

JANUARY 25, 1995

*Hon'ble Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly,*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this session of the 9th Kerala Legislative Assembly. In this session, which falls in the fourth year of the present United Democratic Front Government of the State, I extend to each one of you my warm and sincere greetings and seek your whole-hearted co-operation in my Government's earnest endeavour to achieve rapid growth and development and all-round prosperity for the State.

2. The State of Kerala has effectively demonstrated to the rest of India, and to the World, that even a developing country with limited resources can achieve laudable results in the field of Education, Health and Human Resource Development if there is the will to strive hard. It has been the firm resolve of my Government to show to the world that Kerala can achieve similar success in the field of economic development also. With this clear objective, my Government had drafted a new Agricultural policy, a new Industrial policy and an elaborate policy for infrastructural development. I can say with a sense of achievement that my Government's efforts in translating these policies into action-plans and implementing them vigorously have been quite fruitful during the last 3 years.

3. It is indeed a matter of pride and satisfaction that the last three years have been years of all-round growth and development for the State. Because of the effective and successful administration of Law and Order, there has been a general atmosphere of peace which has encouraged steady progress on all fronts. In the industrial sector as well as the plantation sector, the general atmosphere of goodwill and peaceful relations contributed to a period of continuous growth. Our State has now reached that momentous point which economists call the 'take-off stage' of economic development which brings us to the very door-step of all-round prosperity.

4. It may be stated without fear of contradiction that my Government's efforts to create the necessary infrastructure for development in the State has met with commendable success. A firm foundation has been laid for the development of an excellent network of roads and of water transport facilities, the development of several minor ports and also of three international airports in the State. Work has been started on several diesel based thermal power projects which will be commissioned in the near future. Many public sector industrial units which were considered to be constantly sick and sinking have now turned round and started moving towards the path of progress and making reasonable profit. In the joint sector as well as in the private sector the foundation has been laid for several new projects which will come into being within another two or three years.

5. The liberalised economic policy of the Central Government has been successful in releasing the Indian State from the shackles of control and opening a new era of steady growth and expansion in Agriculture, Industry and other sectors of economic growth. The co-ordinated efforts of my Government with those of the Union Government have created a new environment in which Agriculture and Industry can grow at an impressively accelerated pace. Our policies have resulted in a higher level of income for our farmers and a high growth of industry in our State.

6. Agriculture and allied activities contribute the largest share of the State's income. I am happy to state that the bold initiatives taken by my Government under the Agricultural Development Policy announced in March, 1992 have paved the way for a systematic revival of Agriculture as a meaningful economic activity in the State. There has been a constant and perceptible improvement in the performance of almost all the important crops of the State both in total production and in the level of productivity. The production and productivity of coconut, for example, have increased substantially over the last three years. The plantation sector as a whole has recorded impressive growth. It is for the first time during a period of two decades that the agriculture sector has shown such steady and continuous growth for three years consecutively. The prices of agricultural products during this period, except in the case of coconut, have also been satisfactory. In the case of coconut the State Government launched an effective Price Support Scheme with the help of the

Government of India and collected over 60,000 tonnes of copra involving an amount of Rs. 150 crores. The State Government have also launched a massive coconut development programme with an outlay of over Rs. 215 crores to be implemented over a period of three years.

7. The strategy followed for the development of paddy has been to augment productivity through infrastructure development combined with mechanisation, and scientific processing and marketing. I am happy to announce that my Government have decided to initiate action this year to exempt farmers from the payment of charges for the electricity consumed for paddy cultivation so that the cultivation of paddy becomes less expensive and more profitable. In order to improve the productivity of pepper, my Government will implement a new Integrated Pest Management Programme this year. Detailed development programmes will be implemented for other spices like nutmeg, clove, ginger and turmeric also. It is a matter for satisfaction that my Government has been able to secure substantial financial assistance from the Government of India in the Agricultural sector and that more than 30 Centrally Sponsored Schemes are now being implemented in the State covering almost all the crops from coconut to betelvine.

8. I am proud to mention that, when the State was struck with an unprecedented flood during July-August, 1994, my Government, in spite of its severe financial difficulties could release an amount of Rs. 15 crores to provide relief and assistance to the flood-hit farmers.

