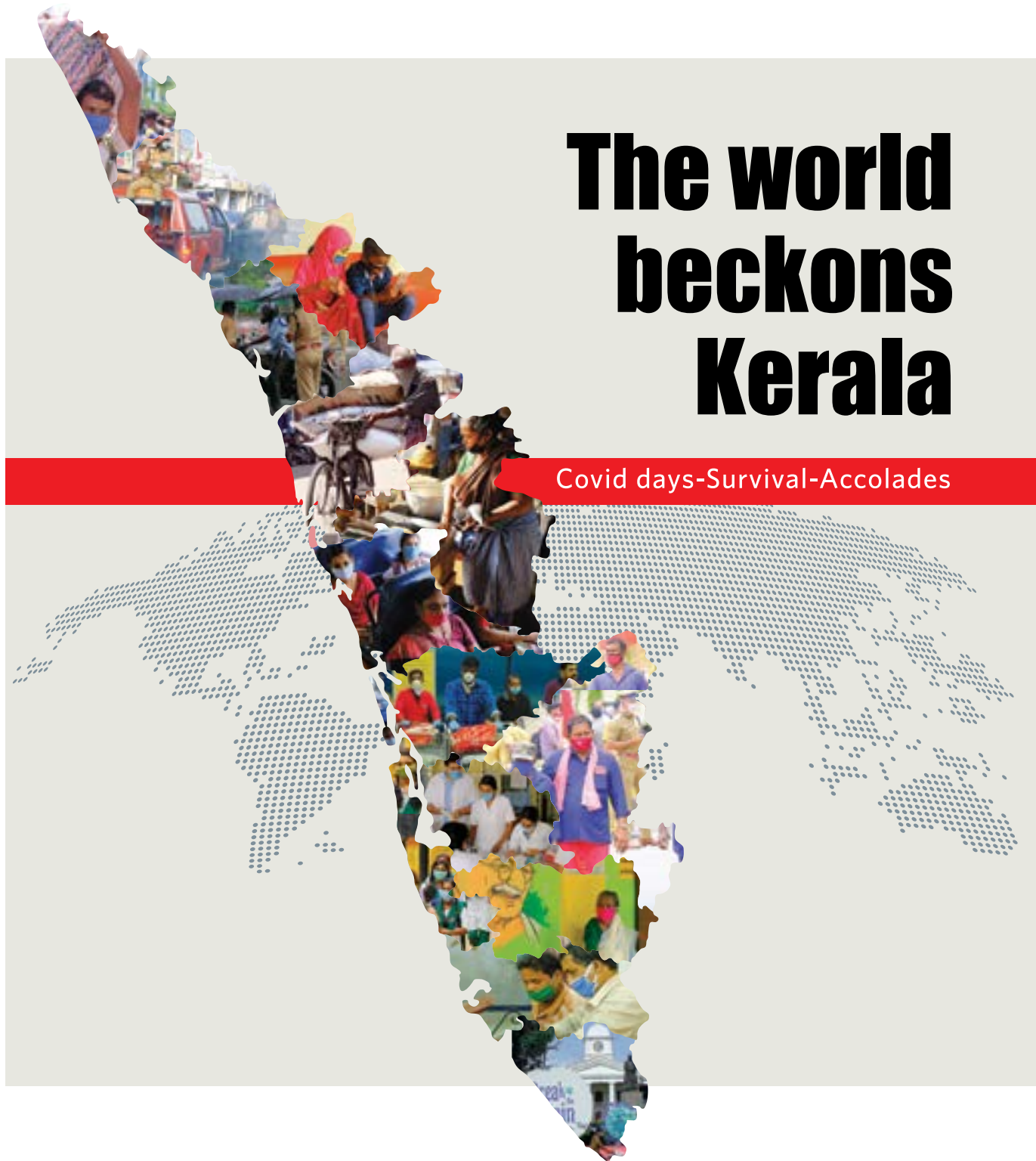


The world beckons Kerala

Covid days-Survival-Accolades



About the Book



S. Harikishore IAS

Director - I & PRD

It has been more than a year since we started living with the pandemic Covid - 19. Kerala has showcased an unparalleled modus operandi for taming the invisible foe. While the whole world is trying to get in terms with the situation, we have been fighting it out to live with the new normal, which has become a success since we have done exceptionally well in containing the mortality rate to the minimum. Here, this book brings forth those days of covid, right from the pen of some of the District Collectors, since they were the ones who led the round against Covid 19 upfront.

Then comes the thanksgiving part - those people who recovered from the pandemic expressed their sincere gratitude to the State Government of Kerala, for the kind of support provided in the days of distress.

The third segment is all about how the world opines regarding the efforts of the State Government in governance. In addition, some of the most relevant policies of the Government are included. I hope this book will evoke enthusiasm amongst all and the same would make everyone aware of the situation they are in.

S. Harikishore IAS

Director - I & PRD



C O N T E N T S

THE PANDEMIC	07	Unfazed by Covid	25
We fought with valour	09	Abdul Gafoor – The survivor from Kasargode	26
Competent resistance.....	11	The young doctor was determined!	27
Timely intervention assures safety	13	The CFLTC episode, The teacher’s experience	28
A rare experience indeed.....	15	“I can’t thank enough!”	29
Testing times, but teamwork matters	17	Health department’s helping hand	30
Unforgettable days	19	“Thus I became positive in life” / A family that fought and defeated covid	31
THE SURVIVAL	21	Crossing the covid bridge.....	32
“The government is with you” - A promise that was kept	22	The survival saga.....	33
A thousand words not enough to convey gratitude	23	“Let’s face it positively”	34
The man who gave Covid a lift & his recovery saga.....	24		



C O N T E N T S

<p>THE WORLD'S EYE VIEW ON KERALA..... 35</p> <p>Towards true democracy37</p> <p>Kerala is the best model..... 38</p> <p>The futuristic Government 39</p> <p>The role model/Confidently ours..40</p> <p>Words not enough 41</p> <p>Benevolent by all means..... 42</p> <p>Kerala is always ahead of time 43</p> <p>The 'active' leadership44</p> <p>The true purpose of governance.... 45</p> <p>Reshaping positively.....46</p> <p>Well-intentioned performance..... 47</p> <p>Defense intensified48</p> <p>Frontrunner by all means 49</p>	<p>NOTED POLICIES 51</p> <p>Meal for just 20 rupees :</p> <p>The success saga of people's hotels 52</p> <p>Keeping darkness at bay 53</p> <p>Farmers' Welfare Fund Board: Setting an example to the rest of the country 54</p> <p>The 'MAPATHON' Era..... 55</p> <p>The Corporate Innovation days..... 56</p> <p>Study rooms (Padanamuri) for SC students 57</p> <p>K-FON 58</p> <p>Responsible Tourism Policy..... 59</p> <p>Right to sit act60</p> <p>Erasing the Carbon Footprint..... 61</p>
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Covid days -Survival-Accolades

- Editor-in-Chief : S. Harikishore IAS
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Deputy Editor in Chief : K. P. Saritha
Editor : C. Rajesh
Assistant Editor : L. Hemanth Kumar
Assistant Information officer : S. Shyama
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The Pandemic



We fought with valour



S. SHANAVAS IAS
District Collector - Thrissur

January 30, Honouring the martyrdom of the Mahatma and reliving the pledge of allegiance towards nation-building and peaceful coexistence between all...It would have remained just another red-letter day, pondering the legacy of Gandhiji, had not a telephone call comes like a jolt out of the blue. Destiny would have that January 30 would be indelibly recorded as the day India's first Covid positive case was confirmed in Thrissur district.

In December 2019, simultaneously as the newscasts of the spread of the dreaded virus strain started filtering out of Wuhan, this District Administration received notifications

for maintaining the highest and steadfast vigilance. The alert was full, high and sustained. We collated details of our people who had travelled back and forth from Wuhan for business or education purposes. We prudently imposed quarantine measures for them. A medical student who returned from Wuhan on the 26th of January was subsequently admitted with symptoms of Covid. Enlisting the support of a private firm in Kochi, the pathogen sample was airlifted to the Institute of Virology, Pune. On the 30th of January, we confirmed the first positive case of Coronavirus. To date, the District continues to maintain the highest levels of alert and preparedness.

As events unfolded, the District Administration responded on a war footing, opening twenty-four-hour control rooms simultaneously at the District Medical Office and the Collectorate. This ensured the highest safety of our people. Subsequent to this isolation wards were readily instated at Thrissur Medical College. A high-level team convened by the Health Minister K K Shylaja, Ministers - A. C. Moideen, Prof. C. Ravindranath, and V.S. Sunilkumar, met to oversee preparedness and plan the next stage of containment. The consequent weeks saw a success curbing of the spread, but by 5th March 2020, 5 Covid Positive cases were registered in Kerala.

Thrissur Medical College and the Government Hospital was designated Covid Hospitals. Additionally, isolation centres were set up in all Taluk hospitals. Pathogen samples were collected from suspected cases. Quarantine facilities were judiciously created for the expatriate community set to land. Details of Covid positive cases from the expats who arrived in two stages from March 7th were assimilated, whilst a simultaneous list was drawn up to accommodate those anticipated to arrive in Thrissur over the next 15 weeks. An awareness program was implemented to educate the public about disease transmission from infected areas and persons. The Department of Health orchestrated mass awareness campaigns, study classes, screening of short educative videos, cultural takes like street skits, flash mobs and school pledges.

Our Police force was readied and trained from the end of January to help coordinate the relief efforts of the District Administration. Measures were enforced to secure the welfare of the vulnerable, women and children, and the migrant labour force. Following the lockdown, containment zones were imposed in those areas of high infection levels, this was rationally

calculated on empirical data, i.e, positive cases, primary contacts and secondary contacts.

Our Health workers toiled hard zestfully despite the spread of the disease. The IMA rendered their expertise, knowledge and care very readily. In anticipation of the summer vacation starting on the 21st of March, more isolation wards were readied at hospitals.

