant is certainly a container plant, feature plant, house plant and an essential element in all tropical gardens. This is also a well suited plant to modern houses which are generally warm. Just take care to mist it frequently to ensure adequate humidity.

Peacock plant makes a tall ground cover in flower beds with shrubs and tall flowering plants. When grown in containers it can be used for a burst of colour on a patio, porch or deck. The showy leaves complement other green plants and flowers in pinks, purples and silvers. When grown in sunny spots the plant can develop problems with spider mites. It may also suffer damage

from aphids and scale insects. Signs of these pests include the yellowing of leaves and dropping off and also clear spots on the leaf surface. Such pests can be effectively controlled by using tobacco decoction or neem oil-soap emulsion.

Beyond its aesthetic value a study conducted at NASA, the US space agency Peacock plant is found to purify and clean the atmospheric air in houses and buildings where they remove many toxic volatile organic compounds thus acting as an air purifier too. Thus this plant is a true companion to garden lovers both indoors and outdoors. ■



GOVERNMENT ORDERS

District level committee constituted

A district level committee for the enforcement & monitoring of Coastal Regulation Zone notification, 2011 has been constituted in each coastal district of the state under the chairmanship of the District Magistrate concerned. Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Kannur and Kasargod are the districts to have the committee with three members each representing the local traditional communities. The Deputy Director of Panchayat, District Planning Officer and the Assistant Conservator of Forest of the concerned districts are also included in the committee.

G.O. (Rt) No.69 /2013 / S & TD,
Dated Thiruvananthapuram, 12.12.2013

Honorarium for Mini anganwadi workers hiked

Government has increased the honorarium of workers in the 126 mini anganwadis in the state to Rs. 2250. This will have retrospective effect from 4th July 2013.

GO (MS) No.112 / 2013 / SJD ,
dtd Thiruvananthapuram, 30-12-2013

Fishermen Debt: Moratorium period extended

The period of moratorium from recovery proceedings on the debts of fishermen has been extended up to 2014 December 31. This is for the loans availed by the fishermen from financial institutions including private and from individuals till 31st December 2007 for the purchase of fishing materials, house building, education of children, marriage of daughters, medical treatment etc.

GO (MS) No.77 /13 / Fisheries dtd.
Thiruvananthapuram, 26-12-13

Interest free loan to fisherwomen

Rs.300 lakh has been release to Matsyafed for implementing the scheme of Interest free loan to

fisherwomen for the year 2013-14.

GO (Rt) No. 1055/2013/F&PD Dated,
Thiruvananthapuram 27.12.2013

Name and Address of the Officer made compulsory in Certificates

A seal containing the name, designation, office, Land phone and mobile phone numbers of the officer concerned should be legibly stamped in every certificate, including Permit for building construction, Building number, Occupancy certificate, issued to the Public and in every correspondences to the government by the Local Self Government Institutions. Government has instructed every officer concerned to strictly follow the same from 1st January, 2014.

It is instructed to follow the same in the case of corresponding note files also. Approval or Lay out approval from the town Planning Department also should contain the same seal of the officer concerned. According to the Government Circular issued by the LSG department No.75419 dated 30-12-2013, stringent action will be taken on erring officials.

Rs.10 crore for Technology innovation zone

Administrative sanction of Rs. 10 crore has been given for the implementation of the various activities related to the Technology innovation Zone at Kochi. HMT building refurbishment, Raspberry Pi programme, Start up Village, building reimbursement are the activities for the entrepreneurial development in the state to which administrative sanction is issued.

GO (Rt) No.295 /2013 /ITD dtd, Thiruvananthapuram
31-12-2013

KSTP to get 50 crore

The State Government has accorded sanction to release an amount of Rs.Fifty crore to the Kerala State Transport Project for the approved works. Out of the total budget provision of Rs. 280.28 crore in the current years budget, so far 150 crore has been released.

GO (Rt) 13/2014 /PWD dtd Thiruvananthapuram
03-01-2014

For details of Govt. Orders and Circulars please visit the websites
www.prd.kerala.gov.in, ww.kerala.gov.in, www.finance.kerala.gov.in