

JANUARY 19, 1990

Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly,

I am happy to welcome you all on the occasion of the commencement of the Kerala Legislative Assembly's first session this year.

2. This session is commencing at a time when momentous developments are taking place all over India and in Kerala. The elections to the Ninth Lok Sabha are just over. For the first time in history there is no one party government at the Centre. A minority government with the support of other parties is now in power at the Centre. Kerala has been ruled by coalitions for the last 22 years. With the present developments possibilities have opened up for multi-party rule in the Centre and the States.

3. In the present circumstances it is clear that the ruling party cannot handle the problems at the Centre in a unilateral manner. I am happy to note that the present Central Government is approaching the problems with this awareness. Prime Minister Shri V. P. Singh and his cabinet colleagues have taken the initiative to handle such problems as Punjab, Kashmir and Ram Janmabhoomi above partisan political lines. A meeting of all political parties has also been convened by the Central Government to discuss the important question of electoral reforms. All these show that the present Central Government has an open mind in problem solving. My Government will give full support to the efforts in this direction. I hope the members in the opposition will also co-operative in this regard.

4. The Central Government had recently brought out a report detailing the financial difficulties that the country is facing. The report shows that like other third world countries our country is also speeding into a debt trap. While this will adversely affect the whole country, there are other problems like unemployment, rising prices, unremunerative prices for agricultural produce, etc., which make the common man's life difficult. If a solution is to be found for all these problems there has to be full co-operation between the government and the opposition and other social and political organizations. Co-operative relations have to develop between the Centre and the States also. I assure you that my government will make all efforts in developing such relations.

5. The financial crisis outlined in the report brought out by the Centre is most acutely felt by Kerala State as compared to any other State. The unemployment problem in the country is felt in the highest degree in Kerala. Further, we face the special problem of foodgrain shortage unlike most other States. As the honourable members know, my government is caught in the grip of financial constraints. If all these problems are to be solved, every one must be willing to rise above party politics and extend full co-operation in implementing our development schemes. My government has decided to give the lead in this. I hope we will get the co-operation of all parties and organisations both inside this house and outside in this effort.

6. The Ninth Finance Commission report for the year 1989-90 has been examined by my government and it has been found that the recommendations of the Commission were disadvantageous to the State. A Supplementary Memorandum highlighting the special problems of the State which require immediate attention has also been submitted to the Commission for consideration in the second report of the Commission along with the detailed estimates of requirements of the State Government during 1990-95.

7. My Government has implemented the recommendations of the Fifth Kerala Pay Commission.

8. The new strategy evolved by the Government on the farm front by opening Krishi Bhavans in every Panchayat, assisted and guided by a functional advisory body with the local Panchayat President as the Chairman was very effective. This infused a new confidence among all concerned with agricultural development in the State.

9. A massive programme called "Group Farming" to enhance rice production was launched by the department during the current year. The programme has covered 61224 ha. during Kharif 1989 with active involvement of 1.63 lakh cultivators. The introduction of "Agro Clinics" as an integral part of Group Farming Programme was a novel innovation and has gained universal appreciation of farmers. Since the Group Farming Programme has been found very successful the strategy is going to be extended to coconut farming also.

10. With the basic objective of generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and under employed persons, both men and women, in the rural areas and creation of assets that can provide benefits to the participating farmers, the scheme for "Employment Generation" in the agricultural sector is going to be implemented. Augmenting the utilisation of institutional finance for the development of the State economy by strengthening the infrastructural facilities in the farm holdings is one of the components of the programme. The programme is conceived as a community effort to be implemented with the active involvement of different agencies like Krishi Bhavan, Agricultural Advisory Council, Panchayat Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Commercial Banks etc. Preliminary activities for the implementation of the programme have already been started.

11. The Government of Kerala have recently formed a new autonomous Corporation, "The Horticultural Products Development Corporation" for implementation of various schemes in the sector. One of the main areas of operation for the Corporation is to handle vegetable production, procurement and distribution. The Corporation is aiming to organise vegetable growers under co-operatives and farmers associations to increase the production of vegetables in the State. The Corporation is also planning to establish fruit processing units especially to help pineapple and tomato growers of the State, who do not have remunerative market for their produce today.

12. In order to safeguard the interests of coconut growers of the State on a long term basis, the Kerafed had commenced an ambitious project viz., Integrated Coconut Development Project at an estimated cost of Rs. 93 crores. The Project consists of three sub-projects, of which two have already commenced. The project aims at the increase of yield of coconut and the processing of the yield in the State itself. For this purpose the Kerafed proposes to instal one Coconut Processing Complex in each sub-project area.