Combating strategies adopted by the District Health Department also included the formation of a media monitoring system and a social management team, and awareness programs were promulgated. The people's representatives displayed a dutiful rendering of their services.

Social media campaigns and psychosocial counselling were effectively stepped up and dispensed. The Police force ensured the steady, unrelenting support of the Janamaithri police. Rapid response teams were formed at ward levels. Prompt and extensive review meetings were held daily at 5 pm at the Collectorate and the briefings passed on to the people. 103 counsellors provided routine counselling to individuals in quarantine. The district's Information Office promptly updated the administration's policies to the media. Additionally, there were numerous cultural inputs from talented artists and singers to beat the Lockdown blues. The District Development Committee reconvened for the first time on the 27th of June.

The preparedness of the State Government to face Covid's onslaught was bolstered by the wisdom gathered facing the Nipah epidemic. At the core of all the valiant efforts lay the crucial task of prevention of spread. It must be reiterated that world-class recuperating measures were hosted by the Government whilst presenting to the people the full armoury of measures to protect, prevent and curb this pandemic. ■





Competent resistance



B. ABDUL NASAR IAS
District Collector - Kollam

Kollam District administration took appropriate steps from the beginning itself in defending the outbreak of the covid 19 pandemic. The district has geared up for a continuous and integrated process of planning and organizing, coordinating and implementing measures by following the rules and regulations from the state Government in a fool-proof manner.

As I felt that the break the chain campaign was successfully accomplished throughout the district and the message was

disseminated to the entire populace. The need to maintain social distancing was messaged to the masses through various awareness campaign programmes and throughout print, visual, audio and social media.

The programme titled 'let us kill corona in Kollam' prepared by the district medical officer with NHM was an exceptional one by all means. The short film -shradhha produced by the district collector too garnered the desired result Moreover meetings

and programmes to sensitize various religious gatherings in the initial stage itself helped to maintain almost covid - free days in the beginning. Again the control - monitoring system in the coastal areas helped to reduce the spread of the disease among the fisher communities.

In my view declaration of the lockdown coupled with health awareness programmes brought the desired result in containing the pandemic. The welfare and repatriation activities of guest labourers too were initiated and fulfilled in an effective way. The result - lessened number of infected among guest labourers in the district.

The formation of CCG (closed cluster groups) headed by CMO (cluster monitoring officers), a unique project - the collective effort from the local people consisting of 20 to 30 families too ended up effective. The timely intervention and the sharing of vital information with regard to the Government directions paved way for an effective roll in reducing the spread of disease out of proportion, especially in the coastal belt of the district. The activities of CCG attracted special mention from the Chief Minister exemplifies the value of the initiative.

The activities done so far has been a great success and the credit goes to the officials as well as the general public who wholeheartedly stood behind the district administration.

I may conclude that the overall efforts in covid 19 containment activities, mitigation, treatment, rehabilitation, survival etc. taken up in the district helped a lot in these trying circumstances. The experience in fact triggered the valour to face any challenges in the future confidently. ■





Timely intervention assures safety



H. DINESHAN IAS
Collector - Idukki

When the novel coronavirus hit Idukki district by mid-march 2020, the district administration quickly responded with stringent and robust measures: rapid testing, complete lockdown, entry - restriction at borders, effective contact - tracing, and firm quarantine measures. The goal of the district administration was to minimise serious illness and overall deaths while minimizing societal disruption as a result of the pandemic.

By 15 march 2020, first covid 19 case in Idukki district was reported in a foreign traveller who visited Munnar from the UK. After that, Idukki experienced a phased increase in covid 19 positive cases.

While taking measures to flatten the curve early, the district administration faced the daunting task of strengthening existing health facilities, equipping two district hospitals - to effective covid 19 management hospitals. With the help of supportive



representatives and line departments, the district administration squeezed the financial requirement for the up gradation which constituted equipment purchase, minor and major civil works etc.

Tracking and Testing

Formation of a health advisory group to track, identify and test all travellers coming from covid 19 - affected areas became handy. The district administration has ensured the support-convergence of allied departments including health, police, forest, DDMA, LSGD and Revenue.

The whole covid-19 related activities were monitored on a daily basis with effective coordination of district administration with the constituted war room and 24*7 control cell operating for regular tracing, tracking and follow up actions, cluster

zone declaration, identification and containment zone identification.

Special call centers were operationalised for mental health and palliative care services. A gap analysis was done and required human resources were allocated through NHM. In order to increase sample testing and surveillance, an accredited testing facility RTPCR lab at Government medical college Idukki was established. Antigen testing facility was implemented in nearly 62 centres across the district. In addition to this mobile testing centres were also started. Sample transport and logistics support mechanism was centrally established for the smooth functioning of the whole process.

Infrastructure Development

District hospitals were upgraded with an increased quantity of oxygen - beds and ICU - beds with ventilators. In the Government medical college Idukki, 40 ICU beds were established with 24 ventilators and in the district hospital Thodupuzha, 10 - bedded ICU was established with 6 ventilators for catering the category - B and category -C patients in the district.

The number of Category - A patients was rising during the pandemic situation, as the hospital bed numbers are too precious to cater to these group, covid 19 fresh line treatment centers (CFLTC) were opened in 6 regions across the district. The additional requirement of staff in these centers was met by NHM from covid 19 brigades and existing rank list.

Daily requirements of the CFLTC'S were met by management committee headed by LSGD under the direct supervision

of the district administration. All the fresh recruits were given training and orientation regarding all the aspects pertaining to covid 19 management.

Line list of dialysis patients was made and nearly 285 were enlisted, who had their dialysis from 35 centers in and around Idukki. With the help of district panchayath and NHM, all the services pertaining to dialysis including transportation were made free of cost during the time of the lockdown.

A new and fully equipped dialysis center with 10 beds were established in Government medical college Idukki. In district hospital Thodupuzha, additional two machines were installed exclusively for covid 19 positive dialysis patients.

A control cell was exclusively designed for palliative care offering video consultation, drug delivery and timely referral thereby reducing their risk of contact. For nearly 10000 pregnant women in the district, the antenatal services were given at their door steps by specially trained field staffs.

Teleconsultation services were provided in order to reduce the patient inflow to covid 19 hospitals. Post covid 19 clinics and virtual consultation via e-sanjeevani platform introduced. Spatial mapping of the daily covid 19 cases and containment zones using Geographical Information System (GIS) added strength to the activities. Online platforms were widely used for training and meetings.

Immediate attention and care provided to the most vulnerable came out as a success. The timely intervention helped in the survival of many, which in fact helped in reducing the mortality rate. ■



A rare experience indeed...



A. ALEXANDER IAS
District Collector- Alappuzha

When the novel Coronavirus started raging across the globe and its glaring impact was felt by everyone, it was definitely worse than fiction. We entered into a new-normal, peppered with concerns. As the officer in charge of Alappuzha district administration, I understood that every measure, every step in the fight against Covid was totally new, and hence undoubtedly challenging.

Societal stigma associated with Covid was a major factor which we had to overcome during the initial stages of the pandemic. People were hostile when it comes to cremating the dead bodies of the victims of Covid. Gradually things changed and people began cooperating.

Every district administration in the state was entrusted with the responsibility of finding more facilities to accommodate the



increasing number of covid patients and it was definitely a huge task. In spite of identifying many buildings for starting first-line and second-line treatment centres, we were always worried about the possible lack of adequate beds in near future. The timely intervention and suggestions of local bodies and common people came in handy on those occasions. I happened to receive a phone call from a Pathirapally resident, who suggested that the closed-down facility at DC Mills can be used for running a first-line treatment centre. It was a huge facility which could accommodate more than 1500 people, but a lot of maintenance works had to be done. We immediately started working on it.

I was particular that covid patients' needs should be attended to immediately. , On the month of June, I received a call from a covid patient, who had also been undergoing regular dialysis. He wanted to bring in to my notice the lack of special dialysis facilities for covid patients. Soon after receiving the complaint, we jumped into action. Ambalapuzha block panchayat authorities released nearly Rs.25 lakh from their plan fund and we could soon set up a special dialysis unit for covid patients at TD Medical College, Vandanam. The district administration also took special care in improving the efficiency of dialysis units in periphery hospitals too. With the help of National Health Mission, we could rope in more staff for this purpose too.

During July- August, it was a double whammy awaiting district administration. Possibility of flooding in low-level areas in Kuttanad, as well as covid-spread, posed a serious threat; but we were prepared in advance, by shifting the unsound and the elderly to Hotel Raiban in Alappuzha town.

Last but not the least, the district administration's special drive against covid, 'Karutham Alappuzhaye', was received well by the public. We could bring together a large group of people including students, youth and Kudumbasree members in this campaign which included awareness programmes, mask distribution, special care for the elderly etc.

Overwhelming participation from students, teachers and residents of Alappuzha district for a Rangoli competition cannot be left unmentioned. Apart from the health department, which was always in the forefront of the fight against covid, local self Governments and various departments like education, revenue, panchayat etc joined their hands during the campaign, Karutham Alappuzhaye.

The Information Public Relations Department and various media provided the essential support necessary for the success of such a campaign. All these efforts helped spread awareness in the fight against Covid.

Every single initiative, including the campaign and setting up of facilities, in the fight against covid pandemic was certainly a huge learning experience for me as an administrator. ■



Testing times, but teamwork matters



S. SUHAS IAS
District Collector - Ernakulam

The Covid Pandemic, the defining global pandemic has thrown up unprecedented upheavals in all walks of life. The state of affairs was no different for the District of Ernakulam. The district operated almost as the epicentre, Kochi worked on maximum alert, whilst Kochi airport recorded the highest volume of expatriate returnees. Consequently, their repatriation, health screening and quarantine measures threw up huge challenges.

