



The 100 Days of 100 Beginnings...



The Confident '100' for Resurgence...



Kerala's Historic Tryst with Covid-19

# KERALA CALLING

₹ 12

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2020 SEPTEMBER 01

100

100 DAYS  
100 PROJECTS

# Kerala No. 1

*Kerala retained the top position in the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2019, which assesses each State and Union Territory's achievement regarding Sustainable Development goals (SDG) such as good health, quality education, gender equality, Clean water and sanitation, reduction in hunger and poverty, among others.*

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**KERALA HAD THE TOP RANK AMONG STATES  
WITH A SCORE OF 70. LAST YEAR IT WAS 69**

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**BEST IN GOVERNANCE**

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**LEAST CORRUPT**

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**FIRST IN LAW AND ORDER**

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**BEST IN HEALTH**

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**LOWEST INFANT MORTALITY RATE**

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**LOWEST MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE**

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**BEST IN EMPOWERING THE DIFFERENTLY- ABLED**

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**BEST CHILD- FRIENDLY STATE**

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**TOPS THE FOOD SAFETY INDEX**

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**KERALA STATE WOMEN DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION WON NATIONAL AWARD**

---

**BEST IN TOURISM**

---

**BAGGED THE BEST STATE FOR TOURISM IN  
THE STUDY OF SOS BY INDIA TODAY**

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**BEST IN EDUCATION**

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**TOP TO ENSURE GIRLS' EDUCATION FACILITY**

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# Survival of the Fittest

We have prepared for the worst and the triumph in tackling the death-rate in an apocalyptic – like, pandemic-struck era is no mean achievement. Since the novel corona virus continues to claim many numbers of lives across the globe, it is the ever determined, resolute and pragmatic State Government of Kerala that brought forth this much more envious success in defending the Covid-19 threat. People from all walks of life stood firm behind the Government and this made containment of the disease spread to a great extent.

The pandemic is spreading rapidly and the inevitable happening is being met with all possible means. But the State and its populace cannot take it for granted to remain idle these days. The ‘system’ has to run sans impediments. So, the State Government has decided and has made it a reality that developmental activities occur without the slenderest of delay.

The 100 days – 100 projects initiated to revive the economy, as well as the development of the State, is marching in the right direction at the exact pace. Worries regarding the post-covid days are being addressed with the initiation of the 100 days programme and more such enterprises are there in the pipeline too.

In addition to the progressive projects, the Government ensures that those downtrodden-marginalised class does not suffer the negative impact of the epidemic. The social-security pensions are distributed on time, an increase in amount has been made and the same will be distributed every month despite the financial crunch owing to the pandemic spread.

The LIFE Mission – the complete housing project is moving in the right direction to provide safe shelters to the needy. Despite all the odds umpteen numbers from the deprived section are provided with safe and sufficiently - spaced abodes. Most of them celebrated this Onam with much gaiety and are thanking the State Government of Kerala for standing behind them in these ‘tough’ times. All those reactions and experiences are being shared in this edition alongwith the usual diversity in reading.

**U. V. Jose I. A. S**  
Editor-in-Chief



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# The Confident '100' for Resurgence...

**Pinarayi Vijayan**  
Chief Minister of Kerala

Kerala has so far done a commendable job in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, we are entering a stage where we are starting to live with the pandemic. As I had mentioned in an earlier issue, life has to go on, we have to move forward. Our Break the Chain campaign and COVID-19 containment strategy have together restricted the spread of the disease from peaking to the previously predicted unmanageable levels. Our Covid positive cases for August were lesser than what we had anticipated, despite increasing the number of tests.



After the successful implementation of Rs. 20,000 crore COVID-19 package, we have now launched a '100 Days, 100 Projects' campaign. We aim to complete 100 projects in the State in the next 100 days as part of an action plan. We expect this to boost the socio-economic status of the State during this tumultuous period. This is the State government's Onam gift to the people of Kerala. Kerala's economic growth should not be stagnant during the Covid season. We have to face new challenges as per the changing needs of the people. We will speed up projects which were delayed due to the pandemic. This action plan will also include the fulfillment of the promises made by the government and enhance relief measures.

We will provide food kits for all ration card holders for the next four months. This is in continuation to the much-lauded food kits given during Onam and lock down. The kits will be distributed through ration shops, and would directly benefit about 88 lakh ration cardholders in the State. When this Government had come to power, the distribution of welfare pensions was in disarray. We streamlined its distribution and paid off even the arrears, and gradually increased the pension from Rs. 600 to Rs. 1,300. The number of beneficiaries has also been increased from 35 lakhs to 58 lakhs during this period. Now, we have decided to increase the social welfare pension by Rs. 100 to Rs. 1,400 and distribute it on a monthly basis as well. These measures will further strengthen our comprehensive social security net.

Government has made great strides in improving the infrastructure of government hospitals and enhancing its human resources. As



*Konni medical college*



*Safdar Hashmi Library, kannur- Fully digital panchayath library in India*

part of this ongoing campaign, the public health system will be further strengthened in the fight against COVID-19. Since the outbreak, 9,768 healthcare workers have been recruited through the National Health Mission. If required, more staff will be added to the health system within the next 100 days. The operation of COVID-19 First Line Treatment Centres will be made more efficient and the number of tests will be increased to

50,000 per day.

The Government aims to transform the Primary Health Centres (PHCs) into fully equipped Family Health Centres (FHCs) with hospital facilities. So far 386 FHCs have been completed and commissioned. In the next 100 days, 153 FHCs will be inaugurated. 24 new buildings will be completed in Medical Colleges, District, General and Taluk

Hospitals. 10 new dialysis centres, 9 scanning centres, 3 Cath labs and 2 modern cancer treatment facilities will be completed within 100 days as well.

All government schools with more than 500 students are being upgraded with KIIFB funding. 35 school buildings constructed at a cost of Rs 5 crores are being inaugurated as part of the campaign, in the next 100 days. 14 school buildings constructed at a cost of Rs 3 crores are about to be inaugurated. The construction of 27 other school buildings will be completed and the construction of 250 new school buildings will be initiated.

The programme to transform all lower primary schools into hi-tech schools is progressing with funding from KIIFB. Hi-tech computer labs will be set up in 11,400 schools. The Vidyashree project to distribute laptops to five lakhs school children under the auspices of KSFE and Kudumbasree will be completed within 100 days. 10 ITIs renovated at a cost of Rs. 18 crores will be inaugurated.

150 new courses will be allotted in government and aided colleges in the state. Land acquisition for the permanent campuses of APJ Abdul Kalam University and Malayalam University will be completed and their foundation stones will be laid. Buildings for 32 higher education institutions will be completed with an investment of Rs. 126 crores.

A special task force will be set up under the Departments of Law, Finance and General Administration to draft special rules with regard to the 11 institutions whose recruitments have been handed over to the PSC. Within 100 days, 1,000 posts will be created in the colleges and



*E.K. Nayanar Bus stand cum Shopping Complex, Kunnammkulam*



*Malabar cancer centre*

higher secondary schools. 50,000 people will be employed in the non-agricultural sector through 15,000 new ventures. The main agencies will be Local Co-operative Banks, Kudumbasree, KFC, District Industrial Centres and Local Bodies. Each agency will publish additional jobs created, through a dedicated portal.

An amount of Rs. 961 crores will be provided from the Chief

Minister's Disaster Relief Fund for the renovation of 5,000 rural roads. Administrative sanction for Rs. 392.09 crores will be granted as part of the Rebuild Kerala Initiative, for rural roads. 189 PWD roads funded by KIIFB and built at a cost of Rs. 1,451 crores will be opened to traffic. 158 km of KSTP roads worth Rs. 901 crores and 21 bridges including Kundannur and Vyttila flyovers will be inaugurated in the next 100 days. 41 KIIFB



projects tendered for Rs. 671.26 crores will be inaugurated by November.

Of the 590 km of Kovalam - Bekal waterway, 453 km will be made navigable. Boat jetties at Champakulam, Parassinikkadavu and Pazhayangadi will be completed. Kochi Metropolitan Transport Authority and Safe Kerala Control Room will be inaugurated. The first electric hybrid cruise vessel, 2 catamaran boats and 2 water taxis will be launched. Port office building of the Vizhinjam International Port project will be inaugurated. In the next 100 days there will be a major breakthrough in realising the Wayanad Tunnel Route, for which the implementation agency is Konkan Railway.

We are setting up Kerala's first Open University as a memorial to the revered Sree Narayana Guru. The university will function as an integrated center for distance education in Kerala. Distance education systems of other universities in Kerala such as Kerala, MG, Calicut and Kannur will now be part of the new university.

Sree Narayana Guru was a proponent of non-formal education. The relevance of online courses is increasing day by day in the context of changes in the global work environment and the current Covid crisis. It is in this context that an open university in the public education sector is coming up in Kerala. Anyone of any age can join Open University courses. University shall issue diploma certificates for dropouts, if they are eligible.

The university will have a fully online academic system from registration to announcement



*Supply Co Suburban Mall, Piravom*



*Tata Covid Hospital, Kasargod*

of results. In addition to the traditional courses, the Open University will also offer skills development courses. Higher education will become more popular through this. Eminent teachers and experts from national and international level will be taking online classes at this university.

With all these measures, we hope to reinvigorate various sectors

like agriculture, irrigation, electricity, sports, culture, local self governments and also traditional sectors like coir and cashew. Our government is striving to move forward with its commitment to development and social justice. The performance of the '100 Days, 100 Projects' campaign will be reviewed at all levels in the coming days. We would like to give the assurance that they will be completed on time.