9. Rapid industrial development is one of the highest priority areas of my Government. A large number of initiatives have already been taken to promote and facilitate industrial growth. One of the most important steps in this regard has been the formation of the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation which is setting up a number of industrial parks all over the State with the help of professional experts and in collaboration with reputed public and private organisations. As a result of these efforts, a visible improvement in the Industrial environment of the State can now be noticed. Places like Palakkad, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram are fast emerging as major industrial sites in addition to Kochi which already has grown as a vibrant industrial centre of India.

10. The traditional industries such as coir, handlooms, handicrafts, cashew etc., hold tremendous potential for large scale generation of employment in the State. All possible assistance will be provided to this sector for its healthy growth and expansion. Wherever possible, modern technology will be inducted into this sector to reduce the drudgery of work and to improve the quality of products.

11. My Government will accord the highest priority to establishing a very large number of small scale industries in the State. Applications for establishing such small industries will be cleared in the shortest possible time. Already the system of single window clearance has been introduced at the District level and the State level. This system will be further strengthened with the co-operation of various departments and organisations.

12. Our State is blessed with extensive deposits of very high quality mineral sands. My Government will make full use of this potential by expanding the existing public sector plants which produce Titanium Dioxide and also by establishing a few new projects for the extraction of mineral sands. For this purpose, joint, venture projects will be set up with reputed private companies which have the necessary technology and financial capability. A joint Indo-French Project for exploration of placer gold has already commenced its activity.

13. It will also be the endeavour of my Government to reorganise and rejuvenate the sick public sector undertakings. No doubt this is a very daunting task considering the huge amount of resources required and the enormous effort and energy which will have to be put in. However, I am happy to state that abundant co-operation is forthcoming from the Trade Unions and the employees of these undertakings in this endeavour.

14. In the power sector, the task before us is to augment the generation capacity to match with the rapidly growing demand in spite of the severe resource crunch facing the State. Private investors from India and abroad have to be attracted to invest in the power sector. Many proposals have been received in this regard and are now under active consideration.

15. After a long period of stagnation in the power production front, my Government started several new Diesel-based power projects in the State and all these projects will be completed within the 8th plan. Moreover, the ongoing Kakkad, Lower Periyar and other Small Hydel Projects will be completed before 31-3-1996. Work on the massive Pooyamkutty Hydro-electric Project will be started in 1995. It is expected that the first

stage of this project can be completed by the year 2003. Work on the Kayamkulam Thermal Power Project of the National Thermal Power Corporation will also commence this year; and it is a matter of satisfaction for the State that it has now been decided that the entire generation of power in this unit will be for the benefit of Kerala State.

16. Thermal power development, which is very capital intensive, will be opened up for private participation in Joint Venture Projects in which the State Government, or the State Electricity Board, will invest a part of the funds and the major portion of investments will come from the private sector either from within India or from abroad.

17. The Kerala State Electricity Board will also launch a massive 'System Improvement Scheme' in the Transmission and Distribution sectors, to avoid the loss and wastage of electricity. My Government also propose to create a separate Power Transmission Corporation in Kerala to design, implement, control and administer the massive high voltage power transmission lines.

18. My Government have realigned the Forest Management Policy in order to give topmost priority to the protection of forests and wild life and the conservation of biodiversity. Projects for eco-development, protection and propagation of rare and important forest species, preservation of endangered 'Shola' forests, and efficient management of specially protected areas have been formulated. In the coming year, a World Bank Aided Eco-development Programme for the Periyar Tiger reserve area will be taken up.

19. Most of the problems in forest protection stem from the lack of understanding of forests on the part of the public. The modern approach is to involve the public in the conservation and management of forests and wild life. In selected areas, therefore, my Government next year will introduce a long-term Joint Forest Management programme with public participation and involvement. The ongoing scheme of re-organisation of the administrative units of the Forest Department will be completed during 1995-96. The Forestry Information Bureau set up during 1993-94 will also be strengthened.

20. The programmes contemplated in the Fisheries Policy formulated by my Government will start getting implemented during 1995-96. The construction work of the proposed fishing harbours at Kayamkulam, Kattur-Pollathai and Punnapra will be started during the next financial year. Action will also be initiated for establishing another fishing harbour at Muthalappozhi.

21. New fish marketing centres will be established in major panchayats. A scheme for fish culture in all the ponds owned by the Panchayats and Municipalities will be taken up with the help of private investors.

