

KERALA CALLING



A YEAR OF RESILIENCE AND PROGRESS

The State's unwavering commitment to development and welfare shines through its resilience, innovative projects, and people-centric governance in 2024



The mist takes its time
settling over sleepy hills
and the steaming tea
stretches almost a metre.

Meanwhile on a pathway
that rambles along tea gardens,
you catch up with yourself.

Slow down
in God's Own Country.

STAGE Two 7407





Progress Amidst Challenges

As 2024 ends, Kerala takes stock of a year marked by challenges and measured progress. Under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the state has pursued a pragmatic agenda, balancing governance with resilience.

Public engagement has been a defining feature. The Mukhamukham programme deepened dialogue between officials and communities, while the ongoing Grievance Redressal Adalat addresses citizens' concerns with an efficiency rarely seen at the national level. These initiatives are reshaping the relationship between government and the public.

Infrastructure projects have moved ahead despite fiscal constraints. The Thottiyar Hydropower Project is finally operational, adding 40 MW to the state's energy mix. Progress at the Vizhinjam Port signals Kerala's ambition to become a logistical hub in global trade. These projects are now within reach due to determined leadership.

Technology has also been at the forefront. The Ente Bhoomi digital land management system streamlines property transactions, eliminating bureaucratic hurdles. In Kannur, India's first supercapacitor manufacturing facility sets Kerala on course to contribute to defence, renewable energy and electric vehicle industries. Such initiatives underline the state's commitment to modernisation.

Cultural contributions remain integral. The 29th International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) promises to showcase the state's standing as a cultural beacon. Few events so effectively combine artistic ambition with global relevance.

Kerala's development narrative for 2024 balances ambition with pragmatism. Progress has been uneven, but the state's approach—blending innovation with inclusivity—remains its strength. Sustaining this momentum into 2025 will require focus and adaptability.

Wishing everyone a productive and fulfilling New Year.

T.V. SUBHASH IAS
EDITOR



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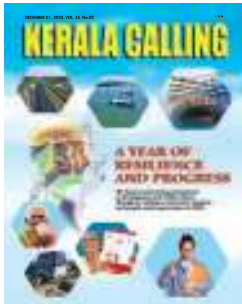
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Kerala Shines with Silver at IITF



The Kerala Pavilion, themed “Viksit Bharat @2024”, won the prestigious silver medal in the Swachha Pavilion category at the India International Trade Fair held at Pragati Maidan. The medal was presented by ITPO Chairman & Managing Director Pradeep Singh Kharola and Executive Director Prem Jit Lal during the closing ceremony at the amphitheater. The medal was received by I-PRD Additional Director, K.G Santhosh, along with Deputy Director S.R Praveen, Joint Secretary V. Shyam, Information Officers P. Satikumar, C.T John and pavilion fabricator V.S Premchand. The Kerala Pavilion, directed by Information and Public Relations Department and designed by Kozhikode- based GIT ZEST, featured 24 stalls highlighting the states multi faceted achievements and contributions to India’s growth.



Kerala Pavilion being presented Silver medal at IITF, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi



Leading the State in Development and Welfare

Pinarayi Vijayan
Chief Minister

As the year 2024 draws to a close, a sincere retrospection reaffirms that Kerala faced inexplicable challenges this year, yet stands tall, thanks to the solidarity of its citizens and the harmony that prevails in our society. Kerala, which has always upheld the values of democracy, secularism and social justice, continues to be a model for the entire country regarding quality of life and public welfare. This year saw the realisation of several big projects and initiation of several others.

2023 ended on an optimistic note with the culmination of NavakeralaSadas, in which the state's cabinet members travelled to all 140 assembly constituencies to interact with the people about the issues facing the state. Opinions were solicited from people in various walks of life, and Kerala's development prospects were discussed in great detail. This unique governance model was followed up this year with the Mukhamukham programme, in which profound discussions were held with focus groups including students, youngsters, women, labourers, etc. The government of Kerala is continuing with this exercise of redressing public grievances and seeking the public's suggestions. 'Karuthalum Kaithangum' Grievance Redressal Adalat is being held from 9 December 2024 to 13 January 2025.

Kerala, the Phoenix

Tragedy struck Kerala when, in the wee hours of 30 July, two villages, Mundakkai and Chooralmala in Wayanad, were uprooted by a disastrous landslide. Kerala, as always, rose to the occasion and stood in unison for rescue, rehabilitation and revival. The affected people were provided with food, shelter,



all amenities and financial aid. A model township is envisaged for the permanent rehabilitation of the people in affected areas. This was the first time when a rehabilitation plan was formulated seeking the opinion of the affected people too. Despite the apathy from the Union Government, Kerala will not leave any stone unturned to ensure the complete rehabilitation and rebuilding of the displaced lives.



Accolades Aplenty

Kerala has once again topped the Sustainable Development Index in India. Kerala has consistently topped the list prepared by NITI Aayog based on 16 development goals, including health, education, gender equality, elimination of inequality, energy, industry, environment and clean water. Kerala has also improved its performance by four points.

It was also a proud moment for the state when the Corporation of Thiruvananthapuram won the UN-Shanghai Global Award for Sustainable Development. Thiruvananthapuram became the first city in India to receive this award, jointly presented by UN Habitat and Shanghai Municipality.

Geared up for a Smooth Sail

With the realisation of Vizhinjam International Port, a special chapter has opened in the development history of Kerala. The emergence of Vizhinjam as one of the largest ports in the world that can berth mother ships has become a very proud moment for our country.

It is a great achievement that Vizhinjam International Port will become a complete port by 2028, almost 17

years ahead of its timeline. Despite the financial constraints, Kerala has successfully implemented a massive project. This is the result of the government's will and commitment to stand firm for the progress and welfare of the people in any crisis. Vizhinjam Port, which will contribute to wide-ranging development, will inject new energy into the economic progress of Kerala. The government will move forward with firm steps to complete the other phases on time.

Taking off on the Right Note

A seaplane took off in Kochi, boosting Kerala's tourism sector. With the launch of more seaplane services, a network connecting various tourist destinations in Kerala will be set up. By connecting our four airports with water routes centred on major water bodies, this network will open up huge tourism opportunities. Such state-of-the-art travel routes will attract tourists and create new job opportunities.

Powering Progress

The completion of the much-stalled Thottiyar Hydropower Project in Idukki district has given a boost to Kerala's power sector. The construction of the Thottiyar Hydropower Project, which has an installed capacity of 40 MW and a generation capacity of 99 million units, was made possible by the



committed interventions of the LDF government during the last eight years of its rule. The Thottiyar Hydropower Project is a major step forward in the efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in the energy sector.

Futuristic Projects

The super capacitor manufacturing facility in Kannur is the first super capacitor manufacturing facility in the country. This plant will be able to manufacture super capacitors required for the country's defence sector, electric vehicles and space missions. The first phase of the plant has been completed by importing the necessary machinery. Leading institutions such as ISRO and DRDO are also collaborating with the new plant in Kerala. Once fully operational, the super capacitor manufacturing facility will pave the way for revolutionary advancements in the fields of science, technology and industry. The Centre of Excellence for Nutraceuticals, which is being set up in Thiruvananthapuram, will generate potent nutraceuticals, which impart therapeutic, preventive or immune stimulant functions to the human body. The government intends to nurture this industry by leveraging our ecosystem and talent pool as a biodiversity 'hotspot'. The Centre of Excellence in Nutraceuticals will come into operation at the allotted land at Thonnakkal Life Science Park, Thiruvananthapuram, under the

aegis of Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC), Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KS CSTE) and Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC). The necessary temporary laboratories will be set up soon in the existing facility of the Institute of Advanced Virology.

Kerala Space Park in Thiruvananthapuram is the first Space System Park in the country to be launched by a state government for initiatives in the space, defence and aviation sectors. The Space Park will focus on attracting investments to develop a strong industrial ecosystem that supports space exploration activities across the country. Kerala Space Park (K-SPACE) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) to collaborate in setting up a Space Industrial Park.

Creating 'Ease of Doing Work' Environment

The government is trying to fuel Kerala's growth towards a knowledge economy by creating a worker-friendly work environment. The construction of the first 'Work Near Home Centres' which has started in Kottarakkara, will be completed in 2025. Through



such centres, the best employment facilities available in the metro cities of the country will be made possible even in small towns in Kerala. The objective of the Work Near Home Centres, which are being established under the leadership of the Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC), is to establish a network of workspaces across Kerala for employees and organisations working in the knowledge-based and information technology sectors to work remotely. Kerala has emerged as the Top Achiever in the Ease of Doing Business Reforms in the country. The announcement was made by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Govt. of India, under their Business Reforms Action Plan. It marks yet another milestone in Kerala's journey towards becoming a premier hub for industry, technology, and sustainable growth.

Making Hassle-free Systems

The first comprehensive land information digital system, Ente Bhoomi Integrated Land Information Management System, developed by Kerala, will be a model for the entire country. The fact that such a system is unheard of even in countries that are highly developed says a lot about the progress Kerala has

managed to achieve. This system has been prepared when the digital land survey is in its third phase. The public will be able to carry out land-related transactions without visiting various government offices.

A State in 100 Countries

The 4th Loka Kerala Sabha once again bolstered the ties between Kerala inside and outside Kerala. This time, the LKS saw participation from Malayalis in 100 countries. The Loka Kerala Sabha brought forth constructive discussions and suggestions regarding the welfare of the expatriates. The Loka Kerala Sabha has broad goals such as enabling the unity and cooperation of expatriate Keralites in other Indian states and various parts of the world, ensuring the participation of expatriates for the development and progress of the country, and devising plans to discuss and resolve their problems.

When it comes to people's welfare, Kerala is unparalleled in its vision and execution. From social security measures to ensuring geriatric care, from general education to lifestyle disease management, the government of Kerala is moving ahead with our people as a guiding light. We are one year closer to our vision. Let's hope that the next year augurs well for the state and brings peace and prosperity to all. Wishing all a very Happy New Year.

A Paradigm for the World

K. Rajan

Minister for Revenue and Housing

Kerala's Revenue Department has gained manifold achievements in e-governance, modifying that Kerala will lead India in several fields. Now, the state is leading the world, astonishing many.



Numerous projects were devised and implemented to fulfil the pronouncement to provide land for all, with the required documents, and to make all services smart. These turned useful in many ways for the staff in the Revenue Department and the public alike. The Revenue Department's website itself states that citizens need not visit the offices to avail of its services and can enjoy them in their own homes, with comfort, unless warranted by the officer concerned. This was a great relief to the citizens

many a time, especially during the Covid pandemic, when they were confined to homes. The citizens also can heave a sigh of relief as all payment histories are digitally saved, and one need not keep hard copies for all payments. This is indeed a helping hand to many senior citizens.

Apart from this, various e-governance initiatives that will benefit all sectors have been



begun by the Revenue Department. This is being successfully implemented now, the most important among them being various collection services, services for citizens, staff services, inventory services, etc.

The geographic data coming under the Revenue Department has been fully digitised. Based on this, modules have been designed to collect land tax, Aadhaar updating and linking, services related to the issuance of various certificates, land conversion, land acquisition, land conservation, etc. These can be handled online. Such modules are being implemented for the first time in India. Citizens can make quick payments through the portal.

The Electronic Mortgage Recorder App, which was included under the fourth 100-day agenda of the government, is useful for financial institutions and the public. Apart from this, it will help gain transparency in land dealings. Twelve new e-governance apps were included and completed under the fourth 100-day agenda. Online facilities have been arranged for providing social security pension, paying land tax/surplus tax, revenue recovery payment, etc.

As part of mobile governance, an app, with good User Interface (UI) and User Experience

(UX), was introduced for land dealings. With the updating of the ReLIS portal (a web application devised by the Revenue Department), land tax, building tax, surplus tax, etc. can be paid from 10 foreign countries, including the USA, UK, Canada, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Apart from this, land conversion, mutation of property, getting thandaper (a property's revenue record and certificate of land ownership), etc. are all possible through this portal. Along with this, a business user can safely log in to the portal using their PAN (Permanent Account Number). The various payments collected will be transferred to the state exchequer efficiently, and accounts are managed digitally in all Revenue offices.

ReLIS enables online integration of Registration and Survey Departments. The portal will help enable transparency in land dealings and has brought to an end various fraudulent acts associated with such deals. This has been made possible with the introduction of the 'Any Land Search' facility in the ReLIS portal. It has gained much acceptance among the public. With this facility, any information related to a particular land can be searched, and other details, including the owner's details, pending tax dues, thandaper number, survey number, etc., can be found. Any citizen can get an updated digital sketch of any single parcel of land in the village through the e-maps facility in the Revenue Department's portal. Cadastral maps are prepared within village boundaries, with proper village indices defining associations and orientations among plots constituting the village.

Within the last two years, around 10 lakh people have registered in the ReLIS portal. This is indeed a sign of increased public participation in the scheme.

The Revenue Department has achieved remarkable progress in e-governance, becoming the first to implement online transfers without discrepancies—based on Station Seniority in 2023 and Cadre Seniority in 2024—ensuring increased transparency and efficiency. Over 2,000 revenue offices across 14 districts have been digitally connected via the e-office facility, supported by high-bandwidth KFON connections, significantly enhancing work efficiency. Various centralised online modules, such as surprise checks, complaint resolution procedures, and idea generation systems, have been introduced to track service progress and improve efficiency.