\*

# 1000 Days Projects

[September - November 2020]



- GAIL pipeline
- International Virology Institute
- Kochi metro - completed up to Pettah
- Monthly Food Kit supply Programme – Food and Civil Supplies Department
- Open University @ Kollam

Free Monthly Grocery Kit

Free Monthly Grocery Kit

## Health and family welfare Department

- Kasargod - TATA COVID hospital.
- Casualties of Thiruvananthapuram medical college and R.C.C
- Seven Projects of Kottayam medical college
- Four Projects of Kozhikode medical college
- Six Projects of Malabar cancer centre
- Inauguration - O.P section of Konni medical college
- Cath lab, ICU sections of Kollam medical college
- 153 family health centres
- Inauguration of the new buildings of 18 District/ General/Taluk hospitals
- Announcement of 150 new courses
- Announcement of the increment of welfare - security pensions by 100 rupees



## Social Justice Department

- Kaivalya Programme for 47027 differently abled people
- Declaration of the floor price of vegetables

## Agriculture Department

- The inauguration of climate friendly farming methods in Munrothuruth and Kuttanad
- Commencement of the Second kuttanad package

## Labour and Skills Department

- Inauguration of 10 renovated ITIs
- 50,000 jobs within 100 days – opening of portal

## Labour Department

- Guest Worker - friendly Residences in Kerala
- Facilities to report vacancies via online to the Employment Exchanges

## Water Resources Department

- Jalajeevan Mission programme.
- The state level inauguration of the Rs. 200 crore coastal protection programme at Chellanam
- Kadamakkudi drinking water Project
- Palakkad interstate water hub



## Industries Department

- **Ease of doing business – single window system inauguration**
- **Ottapalam defence park, Palakkad – Cherthala mega Food Park**
- **Laying of the foundation stone for Medical Device Park (K.S.I.D.C)**
- **Combined Rice Technology Park Palakkad**
- **Multipurpose Park at Kundara Ceramics**
- **Inauguration of the construction of Nadukaani textile processing centre**

## Coir, Harbour Departments

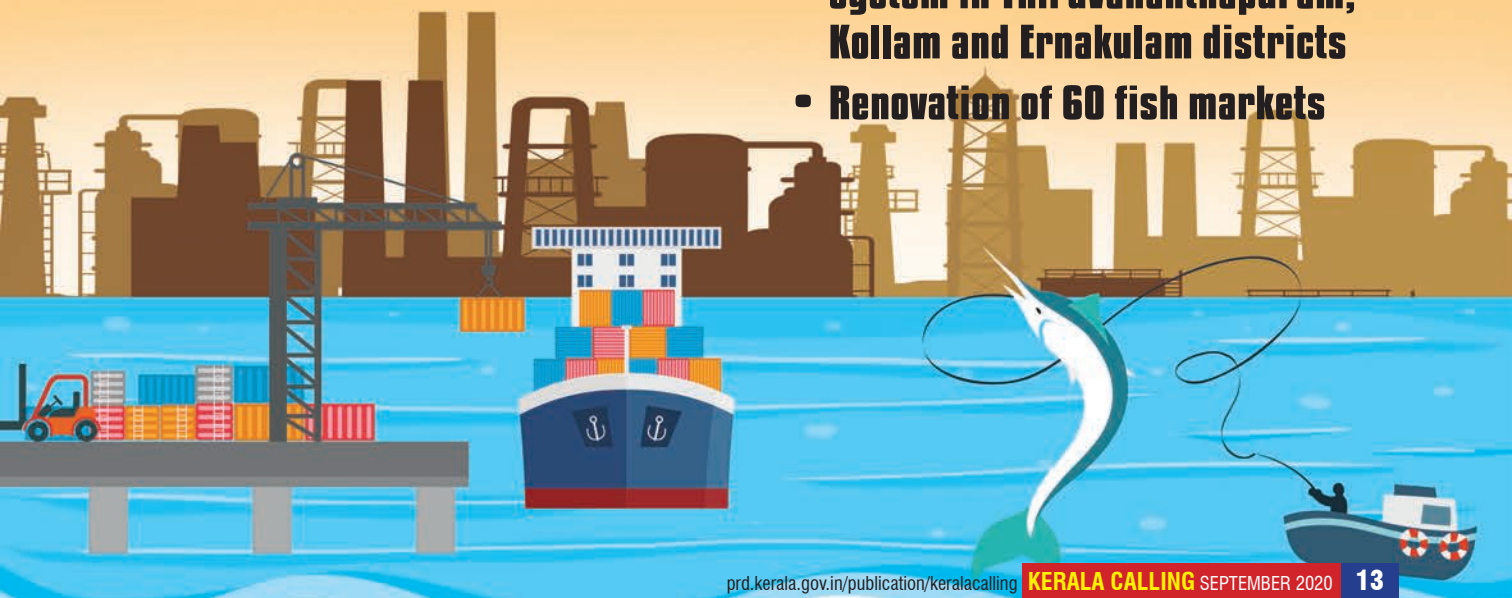
- **Completion of 100 mechanised coir factories**
- **Inauguration of Alappuzha coir museum and the foundation laying of Port Museum**

## Fisheries/ Harbour Department

- **Koyilandi, Manjeswaram Fishing Harbour**
- **Commencement of the construction of Chethi Harbour**

## Fisheries Department

- **One fish stall in one constituency**
- **K.C.C loans for 10,000 fish cultivators**
- **Online fish sale and Home Delivery system in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Ernakulam districts**
- **Renovation of 60 fish markets**



## Public Works Department

- Alappuzha- Changanacherry Elevated road
- Kundannur overbridge
- Vyttila overbridge
- Alappuzha bypass
- 41 KIIFB road Projects
- 181 public work roads worth Rs. 1273 crores
- 158 Kilometre K.S.T.P roads worth Rs. 901 crores
- Completion of 21 bridges
- Aruvikkara Mini Civil Station
- Punalur court complex
- Opening of four sub R.T offices
- Kovalam – Neeleshwaram waterway

## Public Education Department Inaugurations

- 35 schools renovated at a cost of Rs. 5 crores
- 14 schools renovated at a cost of Rs. 3 crores
- Other 100 schools
- High tech computer labs at 11,400 schools
- Renovation of all schools in coastal area



## Scheduled Tribe Development Department

- 4 metric hostels
- P.K. Kaalan Scheduled Tribe Family Upliftment Programme
- 6,000 study rooms

## Sports Department

- 10 Sports stadiums including Koothuparamb, Chalakkudi municipal stadiums

## Tourism Department

- Inauguration of 66 Tourism Projects
- Veli Miniature Railway
- Kozhikode beach cultural hub
- Tourism Project of Neyyar Dam
- Vellar Craft Village

## Home Department

- 15 Police stations and 15 Cyber Police Stations
- Malappuram Central Prison and Alappuzha District Prison

## Excise Department

- 6 Excise Range Offices



## Revenue Department

- Distribution of 10,000 purchases certificates and 20,000 title deeds
- Inauguration of 19 Smart Villages

## Cultural Department

- Unveiling of the Sree Narayana Guru Statue
- Cherayi Pundit Karuppan Memorial
- Radio Malayalam Studio
- Palakkad district Heritage Museum
- Commencement of the construction of T.K Padmini art gallery at Ernakulam

## Forest - Wildlife Department

- Konni Elephant Museum

## Department of Animal Husbandry

- Implementation of goat semen donation programmes in 500 more centres
- 50 Kerala chicken outlets
- Inauguration of the renovated state dairy lab building
- Elevated and community Cattle shed Programme

## Devaswom Department

- Guruvayur Prasadam Programme





## Transport Department.

- Production of hybrid cruise vessel, catamaran boats and water taxis
- Kochi Metropolitan Transport Authority

## Harbour Department

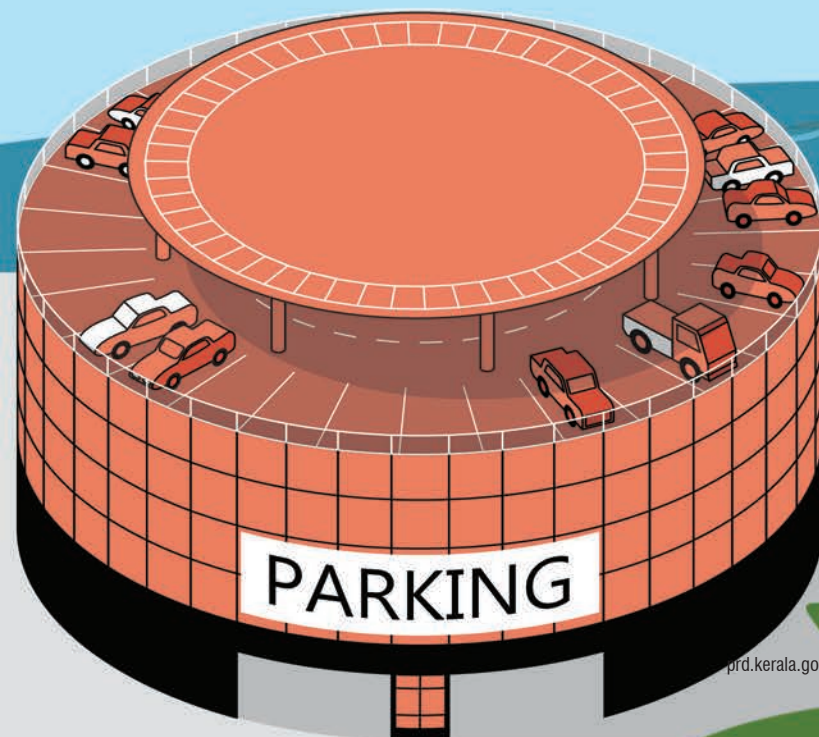
- Inauguration of the front office building of Vizhinjam harbour Project

## NORKA Department

- Medical insurance policy for the emigrant people.
- Efficient rehabilitation of the emigrant people

## Local Self Governance Department

- First and second phase multi-level car parking in Thiruvananthapuram Corporation
- Combined plastic waste treatment centre- at Kuttippuram and Malappuram
- 25000 houses as part of Life Mission
- Complete solid waste disposal Programme at 250 local governing institutions
- Implementation of Integrated Local Governance Management system at 150 Local Self- Governing institutions
- Commencement of the deployment of disaster management wardens



## Electricity Department

- Kothamangalam, Chalakkudy, and Kaloor sub stations
- Inauguration of the first phase of Pugaloor- Madakathara high voltage DC line

## Finance Department

- Vidhya sree Programme to avail laptops to 5 lakh students under the initiative of KSFE and Kudumbasree

## Higher Education Department

- Foundation laying after the completion of land acquisition for the permanent campuses of Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam University and Malayalam University
- Completion of the construction of buildings for 32 higher education institutions
- Announcement of 1000 posts at college, higher secondary levels
- Kerala Youth Leadership Academy



# The 100 Days of 100 Beginnings...



**Kavita Martin**  
Freelance Journalist

When it comes to development Kerala has been in forefront at least for the last four years. The pace is not lost and the envisaged 100 programmes within 100 days typify this 'fact'.



To better leverage the ongoing social development initiatives, plans and projects in Kerala, the State Government has initiated 100 projects in 100 days programme. This initiative by the government to empower the people of Kerala is in line with the four principal projects announced by the State Government of Kerala in 2016, to comprehensively develop thrust areas of housing, health, education and agriculture under missions such as Haritha Keralam, Ardrum, Life and the Comprehensive Educational Rejuvenation Programme.

Introduced as part of an action plan to boost the socio-economic status of the State, the Chief Minister said that Kerala's economic growth should not be stagnant due to the COVID-19 and it should face the new challenges according to the changing needs of the people ensuring speeding up projects that were delayed due to the pandemic.

The social security programme that has a wider acceptance among the downtrodden, the government has upgraded the system of distribution of social welfare pensions. The former system of paying the pension in lump sum periodically a few times in a year has been made into a monthly payment system and an increase in Rs.100 is ensured.

While boosting health infrastructure facilities, the Government took all possible measures to ensure adequate human resources to meet the rising demands of the situation. 9,768 healthcare workers have been recruited in a short span of time and more will be recruited based on the requirement in the coming 100 days.