22. The Production and distribution of Fish and Prawn seedlings from the Government Hatcheries to private farms has made remarkable strides due to the efforts of my Government. More than 10 million fish seedlings and more than 17 million prawn seedlings have been distributed during the current year. This momentum will be maintained and even improved during the next year.

23. During the current financial year the Rural Development Department of my Government has been able to rise the Per Family Investment (PFI) under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) to an all-time high. Ours is now one of the very few States in the country which have been able to substantially enhance the quantum of financial assistance to families below the poverty line. This tempo will not just be maintained but greatly accelerated next year. The State will give particular importance next year to the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) Programme. This programme will be converted into a vehicle of social transformation by involving in it mass campaigns against poverty, illiteracy, poor sanitation and so on. A conscious bias in favour of women's development will not only improve real rural family income, but also enhance the participation of women at all levels in the productive sectors of society.

24. It has been the consistent policy of my Government to make the co-operative sector an active and vibrant agency of development and social change. Commensurate with the growth of deposits, the co-operative are now poised for liberal disbursement of credit especially to the farmers and the weaker sections of society.

25. The Co-operative Hospital Complex at Pariyaram in Kannur District has commenced functioning. The proposed new Medical College attached to it will also start functioning in the very near future. Initial steps have also been taken to set up a modern Tyre factory in Kottayam District in the co-operative sector with the involvement and participation of rubber cultivators.

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26. With the assistance of the National Co-operative Development Corporation, Integrated Co-operative Development Projects are proposed to be implemented in Kannur, Malappuram and Kasaragod districts of the State during the coming year.

27. It is also proposed to construct a "Sahakarana Bhavan" at the State Capital to house the offices of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, the State Co-operative Union and the other local offices of the department. This work will be undertaken by the State Co-operative Union with the active co-operation of the Government.

28. In the educational sector, the policy of my Government has been to expand the facilities for Technical Education in the State in a substantial manner so that young men and women of our State are not forced to seek their chances outside the State spending large sums of money. Already great strides have been made in this field; and the momentum will continue next year also.

29. It has been one of the cherished goals of my Government to establish an Indian Institute of Management in this State with the blessings of the Government of India. This proposal has now reached the final stage and it is expected that the institution may come into being during the next year. This will be one of the foremost institutions of its kind in South India.

30. There has been a long-pending demand for opening a new University in the North Malabar area to reduce the unbearable workload of Calicut University and to promote educational progress in the northern Districts. The report submitted by the Task Force appointed to go into this matter has been accepted by the Government and it has been decided to appoint a Special Officer to ensure that the University starts functioning in the beginning of the next academic year itself.

31. The Universities in the State have been complaining of the immense burden laid on them by the registration of too many private candidates and the pressure of correspondence courses. As a solution for this problem, it has been decided to detach these wings from the other Universities and to establish a new Open University to handle these problems so that the interests of the students who are not able to attend regular academic institutions can be safeguarded. It is expected that the Open University can be established in the next academic year itself.

32. Government have been able to launch a comprehensive scheme (of more than Rs. 100 crores) for achieving high quality in the Primary sector of education. This scheme which is called the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has already been implemented in the districts of Malappuram, Kasaragod and Wayanad under the World Bank scheme and with the approval of the Government of India. During the year 1995-96, Government will be taking steps to extend DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) to other districts also.

33. It has been the policy of my Government to give special attention to educationally backward areas as well as to Communities which are educationally backward; and to expand the facility for education in the State so as to give effective coverage to these sectors. This programme will continue to be pursued vigorously. It has also been the policy of my Government to bestow special attention on the education of under privileged sections like the physically and mentally handicapped children. Next year, a training centre will be started at Mavoor, Kozhikode, for the specialist teachers of the schools for the physically handicapped.

34. Under the Literacy Programme, my Government have already achieved total literacy among the Scheduled Tribes; and it is hoped that total literacy will be achieved among the fishermen along the sea coast of Kerala during 1995-96. Service Centres will also be set up to give effective guidance and counselling to improve the employment opportunities of the newly literate.

35. At present pre-primary education in the State is not conducted in a systematic manner. A comprehensive programme will be undertaken next year for streamlining pre-primary education in the State.

