



ADDRESS
TO
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
KERALA

3RD FEBRUARY, 2006

BY

SHRI R. L. BHATIA
GOVERNOR OF KERALA

Hon'ble Speaker, Hon'ble Members,

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to the first session of the Kerala Legislative Assembly for the year 2006. I am confident that during the year 2006 Kerala will march towards the path of growth with equity. Now that the Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly is nearing its term, it is worthwhile to recapitulate and enlighten this august House about the efforts and initiatives taken by my Government for the overall development of our State.

2. Despite many challenges, my Government has placed Kerala on a positive growth track. The State of Kerala has attained worldwide acclaim for its achievements in improving the physical quality of life of the people, and in the creation of social infrastructure, particularly in the health and education sectors. Although various initiatives have been taken in the recent past for promoting comprehensive growth including industrial growth, bold and forward looking measures are required in future also if Kerala is to capitalize on its unique strengths. My Government is committed to do the same.

3. His Excellency the President of India had placed before this august Assembly 10 mission mode agendas for prosperity of the State by the year 2015. My Government after conducting wide ranging discussions outside and inside the

Assembly, has enlarged this to "10+3+3" mission mode projects and has come out with Vision 2010. The implementation of the mission projects is guided by a High Level National Advisory Council. The 5 implementation Task Forces set up have identified suitable projects. A detailed action plan has been drawn up for the implementation of these projects over a 5 year period, with a financial outlay of Rs. 13495 crores, the State Government share and Government of India share envisaged at 16% and 6% respectively. Investment from private sector and financial institutions would account for the balance share.

4. My Government believes in focused and targeted development to ensure outcomes. This pro-active approach led by the Chief Minister and his cabinet colleagues has resulted in success of programmes like 100-Day Programme, One Year Action Plan, Mass Contact Programme and Sutharya Keralam. As a result a number of projects were completed and thousands of genuine complaints were resolved in a time bound manner thereby benefiting people at large.

5. Last year my Government had, in this very House, charted out an agenda for progressive reforms centered on modernization and development with a human face. Accordingly the traditional sectors of coir, handloom, cashew, and fisheries have been given special emphasis during the tenure of my Government. It has extended marketing support, taken quality improvement initiatives and has devised a social security net for people dependent on these sectors.

6. My Government has taken all possible measures for the welfare and development of the poor, the needy, the marginalized, the downtrodden and the deprived sections of society. The success of Projects like Kudumbasree, Ashraya, Prathyasha etc. are the best illustrations of how support by way of extension services has helped to empower the weaker communities. The unique participatory social security programme, Ashraya, has become a national model, which is likely to be replicated in other parts of the country. I am happy to state that from this year onwards, there will be no arrears on social security pensions like National Old Age Pension, Destitute Pension, Pension for physically handicapped and financial assistance to unmarried women above 50. All other pensions directly paid by Government are being paid on the 1st of every month.

7. My Government has recently launched a comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme for the BPL population of the State encompassing benefits like compensation for accident related death and disability, existing illnesses, maternity benefits, domiciliary hospitalization and mental illnesses. The scheme targeting 25 lakh families is being implemented through Kudumbasree. The premium amount of Rs. 99 is apportioned between the State Government, Local Self Government and beneficiary family on a 1:1:1 ratio.

8. Keralites can be proud of the determination, dedication and commitment of the Government to ensure and uphold social justice. My Government has taken a landmark decision

to amend rules to earmark and reserve 40% of posts in Government services for the communities eligible for reservation. This historic decision will ensure that, in future, no backward community is denied the opportunities due to it. I am extremely happy to note that the efforts of my Government for ensuring social justice have received support and cooperation from all sectors.

9. On December 26th, 2005 we observed the first anniversary of the killer Tsunami waves that brought havoc to our coastlines. It gives me immense satisfaction to note that my Government left no stone unturned to offer solace and relief to the affected and hapless families. For co-ordination of relief and rehabilitation works and for their effective implementation, a new 'Department of Disaster Management' was formed under the Revenue Department. Under the Rajiv Gandhi Package for Tsunami relief, Government of India sanctioned a total amount of Rs. 249.36 crores in January 2005. The cash component of the package was Rs. 100 crores, against which the State Government incurred an expenditure of Rs.103.13 crores for relief operations. Besides, the Asian Development Bank sanctioned Rs. 246 crores for specific Tsunami Relief Projects, which included an outright grant of Rs. 106 crores. The projects are implemented at the State level by a Committee headed by the Chief Minister. Besides, an amount of Rs. 28.35 crores has been spent from the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund towards various Tsunami relief activities. The rehabilitation work is in full swing and the life and economy in the affected Panchayats is returning to normalcy.