The methodical, structured and surgical coordination between the various departments of The State Government reaped deserved success. To be specifically highlighted was the saga of the U.K. based tourists who had to be forcefully quarantined whilst trying to breach isolation and lockdown regulations. They were offered world-class health care and nursed back to robust health. They progressed on to be goodwill ambassadors for the state - of - the - art health care that Kerala offered them and



this successfully dispelled the unwarranted backlash that Kalamassery Medical College(their treatment centre) faced globally.

The district is also hosting to a substantially high number of the migrant labour force. To sensitively handle their myriad needs and to rope them too into abide by the lockdown regulations required great teamwork between the various forces of the State Government. That effectively remains the highlight of this district's and the State's success story in the handling of the Pandemic: the foresight to predict challenges, the wisdom to implement contingency measures in a coordinated manner efficiently across all levels of the State machinery. ■





Unforgettable days



DR. D SAJITH BABU IAS
District Collector, Kasaragod

Extensive and elaborate arrangements were made in the District to contain the spread of Covid-19. While strict restrictions were in force, utmost priority was given to supply of food materials and medicines to the sick and needy. Well -equipped community kitchens functioned across the district in an exemplary manner catering to the needs of people.

Special consideration was given for the identification of migrant labourers and to distribute 16828 food kits at their dwellings.

The first district to seal the borders Well before the official announcement of the 'lockdown' period, the entry of vehicles from the neighbouring districts was stopped by enforcing a border ceiling. This has helped us a lot for checking the entry



of suspect cases; this was more of a deterrent as too many persons could have entered the district with the disease in the initial period, through the 12 unmanned routes from Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka.

- **The first district to start exclusive Covid-19 Hospital**

Kasaragod General Hospital was declared as exclusive Covid-19 hospital and resources were pooled in, to efficiently manage the disease. All other patients were shifted to the nearby Cooperative hospitals to reduce the pressure on health staff as well as to reduce the spread of the disease to other patients.

- **Maintained transparency and better consultation with the public**

The latest news advisories etc were shared to the public on a real-time basis through visual, social and print media. A

'Facebook' live programme was initiated wherein the District Collector on alternate days started sharing all the information about Covid-19 pandemic with the public between 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm.

- **Support for farmers**

The decision of the District Administration to buy the produce directly from the farmers at 20% less than prevailing 'Market price' fixed by the Administration, became a boon to the farmers.

- **'Room quarantine and not home quarantine' motto popularized**

The district administration through its various agencies started popularizing the motto of 'room quarantine' instead of 'home quarantine' to avoid the spread of disease among other family members.

- **The first district to start CFLTC**

The newly constructed Ladies' Hostel in Kasaragod was converted as CFLTC.

- **PCR Lab in 5 days**

The laboratory at the Central University of Kerala was converted as a full-fledged Covid 19 testing lab.

- **A tertiary care hospital**

With the help of TATA Group, a 551 - bed hospital was established in less than 4 months' time for treating Category C patients who warranted tertiary care.

- **Treatment of dialysis patients**

To treat the 504 dialysis patients in the district, a plan was prepared to establish 70 more dialysis units over and above 24 units present in the district.

- **IEC Coordination Committee**

In order to save limited resources, a coordination committee was formed at the district with the Collector as Chairman and DIO as Convener.

In a situation where there were no uniform protocols and past experiences to guide, the challenge we undertook with the help of people in the district is unforgettable. ■



The Survival



“The government is with you” – A promise that was kept

The Corona virus, that brought the entire world to a standstill, entered me in the form of high fever. What followed were very critical days. Those were the moments when I experienced the excellence of anti-COVID measures adopted in Kerala. The promise “The Government is with you” was honored in the best possible manner – said Prajeesh a native of Koduvalli, Kozhikkod.

The Antigen test conducted at Koduvally on 26 September confirmed that I had contracted the Corona infection. As I had run a high temperature a couple of days before the test turned positive, my movements had been limited. That helped contain the spread of the disease. The rest of the days were spent in the First Line Treatment Centre that had been prepared at the KMO College in Koduvally.

From the time the infection was confirmed, the Health Department authorities were in constant touch with me, and they collected all the vital details. I had a call from the Police Department in order to make out a route map of contacts. There were volunteers at the COVID Centre; every ready to render whatever help was required.

Members of the COVID-resistance army did everything to disinfect my house and

premises. I even received a formal SMS that alerted me that I had turned COVID positive, and that all arrangements had been made at the KMO College for my treatment.

A labourer from Bihar who was working at a construction site at Narikkuni occupied the bed next to mine. He too had been tested COVID positive. We used to get phone calls from the COVID Centres enquiring whether there was anyone under severe mental stress who required psychological counselling. Ten days later, another test was done and I turned negative. After returning home, I went into another spell of quarantine. Only after it got over, did I stir out. My wife too was infected with COVID, and was housed in another building in the same COVID Centre. After treatment, she was cured. The Government has set an example by intervening effectively during the time of a terrible pandemic. ■



A thousand words not enough to convey gratitude...

There were no identifiable symptoms of a Corona infection. The only discomfort I felt was caused by a mild flu-like condition.

As a driver, working with a public transport system like the KSRTC, exposure to the public was uncommonly high. That was why I underwent a COVID Antigen test conducted by the state Health Department. But when the result came positive, I had not expected it in the least.

From the time my infection was confirmed, the Health Department personnel and my friends stood by me like a rock, and helped wipe it out completely. Today when I look back, my mind fills with confidence because I overcame an infection that the whole world viewed with fear. These are the words of Senthil Raj, who hails from Aroor.

Senthil Raj tested positive for COVID on 23 October. During the lockdown period, whenever he went out, he was very meticulous about wearing the mask and keeping a sanitizer in possession.

So, he had absolutely no idea where he got the infection from. However, early detection helped prevent the infection from spreading to others.

From the time his infection was confirmed, the Health Department personnel maintained contact with him at regular intervals, and took care to bring medicines and medical equipment to his doorstep without any delay. The police station of Aroor also kept in touch, and collected all the necessary information from him. The psychological support extended by both departments was noteworthy.

The meticulous work of our Health Department, the constant intervention of our health workers, and the support extended by friends and relatives were what helped us overcome Corona. Words are not adequate to express the gratitude that my family and I feel towards everyone. Senthil feels overwhelmed. ■



The man who gave Covid a lift & his recovery saga

Little did I know that it was Covid and days filled with anxiety that was unwittingly invited into my life when I gave a stranger a lift while on my way to Kottayam. Until then, I didn't even know who he was. He was an acquaintance of my friend who was also in the car with me - says Diju D. Dominic from Nedumkunnam, Kottayam.

He told me that this person was waiting for a bus on the same route that we were driving through. Fully aware of how hard it was to rely on public transport in the times of Covid, it was I who reversed the car and asked that he join us.

On the phone with him the next day,

he told me with dismay that he had tested positive. My friend and I decided to quarantine ourselves. Later on, my sample test result was positive while my friend's turned out negative. From life in quarantine, I was moved to a Covid First-Line Treatment Centre (CFLTC).

It was one of the best treatment centres in Kottayam, Media Village the communications college at Kurisummoodu in Changanassery. It became clear that a Covid Treatment Centre was not the same as what I'd been hearing about before. Testing, confirmation calls, counselling, treatment facility, food arrangement, the next phase of sample testing, all such steps were

being carried out diligently. Staff from various departments and volunteers was all hands-on day and night in this endeavour. Encouraging Words from the health department officials gave me strength.

I emerged victorious in the fourth test as the result was negative. I returned home, having experienced firsthand the effective intervention carried out by the State Government agencies. Even now, I recall everyone - from the doctors at the health department to the sanitation workers at the treatment centre, with gratitude. I may be known as the person who gave Covid a lift, but I don't regret it in the least. ■



Unfazed by Covid

To Nissar, who works day and night to protect the health of the people, the year 2020 is not a mere sheaf of memories, but a set of scorching experiences. But the story he loves to narrate is one of his own survival with renewed strength, despite having collapsed at the Shakthan Market in Thrissur following a COVID infection.

In June last year, when two loading workers at the Shakthan Market turned COVID positive, 349 of their fellow-workers were instructed to undergo an Antigen test. By the time, the tests got over, it was dark. Eight of them were found to be infected, and so an ambulance had to be arranged to shift them to hospital. Meanwhile, there was a spate of phone calls from home but Nissar chose to ignore them. Intent on discharging his responsibilities, he continued with his work. It was past 9 pm when he finally reached home at Perumpillissery. He spoke to Rafeena his wife and his children Ishaan Fathak and Rasha Parveen, and together they decided not to celebrate the forthcoming festival.

Nissar, a native of Kozhikode, stays at Cherpu Perumpillissery. Shakthan Market was the chief place of work assigned to him. All the health personnel, including Nissar, would report to work at 3 in the morning. One of the responsibilities was to check the quality of fish arriving at

the market and reject bad stocks. With the COVID outbreak, the materials had to be taken to quarantine centres. In the meantime, the corporation sanitation workers and employees tested positive for COVID. In the tests that were conducted following this development, Nissar too was found to be infected.

When one is deeply involved in protecting the health of one's land, it may not be possible to give much attention to one's own health and basic comforts. After Nissar, a Health Inspector with the Corporation, survived his COVID infection, he returned to his responsibilities with renewed vigor. He believes it is possible to defeat this pandemic that has twined itself around the world and brought it to its knees right now. This proactive professional has shown by his own example how survival is possible. He sees his work, not as a job that he to do. Rather, it is a sacred responsibility he is bound to discharge for the health of the community. ■



Abdul Gafoor – The survivor from Kasaragod

When his swab tested positive for COVID-19, Abdul Gafoor's heart missed a couple of beats.

He is 57 and diabetic. So, when he got admitted to the COVID Ward at the Kanhangad District Hospital in Kasaragod district on 21 March, he invested all his trust in the staff working there. And the returns he got – in terms of a new lease of life – are nothing short of overwhelming, this resident of Mymoon Nagar in Mogral [a part of Kumbala grama panchayat in Kasaragod], states. As part of the treatment, he was shifted to Kasaragod General Hospital on 26 March. There too, he got first-rate treatment.