13. My government has recognised the crucial and strategic role that the livestock sector can play in the economic development of the State. As a result of various measures taken in the recent past by the Government, substantial progress has been achieved in this sector in terms of increased production. Concentrated efforts will continue to increase the production of milk, meat and eggs during 1990-91 also. The emphasis will be on productivity. The idea is to strengthen the livestock sector through the involvement of farmers at the grass root level through better health coverage, extension support, credit and infrastructural facilities. The activities of various agencies such as the Kerala Livestock Development Board and the Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation will be co-ordinated at the state level so as to achieve the maximum results from the infrastructural and organisational capabilities already built up in the State.

14. In the fisheries sector my government is committed to the prudent exploitation of marine resources, development of inland fisheries and to the all round development of fishermen. A Rs. 75 crore project with the assistance of Kuwait Fund for the development of prawn farming in 1500 ha. of brackish water farms is under implementation. Fish Farmers' Development Agencies will be started soon in Trivandrum, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Malappuram and Kozhikode. Such agencies are also planned to be set up in Kasaragod and Pathanamthitta. Scientific development of fisheries in reservoirs will be attempted. Co-operatives will be set up for inland fisheries development and the functioning of marine co-operatives will be streamlined. The departmental machinery for enforcement of the Kerala Marine Fishing Regulation Act will be strengthened. A similar legislation is also planned for the regulation of inland fisheries. My government will continue to vigorously implement the various welfare schemes for fishermen.

15. The co-operative movement has made significant strides in the State. The co-operative credit structure has been strengthened and the State leads in the disbursement of long term and short term loans for, agriculture. Under the World Bank aided scheme for storage projects action has been taken to construct rural godowns. The Integrated Co-operative Development Project in Wayanad is already under implementation. Similar projects for Kottayam and Palghat districts have also commenced. An intensive drive to increase the membership of credit co-operatives is to be launched soon. The Kerala Agricultural Development Bank is proposing to deal with rural housing finance also, for which necessary changes in the law are on the anvil. A comprehensive amendment to the Co-operative Societies Act has been prepared and will be introduced as legislation soon. A plan is also under implementation for the revival and rehabilitation of consumer co-operatives and marketing societies.

16. Conservation and consolidation of forest wealth of the State will continue to be an important concern of my government. Consolidation of forest boundaries will also be given impetus during 1990-91. Wildlife management will also receive necessary attention. During 1990-91, a Rs. 4 crore eco-development programme will be launched in the Periyar Project Tiger Reserve area.

17. Forest Stations, established in 1988 in Malappuram District have proved to be very effective for strengthening forest protection and maximizing the efficiency of the basic administrative units. Restructuring of basic units into Forest Stations will be extended to other districts also in a phased manner. A draft Bill to amend the Kerala Forest Act for making its provisions more purposeful and stringent has been finalised. For meeting the social needs for forest produce, Government have undertaken afforestation work and schemes to maximise the productivity of existing plantations. People's participation in afforestation and farm forestry programmes was promoted through the involvement of voluntary agencies. From 1990-91, Panchayats will be involved in Social Forestry activities. The World Food Programme, started in six northern districts in 1988 for generating employment opportunities and reducing the poverty and deprivations of tribals, will be continued during 1990-91 and action will be taken to extend this programme to other districts also.

18. The major programmes of the Rural Development Department are centrally sponsored. My Government will continue to implement these programmes with public participation.

19. My Government has been giving priority to the development of Small Scale Industries and Village Industries. My Government has also identified Electronic Industries, Food Processing Industries, Light Engineering Industries, Rubber Industries, Leather Industries and Pharmaceutical Industries as thrust industries, and as a gesture to promote these industries, Government has decided to give a special capital subsidy of 5% to the above industries.

20. My government proposes to develop two Growth Centres sanctioned by Government of India providing all infrastructure facilities. Three Technology Parks are also proposed in the State. Government also will give all help and assistance to all private entrepreneurs who wish to start new industrial units in the State.

21. In the case of traditional industries, Government's policy is to reorganise traditional industries and make them profitable through improved quality and marketability of their products.

22. My Government is convinced that the development of sericulture has considerable potential in the State. A comprehensive plan for the development of sericulture during the VIII Plan has been drawn up.

