



ADDRESS
TO
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
KERALA

27TH JANUARY, 2005

BY

SHRI R. L. BHATIA
GOVERNOR OF KERALA

Hon'ble Speaker, Hon'ble Members,

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to this eleventh session of the Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly. This is the first time I am addressing you after assuming office as Governor of this beautiful State.

2. This session is being held at a time when the State is still in the grip of one of the worst natural calamities faced by it when the killer Tsunami mercilessly lashed its coasts on December 26th, 2004 and brought in its wake untold misery for the State. The trail of death and devastation left behind by the killer waves was unprecedented. While the State got a lead-time of nearly four hours from the time the killer waves first hit the Tamil Nadu coast, which helped in averting a much larger loss to human lives, the State still ended up losing 170 precious lives. Also, over 1600 persons suffered injuries. The two Panchayats of Alappad and Arattupuzha have been completely devastated. Houses have been razed to the ground, cattle perished, fishing boats, nets and fishing equipments washed away, landing centres flattened and fishing harbours silted up and breakwaters and Armour stones seriously damaged. Extensive damages to water supply systems, electric installations, road communications and other physical infrastructures have resulted in disruption of life along the coastline.

3. Kerala, which has a very high density of population, has its highest densities on its coast compared to rest of the country and is inhabited by fishermen whose income levels are far below those in the midland and hill regions of the State. Unfortunately, it is the economy of these poor sections of society, which has been totally shaken by the present calamity. Their livelihood support systems having been extensively washed away by killer waves, they are unable to get back to work before substantial new investments are infused to create new capital and all activities along the coastline have consequently come to a complete standstill.

4. If there has been a silver lining amidst all the gloom and despair, it has been the swift and unprecedented response of my Government and the outpouring of support, in all forms, from the people at large, who have come forward in a manner not seen before, to provide succour to the affected people. I am glad to state that the Chief Minister and his other Cabinet colleagues were personally with the hapless families, sharing their sorrows and extending a helping hand, in their hour of crisis. The bureaucracy also rose to the occasion and left no stone unturned to provide solace to the affected families. The Union Government too came forward with help in the State's hour of crisis. In particular, my Government would like to express its gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister and his other Cabinet colleagues whose kind gestures towards the hapless families made during their visit to the State proved to be the much needed salve that the State had been yearning for. Emboldened by the above gestures, my Government has resolved to take all possible steps

to wipe out tears from every eye. It has accordingly drawn up an ambitious reconstruction plan and submitted the same before the Union Government for sanction of necessary assistance from NCCF.

5. My Government is aware that the task before it is gigantic. However, I have no doubt in my mind that given the track-record of my Government as evident from its record of accomplishments during the past years as also the slew of programmes and projects that it has drawn up for implementation during the ensuing year, some of which I would be touching upon during the course of my address, it will be able to achieve the task before it.

6. Before proceeding further, I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation for the invaluable contribution made by Shri A. K. Antony and his other Cabinet colleagues in steering the State to the present stage of all round development. I am sure this august House remembers the precarious state of affairs when the mantle was passed on to Shri Antony and his team. It is entirely due to the able stewardship provided by them that the State finds itself today poised for a big leap. My Government intends to carry forward the good work that was being done by them. The flurry of initiatives launched by my Government in the recent past is indicative of the above.

7. One such initiative undertaken by my Government, under the dynamic leadership of the Chief Minister, aimed at galvanising the bureaucracy and speeding up the delivery mechanisms was the launch of the **100 Days Programme**, announced on September 8

after the first meeting of the new Cabinet. I am glad to state that the Programme has been a grand success. During the period, nearly 20,000 vacancies in Government/PSUs were reported to the PSC for their advice, bringing smiles on the faces of a large number of educated unemployed youths in the State. Nearly 77% of pending files also could be cleared, bringing prompt relief to the common masses. The thrust given by various Departments in implementing targeted schemes have given the much-wanted dynamism to the Government. The success of this Programme clearly shows what a determined political leadership can achieve with the assistance of a committed bureaucracy.

8. Enthused by the success of the **100 Days Programme**, this year my Government proposes to launch a **One Year Plan**, which will be called **Kerala Fast Forward**. The top priority under this Programme will be to rebuild the villages washed away by the killer Tsunami. Providing new houses and other basic amenities to the affected people will also be on top of the agenda. Besides, there will be special schemes for the upliftment of the downtrodden and for welfare of people at large. My Government is convinced that speedy implementation of programmes and projects will take Kerala forward fast. Setting up of a new Department for Programme Implementation to monitor and oversee the implementation of Government's programmes is a reiteration of the above belief of my Government.

