

FEBRUARY 16, 1979

Respected Mr. Speaker and Hon'ble Members,

I have great pleasure in welcoming you all to this Session of the Assembly. It is also my proud privilege to address you for the second time since I took charge as the Governor of Kerala. I extend my good wishes to you all, and through you, to the people of Kerala.

Before I proceed with my speech, I wish to express my sentiments over the sad demise of six of our Members of this august House. It is very sad and unfortunate that we have lost six of the prominent Members, including a Member of the Cabinet, during the last one year—Sarvashri E. John Jacob, M. P. Narayanan Nair, Pattiam Gopalan, T. A. Ibrahim, M. Kunjukrishnan Nadar and P. P. George. I wish to pay homage to the memory of those departed leaders, and on behalf of you all, I convey my heartfelt sympathies to the members of the bereaved families.

In the past year, there had been some major political changes in the State. In October, 1978, the Ministry headed by Shri A. K. Antony resigned and the new Ministry under the present Chief Minister Shri P. K. Vasudevan Nair was sworn in. I express my appreciation of the excellent work done by Shri A. K. Antony and his colleagues during his tenure of office as Chief Minister for the people of the State.

In this context, I would like to make it clear that the change in leadership has not in any way affected the administration or policies of the present Government.

The year 1978 was marked by political stability and progress. The efforts of my Government were focussed mainly on the chronic socio-economic problems faced by the State. The economy of this State has registered a marked improvement in different directions as a result of the implementation of progressive socio-economic programmes. My Government have done laudable work in connection with the floods, last year. It is a matter of pride that in spite of heavy floods and other adverse factors my Government have been able to stabilise the prices of most of the essential commodities.

It is a matter of credit to my Government that the recommendations of the Pay Commission were fully accepted and implemented, bringing substantial benefit to its employees. The integrated Rural Development Programme covering 58 Community Development Blocks has been launched by my Government. In the field of Dairy Development, the Operation Flood Programme II is proposed to be started by my Government. A number of housing schemes have been taken up for the weaker sections of the Society. The launching of separate housing schemes for Kudikidappukars, Fishermen and Harijans has been a creditable achievement of my Government during last year. The commissioning of Pazhassi Project and dedication of the Sri Chitra Tirunal Medical Centre at Trivandrum to the nation by the Prime Minister and the inauguration of the first stage of Pampa Irrigation Project by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation are other significant events. The scheme for the unemployed and the welfare schemes for the poor and destitute are also being implemented by my Government. The formation of the Wayanad Revenue Division is an important step that will help development of that area. The satisfactory law and order situation and a peaceful labour front have contributed to general progress in no small measure. The achievements in various fields have instilled in us a new confidence in facing the future with courage and hope. I shall now place before you the concise record of the implementation of various programmes by my Government and the broad outlines of its policies for the year 1979-80.

As stated earlier, last year many parts of the country were ravaged by devastating floods causing considerable destruction to life and property and endless human misery. The State of Kerala was also subjected to unprecedented rainfall and floods in November, 1978. Apart from loss of human lives, the fury of the floods caused tremendous havoc and distress. While the full extent of damage could not be evaluated the damage under various quantifiable items has been estimated at Rs. 75.20 crores. On the recommendations made by the Central Team which visited the State, the Government of India sanctioned Rs. 11 crores as advance plan assistance and Rs. 2 crores as short-term loan. In addition 12,500 tonnes of rice and wheat have been allotted to this State free of cost. Though the Central assistance was far below our expectations, and was not commensurate with the demands raised by us, my Government are grateful to the Government of India for their speedy and timely help.

