



**ADDRESS  
TO  
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
KERALA**

**29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2001**

**BY**

**SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH KANG**  
*GOVERNOR OF KERALA*

*Hon'ble Speaker, Hon'ble Members*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the members of the Eleventh Legislative Assembly on this occasion. I offer my warm greetings to all of you. The people of Kerala have once again demonstrated their deep-rooted faith in democracy. They have sent their representatives to this great institution with hope and faith. I am sure you will fulfil your responsibility to the people of Kerala in the most befitting manner. I have no doubt that you will make all efforts to live up to the confidence and trust that the people of Kerala have reposed in you. I extend my best wishes to each one of you and hope that you will succeed in leaving your indelible imprint in the annals of this House and in the glorious history of our State.

2. The recent train accident at Kadalundy in Kozhikode has left us all with a deep sense of shock and sorrow. My Government, along with all of you here, convey our heartfelt condolence to the bereaved families and fervently hope that the injured will speedily recover. I take this opportunity to place on record my Government's appreciation of all the brave and noble people who participated in the rescue and relief operations during the last few days.

3. The new Government has assumed office. I congratulate the members of the Government and place on record my best wishes to them. My Government will work for the welfare of the people in accordance with the principles of the Constitution and will take all steps to fulfil the expectations and aspirations of the people to usher in peace, development and prosperity. Naturally, economic development, which is the basis for improved physical quality of life of people, will be the highest priority of my Government.

4. In the annals of Kerala polity, the recent elections are significant in many respects. The most notable among them was the reflection of peoples' spontaneous endorsement of the constructive criticisms voiced by the UDF against the last five years of misrule of the Left Democratic Government and the exemplary style of functioning of the UDF as a responsible opposition. Through their ballots, the people of Kerala have denounced the inaction, misrule, corruption and violence that the LDF had unleashed during their tenure in office. The attempts of the LDF Government to promote their party and the cadres at the expense of the welfare of the people and the development of the State invited public wrath. Fed up with the corruption and excesses of the LDF rule, the people of Kerala had yearned for a change in Government. In 1996, the LDF came to power defeating the UDF with a margin of 1,69,418 votes. But in 2001, the people voted UDF back to power with 99 seats and a margin of 8,42,561 votes. My

Government will surge ahead, taking into account this verdict of the people, with a sense of realism and humility.

5. My Government has a vision of the future for our State. It will display will power and determination, in directing its energies towards realizing this vision. The Government is starting a new journey. But it faces an uphill task. The State is facing a frightening financial crisis today. My Government will chart a new course eschewing the traditional and much trodden path of the past, with the avowed intention of taking on the challenges posed by the grave financial crisis. The immediate manifestation of this crisis is that Government alone cannot finance development in vital sectors including agriculture, industry and infrastructure. My Government shall endeavour to attract private investment in key sectors like Industry, Information Technology, Education, Power, Transport, Tourism and Public Works as part of a strategy to resolve the development crisis in the State. A key element of my Government's approach to economic growth shall be to create more infrastructure facilities by building an investor friendly climate in the State. My Government shall, within a transparent framework, attract private investment from Non Resident Keralites to march forward in all sectors of development.

6. Every step that my Government takes in pursuit of this vision will always bear the stamp of integrity and sincerity.

This shall be the hallmark of my Government and the inviolable covenant with the people of Kerala. My Government will conduct its affairs in a manner that will ensure a corruption free administration in which decisions will be taken in a fair and impartial manner. My Government resolves to make our State a model of good governance. The emphasis will be on building a dynamic responsive and transparent Government that will be fully prepared to meet the aspirations of the people.

7. Unfortunately, my Government has started off with a grave financial crisis. Non-payment of bills, cheques and other financial instruments issued by Government have led to a precarious situation. The exchequer is on the verge of collapse. This has naturally led to serious erosion of Government's credibility. Some of the payments that have got stuck in this financial crisis of Government are instalments of housing loans, unemployment assistance, old age pensions, destitute pensions and agricultural workers' pensions. Supplies of medicines to hospitals have virtually stopped, as Government is unable to pay the suppliers. The noon meal programme for our school children is at risk, as the expenditure of Rs. 100 cr. incurred by the Civil Supplies Corporation has not been paid. There have been numerous instances of contractors not getting payments on cheques issued to them. Government has not even been able to release Rs. 300 cr. of various grants released to the State by

Government of India. Government has defaulted on the repayment of Rs. 203 cr. to HUDCO. As a result, HUDCO, one of the major funding agencies for development in the State has decided not to extend any further assistance to the State. The common man has been put to severe hardships on account of financial difficulties experienced by Government. The situation has come to such a pass that our Government employees who retire after long years of service are unsure whether they will receive their gratuity and pension benefits in time. For the first time, there is a growing fear that Government may not even be able to pay the salaries in time.