10. I am delighted to note the seriousness and sincerity with which my Government is extending support to mitigate the hardships faced by Sabarimala pilgrims. With constant and persistent persuasion of my Government the much needed forest land was made available at Nilackal, Pampa and Sabarimala for providing public amenities to the crores of pilgrims visiting Sabarimala. My Government has also decided to prepare a master plan for Guruvayur for the planned development of the area into a full-fledged pilgrim township.

11. My Government is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in administration and promoting probity in public life. The recently passed landmark 'Right to Information Act, 2005' gives right to citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities. My Government has taken all steps necessary to implement the provisions of the Act in its true spirit.

12. The growth in the industrial and infrastructure sectors requires massive investment. My Government attracted private and public investment to the State by creating an environment that favours such investment, while at the same time protecting the larger interests of the State. The efforts put in the Global Investors Meet (GIM) have started showing results. The State has achieved the much needed "pro-investment climate" that had resulted in investment proposals of about Rs. 22,000 crores in various industrial and infrastructure projects. The sincere efforts of my Government have helped in initiating projects like LNG Terminal, Natural Gas Pipeline of GAIL,

Petrochemical Complex, Smart City, Techno City, ICTT at Vallarpadam, Deep Water Container Transshipment Terminal at Vizhinjam and many other large projects during the last year.

13. My Government has accorded top priority for the development of the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram. A number of projects are being implemented under the aegis of the Capital City Development Project for improving the critical infrastructure of the city.

14. The development works of the Animation Zone at KINFRA Film and Video Park, Kazhakkuttom, Thiruvananthapuram are nearing completion. The Biotechnology Park is being developed in 50 acres of land at Kalamassery, Kochi with financial assistance from the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. KINFRA's second Food Processing Industrial Park in 85 acres of land at Enadimangalam, Adoor with financial assistance from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India is under progress. Sanction has been received from Ministry of Commerce, Government of India for the development of the three product specific SEZs, viz. for Animation & Gaming Industry, at Kazhakkuttom, Trivandrum, for Electronics at Kalamassery, Ernakulam and for Food Processing at Kakkancherry, Malappuram.

15. My Government is committed to creating an enabling environment and developing necessary infrastructure for the growth of the Information Technology Sector in the State.

A significant achievement is the setting up of Infopark in Kochi. The proposed SMART City - a 300-acre self-contained IT and IT-enabled services township in partnership with the Dubai Internet City, is expected to provide direct employment to 33,000 persons. Memorandum of Understanding for this project has already been signed.

16. The Techno Park houses 80 transnational companies employing over 10,000 professionals. As part of the 2nd phase expansion, a world-class building "Tejaswini" is being constructed. My Government has taken steps to create additional state-of-the-art built-up space spread over 500 acres in the proposed Techno city, adjacent to Technopark. Akshaya, the ambitious project to bridge the Digital Divide, which has earned accolades from all parts of the world, is now being rolled out into 7 more districts. The remaining 6 districts will be covered in the coming year.

17. My Government has an ambitious plan to establish itself as a fully networked State by 2007. The State Information Infrastructure (SII), with three data centres in the major cities of Kozhikode, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram is fully functional and is catering to the e-governance needs of various Government Institutions. I am happy to state that the Video Conferencing facility has been commissioned in December 2005 between Chief Minister's Office and 14 District Collectorates and important offices in Thiruvananthapuram and New Delhi.

18. Despite unprecedented set backs to the agricultural sector in the recent years on account of drought and depressing prices for various agricultural commodities, my Government has successfully initiated several farmer-friendly policies and programmes to sustain the developmental thrust in the farm sector. Agri Export Zone for fruits and vegetables has already been established and one for medicinal plants is also being implemented. My Government will ensure support to the State Horticulture Mission under which schemes amounting to Rs. 75 crores have already been cleared by the Central Government.

19. In order to provide single window service to the farmers, Agro Service Centres would be established in Krishi Bhavans. Micro Enterprises for value addition, microfinance and marketing assistance would be provided for crops like pepper, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, coconut etc. I am also hopeful that AGRISNET (Agricultural Information System Network) for networking the services provided in the agricultural sector would be executed during this year. Efforts are also on to provide insurance coverage for the major perennial crops of Kerala. My Government also intends to encourage farmers to take up organic farming in a large way.