9. Another initiative of my Government, which has attracted wide appreciation of people at large, revolved around the steps taken for bringing Government at the doorsteps of the

people. The Chief Minister himself showed the way by holding **Mass Contact Programmes** all over the State. These Programmes, which attracted unprecedented crowds, stood out for the speed with which grievances were redressed and the sincerity of approach of my Government. I am happy to state that out of nearly a lakh of people who attended these **Mass Contact Programmes**, the Chief Minister could redress the grievances of half of them.

10. My Government intends to take this initiative a step further and accordingly, proposes to launch a massive **Sutharya Keralam** Programme. The Programme, as the name suggests, would focus on improving transparency in governance and promoting probity in public life. For achievement of the above objectives, my Government proposes to undertake various radical measures aimed, among others, at simplification of procedures, cutting down of delays, bringing accountability in governance and making desired information available to the public virtually at the doorstep through an innovative use of available IT tools. The Chief Minister's Public Contact Programme, which would be telecast/broadcast through Doordarshan and All India Radio every week, is expected to be an important part of the Programme. Under it, Keralites from anywhere in India and abroad can reach the Chief Minister at the appointed time with their grievances. The replies to the grievances so voiced would be provided by the Government speedily. The Programme would also shed light on many new projects of the Government, thus clearing doubts in the minds of people. With a view to bringing accountability in governance and promoting probity in public life, my Government proposes to take its policy of zero-tolerance of corruption a step further by declaring war against corruption.

11. My Government is committed to upliftment of the economic condition of farmers. For fulfillment of the above goal, it has undertaken a series of measures for increasing production and productivity of the various crops. Disease control measures, introduction of scientific methods of cultivation, collection and distribution of high yielding variety of seeds to the farmers, promotion of hi-tech innovative agriculture, establishment of more soil testing laboratories and establishment of virtual university are some such measures. It is also proposed to lay more emphasis on the replanting and revitalization of perennial crops. In order to free our local farmers from the clutches of middlemen and traders and to implement direct marketing, my Government proposes to introduce **Marketing Bill**. My Government also proposes to set up a **State Horticultural Mission**. It is also proposed to set up **Agri-export Zones** for spices, medicinal plants and floriculture, with assistance from Union Government. It also intends to come out with an **Organic Farming Policy** to promote Organic Farming in the State. With a view to give a fillip to the Animal Husbandry sector, my Government proposes to undertake an extensive Disease Control Programme so that food from the animal origin is of International Standard. It also proposes to set up a Livestock Product Investigation Laboratory at Kochi. Action for modernising the meat industries will also be taken. Women will also be actively involved in this programme. In the Dairy sector, my Government is now implementing, with the assistance of NDDB, a State-wide Programme to prevent outbreak of Cattle Diseases. With a view to increase availability of fodder, farmers are being encouraged

to grow fodder. They are also being encouraged to grow non-conventional feeding materials like **Azola**. In order to upgrade cattle population and to increase milk production, a new Breeding Policy will be implemented. Under **Women in Agriculture** Programme, my Government would be establishing new income generating enterprises. My Government also proposes to suitably modify the Scheme for **One Lakh Youth** with a view to involve youth in productive agricultural programmes. My Government is also committed to safeguard the interests of its farmers by ensuring remunerative prices to them. It would accordingly continue with its Market Intervention Scheme for Paddy, Arecanut, Coffee and Pepper.

12. In the Co-operative sector, I am happy to note that my Government has extended relief to the tune of Rs.143.09 Crores to 5.14 lakh loanees under One Time Settlement Scheme. It has also helped in recovery of Bad Debts amounting to Rs.1251.86 Crores belonging to 3224 Co-operative Societies. With a view to provide much-needed breather to the people affected by Tsunami, my Government has decided to extend the Scheme by three months.

13. My Government proposes to introduce schemes for crop insurance and for taking over of the liability of Farmers who avail Agricultural loans and who die before closure of the loan, under Risk Fund Scheme. It would also strive to ensure that the Primary Agriculture Credit Societies extend at least 25% of their credit to agricultural sector. It proposes to extend the NABARD assisted Self Help Group Scheme to all the districts in the State.

