Emerging Kerala

Vision
To make Kerala a premier global hub of economic activity, by fostering entrepreneurship and industry, for leveraging its inherent strengths, resulting in equitable socio-economic growth.

Mission
To present and showcase Kerala and create awareness amongst all stakeholders - Enterprises, Government, Institutions, Leaders & Influencers, Investors and General Public - through continuous engagement and connect initiatives, while simultaneously creating the right environment, to facilitate the transformation of Kerala into a business hub and preferred investment destination.

Event
Emerging Kerala is planned as a biennial Global Connect, the first being 'Emerging Kerala 2012' scheduled to be held from 12th – 14th September 2012 at Le Meridien Convention Centre, Kochi, Kerala. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh will inaugurate the three-day event.

Several programmes are planned in connection with and run up to 'Emerging Kerala 2012.'

Business meets
Sectoral conclaves,
Domestic and international road shows
Discussion and debates,
Besides the inaugural session, the first Global connect will have -
Plenary Sessions
Sectoral presentations
Roundtables
Business to Business (B2B) connects
Business to Government (B2G) connects
Cultural performances

The Event as well as its associated programmes would have the support of the Government of Kerala (GoK), in addition to various Trade and Industrial bodies. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and National Association of Software & Services Companies (NASSCOM) are event partners.

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Editorial

When Kerala is all set to truly emerge into the global scenario, we at ‘Kerala Calling’, the official magazine of the government of Kerala, think it appropriate to bring out this special edition to commemorate the event. The realisation that the state possess all the ingredients and resources for its growth and that these only needs to be arranged in a working order has stirred the government to embark on the ‘Emerging Kerala’ exercise.

Planning for the future with a clear vision is what could be rated as the numero uno achievement of Kerala government. Standing on the firmness of the present, with the experience of the past, this government has planned into the future with a vision for 2030.

Roping in the service of stalwarts like Sam Pitroda, for setting development objectives, the state could evolve Kerala specific and clear cut targets for development. Emerging Kerala is founded on the clear vision and steadfastness of the Kerala government to achieve these objectives of development and growth.

The government has chalked out pro-active policies with commitment to inclusive development with sustainability as the watchword and creating an investor friendly environment.

We welcome you, the finest thinkers, policy makers and entrepreneurs, to our fabled land of beauty and opportunity, to wallow in its treasures and to put your thoughts together, to reap rich dividends and to leave it all the more prosperous and beautiful.

A Firoz
Director
Department of Information & Public Relations
Government of Kerala
Kerala...
a land that has to be seen to be believed!

A land where nature is ever at her youthful best. Welcome to Kerala, India’s only tropical paradise, located at its southernmost tip. Gracing on one side of Kerala are the lofty mountain ranges that kiss the sky. And on the other side the waters of the blue Arabian sea wash the land. A birds view of the land will present the myriad features of this tropical land: dense tropical forests, fertile plains, beautiful beaches, cliffs, rocky coasts, an intricate maze of backwaters, still bays, glimmering rivers. This is the land where time moves at a snail’s pace. A land that remains quite isolated, yet easily accessible, known as God’s own country. This is a land that has to be seen to be believed.
A step forward to sustainable development

Emerging Kerala is not an investment meet in the conventional sense. This is not an exclusive gathering of investors and we are not holding this event with the sole purpose of signing MoUs and agreements. It is a platform to highlight Kerala’s strengths to the world. It will also be a place to showcase potential and opportunities in various sectors in Kerala.
It is my firm belief that “Emerging Kerala 2012” is going to be the beginning of the change that all of us want to see in Kerala. My government has given the highest priority to this summit as it is the first crucial step in our renewed efforts to achieving faster, sustainable and inclusive growth, both social and economic.

I make it clear at the very outset that “Emerging Kerala” is not an investment meet in the conventional sense. This is not an exclusive gathering of investors and we are not holding this event with the sole purpose of signing MoUs and agreements. It is a platform to highlight Kerala’s strengths to the world. It will also be a place to show case potential and opportunities in various sectors in Kerala. Our aim, at this juncture, is to showcase Kerala’s inherent strengths, and the opportunities that exist here for industry and enterprise.