8. My Government has taken on the burden of an unprecedented level of public debt. The debt at the end of the last financial year, 2000-01 has risen to around Rs. 24000 cr. from Rs. 20176 cr. at the end of the year 1999-2000. But what is most alarming is that the portfolio of debt is now more in the nature of short term liabilities incurred to finance recurring expenditure of Government—which imposes a direct and immediate burden on my Government. Kerala State Electricity Board is running an annual deficit of Rs.1925 cr. bringing its monthly deficit to Rs. 160 cr. The interest burden of the Board alone is Rs. 65.27 cr. per month. Kerala State Road Transport Corporation is experiencing a monthly shortage of Rs.15 cr. Unpaid bills of the Corporation on diesel, tyres etc. amount to Rs. 174 cr. The Kerala State Housing Board is on the verge of imminent financial collapse. The gravity of

these problems defies solution. Pressing liabilities that have to be met by my Government, as on date, are estimated to be Rs. 3477 cr. Government will have to find Rs. 900 cr. more for financing the Annual Plan in the State this year.

9. In the larger interests of the State, my Government will follow a policy of co-operation with the Government of India. At the same time, my Government will adopt a strong and uncompromising stand against the import policy of the Central Government which has adversely affected our agriculture and brought untold misery to our farmers. The common man gets a respite from the rise in prices through the Public Distribution System. But unfortunately, Government of India has assumed a stand which will only serve to destroy the Public Distribution System built up over the years. In order to protect the interests of the common man, my Government will ensure that the Public Distribution System is maintained uninterrupted at all costs. My Government will also attempt to secure maximum subsidies from Government of India for this purpose. During the last five years of LDF rule, the single point agenda of action that the Government had was to criticise liberalisation and related policies of the Central Government. Obviously, all this criticism has brought no relief or succour to the farmers of Kerala. On the contrary, my Government, while exerting all possible pressure on Government of India, will adopt a stand beneficial to the farmers and also endeavour to safeguard their interests. My

Government will take all possible steps to save farmers from the ravages of declining prices of rubber, coconut, coffee, tea and other agricultural produce.

10. My Government has brought out a White Paper on the State's finances. It is my sincere hope that the White Paper will initiate a wide debate among the people regarding the State's finances. My Government is aware that unless emergent measures are taken, the financial situation will become hopelessly irretrievable. Above all, what is most important today is to initiate immediate measures to restore the faith of the public in Government. Rectifying this critical financial situation will not be an easy task. First and foremost, my Government proposes to put an end to extravagant public spending by enforcing austerity measures. Secondly, the situation also demands hard measures which are possible only within a broad consensus of the people. Needless to say, it is the irresponsible and unjustifiable handling of the financial crisis by the Left Government that has forced my Government to the only option of going in for mobilisation of new resources. People will have to be taken into confidence and they will have to participate in this process of restoring the financial health of the State.

11. Notwithstanding the fearsome magnitude of the fiscal challenges ahead of us, my Government will not brook any delay in the economic and social development of our State. My Government is aware that unemployment has reached all time high levels. There were as many as 41.86 lakh unemployed persons on the live registers of our employment



exchanges in the year 2000. The overarching goal that will drive the development efforts and economic policies of my Government will be to provide employment to this burgeoning number of unemployed. Every development scheme to be launched will not lose sight of this perspective. My Government will make all out efforts to generate employment opportunities for 15 lakhs people in the next five years in the areas of small scale industries, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, organic farming, tourism, information technology, biotechnology and power among others.

12. Raising additional resources through better tax collection system is a priority for my Government. Computerisation of Commercial Taxes Department, will be completed expeditiously. Steps will be initiated for bringing tax reforms. New areas for widening the tax base will be explored.

13. My Government will explore avenues to secure financial aid from all possible sources, including International Financial Institutions.

14. My Government attaches the highest priority to maintenance of law and order in the State. My Government would like to assure the people of this State that it will not fail to provide an environment conducive to a peaceful life for our people. The police machinery will be made to perform its cardinal duty of ensuring peace and order, firmly and fairly. My Government will extend equal and just treatment to every

individual. The dignity of every man, woman and child will be respected.

15. My Government will strengthen the capability of the police to enable it to discharge its functions effectively. A programme of modernization and upgradation of police infrastructure such as police stations, communication networks, mobility, weaponry and housing for police personnel by drawing upon all available resources will be launched. Skill development through training and organized use of computers is also being planned for implementation in the coming year. There will be a conscious and sustained effort to upgrade the level of technology in crime investigation. The Forensic Science Laboratory and the Chemical Examiners Laboratory will be upgraded and equipped with modern sophisticated equipments.

16. My Government will take measures to enhance the welfare of prisoners. It will also modernize and upgrade the facilities of the Fire Force and provide the needed support for effective fire fighting.

17. My Government intends to introduce the novel concept of "Kudumbasangamam" (Family Fellowship) as a measure to generate employment opportunities by meaningfully utilizing the family resources at the micro-level. A typical unit of Kudumbasangamam would consist of twenty-five families. This unit would come together to start an income generating

agricultural or industrial activity. Four Kudumbasangamams would constitute a Family Forum. Small Scale Units and growth centres will be set up for such Forums under the auspices of the Panchayats.