It also proposes to make available loans at low rates of interest for rainwater harvesting schemes. My Government intends to start processing units under Women Co-operative Federation. It also intends to take steps for revival of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Co-operatives.

14. This august House is aware of the acute hardship being faced by an ever increasing number of pilgrims visiting Sabarimala every year due to lack of sufficient infrastructural facilities. My Government too shares the sentiments of the pilgrims and is therefore committed to take all possible steps necessary for making available all the required infrastructure for the pilgrims at the earliest possible. It has accordingly proposed to implement a **Master Plan for Sabarimala** with further fifty years of development in view, by utilizing part of the land falling in the buffer zone of Periyar Tiger Reserve. My Government is hopeful of shortly getting the required permission of Union Government for utilization of necessary forest land, which has been so far acting as a stumbling block.

15. Aiming at a qualitative progress in the field of Higher Education, my Government proposes to initiate a series of measures, which, among others, include establishment of the State Higher Education Council, development of entrepreneurship clubs in colleges, establishment of a permanent mechanism for industry-institute interaction, introduction of computer proficiency scoring and certification for employment, connecting at least 200 colleges to the Education Grid and utilization of the recently launched **Edusat** to the maximum possible extent. The programmes that

my Government has proposed in the field of Collegiate Education include development of one Government College in each affiliating University as a Centre of Excellence and conferment of academic autonomy on the colleges selected as Centres of Excellence. In the field of Technical Education, my Government proposes to develop Government Engineering College, Thiruvananthapuram as a centre of excellence, confer academic autonomy on deserving engineering colleges and polytechnics and obtain AICTE approval for all Government Polytechnics.

16. As a part of the fiscal reforms in the State, my Government is fully prepared to introduce the new Budgetary Cycle that envisages the passing of the full Budget for 2005-06 before the end of the current financial year. This will facilitate timely implementation of the programmes and schemes envisaged in the Budget. In a similar move, for the first time since Decentralized Planning was introduced in the State, the Local Governments too would complete their preparation process for the Annual Plan 2005-06 right at the beginning of the financial year, with the result that they also will get a full year for implementation.

17. My Government has already fulfilled the promise of setting up of a **Coastal Area Development Agency** for the integrated development of coastal areas and the fisheries sector. The Coastal Area Development Agency is intended to provide additional resources and expertise for ensuring the development of coastal infrastructure such as harbours, water supply, sanitation,

power and transport. The Agency will work in tandem with Government Departments and Local Self Governments for ensuring that adequate resources and the best possible technologies are deployed for the holistic development of the coastal areas. This year my Government proposes to issue smart cards to fishermen for ensuring effective disbursement of their entitlements from the Government and for streamlining their social security benefits. These smart cards will also be helpful in organising their rescue in emergency situations at sea. My Government is committed to provide houses to all such fishermen families who are houseless. It therefore proposes to implement a scheme for providing houses to such fishermen during the coming year.

18. My Government proposes to undertake major initiatives for improving service delivery in its Taluk Supply Offices and Rationing Offices and for fostering Quality Consciousness among the consumers. My Government also proposes to set up a Consumer Welfare Fund in the State, with a corpus of Rs. 30 lakhs, to assist Non-Governmental Organisations and other bodies to undertake Consumer Protection/Welfare activities. Steps will also be taken to clear the arrears due to the Ration Dealers for distributing ration articles during various calamities faced by the State. The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation will set up three Packing Centres at Malappuram, Ernakulam and Pathanamthitta Districts.

19. My Government proposes to launch an ambitious programme to increase the green cover of the State by 5% in a time bound manner. The **Habitat Forestry** Project proposed to be so launched would consist of 17 innovative schemes, which would establish forestry as a way of life in the State. With a view to encouraging lifestyles in tune with nature, my Government would establish eco-villages, which would concentrate on agro-forestry, organic farming and other eco-friendly ways of living. Micro-plans will be drawn up for the integrated development of these villages. To encourage people to increase planting of trees within their homesteads, appropriate legislation will be enacted to remove the bottlenecks in felling of trees so planted. Concerted efforts, including legislation, will be made to curb the menace of ganja cultivation in the forest areas. Modern and Scientific steps will be taken to protect the precious sandal wood wealth of our forests and prevent illegal extraction, transport, processing and marketing of sandalwood. My Government also proposes to set up a **Print Village** to provide all modern back-up services for the promotion of the printing sector.