36. My Government have implemented various infrastructural development schemes for the promotion of Sports. A Sports Hostel at Kozhikode and a Martial Arts Centre at Thiruvananthapuram have been established with the help of the Sports Authority of India. The construction of the Rajiv Gandhi Sports Medicine Centre and the "Kayika Sadanam" at the headquarters of the Sports Directorate, Thiruvananthapuram will be taken up immediately. The long-cherished project of establishing a high altitude training centre for sports at Munnar will also take concrete shape in 1995-96.

37. Several excellent Sports Stadium Complexes have already been established at different parts of the State. My Government have decided to invite investment by the private sector in establishing sports facilities in the State by providing them with incentives like tax relief. The Kerala Sports Council has also taken up programmes of establishing sports schools and sports hostels in different parts of the State. As a result of all these efforts, there will be a great resurgence in the field of sports in our State in the near future.

38. My Government have undertaken a number of programmes to activate the cultural scene in Kerala. A "Guru Gopinath Natanagramam" has been set up near Thiruvananthapuram. The formalities for setting up a "Folklore Akademy" at Kannur have been completed. A modern Planetarium and space theatre are being set up at Trippunithura. The "Vasthu Vidya Gurukulam" set up at Aranmula, to study our traditional architecture has already commenced its training programmes. The Science Park Programme formulated by my Government has started attracting a large number of children who receive entertainment and enlightenment from them. I am also happy to state that the draft cultural policy formulated by my Government has been widely discussed among the enlightened public of the State. Now it is being finally adopted after incorporating the useful suggestions and recommendations made from various knowledgeable quarters.

39. It is a proud distinction of my Government that contributory pension scheme for working journalists has been launched. The pension scheme has already been implemented. The minimum pension under the earlier scheme of financial assistance to journalists has now been enhanced to Rs. 500 per mensem.

40. Tourism is regarded as a high priority area by my Government to generate employment and ensure development. Many imaginative and attractive programmes have been initiated during the last 3 years to promote Kerala as an important tourist destination. The tourist arrivals to the State have shown remarkable growth. An ambitious tourism development project at Bekal in Kasaragod District is on the threshold of implementation. Government have decided to create a joint sector company for this purpose. Similarly my Government have decided to give special attention to the backwaters of Kerala which have tremendous tourism potential. A detailed project is being launched to tap the tourism potential of the backwaters and the inland waters of the State. I may make a special mention of the 'Water Train' which has been recently introduced in the Veli lake and has attracted thousands of children already. Government have also formulated very clear policies to attract private investment in the tourism sector. With the focus on investment and integrated infrastructure development, the target of achieving 5 lakhs foreign tourist arrivals in the next 5 years will certainly be fulfilled.

41. I am proud of the fact that our State continues to maintain its high position in India in respect of all Health Indicators. According to the latest information, infant mortality rate in Kerala which was 17 per thousand has now come down to 13 per thousand. Here it may be noted that no other State in India has so far achieved an infant mortality rate below 50 per thousand.

42. Our State has now entered the final stage of total eradication of the menace of polio. As a result of the special campaign conducted during 1994, the number of reported cases of polio has come down to 8 in 1994 as against 47 in 1993. All efforts are being taken to see that no case of polio occurs in the State hereafter. The State can be declared totally free from polio within the next three years.

43. My Government are committed to improve the quality of services in the District Hospitals and the Women & Children Hospitals. It has been decided to introduce the 'three shift system' in these hospitals during 1995-96 so as to provide service to the public throughout the day and night.

44. It has been decided to bring the Medical Colleges of Alappuzha and Thrissur on par with the other Medical Colleges in the State. Necessary infrastructural facilities will be made available urgently in these Medical Colleges and more postgraduate courses will be started.

45. A comprehensive programme for all-round expansion of paramedical training courses in the State will be started in 1995-96. This programme will cover the public sector as well as the private sector since the policy of my Government is to welcome the active participation of private agencies in the medical and educational fields.

46. The menace of AIDS has become a serious threat to this State which has a large and mobile population. Steps are being taken urgently to upgrade all the Blood Banks available in the State, and also to introduce effective measures to prevent the spread of HIV infection.

47. My Government has sanctioned the construction of a new building complex for the Government Ayurveda College at Kannur. The total cost of the project will be Rs. 9 crores. It is hoped that the construction will be completed within two years.