23. In the matter of public sector, my Government has taken steps to improve the working of the public sector units by extending timely rehabilitation assistance and keeping a constant watch on their performance. The intention of the Government is to improve the profitability of the public sector companies by getting the active co-operation of the workers in the successful running of the companies and converting the public sector units into viable and profitable units. A new company by name Kerala Hitech Industries Limited has been registered for manufacturing of specialised equipments required by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

24. Monopoly procurement of cashew will continue in the coming year also.

25. As a result of persistent requests made by my government, the Government of India have declared the Cochin-Muvattupuzha-Munnar-Madurai road as National Highway 49. The construction of infrastructural facilities for the Naval Academy at Ezhimala is in good progress. Despite financial difficulties Government have taken timely and urgent steps to repair the damages caused to roads by heavy rains.

26. Considering the long delay in completion of almost all irrigation projects in the State, the strategy of the Government continues to be to give top priority to completion of ongoing projects. Action plans to ensure that the benefits from the investment already made are derived as much as possible, are being implemented. Good progress has been made in minor irrigation and anti-sea erosion works. Government of India have been addressed to include Chitturpuzha, Pampa, Periyar Valley and Kuttiadi projects also under the Command Area Development Programme.

27. In the key sector of drinking water supply, the emphasis will be on the completion of ongoing water supply schemes under the Minimum Needs Programme, the centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Scheme and on accelerating the pace of execution of World Bank and Bilateral Projects. The paucity of funds

is a major constraint in the maintenance and operation of a large number of rural and urban water supply schemes as also in the completion of a very large number of ongoing schemes. The financial assistance received from Government of India for schemes in this sector has been grossly inadequate.

28. World Bank credit is expected next year for the completion of 12 rural and 12 urban ongoing water supply schemes. In addition, 6 new urban water supply schemes are proposed to be taken up outside the Plan, with loan assistance from LIC and HUDCO. Negotiations are in progress with the World Bank for availing loan assistance for the augmentation of water supply systems in Trivandrum, Cochin and Calicut.

29. There has been a distinct improvement in the power situation as a result of the bountiful monsoon. Full use is being made of the power available from central sector power stations. Several steps, including the commissioning of a large number of sub stations, have been taken for strengthening and rationalising the transmission and distribution network in the State. To increase the supply of power, and to provide for peak demand generation capacities have to be added substantially. The work on ongoing projects like Kakkad and Lower Periyar has been expedited. Several mini-hydel schemes are under implementation. Apart from the Kayamkulam Project which has been taken up by NTPC, my government has proposed to the Government of India to take up another Super Thermal Power Station in Thrikkariapur in North Kerala. Substantial improvement was made in the functioning of the Electricity Board during the year.

30. Action is being pursued to finalise the formulation of the Transport Development Finance Corporation. Kerala State Road Transport Corporation's operations have been stabilised to a considerable extent and there has been a steady improvement in its performance.

31. My government has been actively pursuing with the Government of India, the question of declaration of Trivandrum as an international aerodrome and the question of expansion of Cochin and Calicut aerodromes.

32. My government hopes that work will start soon on the West Coast Canal which has been declared as a National Waterway. The survey of the Kottapuram-Badagara-Manjeswar sectors has been recommended to the Inland Waterways Authority of India.

33. Maintenance of existing port facilities, conduct of dredging operations at Beypore and Neendakara and the conduct of prompt rescue operations will be the main thrust of operations in the coming year. It is expected that during the coming year more ships will call at Alleppey and Beypore. During 1988-89 hydrographic surveys were conducted in the ports of Vizhinjam, Neendakara, Azhikode, Ponnani, Azhikkal and Kasaragod.

34. The most serious problem faced by the Public Distribution System in Kerala is insufficient allotment of rice and palmolein by the Central Government. My government has taken up the matter with the Central Government, highlighting the problem and requesting for adequate allotments.

35. A number of useful schemes being implemented by the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation have helped to check the rise in the price of various essential commodities. Opening of one Maveli Store in each block, subsidised distribution of pulses and spices through a large number of outlets and operation of mobile Maveli Stores are among these. The scheme for subsidised distribution of rice during the lean months is continuing.

36. My Government has introduced 'Group Insurance' coverage for children, which is unique in the country. This is to cover accidents occurring to children anywhere anytime. During 1989-90, the scheme relating to supply of noon meal to Lower Primary and Upper Primary schools has been rationalised and conducted successfully with active participation of the public. The scheme will be continued. District Institutes of Education and Training have started functioning in Trichur, Wayanad and Kasaragod. DIETS are proposed to be set up in four more districts, viz. Ernakulam, Pathanamthitta, Cannanore and Kozhikode in 1990-91. Operation Black Board, which aims at providing minimum facilities in elementary schools in a phased manner, is being implemented in the State. Government propose to launch a massive scheme for construction and renovation of school buildings in the public sector. The scheme of Vocational Higher Secondary Education which has been introduced in 100 schools will be extended to more schools in the State.