20. Animal Husbandry and Dairy Sectors in Kerala have made remarkable development in recent years. Some of the major initiatives taken by my Government during the year are setting up of Livestock and Marine Products Investigation Lab at Kochi, Setting up of Milk Products Manufacturing

Facilitation Centre at Aroor and Implementation of Animal Disease Control Programme to eradicate Foot and Mouth Disease with the assistance of National Dairy Development Board. A Dairy Farmers' Welfare Fund has been set up recently. Projects like Cow Villages (Pasu Gramam), buffalo rearing and goat rearing will be implemented. To promote meat export and the quality control of meat, a high-tech laboratory will be established. A State Veterinary and Animal Health Complex with the highest standards will be established at Thiruvananthapuram.

21. I am happy to state that under the Social Welfare Department a scheme to supply food grains, free to widows and unmarried women aged 50 years and above, is proposed for implementation shortly in selected 18 blocks. Although the ICDS scheme has been universalized, all beneficiaries have not benefited under this scheme. My Government has therefore decided to start 3258 numbers of additional Anganwadi centres to cover all beneficiaries by March 31st 2006.

22. To mitigate the sufferings of our fishermen my Government has initiated a livelihood restoration programme in the Tsunami affected areas during 2005-06. Approval has been given for construction of 3.710 kms of original sea wall and re-formation of 11.388 km of seawall in the affected areas. To create employment opportunities through micro enterprises, self-help Groups of fisher-folk will be organized both in the coastal and inland districts through the Society for Assistance to Fisherwomen (SAF). My Government is committed to

reorient the sea rescue operations with community participation. Marine Enforcement will be made more effective with active participation of Coast Guard.

23. A Coastal Area Development Agency has been formed recently to function as an arm of Government to facilitate infrastructure projects for the coastal areas of the State. The main focus areas of CADA include construction of houses, drinking water supply, road linkages with the nearest National/ State Highways, sanitation facilities, social infrastructure, development of fish landing centres and fishing harbours and development of coastal based tourism.

24. A new scheme 'PURA' (Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas) will be implemented in coastal areas with the active participation of Local Self Governments to provide physical, economic, knowledge and market connectivity. As part of this, housing, drinking water, sanitation, roads, fishing harbours and fish landing centres will be set up.

25. Targeted Public Distribution System is one of the effective strategies for alleviation of poverty and for ensuring food security at the household level. The scheme covers 67 lakh families in the State. During 2006-07, the Civil Supplies Department intends to conduct a Household survey of all BPL families in the State to identify and exclude ineligible persons from the BPL Category and to bring eligible persons, after due verification, under the Anthyodaya Anna Yojana Scheme. 5.9 lakh families in our State are covered under the AAY

scheme, under which rice is distributed at the rate of Rs. 3/kg. My Government has now launched a new scheme, enabling 14.45 lakh BPL families also to enjoy the privilege of rice at Rs. 3/kg, at an additional expenditure of Rs. 9.50 crores per month.

26. During the current year, the marketing infrastructure of the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation was expanded with the opening of 1150 ARD Sabari Stores. This has helped in ensuring stability of prices for all essential commodities. KSCSC took a bold step for procuring paddy directly from the farmers of the State. Till November 2005, 110509 MT of paddy has been procured. This has ensured remunerative prices to the farmers. The KSCSC proposes to continue paddy procurement from farmers during 2006-07 also.

27. My Government is setting up an indigenous Food Research Institute at Konni in Pathanamthitta District. This will equip entrepreneurs in Kerala to preserve and promote the use and export of indigenous foods and beverages and to compete globally.

28. Coir, the most important traditional industry provides livelihood to more than 3.75 lakh workers, of which majority are women from BPL families. To provide self employment opportunities to the displaced coir workers, my Government, in association with Coir Board, is implementing a scheme for setting up self help groups by providing them with training, motorized rath, workshed facility and working capital.

The Department is encouraging setting up of Defibring Mills in both co-operative and private sector by providing 50% subsidy on capital investment. My Government has taken initial steps to set up a National Coir Research and Management Institute (NCRMI) at Kudappanakunnu. My Government proposes to introduce a Production Marketing Incentive (PMI) Scheme, set up Model Coir Gramam at Vayalar and Perumon and Raw Material Banks for fibre and provide special thrust to the Geo-textile development programme in the coming year.

29. In the handloom sector, I am happy to announce that all handloom weavers will be insured under the Group Insurance Scheme. Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation is taking earnest efforts for revival of the marine and cashew sector units in the State through cluster approach. The Cashew Development Corporation set an all time record, providing employment to its employees for 233 days in the year 2005, and new employment opportunities to about 1000 persons in the factories.