20. My Government believes in transparency in its day-to-day functioning and has hence brought out a Policy for Procurement of Drugs and Supplies. In addition, it has also announced different Drug Formularies for different categories of Hospitals. Shortly, my Government will also bring out a Policy on Procurement of Equipments in Government Hospitals. To ensure secondary health care in rural areas, 1200 posts including that of doctors were created and inpatients wards at 42 centres

were commissioned. My Government desires to re-introduce the Referral System as recommended by the Committee of Experts headed by Dr. E. Balaraman Nair. In the wake of re-emergence of communicable diseases like Dengue, Malaria etc., my Government proposes to implement Integrated Diseases Surveillance Programme with an outlay of Rs.12.38 Crores, with World Bank assistance during the year. Coming to Indigenous System of Medicine, I am glad to mention that my Government proposes to develop the Homoeo Medical College and Ayurveda College at Thiruvananthapuram into Centres of Excellence. My Government also intends to bring a Legislation for accreditation of Ayurveda Institutions. An innovative scheme of developing Ayurveda Herbal Gardens in selected schools in each district of the State will be launched.

21. My Government is committed to maintenance of law and order in the State. I am happy to state that overall law and order situation in the State is satisfactory, with no significant communal trouble in any part of the State. With a view to improve security along the State's long coastline, my Government has established Kerala Marine Police. Three new Fire and Rescue Stations at Nedumangad, Perinthalmanna and Mananthawadi have also been set up. Fire and Rescue Services Training Institute, coming up at Thrissur, is likely to commence its functioning shortly.

22. In the Housing sector, my Government proposes to introduce a new Scheme for the weaker sections of the society during the coming year. Kerala State Housing Board will also be undertaking a whole host of activities during the coming year. Some of the important activities that it proposes to undertake are construction of Commercial Complexes, construction of Pay wards in Taluk Hospitals, construction of Cottages at important tourist centres and construction of Old Age Homes.

23. My Government will intensify the efforts to provide dynamic support for investment in the State by providing quality infrastructure and hassle-free clearances. Included among the major projects on which visible progress is expected during the coming year are the LNG Terminal Project at Kochi, Natural Gas Pipeline Project of GAIL, Kochi Fashion City Project and Petrochemicals Complex at Kochi. KSIDC is providing necessary assistance and coordination for the speedy implementation of these Projects. KINFRA has initiated action for starting a Biotechnology Park with Technology Incubation Zone at Kochi as also an Animation Industry Building and School at the Film and Video Park, Thiruvananthapuram. An International Exhibition and Trade Centre will be set up at Kochi by KINFRA with private sector participation. Considering that a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet has already been set up to review the restructuring of PSUs, my Government has decided to suspend the functioning of ERC and to provide the required funds to PSUs for holding on operations.

24. My Government is committed to the development of the traditional industries, which support the livelihood of a large percentage of our population. With an equally committed UPA Government in power at the Centre, my Government is confident of bringing about a radical change in the sector, through consolidation of schemes, reorganisation of priorities of the existing schemes and introduction of new schemes. I am sure that my brethren in Coir, Cashew, Khadi, Handloom, Handicrafts and similar other traditional sectors are going to see brighter days in the coming future.

25. In the Information Technology sector, the concerted efforts being made by my Government to establish Kerala as a frontline industry destination have started yielding encouraging results, with leading IT majors setting up operations in the State in the last year. While Thiruvananthapuram is already acclaimed as a significant software hub, Kochi is rapidly emerging as a location of choice for the ITES and BPO industry. My Government expects the inflow of investments to go up significantly in the coming year, with the completion of the 1st phase of the Infopark at Kochi and commencement of work on the Thiruvananthapuram IT corridor shortly. With the completion of the ongoing land acquisitions at Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi, the capacities for the IT industry are expected to be doubled, thereby fulfilling substantially the commitments made in the IT Policy of 2001. As a part of its efforts to build a global business environment for the IT industry, my Government is also

actively considering a proposal to set up an Integrated IT Township at Kochi with international participation. This would be a first of its kind facility in the State and would be a significant step towards attracting high technology companies and businesses into Kerala. As a result of these flagship initiatives, my Government expects to double exports and employment in the IT sector. Based on the successful implementation of the Akshaya project at Malappuram, my Government has already commenced its replication in 7 districts. It is proposed to set up a network of over 2500 internet kiosks in these districts, thereby generating direct employment for over 7000 persons and commensurate indirect employment. In the area of e-Governance, my Government's endeavour is to make available common e-Governance services to the citizens at the grass root level. For this purpose, it is proposed to set up an Integrated Government Services Gateway, through which citizens can access the entire range of services and interact with Government Departments online. A key objective of the Gateway will be to ensure speedy and effective redressal of citizen's grievances.