Transforming the Primary

## **The Chief Minister said that Kerala's economic growth should not be stagnant due to the COVID-19**



## **The performance of the 100-day action plan would be reviewed at all levels to ensure timely execution**

Health Centres (PHCs) into fully equipped Family Health Centres (FHCs) with hospital facilities is an ongoing process. and so far, 386 FHCs have been completed and commissioned. More FHCs will be inaugurated and new buildings will be completed as part of the Medical College / District / General / Taluk Hospitals in these 100 days project.

The Comprehensive Educational Rejuvenation Programme was envisaged to revive the education sector. Thirty-five school buildings built at a cost of Rs 5 crores and 14 school buildings constructed at a cost of Rs 3 crores were inaugurated as part of the 100 days programme. Further, construction of another 27 other school buildings will be completed and the construction of 250 new school buildings are planned to start. For higher education, plans are afoot to allot 150 new courses in government and aided colleges in the State.

Employment generation in the various sectors is a priority. Setting up of a special task

force will be completed under the Legal, Finance and Public Administration. Lead agencies such as Local Co-operative Banks, Kudumbasree, KFC, District Industrial Centres, and Local Bodies will inform the additional jobs created through a dedicated portal.

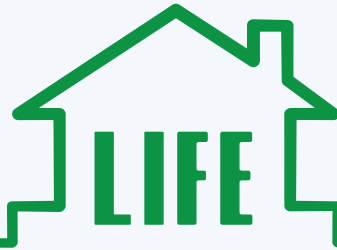
Infrastructure development is too given high priority. KIIFB funded 189 PWD roads built at a cost of Rs.1,451 crores will be opened soon. Within the next 100 days 158 km of KSTP roads worth Rs.901 crores and 21 bridges including Kundannur and Vyttila flyovers will be opened to the public.

The inauguration of Kochi Metropolitan Transport Authority and Safe Kerala Control Room will also be held in these 100 days project programme. The launch of the first electric hybrid cruise vessel in the State, two catamaran boats, and two water taxis, the inauguration of the Vizhinjam International Port Project Port Office Building, and the initial project process beginning to construct the. Wayanad Tunnel Route with the lead of Konkan Rail Corporation is among the other major projects in the offing.

The performance of the 100-day action plan would be reviewed at all levels to ensure timely execution and implementation of all the 100 projects in 100 days.

As Kerala fights the pandemic, COVID-19, the State Government have high hopes for the Kerala model of social security, health protection, infrastructure development, empowerment through education and entrepreneurship will be in line with the international movement of 'decade of action' in the coming decade.





**Despite all the odds, most among the underprivileged were in a situation to celebrate this Onam with much fervour. Ecstatic moments came to them in the form of a safe shelter- a home of their own. It is the LIFE mission, initiated by the State Government of Kerala helped many realise their dream of 'safe' living. Following pages depict the warmth of the 'fortunate' lot living their new 'Life'.**



# A “Life” Onam for Revathi and Aarti



*Revathi and her sister Aarti with their parents*



*Radhamani*

It is a time of joy for third-grader Revathi and her sister Aarti. These little ones are excited to be setting up their ‘first athapookalam’ in a house built under the State Government’s Life Mission Project .

They are the children of Biju and Radhamani at Revathi Bhavan, Chiratharakkal, Manikkal Panchayath in the Thiruvananthapuram district. As they did not have their own land, the panchayat itself took the initiative to buy land for them. Later, a house was allotted for them under the Life Mission. Toilets and wells were constructed under various schemes. They still have to add final touches to the house, but they are confident that they can finish it.

“But I did not think I could live in my own house so soon,” says Radhamani. In her eyes, there is a glimmer of confidence and pride in having a house, provided by the state government.

Biju, a labourer, is out of job often in the rainy season. The family has had to leave many a home with tears in their eyes as they could not pay the rent properly during many Onam seasons. Now, with no one to evict them, Radhamani is celebrated this Onam with her husband, children and elderly mother in their own house.

The State Government’s life mission is advancing rapidly despite the COVID-crisis, which has literally dragged the entire world backwards. Through the Life Mission, the dream of owning a home during Onam has become a reality for many families in the district.

Haridasan is feeling rather proud this Onam. A cattle farmer by profession, he lives in his new house in the village of Thazhuthala, Kottiyam, in the district of Kollam. Haridasan considers it more of a consolation than of a joy to be able to celebrate Onam at the seven-cent house that was completed through the Life Mission. This is because his wife died of cancer five years ago.

It was impossible for them to dream of owning a home in those times, as they were facing many financial difficulties related to his wife's treatment. The family was also seeking financial support from the government.

Haridasan lives in his new house with his son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Considering this to be a new beginning in life, the family also thanked the State government for the benefit they received.



# Haridasan's 'Proud' Onam



Haridasan and Family



## The 'Experience' of Life's Blessings

Indira and her mother Jagadamma celebrated Onam in their new house 'Kavuvila Vadakkethil' in the village of Kottiyam, Thazhuthala, Kollam. The new house was built through the Life Mission. They are happy to be able to celebrate Onam in a house built on their own four cents of land. The Life project has fulfilled a long-cherished dream of Indira, a cleaner at a private hospital in Kottiyam, and her mother Jagadamma, 82, for whom a safe and secure house is now a reality.

Both the mother and the daughter say that the welfare pension provided by the government despite the crisis was a double gift during Onam. Indira's husband departed a year ago and they have no children. Her mother Jagadamma has age-related physical ailments. However, these women are proud to be able to live in their own home under the State government's care.



Indira and her mother Jagadamma

## LIFE ALAPPUZHA

Sreekumar and his family from Muhamma, Alappuzha is on cloud nine and celebrating their happiness. It was their years of dream to have a house of their own and it has been accomplished through the State Government's Life Mission. Sreekumar is a driver, his wife Usha, an Asha Worker, children Sreemol and Sreehari were busy celebrating Onam in their new house. Sreekumar got this house in the 15th ward under the government's Life Mission Scheme.

The whole family was living in a shed for years. Sreekumar says his biggest dream was to have a well-built house. Now his children can continue their education properly with more comfort in their new home as they are excellent in studies.

During this Onam, the family says that they got a new life through the Life Mission. The 450 sq. ft house features a hall, two bedrooms, a bathroom, a living area, and a kitchen.



# The Wait is Over...



*Sreekumar and Family*



## Time to Rejoice...



*Rajamma, Alappuzha*

Rajamma can peacefully sleep under the new house she got through the Life Mission project. It was her dream to get a 'release' from her old dilapidated house and it has become true. Rajamma is a native of Thannirmukkam Panchayat, Alapuzha. Her husband died 30 years ago. She was alone in that old house after marrying off her daughter.

Due to the severe back pain, Rajamma has been wearing a belt for years and could not go to work. She relied on the Coir making for meeting her daily expenses. Meanwhile, the Government's Life Mission Scheme came to support her. The newly built house consists of two bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a hall.



# Beena's 'Life' - Onam

This year marks a particularly joyful Onam celebration for Beena and her husband Anil, a tile worker. It is their 'first' Onam in the house provided by the Life Mission - The Kerala State Government's total housing initiative.

The couple and two children earlier lived in a tiny two-bedroom house near the Kalanjoor border in the Pathanamthitta district. The ageing house collapsed in strong winds and rain after which the family was forced to live in a shed for four years. It was then that Beena learnt about the Life Mission and she filed an application through the Kalanjoor panchayath. Now, the family has fulfilled their cherished dream of owning a house on five cents of land.

Their new home has two rooms, a hall, a sit-out, a kitchen, a work area and a toilet. "Owning my own house is a dream come true," says the forty-year-old Beena.



*Beena and her son Navjeet in front of the house they got through the Life Mission*

## An Auspicious 'Life' Story

In the shade of her new 'Life' - house, Soudamini Sasi at Thannithodu Puthen Veetil has relished the 'first' Onam at her own house. Onam has never been so syrupy for her in the 16 years she lived in a rented house. Now, her wish has come true through the Life Mission - her own abode.

Soudamini, her husband, Sasi, and their two children lived in five different rented houses over the span of 16 years. Three years ago, Soudamini submitted her application for a house in Life Mission, the State Government's total housing scheme. In between, a car accident devastated Soudamini and her family - Shashi seriously injured and a part of his son Manoj's body was paralyzed.

But now, her 'dream house' become a reality. The house has two rooms, a kitchen, a hall and a bathroom. Despite all the odds, she is much relieved, for she is sheltered under the safe roof of 'Life'.



*Soudamini and family in front of the house they got through the Life Mission*

# Rajeev Now has his Own House

Sudalaiyappan and his family came to Kottayam from Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu three decades ago, in search of work. This time his son Rajeev got a valuable Onam gift in the state where he was given a job and a life. The young man and his wife Saranya started living in a house built by Life Mission on the eve of the festival of Onam.

Rajeev first tried to build a house at Thottakkad Lakshmi Bhavan by saving money from his mending job. He applied for a house in Life Mission but was unsuccessful as he did not own a ration card. Later, a special order was issued by the government for the Scheduled Castes to join the Life Scheme. Rajeev was allotted a house as he had a family card which made him a beneficiary of the scheme under the new order. His new house occupies a total of 400 square feet and consists of two bedrooms, a hall, a kitchen and a bathroom.



*Rajeev and Saranya*

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, the local festivities were less lively, but this time it was an unforgettable Onam for Vinoj and his family; this is the first Onam in their own house and the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream for Vinoj, his wife Sunita and their children Alan and Milan.

The Life Mission of the State government has opened the door of hope for them as they found it impossible to build a house with their income. Lack of land to build a house prevented it from being considered in the first instance. He later received three cents from his father's property.

The government has provided Rs. 4 lakh for a 400 sq ft house with two bedrooms, hall, kitchen, veranda and toilet. In addition, he was included in the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and paid 90 days wages at the rate of Rs. 291 per day. The panchayat received a grant of Rs. 10,200 from the Sanitation Mission as incentive for the construction of a house. The family is also included in the comprehensive drinking water scheme implemented by the panchayat.

## Vinoj and Family Ecstatic



*Vinoj, his wife Sunita and their children Alan and Milan.*

## LIFE IDUKKI

The journey to Mathew's house in Aanakulam takes one through the beautiful, hilly Mankulam panchayat in Idukki. The family celebrated their 'first' Onam celebration in their new house built under the State Government's Life Mission, this year. The eldest daughter Amala celebrated her marriage in her new home.

Mathew, an autorickshaw driver, had been living in a dilapidated house for a long time on a family plot. According to his wife Lali—Life Mission enabled them to win the biggest lottery ticket they have ever won, since Mathew more than often tried his luck through lotteries.

Lali works as a tailor. The income from the autorickshaw and tailoring was not enough for them to own a house. They had to provide for the education of their children, which they succeeded, even they somehow managed the marriage of their daughter too. But a decent shelter of their own eluded them until they applied for a house through the scheme – LIFE.

This time their wishes come true. These are happy days for Mathew and family, for they are proudly living in a simple but sufficiently spaced home of their own.