30. My Government has succeeded in implementing the National Rural Health Mission Project launched by Government of India. Telemedicine Project connecting 5 Medical Colleges, Regional Cancer Centre and District/Taluk Hospitals in the State with the technical support of ISRO has also commenced. A bio-medical waste disposal scheme for hospitals called IMAGE is being implemented through the Indian Medical Association. For the first time in the whole

country, my Government has started giving ARV Drugs free of cost to HIV/AIDS patients. The centrally sponsored scheme, 'Janani Suraksha Yojana' is implemented to extend financial assistance for the first and second delivery to BPL mothers in any institution.

31. My Government also proposes to establish Disaster Management Units and rapid action teams in all the districts to meet emergency situations like natural calamities, epidemic outbreaks etc. My Government proposes to form societies in tribal areas for promoting herbal plant cultivation. A special scheme to help patients with Sickle Cell Anaemia in backward districts would also be implemented.

32. Kerala has always been known for its enterprising people who have toiled hard for livelihood in all parts of the world. My Government has always recognized the contribution of NRKs and is ever willing to lend them a helping hand for solving their innumerable problems. It was in this context that a separate department called NORKA was established by the Government, which was the first of its kind in India. Voting Rights to NRKs has been one of their long-standing demands. I am happy to state that Government of India has agreed in principle to give voting rights to NRIs.

33. NORKA Department has launched a scheme called "Ente Gramam Ente Swapnam" for the development of the infrastructural facilities of villages with the active participation and financial assistance of NRKs. This scheme extends financial assistance to poor returnees. The NORKA centre at

Thiruvananthapuram, on completion, will be the nodal centre to address all issues connected with NRKs. My Government proposes to initiate a scheme, Comprehensive Employment Mapping, by gathering information about new job opportunities in various countries and offering training to job aspirants for skill upgradation, through finishing schools.

34. I may happy to state that my Government has accorded sanction for completion of the long pending construction works of the Kerala House at Vashi, Navi Mumbai, akin to the Kerala House at New Delhi. This on completion will be the transformation of one of the long cherished dreams of Malayalis travelling to Mumbai.

35. Constructive collaboration between the industry and university is a must for improving the quality of higher education in general and of technical education in particular. For achieving this objective my Government intends to reform the University curriculum and encourage innovation in Universities and start Production Centres attached to selected Engineering Colleges in the State. A comprehensive programme for developing the soft skills of graduates has been initiated and will be continued with the active participation of the industry.

36. Communal harmony and public peace in Kerala is something we all are proud of. My Government has taken a number of steps to equip police to deal with any untoward situation and to maintain the general law and order and for ensuring protection to the life and property of the people.

Some of these are formation of the Range Unit of Kerala Marines, District Passport Cells and Inter State Intelligence Support Team, strengthening of Immigration Wings, opening up of Kerala Police Academy at Thrissur, implementation of 'Rail Alert System'-the first of its kind in India, facility for DNA Finger printing and polygraph Test in the FSL and setting up two Regional FSLs, at Kannur and Thrissur.

37. Cyber Police Station, Kerala Police "24 X 7", 'Mahila Desks' to assist the public visiting the Police Stations, especially the women and children, strengthening of the existing Highway Police and Traffic Units and starting of Coastal Police Ranges are some of the programmes my Government intends to implement in the coming year.

38. Video conferencing system linking various courts and jails of Thiruvananthapuram District is an important programme that my Government is implementing for facilitating extension of remand of prisoners without physically presenting them before courts.

39. New Fire and Rescue Stations were started at Kadakkal, Chengannur, Pambady, Kaduthuruthy, Painave and Nilambur during the current year. My Government intends to procure more fire fighting vehicles and equipments and to open new Fire and Rescue Stations at Oyoor, Kalluorkad, Mannarcaud, Peringom and Poovar for improving the fire and rescue operations.

40. Ports have played a significant role in the development of Kerala since time immemorial. To realize the true potential of ports they need to be all weather ports equipped with modern handling equipments. With this objective in mind my Government has decided to develop Vizhinjam, Azhikkal, Beypore and Alappuzha ports on a priority basis.

41. Development of a Deepwater International Container Transshipment Terminal at Vizhinjam has been given top priority and brought under the fast track scheme of Government. The total cost of the project, which is envisaged in three phases is estimated to be Rs. 4,360 crores. Development of Azhikkal port at a cost of Rs. 1,388 crores and a multi-purpose port at Vizhinjam costing Rs. 400 crores has been proposed for development under the National Maritime Development Programme (NMDP) of Government of India. Development of Beypore port through private participation will commence in the year 2006-07. As part of the development of cargo handling facilities in the harbours, cargo berths are being built at Vizhinjam, Thangassery and Azhikkal.