18. My Government proposes to have an entirely new approach to industrial development in the State, which will build on the industrial policy of the Government, issued in 1991. Private sector participation will be solicited and welcomed in the industrial development of the State. The potential of the State in the field of information technology will be fully developed and Kerala will be converted into a major I.T. destination of the country. Kochi will be developed as the I.T. capital of Kerala. My Government also proposes to launch a programme to generate adequate numbers of trained IT professionals by setting up Centres of Excellence in IT sector, in collaboration with the private sector. Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management, Kerala will be developed as a resource centre to facilitate upgrading of institutions and to undertake R&D in IT. Further, it would also be the endeavour of my Government to develop Kerala as a model E-governance State in the country. IT will be used to increase efficiency in all sectors.

19. Biotechnology would be another thrust area for my Government in its quest to usher in industrial development in the State. Food processing industry will be given special

emphasis to attract foreign and domestic investment. My Government also proposes to develop "Special Industrial Zones" for industries where entrepreneurs will be given all incentives and necessary encouragement for setting up and running new industries. Small scale industry needs to adopt strategies to compete globally in terms of quality, productivity and efficiency. Strategies like cluster based development, which have been initiated for rubber based industry in Kochi and Kottayam districts will be extended to other sectors also.

20. My Government will give a new fillip to infrastructure development. The experience gained from the Mattancherry Bridge BOT Project in Ernakulam will be used to structure several vital infrastructure projects on the BOT system. My Government will adopt a BOT framework to create infrastructure facilities in roads, bridges and other areas.

21. Government will use the help of expert agencies to revitalise Public Sector Undertakings. Suitable strategies will be adopted to enable PSUs to compete and survive in the open market. Government will restructure PSUs, which impose an unsustainable burden on the State Exchequer, with investment from the private sector. This will allow infusion of funds, technology and professionalism into PSUs.

22. The Coir Industry is facing a severe crisis today. More than four lakh families of coir workers depend solely on the coir sector for their livelihood. Government shall protect the

coir industry and workers engaged in it from the exploitation of middlemen and shall strengthen the coir co-operatives. Various Schemes in the co-operative sector, and in the manufacturing side, including starting of 100 Geo Textiles Units will be taken up. To give a thrust given to Coir Geo Textiles, adequate funding will be provided to the GTDP Cell in the Directorate of Coir Development. The unprecedented crisis in the coir industry can only be effectively solved by the concerted efforts of Coir Board, producers, exporters and workers. There is unhealthy competition from cheap coir products of other States. Diversified products and innovative designs in value added coir products have to be developed to meet this threat.

23. Primary Co-operatives, COIRFED and Kerala State Coir Corporation Ltd. have accumulated huge stock of unsold coir yarn and products. The changes in the Government of India's policy on rebate and its Market Development Assistance have exacerbated the marketing problems of these organisations. The gradual withdrawal of the minimum export price as a policy of the Government of India and Coir Board has only served to compound the crisis. My Government shall spare no efforts in persuading Government of India to maintain the minimum export price and also to reverse its decision to withdraw the same for certain products like coir embellishments.

24. Other traditional industries like handlooms, cashew, beedi and fishing which sustain lakhs of families have been languishing for years. My Government will bestow special attention to reorganise and revitalise each of these traditional sectors. Handloom provides employment for two lakh people in the State. Steps to revive the handloom sector will be undertaken by strengthening the co-operative movement and the activities of the apex bodies, HANVEEV and HANTEX. The accent will be on finding markets abroad for new designs developed through the application of Fashion and Design Technology. My Government will also adopt a new strategy for the cashew sector which will focus on solving the issues of shortage of raw materials and non-availability of working capital. Consequently, more mandays of employment can be generated for the cashew workers.

25. My Government is aware that the State is only able to tap 50% of the potential that the fisheries sector offers. The thrust in this sector will be on exploiting the employment opportunities of the sector while at the same time giving equal attention to the welfare of the fishermen. My Government proposes to formulate and implement a massive self-employment programme for fisherwomen at an estimated cost of Rs 15 cr. in which the fisherwomen would be organized into Self-Help Groups and empowered to undertake economic activities allied to fisheries and other activities. An Integrated Fisheries Development Project will be implemented for

traditional fishermen with the help of NCDC funding. New Fish Landing Centres will be constructed at seven places. Fishermen's Welfare Fund will be revitalized and its resources augmented to ensure better flow of assistance to the fishermen community.

26. My Government proposes to bring an Act for regulating and promoting inland fisheries in the State.

27. My Government accords very high importance to conservation of natural resources and sustainable development in the State. A comprehensive "Environment Policy" will be announced shortly.

28. Development of Science and Technology is a vital element of modern development. My Government proposes to set up a "Science, Technology and Environment Informatics Centre" to make the scientific information and technologies available with STED and its research institutions to user agencies. It will also provide entrepreneurs state-of-the-art international technology for their use.

29. My Government is fully aware of the severe hardships faced by our farming community. Farmers, agricultural labourers and related workers are indeed going through a most distressing period. This, no doubt, is the combined result of the recent fall in prices of most of the agricultural commodities

and the wide spread debilitating diseases of major crops like coconut, pepper and cashew. The sharp fall in income from the agricultural sector has, no doubt, affected the State's economy as well. My Government is determined to retrieve the situation in every possible way.