48. It is the policy of my Government to improve the service conditions of the Government Medical Officers. The recommendations of the One Man Commission set up to examine this issue have been discussed with the representatives of the Medical Officers and final decisions have been arrived at. This involves the creation of speciality cadres and also improved promotion prospects for the Government Medical Officers. Government have also decided to institute awards for the best Doctors as well as to the best Public Health Centres in the State. The first set of awards will be distributed on July 1st 1995 (Doctors Day).

49. My Government will be giving topmost priority to the repair and maintenance of all the departmental roads in the State so that the travelling public is given maximum convenience and satisfaction. It is a fact that the roads all over Kerala got seriously damaged during the unprecedented rains of July 1994. However, it has been possible to make remarkable progress already in repairing and relaying these roads. During the year 1995-96 also, maximum attention will be given to the proper maintenance of all these roads and their upkeep in an excellent condition.

50. It has been a proud achievement of my Government that the road to Pamba (near Sabarimala) in Pathanamthitta District which was quite narrow and risky till 3 years back has now been improved considerably and raised to the status of a highway. It may also be mentioned here with deep satisfaction that the project of opening an alternative road of high standard from Kozhikode District to Wayanad District which was only a dream in the past has now become a reality.

51. The Thiruvananthapuram-Neyyattinkara bye-pass and the Kollam bye-pass in National Highway 47 will make substantial progress next year. The Alappuzha bye-pass, Thissur bye-pass and Kozhikode bye-pass will also be taken up. The provision of four lane facility in the Aluva-Cherthala sector of N.H. 47 and the construction of a link road (NH 47A) connecting Willingdon Island and the Kochi bye-pass of NH 47 will make considerable progress in 1995-96. A major project of establishing a new road connection between Vypeen island and Ernakulam has already been taken up and will be implemented next year. My Government have also decided to invite private investment and participation in the construction of roads. The major bridge work which is making progress now is the 'Akkulam' bridge in the Thiruvananthapuram-Neyyattinkara bye-pass. The Alappuzha bridge and Varapuzha bridge will also be taken up next year.

52. My Government can claim the privilege of being the first State Government in India to have evolved a comprehensive Water policy. Several major irrigation projects for tapping the available water potential of the State are now being implemented. Projects like Pampa, Periyar Valley, Chimmoni, Chitturpuzha and Kuttiyadi will be completed and commissioned within another two or three months. The Kanjirapuzha Project the Muvattupuzha Valley Project and the first phase of Kallada Project will be commissioned during 1995-96. Command area development works to the tune of Rs. 24 crores will also be implemented in the command areas of various irrigation projects next year.

53. The construction of 3.7 kms. of new sea walls will be taken up under anti-sea erosion works during the next year.

54. During the year 1995-96 Minor Irrigation Schemes benefiting an area of 17,359 hectares will be taken up. Moreover, a comprehensive plan of action for controlling flood in Thiruvananthapuram City will be launched during the year.

55. My Government had started 545 small and large water supply schemes which are now under various stages of implementation throughout the State. Out of these, 229 numbers will be completed by the end of this financial year. This will ensure that 47% of the rural population of the State is covered by schemes of protected water supply. It may be seen that already 64.5% of the urban population has been brought under the coverage of water supply schemes.

56. A major Water Supply Scheme for Rs. 50 crores will be implemented in Kochi during the next year. New schemes for improving the water supply system at Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, Alappuzha Idukki and Kollam are also planned for implementation during 1995-96. Thirteen other new Water Supply Schemes will also be implemented in the State next year with the assistance of the Life Insurance Corporation

57. A scheme for providing water supply to 1.65 lakhs population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will be completed during this year with an estimated cost of Rs. 295.83 lakhs. I am happy to state that the first stage of the Netherlands assisted scheme and the Danida assisted scheme for water supply also has been completed.

58. It is also proposed to strengthen the research wing of the Kerala Water Authority during the next year. In order to improve quality control of the water supply systems, two new Divisions—one at Aluva and another at Kozhikode—will be started in 1995-96.

59. On the Food front, my Government have been able to ensure that there is a steady supply of foodgrains and other essential commodities and that the prices are kept reasonably under check. The Public Distribution System is functioning quite satisfactorily.