“The first thing to do is to remove all fear from one’s mind. The best way is to handle it with care. The Government of Kerala is providing wonderful facilities to

treat COVID-19 patients,” Gafoor says, in the light of his own experience.

He had returned from Naif in the UAE on 14 March, along with his son. The two had alighted at Kariapoor airport. Shortly thereafter, both of them took the swab test.

While Gafoor was detected with the illness, his son tested negative.

Gafoor emphasizes that throughout his treatment, doctors and nurses were constantly available and ready to solve his problems. When the test was done on 11 April indicated that he had overcome the disease, he was discharged. However, the doctors have advised him to maintain a 14-day quarantine. ■



What the pandemic precipitated in a young doctor, who set out to combat COVID, were severe health issues. She had to spend days suffering myocarditis that threatened to put her heart out of rhythm. But she could overcome the distress with the help of her mental courage as well as the co-operation of her colleagues. After vanquishing the virus in her system, thirty-three-year-old Dr. Rashi Kurup of Thrippunithura is back in the arena, as a frontline warrior, to fight COVID.

The young doctor was determined!

It was on 23 September 2020 that Dr. Rashi came to PVS COVID Apex Centre at Kaloor in order to treat COVID patients, after having registered herself as a volunteer at the COVID Jagratha Portal of the Government of Kerala. Two weeks later, she ran a mild temperature but as the Antigen test came up negative, there was nothing to worry. The temperature soon became normal but soon she began to experience nagging breathlessness and chest pain. Subsequently, she did an RT-PCR test and that indicated she was COVID positive.

Dr. Rashi had to get herself admitted as a patient in the very hospital where she had served as a doctor. She underwent treatment for 10 days in the ICU. Later she was shifted to a private room, where she spent five days, before leaving for home.

It was when she was back home that

Rashi experienced the full impact of the infection on her system. She could neither walk nor speak. Neither the chest pain nor the breathlessness subsided. A detailed cardiac examination revealed that she was on the threshold of a minor heart attack. (As the after-effect of COVID, this condition has been detected in a few patients.) Although her chest pain has begun to subside, she continues to take medicines.

Many people wondered whether she should continue her medical practice. But Rashi was firm in her resolve. She was determined to rejoin duty, and give others whatever treatment and care she had received as a patient. The consolation given by her colleagues had been tremendous. So she had to be with them, and work shoulder to shoulder in order to alleviate the suffering of other patients. Dr Rashi rejoined duty to fight COVID. ■



The CFLTC episode

Barring the physical difficulties, he endured during the COVID times, the experience of receiving treatment is something Sharafuddin is only too happy to recount. It was during the initial days, when the state was slowly being caught in the grip of the pandemic, that the test conducted on 25-year-old Sharafuddin, a resident of Arappuzha in Palakkad-Kavassery, confirmed he was COVID positive. He had experienced a slight fever and body ache while he was in his workplace, and decided to return home.

When he consulted a doctor, he was advised to undergo a COVID test. Accordingly, he took an RTPCR test at the Palakkad District Hospital. By the time he got back home, the temperature had subsided, and the other physical discomforts also seemed to have disappeared. Precisely for that reason, he did not suspect he would test COVID positive. The very next day, he received a phone call from the Alathur police station advising him not to panic, and not to cause distress to his family by passing

on the information. The preamble raised Sharafuddin suspicions, and he assured the police that he did not have any fear even if he were COVID positive because he was confident that the treatment protocol was very effective.

Sharafuddin who was shifted to the COVID First Line Treatment Centre (CFLTC) at Peringottukurissi has only good things to say about the care he received at the centre. Doctors and nurses made personal calls, examined him, and enquired about his health. He was served food and medicines at regular intervals, accommodated in a spacious room that could house five persons. The washroom was maintained well. The next test was conducted ten days after he was admitted to the CFLTC. On getting confirmation that he was infection-free, he was allowed to go home but was advised to remain in quarantine for seven days. During this period of rest, health personnel including ASHA workers made regular phone calls, and collected details. This was a great source of relief and gave him a lot of confidence, admits Sharafuddin. ■

The teacher's experience

I was tested COVID positive when I underwent a check-up for Anganawadi teachers. I went through very trying times, physically and psychologically, as I had to lead an isolated existence at home. Health personnel kept in touch with me constantly over the phone and gave me necessary instructions. That gave me a lot of solace. The service of the counsellors was of great help too. It was their co-operation that helped me overcome the stress as I remained alone at home. The intervention of the Health Department and the state government went a long way in giving relief and building self-confidence – says Lata Ramakrishnan, anganwadi teacher from Nenmara.



I had heard about some contagious disease spreading in countries far away. However, during that time the village of Valat was untouched by it. The Health Department told us everything about Corona but we never expected it to come here. The disease eventually appeared here but with the help of Governmental systems, I came back to life. I'm grateful for it -these are the words of the 70-year-old Pathu, a native of Valat, who survived COVID-19 and returned to life. In the initial days of the spread of COVID in Wayanad, Valat became a cluster.

“I can't thank enough!”

Several people tested positive at the special medical examination camp set up by the Health Department at Valat Primary Healthcare Centre [PHC]. I was taken to the COVID Primary Healthcare Centre at Manandavady. There I saw many people of all ages, all affected by COVID, like me. But the doctors and nurses were very dutiful towards everyone. That was a cause of huge relief. Everyone gave full support, disregarding the fact that it was a contagious disease. Everything was given for free. We did not face any difficulty.

The confidence infused by the Health Department was what helped root out the disease from my body, even at this advanced age. The concern shown by

the COVID Centre was a source of great comfort to people at home. Whenever the relatives made telephone calls, they received news about my recovery. The Centre became a haven for many COVID patients like me who had gone there from the Valat cluster. I underwent treatment for eleven days. After that, when another test was done, I was declared free of the disease. By the time I reached home, I had a fairly good idea about COVID, and was convinced it was because of the vigilance shown by the Health Department that the infection could be treated. I have no words to express my gratitude towards the State Government that stood by the people through this crisis - the survivor elaborated. ■



Health department's helping hand

To those who argue that treatment facilities will decrease if there is a spike in the number of patients, the Health Department's response is that if the number of patients rises, it will surge the facilities. The high - quality COVID treatment and other facilities arranged at the Manandavady District Hospital prove that these are not empty words. It is perhaps only natural that common people are sceptical regarding assurances that the authorities have made arrangements to supply nutritious food and set up clinics fitted with modern treatment facilities. But Sajna, who has been discharged after COVID treatment,

endorses it very emphatically.

Her mother was being treated at home for COVID but when her condition worsened, she had to be admitted to hospital. Sajna accompanied her to be a bystander. In two days' time, Sajna too caught the infection. They had got themselves admitted in the hospital during a crest phase in COVID cases in the district.

However, as soon as she reached the hospital, her anxieties disappeared. For breakfast, she could choose to have dosa, appam, noolputtu or other items. Later, she was served milk, eggs and rice; then there was tea in the evening; and for dinner, she could either have chappatis

or rice gruel. On certain days, biriyani was on offer. In the initial phase, she had lost her sense of taste. But in course of time, when it returned, she could savour the food offered there. Doctors came on their regular rounds every day and examined the patients. The services of nurses were available round the clock.

Both women assert that their quick recovery was due to the meticulous care and attention they received at the hospital. Sajna's words are a testimony to the fact that the Health Department took a lot of care to ensure a steady quality of healthcare even when the disease spread widely in the state. ■



“Thus I became positive in life” ...

It was in connection with the annual vacation that I came home from Dubai last March. I was a taxi driver at the Dubai RTO.

The very next day after my return, when I began to experience fatigue, I went to Pariyaram Medical College for the COVID detection test. At first, the hospital authorities told me that the result was negative. Two days later, they said the result was positive. Those were the days when I lived in terrible fear – the words of Rajesh, a native of Peringome, who was the first COVID patient in Kannur district.

As soon as I was detected with COVID, my mother, wife and son were also admitted to hospital. Though not infected, they were very apprehensive. The interventions of the health workers and the police were very sympathetic. We used to get at least five phone calls a day, seeking updates on our condition. I was all alone in a room.

After I returned home following discharge from hospital, I ventured outdoors only after two months. We will certainly survive COVID-19 - the forty-five-year-old Rajesh is hopeful. ■

A family that fought and defeated covid

Those were the days when the COVID pandemic had begun to spread. The patient was eighty-two-year-old Shamsuddin, a native of Cheruvanchery in Kannur district. He contracted the disease in April from his daughter who had returned from the Gulf.

Soon thereafter, nearly every member of the family became infected. Some showed symptoms, others did not. They spent days in deep mental stress. Ten members of the 17-strong family battled the disease.

Two of them were children, and two among the five infected women were in advanced stages of pregnancy. One of them delivered a baby while being treated for COVID in a hospital.

During this time, those who gave full support to Shamsuddin and his family were the Health Department, the state government and the healthcare workers. As Shamsuddin had co-morbidities, he was taken to Pariyaram Medical College Hospital while the rest of the infected members were accommodated in the special COVID wing of the Ancharakkandi Medical College Hospital. Shamsuddin had to spend almost one-and-a-half months at Pariyaram Hospital because of cardiac-related issues.

Shamsuddin's daughter-in-law avers that the family got such care in the hospital as is normally received only at home. Dr Ajith and Dr Amritha stood by them throughout their stay there. And as the entire family was in hospital, none of them felt they had left home!

These are certain happy memories that the family savours from their hospital experiences. Shamsuddin is of the opinion that the COVID-resistance measures taken by the Government of Kerala are exemplary.



Crossing the covid bridge...

Little Zia (not his real name) became COVID-infected on the fifth day after birth and overcame it in eleven days. Today he is three months old and the source of great pride to the healthcare workers of the COVID-resistance force. Zia was the first infant in the district to be COVID-infected within days of his birth.