30. In the short term, Government intends to set up a standing committee of eminent experts to study on a continuous basis, the impact of the opening up of the Indian market as a result of WTO Agreement on Agriculture. This Committee will recommend measures to counter the ill effects of WTO agreement and fully exploit the positive advantages of access to international markets.

31. In the long run, departments and Government agencies will be reorganized to effectively face the competition of products from outside and to make our products more cost effective. My Government proposes to set up a Department of Horticulture, to give a boost to the production of high value vegetables, flowers, fruits, spices and other horticultural crops. Further, my Government will also set up a Department of Land Resources to improve the soil fertility in a sustained manner, by bringing in units and organizations working for land development under one agency. These new departments will give technical support and guidance to local level institutions including Panchayat Raj Institutions to undertake soil, water and biomass development on watershed basis and for the development of high value horticultural crops.



32. The Public Sector Undertakings, Boards and Authorities engaged in the field of agriculture will be revamped to ensure that they provide timely service to the farmers. Better co-ordination will be achieved in the activities of Kerala Horticultural Development Programme, Haritha Sanghams and Kerala State Horticultural Products Development Corporation. The Kerala Agricultural University will take up crop-specific research to harvest the benefits of advances in science, technology and engineering fully.

33. My Government shall encourage research and training institutions of the State, Centre and Non-Governmental Organizations in the field of agriculture to take up research, training and extension to help farmers within their reach. My Government proposes to introduce appropriate arrangements at various levels for developing an effective 'Research Extension Interface' to ensure that the fruits of research reach the farmers quickly and to help them fight diseases like mite and root wilt.

34. My Government is aware that the farmers in many areas are continuing the conversion of paddy land for other uses. My Government is determined to reverse this trend by providing the required infrastructure and other incentives to make paddy cultivation viable.

35. Effectiveness of irrigation, the most critical input in agriculture, will be studied in depth and measures will be adopted to ensure that water is made available in time to the

farmers and their organizations. Water management specific to crop needs, will be ensured through training and extension work among farmers.

36. Coconut, the backbone of the State's agriculture, will receive special attention through a Coconut Technology Mission. Till the Mission is launched, the present programme of promoting community irrigation, drip irrigation, supply of quality planting materials and adoption of plant protection measures will be intensified. Mixed farming will be encouraged to ensure better return for farmers. Effective steps will be taken to eradicate the menace of coconut mite and other diseases. My Government will ensure a convergence of efforts of the Kerala Agricultural University, CPCRI, Agriculture Department, Panchayats and Farmers Organisations in applying scientific methods to contain the mite menace fully. The programme of procuring raw coconut from the farmers, at a price compatible with the Minimum Support Price will be implemented. My Government intends to prevent the exploitation of farmers by middlemen and shall do this by closer supervision of procurement activities. All out encouragement will be given to both public sector and private sector organisations for product diversification and marketing of coconut products.

37. My Government will take all possible steps to solve the problems of rubber farmers. The crisis in the rubber industry

started with large-scale imports of rubber from 1996 onwards. My Government has already urged Government of India not to lift the restrictions on the import of rubber through advance license. Government of India has also been requested not to allow any imports of rubber through OGL given the fact that there is a surplus of 1.5 lakh tonnes of rubber in the country. My Government intends to encourage the use of rubber in roads and new industries. Government of India will also be urged to include rubber as one of the agricultural products for international trade, through W.T.O renegotiations. Full support will be given for the procurement of rubber to be supplied to advance import licence holders. If rubber prices continue to remain below economically viable prices for the farmers, Government will resort to market intervention to boost the prices and bring relief to rubber cultivators.

38. Spices, especially organic spices, have great demand in the international market. Farmers in the major spice growing districts will be helped to improve productivity and quality of pepper and other spices to compete with products from South East Asia and other countries.

39. Cashew offers good export potential in our State. Special technology packages like high density planting, use of clonal material for planting and rehabilitation of unproductive plantations will be attempted on a wider scale to promote cashew production for export.

40. The shortcomings in the implementation of vegetable production through Haritha Sanghams will be carefully studied. The programme will be streamlined and expanded in suitable areas. The marketing of the products will be linked up with the Kerala State Horticultural Products Development Corporation and Local Self Government and farmers will be ensured fair price, thereby making the programme sustainable.
41. Agro-Industries will be given increased attention. My Government will emphasise the development and marketing of value added products from coconut, fruits, vegetables and spices.
42. Debt relief to agriculturists will be given by enacting proper legislative measures.
43. The state recorded production of 26.75 LMT of milk during the year 2000-01. The increase in milk procurement in the co-operative sector is an all time record of 22%. Efforts will be continued in the Animal Husbandry and Dairy sectors to increase productivity by further strengthening cross breeding facilities and improving the efficiency of the services. The processing capacity of KCMMF will also be increased to keep pace with the increase in production. Efforts will be taken to improve the market share of dairy co-operatives by encouraging more sales agencies taking into confidence private agencies also.

44. Higher standards of sanitation and hygiene will be ensured in dairy as well as in meat processing. Pilot projects in the use of Mobile Artificial Insemination units as well as Milking Machines will be developed and extended further for massive adoption with the active involvement of the local self-governing bodies and dairy co-operatives.