It is a fact that while we have achieved tremendous progress in social development, education and healthcare over the past couple of decades, other sectors such as industry, manufacturing and agriculture, have not kept pace. Kerala’s current economic indicators are hardly a true reflection of what our state can really achieve – given our resources, our potential and above all the skill, intelligence and abilities of our people. “Emerging Kerala” is an attempt to address this mismatch.

We have drawn up a series of projects across more than two dozen sectors that have growth and investment potential. Infrastructure, as we know, is the backbone of any economy. If we seek to raise our economic standards to globally advanced levels, our basic infrastructure also needs to rise in tandem. The mega infrastructure projects that we have identified – including the High Speed Rail Corridor, Metro Rail, Monorails, airports, seaports, power plants, investment and manufacturing zones, IT parks – all require huge capital investment.

For project of such immense scope and costs we believe that the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model is the most viable option. We only support ventures that are eco-friendly and non-polluting. For medium and mega projects – any project that envisages a built-up space of over 20,000 sq ft – clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, and the State Pollution Control Board is mandatory. The PPP option also ensures that there is a mechanism in place to return the investment in three years.

It is possible to harmonise development with the environment. We have an example of this successful synergy right before us – in our tourism sector. Private participation has played a vital role in raising the profile of Kerala as a tourism destination. Today the sector is one of the biggest contributors to our economy, a source of livelihood for hundreds of thousands of people and a source of pride for all of us. Kerala is reputed worldwide as a “green haven”, so environment protection is not just a responsibility, but an incentive. This is the model we want to replicate across other sectors – development that is in consonance with our unique attributes.

If you look at the projects to be showcased at Emerging Kerala, you will notice the thrust on Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). In Food and Agro Processing sector for instance we have a number of projects to boost our agriculture sector, such as value addition for coconut products, processing of indigenous fruits, spices research, animal husbandry, meat production and high-tech farming techniques.

Over the longer term such projects will incentivise agriculture, improve productivity, fetch better prices for farmers, create wider markets and help bring more land under cultivation. If you look at education, our focus is on skills development, training, R&D and innovation. Our entrepreneurship development programmes and incubator projects are designed to transform our people from job seekers to job creators. We intend to leverage the support of organisations such as the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), The India Entrepreneurs (TiE) and the various state government programmes to train unemployed youth and create a pool of employable people.

Outward migration has for long been a problem for Kerala. It is not right that our brightest and best should feel compelled to seek good education and jobs outside the state. Our technology professionals, management experts, scientists, doctors, engineers and skilled workers must find opportunities at home. We need them to stay back to build strong families and stronger communities. That is the spirit of “Emerging Kerala”.

Our requirements today are different from what they were 20 years ago and, if anything, the pace of change in Kerala will be even faster in the next 20 years. We have to factor that into our long-term planning, if the next generation is to avoid the kind of resource and infrastructure problems we face today.

Emerging Kerala will bring together leading thinkers and policymakers from around the world to discuss ideas and strategies for the future. We will repeat this exercise every two years so there is follow-up and continuity to our plans. We welcome new ideas and suggestions and are committed to ensuring transparency in the conduct of this event. We have an online portal where all projects are listed for the public to see.

We welcome constructive criticism and debate on all issues. They are signs of a healthy democracy. I believe this is the right time and the best opportunity for us to pursue growth and development on our own terms. I seek the support of every citizen for “Emerging Kerala” with the assurance that my Government has taken up this initiative with the objective of making our state’s future prosperous, secure and peaceful.
Opening the
Windows of
Opportunity

P K Kunhalikutty
Minister for Industries & IT

As many as 1,600 delegates from 35 countries have already registered for the event. Besides, the government have invited union and state ministers, corporate honchos, senior government officials, top bureaucrats, diplomats, representatives of foreign trade missions, heads of financial institutions, leading economists and technology experts, among others.
When it comes to fields such as health, education and human resources, not only that Kerala is ahead of several other states in India but it is really on par with or even better placed than some of the world’s most advanced countries. Let’s not forget, the fact that we have been working hard for long to retain the position and gain progress in other sectors as well. Sadly, we have not succeeded in making the best use of available resources or locating new ones. Successive Governments have taken many policy decisions, however we have not been able to execute them satisfactorily and take follow-up steps. We have to concede that lacunae in implementation measures have posed hurdles on our path to progress.