Initiatives like the Revenue Recovery Digital Payment Module, successfully implemented in Vilappil Village of *Kattakada Taluk*, and the comprehensive Building Tax Appeal Module have eased staff workload. For 2024-25, planned e-governance initiatives include Revenue e-courts, vertical property land ownership for flat owners, an e-module for Pattayam (property ownership records), and Revenue Cards. Additionally, an e-literacy campaign aims to improve digital skills and foster seamless information transfer between departments

Mission Possible!

Roshy Augustine
Minister for Water Resources

The Jal Jeevan Mission is creating new history in Kerala. The project, that aims to provide drinking water through taps to rural homes, is rewriting the drinking water distribution map of Kerala.



The Jal Jeevan Mission is a massive project aimed at improving the quality of life of the rural population, especially women, people in hilly areas, and those belonging to the SC/ST category. The water supply network, which is being implemented gradually in rural areas through Jal Jeevan Mission, has now become widespread.

This is the largest project ever undertaken by the Department of Water Resources. Through this project, the government has taken on the huge task of providing a particular quantity of clean drinking water to every household in rural areas through taps. The fact that only 25 percent of households had connections at the time of the project's launch and the number of drinking water projects existing in rural areas was few were the major challenges faced by the government while undertaking this project.

In June 2020, the Kerala government boldly decided to implement a critical project during the challenges of the Covid crisis. The Water

Resources Department, alongside the Kerala Water Authority and Panchayats, swiftly prepared the projects, obtaining necessary approvals within four months. The first phase of the project began after the state-level inauguration by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on October 8, 2020. Since then, the Water Resources Department, Kerala Water Authority, and Ground Water Department have worked tirelessly to ensure its progress.

Ensuring sustainable availability of water

When the project activities began, only three districts (Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Thrissur) had more than 25 percent access to drinking water. In contrast, many states that have now achieved 100 percent access had over 50 to 70 percent access



when their projects started. Additionally, Kerala is implementing drinking water projects with a sustainable plan for the next 30 years. While 55 litres per person per day is the target, the government aims to provide at least 100 litres per person per day, considering the rural-urban situation, long-term needs, and sustainability.

Currently, clean piped water is available to 54.50 percent of rural households in the state. With the completion of new drinking water projects, the goal of providing piped water to all households is achievable. Of the 54.45 lakh connections sanctioned, 20.56 lakh have been provided. This represents a significant achievement, as more connections were provided than previously existing, with about 30 percent more rural connections established in just four years since the project's launch.

More than 65% of the target has been achieved in *Kollam, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, and Thiruvananthapuram* districts. 111 Panchayats have already achieved 100% coverage, eliminating the need for additional funding in the drinking water sector, allowing these areas to focus on other development priorities. Before the project, only 6 Panchayats had coverage above 50%; now, 517 Panchayats have surpassed this threshold. Eight

assembly constituencies have achieved 100% coverage, up from only 10 constituencies with over 50% coverage before the project.

The Jal Jeevan Mission is transforming rural living conditions, aiming for 100% tap water availability in Kerala, similar to its success in literacy. This achievement must continue sustainably, ensuring people never worry about access to drinking water.

Scaling Heights with Hilly Aqua

Hilly Aqua, a product of the Department of Water Resources, was introduced to the market with the goal of providing affordable, clean bottled water to the public. Its

Currently, the government has been able to provide clean piped water to 54.50 percent of the rural households in the state.

quick success in the market is attributed to the high quality of the water, prompting the government to take more active steps in its market involvement. Along with this, efforts have been made to meet the demand from expatriate Malayalis in the UAE who wish to drink water from Kerala. On October 1, a deal was signed between UAE-based Arohana General Trading LLC and KIIDC to export Hilly Aqua to the UAE.

Under the *Sujalam project*, a joint initiative by KIIDC and the Food and Civil Supplies Department, 1 liter of bottled water is made available to the public at a price of Rs. 10 through local shops, ration shops and K-stores. In the past four months, bottled water worth Rs. 1.5 crore has been sold under this scheme. Additionally, Neethi Medical Store, Supplyco, Triveni, Jail Outlet, Jail Freedom Foods, KTDC, and others are selling bottled water at Rs. 10 per liter. Hilly Aqua is also available for sale on KSRTC buses, starting from the super-fast category.

The Southern Railway has approved the distribution of 1-liter bottles of Hilly Aqua for the next three years. In medical colleges and taluk hospitals, the water is also being sold at Rs. 10 per liter. Studies are underway to introduce biodegradable bottles for Hilly Aqua, a first for Kerala, with plans to implement this within the year.

Hilly Aqua is progressing with plans to double its production. A tender process to add an additional production line in Thodupuzha has begun, with completion expected by May next year. Additionally, efforts are underway to expand the water treatment plant in Aruvikkara, with a goal to double production by April 2025. A tender for introducing soda and soft drinks alongside bottled water is also in progress, with production expected to start by May.

In the last financial year (2023-24), Hilly Aqua's sales revenue reached Rs. 8.83 crore, a significant increase from Rs. 5.22 crore in the previous year. By October of the current financial year, sales revenue had already reached Rs. 6.38 crore. The number of distributors has also grown from just six in Thiruvananthapuram, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki, and Thrissur to over 50 new distributors across various taluks.

1 litre of bottled water is made available to the common people for Rs. 10 through ration shops and K-stores

Glaming Bright

K. Krishnankutty
Minister for Electricity

Kerala joins the energy elite club of renewable energy-rich states, crossing the benchmark of 1,000 MW capacity in solar energy production.



Policies and programmes of the Kerala state in the power sector is in alignment with sustainable development goals, thereby supporting the nation's commitment to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. The state has set an ambitious target to generate 3,000 MW of renewable energy, aiming to meet 50% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2030, achieve 100% renewable energy dependence by 2040, and become net carbon neutral by 2050.

The state's power sector has experienced steady growth, marked by significant milestones over the past three-and-a-half years. During this period, Kerala has added 1,067.714 MW of generation capacity, including 979.164 MW from solar and 88.55 MW from hydro power projects. The 60 MW *Pallivasal* extension hydroelectric project is expected to be completed this year, and seven new hydroelectric projects, totaling 111 MW, are under

construction.

A 15% increase in peak demand last summer highlighted the need for more internal generation capacity. Constraints in the transmission network and insufficient power during critical peak times prompted the redesign of the network to address these challenges. Despite abundant water resources ideal for hydroelectric and pumped storage projects, delays in these initiatives have led to intensified efforts in developing solar energy and Battery Energy Storage Systems, which offer faster implementation timelines.

Popularising Rooftop Solar Plants

It is a fact that the high density of population and non availability of open land sets limitations in



going for large scale ground mounted solar plants. Despite these limitations, we have so far achieved 284.9 MW capacity of ground mounted solar plants. Right from the launching of 'Soura Project' under the 'Oorja Kerala Mission', concerted efforts are being taken in tapping rooftop solar energy, especially rooftop solar plants by popularising the available subsidy schemes and entrusting jobs to more empanelled developers. As of now, 1.78 lakhs consumers have installed rooftop solar plants across the state with a total capacity of 1022.65 MW. Kerala could join the energy elite club of renewable energy-rich states of the country crossing the bench mark of 1000 MW capacity of solar energy production.

Kerala ranks second in the country for claiming subsidies for rooftop solar installations. Following the launch of the PM Surya-Ghar scheme by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, which aims to solarize middle-class households, rooftop solar installations have been adding about 35 MW of solar power to the grid every month. With 2.5 lakh registrations under the scheme, Kerala has shown strong acceptance of solar energy initiatives.

Kerala, being a state blessed with plenty of dams, rivers and back waters, have an estimated potential of 6000 MW from floating solar plants. Unutilized and uncultivable water bodies can be utilised to install floating solar plants, which will definitely contribute to our green energy requirements.

A unique project in this regard is the ongoing 50 MW *West*

Kerala ranks second in the country in claiming subsidies for rooftop solar installations.

Kallada floating solar project at Kollam district. The said plant is to come up in the 300 acres of uncultivable water-logged paddy fields in *West Kallada* village of *Kunnathur* taluk. This project also benefits farmers, with a 3% share in the profits. The state

government has supported the initiative with a Viability Gap Fund of Rs. 11.83 crore, promoting such projects. The success of this project, with assured returns to farmers, could be replicated across Kerala.

Another remarkable project implemented in the state by ANERT is the solarisation of ST and SC households by installing solar panels of capacities 2 KW and 3 KW using state and central funds. So far, 715 houses under Life mission project and 305 houses built by state SC department were solarised under this scheme. The electrification of remote tribal hamlets where extension of electric grid is not possible, hybrid projects with solar, wind and battery system is being implemented. This hybrid project has been completed in 3 hamlets benefiting 60 tribal families.

Solarisation of Agriculture Pumps

PM-Kusum Scheme aiming solarisation of agriculture pumps is getting popularised in our state utilising the subsidies announced by the central and state governments. Under this scheme, Kerala is focusing on both feeder and individual pump solarisation. KSEBL has already installed 1.5 MW of solar plants under feeder solarisation, with 15.5 MW more in progress. For individual agricultural pump solarisation, ANERT has implemented a state-specific model, installing solar plants on farmers' fields without any cost to them, using a 30% central subsidy. ANERT secured loans from NABARD for the capital, with excess energy sold to KSEBL to repay the loans. So far, 900 agricultural pumps have been solarised out of the 45,000 planned.

Unutilised and uncultivable water bodies can be used to install floating solar plants, significantly contributing to our green energy requirements

Special approval from the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy is obtained for inclusion of solarisation of high capacity dewatering pumps of kole fields in the state, under *PM-Kusum scheme*. This scheme saves the state agricultural department from spending money towards electricity subsidy to marginal farmers.

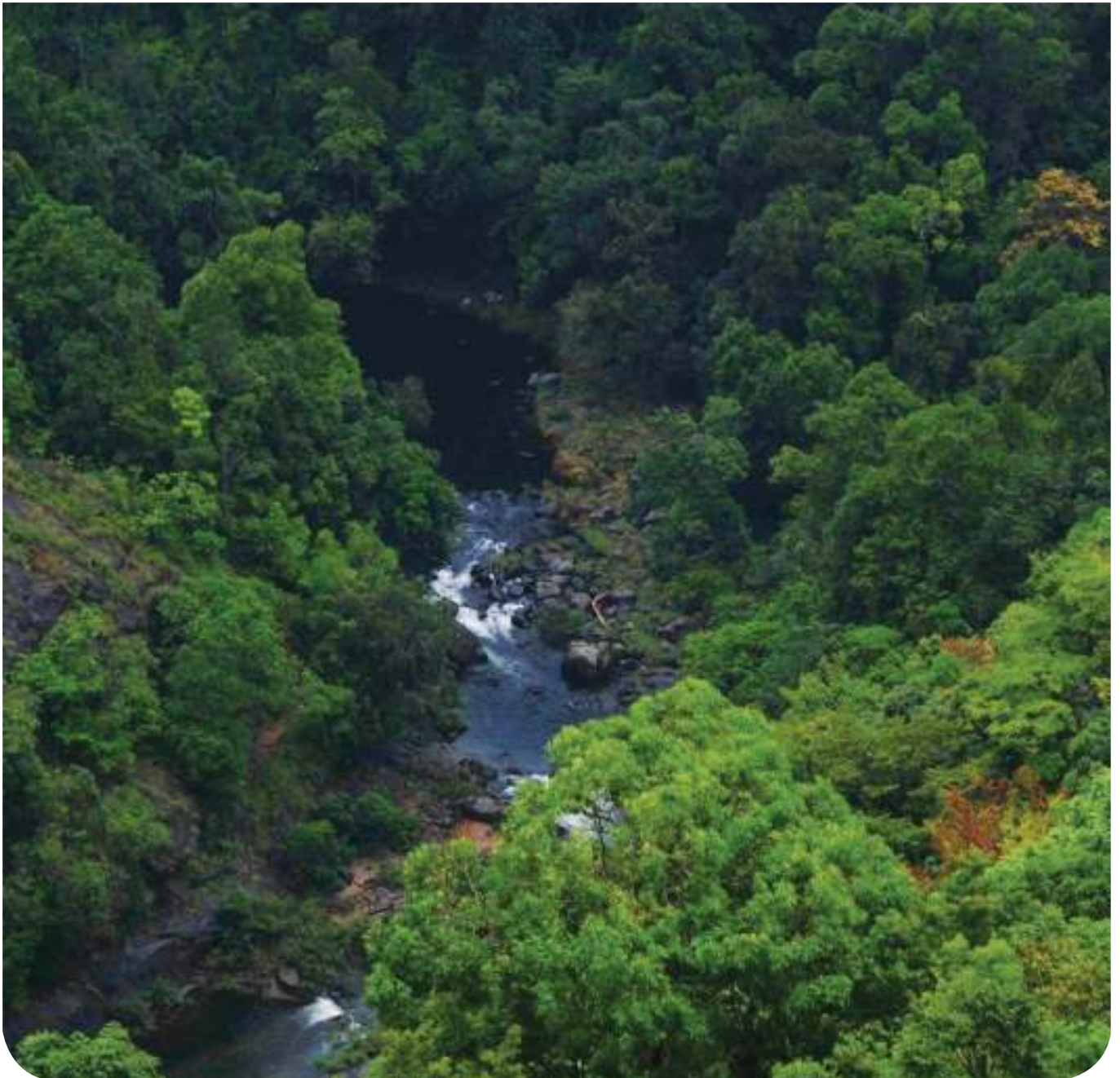
As part of Thiruvananthapuram's solar city initiative, ANERT has installed 17.06 MW of solar capacity across 514 public buildings.