45. My Government intends to train at least 15000 farmers in scientific livestock and poultry production. All dairy farmers will be brought under the Kamadhenu Insurance Programme, which will be popularized through the Farm Information Bureau. There will be an intensive drive to contain mastitis through comprehensive veterinary care. A programme for Intensive Dairy Farming through adoption of villages or a region will be taken up. Fodder nurseries will be established in Grama Panchayats to ensure the availability of fodder planting materials locally. District Dairy Quality Control Laboratories will be strengthened to provide guidance to consumers as well as producers.

46. My Government shall endeavour to improve delivery of health services to the common man. For this, it is essential that the infrastructure at the District, Taluk Hospitals and Community Health Centres be improved. My Government will take up a project for strengthening the Community Health Centres, Taluk Hospitals and District Hospitals with the help of the World Bank. Functioning of Hospital Development

Committees will be streamlined. To provide additional facilities to patients, Medical Colleges will be gradually converted into referral hospitals. The Indian Institute of Diabetes will start functioning this year. A new drug-testing laboratory will be set up in Thiruvananthapuram. A tissue culture lab will also be set up for the propagation of rare and endangered species of medicinal plants.

47. Non-communicable diseases are emerging as a major threat in the State. My Government will pilot a public health intervention in selected local bodies for early detection, prevention and management of non-communicable diseases. The intervention will be carried out through public health workers and every person in the local body monitored through a health card system.

48. In order to provide flexible consultation time to patients and to augment the resources of the hospital development committee, pay clinics will be introduced in Medical Colleges, and District Hospitals. Voluntary philanthropic organizations and other donors will be invited to adopt hospital wards and to contribute to the improvement of hospitals. Health Card System will be introduced to patients, suffering from serious diseases.

49. In view of the growing interest in Ayurveda, my Government proposes to convert the Ayurveda Medical

Colleges at Trivandrum and Kannur into centres of excellence by providing them with the necessary infrastructure.

**50.** Tourism has emerged as Kerala's core competency sector. Tourism in the State has grown and expanded in the State in partnership with the private sector. Government proposes to further strengthen this partnership. My Government will focus on improvement of infrastructure in tourism destinations. It is proposed to bring in a regulatory mechanism to relate the development of tourist destinations in the State to their 'carrying capacity'.

**51.** Development of backwater tourism, development of Vagamon as a new hill station, development of international standard golf courses at Cochin and enhancing "God's own country" brand equity of Kerala tourism will also be taken up by my Government. A new self-financing Hospitality Institute of international standards will be set up to train human resource in the sector to cater to the increasing number of foreign tourist arrivals.

**52.** Non Resident Keralites have played a critical and significant role in the development of the economy of the State. My Government will try to utilize their skills and resources to give a major impetus to development process. Non Resident Keralites will be invited to establish world-class institutions in the field of medical, engineering and information technology.

53. While my Government proposes to invite the assistance of Non Resident Keralites in the development process of the State, it is also committed to providing an effective and dynamic welfare regime for Non Resident Keralites. There will be constant liaison with the Ministry of External Affairs, Protector General of Emigrants, Police, Revenue and Passports authorities. An NRK Cell would be set up in Kerala House, New Delhi.

54. My Government will give prime importance to capacity addition in the generation sector. The thrust will be on hydel projects for the reason that it is the cheapest source of power available to us. It is targeted to add 211.2 MW of power to the Kerala Power Grid during the current year by commissioning new stations including three small hydel projects of total capacity 34.2MW. New hydel projects of various capacities totalling 305.15 MW are in the process of implementation. Augmentation schemes of existing hydel projects with planned addition of 438 MU are also at various stages of development. My Government will take action to complete the works on top priority.

55. Works of Renovation, Modernisation and Upgradation (RMU) of Pallivasal, Sengulam and Panniar Projects are progressing and targeted to be completed during this financial year. RMU works of 300 MW capacity Sabarigiri Project is proposed to be taken up this year itself.



56. My Government shall address the task of strengthening the Transmission System in the State. Works of 88 Sub Stations are in progress. Steps will be taken to expedite the works and commission these stations during this financial year.

57. In the Distribution sector it is proposed to construct 1525KM of 11 KV lines and 8100 KMs of LT lines and install 1835 new transformers during this year. My Government intends to give 3,78,000 new connections during this year.

58. My Government proposes to undertake a number of new initiatives to improve consumer relationship of the Kerala State Electricity Board. Spot billing system will be strengthened to improve efficiency and increase revenues. New schemes in this area are under consideration. Control rooms will be opened in five Districts to monitor and control interruption and breakdowns to reduce the down times. New Schemes to control interruptions are also being considered. Works to improve voltage in low voltage areas will be expedited and completed.

59. Reforms in KSEB will be implemented expeditiously to convert the Board into a financially viable and consumer friendly organization. Electricity Regulatory Commission will be set up soon for fixing tariffs on scientific basis.

60. The Meter testing and Standards Laboratory, Thiruvananthapuram attached to the Department of Electrical Inspectorate will be fully equipped to meet the requirements for accreditation by the National Accreditation Board for testing and calibration of Laboratories under Government of India. Action will be taken to get the Meter testing and Standards Laboratory recognized as a Regional Testing Centre of Bureau of Indian Standards.