The last few years have witnessed efforts to rectify the situation, though they are yet to yield expected results. However, we have seen a good start in many areas where our bold decisions and follow-up steps have made a difference. One of them has been the move to open self-financing professional colleges in the state. It helped us usher in a revolutionary change in the situation where Keralites massively relied on other states to pursue professional courses. Even so, there has not been a significant change in the number of people leaving Kerala in search of a job. Even today, we have thousands of graduates from Kerala’s engineering, medical and management institutes moving out from the state every year. The reason is that there there are not enough employment or career opportunities in our state.

At the same time, we have many enterprising Malayalis who have found success as investors outside the State and even in foreign countries. But then, we have not succeeded in creating an atmosphere that would woo them to invest in their home-State. To change this situation, we have to work hard in making good use of the potential of NRKs. Most of the anti-propaganda about Kerala that prevails among the NRKs community is false. Statistics in recent years reveal that the loss of working days in Kerala’s industrial sector is on the decline. It is essential to make best use of such positive trends. Such efforts, however, should not be limited to the near future alone. There must be a clear planning for decades to come is for this purpose that a mega event like Emerging Kerala is being convened. The summit coming up this month is an effort to showcase before the world, our State’s broad and forward-looking views on economic development.

Through Emerging Kerala, the Kerala Government aims at looking beyond Kerala’s achievement of being the country’s ‘numero uno’ state in standard of living and social development indices. We are planning to take the state to the next stage of economic development. This is a part of our effort to attain a balanced and sustainable industrial growth, and to convert Kerala into global trade hub and investor-friendly state, without hampering the ecology and environment of the ‘Gods own country’. Our challenge is to ensure that Kerala continues to be a unique growth model that does not place any demands on our natural resources.

Emerging Kerala is not just another typical investors’ meet. It is mainly intended to announce to the rest of the world the scope and opportunities that are available in Kerala. The occasion will help potential investors to understand first-hand about the positive conditions prevailing in the state of Kerala, and make use of them. By making this a biennial event, the Government will be providing an opportunity for necessary follow-ups and appraisals.

Emerging Kerala will present the trade opportunities and scope of the State as an investment destination, but not at the cost of our rich natural resources. Various Government departments are currently preparing project ideas in as many as 26 sectors — all meant to be showcased at the event. Of them, ten are thrust areas that can accelerate Kerala’s growth. It will also give entrepreneurs in the state an opportunity to tie up with industrialists elsewhere in the country and abroad. Kerala’s fast urbanisation throws up both challenges and opportunities. The government is now concentrating on developing world-class infrastructure facilities so as to pace up industrial growth. At the same time we have realised that basic amenities are a prerequisite for attracting investment and improving the standard of living. So, the government will encourage investment opportunities to develop primary facilities of global standards. Emerging Kerala Global Connect 2012, which hopes to catapult the State into the international commerce orbit, will be a milestone in our course of development.
Emerging Kerala, sure, would not be a one-off event. A permanent secretariat is being formed that would handle suggestions and project proposals. Emerging Kerala will host sector-wise deliberations and discussions on policies, besides business-to-business and business-to-government meetings.
milestone in our course of development. The three-day trade-and-commerce confluence in Kochi will announce Kerala’s arrival on to the big scene. It will be far be the state’s biggest platform of its kind for ideas, discussions and meetings. Hon’ble Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, will be inaugurating the September 12-14 summit at Le Meridian Convention Hall.

Emerging Kerala will feature top dignitaries such as US Ambassador to India Nancy Powell and Canada’s Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, besides several representatives of various organisations of the United Nations. Trade and diplomatic representatives of the Arab League will be arriving in Kerala, a couple of days ahead of the event to take part in high-level discussions. The official delegation from China’s Yunnan will be led by Zhu Fei, who is the Deputy Director General of the Department of Commerce of that province. Diplomatic representatives from England, America, Australia and Singapore have already visited Kerala and acknowledged their interest in partnering in investment projects in the state.