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Massive relief measures to the tune of Rs. 3.5 crores were ordered by the State Government. Ex-gratia payments of Rs. 5000 each were made to families of those who died in rescue operations and Rs. 3000 each to the families of those who died in the floods. Financial assistance upto Rs. 600 for fully destroyed houses and upto Rs. 300 for the partly damaged ones was also sanctioned by the Government. Government also supplied teak poles tree of cost to those whose houses have been damaged. Free ration for two weeks was given to the affected persons and uniform cloth and books supplied to school children. Government have sanctioned liberal concession to cultivators affected by floods and have arranged for the free supply of seeds. As a relief to cultivators, all steps taken under the Revenue Recovery Act relating to the Agricultural loans were stayed by the Government for a period of six months. A number of relief works have also been taken up. Action is already in progress for repairing and restoring the damaged roads inspite of financial constraints.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the voluntary efforts and co-operation extended by the people, political parties and various organisations and financial institutions in facing the situation. I may add a word of praise for the commendable work done by the various Government Departments, particularly Police and Defence personnel and Excise Guards in connection with the floods. I also gratefully remember those who have lost their valuable lives in rescue operations.

As the Honourable members are aware, the Central Government decided to change the Planning process in several ways and as part of the new strategy terminated the Five Year Plan 1974-79 with the Annual Plan for 1977-78 and formulated a medium term Plan for 1978-83. The Annual Plan for 1978-79 was finalised on an ad-hoc basis and it was hoped that the medium term Plan for 1978-83 would be finalised before the end of the financial year 1978-79. As it is, it looks as though this might not happen and the Annual Plan for 1979-80 will have to be finalised in the midst of uncertainties.

In this connection I would like to mention here that experience of Planning in this country during the past years has shown, that a highly centralised system of planning can result only in wide regional disparities. The State Government have been, for some time past, actively considering the question of evolving an appropriate frame work for initiating plan formulation from the grass root level, with the active participation of the people. Government are proceeding with the work relating to formulation of District Plans and Block Plans. District Planning Officers have already been posted for this purpose in some districts and steps are being taken to set up the district planning machinery. My Government have also decided that there should be very close association of experts in the planning process & have, therefore, decided to have the State Planning Board reconstituted with a full time Vice-Chairman and Members.

With regard to the finalisation of the Five Year and Annual Plans, Members are aware of the strong pressure exerted by the States at the Centre to increase the States' Plan outlay, and transfer adequate resources to the States. It was pointed out at the meeting of the National Development Committee by my Government that there should be reasonable parity in per capita Plan outlay of the States. The State Government are of opinion that the financial allocation for the Plans has been faulty and unscientific, resulting in regional disparities. To correct these imbalances, it is felt by my Government as well as many other State Governments that there should be a more rational and bold approach in the allocation of funds to the weaker State from the Centre.

Under the award of the Seventh Finance Commission, there is a wide disparity in the per capita surplus in the revenue account accruing to each State. This has contributed to a situation where the backward States are not having adequate resources for Plan investment. A suggestion was made by my Government and supported by many of the State Governments that a portion of the Central assistance for State Plan should be set apart for giving special assistance to those States whose per capita revenue surplus is below the all States' average. It is unfortunate that there is no definite decision on this matter till now. My Government also consider it necessary that there should be a reconsideration and restructuring of the Centre-State financial relations for the successful implementation of the Five Year Plans. My Government are aware of the need for curtailing the non-Plan expenditure to the minimum, in order to be able to find more resources for Plan investments.

There is also need to improve the working of public sector enterprises to generate more resources. My Government look forward to co-operation from all sections of people in achieving the objectives.

The position regarding the price and the availability of rice and wheat continued to be satisfactory during 1978-79 due to the adequate supply of wheat and rice by the Government of India and the abundant

availability of rice and wheat in the open market. Now Government have permitted the ration shops to deal in other selected commodities. The public distribution system is playing a vital role in controlling the prices, and Government intend to strengthen it further.

In view of the falling price of paddy and tapioca, Government last year decided to implement a Price Support Scheme for paddy and tapioca. Now paddy is being purchased at the rate of Rs. 120 per quintal bringing considerable relief to the cultivators. The price support scheme for tapioca is being started by the Government. My Government had been urging the Government of India for fixing a remunerative floor price for rubber.