61. KSEB will implement computerisation including major district offices to enable speedy issuance of Licences, Permits and Certificates and to improve efficiency and accuracy in all activities including external consultancy works.

62. My Government will take a bold stride forward in the road sector. It will take recourse to all avenues of private participation in the funding and construction of roads. It realizes that road development cannot be confined within budgetary resources. We have to tap multiple sources including market borrowings. My Government will provide necessary incentives and an effective framework for involving the private sector in road building. A Road Board will be created which will administer a Road Fund made up of road related revenues, contributions, sponsorships and participation of Non Resident Keralites. The Road Fund will be the launching pad for projects with private participation and capital market borrowings. Land under Public Works Department in strategic locations would be identified and commercially

exploited, involving private sector where necessary, and the revenues will be channelised for building up the proposed Road Fund.

63. My Government envisions the construction of a High Speed Access Controlled Motorway running along the State. This will provide the east-west connectivity to the existing roads, which will be upgraded and rebuilt. The proposed High Speed Motorway would be the backbone of the transport infrastructure of the State. A new vision document on the proposed High Speed Motorway is being drafted.

64. My Government will closely oversee pavement construction by creating quality control teams and positioning them in different locations. There will be a large-scale computerisation in the planning and design of road net works and bridges for which innovative designs will be created. A large number of project ideas have been given shape to for which detailed project reports would be completed in the next six months.

65. There has been a substantial increase in trade from the Indian ports after the opening up of the economy. To enable Kerala to partake in this growing traffic, the port infrastructure in the State needs to be improved. My Government proposes to come out with a comprehensive policy to improve efficiency of the ports and to attract private investment for the speedy development of minor ports.

66. Integrated management of our fragile water resources and provision of adequate fresh water for all are key priorities for my Government. My Government proposes to adopt the "demand responsive approach" with special emphasis on water conservation and watershed penetration schemes. Special emphasis will be given on setting up a network of check dams and sub surface dams across the state, utilizing plan funding as well as resources from institutional funding.

67. Our coastline forms part of our national boundaries and its protection is vital for strategic reasons. My Government proposes to pursue with Government of India, a scheme to sanction assistance for sea wall construction and re-formation.

68. In 1994, the then Government had prepared a Unified Irrigation Bill, which was however not pursued. My Government proposes to enact a comprehensive "Irrigation and Water Management Bill" which will address issues relating to management of our rivers and water resources, protection of water environment, management of irrigation systems etc.

69. To provide protected drinking water to all, my Government will strengthen Kerala Water Authority and encourage local communities to set up their own self-sufficient water supply schemes. Community based water schemes with environmental sanitation and hygiene components, will be set up with the assistance of Government of Netherlands. My Government also proposes to obtain aid from the World Bank

for financial assistance for covering the whole state with a package of new rural and urban water schemes. The long delayed water supply scheme of Kochi City will be completed. A new scheme of community based water supply will be implemented shortly in the districts of Kollam and Kasargode with the assistance of Government of India. To improve the revenue collection in the Kerala Water Authority, the system will be fully computerised.

70. Sewerage improvement works in Thiruvananthapuram will be completed soon and new schemes will be taken up with the assistance of HUDCO.

71. Poverty alleviation, providing shelter for the poor and improving rural infrastructure are areas, to which my Government accords utmost importance. Under the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojna, my Government proposes to build 68400 houses for rural poor below poverty line over the next three years. 15200 houses are proposed to be completed during the current financial year. Rs. 19.71 crores has been sanctioned for providing all weather road connectivity to unconnected habitations. 73 rural road projects worth Rs. 31.64 crores sanctioned under RIDF VI of NABARD will be taken up during the year. The Total Sanitation Campaign now under implementation in the districts of Kasargode and Kollam will be extended to Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha and Malappuram this year. Integrated Wasteland Development Project, aimed at eco-restoration and soil conservation, now

under implementation in Kasargode and Kannur districts will be undertaken in Malappuram and Idukki districts this year. A novel project of participatory poverty assessment will be undertaken this year with the help of the Asian Development Bank.

72. The welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will receive high priority by my Government. My Government will implement various schemes for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Some of the measures taken in this regard will include: giving educational assistance at enhanced rate from pre-primary to college level and research and imparting training to SC/ST youth in information technology.

73. My Government proposes to constitute a Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes affairs to monitor the implementation of Government policies and programmes. A Centre of Excellence to build up the intellectual and physical competence of talented SC/ST students and youths will be set up. My Government also proposes to start entrepreneur development schemes, courses and training for imparting managerial skills in industry, trade and commerce to the SC/ST youths to tackle unemployment and to ensure economic empowerment.

74. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Youths will be given Education and Training in Computer and Information Technology in prestigious institutions. It is proposed to bring

out a comprehensive legislation to safeguard the tribal intellectual property rights for their traditional knowledge, systems and professions.

75. The Government shall implement the State Youth Policy with necessary changes, with a clear focus on the development of our young people. The main thrust of the policy will be "Youth Empowerment" in all spheres. Programmes for the youth in the State against drug abuse will be undertaken by the Youth Affairs Department with the assistance of United Nations Agencies, Non-Governmental and other Voluntary Organisations.