Bringing Nature Back

A.K. Saseendran

Minister for Forests and Wildlife

The government is restoring the ecology of our forests, thereby reclaiming the degraded ecosystem of the state.





Kerala is the home of a major portion of the Western Ghats, which is one of the eight “Hottest of the Hotspots” of biodiversity in the world, included in UNESCO’s list of World Heritage Sites. The forests, rivers, backwaters, wetlands, and human habitations of Kerala are home to this rich biodiversity. Amidst the rapid developmental activities that we are witnessing and aspiring for, maintaining environmental health and ecological stability is crucial for achieving sustainable development. However, the luxuriant forests of Kerala had been managed for a long time for merely the tangible benefits that flow from them, namely timber, pulpwood, and other non-wood forest produce, while ignoring the fact that forests are our best bet against natural calamities, which our State has been suffering far too often in recent times. The invaluable ecosystem services provided by the forests were given scant attention in management.

After realising the maladies caused by this historical ignorance, the Kerala Forest Department took a huge conscious departure from traditional forest management to managing forests for ecosystem services, viz., clean water, clean air, biodiversity, etc. Thus, the State brought out ‘The Kerala Eco Restoration Policy, 2021’, which is a significant framework guiding the state’s approach

to forest management and restoration. Kerala is probably the first among Indian states to roll out an exclusive policy in this regard, and this is in tune with the United Nations’ declaration on Eco Restoration, which is a global initiative launched by the UN General Assembly, spanning over a decade from 2021 to 2030, aimed at protecting and restoring degraded ecosystems worldwide to combat climate change, enhance biodiversity and improve people’s livelihoods.

Kerala is probably the first among Indian states to roll out an exclusive policy for ecological restoration.

Building a Strategy

The Eco Restoration Policy, 2021, of Kerala emphasizes sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation and the active involvement of local communities. It provides a comprehensive strategy for converting monoculture plantations to natural vegetation, restoring degraded lands, managing invasive species, conserving soil and moisture inside forests, strengthening participatory forest management, mitigating the ill effects of forest fire, scientific and sustainable utilisation of non-wood forest produce while protecting the rights of tribal people, conserving biodiversity outside forests, viz., sacred groves, mangroves, etc., preventing erosion along our coasts and rivers, enhancing tree cover outside forests through people’s participation and enhancing ecosystem services. All these activities are designed to augur well for making Kerala carbon-neutral as early as possible.

Acting upon the Strategy

As per these guiding principles, several tracts of exotic monoculture plantations in several Forest Divisions of the State Forest Department are being restored to naturalness by removing exotics and planting native species, thereby improving the health of the habitat. Out of the approximately 27,000 ha of monoculture plantations of Acacia, Eucalyptus, Wattle, and Teak in the State, 1,365 ha has been restored so far and about 5,400 ha are being tackled under various schemes of the Forest Department. In the Nemmara Forest Division in Palakkad District, for example, 10 plantations of Acacia and Eucalyptus spread over an area of 240 ha have been restored by removing

Several forest divisions of the State Forest Department are being restored to naturalness by removing exotics and planting native species.

exotics, planting native species, conserving soil and moisture by constructing check dams, ponds, gully plugs, etc. Similar works are being carried out in other Forest Divisions as well.

These eco-restoration activities have led to improvement in biodiversity, enhancement of water sources, etc. The overall improvement of the forest habitat has been so evident that in those areas the wild animals have preferred to stay within the forests, thereby reducing the chances of human-wildlife conflicts. We can confidently say that eco-restoration has been a step in the right direction for the Kerala Forest Department and the whole of Kerala.

Registering Growth

Ramachandran Kadannappalli

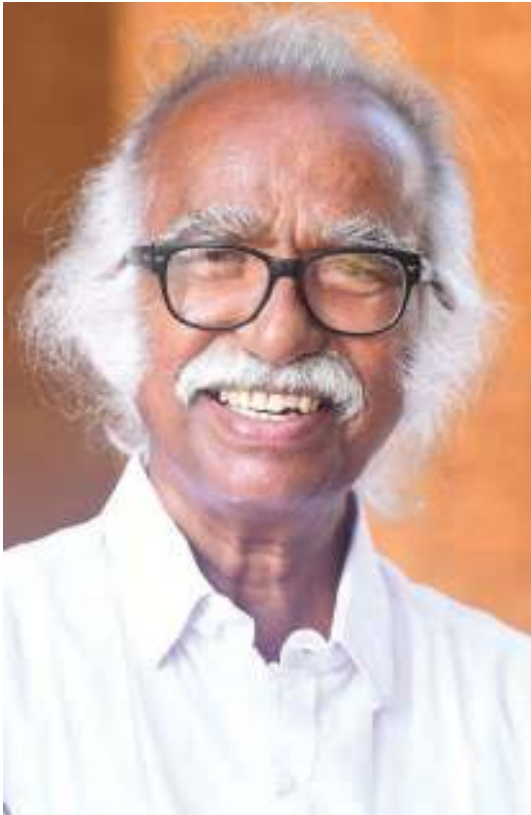
Minister for Registration, Museums, Archaeology, Archives

Modernisation attempts implemented by the Department transform the mode of service delivery to the public.



The management of land information is not a new system. Information systems have been in existence since people first took to agriculture. More recent examples include topographical and geological mapping programmes, valuation and forest inventory surveys, and the land title survey and registration systems. These systems provide both the information infrastructure necessary for land allocation and settlement and the additional technical and resource information needed for resource development.

What is new today is the quantity of data that can be handled, the speed with which these data can be processed, and the ways in which the data can be manipulated and analysed. The state of Kerala has had a growing role in the process of land administration through, for example, granting of land titles, land taxation, and various programmes dealing with environmental and land regulation, etc. This, together with the application of IT systems,



has focused attention on the need for new strategies and policies for gathering, administering, analysing, and disseminating land-related information.

The Registration Department, being one of the Departments set up more than 150 years ago, has its own baggage of customary delivery patterns suited to the old times. Considering the modernisation attempts implemented by the Department to transform the mode of delivery to match the standards of the current time, the efforts achieved so far can be reckoned as outstanding and successful. The Department has received state-wide acclaim on account of its remarkable achievements in the areas of service delivery in comparison with other Departments in the state as well as in the neighbouring states. Infrastructure Development is an important prerequisite for realising the ultimate vision of the Department. Revamping and reforming the administrative system to serve the people better need not be over-emphasised. Having a broad range of IT capabilities, the major aim of the Department, among other things, is to make the services available electronically and to enable the citizens to have access to such services.

Programmes for Subsequent Years

The present process involved in document

registration is undergoing a massive change. E-stamping for all property-related transactions irrespective of denomination, biometric scanners and web cameras for identification of parties while registering a property, Aadhaar authenticated property transactions, system-generated registration certificates, etc., are some of the initiatives planned for the ensuing year.

Online System for Chit Fund Registration

Chit Funds contribute to the value of financial markets in India, particularly in Kerala. A chit fund is an unorganised money market industry in India. A chit fund works on the concept of savings and borrowings. In order to address the existing pain areas, the Department has joined hands with the Kerala Development Innovation and Strategic Council (K-DISC) for the implementation of a state-of-the-art core digital workflow

The major aim of the Department is to make the services available electronically and to enable the citizens to have access to such services

system covering all functionalities for the end-to-end administration of chit business in the state. The element of mutual help and co-operation inherent in chits makes it distinct from other similar savings schemes. It is no wonder, therefore, that chit funds have survived the test of time and have become an important part of the culture and traditions of the people of Kerala and South India.

The instances of exploitation, cheating, and malpractices in the chit fund industry, particularly in the informal chit sector, warrant prudential regulation and strict enforcement of the Chit Act in the state. This highlights the need for a core digital system to effectively administer and regulate the chit fund business in Kerala. Moreover, the system proposed would provide valuable leads to the regulator and all the stakeholders concerned in achieving meaningful and holistic financial inclusion in the state. A similar system for registration of partnership firms and society registration is also being rolled out with improvement in features when compared to the existing application system.

Modernisation of Record Rooms

Many of the Sub-Registry Offices in the state are crunching for space due to the increase in the number of physical registers. The existing facility in the Sub-Registry Offices for maintaining these records is inadequate to handle the increasing number of records being generated daily. This has made the document management system in the Sub-Registry Offices cumbersome. Racks and shelves for stacking books and registers containing records to be preserved permanently are a pressing need.

Compactor shelving systems are the most ideal and the latest concept in the record management facility. The Department has been focussing on modernising the age-old record-keeping system in the offices to enhance the Document Management System. This will improve the outlook and appearance of Sub-Registry Offices in the state.

Modernising Public Transport with Enhanced Services

K.B. Ganesh Kumar

Minister for Road Transport, Motor Vehicles, Water Transport

KSRTC has introduced several new initiatives to enhance its services, catering to the diverse needs of its passengers. These include innovative solutions for students, advanced ticketing systems, driving schools, and upgraded amenities for passengers.



KSRTC has revolutionized the student concession process, enabling students to apply for bus passes online. Their application status can now be tracked through an integrated SMS system eliminating unnecessary travel and paperwork, streamlining the process significantly.

Live Ticketing System

This system has been introduced to provide real-time travel flexibility allowing passengers to book seats on buses even after the journey has commenced, using the official KSRTC website or app.

Current Implementation is trialed on low-floor AC buses operating on the Thiruvananthapuram-Kozhikode route, to improve seat utilization and provide a seamless booking experience for passengers.

Google Transit Integration

By integrating KSRTC's services with Google Maps, passengers can track services like Superclass services, City Circular, Bypass Riders etc.



Driving Schools initiative

To promote road safety and provide quality driving education, KSRTC has launched Driving Schools across the state, which is the first of its kind run by any of the State Road Transport Undertakings in India. The program was officially launched on June 26, 2024, by the Honorable Chief Minister.

- **Locations:** In its first phase, 11 centers are being made operational, including those in Thiruvananthapuram, Parassala, Attingal, and Kozhikode.
- **Special Features:** Female instructors have been appointed to encourage women to join, all facilities including driving simulators are included, state-of-the-art training centers with cut models, instructors with ample experience in KSRTC, adequate number of training vehicles, etc.
- **Achievements:** The Thiruvananthapuram center started in Staff Training Center alone has enrolled 279 trainees with a total of 297 individuals across various centers, generating impressive revenue of ₹24.81 lakh within a span of five months from June 2024.

Air-Conditioned Passenger Waiting Areas

KSRTC, in partnership with private entities utilizing their CSR funds, has set up air-conditioned waiting lounges at key bus stations. These facilities are now available at Thiruvananthapuram Central,

Kozhikode, and Angamaly bus stations. Key amenities include dedicated breastfeeding rooms, mobile charging points for passengers etc. This initiative aims to improve travel comfort, especially for families.

To promote road safety and provide quality driving education, KSRTC has launched Driving Schools across the state

Courier and Logistics Centres have been established to enable the safe delivery of parcels anywhere in Kerala within 16 hours at an affordable cost. The service is available at 55 KSRTC depots in Kerala and in select cities outside the state, including Bengaluru, Mysuru, Coimbatore, Tenkasi, and Nagercoil. Both

the sender and the receiver are intimated via Phone message.

Innovation Centre

Steps are underway to establish an Innovation Centre at the central workshop in Pappanamcode. This centre will facilitate the evaluation of employees' innovative ideas and conduct cost-benefit analyses as part of setting up necessary systems in existing workshops.

Off-road Reduction

Between January and February 2024, the average daily off-road count for KSRTC buses ranged from 900 to 1000. However, by implementing strategic measures, this number was significantly reduced to an average of 503 by September 2024. The lowest off-road count for the year was recorded at 404 buses on August 13, 2024. KSRTC's immediate goal is to sustain an average daily off-road count below 500.

Modernization of Workshops

The KSRTC Central Works Engine Reconditioning Shop in Pappanamcode has been modernized with air-conditioning and advanced equipment, raising monthly engine production from 18 to 42 units. Similar upgrades, including air-conditioned reconditioning shops for gearboxes, axles, steering boxes, and brake units, aim to enhance mechanical staff efficiency.

Journey towards Operational Profit

KSRTC operates a total of 93 depots. To boost ticket revenue and tackle its financial challenges, specific targets were assigned to each depot. Unit-level coordination enabled 77 depots (83%) achieved operational profitability. Operational profit or loss was determined by accounting only for the essential expenses and revenue directly linked to service operations.

Superfast Premium AC Buses

KSRTC has launched 40-seater AC Premium Superfast Diesel Buses to offer a high-quality, affordable travel experience and promote public transport. Features include free Wi-Fi, pushback seats, reading lamps, bottle holders, magazine pouches, a music system, TV, CCTV, seat belts, ESC for safety, AI-based driver monitoring, a passenger information system, and advance booking via a mobile app.