Increased agricultural production depends not only on the availability of adequate inputs at appropriate prices but also on the availability of reasonable return to the farmer. This is particularly so for our State where valuable cash crops are produced for export purposes, thus contributing significantly to the earning of foreign exchange. My Government feel strongly that attempts should be made to establish Price Stabilisation Fund which would take care of price fluctuations, if any, occurring in the price of agricultural products owing to any reason so that the producer can look forward to reasonable prices.

Another matter which is of concern to my Government relates to unilateral decisions taken by the Central Government affecting very seriously the revenues of the State. Members are aware how certain amendments to the Central Sales Tax Act made in 1976-77 have already created problems for the State. It is a matter of regret that our repeated protests and pleas to the Central Government in this regard have been in vain. It is again a matter of concern to us that the Central Government are reported to be contemplating a constitutional amendment which would seriously erode the right of States to earn revenues from exportable commodities. My Government trust that the proposal will be given up. In this context my Government also would like to press again with the Central Government for reimbursement of the revenue loss already incurred by the State on account of the amendments carried out to the Central Sales Tax Act.

The strategy for agricultural development that will be followed by the State during the coming year is based mainly on an area development approach. Efforts will be made by my Government to increase the productivity of both food and commercial crops. A number of programmes are devised for expanding cultivation of cocoa, pepper, cashewnut, coconut etc. Government have now geared up their machinery in order to formulate proper schemes and projects so as to avail themselves of institutional finance for developmental activities. Greater emphasis will be paid to endure more effective extension activity among the farmers. I am glad to say that after initial teething troubles, the Special Agricultural Development Programme financed by the World Bank is making progress.

In the field of land reforms, as the House can be legitimately proud, Kerala has been far ahead of many other States. As a second stage, with the near completion of land reforms, my Government are now engaged in the improvement of the well being of several lakhs of families so benefited. My Government's attention has, therefore, been on devising schemes for helping the small and marginal farmers and the agricultural labourers to improve their productivity and income, and also their quality of life. The SFDA programme was extended to non-SFDA areas and the Integrated Rural Development Programme has also been taken up in the State. Government also propose to encourage the lakhs of small cultivators to undertake intercropping by providing suitable incentives. Credit planning through commercial banks and Co-operative Societies has been intensified by close monitoring of lead bank activities. Irrigation facilities have been stepped up. My Government will continue to lay stress on improving the rural economy so that the economic and social benefits of tenurial reforms are maximised. Government are taking steps for the expeditious distribution of 10,000 hectares of vested forest land. Government also propose to set apart a portion of the land for development of plantations in the public sector. Government are convinced that such a programme will help the development of the economy of the State and also provide large scale employment to the rural poor.

The command areas of Malampuzha, Peechi and Chalakudi are approved for development under the Central Scheme for Command Area Development. It is proposed to set up a full fledged Command Area Development Authority to ensure integrated development of areas irrigated by approved Major Irrigation Projects.

As I mentioned already, one significant achievement during the year was the commissioning of Pazhassi Irrigation Project by the Prime Minister of India. Another Project taken up during the Third Plan i.e., Kanhirapuzha Irrigation Project is proposed to be commissioned during 1979-80. In order to make in-depth

studies in regard to efficient water conservation, management and use, the Centre for Water Resources Development, which had been established has also been formally inaugurated at Calicut by the Prime Minister recently. The Kuttiyadi Augmentation Scheme is a new Hydro Electric Project under investigation. Preliminary survey has been completed and the Project Report has been submitted to the Central Electricity Authority.

Though we have a satisfactory build-up of power generation capacity much remains to be done towards strengthening the transmission and distribution network to provide for optimum utilisation of power within the State. The Plan proposals for 1978-83 have accordingly been drawn up giving priority to transmission and distribution.

The Silent Valley Hydro Electric Project has since been revised with added technical features and early final approval of Government of India is expected. An Ordinance for the protection of ecological balance in the Silent Valley protected areas has been promulgated on the 30th December, 1978.

Work on Kakkad Hydro Electric Project with a plant capacity of 50 Mega Watt and an energy potential of 260 million units has commenced. Preliminary work on the lower Periyar Hydro Electric Project with a plant capacity of 180 Mega Watt and an energy potential of 615 million units has been undertaken. It is proposed to seek Canadian assistance for the Idukki Hydro Electric Project Stage II and assistance from the World Bank for a Transmission Project at an estimated cost of Rs. 63.93 crores.