76. As part of the universalization of the ICDS scheme, 23 new projects will be started during the current year. In addition, the street children programme, presently operating in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode will be extended all over the State.

77. My Government will formulate, after elaborate consultations with all concerned, a Labour Policy, which will be investment friendly and will at the same time protect all legal rights and privileges of the workers.

78. My Government will take effective steps to utilise the abundant human resources of our State productively. Government will explore all possibilities of taking advantage of the job opportunities opened up in the IT Sector. My

Government will, accordingly, restructure the Industrial Training Courses to cope with the growing demand in this area. New courses will be sanctioned to avail of diverse job opportunities. ODEPC will channelise the avenues of technical employment abroad through tie up arrangements with foreign recruiting agencies. Regional Professional Employment Exchanges will be set up at Cochin and Calicut to facilitate their services through out the State. To enhance efficiency, all Employment Exchanges will be computerised. ESI coverage will be enhanced, ESI Hospitals will be upgraded and quality treatment will be assured to the workers.

79. Welfare Funds under the administration of Labour Department will be revamped to ensure that the beneficiaries derive maximum benefit from these funds.

80. Child Labour is one of worst forms of social exploitations still prevalent in our society. My Government will take all possible steps to eradicate child labour from the State.

81. The school education system is the bedrock of the educational edifice of a society. As such Government has to approach this thrust area with sensitivity and far-sightedness. My Government has therefore decided to critically examine and carefully revise the new school curriculum introduced in



the context of DPEP in the past four years. An Expert Committee consisting of academicians, teachers, social scientists and public men would be constituted to appraise the new curriculum and advise the Government on how to make it socially relevant and acceptable. School textbooks will be revised accordingly.

**82.** My Government proposes to make every school child confident in the use of computers. This will be achieved by integrating computer education into their regular curriculum. The project IT@School will be broad based to cover school children.

**83.** To improve the basic amenities in the schools, my Government proposes to chalk out a "Total School Improvement Plan" to be implemented within five years by which it will be ensured that all the schools in the state have minimum facilities and decent amenities.

**84.** In order to strengthen vocational education and to make these courses more relevant, a State level "Vocational Educational Council" will be set up to advise Government on policies relating to vocational education.

**85.** In the Higher Education sector, my Government intends to bring about qualitative improvement through introduction of more job oriented courses, orientation courses for the teachers, improvement of lab facilities and modernization of curriculum

and method of teaching besides encouraging widespread use of IT. As a policy, my Government will encourage self-financing institutions at Higher Secondary and Collegiate level. My Government believes that Universalisation of Higher Secondary as a declared objective has great relevance to Kerala's economic and social growth. Towards this end, self-supporting institutions at the Higher Secondary level will be encouraged.

86. In the Technical Education sector, AICTE has issued viability certificates for starting 18 new Engineering Colleges and 14 MCA institutions. Out of the 18 proposed new Engineering Colleges, 14 are in the private sector. It is expected that there would be at least 2500 additional seats for Engineering when these colleges start functioning. In addition, 3 new Polytechnics are proposed to be started. Government also proposes to convert College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram and College of Engineering, Thrissur as centres of excellence for IT with assistance from Government of India and external agencies. A new Engineering College shall be started at Perinthalmanna under the management of L.B.S. Centre.

87. My Government would take steps to make Kerala, a Technical Education Centre, which could attract students from other States and countries. Towards this end, Government would seek active co-operation and involvement of the private sector.

88. My Government is committed to the decentralization of powers to local bodies and proposes to consolidate the gains of the decentralized planning process. However, in doing so, my Government will also correct the aberrations that have crept into the implementation of the decentralized planning by over politicisation. Local bodies will be given complete freedom in the formulation and implementation of their development plans. Consequently, all the expert committees will be abolished. The thrust will be on developing transparent, participatory and accountable Local Self Governments in the State.

89. Kerala has not adopted a comprehensive Urban Policy so far. My Government will formulate a comprehensive Urban Policy shortly.

90. A professional scientific approach will be taken to solve the problems of solid and liquid waste. My Government will implement this as ordered by the Supreme Court of India before December 31<sup>st</sup> 2002. My Government will adopt a bold approach towards out sourcing, privatisation, and public private partnership.

91. The Kerala Institute of Local Administration will be made a Centre of Excellence and a premier institution in the field of decentralized governance. The Kerala Rural and Employment Welfare Society will set up more units to give gainful employment to the local youth.

92. Kudumbashree has successfully demonstrated the concept of micro enterprises as a powerful tool for poverty alleviation. Under this programme several innovations in poverty alleviation have been introduced. The Kudumbashree experiment has received international recognition. My Government intends to cover the backward districts of Kasargode and Waynad besides 50 new Panchayaths in other districts under Kudumbashree during the year 2001-2002.