Medical Facilitation Centre

KSRTC, in collaboration with SEMI and NIMS Medicity Hospital, is enhancing emergency medical care at 14 depots in Kerala for the public, passengers, and employees. 24-hour EMC units will be set up to handle all emergencies, including geriatric care. The first phase starts with units at Thiruvananthapuram Central, Neyyattinkara, and Nedumangad, with the Thiruvananthapuram Central unit operational from 05/11/2024

Permeating a Healthy Culture

V. Abdurahiman

Minister for Sports, Wakf and Haj Pilgrimage, Minority Welfare

Through innumerable innovative activities, Kerala is on the path of transformation in sports. The Department of Sports is proactively creating an environment for all sections of the state's population to engage in sports activities.





The government is spending a staggering Rs. 2,500 crore on infrastructural development in the sports sector.

sports councils has been a significant step in the sports sector. Sports councils have been established at the Corporation, Municipality, and Panchayat levels. The Goal project, which aims to provide football training to 5 lakh children, has been launched. Additionally, 18 fitness centres have been set up in various districts.

To popularise sports, a dream project titled *One Panchayat, One Playground* was inaugurated by Honourable Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The goal is to provide quality playgrounds in all the Panchayats of Kerala. The first playground was built in Kallikkad in the Thiruvananthapuram district, and a total of four playgrounds have been completed so far. Construction of 28 playgrounds is currently in progress.

It is estimated that around 450 local bodies in the state lack quality playgrounds. The target is to provide playgrounds in all these Panchayats within two years. In the first phase, playgrounds in 124 Panchayats have been approved. As per current estimates, a playground requires ₹1 crore, of which ₹50 lakh is allocated by the Sports Department. The remaining amount is raised through MLA funds, local body funds, corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributions, public-private partnerships (PPP), etc. Recognising the importance of playgrounds, many MLAs have come forward to support this project.

We are building sports and fitness centres that will benefit everyone, regardless of age. These centres are planned based on the specific needs and demands of the respective Panchayat. They may include courts for football, volleyball, basketball, etc., along with facilities like walkways, open gyms, toilets, and lighting. These centres will also serve as spaces for local gatherings and social interactions.

The project is mainly implemented on school grounds, Panchayat grounds, or government lands. Playgrounds can be designed and built in the prescribed manner only if there is at least one acre of land available. However, considering the scarcity of land in Kerala, smaller playgrounds are being developed in Panchayats with limited space. The Sports Kerala Foundation, under the Sports Department, oversees construction. Once construction is complete, the playground is handed over to the landowner. A local-level managing committee is responsible for its management and regular maintenance. Maintenance costs are met by renting the playground out to clubs, private academies, etc., on a time-based system. Many playgrounds are functioning effectively under this arrangement. Additionally, there is a provision for the Sports Kerala Foundation to take over and maintain playgrounds if they fall into disrepair.

The Physical Fitness Mission has been launched to ensure the participation of the entire population in sports and physical activities

The One Panchayat, One Playground scheme is silently yet effectively transforming Kerala's sports culture. People of all ages are coming forward to make use of this initiative. This is a significant step towards the dream of a Kerala filled with playgrounds.

The importance of physical activity cannot be overemphasised, especially in this digital age. Sports and physical fitness activities have a significant impact on the social and economic growth of a region. Extensive sports and fitness activities are essential to create a healthy society and develop citizens actively involved in nation-building. The cornerstone of the Sports Policy 2023 is the vision of 'Health for All'. The goal is to achieve wellness for the entire population by implementing the concept of community sports. To realise this vision, society needs to achieve sports literacy.

In an unprecedented move in Kerala's history, the government is spending a staggering Rs.2,500 crore on infrastructural development in the sports sector. Stadiums, indoor stadiums, football turfs, synthetic tracks, swimming pools, fitness centres, open gyms, etc., are being constructed in cities and villages. Around 400 large and small projects are at various stages of completion. These playgrounds will encourage more people to engage in physical activities and facilitate the hosting of more competitions.

Measures and campaigns to activate sports activities at the grassroots level are crucial. The Physical Fitness Mission has been launched to ensure the participation of the entire population in sports and physical activities. The formation of local body-level

Upholding Welfare

G.R. Anil

Minister for Food and Civil Supplies

Holding onto the welfare concept, the Kerala government is strengthening the public distribution system and using it imaginatively.



The Kerala model of development remains resourceful and soulful to this day because it has always cared to address human dilemmas and despair. The Kerala model of development has flipped yet another glorious chapter with the introduction of the new K-Stores. Much like the trees that are rooted in their past and branch out to the future, this new venture instils the good old aspects of our public distribution system and adapts it to the modern world. The state's public distribution sector is entering a new era as the Kerala Stores become operational. Ration shops have always been an essential part of the rural life of Malayalis. They have now been modernised with innovations and diversity in every aspect.

In addition to the food grains, sugar, and kerosene currently available through ration shops for the priority and non-priority groups under the Food Security Act, Supplyco's Sabari-branded products, Milma products, and 5-kilogram Chotu gas can be purchased at K-Store at reasonable prices. Ration card holders can withdraw up to Rs 10,000 at K-Store without going to the bank or ATM. This small

banking service will be available at K-Store through a smart ration card linked to the bank. K-Store also has the facility to pay utility bills, including water and electricity bills. This project is being implemented targeting rural villages where such facilities are not otherwise available.

Evolution of PDS

The public distribution system in Kerala has a long history. At the beginning of World War II, India faced severe food shortages. Rationing was then introduced in Travancore and Cochin for the first time. Public distribution was stopped in 1955. Under the Price Stabilisation Scheme, rations were limited to the low-income group. Initially, the responsibility of food grain distribution was vested in the district collectors and tahsildars. From January 1957, the responsibility of food distribution came under the control of the



Revenue Board Member. The formation of the Public Distribution Department on 28 May 1962, by separating it from the Revenue Department, became a milestone in the history of the state.

It was decided to distribute the available food grains in the state to everyone in a balanced manner at a fair price, and this was implemented from 1 November 1964. With the notification of the Kerala Regulation of Food Grains Distribution (Regulating Measures) Order 1965 and the Kerala Regulation of Food Grains Distribution Order 1965, a legal framework for the ration system came into being. These are the cornerstones of the Public Distribution System in Kerala. According to these orders, statutory rationing came into effect in the state from 24 October 1965 and later, these were comprehensively recast, and the Kerala Rationing Order came into effect on 1 July 1966.

It was World War II that made rationing a necessity. We know that the cause of the World War was the imperialist powers' greed for colonial possessions and that the result was food shortages. Rationing began as atonement for this great crime that starved billions of people and pushed millions to the brink of starvation. Its basic idea was to provide the minimum amount of food necessary to sustain life. However,

another idea—that it is the duty of the state to fulfil all the basic needs of humans—gained prominence in the world from the second decade of the twentieth century. Many countries came to this path.

Its reflection and response took place in our country as well. As a result, the public distribution sector in our state prospered further.

Ration card holders can withdraw up to Rs 10,000 at K-Store without going to the bank or ATM.

However, by the 1990s, a deviation from this policy was visible all over the world. Countries around the world deviated from the welfare state model. Our country also adopted global-liberal-privatisation policies. As a result,

a target-based public distribution system was introduced. An essential element of this policy was to limit subsidies and freebies to the poorest and most vulnerable. This sounded the death knell of universal rationing in Kerala. Ration was limited for the very poor. The APL-BPL division came. The National Food Security Act of 2013 made categorised rationing legally binding.

The central government restricted ration to priority categories like Antyodaya Anna Yojana (Yellow Card) and Priority Household (Pink Card) and limited the priority category population in the states. In Kerala, this was fixed at 1,54,80,040. 57% of the people in Kerala were left out of the public distribution system.

Kerala Thinks Differently

The Central Government has announced a system of transferring food grain subsidy in cash directly to the beneficiary's bank account through the Direct Benefit Transfer system. This has been implemented in the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Pondicherry. We can see this firsthand from Mahe in Pondicherry. The ration shops there are permanently closed. While this system may seem convenient, it can be understood that it undermines the basic objectives of the public distribution system.

But Kerala is taking a different approach here. As mentioned above, the K-Store project is initially being implemented in remote villages where state banking services and utility payment systems are not available within a radius of two kilometres. In the first phase, 108 K-Stores were opened. Currently, 1,403 ration shops in the state have been upgraded to K-Stores. This will increase to 2,000 by the end of this financial year. Along with the services provided to the beneficiaries, the state government also aims to generate higher income for the ration trader community and market potential for products from the public sector and the micro, small and medium enterprise sector. All ration shops in the state will be converted to smart in a phased manner. This initiative is one of the examples of Kerala's readiness to uphold the welfare state concepts and put forward a pro-people alternative within the federal system envisioned by the nation's constitution.

K-Store has the facility to pay utility bills, including water and electricity bills.

Making Kerala a Welfare State

K.N. Balagopal
Minister for Finance

The Kerala government is enduring in making the state a welfare state in toto. The bedrock of the state government's viewpoint is nothing but the improvement and development of the state with a uncommon accentuation on social welfare.



The state's persistent endeavors to give quality instruction and guarantee a sound life, and welfare activities such as ventures to make work openings for all, comprehensive lodging plot beneath the LIFE (Vocation Consideration and Money related Strengthening) Mission, programs to annihilate destitution and all-embracing wellbeing protections plans have certainly caught the creative ability of the world. The government is guaranteeing to grant a defensive shield to the frail, helpless and elderly people in its interest to form a all encompassing welfare state. And that's the reason why the government is giving most extreme significance to grow and increment the scope of the social security benefits plans.

Pension beneficiaries

Kerala has five categories of social security pension beneficiaries:

agriculture labor pension, pension for unmarried women over 50, old age pension, pension for individuals with mental and physical challenges, and widow pension. The first two schemes were introduced by the Kerala government. Additionally, social welfare pensions are provided to retired workers from 16 sectors. The state also offers social security to workers from unorganized sectors due to the financial instability of welfare fund boards.

The welfare pension data base has information relating to as many as 63.67 lakh pensioners of which 63 percent beneficiaries are women.



state government's limit is Rs one lakh. In 2016, when the previous government left office, 34,43,414 people were receiving pensions of Rs 600, with an 18-month backlog. It was the Pinarayi Vijayan government that cleared these dues and is now disbursing pensions to 62 lakh people, with pension amounts increased in phases to Rs 1,600, with plans for further hikes.

The welfare pension database has information relating to as many as 63.67 lakh pensioners, of which 63 percent are women

From 2011 to 2016, Rs 9,011 crore was allocated for welfare pensions. From 2016 to 2021, Rs 35,154 crore was disbursed, an increase of Rs 26,143 crore. In the current term, Rs 33,000 crore has

been disbursed in just three years.

A helping hand to weaker sections

Notwithstanding the financial constraints, the state government's policy is to lend a helping hand to the weaker sections of the society. The government ensured regular distribution of monthly welfare pension till the month of November to the beneficiaries. The social security pensions are burdening the exchequer to the tune of Rs 900 crore per month.

Out of the five pending installments of social security pensions, one tranche of pension was disbursed during this year's Onam festival. The state government plans to disburse one pending installment this year and the remaining three next year. The government has a firm resolve to settle the social security pension dues.

Welfare pension and expenditure

It is remarkable that 98 percent of the funds required for implementing Kerala's comprehensive social security pension scheme are sourced by the state itself. Contrary claims are incorrect. Kerala's scheme is the most comprehensive social security pension system in India. The central government's contribution of two percent of the total expenditure is distributed among the National Old Age Pension Scheme, National Widow Pension Scheme, and National Disability Pension Scheme. The central government's benefit, which amounts to Rs 300 per person, applies only to 6.8 lakh people.

The Centre's contribution for old age pensions is just Rs 200 out of the Rs 1,600 allocated for people aged up to 79 years, with only 3.4 lakh people receiving this benefit. For those above 80 years, the Centre's share is Rs 500 per person, given only to 1.16 lakh individuals. The central government's contribution to the National Disability Pension Scheme, which has 66,928 beneficiaries, is merely Rs 300 per person, the same amount as the National Widow Pension Scheme. The state has not received the Centre's share regularly and has had to cover the shortfall of Rs 382 crore for social security pension schemes since July 2023. The Centre has yet to release these funds.

While the income limit for social security pensions under the central government is Rs 25,000, the

Central policies pose a hurdle

The current state government, which took office in 2021, has faced significant financial difficulties that persist. Both the 2016 Pinarayi Vijayan Government and the present administration have given equal importance to infrastructure development and social welfare schemes. The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) is tasked with completing major infrastructure projects, while a separate company was formed to ensure timely distribution of social security pensions. However, Kerala's borrowing limit was reduced after the Union Finance Ministry classified loans from KIIFB and the pension company as state debt, retroactively. This resulted in a loss of Rs 1.08 lakh crore for Kerala.

The state's tax share has fallen from 3.875% under the 10th Finance Commission to 1.92% under the 15th Finance Commission. The central grants for 2020-21 were Rs 31,017 crore, but this decreased to Rs 12,068 crore in 2023-24. Kerala was denied 56% of its central grants last year, and the share of financial transfers from the Centre in the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) dropped from 5.12% in 2021-22 to 2.88% in 2023-24.

Furthermore, the central government's contribution for most projects, previously set at 75%, has been reduced to 50%, forcing Kerala to shoulder the entire cost of crucial projects related to ICDS and NHM. Despite these challenges, the state has managed to continue its social welfare pension disbursements, thanks to a 64% increase in tax revenue between 2021-22 and 2023-24. Although accusations of a debt trap were raised, Kerala's debt-GSDP ratio has decreased from 38.47% in 2020-21 to 33.4% in 2023-24, with the average annual expenditure reaching Rs 1.61 lakh crore.