In the field of forestry, effective steps will be taken by my Government to protect and maintain the forest wealth and sustained efforts will be made to bring additional areas under plantations. Government propose to start wood based industries in the public sector to ensure avoidance of wastage of timber and maximise its utilisation. For making available to the poor people firewood at reasonable prices, Government propose to establish more number of fair price firewood depots.

With a view to ensuring the welfare of Tribals, the right to collect minor forest produce will be entrusted to Co-operative Societies of Tribals. A Fire Depot-cum-Training Centre with New Zealand collaboration has already been started. It will come into full swing during this year. Government is also considering the establishment of a full-fledged wild life wing.

Kerala has made considerable headway in cattle development. Under the Operation Flood Programme II for increasing the milk producing capacity of the State, 6.5 lakhs of breadable cattle will be brought under Intensive Dairy Development Programme in the Anand pattern at an expenditure of Rs. 1075.50 lakhs. This programme will be financed by the Indian Dairy Corporation. All the potential areas for milk production in the State will be covered by this Programme. More than 2 lakhs farmers will be benefited when the Scheme is fully implemented.

Honourable Members are aware of the steps taken by the Government for the rapid industrialisation of the State. I am glad to state that the results of these efforts have been satisfactory. My Government's policy had been to support and strengthen the traditional industries which give large-scale employment to the people. At the same time, Government are also of opinion that basic and heavy industry will have to be given due importance. The industrial development of a country and its over-all economic growth including agricultural development is dependent on a broad base of heavy industries.

The various programmes undertaken by my Government for the industrialisation of the State are making good progress. Kerala State Electronic Development Corporation continued to show steady progress in the development of Electronic Industries. It is a matter of serious concern that various public sector undertakings are still inviting global tenders while so much progress has been made in indigenous technology in the field of electronics. I hope that Government of India will issue suitable instructions in this regard.

Significant progress has been made in the establishment of the ambitious project of the Government, the Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited. Malabar Cements Limited, Walayar and Steel Industries Limited, Kerala have also recorded substantial progress during the year.

The Kerala Minerals Exploration and Development Project aided by UNDP has succeeded in initiating geological exploration in respect of various minerals in different districts of the State.

In the textile sector, Kerala State Textile Corporation has taken over four sick mills and is running them efficiently. The Trivandrum Spinning Mills Limited, Balaramapuram has started making marginal profits.

1978 was a trying year for our cashew industry and the State-owned Cashew Development Corporation. There was an unprecedented crash in the international price of cashew kernels leading to heavy loss for the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation. Though the Government of India are reluctant to give subsidy for cashew exports, they have expressed willingness to give an immediate loan of Rs. 5 crores to our Corporation and another Rs. 5 crores linked to export of balance stock. It is necessary to create a fund to stabilise the industry in order to face the crisis it is periodically subjected to. It is felt by my Government that the profit earned by the Cashew Corporation of India in importing cashew should be the mainstay of this fund.

Traditional industries like Handloom, Coir, Beedi, Cashew etc., are the major source of livelihood for a sizable section of our population. In the Handloom and Coir sectors, as also in Beedi industry, my Government's efforts have been in bringing more and more workers into the co-operative fold. Investment in these industries results in a direct employment of more persons than in any other industry. I hope that in the coming years we will be able to pump in more money and thereby achieve substantially higher results in the sector. It is regrettable that the Government of India does not, at times, appreciate the special problems of some of these industries. A case in point is the support given to the policy of decontrol in the Coir Industry based on the recommendations of the Sivaraman Committee Report. My Government have already expressed themselves strongly against decontrol. It would perhaps be wise for the Government of India to leave the State to make its own policies concurring Coir and Cashew which are essentially Kerala's monopoly industries providing employment to several lakhs of people.