37. Under the National Literacy Mission my government proposes to achieve 100% literacy in the 15-35 years age group by 1991 with active participation of voluntary agencies. 'Kerala Saksharatha Council' and District Literacy Associations are proposed to be set up. The idea is to launch a massive literacy campaign which will have the character of a popular movement.

38. In tune with the policy of developing technical education in the State, a new Model Engineering College was started at Ernakulam under the aegis of the Institute of Human Resources Development in Electronics in October, 1989. Negotiations have been concluded with the World Bank, through Government of India, for implementation of a project for strengthening Technical Education particularly in Polytechnics. Three Government junior colleges have been upgraded to degree colleges during 1989. A Model Technical High School is also proposed to be set up besides the model Polytechnic and Model Engineering College already started.

39. Our State has the pride of place in the library movement in the country with a network of 4000 libraries under the leadership of the Kerala Grandhashala Sanghom. It is a matter of pride that the Kerala Public Libraries (Kerala Grandhashala Sanghom) Act could be enacted during 1989.

40. The Yuvajanamela organised last year at the Panchayat, Block, District and State levels provided ample opportunity to the rural youth to exhibit their sporting and artistic talents. In the new year the following schemes are proposed to be implemented.

1. A state level training centre to upgrade the facilities for sports and youth activities;
2. A Sports Project Development Area Centre at Calicut in addition to the one sanctioned at Quilon;
3. A Centre for Archery in Wayanad District;
4. A Circus Institute at Tellicherry; and
5. A Centre for development of Kalaripayattu at Trivandrum.

41. It is also proposed to bring forward a legislation for development of sports and games in the form of the Kerala Sports Bill.

42. The law and order situation in the State has been fairly peaceful. Our State has a tradition of maintaining communal harmony. The last Lok Sabha Elections were held in a peaceful atmosphere in our State while several other states witnessed a great deal of violence.

43. Re-orientation courses are being conducted for different categories of Police personnel. My government has instituted a Medal called the "Kerala Chief Minister's Police Medal" for Police personnel of the rank of Sub Inspector and below and other equivalent ranks in the Police Force. 200 Police personnel will be given award every year in recognition of their meritorious service.

44. With a view to achieve the accepted minimum strength in Police Stations, recruitment of Police personnel is being done on a priority basis.

45. Special attention will be paid to improve the living conditions of prisoners in jails and giving them vocational training to equip them for gainful employment when they leave the prisons.

46. It was an all time record that a large number of Fire Stations could be started with people's participation during 1988-89 and my government is pacing fastly to start more Fire Stations during the current financial year.

47. My government took prompt steps during the previous year to mitigate difficulties caused to the people on account of the heavy rains during the monsoon. The heavy rains in July 1989 took 76 lives and caused considerable damage to public and private property and agricultural crops on an extensive scale. My government took vigorous action to present our difficulties to the Central Government. The Central Government, sanctioned relief assistance of Rs. 36 crores and reconstruction work is currently on. My Government has also taken up with the Central Government, the need for devising appropriate norms for compensation for damage caused to long-term plantation crops.

48. My government has made substantial progress in assigning land to the landless. My government continued its active efforts to obtain Government of India's clearance for the grant of title deeds to pre 1977 occupants of forest lands and it hopes that it will be possible to issue title deeds soon. Extracts of the record of joint verification were distributed to landholders who, prior to 1977, were in possession of lands registered as 'forests' in the records.

49. My government has passed necessary legislation for setting up of a State Land Reforms Tribunal for deciding surplus land cases awaiting decision before the High Court. It is awaiting the assent of the President. The legislation for giving Pattayam Pass Book to all landholders, which would serve as a document listing at one place the land holder's right over all lands in his possession and providing easy access to credit institutions, is awaiting clearance of the Government of India. My government welcomes the proposed action of the Central Government to reduce the debt burden of small farmers and agricultural labourers in regard to loans taken by them from financial institutions. As for other loans availed by small landholders my government proposes to bring a legislation to afford debt relief to such class of cultivators.

50. During 1989-90 all our efforts were made for the successful implementation of the schemes under family welfare activities and it is expected that the State will retain its first place during 1989-90 also.