FYUGP Turns Kerala Into Int'l Edu Hub

Dr. R. Bindu

Minister for Higher Education & Social Justice

Kerala's four-year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) is set to transform the State into a global hub for higher education.



Kerala has once again set a precedent for the country by introducing the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP), set to launch in the 2024–25 academic year. This move marks a significant leap in transforming the state into an international hub for higher education. With the introduction of a graduate programme of global repute, Kerala is now home to a higher education system of international standing, offering students the chance to pursue globally recognized degrees without leaving the state.

The state's higher education sector is undergoing a profound transformation. Its new focus is not just on providing education, but also on utilizing the knowledge imparted to students to uplift society and drive the state's economic growth. This shift aims to make Kerala a knowledge-driven economy, fostering academic excellence that translates into tangible social

benefits.

Achieving a Knowledgeable Economy

To attract both domestic and international students, Kerala recognized the need for a curriculum meeting global standards. The state government formed three commissions to recommend reforms aligning the higher education system with international norms. The Commission for Reforms in Higher Education, led by Prof. Shyam B. Menon, recommended a four-year degree system, similar to global universities, facilitating international credit transfers. This new programme offers two paths: entering the workforce with applicable skills



or continuing academic studies. Previously, Kerala students studying abroad had to redo undergraduate courses to meet foreign credit requirements, a problem now resolved by the new system's international compatibility.

Changes Introduced in Courses

The four-year degree programme is built on a credit-based system, similar to those in foreign universities. Students will be guided by Academic Advisors to select a combination of subjects, ensuring they gain the knowledge and skills required for their chosen careers. The curriculum is designed for easy credit transfer under systems like the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) or the American Credit Transfer System, making it internationally compatible.

The degree courses consist of two main components: Foundation Courses and Subject-based Pathway Courses. Foundation Courses are designed to provide basic knowledge on a variety of subjects such as Gender Equality, Constitutional Studies, General Knowledge, Skill Development, and Multidisciplinary Studies. These courses ensure that every graduate receives a well-rounded education.

Pathway Courses, on the other hand, offer specialized knowledge in the chosen field of

study. These are organized into four levels: Level 100, Level 200, Level 300, and Level 400, with each level offering core and elective courses that are tailored to the student's chosen discipline. To complete their degree, students must meet the required number of credits by selecting courses from these levels.

Flexible Time, Focus on Skills Training

The new curriculum also places a strong emphasis on practical learning. In the past, classrooms and labs were utilized for only five to six hours a day, but the revised system extends this to at least eight hours a day, providing more opportunities for hands-on experience. The fourth year focuses primarily on projects, internships, job training, and field work, with students gaining real-world experience both inside and outside the classroom.

Students are also given the option to take a break during their studies. If they decide to pause their education after the third year, they can re-enter

the programme later, with their previous credits preserved in an Academic Bank of Credits. This ensures that the practical experience gained during the break can count toward their degree, with the credits remaining valid for up to seven years.

UGC to Follow Kerala Model

Kerala's four-year degree programme has gained national recognition, with the University Grants Commission (UGC) adopting the state's reforms as a model. A key feature is the "Fast Track" option, allowing students to complete their degree early by earning the required credits in less time. The "N minus one" facility enables students to finish their degree in two-and-a-half years if they meet credit requirements, appealing to high achievers. The UGC plans to implement this system nationwide. Additionally, the honours degree offers research opportunities, allowing students to bypass a separate postgraduate degree to pursue a PhD, supporting the UGC's focus on high-level research.

Research of International Standard

To further enhance the academic environment, Kerala has been setting up Centres of Excellence and research labs in universities and self-financing institutions. The state has also introduced several initiatives to support research, such as the Nava Kerala Post-Doctoral Fellowship and the Kairali Research Award. These initiatives are aimed at providing students with the resources and guidance they need to engage in high-quality research, fostering a culture of innovation that will benefit both the academic community and the broader economy.

Kerala's four-year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) ensures international compatibility with credit-based courses and flexible pathways for students.

The new system enables practical training, research opportunities, and credit transfer to international institutions

A New White Revolution in the Making

J. Chinchurani

Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development

Kerala's dairy sector is undergoing a remarkable transformation, driven by collaborative strategies and innovative technologies.



The dairy industry has long been a cornerstone of Kerala's rural economy. Traditionally, most households reared cattle to meet local milk demands. Over time, however, the dairy sector has transformed into an organised entrepreneurial venture, with co-operatives playing a central role in distribution. To sustain this growth and address emerging challenges, the sector has embraced reinvention. Today, Kerala's carefully designed schemes and projects are yielding promising results, reviving farmers' interest and rejuvenating milk production.

The Significance of Agriculture and Livestock

Agriculture has always been a critical pillar of Kerala's economy, yet it faces hurdles such as climate variability, price instability, and marketing challenges. Despite these issues, the livestock sector remains vital, not only for rural employment but also for nutritional security. The decline in agriculture, however, has disrupted the availability of cattle feed, impacting livestock farming. Recognising

this, the government has introduced several initiatives to support dairy development and mitigate these challenges.

Progress in Milk Production

Kerala's journey towards self-reliance in milk production is marked by steady progress. Despite setbacks, milk production increased from 25.32 lakh MT in 2021–22 to 25.79 lakh MT in 2023–24. Crossbred cows now yield an average of 10.77 kg per day, surpassing the national average of 8.41 kg. Though Kerala still imports about 5.2 lakh litres of milk daily, ongoing efforts steadily reduce this dependency. Notably, daily milk procurement by dairy co-operatives reached a record 21 lakh litres in 2021–22, reflecting strategic planning and efficient coordination.



Key Drivers of Dairy Self-Sufficiency

Several agencies under the Department of Animal Husbandry have joined forces to propel the dairy sector forward:

1. **Animal Husbandry Department (AHD):** Enhances cattle health, fertility, and productivity.
2. **Kerala Livestock Development Board (KLDB):** Leads genetic improvement programmes, provides high-quality semen, and trains farmers.
3. **MILMA:** Oversees milk procurement, processing, and marketing, while incentivising farmers with fair pricing.
4. **Dairy Development Department:** Focuses on training and financial aid to enhance operational efficiency.
5. **Kerala Feeds Ltd.:** Supplies premium-quality cattle feed.
6. **Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU):** Conducts research and capacity-building initiatives.

Innovative Government Schemes Veterinary Support Services

- **Night Emergency Veterinary Treatment:** Provides doorstep care from 6 pm to 6 am, ensuring support outside regular hours.
- **Mobile Veterinary Units:** Operate across 29 blocks

to deliver essential veterinary services directly to farmers.

- **Mobile Tele-Veterinary and Surgery Units:** Bring diagnostic and surgical facilities to rural areas.

Advanced Fertility and Breeding Programmes

Kerala's dairy sector is evolving into a self-sufficient model through innovative government schemes, advanced veterinary care, and collaborative farming initiatives.

- **Regional Livestock Fertility Management Centres (RLFMC):** Focus on detecting and treating reproductive disorders to boost conception rates.
- **Sex-Sorted Semen Technology:** Introduced to increase the female cattle population, ensuring sustained milk production. Early results indicate higher success rates in producing female calves.

Fodder and Collective Farming

- **Fodder Plus Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs):** Part of a national initiative to address fodder shortages by promoting collective farming and reducing reliance on external feed.

Training and Capacity-Building Programmes

Various agencies, including AHD, KLDB, and KVASU, conduct regular training sessions on cattle care, disease prevention, and efficient dairy farming practices. Some notable schemes include:

- **Calf Feed Subsidy Scheme (CFSS):** Aims to lower the age of first calving, extending productive life and increasing milk yields.
- **Gosamrudhi Cattle Insurance:** Offers comprehensive insurance coverage for cattle at affordable premiums.
- **Govardhini Scheme:** Encourages farmers to rear high-quality calves, ensuring a robust future generation of dairy cattle.
- **Model Animal Husbandry Villages:** Serve as hubs for implementing AHD schemes to improve local livestock populations.

Results of Coordinated Efforts

The impact of these initiatives is evident. Between 2020–21 and 2022–23, milk production rose from 25.33 lakh MT to 25.79 lakh MT. Local milk production now meets over 80% of the state's demand, a significant improvement from 65% in 2020. Enhanced veterinary services, breeding practices, and fodder management have collectively increased the productive cattle population, bridging the demand-supply gap.

Cutting-edge technologies like mobile tele-veterinary units and sex-sorted semen are revitalising Kerala's dairy industry, setting a benchmark for the nation.

A Future Full of Promise

Kerala's dairy sector is undergoing an exceptional transformation. Improvements in veterinary care, breeding programmes, and fodder production are enhancing productivity and uplifting the livelihoods of dairy farmers. With continued investment and policy support, Kerala is poised to achieve complete self-sufficiency in milk production, heralding

a new White Revolution that could set a model for other states to emulate.

Kerala Aims for Complete Digital Literacy

M.B. Rajesh

Minister for Local Self Governments, Rural Development, Excise

Kerala is on the brink of becoming the first fully digitally literate state in India.



Kerala, which has surprised the world with its unique social achievements, is approaching another milestone. Kerala will become the first fully digital state in India in the New Year. Digi Kerala is a wonderful project that will help the common people to utilise modern technology in their own lives. The state government launched the Digi Kerala project with the grand objective of empowering the common people to easily access the rights, services and assistance they deserve through technology. This is a major effort in Kerala to bridge the digital divide and make

information technology an integral part of daily life.
Bridging the Digital Divide

The 'Digi Kerala' project, which aims to make Kerala a fully digitally literate state, was inaugurated by Honourable Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. It is a complete inequality that digital technology is the monopoly of only one section while another section is outside its reach. Kerala is putting forward the social goal of achieving digital equality by eliminating



this inequality. The project aims to make digital technology and its benefits accessible to all people. This will enable the entire population of Kerala to use mobile phones and internet facilities.

Mobile phones and online services are indispensable in daily life for all sections of the people. Online service systems have already been implemented to provide services from local self-government institutions and the government quickly and easily. The online service system called K-Smart, which has been implemented in municipalities and corporations, is being extended to all local self-government institutions including gram panchayats by April 2025. Therefore, it is imperative that all the people of Kerala are trained to submit applications and receive services online. And people can also benefit from other systems in the digital world. Digi Keralam is a digital literacy movement designed for this purpose.

3,05,239 volunteers were deployed across the state to identify and train those who were not digitally literate. Digitally literate volunteers from Kudumbashree members, auxiliary group members, literacy mission promoters, SC-ST promoters, employment guarantee scheme participants, National Service Scheme, NCC, Nehru Yuva Kendra, Community Volunteer Corps, volunteers from

Library Council, State Youth Welfare Board, voluntary organisations, youth and students were deployed for data collection and training.

Extensive Process

Data from all people above the age of 14 years was collected at the local self-government level and digital training was provided to those

Digi Keralam aims to make digital technology and its benefits accessible to all people.

who were not digitally literate. After the training, those aged 14 to 65 years were subjected to final assessment. The final assessment consisted of 14 questions. After this, a super check was conducted at three levels.

Super check is being conducted using the personnel system of the Local Self-Government Department at the district and state levels. An external agency has also been appointed for this purpose. The State Statistics Department is the external agency. Those who are found to be not digitally literate in the super check will be re-trained and made digitally literate. After that, Kerala will be declared a fully digitally literate state.

A total of 14,993,655 people from 8,329,457 families were surveyed till 25 November 2024. The survey was conducted by 305,239 volunteers registered in the Digital Literacy Project. 2,186,909 people were identified as learners. Out of these, 15,214 are above 90 years of age. 2,175,886 learners have completed the training. Out of those who underwent the assessment, 2,174,180 passed at a pass rate of 99.41 percent. The state-level declaration of complete digital literacy will be finalised after a super check is conducted.

Out of the 1,034 local self-government bodies in the state, about 800 have already declared complete digital literacy. The official declaration has been made in the districts of Pathanamthitta, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Kasaragod, Idukki and Alappuzha. The work in other districts will be completed as soon as possible and a complete digital literacy declaration can be made in the New Year. Let us move forward towards the extraordinary achievement of becoming the first fully digitally literate state in the country.

15,214 people above 90 years of age are being trained to become digitally literate.

Training Curriculum of Digi Keralam

- Basics of smartphones - handling calls and SMS, relevance of OTP, managing dialler and contacts and use of camera
- Sending emails, creating social media accounts, sending messages in the form of pictures, document files and voice notes using social media
- Installing various apps and using them
- Web surfing, video search and information-gathering techniques
- Making UPI transactions, online payment
- Introducing individuals to various e-governance facilities like the citizen portal, Chief Minister's Public Grievance Redressal Cell, and e-district service
- Training for online payment of KSEB-KWA bills and online booking of gas connections, buses and trains

Responsible Models in Hospitality and Tourism

Adv. P.A. Mohamed Riyas
Minister for Public Works and Tourism

Kerala government is popularising the hospitality network of government rest houses and is introducing new methods of tourism advancement through responsible tourism.