26. My Government is committed to maintain an investor-friendly Labour climate in the State without compromising on the rights and privileges of the working class. It proposes to fix **Floor level Minimum Wages** for employment in all sectors. It also intends to introduce new Welfare Schemes for the Plantation Workers, Gold and Jewellery Workers, Tree Climbers and Workmen in Shops and Commercial Establishments. It is also

proposed to introduce a **Habitat Housing Scheme for Plantation Workers** in association with Local Bodies and Plantation Managements with a view to replace the Labour Lines that have become uninhabitable. My Government is aware of the need for having Training Courses in tune with the changing needs of the industry. Accordingly, it intends to undertake complete revamping of the existing Training Courses. It proposes to develop 5 ITIs as **Centres of Excellence** with assistance from Union Government. It also proposes to impart Spoken English skills to all ITI Trainees with the help of Kerala State Information Technology Mission. My Government also intends to launch a **Website with Data Bank of Professional Manpower in the State** for potential employers. My Government proposes to strengthen the existing ESI Hospitals in the State. It also intends to open more ESI Dispensaries. It is proposed to start a **Building Technology Institute** under the Kerala Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Fund Board to impart modern training in different trades of construction work. **Old Age Homes** for the infirm construction workers are also proposed.

27. My Government is of the firm belief that efficiency and effectiveness of its legal machinery can be greatly enhanced by the use of modern IT tools. This belief of the Government has been further reinforced by the positive benefits that have already started accruing to it from the various projects undertaken in the Law Department like IT project for Court Case Monitoring for Law Offices, project for Modernisation of Law Department, Law Portal project, Law Library Automation project etc. My Government intends to take this initiative forward in the coming year and bring these projects to completion in all respects. My Government also proposes to come out with an Intellectual Property Rights Policy for the State during the coming year.

28. The large number of pendency of cases in Courts and the consequent delays in securing justice to the litigants has been the bane of our judicial system. In such a situation, Lok Adalats have turned out to be a very popular and comparatively inexpensive form of alternate dispute resolution mechanism. For making the functioning of Lok Adalats more effective, a proposal to computerise the Kerala State Legal Services Authority is under consideration of my Government.

29. It is a matter of great satisfaction for my Government that Kudumbashree, the State Poverty Eradication Mission, which now covers over 30 lakh families, continues its onward march with its array of newer initiatives aimed at eradication of poverty through empowerment of women. The targets set by Kudumbashree for itself for the coming year include coverage of all the BPL families in the State in the NHGs, formation of Balasabhas throughout the State, starting of more micro-enterprise units specially in Agriculture, Horticulture, Agri-processing and Food Processing sectors, encouragement of lease land farming, implementation of Destitute Rehabilitation Programme (Ashraya) in 350 more Panchayats, construction of 10,000 new houses for the urban slum dwellers under Valmiki Ambedkar Awaas Yojana and creation of employment opportunities for 50,000 educated unemployed youth.

30. My Government has been making special efforts for empowering Local Self Government institutions. For the first time ever, it has provided an amount of of Rs. 531.11 Crores towards Maintenance Grant and General Purpose Grant to these institutions. It proposes to continue with its effective and far-sighted activities for achieving the object of Decentralisation in

true sense. Considering the tourism potential of Varkala area, my Government has constituted Varkala Development Authority. With a view to ensure prompt and efficient delivery of public services at affordable costs to the public in a fair and transparent manner, my Government has launched a programme for setting up of **Janasevana Kendrams** in 58 Urban Local Bodies. My Government intends to extend this programme to all Local Bodies in phases. With a view to facilitate on-line registration of births and deaths, my Government proposes to set up Hospital Kiosks in selected important Hospitals in the 5 Corporations of the State.