60. Several measures have been adopted by my Government to ensure that maximum satisfaction is given to the ordinary consumers of foodgrains and other essential articles. New retail shops were sanctioned liberally in order to ensure that no consumer needs travel more than one kilometre to reach the nearest shop. An additional number of 6.5 lakhs of ration cards were distributed to persons who did not possess ration cards so far and the ration rate per unit was increased from 770 gms to 1000 gms. My Government have sanctioned 350 new Maveli Stores to make the articles of daily consumption available to the common man at the most reasonable price. During festival seasons, a steady supply of essential goods at subsidised rates through the public distribution outlets was ensured to keep the prices under check. Special markets were also organised at busy urban centres to help the common citizen. In short, the performance of my Government on the Civil Supplies front during the last 3 years has been a story of dedicated service crowned with unmistakable success.

61. My Government have launched various schemes for the "Modernisation of the Police Force utilising the 50% assistance offered by the Central Government. It is proposed to implement a satellite based communication system and a revised Police Telecom System. Proposals are under active consideration to increase the strength of Women Police and also to increase the number of companies of Armed Reserve to 16. Re-organisation of various branches of the Police Department like District Special Branch, State Crime Branch, C.B.CID, Narcotic Control Bureau, Airport Security etc. is also under consideration.

62. My Government have a proposal to establish a Kerala Police Academy at Thrissur. A steady expansion of Police Housing facilities is being achieved. The various offices of the Police Department are also being equipped with additional facilities. The work of construction of offices for the Finger Print Bureau and the Photographic Unit of the State Crime Records Bureau has already been awarded. Action is also underway to equip the three Chemical Examiners' Laboratories with sophisticated, scientific equipments.

63. The Fire Force will be modernised by providing highly sophisticated equipments for fire-fighting, availing loan from the General Insurance Corporation of India. New Fire Stations are proposed to be opened at Koilandy, Kanchikode Vadakkancherry, Kunnathunad, Mavelikkara, Chengannur, Kottarakkara and Varkala during the next year. A Super Fire Station is proposed to be established in the Kochi Industrial belt to effectively tackle the petroleum/oil fires. A Modern Fire Service Training School will also be established at Viyyur.

64. A priority list recommended by the High Court of Kerala has been approved by Government for setting up new courts. The intention is to set up a few new courts every year. It is proposed to establish three new Civil/Criminal Courts and two Motor Accident Claims Tribunals during 1995-96. Setting up of more Family Courts is also engaging the attention of Government.

65. Construction of a Multi storeyed building for the High Court at Ernakulam and quarters for Judicial Officers at Alappuzha and Kasaragod have already been taken up. Construction works in respect of Neyyattinkara Court Complex and 'Judicial Officers' quarters at Ernakulam and Alappuzha have been sanctioned.

66. My Government intend to maintain peace and harmony in the sphere of industrial relations. There has already been a noticeable improvement on the Labour front. Government will take all possible measures to ensure that the various labour laws are enforced effectively to benefit the working class. However, steps will be taken to prevent avoidable labour disputes, strikes and lockouts in factories. Effective steps will be taken to settle labour disputes amicably and expeditiously.



67. Government will take the initiative to evolve a code of conduct binding on both the labour and the managements. In order to monitor the labour situation in various establishments on a daily basis, a computerised Management Information System (MIS) is being set up. Government are also considering formulation of Industrial Relation Committees in several new industries. A new Welfare Fund will be created for Bedit-Workers.

68. Apart from ensuring peaceful industrial relations, Government are also anxious to ensure better health to the labourers working in the factories. With this end in view an Industrial Hygienic Laboratory has been commissioned.

69. Last year 53 new ITC's were sanctioned. A new ITI has been sanctioned at Kuzhalmannam in Palakkad District recently. Maximum World Bank Assistance will be utilised for the improvement of industrial training in the State.

70. My Government propose to open 11 new Employment Exchanges in the remaining 11 Taluks of the State to achieve the target of one Employment Exchange for a Taluk. The modernisation of employment exchanges by computerization in a phased manner is also being taken up.

71. Providing adequate housing for the socially and economically disadvantaged groups of the society continues to occupy an important place in the policy framework of my Government. Several Special schemes relevant for this group like housing complexes in rural areas, loan schemes for economically weaker sections housing for flood victims house site allotment schemes and interest subsidy schemes are under implementation.