42. The last four years witnessed unprecedented growth of the co-operative sector in Kerala consequent to the earnest steps taken by my Government. Relief to the tune of Rs. 199 crores has been extended to 5.43 lakhs loanees under the 'One Time Settlement Scheme'. The scheme also helped in

recovery of bad debts amounting to Rs. 1488 crores belonging to 3442 societies. Interest for agricultural loans was reduced to 8.5%.

43. Besides these, my Government has also launched many important welfare schemes like Green card and Kissan Credit Card Scheme for prompt loan re-payers, Agricultural Debt Relief Scheme, Special package scheme for Wayanad District, Lenient Loan Scheme for rain water storage programmes through credit co-operatives, and Risk Fund Scheme for taking over the liability of agricultural loans of those loanees who die during the repayment period of loan. My Government proposes to extend the 'One time settlement scheme' up to June 2006. The quantum of agricultural loans through the sector will be doubled.

44. A Multi Disciplinary intensive care unit with a project cost of Rs. 4.00 crores is proposed under the auspices of Academy of Medical Services, Pariyaram, Kannur. Super Speciality clinics, Nursing College and various para-medical courses will be started under co-operative Medical College, Kochi during the next year.

45. The Service Delivery Project, which is the most important initiative under Modernising Government Programme, has been implemented in 2587 institutions. Several innovative experiments like quality circles and 'Sevana Mudra' certification which is an attempt to benchmark and standardize Service Delivery in public institutions, are being

piloted successfully. Guided by the promise and relevance of the Service Delivery Project, my Government has decided to launch the second phase of MGP for which Government of India has been approached.

46. Kerala has been selected as the State having the best Panchayati Raj system in the country. I consider this as the acknowledgement of the successful efforts of my Government in strengthening decentralization in the State. Efforts are on to enable the new local Governments to provide responsive governance. The much-delayed computerization of local Governments has restarted now and would be completed in the next year. This will significantly improve issue of certificates, maintenance of accounts and monitoring of development programmes, and, later lead to citizen-friendly e-governance.

47. The urban development efforts in the State would receive a boost with the implementation of the ADB assisted Kerala Sustainable Urban Development Project through the five City Corporations of the State. My Government is ready to make the best use of the newly launched Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.

48. Kerala can be justifiably proud of the outstanding achievements of Kudumbashree in socially and economically empowering the poor. Kudumbashree is now an international best practice and its strength will be utilized by my Government to launch many initiatives, inter alia, setting up

a Micro-finance Company under the aegis of Kudumbashree, developing five clusters of micro enterprises to promote local economic development etc.

49. For the overall development of SCs my Government has strived to create an environment where they get access to quality education for enabling them to have gainful employment. With this motive 4 lakh students were covered under pre matric and post matric studies under Educational Concession Scheme. My Government proposes to start a Nursing College exclusively for the benefit of SCs and STs by upgrading one of the para-medical institutions in 2006-07.

50. My Government has always accorded highest priority to tribal development and endeavoured for elimination of poverty and reduction of unemployment among the tribals. During the last three years, developmental activities to the tune of Rs.350 crores were implemented out of the funds earmarked under the TSP corpus fund. My Government also proposes to extend Health Insurance coverage to all primitive tribal families. Priority has also been accorded for the completion of construction works of the Pre-matric Hostels and Model Residential/Ashram Schools. This august House is aware of the problem of landlessness among the tribals. Tribal resettlement is a major activity under the TSP. Since the formation of the Tribal Mission, a total extent of 5902.92 acres of land has been distributed to 3802 tribal families. My Government also proposes to implement a special package

for the tribes of Wayanad and a comprehensive package for the primitive tribes.

51. Under Rural development, besides other schemes National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme will be implemented in two districts viz. Palakkad and Wayanad. My Government proposes to assist 30000 families for starting micro enterprises next year under Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana.

52. Kerala has always been recognized nationally as well as internationally for producing the best sporting talent. The Kerala Sports Act 2000 amended recently provides for wider representation and enhanced scope of functions for the Kerala State Sports Authority. A "State Sports Welfare Fund" similar to the "National Sports Welfare Fund" will be constituted for the development and welfare of sports persons in the State. It is proposed to establish a Sports Science Centre in Ernakulam similar to the one operated by Sports Authority of India at its regional center at Bangalore.

53. My Government is of the firm belief that empowerment of the youth is essential for the development of the State. The Youth Affairs Department through the Youth Welfare Boards has drawn up ambitious plans to identify entrepreneurial potential in youth and to enable them to explore opportunities in emerging sectors related to IT and IT enabled services and also in the traditional sectors.