Dr Franco Culasso, who is a senior adviser with the UK-based National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, will deliver a keynote speech on quality healthcare in Kerala. Other prominent persons to address the gathering include India’s Planning Commission Deputy Chairperson Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Sam Pitroda, Adviser to the Prime Minister of India on Public Information Infrastructure & Innovations, and Dr Gita Gopinath, Professor of Economics at Harvard University, besides senior executives from leading companies such as Tata, Infosys, Godrej and Mahindra & Mahindra.

Emerging Kerala, sure, would not be a one-off event. A permanent secretariat is being formed that would handle suggestions and project proposals. Emerging Kerala will host sector-wise deliberations and discussions on policies, besides business-to-business and business-to-government meetings. The three-day meet will hold a string of discussions on various subjects that are pertinent to Kerala. The main topics of discussion would be Kerala Development Model: Ways to Achieve Speedy, Complete and Sustained Growth; Bridging the Gap in Basic Amenities: The Role of Public-Private Partnership; Manufacturing, Commerce and Service: The Catalyst Forces in Kerala Economy; Maintaining the Socio-Cultural Heritage of Kerala and The Role of Economic Reforms in Total Growth. Emerging Kerala will provide a venue for mutual trade. It aims to open a new path in Kerala’s socio-economic growth by bringing corporate houses and industrial magnates on to the same platform, where they would discuss and analyse subjects. At the summit, the government will announce development projects that would provide opportunities for investment in PPP model.

Besides the B2B and B2G meetings, Emerging Kerala will facilitate special sessions for non resident Malayalis. It will also host a technology exhibition. Organised by the Kerala Science, Technology and Environment Council, it will display the technological feats developed by various academic and private institutions. It may be recalled that the ongoing 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) gives emphasis to commercialising such regionally developed technological products through industrial incubators.

The scheduled visits of high-profile personalities and institutions have already earned Emerging Kerala, public attention. As many as 1,600 delegates from 35 countries have already registered for the event. Besides, the government have invited union and state ministers, corporate honchos, senior government officials, top bureaucrats, diplomats, representatives of foreign trade missions, heads of financial institutions, leading economists and technology experts, among others. The event is being organised in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and NASSCOM. The nodal agency for Emerging Kerala is Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC).
Emerging Kerala global connect is permanent connectivity of the State to the global entrepreneurial arena, which is to be charged biennially. Emerging Kerala is a sustained campaign to showcase the strengths and potential of Kerala, both in terms of growth and investment. We want to show the world, our pro-active policies, our commitment to inclusive development and sustainability and our efforts to create an investor-friendly environment. Emerging Kerala will also bring together some of the finest thinkers, and policy makers of the world in a single platform and their brainstorming sessions will no doubt benefit our state in particular and our country at large.

We have certainly learn to dream big.
Emerging Kerala marks a mile in Kerala’s travails to emerge from behind the scene to the centre stage of all-round development and growth. Evaluating the highly successful first 100 days Programme of this government, Chief Minister Sri Oommen Chandy had said that he would not rest or consider it a milestone until vision 2030 is set in motion... and here is the true beginning!

We have a very clear vision for Emerging Kerala. It is a platform to showcase our state. There are no specific targets and this is going to be a continuous exercise. Our call environment. Only projects that ensure optimal utilization of resources and are not damaging to the environment will be put forward and cleared. Large infrastructure projects take time to complete. They will be our legacy for future generations. But even small projects can create large economic and social benefits. My experience as minister for Non-Resident Keralites Affairs is that many small and middle income group of Gulf Malayalees are looking forward to opportunities for investing in developmental projects of the state. Measures in this direction, like scaling down the minimum share for Kannur Airport Project from rupees two lakh to rupees fifty thousand, has generated more interest and participation of NRIs in such ventures.

The closing down of many airlines due to the recent meltdown in the airline industry and the withdrawal of the Air India’s budget services to Gulf has affected the Non-Resident Indians, especially the Non-Resident Keralites to a very large extent. In this context, the government is seriously pondering on the possibility of starting ‘Air-Kerala’, a budget airline company. Non resident Keralites are already voicing their whole hearted support for this venture.

A shipping company for transporting people from Kerala to the Gulf and back at much cheaper costs is also under the active consideration of the Government.