# Life at 'Own' Home



*Anne Maria, daughter of Mathew, arranging flowers at home for Onam, with her friends.*

## Preetha and her Children Welcome Onam at their 'Life House'

Twins Albin and Abhimalek eagerly wait to play and listen to stories with their sisters, Adona and Anina, during the break between online studies. It is Preetha's children 'first' Onam at the new house they got through the Life Mission project.

Preetha and her four children live in the 16th block of Vathikudi Grama Panchayat in Idukki district. Six months ago, her husband Shijo died of a heart attack. At that time, the construction of the house was started under the Life Mission. When friends and officials stood by Preetha with all the help, her dream of home became realised.

Now, even the minimum Onam celebration they were engaged in, magnified their happiness manifold, for the family was in the comfort of their new house. Preetha's words reflected the joy of her dream come true as she thanked the Government, officials and NGOs for making her dream of a home a reality. Their former house was unsafe and barely fit to live in. Their 'LIFE' home is 420 square feet and consists of two bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, a living room and a bathroom.



*Preetha and her children in a house provided by the state government's Life Housing Scheme*

# Asha and her Family's Onam...



*Asha and family at home.  
Asha's house completed in Life Complete Housing Project*

Asha Vijayan is happy to be able to arrange a traditional Onam 'Athapookalam' in the front yard of her very own house at Kunnappilly, on the north side of Kottapadi. For nine years, she had celebrated many Onams in a rented house, while yearning for her own home.

After much disappointment, she finally got what she wanted - three cents of land from the Scheduled Caste Development Fund. The Life housing scheme in Kottapadi panchayath was included in the list. The house is built with a closed terrace with two rooms, a hall and a kitchen. In 2020, Asha's dream of owning a home came true.

Asha says she is happy that her seven-year-old son has a home to play in and space to ride a bicycle. Asha added that they were saved by the state government's Life Complete Housing Mission.



Saritha and her family from Arayankavu, in Ambalur panchayath, are happy that their dream of owning a home has come true through the state government's 'Life' Mission this Onam.

Her husband Palani's autorickshaw was the sole source of income for the small family which includes her two children. With their visually-impaired son in tow, the family had been living in hospitals and rented houses before acquiring three cents of land in the Ampalloor gram panchayat with the help of surplus money and contributions. They were included in the 'Life' scheme during their stay in the Thripunithura Municipal Corporation. As the land in her name was in the Ampalloor panchayat, the benefit was shifted over to there.

The new home hosts two rooms, a hall and a kitchen. When her daughter Athira said that they could not believe that their dreams had come true after waiting for a long time, Saritha added with a smile that from now on every Onam will be golden...

## A golden Onam for Saritha



*Saritha and her son from Ambalur, the beneficiaries of the government's 'Life' comprehensive housing scheme, at their home.*

# Sheela's 'Battles' and her 'New' Life

Sheela, Rajan and her son Prithvi lived in the 21st ward of Chavakkad municipality. After the death of her husband Rajan, the family lost their only means of support and lived in great misery. But Sheela was frustrated by the debt and the deplorable condition of the house, as she had sent their savings on treatment for her husband.

Sheela says she often had a fear of losing her life in the past. Then she learned from the Chavakkad municipality office that the homeless will get their own houses under the Kerala government's Life Mission housing scheme. With the help of municipal officials and close friends, she was able to apply under the category "has land but no house", and her name appeared in the second allotment. Suddenly life changed. Sheela says that sometimes she even doubted the old saying that God would watch over the helpless. But, in fact, the Government came to her aid in her worst moments. So, before Onam 2020, she started living in her new house and she now sleeps without any kind of fear or insecurity.



Sheela in front of the house

## Back to 'Life'

"Life Mission has made the dream of a good home a reality for those of us who have not had a safe home for ten or twelve years. After my son had an accident, his house was sold to cover medical expenses. He lived in a shack next door. The Life Mission has given us back a new life. " Says, Arippinni Krishnankutty and Sharadha from Edathiruthi, Thrissur.



Arippinni Krishnankutty and Sharadha

## LIFE PALAKKAD

Radha, her husband and son celebrated Onam in their new home. The small family from Puzhaykal in the Palakkad Kannadi panchayath lived in a rickety shed for 13 years. Radha was also suffering from respiratory ailments for which she is still receiving treatment. Radha fell ill while her son was studying Plus Two, and he was unfortunately forced to drop out of his studies. Thus, at a time when life was at a standstill, Radha got a ray of hope through the Life Mission project.

For Radha, who works as a labourer, the new house is a sign of rejuvenation in her life. They also share the comfort of being able to sleep without being exposed to rain and sun. The house is built on three cents of land and contains two rooms, a hall, a kitchen and a veranda.

# Radha's "Life" Onam



*Radha, a native of Puzhaykal in Kannadi Panchayath, arranges an attapookalam at the house obtained through the Life Mission project*

## A New Beginning for Geetha



Geetha and her family, residents of Agali, are relieved to be able to move from their 'shed' to a safer home through the Life project. The family of five has been surviving by living in a single small makeshift-shed for years.

Geetha says that her dream of a long-term home has come true through the Life project. Five people, including three children's life, have changed now. Her husband was being treated for an accident while staying in a one-room shed. The only reliable income they had was from the State Government's employment schemes. Now, the family got home through the Life Mission.



*Geetha from Agali in front of the house obtained through the Life Mission project*

“This is a good house for me and my daughter. Our old one could have been washed away in a storm like yesterday’s.” Yashoda becomes vocal when talking about the security provided by her new house.

Her story of happiness is told by the flowers that bloom in the yard of Yashoda’s house in Thachattuparambu, Choonur, in the Penmala panchayath, Malappuram. All these flowers belong to Priya, the daughter of Yashoda. Like a butterfly fluttering around flowers, she fills the home with laughter and light, while attending online classes and playing. But their last two Onams were not like this. At that time, Yashoda could only hold her aged mother and daughter under a leaky roof and cry. Her dream of owning a house and the journey to it was facilitated through the state governments “Life Mission”.

# A Blooming ‘Life’ Story



*Yashoda and her daughter*

## Maryumma: No Longer a Victim of Fate

Today, Maryumma, a native of Nellolipparambu in the Ponmala panchayath, Malappuram has received her very own dream house through the state government’s Life Mission. Eleven years ago, her husband, Kunji Muhammad, suffered a stroke. His sudden infirmity paralyzed Maryumma as well, and she later had a heart attack. Their only relief was in government welfare pension for Kunji Muhammad. They did not even think of owning a home, believing it to be a far-fetched dream.

Maryumma had bought some land with the money she had after selling the old house. It has been two years since they ended their stay at a six-year rented house and this Onam season, they moved into their brand-new home.

Now, Maryumma has a comfortable two - bedroom home. There is a hint of pride in her voice when she says that it is convenient to live with grandchildren and children everywhere in the house. This is the confidence and security that is being provided by LIFE Mission.



*Maryumma and her husband*

# Happiness Attained Through Life Mission

Although there was no big celebration this year like everyone else due to the COVID-19, Nediarambath Sumathi and her family enjoyed the happiest Onam. They had their Onam in the new house given by the LIFE mission. The insecurity they had living in a rented house disappeared with the gaining of the new house. The house was completed with the four lakhs given by the government and with some savings, says Sumathi.

Sumathi and her family live in the 10th Mile of Chelannur Grama Panchayat, Kozhikkod. They got the house in the second phase of the project. The family lives on the income of their son Benish, who is an employee of a private company. The other family members include Sumathi's husband Bhaskaran, Benish's wife Anusha, grandchildren Abhimanyu and Amarnath. The house is built on 400 sq. ft, consisting of two bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen, a hall, and a living area.



*Sumathi and her Family*

## When the Dream Becomes Real...

"I was dreaming of a well-built house and the State Government rescued my children and us from the old grubby house. We now live happily, peacefully, and securely in the house provided by the Life Mission" -says Kritheesh from Kozhikkod. His family consists of his wife Resmitha and children Tejalekshmi and Tejas. "It was the first Onam in the new house, one with the utmost joy and happiness", Kritheesh added.

The house is built on 400 sq. ft, with two bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen, a hall, and a living area.



*Kritheesh & Family, from Kozhikkod*



## LIFE WAYANAD

It was a breezy Onam full of flowers, feasting in a new house for 34-year old P.S Indu and her family. Indu lives in Punnapurath House, Chekotkunnu, in the Tirunelli panchayat in Wayanad. After 24 years, the family has been granted a house of their own under the state Government's Life Mission initiative for housing. Their new home consists of two bedrooms, a seating area, a dining hall, a kitchen and a bathroom.

"If the Government had not provided such a house, our misery would not have ended. I am indebted to the government for making the dream of a home a reality," Indu said.

Their family was living together in a collapsed hut. Her husband Anoop is a building - worker and the sole breadwinner. Indu could not go to work as there was no one to look after her young children.

# From Uncertainty to Security



*Indu and family*

## Life 'Bumper' for Geethamani

Geethamani from Puliarmala, Kalpetta, in Wayanad, won a kind of dream - lottery this Onam. The family has started living in their completed house under the Life Mission of the State Government during this season. This house is the gift that Geethamani got after waiting for 31 years.

Her family consists of her husband and two children. Although she bought the land years ago with the proceeds from her labour, it was impossible to build a house with the rest of her money.

It was through the ward councillor that she learned of the Life housing scheme last year. Now, she moved into the new house. The family is moving on with Geethamani's income after her husband, who works as a labourer, lost his job. Geethamani is a member of the Haritha Karmasena of Kalpetta Municipality.



*Geethamani and her husband*

# Safe and Secure in their New 'Life'

"I am not afraid anymore. There is no fear, only happiness ..." these are the words of Devi of Kurumathur Panchayath in Kannur, one of the thousands of beneficiaries under the Life Mission for comprehensive housing.

Devi hails from the 17th ward of Kurumathur panchayath. Her husband Lakshman is a labourer and together, they have two children. Her daughter is married. The 27-year-old son is in therapy for mental illness. Despite the financial difficulties, the relief of having a home to sleep in came to an abrupt end. Their house was so dilapidated that she pulled out a plastic sheet and lived in a one-room shed for two years. After finding out about the Life Mission and applying, her new home was ready in six months.



*Devi and her son at home*



# Saraswati in her 'Own' Abode

T.V Saraswati from Koonam is a happy woman since she is now sheltered under the roof of LIFE. When her husband left her five years ago, Saraswati was left with two young children, Abhinand and Sreelakshmi, and an old dilapidated house.

But now, Saraswati and her children today can forget their bitter past. Life Mission came to the rescue of the family in the mode of a sufficiently spaced home recently. Three months ago, their dream of a new home that would not leak when it rained came true. Saraswati, Abhinand and Sreelakshmi are happy to live their new 'life' inside this house given by the Life Mission.



*Saraswati and her children*

## LIFE KASARGOD

Manikotte Narayanan and his family celebrated Onam at their very own “Life” House. Narayanan, a labourer, was seriously injured in a road accident went jobless. His wife Madhavi owing to old age was confined to their house. Their son Biju, wife Renuka and the three children also lived with them. The family of seven lived in a little spacious house made of metal sheet, which was in a ramshackle state.