The hospitality industry is crucial in today's world, especially with the exponential growth in travel for personal, business, and tourism purposes. Having reliable places to stay during such trips is essential. In Kerala, both the government and private enterprises actively contribute to the hospitality sector. The Public Works Department (PWD) operates the largest network of hospitality establishments in the state, managing 153 rest houses across Kerala. The government has taken significant steps to popularize this network and has been executing this initiative successfully.

Making Room for Popular Demands

Public works rest houses were confined to government system.

However, in a bid to make these facilities available to the public, the government launched the "People's Rest House" initiative. The first phase of this project included the introduction of an online reservation system, which was launched on November 1, 2021, along with a dedicated website. This development marked a major shift in the hospitality sector, allowing people to book rooms in these rest houses online. Over the next three years, 3.15 lakh people used this service, leading to a dramatic rise in the revenue generated by the rest houses. The income from these rest houses grew significantly, with



earnings exceeding Rs 20 crore. In 2021, the income was Rs 63,48,413, which increased to Rs 4.26 crore in 2022, Rs 7.45 crore in 2023, and Rs 7 crore by November 2024. This surge in revenue has been a huge impetus to government's initiative.

In 2024, the government took further steps to popularize these rest houses, fulfilling its promise to renovate and reopen more of them to the public. Notably, rest houses in tourist hotspots like Fort Kochi, Farooq, Ponmudi & Sultan Bathery were revamped, making them attractive to tourists. These changes have strengthened the hospitality system in the tourism sector. Plans to expand the network of rest houses are also in progress, with new projects, including women-only rest houses, further expanding the hospitality offerings.

To promote transparency and public participation, Digital Project Boards (DLP boards) were introduced to keep citizens informed about the maintenance period of works. This initiative encourages people to take an active interest in the work of the department. Additionally, the ongoing project to maintain roads under a running contract has been well-received by the public. In a similar fashion, Kerala is upholding the people's model in the hospitality sector too.

Touching Roots, Soaring High

Tourism should touch the lives of the people& the

people should cherish tourism. The state's Responsible Tourism (RT) initiatives were created with this goal in mind. Kerala has now become the genesis of new models of responsible tourism to the world. The salient feature of 2024 is the introduction of new methods of advancement of popular tourism through responsible tourism .

The Public Works Department has 153 rest houses spread across the state, which are easily accessible to citizens.

The foundation of Responsible Tourism in Kerala lies in local participation. Local communities are encouraged to engage in tourism-related activities in major tourism centres, . The government is proud to have been able to transform the Responsible Tourism Mission into a society and expanded its activities .

Kerala's diversity is a key attraction for tourists, with its villages, heritage, and traditional occupations drawing visitors. Experiential tourism is especially evolving as a highly popular model. Responsible tourism activities help maximize these opportunities, and various projects are being designed and implemented to promote village , cultural , festival , farm/ agri, heritage and food tourisms. Additionally, the promotion of souvenir and handicraft making has helped diversify Kerala's tourism offerings. This strategy has been successful in bringing tourists to rural areas, creating employment for local people . To date, 25,188 indigenous units have been registered, providing livelihoods to 52,344 people.

A key advantage of Kerala's responsible tourism initiatives is its women's participation. It is particularly noteworthy that 70% of the actively operating units are either owned or led by women. This has not only boosted the local economy but also empowered women by offering them opportunities in the tourism sector.

Building on this success, the government launched the Women-Friendly Tourism Project, which was expanded in 2024.

This initiative focuses on creating a network of women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. This network includes women-operated tour services, taxis, food businesses, home stays, and more.

A study on women's safety in major tourist destinations is also underway.

Kerala also hosted an international conference in Munnar, which provided a platform for discussions on women-friendly tourism and led to important decisions to strengthen these efforts. We have received numerous international awards in this field. This year, Bepore Comprehensive Responsible Tourism Project earned national recognition, along with Kadalundi and Kumarakom as the best tourism villages. Kerala's hospitality and love make it unique, and responsible tourism strengthens preservation efforts.

Through its commitment to responsible tourism, Kerala is poised to take its tourism industry to even greater heights, offering a model that can inspire other regions and countries around the globe.

Responsible tourism provides livelihood to 52,344 people in 25,188 indigenous small scale units.

Greener Pastures Await Kerala

P. Prasad

Minister for Agriculture

With focused schemes and attractive campaigns, Kerala is steadily pacing towards self-reliance in agricultural production and effective agricultural marketing.



The far-reaching '*Njangalum Krishiyilekku*' (We Too into Agriculture) campaign, which the Agriculture Department spearheads in coordination with other departments, aims to instil the spirit of farming in every household in Kerala and make the state self-sufficient in food production. This initiative has played a key role in reviving farming culture in many households and promoting safe, natural farming practices across the state. It led to the creation of 23,568 agricultural clusters in production, service, and marketing. The shift from crop-oriented to farm-centric techniques resulted in 21,520 model farms and increased agricultural income. The collaboration among agricultural groups has driven value-added products and created 150,000 jobs at the grassroots level, a significant achievement for the state government.

Cultivating Prosperity

The '*Krishi Samriddhi*' programme, building on earlier initiatives, is being implemented with the help of local self-government institutions (LSGIs) to empower farmers in addressing technical, financial, social, and welfare challenges. The programme focuses on strengthening agriculture clusters in Krishi Bhavans and LSGIs. Its goals include achieving self-sufficiency in fruit and vegetable

production, increasing farmers' income, encouraging youth participation in agriculture, and ensuring safe, nutritious food production.

To meet these goals, the programme will incorporate the '*Poshaka Samriddhi Mission*' and the '*Jaiva Karshika Mission*'. Additional objectives include mitigating climate change effects through resource conservation, promoting agricultural entrepreneurship through FIG-FPO-Agri Business Consortium, and training farmers to export products via Kerala Agro Business Company.

The programme will be rolled out in three phases across all LSGIs in Kerala. The first phase, focusing on agriculture and the environment, will begin in 107 LSGIs from 14 districts. Resources from various departments will be integrated for smooth execution. LSGI officials have been trained, and the programme will gradually expand.

Micro plans developed by each LSGI will be



supported at district and state levels, with a focus on creating replicable models. The programme adopts a collaborative approach to identify and solve challenges faced by farmers. Production and marketing plans will be informed by data from 'Kathir Software,' which provides detailed farm information. Efforts are also underway to form Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) to increase agricultural income at the block and panchayat levels.

Plans are on the anvil to increase vegetable production to 25 lakh metric tonnes in the state in five years.

Vegetable Production Campaign

Following the Chief Minister's special instructions, Kerala aims to achieve self-sufficiency in vegetable production with the support of various departments and public participation. The 'Samagra Pachakari Ulpadana Yajrnjam' will begin at the LSGI level on 1 January 2025, building on the success of the 'Njangalum Krishiyilekku' programme. The campaign focuses on producing high-quality, pesticide-free vegetables locally. Kerala currently produces 17.21 lakh metric tonnes of vegetables, importing seven lakh metric tonnes from other states. The goal is to increase local production to 25 lakh metric tonnes in five years. Various departments, along with

Kudumbashree, Haritha Karma Sena, residents' associations, and other groups, will collaborate to execute the programme effectively.

Climate-Smart Farming

The World Bank has approved the Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain (KERA) modernization project, aimed at enhancing climate change resilience and promoting climate-smart farming. At a meeting on 31 October, the World Bank sanctioned Rs 1,655.85 crore in financial assistance for the Rs 2,365.5 crore project, with the state contributing Rs 709.65 crore. The project will benefit 4 lakh farmers directly and 10 lakh farmers indirectly over five years. Additionally, Rs 76 crore will support small and medium-scale agro-enterprises run by women. This is the first comprehensive agriculture development project backed by the World Bank since 1980.

The synergy among the agriculture groupings created 1,50,000 job opportunities at the basic level.

Financial Allocation for Five Components of the Project

Component 1: Climate Resilience in Agriculture (Rs 790.439 crore)

Climate-resilient agriculture will be put in place with the support of agro-environmental units. A system to facilitate the transfer of relevant digital know-how to farmers will be established, and climate-smart initiatives will be developed to help farmers. Climate-based crop management will be encouraged besides giving importance to the sustainable production of coconuts.

Component 2: Increase Commercialisation of Small-Scale Enterprises Engaged in Value Addition (Rs 899.136 crore)

Strengthening the alliance between farmer producer companies and agri-businesses and providing long-term financial assistance to give a new lease of life to crops such as rubber, coffee and cardamom come under this component.

Component 3: Develop Entrepreneurship in the Agriculture Sector (Rs 508.898 crore)

This includes support to agri-food SMEs, encouragement to start more start-ups in the agri-food sector, support to farmer producer organisations and food parks, among others.

Component 4: Project Management

Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)

Kerala, the leading producer of spices like cardamom, vanilla, and nutmeg, contributes 20% of India's total agri-food exports. However, climate change poses a threat to these achievements. Funds will be allocated to replant coffee, cardamom, and rubber plantations, along with promoting scientific farming practices. Emphasis will also be placed on establishing 'Food Parks' that support agri-enterprises involved in food processing and value addition in rural areas. These parks will have essential infrastructure like water, power, and waste treatment facilities. The project aims to attract investment, foster partnerships between farmers and agri-enterprises, and strengthen agricultural value chains. The initiative also focuses on reducing carbon emissions and increasing paddy productivity. Rs 500 crore will be earmarked under the project to boost paddy cultivation. The International Rice Research Institute has extended help to encourage paddy cultivation in the state.

The Digital Revolution in SC/ST Communities

O.R. Kelu

Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes

We are pacing towards complete digital coverage by ensuring connectivity in even the most remote villages and backward communities.



The state is at the forefront of digital literacy and connectivity. The government is implementing several online learning and health schemes by providing internet connectivity, including in forest areas, and distributing free laptops. Special attention is being paid to ensuring that these benefits are available even in remote Scheduled Caste villages.

The Department for Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes found that 1,284 communities did not have internet connectivity. Here, the village community met to discuss connectivity issues, allocated money from the corpus fund, and entrusted the urgent construction to BSNL. Then, connectivity was

provided to each community by installing towers in forest land and pulling cables. The cooperation of the forest department and local bodies was also received for these activities. Currently, connectivity has been provided to 1,137 communities. Only 147 more communities, which are very remote, are yet to be connected. Here too, all the construction work is in the final stages.

Towards Smart Community Classrooms

Community study rooms are a common space in



the Scheduled Tribes communities. This is where students meet up for studies, and youth groups converge for interaction. Internet facilities have been made available in 364 community study rooms across Kerala. Various learning and motivational projects are conducted live here with the help of technology. Community study rooms are becoming a place to make all the indigenous people self-sufficient.

5G in Remote Communities

High-speed internet connectivity is being provided in villages and hilly areas that have not yet received internet access using air fibre technology. Since air fibre technology is employed, we are able to overcome the challenges posed by geographical barriers and hostile terrain. Thereby, the cost and time taken for laying the connection are significantly reduced.

High-speed 5G services have been made available in five villages, including Attappadi in Palakkad, in collaboration with Jio Fibre. 5G facilities have been provided in community study rooms and Anganwadis in *Attappadi, Kottamedu in Agali Panchayat, Chittoor, Pulpally in Melekappu, Wayanad, Pampadikuzhi in Kozhimala, Idukki, and Attathode in Perunad, Pathanamthitta.*

The Department for Scheduled Tribes Development

is providing 5G air fibre facilities in indigenous villages in collaboration with Reliance Jio. Since it works without the facility of cables, it can ensure uninterrupted service even in adverse weather conditions. Various activities like education and health classes, and job training for students and adults in indigenous villages, can be carried out through this.

Soaking in the International Attention

Internet facilities have been made available in 364 community study rooms across Kerala.

'Digitally Connected Tribal Areas' is a project implemented in Wayanad district by utilising new technologies with emphasis on health, employment and education of Scheduled Tribes.

This is a central-state project implemented by the State Scheduled Tribes Development Department, along with government agencies like the Centre for Development of Advanced

Computing (C-DAC), Regional Cancer Centre, Regional Institute of Ophthalmology, and CSIR - NIIST.

Steps have been taken to expand the project throughout the district and to reach the maximum number of people by ensuring broadband internet connectivity, developing the community study rooms into centres that help in education, health awareness, diagnosis, and employment opportunities, and by selecting and providing special training to those belonging to the Scheduled Caste category who have completed their nursing studies.

In collaboration with the Department of Health Services and RCC Thiruvananthapuram, more than 30,000 people belonging to the Scheduled Castes have been screened for early detection of lifestyle diseases such as oral cancer, cervical cancer, and breast cancer, and about 300 people who were found to be at risk of the disease have been referred for further action. Nineteen people, including 15 nurses, three supporting staff, and one engineer belonging to the Scheduled Caste category, were employed as part of the project.

The project, which aims to prevent and control non-communicable diseases and mental health conditions using assistive technology, received the UN International Award in September 2024. Steps are being taken to expand this project throughout Kerala.

'Digitally Connected Tribal Areas' project receives UN International Award.

4.31 Crores Solely for Idamalakudi

The government has spent Rs 4.31 crore solely for establishing 4G internet connectivity in Idamalakudi, the only Scheduled Caste panchayat in Kerala. BSNL has provided internet facilities by laying an optical fibre cable 40 km from Munnar. With the arrival of connectivity, Idamalakudi is now reachable through mobile phones.

The government believes that ensuring digital connectivity will go a long way in building the ability of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and backward classes to access the right information and the deserved rights.