These are times of when the “sons of the soil” doctrine rears its head in all parts of the world. Everywhere people of the land are preferred for employment over migrants. The day is not far when even our students would be denied access to premier educational institutions outside the state.

We have lost precious time. Our neighboring states with lesser advantage have shot forward...
Kerala Tourism to woo global investors at Emerging Kerala Meet

A P Anil Kumar
Minister for Tourism
Riding on its new tourism policy that ensures hassle-free clearance to investors in the sector, Kerala Tourism is looking for big-ticket foreign investments in plum innovative projects at the ensuing global connect initiative — “Emerging Kerala.” Identified as one of the key sectors to propel Kerala’s future economic growth, tourism is going to be high on the agenda when investors across continents would come down for the three-day summit starting September 12 in Kochi.

The government has come out with a tourism policy which seeks to beef up the state’s infrastructure and involve people’s participation in a larger scale. We are creating an atmosphere that would enable potential investors to be our long-term partners of growth. Emerging Kerala 2012 is going to be a wonderful chance for us to showcase our plans and projects before the world.

Some of the interesting projects that look for steam from the private sector are a state-of-the-art hotel at the upcoming world-class Edy Health City at Panakkad, a Destination Development Boat Club at Thiruvananthapuram (both in Malappuram district), Adventure Sports Arena at the picturesque Vagamon, a Mist Valley Resort and Spa and a Spice Valley Resort (all in the hill district of Idukki). An underwater aquarium at Aruvikkuzhi in coastal Alappuzha district is also being planned, besides a Marine Leisure Island at Veli (Kollam), a Leisure Island at Vembanad Lake (Kollam) and a botanical garden & forest lodge at Neelamangalam in Pathanamthitta district.

It’s been twenty five years since Kerala Tourism started its incredible journey of excellence. Scripting one of India’s greatest success stories, Kerala ushered in a new era of quality and initiatives. Kerala Tourism has been proving its mettle for quite sometime now. In a poll conducted across Asia, Europe and North America by the acclaimed travel portal Smart Travel Asia.com, million plus readers picked up Kerala as the best Asian holiday destination ahead of Bali, Phuket and the Maldives. Kerala Tourism has almost every other national/international tourism award in its kitty. In 2011, it bagged four PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association) awards, including one Grand and three Gold titles for its outstanding achievements. In the environment category, it received the Grand award for the State’s Responsible Tourism programmes at Kumarakom.

Kerala also bagged the Best Indian State 2011 and Best Green Destination 2011 at the Travel and Leisure Awards and the first Lonely Planet Magazine India Travel Awards 2011 for the Best Destination for Families (Indian). Labelled as one of the 50 must-see destinations of a lifetime, Gods Own Country is also one of the places that have been showered with accolades by the global media.

Kerala’s inherent natural, cultural and social advantages ensure that the tourist enjoys a refreshing experience and comes back again. A staunch believer in product re-investing, Kerala Tourism leaves no stone unturned to give a refreshing start to its well established products. Eco-Tourism, adventure tourism, heritage tourism... it constantly re-invents a new array of products - all centred on the concept of Responsible Tourism, which today provides the solid base for tourism development.

Realising the potential of the sector, the government, in a pioneering move, is setting up a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Tourism. It will be headed by the Chief Minister Sri. Oommen Chandy. Giving a strong sense of direction and purpose to Kerala Tourism’s future growth is its new tourism policy. Envisaging a growth based on the culture, nature and tradition of the state, the 2012 policy is a step towards tapping the tourism potential of the State to the maximum.

Envisaging quality visitor experience, focusing on benefits for the tourists, making Kerala a visible global brand across continents would come down for the three-day summit starting September 12 in Kochi.
An Opportunity whose time has Come

K. Jayakumar
Chief Secretary

Kerala has always been globalised even before the term acquired the current connotation. From ancient times Kerala has been trading with the developed world of yore.
Emerging Kerala is an opportunity not only to trigger investment but also to take a close look at the State and discover its strengths and weaknesses.