72. Not content with housing for only the poorest, my Government have been acting as a facilitator for increasing the total housing stock of Kerala through the implementation of the "Rajiv One Million Housing Scheme" (ROMHS). During the last three years 2,53,667 number of houses have been constructed under this scheme involving a financial investment of more than Rs. 350 crores. Special housing schemes for journalist and Non Resident Indians are also under implementation.

73. A project is also being formulated to establish a major Satellite Township in the vicinity of Ernakulam. This township will ease the pressure on the main city and thus improve the quality of life. The construction of Revenue Towers to provide office space for various Government organisations and Government offices has made considerable progress. Construction of Revenue Towers is about to start in more than half a dozen places.

74. Comprehensive legislations on Panchayat Raj and Municipalities have already been passed in our State. The State Laws are quite progressive in nature and envisage considerable decentralisation of powers to the Panchayats at Village, Block and District levels and to the Municipalities. Elections to the local bodies will be conducted within three months and the Government expect the newly elected bodies to be in position before the end of April.

75. My Government have prepared an ambitious programme for environmental improvement in the 'Cleaner Kerala' project. In this project special attention would be given to the disposal of garbage especially in the urban areas. A plan is being prepared to achieve total sanitation within a reasonable period with the co-ordinated efforts of the various Government departments and other agencies for providing public toilets, community toilets and household latrines.

76. The general welfare and the all-round development of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population of the State has been a priority item for my Government. Significant strides have been made in the field of their Education, Health and Housing. In the various plan schemes implemented in the State a special component for the development of this sector is invariably included and the implementation of these schemes is specially monitored to ensure that the intended benefits actually reach these sections of society.

77. Atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes are severely dealt with by my Government in an endeavour to eradicate completely all such crimes against them. It is a matter of great satisfaction that very few such cases are reported now-a-days.

78. Training facilities for young men and women hailing from these sections of society including vocational training are being steadily expanded to provide them with an independent economic base. As a part of this scheme, classes for imparting coaching for examinations conducted by the UPSC, the Staff Selection Commission, etc. are also being organised.

79. The Intensive Child Development Scheme has been rendering remarkable service in improving the health and nutritional status of children and women. At present 113 projects with 16,072 Anganwadies are working in the State. Five new projects have now been sanctioned. The Kerala State Women's Development Corporation has also taken up various schemes to improve the financial position of women.

80. My Government have also taken steps to assist the eligible families belonging to the Backward Classes and the Minorities to obtain the benefit which are offered to them by the respective All India Corporations such as loans for establishing new industries and trades and expanding old ones as well as subsidies for setting up new enterprises.

81. My Government have an intention to make pre-service training compulsory for all fresh recruits to Government service. As a beginning, Government have issued rules regarding the compulsory pre-service training of persons who are recruited as Assistants in the Secretariat.

82. It has been the policy of my Government to give title-deeds to those families which have been in occupation of Government lands for a very long period of time. In respect of lands which were formerly forest areas, those who have been occupying them from dates prior to the first of January 1977 are being conferred with ownership. Several thousands of title-deeds have already been distributed; but in the meanwhile the High Court of Kerala has issued a stay order in the matter. However, the firm resolve of my Government is to take steps to get this stay order vacated and to proceed with the programme of conferring title-deeds on all those who have been occupying these lands before the year 1977.

83. Arrangements have been finalised by my Government for issuing "Revenue Cards" to the land holders. This will be introduced from the beginning of the next financial year. It is expected that the revenue card will serve as a pass book for the landholders to obtain various benefits of governmental programmes without difficulty.

84. Grama Sabhas and Taluk Sabhas which were conceived by my Government to take administration to the door-steps of the common man and to make it more responsive and transparent have been functioning very well. The Government propose to strengthen the Grama Sabhas and Taluk Sabhas by investing them with statutory status.

85. My Government have also decided to introduce necessary amendments in the Kerala Land Reforms Act to protect the interest of the "Karayma Kudiyans" and also of those small holders who are bona fide purchasers of lands which subsequently turned out to be surplus lands. Necessary provisions will also be made to bring to book those landlords who indulged in these deceptive practices.

86. Resurvey work of the State will be resumed shortly; and, in future, Government propose to demarcate the land of each holder with Survey marks so that frequent boundary disputes will not arise.

87. It is the intention of my Government to bifurcate some of the very big Taluks in the State in order to achieve better administrative efficiency and viability. A few new Taluks will thus be established during 1995-96.