He got it from his mother, a native of Chendayod at Panoor, and was admitted on 4 September. This was the first such experience of the healthcare personnel in the district.

“We had had some experience in treating COVID-infected infants that were a couple of months old, but taking care of a COVID-infected baby that was only a few days’ old was a challenging task,” said Dr. Ajith Kumar, the Nodal Officer at the Ancharakkandi COVID Treatment Centre.

What worked to the baby’s advantage was that it was asymptomatic and did not suffer any specific distress. The care and co-ordinated treatment offered at the centre gave a lot of confidence to the young parents of Zia.

The treatment was arranged in such a way that the baby was not separated from its mother.

Breast milk was a factor that helped maintain his resistance power. In the Antigen and RT-PCR tests that followed, he tested negative. So after an eleven-day combat, he recovered his full health before going home. Healthy little Zia is a living testimony to the care and attention given by the Ancharakkandi COVID Treatment Centre and its healthcare personnel. ■





Take
Care

The survival saga

Arjun V. Ajayan, a native of NR City, Rajakkad, was an active member of the voluntary group that was engaged in anti-COVID measures during the lockdown period. As a college teacher and up-and-coming writer, he had joined the social voluntary group formed under the initiative of the State Government, and offered his services in community kitchen work, food kit packing, city cleaning drive, delivery of medicines to patients and so on. As soon as the lockdown was lifted, he went back to shoulder his professional responsibilities of taking online classes, and conducting examinations.

Arjun and his wife subjected themselves to a COVID test as part of sentinel surveillance. As soon as COVID was confirmed, the Health Department sent

an ambulance and took Arjun to the COVID First-Line Treatment Centre that had begun to operate at Kattappana. The protocol followed at the Treatment Centre was to ensure that patients ate nutritious food at regular hours, drank warm water frequently, and took adequate rest.

All arrangements to offer treatment too had been made there.

The Government machinery set up to combat COVID worked on well-oiled wheels. Arjun is full of gratitude towards the frontline workers in the healthcare department. The treatment he received from the time he was admitted to the hospital right up to his discharge was free.

Arjun claims that it was the inspiration as well as the experience he received during the voluntary work that gave him

the courage to face and overcome the disease.

As a writer, he now wishes to give a creative spin to his store of experiences and his survival tale during the COVID period.

Six members of his family – Arjun himself, his wife, father-in-law, parents and younger brother – were infected. But Arjun's father Ajayan is happy to admit that none in their list of contacts tested positive. Arjun is confident that besides strictly following the guidelines laid down by the Government if one takes precautions to ensure no other individual catches the infection due to one's negligence, it is possible to break the COVID chain. ■



“Let’s face it positively”

As a member of the field staff of a private bank, I was always conscious that Corona was lurking close by. So, I took all precautions when I went to work every day.

One Tuesday, while I was on duty, I got a call from my office. The message was that two officers had tested positive for COVID-19. Therefore, I was not required to report at the office. Rather, I had to quarantine myself at home. But by evening, things took a bad turn. I felt so fatigued and feverish that even the act of getting up from bed became difficult. Immediately, I contacted the Health Department personnel. They imparted courage by promising to drop in the next morning to administer the test and advised me not to panic. Soon afterwards, medicines were brought home by the Family Healthcare Centre unit. I had to remain all alone in my room. All along I was hopeful that the test would turn up negative but when the result came that evening, it read ‘COVID-19 Positive’. I developed a high fever, and my entire body ached. I wished everyone would be by my side – Abhilash Prathap’s words, as he recounts his COVID experience.

Having lost his sense of taste and smell, eating food became a problem. But

since his diabetes level had reached its peak, the doctor insisted that he should consume some food, somehow or the other. The situation became so bad that tablets gave way to insulin shots. The doctor called every morning and evening. There were numerous calls from the Health Department, and the doctors sent medicines for the entire family – his kid, wife, father who was diabetic and mother who was asthmatic. Steaming-hot food reached his room three times a day. All he needed to do was eat and take rest. As per doctors’ advice, he took care to eat a couple of oranges too every day. After ten days, all the members of his family went to the hospital to get themselves tested.

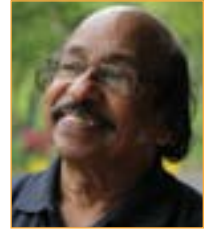
The next day, when the results came, everyone was COVID negative. Twelve days later, we went for another test. The results came negative. This was followed by a seven-day home quarantine.

A viral fever is bound to make us tired. And it takes a week to blow over. But it is only an infection. Thus, after living with me for 19 days, Corona made a graceful exit.

The World's Eye View on Kerala



Towards true democracy



K. SATCHIDANANDAN
Writer

The present Government in Kerala has done exceptionally well, taking into account the fact that this was one of the most unfortunate and traumatic interludes in Kerala's recent history, with tragedies stalking the state one after another, epidemics like Nipah, cyclones like Ockhi, a devastating deluge and finally the present COVID 19 pandemic all of which would have led to massive unemployment, innumerable deaths and total standstill in developmental activities. But, to the surprise and admiration of all impartial observers, including many artists and intellectuals across the political spectrum, Kerala has not only withstood these natural onslaughts, but gone ahead with its reformist and developmental agenda and fulfilled most of the promises in the manifesto of the ruling front.

Kerala has always striven to pursue a model of development where people are not treated as mere spectators,

consumers or clientele but active and proud participants who contribute to the development and reform, a model where the public sector gets strengthened and social equality on all fronts becomes the final goal: in short, a development based more on human, and socialist, values rather than one that appeases capitalist greed and consumerist passion. That can best be seen in sectors like health and education where the present Government has really excelled.

The way the Government has been handling the pandemic has already won international praise and recognition. The same kind of concern and attention was also shown during the great deluge where the Government and the people collaborated in unparalleled ways to reduce the impact on both life and economy, setting another example to the whole of the country. All the departments worked together like the organs of a body to meet the disaster under the unique



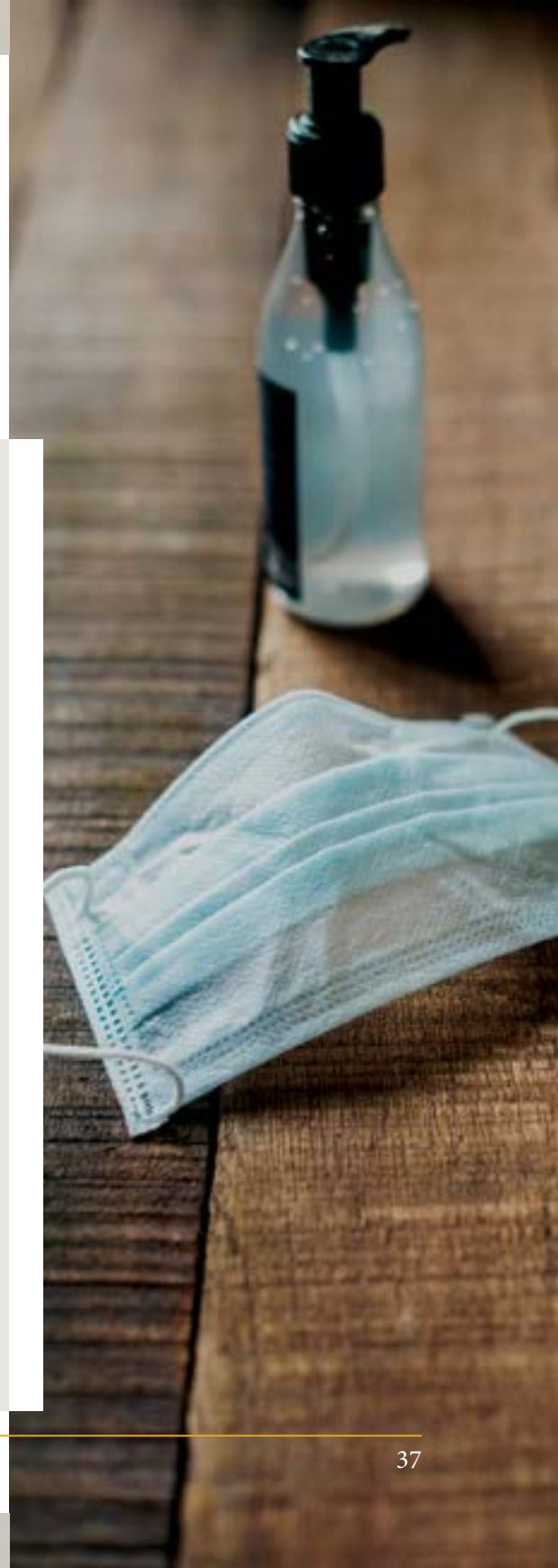
leadership of the Chief Minister.

Education, both formal and informal, has been another major area of affirmative action and positive transformation during these years. The setting up of Loka Kerala Sabha with representatives from different fields of activity and diverse states and countries and the activities of NORKA in facilitating travel and business and disaster assistance to the Malayali diaspora has certainly helped both development at home and assistance abroad. New financial initiatives like KIIFB , the development of Kudumbasree and its debut in new areas like job-oriented courses for women, poverty alleviation, food-supply , tailoring etc, the new care given to the housing sector exemplified by the building of three lakh new houses to meet housing shortage, building and upgrading of infrastructure,-these are all some important achievements of this Government.

The Muziris Project is doing well- despite the temporary lull due to the pandemic

and several museums and monuments- there are many such projects in different stages of completion. The Akademis have generally been doing well; IFFK, Kochi Biennale and the International Theatre Festival have now become part of Kerala's cultural landscape, thanks to the support of the Government and the participation of the people.

This Government, as shown above, has done well on almost all fronts and an additional concern for basic human rights and the preservation of nature will only add to its glory. Let us remember that this is a critical turning point in human history where following thinkers like Bruno Latour and Donna J. Haraway, we ought to understand that human history is but a chapter in the history of the earth and the universe and learn to live in harmony with nature rather than treat it as our property to be exploited eternally, forgetting that our natural resources are limited - as Gandhi said so well decades ago, this earth has enough to satisfy our needs but not everyone's greed.