Kerala’s pace of industrialization might not have been fast enough. But Kerala society seems to have been prepared for a new daybreak of industrialization. History has prepared the State socially and technologically to usher in a migration of capital and job opportunities towards Kerala. Labour in the State is neither aggressive nor indifferent. Certainly they are aware of their entitlements. Labour legislations in the State are sensitive to human rights. A non-exploitative labour culture based on entitlements makes Kerala one of the preferred investment destinations as it has achieved the benchmarks insisted by the modern ethos in international trade.

Kerala has always been globalised even before the term acquired the current connotation. From ancient times Kerala has been trading with the developed world of yore. This continues to this day and millions of Malayalees are living abroad and sustaining our economy. We are aware of the opportunities and difficulties emerging in other countries. Kerala has an inherent inclination to welcome the investor and take up trading, thanks to our long tradition of exports. The contributions of Non-Resident Keralites have not been limited to the economic aspects but has impacted the realm of ideas and attitudes.

We have invested in education and enrichment of human resources. That makes Kerala a dear investment destination. The socially evolved State offers an investment climate with a skilled work force and a managerial class sensitive to local culture and international milieu. The IT infrastructure is one of the best. Proximity to Kochi Port and International Cargo terminal at Vallarpadom are opportunities. Kerala’s natural integration to world economy at a macro and human level is an asset. The soothing greenery is a bonus. The untapped and unique potential of the State in terms of human and social capital wait to be explored. It is no wonder if one is tempted to believe that history has been grooming Kerala to emerge out of the pupa as a preferred investment destination that guarantees sustained growth and investors’ satisfaction.
Food Processing Sector poised for a leap

Alkesh Sharma
Secretary, Department Industries

The Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA) is setting up a food processing park at Adoor in Central Kerala in 30 acre of land. KSIDC is financing units in this park for production of banana chips, cassava chips etc.
To make money out of Kerala’s agriculture sector may read like an idea that goes against the grain. However, that is not the case, going by the range of opportunities that the upcoming Emerging Kerala event featuring 2,500 delegates from nearly two dozen countries, the Kerala Government is keen to present its set of promising projects in the food and agro-processing sectors.

With Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh set to inaugurate the event featuring 2,500 delegates from nearly two dozen countries, the Kerala Government is keen to present its set of promising projects in the food and agro-processing sectors. After all, as a tropical heavy-rain coastal state, Kerala has had an economy that has traditionally thrived on farming and related activities.

Food park
Among the facilities that the government is planning to set up is a food park in the downstream Thiruvananthapuram district. It is slated to come up in five acre of land at Vithura, 35 km south of the state capital. It will be set up in the PPP (public-private partnership) mode with the land on lease from the government. The acquisition is pegged at Rs 1.5 crore. With nuclear families becoming the norm in Kerala, processed food is seeing an exponential growth year after year. The food habits of the people in Kerala are changing, of late, they are becoming increasingly fussy about tastes and nutritional value. The maximum number of industries registered in Thiruvananthapuram district is in this sector.

The Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFA) is setting up a food processing park at Azoor in Central Kerala in 30 acre of land. KSIDC is financing units in this park for production of banana chips, cassava chips etc. One plant has been commissioned here and has employed Australian plant and machinery as well as technology for production of these items.

Food processing unit
Food processing unit is coming up in the coastal Alappuzha district. This facility, at Pallipuram near Cherthala, will boost the ready-to-eat food industry. Especially, Kerala’s very own cassava products, other ready-to-eat food items, seafood products, food delicacies etc. are some of the products at this facility aiming the exports to the Middle-East and Europe. Food processing parks are planned in Ernakulam district in the private sector. These projects are planned near to the Cochin International Airport. The project cost of a typical food processing unit will be Rs 800 lakh, while its sales turnover (at optimum capacity utilisation) is pegged at Rs 2,000 lakh.

For this, the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation (KSCDC) has been developing soft drinks (Kelpalm). Considering the potential for this sector, replicated with various products. Under the Kochi-Palakkad National Investment and Manufacturing Zone (NMIZ) project, it is planned to promote several food and agro processing parks, considering the potential for this sector.

Coconut bio-parks
As for coconuts, which is what makes Kerala particularly famous, the government plans to establish three coconut bio-parks — one each in southern, central and northern Kerala. These parks will produce diverse value-added products of coconut. They envisage functioning through special companies formed under farmer-public-private partnership model. An amount of Rs 15 crore is set apart for this in the budget for 2012-13.