Constructive, Innovative

P Rajeev

Minister for Law, Industries, Coir

The state has started reaping the benefits of the persistent efforts put into the industrial sector.



2024 is a particularly notable year for Kerala, and it has emerged as the top performer in the industries sector. Creating waves at the national level, Kerala bagged the first rank in the Ease of Doing Business ranking released by the Union Government. Kerala, the first state to adopt the policy of 'Responsible Investment, Responsible Industry', is increasingly becoming the most suitable location for green investment and an international destination for responsible investment. The Industrial Policy introduced by our government has turned Kerala into a haven for environment-friendly and less-polluting industries.

Addressing Existing Issues

When the current government came into power, a series of

measures were taken to awaken Kerala from its entrepreneurial slumber. Non-red category enterprises with a capital investment below Rs 50 crore were allowed to set up businesses and function for three years with a simple K-SWIFT acknowledgement. The government also passed a law to grant composite licences to enterprises with over Rs 50 crore capital investment within just 7 days of application. We also set up an integrated inspection system by combining five departments through the K-CIS portal. This helped to prevent corruption and promote transparency. This system received an overwhelming response from



entrepreneurs, and more than 5 lakh enterprises have registered in it. Grievance Redressal Committees with powers of civil court were set up at district and state levels for the timely resolution of complaints of entrepreneurs. This mechanism ensures that the designated officer pays a penalty or faces disciplinary action if he fails to provide service to the entrepreneur. A first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, this mechanism has given a huge boost of confidence to entrepreneurs. The completely digitalised system ensures the closure of cases within 30 days of receiving a complaint.

The technology clinics that have been set up in every district are yet another measure of the Industries Department to find solutions for the issues faced by entrepreneurs and handhold them to success. Experts in the fields of technology, management, law, chartered accountancy, marketing etc. guide the entrepreneurs through these clinics. A toll-free number also operates under the Industries Department to clear the doubts of entrepreneurs. More than 20,000 queries of entrepreneurs have been answered through the Invest Kerala helpdesk. The Meet the Minister programme was also held to resolve pending issues of investors.

Building Upon the Goodwill

Along with the resolution of issues, earnest efforts are being made to attract huge investors to Kerala. The Meet the Investor programme was able to attract investments to the tune of Rs 15,000 crore to the state. Over 30 companies, including IBM, Synthite, and Athachi, invested in Kerala. More than 50% of the employees of Tata Elxsi now operate from Kerala. TCS is building a huge campus worth Rs 1,200 crore for offering IT, ITES, and data processing services. Several companies like dSpace, Nitta Gelatin, Safran, Acsia Technologies, Dhathri, Vensure, Plant Lipids, Craze Biscuits, Leverage Group, and Nesto have announced their investment plans, and some have kickstarted the projects.

Novel Ideas

The idea of private industrial parks stemmed from the thought of how to make good use of private land for industrial purposes. As of now, approval has been granted to 28 private industrial parks.

The government grants a maximum of Rs 3 crore to the park by giving up to Rs 30 lakh for each acre for infrastructural development. Two parks have already been inaugurated.

The government passed a law to grant composite licences to enterprises with over Rs 50 crore capital investment within 7 days of application. Approval has been granted to 28 private industrial parks, in which the government grants a maximum of Rs 3 crore.

The campus industrial parks, envisioned by the government to encourage entrepreneurship among the student community and strengthen the link between educational institutions and industrial units, is a novel venture. The government gives a maximum of Rs 1.5 crore to each estate for infrastructural development.

The Year of Enterprises project was adjudged the best practice of the year in a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the last two and a half years, we were able to start 2,99,326 MSMEs in Kerala. The outcome - Rs 19,402.47 crore worth of investment and 6,36,520 new employment opportunities. It is also notable that more than 93,000

women became entrepreneurs through this project. A loan of Rs 10 lakh was given to MSME entrepreneurs at an interest rate of 4%.

Mission 1000, a project of the Government of Kerala to scale up 1,000 MSMEs into Rs 100 crore turnover businesses, is forging ahead ambitiously. Also, the Department of Industries has set up an MSME insurance policy to protect MSMEs from any unforeseen emergencies that may affect their business. The Government of Kerala has formed a 'Kerala brand' initiative to give international quality to all the goods and services from the state and thereby find an international market for them. Coconut oil is the first product to have the Kerala brand. Till now, six products have been granted the Kerala brand licence.

Since we were able to obtain permission for the ambitious Bengaluru-Kochi industrial corridor, the road ahead looks brighter for Kerala's industrial growth.

Brewing a Culture of Letters

Saji Cherian

Minister for Fisheries and Cultural Affairs

Located in the capital city, Café Bookmark offers a peaceful and inviting space for book lovers.



Café Bookmark, the latest venture of Kerala State Bookmark, has set its goal to explore new dimensions for book reading and book sales. Book reading, sales, discussions, debates, coffee... this is how the gatherings in the café have been envisaged. Anybody can drop in at the café and settle in with a book for reading. Coffee, tea or mineral water will be provided along with the book. If you get intrigued by a book, you can opt to buy it. Or else, feel free to just read it. The Café Bookmark is open from 9 am to 9 pm on all days.

Malayalam and English books from various publishers are available

in Café Bookmark. Books published by Café Bookmark are also available for sale. All books can be purchased at a discount of 30%.

The café was inaugurated on 19 June 2024, on the occasion of World Reading Day. Book Café has opened to a rousing welcome mainly owing to the presence of young generation readers. The flow of youngsters to the café demonstrates that the ostensible alienation of youth from reading is entirely false. The majority of the regular visitors to



the café are, in fact, students. Research students of literature and civil service aspirants can make full use of the literary collection of the café.

Novel Ideas

The genesis of Café Bookmark lies in the realisation that bookshops usually fail when they operate traditionally. To this end, we are devising several ingenious ideas and are steadily executing them.

All books can be purchased at a discount of 30%.

Kerala State Bookmark is setting up a book vending machine for the first time in Kerala. Books can be bought from the vending machine using the G Pay payment gateway. This unique initiative started in Kairali Theatre in Thiruvananthapuram, is sponsored by Kerala Bank.

Bookmark has also ventured into publishing. We have so far published works of around 10 noted writers including Prabha Varma, Dr Vinod Bhattathirippad, C. Rahim, Sreejith Perumthachan and K. C. Mohankumar. Viswasichalum Illenkilum (Believe It or Not) by Prof. M. A. Aliyar is the latest addition to this list.

Bookmark has also started a YouTube channel

to promote its activities and reading. The channel, named Poetics, features interviews and cultural news. Poetics also posts documentaries of important personalities. Book review and experience-sharing videos of Poetics have become quite popular.

Keeping up with the changing times, Bookmark is also introducing e-books. Digital versions of nearly 3,000 books are available in our e-book collection. This project is awaiting approval from the Planning Board. As and when this becomes operational, e-reading can be popularised in schools.

Bookmark has also started preliminary work on documenting and visualising the lives of prominent teachers who are also writers and cultural leaders. This extensive project is christened The Prophets of Inspiration. Through this project, the old classrooms of the illustrious teachers of glorious yesteryears are brought to life. This will surely be a treasure trove for our young generation. We have already documented the classes of eminent personalities like Prof. M. K. Sanu, Dr M. A. Oommen, Prof. B. Rajeevan, Dr V. Rajakrishnan, V. Madhusoodanan Nair, Prof. Aliyar and Prof. C. Ravindranath.

Through such innovative initiatives, Café Bookmark is on the path of reviving the culture of reading and preserving our rich heritage.

Bookmark has also started a YouTube channel Poetics to promote its activities and reading.

Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together

V. Sivankutty

Minister for General Education and Labour

Kerala becomes the first state in the country to organise a sports meet on the model of the Olympics extensively with national standards.





Sports, an important part of human culture, reflect the physical, social, and emotional needs of the individual and society. No other sporting event can claim as much history, tradition, and diversity as the Olympics, the world's largest sporting event. The Olympics originated from the idea that sports can serve as a powerful and effective tool to rise above cultural, political, and national divisions. It is imperative to spread the noble ideas put forward by the Olympics among our younger generation. That is why the state government has organised this year's school sports meet on the model of the Olympics. With the participation of teenage athletes, it has become one of the largest sports gatherings in the world. This great initiative, which began with the inception of Kerala, is carried out with great precision every academic year.

An Event Becomes a Festival

This year's sports meet is unique, being held entirely in a single district for the first time, unlike previous years with multiple venues. Over 5 lakh students from Kerala participate annually. Since the Pinarayi Vijayan government took office in 2016, the event has evolved into a 'Sports Festival', now following a streamlined, district-centred model.

Modelled on the Olympics, the Kerala School Sports Festival is the first of its kind in India, organised to national standards. Over 24,860 athletes competed across Under-14, 17, and 19 categories for both boys and girls. The event featured 1,578 competitions in athletics, aquatics, and 39 other sports as per the Kerala School

Sports Manual.

Leaving No One Behind

Reaffirming its commitment to equity and inclusivity, the Kerala government made Inclusive Sports a key feature of this year's school sports meet. For the first time, 50 young athletes from six Gulf countries, studying in Kerala syllabus schools, participated in the event. Competitions took place at 17 venues of national and international standards.

The first official sports competition held at the Kerala School Sports Festival was Inclusive Sports with the participation of children with special needs. To make this possible, the Department of General Education prepared an Inclusive Sports Manual. Kerala was the first state in India to prepare and implement a special manual for children with special needs.

A total of 1,369 athletes from 14 districts participated in the Inclusive Sports Meet. Venues were made disability-friendly to ensure safe participation. After the competition, children were given the chance to explore Kochi's sights, including rides on the Kochi Metro and KSRTC low-floor buses. All participants received certificates and mementoes during a victory ceremony.

Kerala Style Olympics

The opening and closing ceremonies of the school sports meet, akin to the Olympics, showcased Kerala's cultural richness through a mega display, music bands, and performances of unique cultural forms by over ten thousand school students, offering a spectacular visual experience. Like the Olympics, the Kerala School Sports Festival featured a permanent logo, mascot, promo video, and brand ambassador. The Kerala-shaped logo symbolised aquatic sports, athletics, and inclusive games. The mascot, 'Thakkudu', a giant squirrel, made its debut, and Olympian P.R. Sreejesh served as the brand ambassador.

Competitions followed the Sports Festival Manual by the Directorate of General Education. To combat extreme daytime heat, matches were held under floodlights in the morning and night. Digital boards and live broadcasts on Kite Victors provided global access, with AI ensuring accurate results. Winners received crowns in an Olympic-style ceremony, with designs by students from *Muthedath Higher Secondary School, Taliparamba*. The maroon crown was awarded to winners, while blue and orange crowns went to the first and second runners-up, respectively, with 5,700 crowns distributed in total.

Going All Out

The sports meet was a resounding success, driven by the dedicated efforts of the team led by the Director of General Education and the Sports Organiser, based in Ernakulam for two months. Effective coordination between the Department of General Education and other departments played a crucial role. A mobile app streamlined registration, while accommodation and meals followed a sports nutrition plan. KSRTC low-floor buses ensured smooth transportation. Volunteers promoted campaigns against drug abuse and eye donation, while athletes and volunteers took pledges at all venues. The 'One Lakh-One Goal' campaign highlighted the importance of eye donation, spreading awareness across society.

Medical teams, including experts in Sports Medicine, Ayurveda, and Homoeopathy, were stationed at all venues to provide support. The Kerala School Sports Festival continues to showcase Kerala's sporting excellence, having developed many national and international talents. The government is committed to sustaining this grand tradition, with Thiruvananthapuram set to host the next festival, promising even greater success.

Anchoring India's Development

V.N. Vasavan

Minister for Ports, Co-operation, and Devaswom

Creating a landmark in the maritime history of the country, Vizhinjam International Container Transshipment Terminal was inaugurated on 12 July 2024. As the first ship San Fernando anchored in the port, Kerala scripted a new history which will pave way for the country's ascendance as a leading stakeholder in global maritime trade.



The transformation of Vizhinjam, a quiet fishing village near Thiruvananthapuram, into India's first deep-water container trans shipment hub represents a monumental achievement in Kerala's development journey. This historic milestone, achieved under the leadership of the second Pinarayi Vijayan government, underscores Kerala's commitment to economic modernization and global trade integration. The Vizhinjam International Port is set to reduce logistics costs, generate thousands of jobs, and establish itself as a critical node in global shipping networks, significantly enhancing India's export capabilities.

Since the trial run began, the port has achieved remarkable progress, with 46 vessels docking and over 1,00,807 TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) handled by November 9. Notably, some of the

world's largest cargo ships, such as MSC Anna and Cape Town 3, have anchored at Vizhinjam, highlighting its capability to handle high-volume traffic. The rapid increase in ship arrivals reflects its growing importance in maritime logistics. In addition to its operational success, the port has contributed ₹7.4 crore in GST revenue, reinforcing its economic impact.

Revenue for the State Ahead of Schedule

The Kerala government's proactive measures have secured the future development of the Vizhinjam port through a supplementary concession agreement with Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited. This



ensures the project's timely completion and allows the state to begin receiving revenue earlier than originally anticipated.

Under the initial agreement, the state was to receive a share of the port's revenue in the 15th year of operation, i.e., from 2034. However, delays in project completion meant the Adani Group was only required to share revenue from 2039. The newly revised agreement reinstates the original timeline, ensuring that the revenue-sharing starts in 2034. Additionally, the revised terms increase the state's revenue share by including profits from all four phases of the port, slated for completion by 2028.