Kerala is the best model

T.J.S. GEORGE

Padmabhushan-Writer-Journalist



No Government anywhere in the world gets full marks for its performance. And that is natural, considering the myriad levels at which a Government has to perform. However, the present Kerala Government has won unusual acclaim from diverse sources. A community kitchen, a special Onam kit, covid first line treatment centres are all ideas that seem simple. But only the Kerala Government thought up these ideas and implemented them for the

common good of the people.

There is no surprise that Kerala topped the ranking in the all-important areas of Safety, Health and Environment care. It is rated the Overall Best Big State. It makes me, a 'Keralan' living outside Kerala, extraordinarily proud. I go around telling people that Kerala is the best model they can follow..Thank you, Pinarayi Vijayan and colleagues, thank you, the state's dedicated administrators.

The futuristic Government



M. A. YOUSSEF ALI
LULU Group

Our Government under the leadership of the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has ably dealt with the natural calamities and other untoward happenings in the State. Our State is acknowledged worldwide for its role in containing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation, which is a global health crisis. This is due to the continuing commendable efforts of the Government with the joint support and cooperation of all the residents of our State. Earlier our State has proved itself more than worthy with its proactive response during the Nipah scare and later during two devastating floods.

Non-Resident Keralite Affairs (NORKA) of which our Chief Minister is the Chairman has been playing a vital role in the lives of Non-Resident Keralites, supporting them in times of need and lending them a helping hand. NORKA-ROOTS is the field agency of the Department of NORKA and as the Vice-Chairman of NORKA-ROOTS, I can say with pride that it acts as an interface

between the NRKs and the Government of Kerala and a Forum for addressing the NRKs problems, safeguarding their rights and rehabilitating the returnees.

Our Government has also taken positive steps which have attracted more investments and generated more employment. One of the necessities to attract investments is the state-of-the-art infrastructure and the State have been providing quality industrial infrastructure for attracting industrial investments. The State has been taking steps which are necessary to position Kerala as a favourable destination for industrial investments and to encourage private investments in many sectors. The ease of doing business through the newly introduced single - window clearance is a step for attracting investments both from Non-Resident Indians and other foreign institutions. This was also a thrust for giving more opportunities for our young entrepreneurs who are interested to invest in Kerala.





The role model



ANITHA PULLAYIL
LKS member

The word 'politics' was not seen with much interest until I met the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the Loka Kerala Sabha. The clarity of what he says the restraints in it, the personality that can make it work.

The pension amount was sanctioned with the understanding of the elderly in mind, and what could be greater than that? Government schools and hospitals have

been brought to where they are today and made valuable. Isn't it a great relief to deserve it?

The people of Kerala will never forget the Covid period, no matter who ever forgets it. It is enough for them to remember a Government that did not allow them to starve and to remember the Chief Minister who was at the forefront of it.

Confidently ours



HARIDAS T.
LKS member, UK

On the performance of the Kerala Government over the years to date I can say with gratitude the appropriate actions taken by the Government during all the natural calamities and strong support and proper guidance provided for the people of Kerala including those residing overseas during this pandemic. On the state development side the Government has made several investments with and

without the involvement of Non-resident Indians in various sectors which are beneficial for all the sections of the people of Kerala. The various projects initiated by NORKA for the welfare of non-resident Keralites also deserve lot of appreciation. I am sure that the Government of Kerala will continue to do more projects for the welfare and enhancement of the life of people of Kerala.

Words not enough



SUBAIR KANNUR

Member NRI(K) Commission, Manama - Bahrain



Being an expatriate in Bahrain for the past 32 years, I am able to truly witness major differences in the previous state Governments and that of our current State Government of Kerala. As we all are aware of the Loka Kerala Sabha, -the event hosted by our State Government, to bring the Keralites living around the world under a single platform and to utilize their expertise for the development of the State.

The State Government of Kerala led by the Chief Minister PinarayiVijayan has succeeded in changing the whole framework and developmental schemes of the state and also has put an end to corruption. Out of the 600 promises made in the manifesto just majority have

been implemented. This definitely shows the perseverance and integrity of our Government.

This state government has become the first government of India that introduced high-tech classrooms in all its government-run schools. The state government has also constructed numerous roads, bridges and buildings all through these 5 years which is unique in itself. The health care sector of our state is making progress under this Government which gained superior attention across the globe.

I am deeply indebted to the state Government of Kerala for the relentless support and cooperation and I sincerely appreciate all those services provided for each one of us.



Benevolent by all means



A.V. ANOOP
Chairman AVA Group,
Global Chairman World Malayalee Council



I want to take this opportunity to congratulate, the Kerala State Government for providing decisive leadership and steady direction, even amidst natural calamities that affected the state one after the other, during the past 5 years.

The conclusive manner in which the state health department tackled the Covid 19 and Nipah- situation has received appreciation at the highest level from all over the world.

The states' tourism department's decision to revamp the entire tourism industry certification process has directly helped the global marketing and promotion of our organization, Sanjeevanam Ayurveda

Hospital, which was incidentally the first to receive the prestigious Ayur Diamond certification issued by the Department.

Ayurveda sector has received a strong and unprecedented boost though through the various Government initiatives and efforts like the decision to fast track the modern research centre at Padiyoor and giving a central role for Ayurveda in the fight against covid by setting up Ayur Raksha Clinics across the state.

The state excise Department's initiative to simplify the process for obtaining concerned license for manufacturing drugs has gone a long way in removing hurdles that had been haunting the Ayurveda industry for decades.

Kerala is always ahead of time



STEPHEN GILBERT
LKS member-Canada.

It was in the month of February 2020, I made my last visit to home town Karunagappally, Ainyvelikarara village, Kerala from Canada, to my surprise a health worker from the panchayath visited me at my home and collected my trip details. I asked her why you should collect my details. She replied that it was a part of Covid 19 protocol. Remember that it was the second week of February and that was the moment I felt proud of Kerala's health infrastructure and the present Government's vigilance and preparedness to face the challenge of Covid 19 unlike any other state in India. When I share my experience with my friends in Canada they were surprised and even they spoke very high about Kerala because even so - called developed countries didn't have any such protocol at that time. Of course, Kerala is always ahead of time.

I appreciate the leadership of the Chief Minister Pinarai Vijayan in addressing the unprecedented and unparalleled challenges and natural calamities that this Government had to face since the moment they are in power. I think no other Government in the history of Kerala had to face such tragedies one after the other, but this Government has shown to the people of Kerala and India to the extent - to the world at large the leadership, commitment, determination and confidence in facing the extraordinary

challenges and situations whether it is Nippa, Ockhi, Flood of the century and now Covid 19.

The present Government has succeeded to involve a 'Kerala Model' for the country and the world at large. That is why the national and even the international media like BBC commented about the Kerala Model.

The nerve and vision this Government had displayed in taping the skill, generosity and courage of fishermen at the time of the great flood in the century have saved thousands and thousands of peoples. I appreciate the projects such as Life mission, K-phone, Speed rail, Expressway, Coastal highway initiated by this Government for the development of Kerala. The implementation of these projects will take Kerala to international standards.

The vision and the mission of the Loka Kerala Sabha(LKS) is highly appreciated. It is another feather in the crown of this government. It was my honour and privilege to be present at the inaugural session of this historic event. The LKS venue looked like a 'mini world of Keralites' where all came together, the left and the right, industrialists and labourers, rich and poor under the only banner of Keralite. This is The Government who has exhibited strong determination and will power to safeguard the fabric of secularism and democracy of the country.



The 'active' leadership



SIMON SAMUEL
LKS Member

Care, efficiency and application are the hallmarks of the Government now ruling Kerala under the unparalleled leadership of the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. This Government addresses the problems of the common man with a purpose. Social welfare activities are being effectively implemented. At the same time development happens with equal poise. From basic infrastructure facilities to the rejuvenation of public enterprises, everything happens in a unique way. Innovations have been made in the field of education and health to enable modern technology to be accessible to the common man. The Government is doing a commendable job of bringing welfare schemes to all, beyond political affiliations.

The 'helping hands' of the Government extended to every section of society and the same can be evidenced by the actions during the calamities like Ockhi, floods and pandemics like Nipah and the ongoing Covid trouble. Even the way the Government initiate action to protect the public sector entities is something more than noteworthy.

Improvements in general educational

institutions through modernization and digitalization seems immaculate. The 'trust' on the Government - led educational system is brought back through effective interventions and the smart classrooms and new buildings are the best available testimonials for the same. Even the efforts to provide abodes to the homeless lakhs is winning hearts. Life total housing project is a telling model and more beneficiaries are hopeful to get their due in no time. Better roads, health facilities, access to potable water, non-stop electricity, more farmlands, land deeds to the deserving and the perfect atmosphere to invest - the Government's performance seems near-perfect.

The convened Loka Kerala Sabha is another exemplary effort from this Government to accommodate the Malayalee community from almost all parts of the Globe. The problems faced by Keralites living in different continents are addressed through this initiative and possible solutions are being explored. Thanks to the caring attitude of the Government and to the man behind all these innovative thinking - our Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan.

The true purpose of governance



ANITA NAIR
Writer



There are numerous reasons why the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is so highly regarded not just in India but internationally as well. From a personal viewpoint, my respect and admiration for the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Government stems from the indelible fact that we have witnessed, probably for the first time in a long time, that the true purpose of governance is to work for the welfare of the citizens and the state as well as the nation.

This is a Government that during its tenure has had some of the worst crisis to deal with. From the great floods in two consecutive years to controlling the spread of the Nipah virus to still striving to


contain the Covid pandemic and dealing with the consequences of unemployment among BPL citizens of the state and guest workers.

And so, while the rest of the country struggled to survive, in Kerala steps were taken to ensure that no one went to bed hungry or is untended when ill – that to me is the true manifestation of humanitarian governance. Unlike the dire effects of crony capitalism that has taken root in the rest of the country, the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Government has ensured to keep alive the adage that democracy is by the people for the people.