54. My Government is committed to maintain an investor friendly climate in the State without compromising the rights and privileges of labourers. The Labour Department intends to fix Floor Level Minimum Wages for employment in all sectors. Kerala has made considerable progress in extending social security coverage through the mechanism of welfare fund establishment boards. A welfare fund scheme for the workmen of shops and commercial has been introduced.

55. I am happy to note that the Chief Minister released the Draft IPR Policy Document in December 2005. This initiative of my Government in the Law Department is the first ever in this direction in our country. Various I.T. Projects undertaken in Law Department have started accruing positive benefits and my Government intends to take this initiative forward in the coming year.

56. Kerala State Legal Services Authority has also set up Aid Clinics in 50 Block Panchayats. A book titled "Niyamapaddom" was distributed to school students free of cost.

57. The Law Reforms Committee has identified and prepared a List of 102 Acts and 595 Amendment Acts, which can be repealed. My Government brought out an Ordinance for repealing 697 enactments namely, the Kerala Repealing and Amending Ordinance, 2005 (18 of 2005) which was promulgated in December 2005.

58. My Government launched a mammoth statewide programme 'Revenue Adalath' covering all 1566 villages for 15 working days from 3-1-2006 till 20-1-2006 for disposal of all pending applications/petitions received from the public. The programme received very good response from the public and I am happy to note that about 211087 petitions could be disposed of during the Adalath.

59. During the period up to November 2005, the Revenue Department issued a total of 66500 Pattayams under different categories and 10000 numbers of record of rights to the occupants of lands. In the Survey Department, utilizing modern scientific equipment, resurvey of an area of 1180 sq.km. has been completed.

60. The Kerala State Housing Board launched a new housing scheme, 'Suraksha', under which Government accorded sanction for construction of 2752 houses. This scheme will be continued during the year 2006-07, with the assistance of voluntary organizations for construction of 40000 houses.

61. My Government has taken effective steps to control illegal lotteries. Online lottery has been stopped completely. There has been significant increase in revenue from lottery sales, on account of the effective steps taken by my Government to control illegal lotteries. The circumstances which led to the restarting of the Kerala Paper Lottery in May 2005 is known to this august House.

62. Besides many activities in the field of culture, my Government proposes to construct a new building with all facilities for Sree Chitra Art Gallery and protect Sree Chitra Art Gallery and Napier Museum as scientific memorials.

63. My Government believes in the overall development of forests by ensuring active participation of the forest dependent people in conservation efforts. It is proposed to implement a scheme for planting trees in public and private land under "Habitat Forestry". A scheme for detection of ganja cultivation in interior forests and for prevention of smuggling of trees will be launched with the help of Advanced Data Processing and Research Institute, Secunderabad. The Programme "Wonderful Wilderness" will be implemented in selected 10 Eco-Tourism Centers as part of Eco-tourism Programme.

64. My Government has decided to set up a new Department of Environment for effective regulation and management of matters concerning environment protection. This Department would commission studies to highlight the problems and suggest solutions for prevention of environmental degradation that would be implemented by taking corrective measures within a fixed time frame. A Draft Environment Policy is being prepared and will be declared shortly.

65. A Hill Area Development Agency was constituted for the integrated and sustainable development of the hill areas

of the State. This agency is intended to play a catalytic role in facilitating development of the hill regions through more coherent planning appropriate to the locality and galvanizing the existing agencies working in the areas.

66. All the 193 Treasuries of the State stand fully computerised. A system to generate reports on Receipts and Expenditure of the State Government on a day to day basis, which will enable the Finance Department to monitor the fiscal position and the developmental activities effectively will be commissioned in March 2006. New Sub Treasuries have been opened at Alakkode in Kannur, Manalur in Thrissur, Mannar in Alappuzha, Kadakkavoor in Thiruvananthapuram and Vandoor in Malappuram.

67. My Government has introduced Teller System for the disbursement of pension at Sub Treasury, Kottayam as a beginning. Other Treasuries, where the number of pensioners is on the higher side are being identified for extending this system.

68. The importance of waterways in the socio economic development of Kerala is quite visible. My Government is committed to the development of Smart Waterways as suggested by His Excellency the President of India. The works on development of Kovalam-Kollam, Kottappuram-Hosdurg stretch of West Coast Canal and other feeder canals in the State are proposed to be undertaken during 2006-07.

69. I am happy to say that the Meenachil River Valley Project intended to meet the irrigation needs of large areas in Kottayam District is proposed for implementation in two phases. Approval for the implementation of the first phase at a cost of Rs. 65.27 crore has been issued and the work on this project will commence during this year.