But now, life has changed for Narayanan. His laughter alongwith that of his grandchildren in the house provided by the Life Mission is boundless. The family feels as though the sun has risen in their lives after a span of troubled years. Arya Sree and Avani, the grandchildren formulated a beautiful ‘athapookalam’ for this year’s Onam. The total housing scheme LIFE virtually redefined the otherwise pathetic plight of this family.



# Life at ‘Own’ Home



*Narayanan and his family lay an athapookalam*

## “Thanks to The Government for Giving Me a Home of My Own”

For Pallikkara Alakotte Sarojini, Onam has been exceptionally colourful this year. Her life was thrown into crisis when her husband abandoned both her and their school-going children. She struggled to adjust with the situation but managed to educate her wards.

The family lived in a small thatched and run-down house, patched with sheets of metal. The family lived in here for 10 years. It was then that she came to know about the LIFE housing project.

Now, the family celebrated Onam in a safe home. “Even though I have worked all my life, I cannot build a house like this. Thanks to the Government for giving me a home of my own.” There were tears of joy in her eyes as she said this.



*Sarojini lay an athapookalam*

# Kerala's Historic Tryst with Covid-19



**Dr. P. K. Jameela**  
State Consultant - Aardram Mission

Immediately after the declaration of the WHO regarding the outbreak, the State started its preparation to combat the novel corona virus. On 27th March, the Kerala epidemic disease ordinance was published. From testing to treatment, every aspect associated with the pandemic has been addressed with utmost care. These activities were conducted in a phased manner.



Phase-3 of the pandemic-control started with the unlocking of general lockdown by the end of June. The case positivity rate was 2.02 and the case fatality rate was 0.5 in Kerala. The cases were confined mainly to those passengers returned from foreign countries and other states. The contact cases were less than 10%. As the unlocking had started, the state was expecting a huge increase in contact cases as well as death. Grand campaign was launched with an objective to protect elderly and chronically ill patients through reverse quarantine.

Planning was done to set up COVID First - Line Treatment Centers (CFLTC) initially two per district and extending to one each per panchayath. The contact cases started increasing slowly and now more than 90% of cases are reported to be through contact. The first and second phases in the state there was not much cluster formation but several clusters have been reported in the third phase. The testing rates have been increased so as to attain a target of 50000 tests per day. For improving the 'health HR', COVID brigade has been mobilized to CFLTCs/ COVID hospitals.

Sufficient medical equipment, test kits, PPE, medicines etc are ensured. Adequate treatment facilities are available even if the cases are increasing up to 20000 per day. 24 - hour helpline centers are available in all districts to guide people who are in need of medical help. The Private sector is rolled into anti - COVID activities to a great extent.

Testing has been de-centralized by increasing the number of testing centers in the private and the public sector. Mobile medical surveillance units are set up for the needs of people under quarantine.



**The state is confident enough to manage the increasing load of cases with the involvement of various line departments and agencies**



**Indicators like case per million, test per million, case fatality rate etc. are the best in our state compared to the rest of India**



**Clinical management of COVID patients in CFLTCs and COVID hospitals are done free of cost**

Containment zones declared by SDMA initially are de-centralized and decisions are now taken at the district level.

Steps are taken to ensure reporting of results within practically possible time - frame and to avoid any undue delays in the whole process of sample management. Rates for testing is standardized in the private sector by the Government of Kerala. Walk-in-Sample-Collection-Kiosks were first introduced in Kerala to address the main challenges of sample collection.

COVID hospitals are designated for the management of symptomatic patients and CFLTCs are designated for the management of asymptomatic positive patients. COVID second - line treatment centers were also identified and made functional. As the caseload increased, asymptomatic patients were allowed to remain at home in room quarantine. Clinical management of COVID patients in CFLTCs and COVID hospitals are done free of cost irrespective of the income status of the patient.

Now, daily reporting of cases is more than 2000 with an average death of 12 per day. But the indicators like case per million, test per million, case fatality rate etc. are the best in our state compared to the rest of India. The state is confident enough to manage the increasing load of cases with the involvement of various line departments and agencies, NGOs, volunteers etc. Above all, the educated people of Kerala who are well aware of the situation showing commitment and responsibility to overcome this crisis is giving strength to the State Government's robust measures to combat the pandemic.



# The Effective Response to the Pandemic has Historic Significance



**Dr. V. Raman Kutty**

Ex- Professor, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology and Former head, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies

The annals of history exemplifies the fact that healthcare was given much more importance in Kerala. Now, the health-oriented care has reached its zenith, thanks to the mission-mode governance that this happens sans obstacles.



When the Covid 19 pandemic hit our country, the mega cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai were initially the worst affected. Kerala had stood out by its performance in terms of containing the epidemic and restricting deaths in the early phase.

Once the non-resident citizens started coming back from parts of the world ravaged by the epidemic, there has been a resurgence of the epidemic in the state. New cases are reported in thousands every day. In spite of this setback, the state's resistance to the epidemic has been laudable compared to the rest of India. This is the outcome of a solid foundation of investment in health care.

Growth of education facilities paralleled development in health. All social reform movements in the state emphasised education and this was later to prove beneficial for acceptance of good health care. After the formation of the State, successive governments have spent a large proportion of their expenditure on these 'service' sectors. Share of public spending on health in Kerala was among the largest among the Indian states in the early years of the sixties and seventies. There was a great demand for healthcare from the common people, especially from women and children.

Childbirths were more and more moving from homes to healthcare institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes. In this, the improvement in education of the women helped: taboos against women coming out of their homes were fast disappearing. International scholars have commented that the absence of a doctor in a primary health centre



**The State Government has taken the initiative to make health care much more accessible at the local level through the Ardram mission.**



**This was a great opportunity for many local bodies to utilize the available funds and other resources to improve the facilities in hospitals.**



**The growth of education facilities paralleled development in health.**

elicits public protests in Kerala, a unique situation in India. In Kerala, people were aware of their rights in health. That the great edifice of public health care in Kerala was built by public action was commented upon by such scholars as Amartya Sen.

The decentralisation of power to the panchayats and other local bodies which happened in 1996 was a great initiative in bringing control to the people. This brought the health institutions under the direct administration of the local bodies, and also provided more funds for them. This was a great opportunity for many local bodies to utilize the available funds and other resources to improve the facilities in hospitals.

With the passing of time, there arose strong partnerships between the local health administration and the local political administration in many panchayats and municipalities, raising their health institutions to a level rarely seen in public hospitals in India.

In recent years 10-20% of people have moved back to the public sector for their health care. The State Government has taken the initiative to make healthcare much more accessible at the local level through the Ardram mission. More sophisticated care is available at taluk and district hospitals as well as government medical colleges. The State Government has provided improved funding for care at different tiers of government institutions. The initiative in the health sector provided by the current political leadership is a leading factor which has resulted in the state's good performance in containing the covid-19 pandemic.



# A SURVIVOR'S MEMOIR

**Idukki Engineering College Principal C. Satheesh Kumar, who has gone through the days of Covid -19 situation, has now fully recovered and returned to his job. He is remembering his days he had through and the subsequent survival.**



*Principal C. Satheesh Kumar at office.*





*Dr. Christy handing over Ayurvedic medicines to C. Satheesh Kumar.*

I was having 99.5F temperature for four consecutive days, so I decided to take the test on July 20th. I was very tired and was having a sore throat. There were no other symptoms.

The test result came on July 22nd, I was positive. My symptoms disappeared by then. I had taken all the measures and precautions (always wearing a mask, sanitizing all the surfaces, keeping social distance) and yet the result was positive, which was a bit of hassle at first, but I was relieved when I got to CFLTC which was set up in the hostel of College of Engineering. There were about 80 people in this centre. No one had any significant symptoms or difficulties. No one was seriously ill or had to be taken to the hospital. By the time everyone got there, within three or four days, their symptoms were completely gone. There were people of all ages like from small children to elder ones. When the food packages arrive, the children would knock at every door to let us know. Once in two days, rooms were cleaned and wiped with disinfectants by staff wearing PPE kits.

Every morning, a doctor and a nurse wearing PPE kits would come into the room and enquired about the health condition. The services of at least two nurses were always available on each floor. The test held on the tenth day of admission was reported to be negative and I was discharged. I was not charged for any treatments or food from the moment I was tested positive till I got discharged from CFLTC. Covid tests and all other

charges were taken care of by the State Government. Since the discharge certificate from Idukki Medical College had suggested two weeks of home isolation, I decided to stay in the isolation room of college staff instead of going home. Even after the discharge, Dr. Christy from the medical college reviewed my health - condition over phone. Another doctor from the Government Ayurveda Hospital too called with the same purpose.

After 10 days in CFLTC and 14 days in isolation room, I was first reluctant to interact with others when I was back into normal life. I am healthy now. Consuming those ayurvedic medicines I received through Punarjani scheme had wonderful 'effect'.

The 'planning work' done by our State Government to ensure every COVID patient gets the best care and attention at zero cost is something worth mentioning, if not laudable. There are so many health workers who have helped me directly and indirectly, hence I am not mentioning the names. It is best to stay at home as much as possible. Wear a mask and maintain at least six feet distance away from others while going out for essential needs.

I confirm based on my experience, that we should not fear COVID, but be vigilant. What should be kept away is the disease not the patient. Lets get rid of this virus by following the guidelines.



# A Leap Forward in the Field of Higher Education



**Dr. R. Jayaprakash**  
Former Member, Executive Council,  
The Kerala State Higher Education  
Council

Any attempt to enhance the expansion of the education sector is considered as a pragmatic initiative and in that The State Government ups its ante by introducing the 'Open University', the first-of-its-kind in the history of the State.



The Chief Minister made a declaration revolutionizing the Higher education system in the State by establishing an Open University headquartered at Kollam, aptly in the name of Sree Narayana Guru- a great saint, teacher, philosopher, scholar and a social reformer. The Central Government introduced the Open University system during the 1980s, with the objective to further democratize opportunities for higher education to a large segment of the Indian population, particularly those for whom access was difficult or impossible. The growth of Open Education System has been exponential over the last four decades in the country beginning with the establishment of Dr. B R Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad in 1982. Till now, 13 open state universities were established in various States in India. The open universities offer all kinds of programmes ranging from vocational to general and professional to technical.