31. My Government is committed to modernising Government. Of the various initiatives that are under implementation under the **Modernising Government Programme**, that is under way in the State, the important ones are the *Akshaya Statewide Rollout*, *Knowledge Archive for Secretariat*, *Integrated Personnel & Payroll Management System*, *Police Portal for Community Interaction* and *Digitisation of Secretariat Records*. The Service Delivery Project, a component of **Modernising Government Programme**, which aims at transforming the covered institutions into model service delivery institutions, presently covers 2605 institutions under different Government Departments and Local Self Governments. My Government proposes to extend the coverage of the Project to over 30,000 front-line institutions in eight Departments by availing a loan of Rs. 3,000 Crores over a period of 4 years.

32. This august House is aware of the important role played by Non Resident Keralites towards the development and well being of the State. While gratefully acknowledging their contribution, my Government proposes to involve them further and make them an equal partner in its developmental efforts through utilization of the expertise and resources at their command. With the above end in view, my Government intends to come out with an action plan during the coming year. With the delegation of powers to attest the qualifying certificates of job seekers to Gulf to the State Governments and with the opening of two Authentication Centres by Department of NORKA at Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode, the difficulties being faced by the job seekers have been mitigated to a great extent. I am glad to note that this has happened because of the efforts of NORKA. It is proposed to open another Authentication Centre of NORKA at Kochi during this year. My Government is aware of the hardships being faced by Gulf returnees and accordingly proposes to come out with specific schemes for amelioration of their hardships. For parents of Non Resident Keralites, NORKA proposes to set up an exclusive village, bearing hallmarks of Kerala's architecture and rich cultural heritage, where they can spend the twilight of their lives in a serene atmosphere.

33. The Department of Parliamentary Affairs has been playing an increasingly effective role in coordinating the legislative matters of the State, besides promoting and propagating the Parliamentary democratic system of governance. It has been organizing **Model Parliaments** to inculcate spirit of Parliamentary democracy in the students. An **Institute of Parliamentary Affairs**

has also been set up to promote study, research and training in this area. My Government will strive to make it an **institute of excellence**. To promote interaction, exchange and sharing of experiences on a national and global platform, my Government is contemplating to organize a Global Parliamentary Meet.

34. As this august House is aware, Government machinery plays a very critical role in translating the Government's vision into reality. My Government would like to reassure the Government employees that it would not shy away from its obligations towards them. My Government, accordingly, is willing to consider setting up a Pay Revision Commission shortly.

35. My Government intends to radically restructure the Plan Monitoring System, which is so crucial for ensuring proper implementation of development programs and accordingly, it proposes to introduce a Multi-level Monitoring System, which would be more systematic and scientific. A similar system would be put in place for monitoring the implementation of the plans of Local Governments also. In addition to the conventional monitoring system, my Government has also approved a Participatory Monitoring System, with special focus on tracking poverty and the implementation of anti-poverty programmes and the same would be operationalised from the next financial year.

36. In the Ports sector, efforts to develop a deepwater international container transshipment terminal at Vizhinjam are in good progress. With a view to providing external support infrastructure and developing the port jointly with the private investor, my Government has set up a Special Purpose Company

called **Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited**. My Government expects to sign the concession agreement for this prestigious project this year. My Government has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a private investor for development of a Recreational Harbour (Marina) of international standards at Alappuzha and their detailed proposal is awaited. My Government is also examining the proposal of a private investor to develop Beypore port in Kozhikode. During the coming year, the concession agreement for the project is proposed to be signed and work is also expected to commence. My Government also intends to invite fresh proposals for development of Azhikkal port in Kannur in private sector.

37. Considering that Power is one of the basic infrastructure requirements for growth and development, my Government has given utmost importance for the development of Power sector in the State. The half an hour load shedding, which was introduced in the wake of drought during the last two years, has been dispensed with during the current year. My Government is committed to providing electric connection to all the households in the State by the end of the 10th Five Year Plan. Special attention would be given to provide electric connection to the consumers below poverty line. A pilot project is proposed to be taken up for complete electrification of the Hill Panchayats of four Taluks in the hill Districts. My Government lays great emphasis on completion of the ongoing hydel projects. Kuttiyadi Augmentation Scheme, which has been held up for over two decades now, is proposed to be commissioned during the coming year, adding 223 million units of generation potential.