Reshaping positively ...

VAZHAPPILLIL JOSEPH MATHEW
Member Loka Kerala Sabha



What an elevated feeling it is to be from the state which has witnessed growth and development with a team that has selflessly worked towards a common goal - to deliver on to the responsibility bestowed by the people. Scored on all social indicators such as education, literacy, healthcare, life expectancy, low infant and maternal mortality rates, and connected infrastructure, etc.

In recent years the progress has gained much momentum, so to say, in leaps and bounds and Kerala has figured as topper among other states in India in NitiAayog Indices of 2019. The development model adopted in this state based on the best practices reckoned as Kerala Model has ranked it first in United Nations Sustainable Development Index.

In the field of education, the schools run by the state Government are mostly and widely turned high tech in late years. The poor and the middle-class people can have better treatment free of charge

or at affordable fees these days. The management of epidemics like Nipah, Covid-19 etc in the state stand as models for other states to follow.

Now, the upright gesture of the Government, helping the people of the state with kits consisting of essential food items to eighty-five lakhs households continuously for the past six months proved to be of great relief, especially to those who lost jobs and wages in this pandemic period.

People who were stranded across the globe during the pandemic and with a country level lockdown announced bringing everything to a halt, it has been this leadership which on its abilities steered the path for people to return safely.

We strongly believe that under the current Government we will overcome all these tests of time and will rebuild our state to be again called as 'GODS NEW COUNTRY'.

Well-intentioned performance

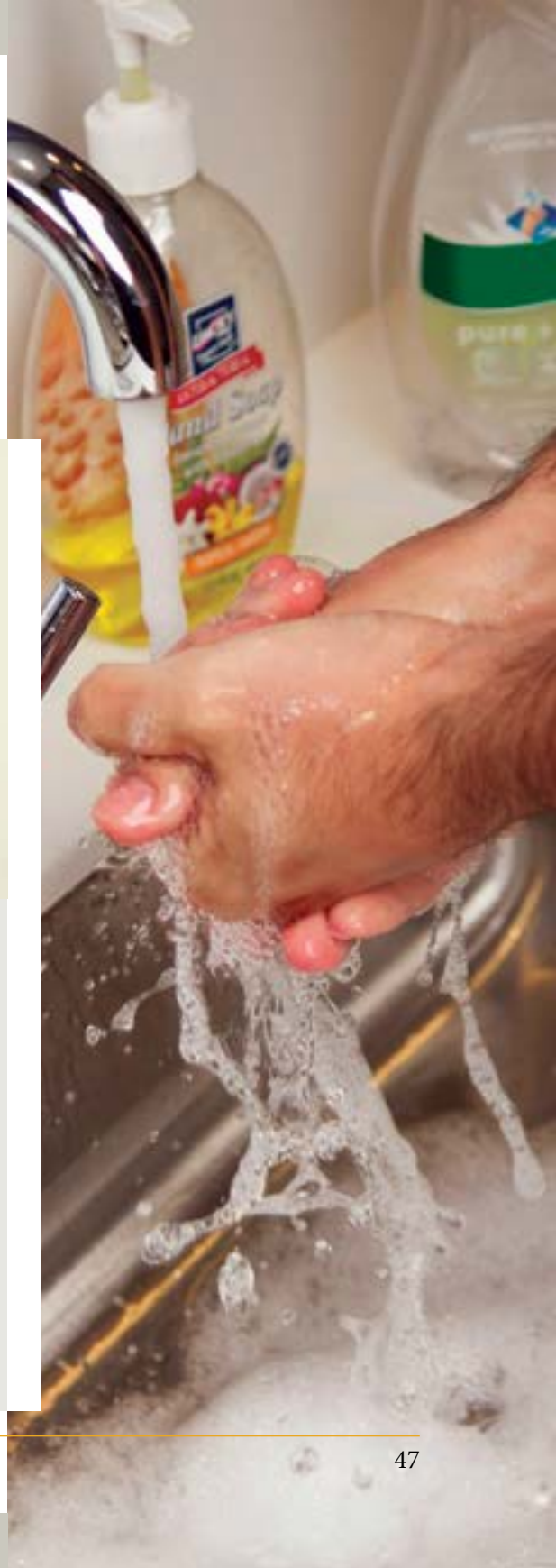
O.V. MUSTAFA
Member - Loka Kerala Sabha



The Government scores well on most areas of development. The involvement of KIIFB is much appreciated and I laud the Government for this out of the box initiative. All the initiatives the Government has taken in enhancing old age pension and paying this on a timely basis, providing food kits to lakhs of people for long periods are appreciable. The investment the Government has made in changing the landscape and ecosystem of our public education system makes every Keralite proud. The activities of the Government

in the health sector and the way it handled Nipah and now the Covid, make our state a model even at the international level.

The determination to complete GAIL, the Power Grid and now the high ways are what our state needed and I congratulate the Government for this. All the initiatives taken to look after the interests of the Government is much appreciated. The formation of Loka Kerala Sabha and various other initiatives have set a new direction to the hopes of the Pravasi community.





Defense intensified

Dr.M. G. SARNGADHARAN
Researcher in biomedical sciences, USA

The Government of Kerala took a bold initiative and conducted detailed discussions with several scientists and public health experts to decide on a plan to build an infrastructure that in the long run would be able to deal with the virus outbreaks. The key to this broad idea was the founding of a research institution capable of studying viruses and viral diseases at a fundamental level. Such research would identify viruses and help their diagnoses, and assist medical professionals in making informed treatment decisions. Thus, the State Government's decision to establish Kerala Institute of Advanced Virology was appropriate and was received with a great sense of satisfaction by the scientific and medical community of which I am proud to be a member. The Institute has already been inaugurated and a Director has been brought in. The serious task of staffing

and setting up of laboratories and critical facilities are expected to proceed well.

Kerala has established a good reputation in Public Health measures. The current Covid-19 outbreak in Kerala is part of a worldwide pandemic. The State has controlled the outbreak much better than many regions and has earned a reputation for effective planning and execution of mitigation and containment measures.

Kerala also did well in their response to the 2018 Nipah Virus outbreak in Kozhikode. While it created much alarm in the community, the swift response by the health ministry restored calm. Strict isolation measures were organized and clinical samples were collected and tested at specialty diagnostic laboratories to correctly identify the pathogen. Public health measures effectively contained the spread, and the outbreak was quickly stopped.

Frontrunner by all means



KUMBLENGAD UNNIKRIISHNAN
LKS Member

I am so happy to state to the whole world about the Peoples' Welfare Government lead by the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Previously, while living in other States, as a Marunadan Malayali, the populace of those lands took us like refugees from a State without job opportunities and inadequate facilities for livelihood. Now, we are proud, when they identify us in a much - dignified manner that we are from the State where the Pinarayi Vijayan led Government which through a historic decision appointed Non-Brahmins 'poojaris' in the Temples.

The world is growing fast. We, Keralites should not miss the bus. Even the State faced severe floods two times, and pandemics like Nipah or Corona, the development is happening with tremendous pace sans any space for graft. At the same time, the Government is taking care of all through its Public

distribution system and Social Welfare Schemes.

Uninterrupted Power supply, Quality-Highways, High-Speed Railways, Airways Creation of Qualified and intellectual work force and whatnot, Kerala is marching ahead of others.

At the Loka Kerala Sabha, while Chief Minister Sri.Pinarayi Vijayan addressing the members stated that the workforce from Kerala will be dearer to foreign companies since they will be provided proper training and foreign language proficiency will be ensured.

Now, the homeless are provided with safe abodes, students are getting a quality education, health sector proved its mettle in defending the pandemic and welfare pension is being hiked like never-before. To be precise this Government can be considered as the best ever Kerala had and the people are indebted to the care that is being provided persistently all these 5 Years.





Noted Policies

MEAL FOR JUST 20 RUPEES : The success saga of people's hotels



In the annual budget of 2020-21, the state government took a decision to start a chain of hotels that will provide food to people at moderate rates. The plan was to start one hotel each in all panchayats and one each in every ward in all municipalities and corporations.

This was a huge challenge but the biggest women empowerment organization in the world, Kudumbashree, accepted the challenge with determination. Thus the dream got realized.

The hotel started with the extensive support and financial aid of the LSG organizations. And with the whole-hearted support of the Civil Supplies Department, Kudumbashree began the initiative as an enterprise model. We can proudly say to the whole world that THIS IS A UNIQUE KERALA MODEL. Till date, Kudumbashree has opened 849 people's hotels across the state.

The people's hotel is a pointer. It underscores the fact that if the government is committed to people's welfare, any project which is beneficial to the people can be implemented in the right spirit. It is not a trivial thing to start such projects by integrating different departments. The initiative was provided with ample space by the LSG organizations to start the hotels. Establishment permit was given to provide rice at a lower price through the Civil Supplies Department. Financial subsidy to the hotels is being given by the Finance Department.

In short, the realization of the project remains a surprise to many. Within a short period of time (eight months) it came into being with the full support of different departments. Now the project is nearing the dream number of 1000. It is estimated that around one lakh people get served at these hotels per day. We, as Malayalis, take pride in such a great initiative, because it is highly beneficial to the people.

Keeping darkness at bay

All of us are familiar with the uneasiness we feel when electricity fails even for five minutes. But the steps taken by the Electricity Board indicate that it is sensitive to this kind of inconvenience we experience. For the past four-and-a-half years, Kerala has not suffered instances of either power-cut or load-shedding. One of the achievements of the Electricity Board is that it has been able to keep up a continuous supply of power, 24 x 7.

Over and above this, 16,77,302 new connections were sanctioned during the same period. Another significant feat is that it has succeeded in achieving the aim of complete electrification. Yet another is that it completed the Edamon-Kochi-Thrissur and Pugallur-Madakkathara HVDC power transmission corridors that had hit a road block earlier. With this, this entire area will be rid of power-cuts and load-shedding once and for all.