70. The drought like situation in Wayanad and Palakkad in the recent year is too fresh in our memory. The work in the Palakappandy Diversion Scheme, which aims at reducing the water scarcity problems of Chittur Taluk in Palakkad District has started and will be completed during the year 2006-07. The Regulator-cum-Bridge at Thrithala in Palakkad District, which was partially commissioned in August 2005, will be commissioned fully during 2006-07. The Karappuzha Irrigation Project and the Banasurasagar Irrigation Project will be partially commissioned during this year.

71. As part of one-year action plan, the Kerala Water Authority has taken up 127 Water Supply Schemes during the last year. Of these, 72 schemes have been completed. Kerala Water Authority has taken up 195 schemes for immediate intervention and 5 comprehensive schemes under long-term measures, in the tsunami affected areas of which 171 schemes have been completed. The initial bottlenecks in JBIC assisted Kerala Water Supply Project for Rs. 1787 crores have been resolved.

72. Under Jalanidhi, a rural water supply & sanitation project assisted by the World Bank, 401 water supply schemes have been completed during the year 2005-06 benefiting 130,635 people. The implementation of Jalanidhi Project will be continued during the year 2006.

73. In addition to the Rain Water Harvesting Campaign which was launched in the year 2004, my Government has now launched a "People's Campaign for Conservation and Preservation of Water" by involving NGOs, Voluntary Organizations, Socio Cultural Organizations, experts in the field of water conservation and students. The 'Water Literacy Project', the first of its kind in India will be continued and the 'Jalajagrithi Samithies' at the Panchayath/ District and State levels will intensify their activities.

74. Under the newly introduced centrally sponsored scheme 'Repair Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies' used for irrigation, two pilot projects for restoration of irrigation tanks in Palakkad and Pathanamthitta Districts have been approved by Government of India. Sanction has been accorded by Government for taking up construction of farm roads in command areas by CADA under various projects.

75. The World Bank aided Kerala State Transport Project (Rs. 1612.80 crores for upgradation and heavy maintenance of 1600 km. roads and inland waterways in the State) achieved remarkable progress.

76. The Roads & Bridges Development Corporation, Kerala Ltd. has completed ten Railway Over Bridges at a cost of about 50 crores. Three other ROBs at a cost of Rs. 12 crores will be completed by March 2006 and during 2006-07 ten more ROBs will be completed. PWD has started the execution of the 1000 kms. hill highway. The first phase of Nandarappadavu to Palakkad has been taken up and survey from Palakkad to Kadukkara near Thiruvananthapuram is being completed. 42 kms. of city roads in Thiruvananthapuram are being developed under Kerala Road Fund Board.

77. My Government has announced a comprehensive road policy for the first time, taking care of each and every segment of road users. Brisk modernization, use of high-tech machinery in road building, development of HR, road safety implementation and other measures are being resorted to, in order to ensure a world class infrastructure to meet the developmental challenges of the 21st century.

78. Kerala can indeed be proud of the good nutrition status of her school-going children. My Government recently launched a novel programme to supply one fruit/one egg per week to all school children of Government and Aided Schools right from Pre-primary classes to Class VII. This ambitious programme, benefiting about 23 lakh students, is an additional investment to tackle any incidence of malnutrition, hidden or otherwise, among the school-going children. My Government introduced the Grading System for SSLC Examination from March 2005 onwards. This has not only

helped mitigate the anxiety of students facing public examinations but also helped in improving the quality of school education comprehensively. This system has now been extended to other examinations including Higher Secondary Examination of March 2006. EDUSAT connecting all the Schools in the State will be ensured by July 2006. An exclusive channel for school education will commence transmission shortly.

79. I am also happy to announce that Government has established the 'K. R. Narayanan National Institute of Visual Science and Arts' at Thekkumthala in Kottayam District. The Institute will be functioning with the technical assistance of internationally acclaimed institutions.

80. My Government is committed to supplying quality power at affordable cost to all the people in the State by 2007. In the coming year KSEB proposes to add 150 MW to the grid by commissioning a number of schemes. To give a boost to our efforts to tap the renewable source of energy, KSEB and ANERT propose to establish a wind farm of 4 MW at Ramakkalmedu in Idduki District during 2006-07. Government accords top priority to reduce the T & D loss by 2% every year by construction of sub-stations, installation of distribution transformers, replacement of faulty energy meters and intensification of anti-power theft activities. For improving the quality and reliability of power supply, KSEB proposes to strengthen the transmission network by constructing EHT sub-stations and lines. The construction of 400 KV Sub-station

at Pallipuram and the 400 KV line from Madurai to Thiruvananthapuram has been completed and commissioned by the Power Grid Corporation.