The Mini-Industrial Estate Programme will be continued in a systematic and scientific way by adopting better procedures in the selection of sites, entrepreneurs and projects and by providing institutionalised training to the entrepreneurs and organised marketing arrangements for the products.

Special steps will be taken for the revival of industrial co-operatives and concessions will be granted for industrial units set up by women and Harijans.

District Industries Centres have already been established. Action has already been taken to organise and strengthen the staff position in these centres to enable them to provide initiative and leadership for the various industrial activities in the Districts. All the services and support required by small and village entrepreneurs will be provided as a package in these centres.

My Government propose to continue with their policy of encouraging healthy Trade-unionism in the State based on collective bargaining in the labour front. It is a matter of credit to my Government that they could resolve a large number of labour issues in the State last year through bilateral negotiations and conciliation. In this context I express my Government's anxiety regarding some of the provisions which are likely to adversely affect the interest of the labour in the newly introduced Industrial Relations Bill in Parliament. My Government trust that nothing would be done to harm the healthy trade-unionism in the Country.

The law and order situation in the State has been quite satisfactory during the year and the State Government was able to control and contain even the few incidents that occurred by firm and effective and timely handling of the situations. The Civil authorities have been keeping their eyes and ears open to prevent the eruption of any large scale incidents affecting public peace or communal harmony. The Police have been able to keep in check any tendency for increase in crime and for the purpose they have been provided with sophisticated equipments and means of transport and communication. Government wish to check the rising trend in traffic accidents and consequent loss of life, by forming more Mobile Courts and Traffic Enforcement Squads equipped with modern aids and equipments. Government are unhappy at the activities of the R.S.S. which is providing weapon training to its members and trying to foment communal disharmony in the State. Government have taken steps to prevent the giving of weapon training or organised route marches with arms by any organisation whether political or communal.

Government have also been aware of the lack of amenities for the members of the Police Force and as a result of the various construction projects taken up, about 50% of the members of the Police Force are expected to be provided with residential accommodation by the end of this year.

A Special Cell has been set up in the Police Department to deal with cases relating to complaints put in by Harijans.

My Government are determined to take effective steps in weeding out corruption from public life. The Kerala Public Men (Investigation into Misconduct) Bill, 1978 which seeks to provide for investigation of allegations of misconduct against public men, is pending before the Select Committee.

Unemployment continues to be the most crucial problem facing the State. As stated earlier, during 1978-79 my Government launched a new scheme for giving unemployment relief at the rate of Rs. 400 per annum. A total number of 1,30,000 persons have been benefited by the scheme. There is also a proposal to link unemployment relief with productive employment generation schemes in future. In this connection I would like to make a special mention of the people from our State who have gone abroad, seeking employment, especially in the Gulf countries. Their difficulties have already been taken up with the Government of India and it is hoped that their problems will receive due attention and favourable response from the Central Government.

In the field of General Education, our twin priorities this year lie in the universal primary enrolment in adult education for those in the age group of 15-35 years. Government have initiated action to open about 300 new schools so that our school-going children, particularly in rural and remote areas, are given a chance to go to school.

110 Adult Education Centres were started on 2nd October, 1978. Government propose to cover 7 lakhs of illiterate adults by the end of 1979-80 through a programme of Adult Education operated largely by voluntary organisations, with Government acting as a friend and guide.

Kerala ranks first among the States in India in respect of Health facilities. In continuation of our dynamic Health Policy, rural dispensaries are proposed to be started in Panchayats newly created by the bifurcation of major Panchayats. In addition to the 44 Taluk Hospitals, new hospitals are proposed for 3 Taluks which do not have such facilities at present.

A Scheme for Health Care Programme in selected areas is proposed to be implemented so as to cover the medical requirements of the entire family in such areas on a contributory basis. The Government also propose to introduce a scheme for comprehensive medical check up of hotel employees. In collaboration with the KELTRON a new set up for repairs and maintenance of medical instruments in the major hospitals is being worked out.