Open universities also occupy a coveted position in the Indian Higher Education System because of its major contribution in enhancing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)



Higher Education Minister: K. T. Jaleel

**The growth of Open Education System has been exponential over the last four decades in the country**



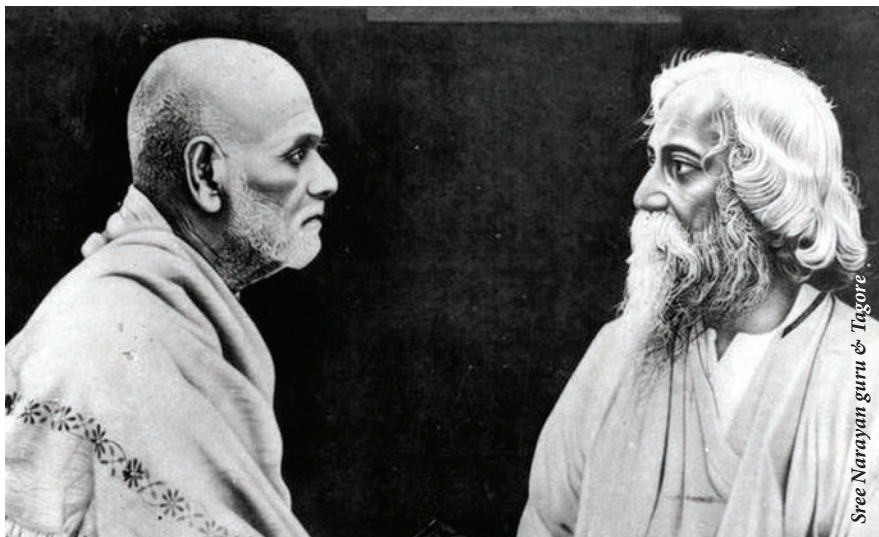
**The decision to start an Open University is the result of a positive approach on the part of the State Government...**



**Establishing an open university in the State may lead to the opening of the portals of higher education to a variety of potential students**

Report published recently states that in India the GER is 26.3% out of which 10.62% constitute the students admitted through the Distance Education mode. Hence, it is an established fact that with the opening of the Open University the GER in the State will naturally increase. The decision to start an Open University is the result of a positive approach on the part of the State Government to increase the GER in the State from the current 37%.

The new experiment of establishing an open university in the State may lead to the opening of the portals of higher education to a variety of potential students covering different spectrums of society and profession who would otherwise not be able to acquire new skills and higher qualifications. It will provide an innovative system of university-level education which is both flexible and open in terms of methods and pace of learning, a combination of courses, eligibility for enrolment, age of entry, the conduct of examination and implementation of the programmes of study. Distance education is a lifelong activity which enables assiduous individuals to update their knowledge and also acquire new knowledge in diversified areas.



Sree Narayan guru & Tagore



Dr. B R Ambedkar

# CM Announces Development of Government Schools



Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced the completion of 14 government school buildings at a cost of Rs. 3 crore, as part of the 100-day Action Plan. The inauguration of 34 completed Higher Secondary School buildings in various constituencies of the state were carried out through video conferencing.

Construction of 250 new school buildings will begin soon. More than 350 schools are being provided with basic facilities using plan funds. The Chief Minister also congratulated schools in the state for their online education efforts. Special mention was given to the role of KIIFB in the development of the state.

“More effort is needed to improve. Our needs to be identified and addressed. Schools as centers of excellence will be equipped in all constituencies without bias or exclusion,” the Chief Minister added.

# Kerala Tops School Education Quality Ranking - CM

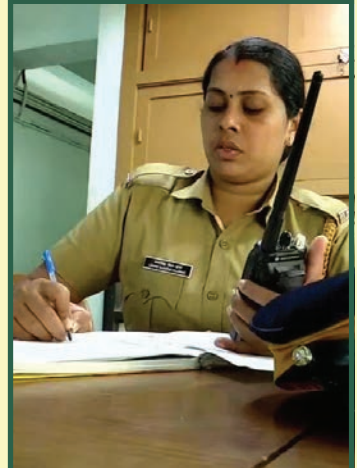


Kerala has achieved the number one position in the School Education Index prepared and released by NITI Aayog, reflecting the State's efforts to invest and improve the public education system.

“Our policy is to further strengthen our public education sector. The goal is to make more schools centers of excellence,” said the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The state has implemented various schemes in the education sector in the past four years. Government schools which were on the verge of closure were acquired and rebuilt to improved standards, turning them into valuable learning centers.

# Five New Women Police Stations



“Five new women police stations will be inaugurated in the state” announced the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. He said this after inaugurating the new police station buildings at Ponnudi andat Varkala held via video conferencing.

The two buildings in the district have been constructed by the Habitat Technology Group, in the unique Kerala style at a cost of 1.40 crore each. All buildings have been equipped with modern facilities. The stations will be able to operate more efficiently than they used to with their limited facilities. In addition to men and women, the cell is uniquely designed to accommodate transgender people.

**A life sans misery is no more a dream. Those who live in penury now realise and experience the warmth of a determined and caring government these days. The social security pension brings happiness in the lives of the downtrodden. The amount of pension has been hiked of late. A never-before-kind of happiness surrounds umpteen numbers of the deprived a lot. The heartfelt reactions included in the following pages marks another era of compassionate governance.**





# Income and Life

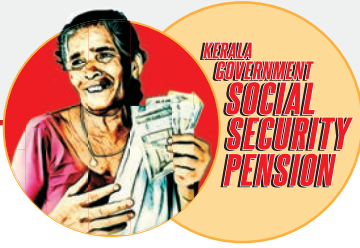
“Our income is our pension. Everything is going smoothly because the pension is available regularly,” says Bharathi Pankajakshan of Punneli House, 11th Ward, in the Nedumbassery panchayat. Her words illustrate how big a role the welfare pension provided by the State Government plays in her life.

71-year old Bharati is a widow, who lost her son seven years ago. Her daughter-in-law and two children are at home. In the floods of 2018, her whole house was flooded and destroyed and Bharati was rendered hopeless about her immediate future.

“My daughter-in-law and I were scared of how to move forward with the two children who are in school. Later, the government intervened and the new house was built under the leadership of CIAL. Eventually, my daughter-in-law was granted a widow’s pension. Now we both get a pension regularly. “The increase in pension amount after the coming of this government has been of great benefit to all of us”, she added.



Bharati and family



## Sreedharan and Padmavathy Gleeful!

Sreedharan Pillai and his wife Padmavathy Amma from the 4th ward of Aroor Grama Panchayat, Ernakulam is the beneficiaries of the Welfare Pension provided by the State Government of Kerala. The old-age pension is their only source of income.

Being a beneficiary Sreedharan Pillai is too happy these days as he is getting his due sans hindrance. He says -“I am 83 years old and my wife is 76. We can’t go to work anymore as we are old. Until a few years ago, we raised two cows and later we had to sell them. Our daughter got married and it’s just two of us live here. We rely on the pension for our medicines and household expenses. It is not enough to thank our government for giving us the pension on time without delay even in these difficult times.”



Padmavathy Amma and Sreedharan Pillai

## Pandipparambil Mary and Family Get Their ‘Due’



Mary and other two family members, Aroor

Mary and other two family members from Pandiparambil, 5th ward, Aroor Grama Panchayat are too happy to get the State Government’s Welfare Pension. The family consists of Mary, her widowed eldest daughter Selena, her 15-year-old son Jinson, and mentally challenged youngest daughter Augustina. The only source of income to this family is the welfare pension provided by the Government and Selena’s salary from the Private Hospital for the cleaning work she is committed with.

According to Mary pension is a great relief to the entire family. She receives an old-age pension of Rs. 1500, Augustina Rs. 1300 for mentally challenged people and Selena receives a widow’s pension of Rs. 1300.



# Annamma Mathew is Happy Again



“Pension is a relief, so is reliable.” – says Annamma Mathew, a native of Vazhathoppu, Kaithakulangara, then adds about the Government which provided welfare pensions to the common man even during the COVID period.

Annamma is 72-years-old. She received her first pension 12 years ago. She could not recollect the amount and it was Rs. 100 at that time. But, this government paid off the 18-month arrears. At present, she gets a pension of Rs.1300 per month. The announcement of the Chief Minister to increase the pension amount by Rs.100 to Rs.1400 brings her to tears of joy.

It has been 10 years since her husband died. Annamma has three daughters, two of them married and the third is unmarried. The greatest joy of this mother is that she does not have to depend on her children for her daily life as she receives this pension, along with a small income from the agricultural products.

*Annamma Mathew receiving the pension delivered at her home.*

## Parukuttyamma – In the ‘safety’ of pension

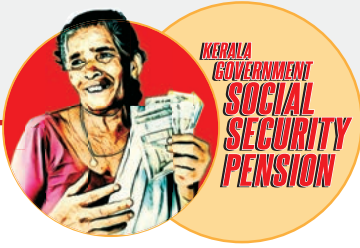
Counting twice, making sure that there is Rs. 2,600; Parukuttyamma of Padippurakkal House flashed the laughter of content. 91-year-old Parukuttyamma, a native of Adimali Vallappadi, is among the thousands of people who are familiar with the benefits of the welfare pension scheme provided by the State Government of Kerala.

She has 12 children, husband Kuttapan died 47 years ago. Parukuttyamma lives in a small house in Vallappadi on the Adimali-Kumali highway. She will agree at any point of time, anywhere that her livelihood goes on with the welfare pension given by the government.



Parukuttyamma





## Santha can Live Courageously



*P.P. Santha of Sivapuram Laksham Veedu*

P.P. Santha from Sivapuram Laksham Veedu, Kannur lost the ability of her legs at a young age due to Gout. She lives alone without any relatives and her only support is the disability pension provided by the State Government.

“Pension is everything, for those who are like me, having no other way to live, pension is the only comfort and hope.” Santha said. “with these legs, I do not have to go and get my pension, it is being distributed here at the right time by the State Government.”

She is now happy that the pension amount has been raised to Rs. 1400. With this amount, her expenses are being met smoothly, including that of medicines.

## Government is With Us; The Experience Says It All.



*P.V. Padmavathi from Pangadam, Payyannur*

When one door is closed, another one opens, the saying became so meaningful in the life of P.V. Padmavathy from Pangadam, Payyannur, Kannur through the State Government. After her husband left, the daily expenses including her son's education were covered by her in employment and small-scale works. The 56-year old Padmavathy had to stay away from strenuous works due to various physical difficulties. She started receiving pension four years ago in a situation where life itself was unbearable for her. The family got relieved to receive money at regular intervals.

“Pension is the only help that we have now. I can go to work occasionally due to Corona, and there is no guarantee for that work too. Our government is the only solution and help for us now.” Says Padmavathy.



# Kalyani from Kuttiyattoor



*Kalyani from Kuttilyattur*

“We live with the pension money. My son is disabled, he is also receiving the disability pension from our Government. I am happy that the government increased the pension amount. I do not know how many people like us are suffering.” Saying this, Kalyani’s eyes were full.

“My son is bedridden for the past 13 years. We cannot think about not even having this pension amount. How are we supposed to live? This family from Kuttilyattoor, Kannur is running solely with the pension money. Our family consists of me, my son, his wife and his two daughters. My son was working in a quarry. An unexpected accident happened in the quarry has changed our lives.” Says Kalyani.

# Yashodhamma from Pinarayi



*Yashodhamma & daughter Bindu*

Yashodhamma from Parappram, Pinarayi, Kannur said “I will receive this pension only till this government is there, right? I want this government to continue.” There were a relief and a security filled in these words. Yashodhamma who does not even remember her age lives with her 43-year old mentally and physically challenged daughter Bindu. Bindu is unmarried.