Phased Development and Enhanced Capacity

The previous agreement mandated the commencement of the second phase only when the first phase handled 75% of its capacity for three consecutive years or by 2045, whichever came earlier. The revised terms now commit Adani Ports to complete all phases (2nd, 3rd, and 4th) by December 2028. This expansion will give Vizhinjam an annual handling capacity of 3 million containers, with automated systems scaling this up to 4.5 million, making it the largest container terminal in South India by capacity.

Financial Benefits for the State

The government's Viability Gap Funding (VGF)

contribution to Adani Ports has been reduced from ₹408.90 crore to ₹365.10 crore, saving the state ₹43.80 crore. Furthermore, instead of paying the full amount upfront, only ₹189.90 crore will be paid initially, with the remaining ₹175.20 crore conditional on completing all phases by 2028.

Some of the world's largest cargo ships, such as MSC Anna and Cape Town 3, have anchored at Vizhinjam, highlighting its capability to handle high-volume traffic.

Delays in land handover and arbitration costs, amounting to ₹36 crore, have also been waived under the new agreement. Additionally, the state will benefit from ₹10,000 crore in private investment for the remaining phases, generating substantial GST, royalties, and other taxes.

Revised Revenue Prospects

The revised agreement significantly boosts the state's financial outlook. Revenue-sharing will begin at 1% in 2034 and progressively rise to 21% by the end of the 40-year concession period. With all phases completed by 2028, the port's

projected total revenue over the 40 years has risen from ₹54,750 crore to ₹2,15,000 crore, increasing the state's share from ₹6,300 crore to ₹35,000 crore.

Tax Revenue and Economic Growth

The accelerated completion and expanded capacity will also yield additional GST revenue of ₹29,000 crore over 36 years, alongside a significant increase in corporate tax revenues. Combined revenue share and GST will contribute an estimated ₹48,000 crore to the state's treasury over the operational period.

Strategic and Economic Impact

The Kerala government has approved the Vizhinjam–Kollam–Punalur Industrial Economic Growth Corridor to maximize the port's potential. Backed by KIIFB, this project envisions a smart industrial ecosystem, encompassing logistics hubs, manufacturing zones, and Special Economic Zones, attracting investments worth ₹3 lakh crore within three years. The development plan integrates seamless connectivity and advanced infrastructure, bolstering economic activity.

Vizhinjam's strategic location positions it to reclaim trans shipment cargo currently routed through foreign ports, such as Colombo. This shift could reduce India's logistics costs by 4–6%, enhancing the country's trade competitiveness.

The Vizhinjam International Port is more than an infrastructure project; it is the kernel of a transformative vision for Kerala, catalyzing economic prosperity and redefining the state's role in global maritime logistics. By ensuring financial prudence, strategic foresight, and sustainable development, the Kerala government is steering Vizhinjam into becoming a landmark in India's economic growth story.

The Kerala government has approved the Vizhinjam–Kollam–Punalur Industrial Economic Growth Corridor to capitalise on the port's potential.

Gift of Lives

Kerala's Surge in Organ Transplantation
Liver Transplant Surgery Now Possible in Government Sector

Veena George

Minister for Health and Woman and Child Development

The achievements of Kerala in the health sector are world-renowned. We have expert and experienced doctors, excellent nurses and technical experts. The health sector of the state is at par with that of developed countries. There has been a significant increase in the number of people, including non-resident Keralites and foreigners, coming to Kerala in search of the best treatment. Efforts are being made to transform Kerala into a health hub.



The second Pinarayi Vijayan government took charge during the beginning phase of the second wave of the Covid 19 pandemic. Along with Covid, infectious diseases like *Nipah*, *Monkey pox* and *Zika* also posed unparalleled challenges. The state health department has been able to deal with those challenges head on and prove our merit at the national level. The Department of Health, Women and Child Development has received more than 27 awards and honours at the national level. Kerala has received the national award for the state that provided the maximum number of free treatment for the last 3 consecutive years. For the first time in history, Kerala secured the first place in the National Food Security Index during this period. Kerala ranks first in the NITI Aayog Sustainable Development Index. It is the state with the

lowest maternal and infant mortality. The World Health Organization has praised Kerala for being a successful model in the field of palliative care.

Discerning Changes in Health Sector

Kerala is making significant progress in its healthcare sector, building on its existing strengths. While the first phase of the '*Aardram Mission*' focused on infrastructure, the second phase targets reducing morbidity. Public participation and local body cooperation are key in fighting infectious diseases, with the 'One Health' project effectively addressing emerging threats. Modern technologies, such as



artificial intelligence and machine learning, are being introduced to improve healthcare efficiency.

Innovations like robotic surgery, G-Gaiter for mobility enhancement, and blood bag traceability are already in use. Additionally, Kerala has made liver transplant surgeries and free distribution of medicines for rare diseases a reality. Efforts include establishing a State One Health Centre and Nipah Research Centre. Fifteen new nursing colleges have been launched, and both Thiruvananthapuram Medical and Dental Colleges now rank nationally. With increased medical and nursing course seats, the state's improved infrastructure has led to a surge in patients at government hospitals, reflecting overall progress in healthcare facilities.

Making Treatment Affordable

This government has made a historic breakthrough in the field of treatment. In 3 years, 16.28 lakh people have been provided free treatment worth a total of Rs. 4,697 crore. Kerala Medical Services Corporation has provided free medicines worth more than Rs. 2,100 crore. Medicines have been distributed through 75 Karunya Pharmacies as a relief. During this period, the amount for Cancer treatment has been increased three fold.

For the first time, robotic surgery was performed in the government sector at Regional Cancer

Centre and Malabar Cancer Centre. The 'Kerala United against Rare Diseases' project is a crucial step in the field of rare disease treatment. S.A.T. Hospital was elevated to the status of Centre of Excellence for Rare Diseases. Apart from this, liver transplant surgeries costing around Rs. 40 lakhs were performed in government medical colleges.

Transplant surgeries were introduced in government hospitals to ease patients' financial burdens. So far 10 liver transplant surgeries have been successfully completed in government medical colleges. The first successful liver transplant in Kerala took place at Kottayam Medical College on February 14, 2022. Three transplants were conducted at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College and seven at Kottayam. Dr. Sindhu and Dr. Ramesh Rajan, heads of the Surgical Gastroenterology Departments in Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram respectively, led the surgeries. This achievement was

made possible by the government's commitment to offering liver transplants in public hospitals.

Carving Excellence in Organ Transplantation

The Kozhikode Transplant Institute is being established to centralize all activities related to organ donation, encompassing treatment, education, research, and training. The institute will provide comprehensive care, covering everything from the treatment of organ damage to transplantation surgery and rehabilitation. Construction of the Organ and Tissue Transplant Institute is progressing as planned, with an investment of Rs. 558.68 crore, approved by the Cabinet through KIIFB.

Located on 20 acres in Chevayur, Kozhikode, the institute will consist of four 6-story blocks. It will feature a state-of-the-art hospital with 510 beds, including general, special ward, ICU, HDU, and operation theatre beds, along with a dialysis centre and a transplantation research facility. Phase one will see the establishment of 330 beds and 10 operation theatres, while phase two will add 180 beds and 6 more operation theatres. The first phase will also include 14 specialty departments, with 7 more added in the second phase. Teaching will play a key role, with plans to introduce 31 academic courses.

The Transplant Institute will be staffed by highly trained doctors, scientists, and healthcare professionals, offering services in cornea, kidney, liver, heart, lung, and bone transplants, among others. The Kerala State Organ Tissue Transplant Organisation (K-SOTTO) has also been formed to oversee organ donation coordination. With these developments, Kerala is set to make significant strides in the national healthcare sector, positioning itself as a leader in organ transplantation.

For the first time, robotic surgery was performed in the government sector at the Regional Cancer Centre and Malabar Cancer Centre.

The cabinet has approved the establishment of the Transplant Institute for Rs. 558.68 crore through KIIFB.

IFFK 2024: Where Stories Cross Borders



**Jeesa Sovichen
Chennattusery**

As the final month of the year arrives, Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, prepares to welcome cinephiles, storytellers and dreamers to the 29th International Film Festival of Kerala from December 13 to 20. The 8-day festival organised by the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy in Association with the Department of Cultural Affairs, is much more than a film festival, it's about bringing people together.

Established in 1994 in Kozhikode, IFFK begins its journey with a centenary tribute to cinema by screening 100 films to mark that occasion. As time went by, it has grown into one of Asia's most celebrated film festivals, by receiving global recognition with its accreditation from the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) in 1999. The festival features a competition section dedicated to films from Asian, Africa and Latin American countries, alongside a selection of the best of World Cinema. The festival also brings the best of Malayalam films to international audiences. Today, with over 10,000 delegates gathering each year, IFFK is a place where cultures, ideas, and emotions meet.

Honouring Legends: Ann Hui's Lifetime Achievement Award

Hong Kong Filmmaker *Ann Hui*, a pioneer figure in the Hong Kong New Wave movement, will be honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 29th edition of IFFK. With a career spanning over five decades, *Hui* is celebrated for portraying marginalised lives in Hong Kong, celebrated for her powerful portrayal of ethnicity, gender discrimination, societal shifts during Hong Kong's transition from British colonial rule to Chinese sovereignty, migration and cultural alienation. Her works have been showcased at film festivals across the globe. She is also the only filmmaker to win the Best Director Award at the Hong Kong Film Awards six times. Five of her celebrated films will be screened at IFFK.

The Spirit of Cinema: Payal Kapadia's Filmmaking Journey

The First Indian Filmmaker *Payal Kapadia*, who won the Cannes Grand Prix for her debut feature "All We Imagine as Light" will be honoured at the Festival with the prestigious Spirit of Cinema Award. This powerful work reflects her commitment to raise voice for the marginalised & explores the intersection of cinema and politics. Her documentary "A Night of Knowing Nothing" won the Golden Eye Award at Cannes 2021 and earned international accolades. An alumna of FTII Pune, *Payal* gained early recognition when her short film "Afternoon Clouds" was selected for Cannes.

A Global Cinematic Celebration

The IFFK celebrates excellence in cinematic creativity, The Golden Crow Pheasant (Suvarna Chakoram) honours the Best Feature Film with a 20 lakh, prize shared by the director and producer. The Silver Crow Pheasant (Rajata Chakoram) emphasises the accomplishments of the best directors while the Audience Poll Award reflects the viewers' cherished choices in the International Competition. Other honors include the NETPAC awards for the Best Asian Film and Best Malayalam film, FIPRESCI awards for the Best Film and Best Malayalam Film of a Debut Director, FFSI KR Mohanan Award for the Best Indian Debut Director.

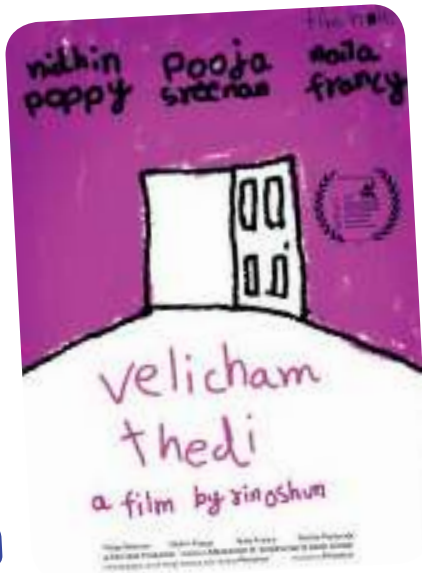
The festival's movie selection is a feast for all film lovers by featuring a wide range of categories that promise to beguile the audience: A key highlight of this year's festival is The Female Gaze category, a tribute to the creative brilliance of women filmmakers. This category features seven films from around the world, which includes *Hanami*, *Loveable*, *Moon* and more. These films delve into themes of migration, identity, societal norms and family dynamics which create a unique perspective on the world through the eyes of women. The Category Country Focus: Armenia features critically acclaimed films that portray the nation's rich socio political and cultural identity. The movies includes *Amerikasti*, *Gate to Heaven*, *Labyrinth* and other some movies each explore themes of anti- colonialism, cultural resilience and social struggles. For the lovers of regional cinema, Malayalam Cinema Today features movies such as *Velicham Thedi*, *Kishkindha Kaandam*, *Mukhakkannadi* along with more outstanding contributions from Kerala's cinematic world. With categories like International Competition, Indian Cinema Now, World Cinema Kaleidoscope, Country Focus, Retrospectives of major filmmakers, Contemporary Focus, Homages and more, this festival focuses on a journey across a global cinematic world. Delegates have the opportunity to engage directly with filmmakers through interactive Open Forums and Workshops. Aravindan Memorial Lecture is a major event that provides a space for profound reflections on the art of filmmaking. The vibrant atmosphere of the festival spreads across Thiruvananthapuram, venues from the Nishagandhi Auditorium to the theatres where stories are brought to life in their purest form. IFFK is not just for Film enthusiasts or critics; it's for anyone who has ever been touched by the magic of a story.



Payal Kapadia



Ann hui





29 
iffk International
Film Festival
of Kerala 2024
13-20 Dec. 2024
Thiruvananthapuram

Organised by 
Kerala State
Chalachitra Academy

On behalf of
Department of Cultural Affairs
Government of Kerala