It is proposed to establish an Institute for Mental Health and Neuro Sciences. The Kerala Health Research and Welfare Society proposes to take up construction of staff quarters for the staff in Rural Dispensaries in the State and also Janatha Pay Wards in Medical College Hospitals and District Headquarters Hospitals. The proposal for setting up National Institute of Ayurveda at Trivandrum is at an advanced stage.

In Kerala where the density of population is nearly three times the all India average the problem of housing is particularly acute. Despite the limited financial resources at their disposal, the State Government have been able to launch massive house construction programmes especially for the weaker sections by attracting institutional finance with the assistance and participation of voluntary agencies. In keeping with their programme to construct one million houses in ten years at the rate of one lakh houses per year, Government, in the course of the year, have been able to start the construction of about 65,000 houses for the weaker sections of the society. By this measure Government also hope to increase the potentialities of rural employment.

The Kerala State Housing Board is operating about 50 public housing schemes covering almost all districts. One of the notable achievements in the past year is the completion of the first stage of the Chengalchoola Slum Clearance Scheme and handing over of 168 flats to beneficiaries. Construction has already been started with regard to the second stage. It is expected that another 176 flats will be completed by this October.

A scheme to make available bank loan facilities to employees and private school teachers who are not eligible for loan under the existing Housing Schemes is also under consideration by Government. Government have also asked the Housing Board to formulate a Rental Housing Scheme for Secretariat employees. A Housing Scheme for people of the State working overseas has also been taken up by the Board. A scheme for providing house sites to landless workers is in good progress.

A Housing Loan Scheme for Industrial Workers and a Scheme for the construction of hostels in Trivandrum, Quilon and Calicut for housing industrial labourers are under the active consideration of my Government.

As mentioned earlier the Kerala Fishermen's Welfare Corporation has a massive housing programme for construction of 25,000 houses for traditional fishermen with the assistance from HUDCO. So also Government have evolved a housing scheme for kudikidappukars who have been granted certificate of purchase for the construction of 15,000 new houses in addition to the existing houses in Ambalapuzha, Shertallai and Quilon Taluks. The scheme is proposed to be extended to other places. The Kerala State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have also taken up a Housing Scheme with the loan assistance from HUDCO. This year the Corporation has embarked on a Scheme for constructing 10,000 low cost subsidised houses for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Fisheries constitute a vital resource of the State. Various steps have been taken over the years to develop this Sector. A brackish water hatchery for prawn culture has recently been established at Azhikode. A scheme for the introduction of Purse-Seine fishing has been sanctioned. The Kerala Fisheries Corporation is exploring the possibility of establishing an aluminium can-making unit in order to preserve fish catches, export them and thus better the revenues. A master plan for the development of fisheries, with emphasis on development of inland fisheries, is also under preparation. The question of entering into the new fields of deep sea fishing is also receiving attention. To exploit the rich potentialities of our marine resources Government have a number of Package Schemes and ARDC Schemes under their consideration.

In connection with the International Children's Year, special programmes for children have been drawn up. Special stress has been laid on child development and rehabilitation of physically and mentally retarded. To meet the wide-spread nutritional deficiency in children, child development services are being implemented.

My Government have implemented a number of Welfare Schemes for Harijans. This year a new colonisation scheme has been started in Karikattur in Kottayam District to settle 130 Harijan families with provision of houses, agricultural land and other amenities. The scheme is expected to be fully implemented in 1979-80.

It is proposed to revitalise the Harijan Co-operative Societies and start Balwadi-cum-feeding centres in Harijan colonies and settlements.

During the current year 21 L. P. Schools and 100 Balwadies have been sanctioned in the Tribal concentrated areas.

In Vested Forest lands exclusively set apart for Tribals, 4 major colonisation schemes are proposed for settling 2000 Tribals. Isolated hamlets will be taken up for integrated developments and it is proposed to cover 500 families next year.

It is proposed to implement integrated Development Programme in the 5 identified Integrated Tribal Development Projects during 1979-80. Training facilities to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will also be extended.

Government have decided to form a Corporation for the development of Christian converts from Scheduled Castes and communities which have been recommended by the State Government to the Centre for inclusion among the Scheduled Castes.