This mother and daughter live with the two pensions receiving from the Government and minor help from other children. At present, they receive Rs. 2600 for Rs. 1300 each. She was happy that the government raised the amount by Rs. 100. There are many people like Yashodhamma, depending on the pension provided by the State Government. Those who have seen big amounts of money might not understand the value of this Rs. 1300 pension amount.



# Cheyi from Kurumathoor



*Cheyi from Kurumathur*

“Isn’t this all we have? I am not able to go to work. They bring the pension at home which is a great help.” - Cheyi, a resident of the sixth ward of Kurumathoor Grama Panchayat, Kannur, now has only a cat in her family. This mother, who has been living alone for 11 years, is dependent on her government pension for meeting her expenses and for medicines. Cheyi has two daughters, both are married. Now she lives here with her cat Manikuttan.

She is 66 years old, suffering from age-based diseases for the past nine years. Her health condition does not allow her to go for work. As there is no source of income for her, she totally depends on the pension that is constantly being sent to her home. She did not forget to mention her happiness when she came to know about the increase in the amount.

# Karthyayini Amma from Nettoor



*Karthyayini Amma from Nettoor, Thalassery*

Many who hated life in the pain of loneliness and of old age, are now welcoming every morning with an open heart and a smile. The State Government is supporting many isolated lives. With the pension being sanctioned every month, the support has become stronger. The words of Karthyayini Amma from Nettoor, Thalassery, Kannur, evidences the kind of ‘care’ the State Government of Kerala is delivering. 78 years old Karthyayini Amma received her old age pension for the first time five years ago. Now she is happy and has the peace of mind that she does not have to seek help from others.

She says after this government came; the old-age pension amount is being sent home by the Co-operative Bank without any breaks. She lost her husband 30 years ago, after that she was depending on this pension for her daily life. Despite the age and physical disabilities, she is thanking the Government with a smile for becoming ‘someone’ for her.



# 80 and Still Going Strong...



*Chitta of Balal Scheduled Tribe Colony in Kasargod*

Before Onam, Chitta of Balal Scheduled Tribe Colony in Kasargod district received her old age pension. Chitta had the satisfaction of celebrating Onam with her children, grandchildren and their children with a heart 'full' of Onam and traditional sadyas. She says that despite their rather lavish celebrations this Onam, there is still pension money left.

This grandmother has been receiving an old - age pension for more than 10 years. Since the house is closest to the post office, she is probably the first to get her pension - currency. Chitta lives in the house of her daughter Kumba. Here, the grandmother is celebrating a kind of second childhood in the company of her granddaughter's son.

# Sumathi Receives Twice the Joy ...



*Sumathi, Mukhathala in Kollam*

For Sumathi, 74, living in Mukhathala in Kollam, a permit for her own house and the receipt of her old age pension appeared as a double blessing. She has been waiting 43 years for the 'blessing'.

Sumathi said it was a proud moment in her life. She is a widow and lives with her three children and their families in a house built in 1977. Despite her physical disabilities, she is fortunate to be able to visit the authorities and receive what was her 'right'. Sumathi is also happy to receive her welfare pension. Sumathi, who came with her youngest son, did not forget to thank the State Government, Ward Members and Revenue officials for distributing the tenancy.



# Relief Amid Adversity



*Gopalan & Santha, Kottayam*

Gopalan and Shanta's smiles light up the twilight of their life. These smiles display the value of the consolation given by the government to their small family, who live in Puthenparambil House, Vechoor, Kottayam. Gopalan, who has been bedridden for ten years needs help if he wants to turn in bed. Their only son was a driver who had to have one leg amputated due to diabetes.

Gopalan and his wife received a farmworker's pension before Onam during the lockdown crisis. The Vechoor Panchayat Service Co-operative Society provided Rs 2,600 each to the couple, including their August pension of Rs 1,300. Shanta also received Rs 3,000 from the Asvaas Kiranam scheme to take care of her husband and his age-related ailments. The couple was overjoyed to be able to contribute a share to their son's family, as they have no income.

## Pension as a Gift ...



*Leela Kottayam*

Leela and her family are happy that their wish to celebrate Onam and preceding days has become true. They received Rs 2,600 as per of the scheme of welfare pensions for agricultural workers.

Leela's husband Purushothaman, a tea shop owner, passed away not long ago. When he got up in the morning and went to work in the field after finishing all the work in the tea shop, he never dreamed that he would get a pension for this job in the future. Leela says that the reward for working sincerely in the soil at that time is the money received as a pension. A portion of the pension money was used for Onam expenses. Some money was given as gifts to the grandchildren. Leela, who lives with her daughter, son-in-law and grandson in a small house spread out over three cents land, says she is thankful to the Government for ensuring the welfare of farmworkers despite the COVID crisis.



# Relief for Sathyavel and his Family



*Sathyavel and Jayashree*

Sathyavel, a native of Chirakkad, Kunnathoormedu in Palakkad district, feels that his life has become calmer through the government's old - age social security pension. Sathyavel, 64, who runs a small store, is suffering from diabetes. The little toe of his right foot has been amputated. His family consists of wife Jayashree (60) and three children.

Sudhakaran, the second of three children, is differently-abled. Sathyavel's wife Jayashree suffered a knee injury in an accident months ago and underwent surgery. But now, Sathyavel is receiving the pension of Rs. 1,300. His wife Jayashree is also getting old - age pension. Their son Sudhakaran too is getting Rs. 1300 as pension offered to differently-abled persons.

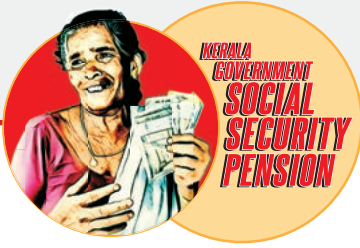
# Kamalasanan Finds Support in The State Government



*Kamalasanan, Pathanamthitta*

"The welfare pension of the state government is a helping hand for me on days when I cannot even get out of this bed..." says 70-year-old Kamalasanan, lying in the room upstairs of his house in PramadanCharuvil, Pathanamthitta. His biggest support currently is the state Government, through which he's getting social welfare pensions. Many years ago, he developed a fever and then subsequently lost his leg through an inevitable amputation.

Five years ago, he boarded a train to visit his brothers in Surat but met with an accident during the journey. He was later permanently bedridden. He was rendered unable to get up or eat without assistance and unable to go to work. But now, Kamalasanan is able to buy medicines regularly as the state government delivers the social welfare pension on time. The only comfort of the life of Kamalasanan is the care of the government and the loving consolation of his wife Sarojini and his son Binu.



# Devaki Amma too Happy ...



*Devaki Amma and family, Pathanamthitta*

“I was lifted out of poverty after receiving the welfare pension from the State Government”, says Devaki Amma from Vallikode, Nediyan in Pathanamthitta. Devaki Amma, who has been blind for 12 years, said she was happy to receive her pension in instalments before Onam. She adds that it is with the kindness of the State Government that she gets all the medicines she needs, the rations, Onam kit and food kit.

Devaki Amma is 79 years old; she lives with her youngest son P. Jayakumar and his wife Sabitha, their children Arjitha and Adisurya in a small house with two bedrooms, a kitchen and a toilet on six cents of land.

# Flashing Smiles...



*Vella, Chekotkundu Scheduled Tribe Colony*

It was a happy Onam season for Vella, a 66-year-old woman from Chekotkundu Scheduled Tribe Colony, 16th Ward, Thirunelli Panchayath in Wayanad. Her job was lost in the COVID-19 lockdown period and she was reduced to dire financial straits. Still, she was happy and was able to celebrate this Year's Onam too, as the state government's Farm Workers Welfare Pension came through, at around ₹2600.

Vella and 78-year-old Kaallan have four children. She lives with her youngest son in a house provided by the Scheduled Tribes Development Department. In their every word, they are grateful and indebted to the Government for providing them with a secure home and a welfare pension. Vella says such interventions by the state government will empower them to overcome every crisis. ★

# The Well-Being-Oriented Support...



**K. Varadarajan**  
Vice - Chairman, NORKA Roots

With the world in the grip of a historical crisis, NORKA is concerned about the future of Non-Resident Keralites and their future both in India and abroad. The State Government and NORKA have worked in tandem to create programmes for the financial, physical and legal well-being of NRKs, who are the lifeblood of Kerala.



With the world in the grip of a historical crisis, NORKA is concerned about the future of Non-Resident Keralites (Marks) and their future both in India and abroad. The State Government and NORKA have worked in tandem to create

programmes for the financial, physical and legal well-being of NRKs, who are the lifeblood of Kerala.

The Dream Kerala project is a futuristic one aimed at helping expatriates returning from overseas to

find employment, enhance their work skill and train them in innovative jobs. The public can also share various development ideas on the Dream Kerala Web portal. Employers can also register skilled as well as unskilled workers.



## Santhvana

Aim to provide financial assistance for Returning NRK's in case of death, for marriages of Daughters and Health Coverage.

## Subsidy / Loans for Returning NRK Investors

Up to 30 lakhs loan from 5832 branches of 16 banks, Cooperation with Meat Products of India, Project with NORKA Pravasi Store and Civil Supplies, 15% capital subsidy (up to 3 lakhs).

- Those that pay off their loans regularly will get 3% reduced interest rates for up to 4 years
- For the 2019-20 financial years, loans worth 53.43 crores were allotted, along with 15 crores worth of NORKA subsidy.

## NORKA Supplyco Pravasi Store

Returning NRKs will be given the option to start a supermarket. They will get up to 30 lakhs loan under NDPREM (subject to terms and conditions). 15% capital subsidy (up to 3 lakhs) and 3% reduced interest rates for up to 4 years (for those who pay off loans regularly)  
Maveli-Store 'inspired' supermarkets

## Skill Development and Skill Training

Youth skill training to enable employment in India and abroad and Technical Education under various government bodies will be ensured.

Training will be provided for nurses looking to get employment abroad, under the Nursing Institute for Career Enhancement.

## NORKA Emergency Ambulance Service

The service intended for NRKs who seek immediate transport to hospitals and houses; also available for transporting the mortal remains of deceased NRKs from hospitals and airports to their homes.



**The Dream Kerala project is a futuristic one aimed at helping expatriates returning from overseas**



**The State Government and NORKA have worked together to create programmes for the financial, physical and legal well-being of NRKs**

## PLAC Legal Assistance

Assistance for NRKs facing jail - term for minor crimes, the project offers access to legal services.

Get Services with A Missed Call - First in The World at NORKA Global Contact Centre

- 1800-425-3939 (India)
- 00918802012345 (Outside India)
- Non-resident Malayalis can give a missed call to address their doubts.
- One of a kind service in the world
- 24x7 call centre
- Any doubts regarding NORKA, NORKA ROOTS, Kerala Pravasi Welfare Board, NRI Commission can be cleared via the call centre.
- Information regarding projects, other services and the news are also available.