88. It is a matter of deep satisfaction that the performance of my Government in the field of distress relief has been outstandingly impressive. During the severe floods of July-August 1994 those who were rendered homeless were accommodated in relief camps and properly looked after. Even the other families which were affected by the floods were given free rations for two weeks. Liberal help was given for the repair of houses which were damaged and in the case of huts which were destroyed an amount of Rs. 12,000 each was given as grant for building new houses. In short, the policy of my Government has been to render timely, prompt and adequate relief to all citizens who find themselves in distress.

89. My Government have been laying emphasis on the strict enforcement of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules and the implementation of road safety measures. New Sub-Regional Transport Offices are proposed to be opened in more number of Taluk headquarters to strengthen the department. Government have launched a vehicle pollution control drive during the current year by establishing Pollution Testing Centres. More such Centres would be established; and vehicle pollution, which is an environmental hazard, will be strictly brought under control.

90. A beginning has been made in the computerisation of Motor Vehicle Offices. The programme will be expanded during the next year with a view to bring Motor Vehicle Offices under a computer network to facilitate building up of a data base on vehicles.

91. Several measures have been adopted to revamp the functioning of the KSRTC; and these measures have begun to show results. It was possible to increase the revenue collection by more than 100% during the last three years. All the efficiency indicators like 'Bus-Staff Ratio', 'Earning per Kilometre' and 'Earning per Bus' have shown improvement. By reducing expenditure and increasing revenue, the Corporation has become self-reliant and the cash loss has been wiped out. It is expected that the Corporation will make profit during the next financial year.

92. There has been substantial improvement in the Water Transport sector also. Water Transport, which was always making heavy losses in the past, has now reached the break-even stage. The Kerala Inland Navigation Corporation which was making losses has also made steady improvement and will start earning profit next year.

93. The Kerala Transport Development Finance Corporation has also made good progress and it is expected that during the next financial year it may register a profit of more than Rs. one crore.

94. There will be considerable investment in the National Waterway between Kottappuram and Kollam by way of dredging and establishment of landing facilities next year. This will open up new opportunities in Inland Water Transportation giving considerable boost to industry and tourism.

95. My Government propose to establish a Centre of excellence in Medical Biotechnology at the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Education, Science and Technology as a fitting memorial to the late Prime Minister. Support from National and International Scientific Agencies will be mobilised to this end.

96. Kerala's Eighth Five Year Plan had been formulated with a targeted overall rate of growth of 5.6 per cent in the State's income in real terms. As per the forecasts of State income for the current year, it is expected to grow at a rate slightly above 5 per cent. The performance of the State's economy during the first three years of the Eighth Five Year Plan has been, by and large, satisfactory and consistent with plan targets. Moreover, the performance of the State economy seems to be slightly better than that of the national economy in terms of growth.

97. We were able to create about 7 lakh employment opportunities including 2.6 lakh continuing employment during the first two years of the Eighth Plan period. It is expected that about 2.9 lakh continuing employment and 2.6 lakh non-continuing employment opportunities will be created during the current year as a result of the implementation of the employment generation programmes.

98. The financial achievement in terms of actual expenditure compared to the approved outlay has improved from 91 per cent in 1992-93 to slightly over 100 per cent in 1993-94 and this performance is expected to be repeated during the current year as well. The plan performance of Kerala, as compared with many other States, has been excellent; and this has earned the praise of the Planning Commission and the Government of India.

99. My Government have now approved a scheme to conduct a comprehensive socio-economic census of the State. The State Planning Board has completed the ground work to undertake this massive survey along with the Department of Economics and Statistics. During this census about 60 lakh households will be visited and useful data collected. These statistics will be promptly fed into computers. This will become an excellent data base for planning the strategies for economic development for the State in future.

100. Kerala State has always been the torch-bearer of progress for the rest of India. We have shown what a committed Government can achieve in bringing about improvement in the life of the people in spite of severe constraints of resources. The last 3 years of my Government have been a landmark in the Saga of steady progress of our State. Let us take a vow to blaze the same trail for the future years also. In the days ahead let it be our collective endeavour to find constructive solutions to all the burning problems of our citizens. Let us strive to fulfil their hopes and aspirations to the best of our ability.

101. I wish the deliberations of this session all success.

JAI HIND