The process of applying for electric connections has been simplified, a centralized customer care number (1912) which works round the clock has been made operational in order to sort out all the problems related to the Electricity Board, an online system has been set up for customers to seek all kinds of services related to the Electricity Board, and a Green Channel system has been instituted in order to give advance information about power availability for industries, and to expedite electric



connection.

A social audit system was put in place in order to make information about KSEB as a customer-friendly institution available, and also to bring about changes in it; a People's Electricity Adalat was convened for sorting out long-standing grievances of customers; electric connections were quickly restored in places that were affected by the floods and the Ockhi cyclone through Mission Reconnect - all these achievements were made in the shortest span of time.

FARMERS' WELFARE FUND BOARD: Setting an example to the rest of the country



Though much progress has been achieved by implementing many visionary projects, the unerring mainstay of the state remains the hard work of the farmers. But the uncertainty of a fruitful harvest and fluctuations in price prevent many farmers from venturing into novel initiatives in farming. Lack of a fixed income is also a scary thing to many. In this digital era, not many youngsters are enamoured of a career in agriculture. The government sees this as a grave situation and in order to save farmers from these fears and dangers, it has decided to take a historic decision; to form a Farmers' Welfare Fund.

The initiative is the first of its kind in the country. Besides ensuring agricultural development, the bill protects the entire family of the farmer. The guidelines for these have been formulated. Pension for the farmer and his family, insurance cover, financial aid for treatments, aid for marriage, educational aid of children, aid for meeting expenses in case of death, etc. are the benefits covered through this great initiative.

The initiative is widely welcomed by the farmers' community not only in Kerala but in other states as well. Thus, Kerala has set up an exemplary template for the rest of the country to emulate. Through this, Kerala has once again shown to the world that even as it zips into the digital era, it is and will remain every inch, a pro-farmer government.

The 'MAPATHON' Era

There was a time when it was hugely challenging to assess, analyse and find places which deserve consideration for specific developmental projects, especially from an 'official' point of view. Too many projects were implemented in the past but, for some reason, most of them did not reach the intended beneficiaries. The void in the 'beneficial' aspects of government projects as well as others had to be filled and this government took it up as a major priority and initiated steps towards conceptualizing and implementing a comprehensive project for the same.

Mapathon came out not only as a novel beginning but as an enterprise that virtually helped in tracking all the otherwise 'hidden' specialties of every nook and corner. Be it natural resources or basic amenities, everything is being mapped here. Local-level mapping is carried out by the State IT mission. The CM himself launched the project. The crowdsourcing initiative then on becomes a huge success.

Stream mapping has been finished with the support of Haritha Kerala Mission and 130 youth professionals in all the 14 districts. Open street mapping is moving at a swift pace, thanks to the contribution from the voluntary brigade. NSS volunteers from the Technical University has completed the mapping of around 8000 km roads and over two lakh buildings. Since every detail is being collected future projects from the government is going to 'hit' the target. All-stream mapping is over in Kollam and Kottayam districts, and rapidly progressing in all other districts.



The Corporate Innovation days...

There was a time when it was a hardship to find the best suitable way to earn a living. Gone are the days since opportunities beckon aspiring minds these days. Here comes the significance of the State Government's policy to involve corporates in start-ups. A corporate innovation programme is designed and is making a mark nowadays towards successfully utilizing the otherwise eluded support from 'giants'.

Corporate Innovation programmes are those which are developed in association with corporates. The start-ups will get hand holding as well as co-creation opportunities from the corporates. The Open innovation model as well as collaboration model for building products which best fit for the industry will be done through this programme. 150 start-ups interacted with 50 corporates. 15 start-ups got business as part of this matchmaking program between corporates and start-ups which includes some international business conversions in Middle East and France.

THOSE ENGAGED

Future group - Industry challenge conducted. Two start-ups got selected.

Bosch - Reverse pitch conducted with Bosch.

GE Healthcare - Predible health got selected in their EDISON accelerator program.

Accenture Ventures - Demo day with these 17 start-ups need to be done. FFS mentors to be provided.

Microsoft - EmergeX start-ups selected from Kerala (12 start-ups) and they are given scale up support from Microsoft



Hitachi - Hitachi is very serious about sourcing start-ups from Kerala and they will get back with interested start-ups to collaborate with. They have plans to conduct more demo days with start-ups.

Talentco - French based company with whom a Kerala start-up got business collaboration.

Oppo - MoU signed with Oppo to support Mobile tech start-ups in Kerala.

UST global - Phythaeon technologies in final collaboration discussion.

STUDY ROOMS (PADANAMURI) for SC students



The Pinarayi Vijayan Government is committed to the overall uplift of the marginalized communities. The government has launched many programmes so as to raise the scheduled caste community to a much higher level. This commitment is reflected in the improved educational prospects of the SC students. As we know, about six lakh Scheduled Caste students are studying in various Pre Matric and Post Matric institutions in Kerala. It is quite unfortunate that most of the students lack

proper environment in their houses because of inadequate facilities. The mean income level prevents the parents from arranging even minimum study facilities for their children. Giving due seriousness to this reality, the government has decided to implement a very novel and innovative policy - Construction of Study Rooms (Padanamuri)

As per this policy, the government is providing financial assistance for the construction of an additional room to the existing house of SC students currently studying in various institutions and whose family/ parent's annual income comes only up to Rs 1 lakh. The area proposed for the study room is 120 sq. ft. The project envisages provision of a bookshelf, chair, table, fan, light, computer and computer table. The amount set apart for one study room is Rs 2 lakh.

The scheme was introduced in the year 2017-18. So far, 12, 500 study rooms have been constructed. This represents the government's sincere commitment to the welfare of the marginalized communities. Apart from this, many other programmes have been initiated in favour of the marginalized.

K-FON

Kerala is a state with a 100 percent mobile density and 80 percent e-literacy and was declared as India's first digital state. This enabled the state to easily adapt to the Covid pandemic situation, through digital platforms such as online transactions, online classes, etc, without many gulfs. Still, it requires a stable IT infrastructure that can cater the services at every nook and corners of the state so that the fruits of the governance reach everyone without discrimination. The Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON) project envisages such an infrastructure, an IT back born of the state, stretching throughout Kerala. On completion, KFON will connect more than 30,000 Govt and Educational Institutions with high-speed Optical Fiber Connectivity. It is also planned to provide free internet services to about 20 Lakhs economically backward households through the project.

This flagship program intends to transform Kerala into an intelligent, innovative, and inclusive society. A Special Purpose Vehicle company was formed with the partnership of Kerala State Electricity Board Ltd., Kerala State IT Infrastructure Ltd., and Government of Kerala.

The main purpose of having a state-owned network is to enable all the Government offices at state/district/block/GP level access the Government applications hosted at the state data centre through a secured intranet. Definitely, it will reduce the cost of internet data.



Responsible Tourism Policy



This policy was drafted in order to give importance to the concept of responsible tourism, and take it forward as a mission. Implementation began in 2008 in four centres and, by 2011, three more centres were covered under the scheme. In 2017, the state government took steps to revitalize the mission's activities by initiating more programmes. As a result, by November 2020, a total of 20,098 tourist centres registered themselves as part of the Responsible Tourism Project. This move benefitted 36,815 individuals directly, and 63,915 others indirectly. In other words, more than one lakh people were able

to find employment and a means of livelihood locally.

Of a total of 16,915 units, 80 % are managed exclusively by women. Thus, through Responsible Tourism, the government has been able to ensure that the benefits of its policy go directly to women, and contribute to the financial development of specific regions. According to available accounts, a total of nearly Rs 36 crores was generated in three years at the regional level. As part of popularizing the project, Aymanam grama panchayat in Kottayam district was declared as the first model Responsible Tourism village

Right to sit act



By implementing the right to sit act, the government of Kerala has achieved a milestone in the labour history of the state. All shops and establishments in the State will now have to mandatorily provide seating arrangements at workplaces for women workers, especially for the saleswomen. This is the era in which the labour has witnessed drastic changes in every phase.

The draft bill brought out by the government proposing amendments includes several provisions that shop owners are bound to make for the safety of women workers. It also includes other women-friendly initiatives, including providing seating arrangements for saleswomen during working hours as well as arrangements to ensure women's safety during night shifts. The amendments proposed by the government make sure of the safety and dignity of women labourers. It was one of the long dreams of the workers to sit properly in the workplaces and the government has taken glorious initiatives to fulfil their dreams.

Following the amendment in act, the employers are obliged to ensure the security of women workers who works after 7 pm in the respective shops. They are also instructed to provide transportation facilities to the workers to their place of accommodation. The government has given instructions to take strict actions against those who break this act and they are liable to pay the penalty. The officials of labour department are instructed to ensure that all shops and establishments, including restaurants, are implementing the amendments, now that these had become the law.

Erasing the Carbon Footprint

Protection of the environment requires that people shift from the use of fossil fuels to safe, renewable sources of energy. And it is an undeniable fact that the measures taken in this direction should not only be of proven merit but urgently executed as well. With such an aim in view, the Government of Kerala has initiated steps to encourage more research in the fields of non-traditional forms of energy, and inspire the people of the state to shift to newer and progressive technology. The Agency for New and Renewable Energy Research and Technology (ANERT) is leading the way, with the help and co-operation of various institutions in the state, by implementing many projects.

One of them is the Carbon Neutral Governance Project floated by ANERT, with support from Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). This will provide electricity-powered vehicles to the various offices and departments of the government. The project seeks to set up Charging Stations in all districts of the state. With one cycle of full charge, a vehicle will be able to cover anywhere between 120 to 450 km. As soon as the project attains success, the facility will reach the masses, and this will bring to fruition the government's dream of eliminating fossil fuels completely.



BYPASS - ALAPPUZHA







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Enquiries: Phone-0471 2517036 Email: iocirculation@gmail.com