## NBFC: NORKA Business Facilitation Centre

The centre aims to bring investment opportunities to NRKs and the Single Window System for NRKs interested in investing has been set up.

## Recruitment

With the approval from the Central Foreign Affairs Ministry, candidates will be sent from Kerala to work abroad under certified agencies. Since 2015, over 2000 candidates have been sent to various countries around the world.

## Certificate Attestation

- Central Government approved service for attesting educational certificates
- Attestation Centres are there in Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Kozhikode.
- UAE Commercial Document Attestation
- Kuwait Visa Stamping
- Certification from various embassies, IEA made easier
- NORKA will also facilitate apostille attestation in certification from embassies in the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait

## Non-Resident Keralite Cooperative Societies Assistance

- Aimed at creating financial independence and providing assistance to returning NRKs

## Emergency Repatriation

- In cooperation with Air India, the mortal remains of deceased NRKs will be returned to India free of charge.

## Pre-Departure Orientation Project

- The project aims at raising awareness about and reducing incidents of illegal recruitment and visa fraud, for which, awareness programmes will be conducted.



# Defining Binge Viewing!



**A. Chandrasekhar**  
Film Critic, Writer, Journalist

**Media Convergence made Visual media more democratic, by enabling the common man to produce movies on their own with the help of their mobile handsets. It is at this juncture that a significant intervention of Over-The-Top (OTT) emerges as effective content platforms in the entertainment industry, exploiting the possibilities of media convergence that the Internet provides.**



*Manoj Bajpayee in 'The Family Man'*

Amazon Prime and Netflix were the first into the industry with a new concept of providing independent and exclusive content via the internet, that was followed by almost all media conglomerates as well as mobile/data/computer providers across the globe. Exclusivity is the trademark USP of OTTs! Even the COVID 19-Lockdown in the country has turned out to be one of the most grossing seasons for OTTs as the world as such are confined to their homes watching movies or web series online!

A Direct-to-Home content mix of the OTT Platforms owes much to the popularity of the relatively new genre, the Web Series! OTTs are pushing Web Series as an effective alternative for movies as such. The content mix and production quality of many super hit web series, the new genre that is available only through the net over the top; do make millions of net-addicts every day.

It is interesting to note that many a web series like Money Heist, Dark and Dark Desire etc that became an instant hit across the globe with more than 3 seasons of continuous streaming over the years, were not originally produced in English. Designed and produced in Spanish and Mexican, these series were made available with a multi-lingual soundtrack that made it acceptable across language barriers.

Sacred Games was the first Indian web television thriller web series based on Vikram Chandra's 2006 novel, produced and directed by Vikramaditya Motwane and Anurag Kashyap under their banner Phantom Films with Nawazuddin Siddique and Saif Ali Khan in the star cast in Netflix. Bard of Blood, another spy thriller web television series based on the



**Web series offers the viewer option to watch it in its original language along with subtitles of their choice**



**Web series normally have a Pan-Indian content mix**



**OTTs are pushing Web Series as an effective alternative for movies as such**

2015 espionage novel of the same name by Bilal Siddiqi, directed by Ribhu Dasgupta is produced by Red Chillies Entertainment, owned by none other than Bollywood Super Star Shah Rukh Khan. Web series like The Family Man, starring Manoj Bajpayee and Priya Mani, directed by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna, D.K Made in Heaven, Mirzapur etc streamed by Amazon Prime and Special Ops starring Kay Kay Menon, directed by Shivam Nair streamed by Hotstar too took the content quality to further heights..

In general, web series normally have a Pan-Indian content mix. They will be either thrillers or stories that could be equally enjoyed by audience across all demographical linguistic and geographical boundaries within the country. They are very particular in having a Pan-Indian star cast wherein they will be featuring stars from the multi-lingual industry so that it could be marketed across the language boundaries.

It should be noted that most of the streaming Web Series have big names associated with it. It involves top brats like Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan from the commercial mainstream to Anurag Kashyap of the Alternate movement. It also ensures international talents like Deepa Mehta and ensures multinational collaboration in its technical side.

Again, unlike Television series, web series offers the viewer option to watch it in its original language along with subtitles of their choice. This is something extremely different from the dubbed versions. Moreover, web series never get elongated to more than 10 episodes. Instead of stretching itself into hundreds of never-ending episodes as in the case of TV serials, Web Series try to exploit their success by coming up with more and more Seasons across several years. Thus, each year, they attract more and more audience too over the seasons. Media Experts call this as Binge Viewing.

True that the term Web Series is being misused and misrepresented widely on the internet by producers of Youtube serials. But the professionally executed web series is much more than that, which has proved to be the real threats to commercial movies.



# In the Name of these Spices!



**Dr. B. Sasikumar**  
Researcher, Agricultural Scientist

'Truth is not a diet but a spice', so goes the adage! A myth vs. truth - reality check regarding some common spices may be surprising, if not rewarding!



*Curcuma aromatica*



*Curcuma zedoaria*

Fig.1. Genuine *Curcuma aromatica* and its counterfeit entity, *C. zedoaria*

## Kasturi turmeric caught in the 'fair and lovely' trap!

Given the social or cultural mindset where beauty is ingrained in the psyche and daily routine of damsels and laymen alike, be it for enhancing the skin complexion or the craze for a blonde look, there is every chance of unscrupulous elements or knaves exploiting the gullible public for quick buck in the name of beauty products. The humble Kasturi turmeric ('Kasturi manjal'), commonly used in toiletry articles, especially facial creams is one such commodity caught in the 'beauty trap'.

The craze for instant beauty comes in handy for the quacks to trade some other common Curcuma rhizomes in the guise of original Kasturi turmeric. The most common turmeric sold in the guise of genuine Kasturi turmeric is a yellow rhizome entity, Curcuma zedoaria.

It is high time that we recognize the unfair means in the 'fair skin' market, aware of the fake entity and root for the genuine root, putting a full stop for the cosmetic ride by quacks.

## Black Turmeric – superstition rules the roost!

Given the social mooring of superstition laced with ignorance, black turmeric is much sought-after entity for sorcery, magic rites, tantric sadhana and many other clandestine activities.

Black turmeric or 'Kali Haldi' is scientifically Curcuma caesia (Fig.2). As the name suggests, the inner core colour of the rhizome is blue - black, not the familiar yellow or pale-yellow colour, one is commonly familiar with turmeric. The rhizomes are aromatic (camphoraceous), bitter in taste, stimulant, carminative and rubefacient used topically for sprains and bruises.

In the guise of 'pepper', there exists more than one pepper



Black ginger is a reality and not at all elusive



Fig.2. Black turmeric

## Black ginger - a blockbuster!

Layman is unaware while erudite think this blockbuster ginger is a myth! However, black ginger is a reality and not at all elusive. Two distinct species are known as black ginger, namely Zingiber malaysianum ('Midnight Black' or Midnight Ginger), an ornamental plant with blackish - red foliage and Kaempferia parviflora (Thai black ginger, Thai ginseng or Krachai dum, Durik Ada, 'Karkashur / Yaimu') with bluish - black rhizome (Fig3), the latter being more important for its medicinal uses.



Fig.3. Kaempferia parviflora

Black ginger does not have the taste or pungency of ginger.



Fig.4. Dried slices of black ginger (Kaempferia parviflora)

## Red ginger red herring

Red ginger (Zingiber officinale var. rubra), common in Indonesia, Malaysia and West Africa, is now available in our country as well. This ginger is blessed with attractive baby pink - red colour and can be used like normal ginger in recipes and medicine. Red ginger has been prescribed as an analgesic for arthritis pain in Indonesian traditional medicine.



Fig. 5. Red ginger

## Peppers of different berries

In the guise of 'pepper', there exists more than one pepper, all traded as a spice or medicinal herbs. The word 'pepper' instantly brings to mind

the perfect black and white pepper berries or the green berries of the vine *Piper nigrum*, the spice with the moniker 'black gold'. However, there are some other species of spices or medicinal plants with the suffix 'pepper' such as Sichuan pepper (*Zanthoxylum piperitum* / *Z. simulans*-Rutaceae) also known as Japanese pepper and Korean pepper; Timut pepper (*Zanthoxylum armatum*) or Nepalese pepper; Pink pepper (*Schinus molle*, *Schinus terebinthifolius* – Anacardiaceae); Tailed pepper (*Piper cubeba*) otherwise popular as Java pepper or cubeb pepper; Ashanti pepper (*Piper guineense*) a.k.a Benin pepper, False cubeb, Guinea cubeb; Adi pepper (*Piper relictum*); false black pepper (*Embelia ribes*) family Myrsinaceae; Wild pepper of Madagascar (*Piper borbonense*) alias Voatsiperifery or Tsiperifery; Jamaica pepper (*Pimenta dioica*-Myrtaceae) also called Myrtle pepper, False black pepper Pimento, Jamaica pimento, Jamaica pepper, Pimenta etc.

Monks pepper (*Vitex agnus-castus*), otherwise known as Chaste tree/Chaste berry, family Lamiaceae; Selim pepper (*Xylopiya aethiopica*), family Annonaceae well known as Kani pepper, Senegal pepper, Ethiopian pepper and Guinea pepper etc., either of the genus *Piper* itself or non-*Piper* genus, apart from the ubiquitous chilli pepper (*Capsicum* sp.), valued as functional foods or medicine.



Fig.6. Sichuan pepper

## The 'Macho' Memorial



Born in Kollam, Jayan was the macho-hero of the 80's Malayalam film industry. His movies tasted success in his heydays and he remains in the hearts of film buffs as a unique action-hero. Now, after a long slit of time, a memorial has been materialised in his hometown – Kollam.

The Kollam District Panchayat took the initiative to erect the memorial and it is positioned in the vicinity of Jayan's birthplace - Thevally. A conference hall has been modernised with all state-of-the-art facilities inside the Kollam District Panchayat compound which is aptly named as the Jayan Memorial Hall. The hall can seat 450 people at a time. The hall will be rented out for weddings and other functions.

# **DO NOT NEGLECT THEM!**

**When we assemble to battle the COVID-19 virus, we must remember the vulnerable amongst us. The needs of the elderly population should not be neglected when we raise our defences against the pandemic. All of us have the responsibility to support them as they are placed in reverse-quarantine.**

**Well-lit rooms with good ventilation should be selected for those entering reverse-quarantine.**

- Necessary medicines should be stockpiled.
- Magazines and newspapers should be provided for recreational purposes.
- They should be provided with a healthy, balanced diet.
- The elderly should be assisted in availing of telemedicine and Sanjeevani services for continuing any treatment they are undergoing.
- Family members should also try to do daily exercises with them.
- If possible, make sure they have access to a TV, mobile phone, laptop and other devices for communication.
- Anyone with a cough, cold, fever and those who are at risk of infection should NOT come in contact with those undergoing reverse-quarantine.
- It is very important to provide the elderly with love, care and unconditional support as they go through this period.

**Don't forget to follow**



**Social distancing, Mask, Soap!**

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