93. The State has been able to maintain an efficient universal public distribution system. However the decision of Government of India to increase the price of ration articles drastically has led to extra burden on the State Government. My Government recognizes that public distribution is an essential service it is committed to provide. Therefore it has decided to continue the subsidies involved at its own expense. Government also proposes to implement a smart card system in 5 ration shops on a pilot basis. Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation proposes to open 20 more Maveli medical stores during the year. The Corporation is also finalizing arrangements with BPCL to open 17 new LPG outlets in different parts of the State.

94. My Government will ensure that the general price level in the open market is kept under control through the operations of the Civil Supplies Department and the Civil Supplies Corporation. Government is committed to support the Civil

Supplies Corporation in its market intervention activities. My Government intends to increase the support given to the Corporation in the years to come.

95. Kerala has a robust co-operative movement well spread out in the agricultural, industrial and credit sectors. My Government will strive to make the movement stronger and capable of delivering the services effectively for the well being of the small and the poor. My Government will also take necessary steps to revive Pariyaram Medical College. My Government are examining various options to enable the Kochi Medical College to continue its academic activities. Engineering Colleges under Co-operative Agency for Professional Education (CAPE) will also be strengthened. Kerala would be made an Integrated Co-operative Development Project State by extending the programme to the only remaining district in the State, viz. Thiruvananthapuram.

96. My Government would strive to conserve the rich biological diversity of the State in the natural forests for ecological and environmental sustainability. Efforts will be made to bring all degraded areas under effective forestation programmes. Besides, Government of India approval will be sought for setting up a new "Tiger Reserve" including Parambikulam Wildlife sanctuary, Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve, Chinnar Wildlife sanctuary and Eravikulam National Park. Government will also take steps to develop eco-tourism

in the forests, especially in the wild life sanctuaries by bringing the relevant area under a separate unit of the Forest Department.

97. My Government will also strictly enforce the arrack ban in the State by enlisting public co-operation. Stringent action will be taken against persons indulging in any activity related to illicit liquor.

98. My Government is committed to modernization and augmentation of IT- enabled services in all possible areas in the Transport Sector, ensuring safety and comfort of the people. More specifically, there will be a time bound induction of information technology in the Motor Vehicles Department, Water Transport Department and Kerala State Road Transport Corporation. Such an induction of information technology will substantially contribute to efficiency and transparency of operations and improve revenue collections. In KSRTC, steps will be taken to modernize the fleet, computerise the operations to ensure efficiency and speed and to increase comfort and safety in road travel. Particular attention will be paid for providing modern passenger amenities at all the bus stations. As regards Water Transport, my Government proposes to take steps to introduce modern, energy efficient boats to serve the needs of the travelling public and also to promote tourism in the backwaters of the State.

**99.** My Government intends to give Induction Courses and training in computers to all newly recruited persons and other officers in the Revenue Department through the Institute of Land Management. Steps will be taken to upgrade the Institute of Land Management as a Regional Institute.

**100.** The recent earth tremors in various districts of the State have created panic among the people. In view of this, each district will prepare District Disaster Management Plan. The Rehabilitation Plan will have the aim of socio-economic uplift of victims of natural calamities.

**101.** My Government will carry out a crash programme to issue pattas to all eligible cultivators who have occupied forestland prior to 1/1/1997. With this end in view, the Government proposes to make necessary changes in the relevant Land Assignment Rules. My Government will distribute one lakh pattas during this year under various other categories.

**102.** Government will install the Global Positioning System and use modern electronic equipments and satellite communications for the speedy survey of lands. My Government will take steps to modernize the Legal Metrology Department.

**103.** My Government proposes to introduce a new Insurance and Housing Scheme for all Kudikidappukars in the State. This insurance coverage will be extended to ex-landlords also.

My Government will give top priority for social housing in the State and declare "HOUSING FOR ALL" as a State wide scheme. Economically Weaker Sections will be given special attention while implementing the project. My Government proposes to set up Satellite Townships at Akkulam in Thiruvananthapuram District and Thripunithura near Ernakulam City. Necessary assistance for this will be sought from national and international financial agencies. Self Employment units are to be set up by the Kerala State Nirmitti Kendra in 100 Panchayats where unemployed youths especially women will be trained in production of building material. My Government also proposes to implement a new scheme for allotment of house plots to registrants in Municipal areas through loan tie-ups with financial institutions.

104. My Government will make housing finance accessible to all homeless families. It will also organize public housing in areas with high-demand. My Government would also propagate effective and environment friendly construction technologies.

105. My Government intends to formulate an Old Age Policy. Departments concerned will adequately focus on incorporating elements of this policy into their programmes. The existing old age homes will be strengthened and their quality improved.



106. Kerala has a rich cultural heritage. My Government has plans to undertake various cultural programmes in consonance with our glorious traditions. Some of these programmes are: establishing an I-Max theatre, the first of its kind in Kerala; opening of Kunjali Marakkar Monument public; declaration of Hill Palace Complex and its surroundings as protected monument. My Government also proposes to elevate the Diploma course at Kerala Kalamandalam to Degree level considering its uniqueness and its objective of preserving the cultural heritage of the State.

107. My Government has nine months left in this financial year. There is much work to be done during this short period. The times are difficult but yet with political commitment and public support, my Government is confident of realigning Kerala on a development path. United, let us share this optimism and march ahead.

JAI HIND