My Government proposes to take urgent steps to complete Malankara Hydro Electric Project, Meenmutty Hydro Electric Project, and Kuttiyar Diversion Schemes during 2005-06. Execution of works for Pallivasal Extension Scheme and 6 Small Hydro Projects totalling 41.3 MW will also be commenced during this period. LNG based expansion project of NTPC, Kayamkulam, raising its capacity by 1950 MW will be a milestone in the Power sector development of the State. In addition to the above, new APDRP Schemes with a total outlay of Rs.1173 Crores are under consideration of Union Government for Accelerated Electrification of unelectrified villages, Electrification of Hilly/Coastal areas, Electrification of SC/ST colonies, improvement of LT/HT ratio and improvement of Sub transmission and distribution network in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode cities.

38. My Government proposes to take up Schemes equivalent to APDRP in Panchayats and Municipalities with a population of more than 35,000, for energy conservation and voltage improvement during the year 2005, which is also being observed as Energy Conservation Year. It is also proposed to create an Energy Conservation Fund as envisaged in the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.

39. My Government attaches great importance to improvement in the quality of roads in the State. The World Bank aided Kerala State Transport Project, which is presently under implementation, has been playing a pivotal role in improving the quality of roads in the State. With recent announcement of

investments worth Rs. 3053 Crores by the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways for four-laning of National Highways in the State and for construction of various Bypasses, the quality of roads in the State are poised for a quantum leap.

40. My Government proposes to introduce an Insurance Scheme for giving enhanced financial assistance to the dependents of persons who die due to natural calamities and accidents. The proposed Scheme will also cover the loss of houses, properties, cattle etc. caused due to natural calamities. My Government intends to constitute a permanent **Authority for Disaster Management** under a new Disaster Management Department. Necessary legislation for this purpose will be introduced shortly. My Government is also considering a proposal to permit assignment of Kulam/Thodu/River Puramboke lands to their existing occupants, if Kulam/Thodu/River is no longer adjacent to such land. A new Scheme to protect the riverbanks by rehabilitating the riverbank dwellers, who have got possession certificates, is also proposed. Such dwellers will be rehabilitated in the nearby Government lands.

41. As a part of rural development, my Government proposes to assist people below poverty line with economic activities of innovative nature under SGSY. Such people will be given training to take up avocation in innovative activities such as Organic Farming, Information Technology, cultivation of Medicinal Plants, manufacture of eco-friendly products etc. Besides, with a view to motivate rural youths to engage in self employment ventures in an effective and successful manner, focused attention will be given to capacity building at district level through training programmes.

42. With a view to create job opportunities for the educated unemployed among SC/STs, my Government proposes to formulate a Self Employment Entrepreneurship Programme for them. It is also proposed to enhance basic facilities for the education of SC/ST students. The existing educational concessions meant for such groups are also proposed to be enhanced. My Government also intends to implement a Rehabilitation Scheme for the landless and homeless SC/STs. My Government is committed to distribute land to all Adivasi families in the State. It has already distributed land to 3374 Adivasi families. Besides, Record of Right on Land has also been given to 375 Adivasi families in Sugandhagiri and Pookot in Wayanad District. During the coming year, my Government intends to intensify its efforts in this direction for achievement of the target of distribution of land to all landless tribals. With a view to arrest and reverse the trend of high dropout of ST students from institutions imparting higher education, my Government proposes to implement a counselling programme. It also proposes to form Multi-purpose Development-oriented Centres, on the lines of Kudumbashree, for STs.

43. In pursuance of National Bio-diversity Act, 2003, my Government proposes to set up Kerala State Bio-diversity Board for promoting conservation of bio-diversity in the State. The Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment has initiated a Patent Information Centre to support patenting activities in Kerala and to promote awareness about Intellectual Property Rights among researchers, academicians and industrialists.

44. In the Social sector, with a view to provide counselling to persons having suicidal tendencies, my Government proposes to start 3 Regional Counselling Centres in Thiruvananthapuram, Idukki and Wayanad Districts. The **Take Home Ration Scheme**, which is presently under implementation in 3 Blocks, is proposed to be extended to the remaining 160 ICDS Blocks.

45. My Government is committed to making Kerala an important force in Sports. It would make dedicated efforts to make Kerala win medals for India, in the next Olympics and other International competitions, by realizing its full potential as a leading State in field of sports. My Government will suitably liaise with Sports Authority of India, New Delhi, for the proposed Athletic Academy for Women in Kerala. In the field of Youth Affairs, my Government has initiated a dialogue with Youth Organizations to channelise the energies for upliftment of youth. It also intends to give help to start some production and marketing units by groups of Youth, to increase employment opportunities.