51. The India Population Project III will be completed by March 1990. This project has been acclaimed to be one of the best projects of its kind ever assisted by the World Bank. The project has vastly improved infrastructure facilities and also brought about wider acceptance of concepts of family welfare in the project districts. My government has submitted a proposal for extension of the project for three more years from March 1990.

52. Several steps have been taken to to expand and strengthen the existing facilities in the field of Allopathic Medicine. To improve diagnostic services in the health units, scanning equipments and other sophisticated devices have been provided. With the establishment of 57 Primary Health Centres and conversion of 25 Government Dispensaries into Primary Health Centres all Panchayats in the State will have at least one Health Unit from any one of the systems by the end of this year. Effective steps were taken during 1989-90 to decentralise the Drugs Control Administration. All encouragement has been given to Indian Systems of Medicines and Homoeopathy.

53. The Kerala State Pollution Control Board has played a significant role in reducing the water and air pollution caused by industries in the State.

54. The activities of Tourism Promotion Councils, which have been set up in all districts, have been strengthened. Constructions of yatri-nivases, wayside amenities and beachside resorts are progressing. To inculcate the spirit of tourism in the youth., Tourism Promotion Clubs will be set up in selected colleges. To pave the way for "VISIT INDIA YEAR" in 1991, it is proposed to make 1990 as "Tourism Awareness Year". For the first time, a chartered flight of tourists has come to Kerala and more are expected to come. From this year onwards, an "Elephant March" is proposed to be held as an annual festival to attract tourists.

55. My government has given special emphasis for housing in the State, particularly for housing for the poor and the disadvantaged. During 1989-90 the third phase of construction of 55000 houses under the Rehabilitation Housing Scheme has been launched and construction of 35000 houses has been started. Under the third phase, financial assistance has been enhanced to Rs. 9000. The spillover work under the second phase of the scheme is also in progress. The first phase of the scheme has been completed and construction of 40000 houses in the second phase is already over.

56. The Kerala State Housing Board has launched several ambitious public housing schemes including loan schemes for the benefit of various sections of the community.

57. The Kerala State Housing Board has also proposed to start a new rental housing scheme in all the district and taluk headquarters. During 1990-91 it is proposed to take up construction of 800 units under this scheme.

58. The Housing Board has already taken advance steps for the formulation of housing schemes for the workers of traditional industries like beedi, handloom and coir.

59. A new scheme with assistance from Central Government, HUDCO and State Government for urban employment through housing and shelter upgradation is also proposed to be taken up during 1990-91.

60. In order to co-ordinate, monitor and regulate the activities of the Nirmithi Kendra in the State, a state level Nirmithi Kendra was also set up.

61. My Government also proposes to amend the Kerala Building (Lease and Rent Control) Act with a view to safeguard the interests of both tenants and building owners.

62. The 11-Point Programme for Panchayats which involves among other things, play grounds, Samskarika Nilayams, markets etc. has made good progress. As part of this programme 28 Panchayats have been identified for implementation of a scheme for rehabilitation of poromboke dwellers. Central assistance has been sought for implementing the scheme to cover all remaining Panchayats.

63. The Government has been taking vigorous steps for the all round deelopment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Many programmes aimed at social, economic and educational advancement of these communities are under implementation. The thrust of these schemes is to bring these communities into the main stream of society. It is for this reason that greater importance is attached to the manpower development of members belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The existing facilities such as provision of scholarships, stipend, hostel accommodation, additional tuition, coaching for appearing for the competitive examinations are being strengthened. Certain new schemes have also been proposed to be implemented. Production-cum-Training Centres are being restructured with emphasis on courses like computerisation which will improve the skills of candidates from these communities for getting suitable employment. The Government are also implementing the schemes for providing house sites to landless SC/ST families.

64. My Government has sought to provide a better life to women and children, destitutes and the mentally retarded. Special care has been taken to ensure that the various social welfare and social security schemes reach the real beneficiaries. The activities under the Integrated Child Development Services have been expanded to more blocks during the year. The Women's Development Corporation has introduced several schemes to help needy women. The Handicapped Persons Welfare Corporation has streamlined its activities. Steps are being taken to improve the lot of neglected and delinquent juveniles. A large number of voluntary organisations have been assisted in securing financial assistance from Government of India for their various social welfare activities. Government intend to set up an organisation for the comprehensive care and rehabilitation of the mentally retarded, to offer them a new hope for a better life.