81. As part of the 100-day programme, in the last one year, 776678 new electricity connections were sanctioned, out of which 152134 beneficiaries were BPL families. This is for the first time, that such a large number of connections were sanctioned in such a short time. The Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyuthikar Yojana, for which Government of India has sanctioned Rs. 343 crores, has been operationalised in 3753 hamlets. Under the APRPD Scheme for energy savings and voltage improvement, Government of India has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 552 crores and work has already commenced. I am happy to state that within a span of 2 years, all houses in Kerala would get electricity connection.

82. It is heartening to note that through concerted efforts, revenue deficit of the Board which was at Rs. 1007.43 crores in the year 2003-04 has been brought down to Rs. 342.77 crores in 2004-05. KSEB has not increased tariff since October 2002. Government took a pathbreaking decision to reduce tariff of all domestic and commercial VII A and VII B consumers by 20 paise per unit with effect from 1st January 2006. Let me proclaim that it is for the first time that such a bold step has been taken by any Government in the history of our State.

83. Kerala is now positioned as the number one tourist destination in the country. The State recorded an all-time high of over 17.28% growth in foreign tourist arrivals during the year 2004. My Government's focus in the coming year will be on the Integrated Development of Tourism Circuits connecting the tourist destinations of the State, sustainable tourism and specialized tourism like health tourism, eco tourism, farm tourism while giving thrust to conservation of our heritage and culture. Large Projects like International Hospitality Management Institute at Alappuzha, Ayurvedic Resort & Herbal Garden at Vagamon and Holistic Health Care Resort & Spice Garden at Nelliampathy will be given priority. The Tourist Centers of Munnar, Ponmudi and Thekkinkadu Maidan will be developed and upgraded to international standards. Kerala Tourism will extend the promotional efforts in untapped markets such as South - East Asia and United States. The task of providing basic amenities to the pilgrim centers of the State under the Pilgrim Circuit Scheme has been taken up. The target set by His Excellency the President of India in tourism sector by 2010 is to triple the arrival of international tourists and to double that of domestic tourists, for which an action plan has already been drawn up.

84. Taking cognizance of the alarming increase in the number of road accidents in the State, a number of quick measures were taken by the Motor Vehicles Department. My Government has already issued an Ordinance to set up a Road Safety Authority. It is also proposed to install Speed Watchtowers at speed prone stretches of National Highway.

The Road Safety Clubs proposed to be set up in educational institutions are expected to take the message of road safety forward.

85. My Government has taken initial steps for setting up a Light Metro Rail System at Cochin, covering a distance of 25 kms., as an alternate mode of mass rapid transport system for the millions of commuters in the commercial capital of the State. The detailed project report, prepared by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has been forwarded to Government of India for approval. Government has also decided to appoint KINFRA as the nodal agency for the proposed project.

86. I am confident that the dream of Keralites for the fourth airport of the State at Kannur, will soon be transformed into reality. My Government has forwarded a detailed proposal to Government of India for approval for construction of the airport on PPP (Public Private Participation) mode.

87. During the year 2005-06, Kerala State Road Transport Corporation implemented several measures to reduce expenditure and to improve revenue collection. The average daily collection of KSRTC, which was Rs. 1.60 crores during the previous regime, has now reached an impressive figure of Rs. 2.62 crores. Operating loss of the Corporation has been brought down from Rs. 18 Crores to Rs. 8 crores per month. Technologically advanced and passenger friendly buses have been added to the fleet, phasing out over-aged buses to afford better travelling facilities to the commuting public. 1469 new buses, including 1024 hightech buses have been put on road by KSRTC since my Government took up the reigns of

administration. Mini buses have been introduced to cater to the travelling needs of the people on rural and interior routes. KSRTC intends to put on road 400 new buses during 2006-07.

88. The task ahead is full of challenges. However, I am confident that for the greater public good of Kerala, for making the dreams of Keralites come true, for doing justice to the faith and trust reposed on us by the people of this unique and richly blessed State, a unity of purpose for development will emerge out of political diversity. Once this happens I am sure, there will be no looking back on our march towards development.

89. I am quite convinced that under the able and dynamic leadership of the Chief Minister my Government has the necessary political will and commitment to transform Kerala into one of the most developed States of India. Initiatives taken by the Government in the field of industrial development, creation of physical and social infrastructure, agriculture and traditional sectors of the economy, poverty alleviation and employment generation programmes with welfare measures for the downtrodden have placed Kerala on a firm trajectory of development and growth. In fact Kerala is now favourably poised to realize its true potential as never before. Let us take a pledge that political differences will not come in the way of development.

JAI HIND