46. With a view to cut down delays, my Government has already initiated the work of computerization of the offices of Sub-Registrars. My Government proposes to complete the computerization of all the Sub Registrars' offices by the end of the coming financial year. With a view to provide necessary amenities to the people visiting offices of Sub-Registrars for their various requirements, my Government proposes to upgrade the existing infrastructure facilities in 69 such offices using MGP funds. Insofar as Lotteries are concerned, my Government has been waging a relentless battle against the marketing of illegal lottery tickets of other States in the State of Kerala. It would continue its fight at all fora, using the entire resources at its command.

47. My Government is committed to the promotion of tourism in the State. Kerala is now positioned as the number one tourist destination in the country. The State has also recorded an all-time high of 26.68% growth in foreign arrivals during the year 2003. During the next financial year, my Government will focus on comprehensively developing at least one tourist centre in every district. Pilgrim Centres and Pilgrim Circuits will be developed. Town squares will be developed in major towns. Water sports and Adventure Tourism will be given priority. **Vazhiyoram project** for the development of wayside facilities with private sector participation will be taken up on a priority basis. Rural tourism will be extended throughout the State. Kerala Tourism will extend its marketing efforts in new markets such as South-east Asian countries and United States. District Tourism Promotion Councils will be strengthened. KTDC will start new hotel projects at Alappuzha and Kannur. The facilities of the existing hotels of the KTDC will be upgraded. The thrust on sustainable tourism and conservation of heritage and culture will continue, along with eco tourism initiatives. The support to private sector in quality infrastructure development and promotion of tourism products will continue. My Government also proposes to extend the **Clean Destination Scheme**, initiated in association with Kudumbashree and other NGOs, to all major tourist destinations.

48. My Government is committed to radically improve the Service Delivery systems in the Motor Vehicles Department through computerisation and modernisation of the Department. It is equally committed to maintenance of Road Safety. The much-awaited legislation creating the Kerala Road Safety Authority and establishment of a Road Safety Fund is expected to become a

reality shortly. My Government expects to see a visible improvement in Road Safety activities once the Authority comes into being.

49. It is a matter of great satisfaction to note that the first phase of the World Bank assisted National Hydrology Project has been completed. My Government proposes to implement the second phase of the project during 2005-2006. Under Minor Irrigation and Water Supply, 63 RIDF schemes that are in progress at present, will be completed during 2005-2006. My Government has identified some last mile projects like Muvattupuzha project, Karappuzha project and Regulator-cum-Bridge at Thrithala for completion within a period of 3 years from 2005-2006. My Government proposes to bring Kallada Irrigation Project also within the purview of Command Area Development Authority during 2005-2006 for realizing the irrigation potential created and for extending the benefits to the farmers. It is also proposed to implement Participatory Irrigation Management System in the CADA Project areas. The World Bank aided Jalanidhi Project has been redesigned and its activities have been scaled up to cover the entire State now. During 2005-2006, 1200 Water Supply Schemes are proposed to be commissioned under this Project. Kerala Water Authority proposes to complete 101 water supply schemes during 2005-2006. The JBIC assisted Water Supply Projects for Rs.1787 Crores will enter the construction phase and are expected to achieve substantial progress during 2005-2006.

50. My Government proposes to vigorously pursue the popularization of Rainwater Harvesting. The strategy and action plan for the purpose have already been finalized. Steps for

awareness generation, training for capacity building and setting up of model rainwater harvesting structures are proposed to be taken up throughout the State. It will be the endeavour of my Government to set up rainwater harvesting facilities in more than 12,000 locations where water had to be served through tanker lorries during the last drought.

51. The havoc caused by the recent Tsunami on the State's Coast has exposed the inadequacies of its Coastal Zone Management Programme. My Government therefore proposes to revisit the field with a view to come up with foolproof strategies to protect the State's Coastline as well as the people living there.

52. In short, it is clear that my Government has a vision for development and growth of the State. It is also clear that it has the necessary will power to translate its vision into reality. I have no doubt in my mind that this formidable combination of thought and action is going to work wonders for the State and its people in times to come. I am equally convinced of the support of each and every member of this august House towards my Government's sincere attempts at taking the State to a trajectory of development and growth never seen before in its history.

53. Let me end my address with an appeal to all the political parties and the people at large to come forward and cooperate in my Government's endeavour to build Kerala into a front-ranking State in India.

I wish all success for the deliberations of the House.

JAI HIND