65. The welfare of the working classes is one of the foremost priorities of my government. Necessary legislations have been enacted to set up statutory welfare funds for construction workers and employees in arrack and foreign liquor industries. A statutory scheme under the Kerala Handloom Workers Welfare Fund Act has already been brought into effect. Distribution of pension to cashew, coir and handloom workers has started. Registration of workers under these welfare schemes is being speeded up. A legislation setting up a welfare fund for agricultural workers under the Kerala Agricultural Workers Act has been enacted. Draft legislation constituting such welfare funds for bamboo workers and beedi and cigar workers have already been adopted by Government. Bills to set up welfare funds for plantation workers, dhobies, barbers and parcel workers are being prepared. A draft Bill constituting a welfare fund for tailors is being scrutinised. A comprehensive welfare scheme for returning overseas Indians in indigent circumstances is being formulated. A proposal to restructure the Kerala State Artisans and Skilled workers Death and Retirement Benefit Fund and to bring other unorganised and weaker sections of workers under the scheme is being considered.

66. Minimum wages have been revised in respect of several employments and four committees are working for revising minimum wages in employment in major industries. The newly constituted Industrial Relations Board has come into existence during this year. A proposal for setting up more Labour Courts Industrial Tribunals to reduce the heavy pendency of cases, as suggested by the Supreme Court of India is being considered. The Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act will be thoroughly revamped to safeguard the interests of workers. The question of restoring the benefits lost by workers as a result of amendment made to the ESI Act in 1984 and 1989 is being taken up with Government of India. A proposal to set up Service Centres on a co-operative basis with government participation in the rural areas to encourage self-employment among technically qualified youth is under consideration.

67. A society by name C-DIT (Centre for Development of Imaging Technology) which is primarily a Research cum-Training Institution for the development and study of advanced technology in film, cinema and television, has started functioning under the Kerala State Film Development Corporation. This is the first of its kind in India.

68. With a view to preserving the famous paintings in old palaces, temples and churches a scheme has been formulated under the joint auspices of the National Research Laboratory for Conservation, Lucknow and Government of Kerala.

69. The Kathakali troupe from Kerala Kalamandalam could win laurels during their visit to Europe last year.

70. There is a general awakening in the field of art and culture in the State during the last two and a half years.

71. As part of the policy to promote the use of Malayalam as official language, Malayalam has been introduced in more departments.

72. Conscious efforts will be made to tap the potential of Science and Technology to tackle the problems confronted in the process of development by improving the interaction between specialised institutions, Government departments and other developments agencies in the State.

73. In order to alleviate the difficulties encountered by the Sale-tax assesses in the lower-tax brackets my government is according high priority to effectively implement the system of summary assessment as announced earlier in the budget speech of 1989. The Government is also examining whether the present system can be further simplified.

74. A high level official committee is constituted to study the impact of taxation on each commodity. This would help the Government to assess the taxable capacity of each commodity and take necessary measures not only to increase the revenue but also to take such corrective measures if excessive incidence of tax hampers indigenous production.

75. Introduction of Bi-weekly lotteries during 1988-89 not only provided the Government with revenue, but also gave employment to thousands of people especially in the lower-income group.

76. My government has also paid attention to the plight of the lottery sellers and agents and is considering to constitute a "Welfare Fund" for them.

77. My government has taken steps to start new lotteries.

78. Kerala State Financial Enterprises has implemented the gold loan scheme which is of great help to the common people. Also plans are on the anvil for disbursement of house building loans by Kerala State Financial Enterprises in order to provide shelters to lower and middle income groups, especially in the rural areas.

79. The Abkari Policy of 1989-90 has resulted in increasing the revenue from Abkari rentals by Rs. 11.12 crores in 1989-90 compared to the previous year.

80. My government has appointed a high-level Committee to explore the possibility of manufacturing spirit from tapioca to meet local requirements, as also to provide price-support to tapioca-growers.

81. My government is committed to the decentralisation of power. A legal framework has already been established for the setting up of democratically elected District Councils. District Councils will make decentralised planning a reality and will pave the way for popular participation in planning and implementation of developmental schemes. Considerable progress has been achieved in decentralised plan formulation exercises.

82. The Steering Committees and Task Forces set up for the formulation of proposals for the VIII Plan have almost completed their work. My government hopes that it will be possible for the State to attain a higher growth path during the VIII Plan, maximising employment opportunities.

83. Honourable members, in the coming days I trust that we shall be able to address ourselves to the tasks ahead with dedication and a sense of purpose. I wish the deliberations of this Session all success.

JAI HIND