My Government have taken a decision to effect certain changes in the existing percentages of reservation for certain Backward Classes for appointments in public services. It has also been decided that in view of the long lapse of time, a fresh study on this question is called for. Government are considering the question of appointing a new Commission for this purpose.

In the area of Transport and Communications Kerala has made considerable progress. It is much better placed than most of the States so far as the length of roads is considered. The Government are making all efforts to persuade the Government of India for according sanction for the improvement of the National Highways by taking up works on by-passes and missing links. Government are vigorously pursuing the sanctioning by the Central Government of the Coastal Railway and the Calicut Airport. Improvement of village roads which form an integral part of rural development will receive greater emphasis.

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation, which operates about 35% of the public transport services in the State, has been concentrating on the replacement of old vehicles in the fleet, for improving the efficiency of the services. During the current year the Corporation has put on road 300 new buses, mainly for replacement. The programme for 1979-80 is to put 640 number of new buses on the road.

The development of ports has also been receiving the attention of the Government. The construction work of the second stage of the Lighterage Port at Neendakara will be taken up during the financial year 1979-80. There is a proposal for the establishment of a Search and Rescue organisation under the Ports Department to rescue the boats and fishermen in distress. Government are also considering the formation of a Kerala Maritime Corporation, with a view to promote Coastal trade and training of people in maritime practices.

In view of the tremendous potentialities for development of tourism in a big way, a Master Plan for tourism development has been prepared by the Government. The estimated cost of the various projects under this programme including the working capital needs is of the order of Rs. 35 crores. It is proposed to take up these programmes in a phased manner with the help of the national financial institutions.

The proposed Press Academy will be started soon. This year a sum of about Rs. 20 lakhs has been paid to the Kerala State Film Development Corporation as grant for payment of subsidy to Malayalam films.

I am proud to state that the policy of the State Government in promoting and developing sports activities has yielded rich dividends. During the current year Kerala State continued to maintain steady progress in the field of Sports and Games. It is a matter of pride for the State that the only achievement for the country in the athletics at the Commonwealth Games at Edmonton was recorded in the name of an athlete from Kerala. The same athlete Sri Suresh Babu won a gold medal for the country in the Asian Games at Bangkok held in 1978.

Additional District Coaching Centres are proposed to be opened in the ensuing year for better training facilities for players and athletes. Government are considering a proposal to institute a welfare fund for sportsmen who become disabled while participating in sports activities.

The Kerala Institute of Public Administration has considerably expanded its activities. A number of new training programmes have also been taken up by the Institute. I am glad to mention that eminent persons like Sri P. N. Haksar, Professor N. S. Ramaswamy are associated with its activities and the Institute is receiving their valuable guidance and help in all matters.

Before I conclude, I would like to make a mention of the intention of my Government to introduce certain legislative measures. With a view to bring about decentralisation in administration and accelerate the pace of development activities, Government propose to give priority to the enactment of the Kerala District Administration Bill. Government propose to introduce a Bill to constitute a fund to give relief to the cashew workers who are facing long spells of unemployment year after year. Government are also considering the constitution of a similar fund for coir workers and also for labourers engaged in climbing coconut trees.

So far we have covered the notable achievements of the Government, with a broad mention of its future policies in the different fields of administration. But whatever progress we have achieved is not enough and is a reminder of how much more we have to achieve. It is a paradox that even after three decades of planning in our country, large sections of the people are below the poverty line. Though in many spheres we are much better off than most of the other States, we have not been able to strike at the very roots of the twin problem of poverty and unemployment.

Along with growth in economy, we have also to ensure equitable distribution of wealth, so that the benefits of our enlightened economic policies safely reach the right hands and there is no poverty in the midst of plenty. The need of the hour is to implement drastic socio-economic measures to improve the plight of the weaker sections of the society. With discipline, hard work and the co-operative efforts of all sections of the people, we would be able to make much headway in the coming year. It is sincerely hoped that we will be able to achieve this goal with your co-operation and I wish you all success in your endeavour.

“JAI HIND”.