Along with this comes the plan for a coconut-based food processing plant. The proposed endeavour (at KSIDC’s Industrial Growth Centre at Kollur in Kollur would be around 3 acre.

Rice bio-parks
In addition, the government’s 2012-13 budget proposes setting up two rice bio-parks — one each in Kuttanad and Palakkad regions. The parks in these two rice bowls will produce diverse value-added products of the crop — to every part of the rice plant: grain, straw, bran and husk. They provide the necessary infrastructure for entrepreneurs to initiate rice biomass-based enterprises. The parks also plan to function through special companies formed under the farmer-PPP model. An amount of Rs 10 crore is set apart for this in the budget for the current financial year. The proposed bio-parks are planned in 25-acre plots at Vechur, DAF, Kozhikode, Kottayam for Kuttanad and Alathur and DAF at Malampuzha in Palakkad district.

Meat, marine projects
Figuring in the list of new initiatives also is a meat processing plant in Kollur. The Rs 10 crore plant envisages processing of cattle meat with a capacity of 1,000 tonne per annum. Out of this, Rs 3.50 crore are required for plant and machinery. The plant will create employment opportunities for about 90 persons. The government is also planning to come up with a marine food park in Poonthura, south of Thiruvananthapuram. It has immense scope for setting up export-oriented units, with the coming up of a port in nearby Vizhinjam. What’s more, the traditional fishing harbours of Poonthura, Vakathura, Perumathura and Vizhinjam are all within 10 km.

Mango processing
Also on the cards is a mango processing and canning unit. The investment cost for setting up one with a capacity of 4 MTPA will be around Rs 5.1 crore. The land requirement will be around 3 acre.

Rice mill
A modern rice mill that KSIDC is planning in Palakkad district is significant, considering that rice mills in Kerala currently meet only 20% of the state’s requirements; the balance is met by PDS and from other states. The processing capacity envisaged for a medium-capacity modern rice mill is 600 tonne a day (18,000 TPA). The plant operation will be on a 2-shift basis of 8-hour shift, according to KSIDC. It would require an extent of around 1 acre of dry land, with paddy as the raw material. At 100% installed capacity, the total paddy requirement per annum would be 18,000 tonne.

Agri trade complex
The government is also planning to set up an agricultural trade complex for popularising and promoting sale of agricultural commodities both within and outside Kerala. Kerala proposes to set up an agricultural trade complex consisting of exhibition-cum-sales centres for different agricultural commodities, export-oriented storage points for agricultural commodities, warehousing facilities for agricultural products, convention centre for farm-oriented programmes, etc. For this, the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation (KSCDC) has a 3.5-acre land at Edappally in Ernakulam district.

In the list of proposed endeavours is a soft drink unit. Kelpalm, a fully-owned government undertaking incorporated in 1985, has been developing soft drinks (Kelpalm). Considering the market trend, Kelpalm has put up a project proposal for expansion and entering a new line of business by investing additional amounts in fixed assets. The proposed cost is Rs 69.19 lakh.

Mango processing
Also on the cards is a mango processing and canning unit. The investment cost for setting up one with a capacity of 4 MTPA will be around Rs 5.1 crore. The land requirement will be around 3 acre.

There is also the individual quick freezing project. Proposed to be located in Alappuzha district, its land would measure between one and two acre. The present capacity planned for it is 100 tonne a day.

The writer is M.D., Kerala state Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) the nodal agency for Emerging Kerala Global Connect 2012.
All set to carry next wave of IT revolution to rural areas

P H Kurien
Principal Secretary, IT, Govt. of Kerala

Kerala is going to be the ideal platform to experiment this third wave of IT revolution in the country. The first wave was confined to big metros like Bangalore and Hyderabad, while the second was expanded to smaller metros like Kochi and Pune.
After creating a foothold in information technology through Technopark and Infopark that are largely restricted to the big metros, Kerala is now all set to usher in a new wave of IT revolution by taking hi-tech aspirations to its far-flung rural hamlets and smaller towns. The state government will showcase a slew of IT-related projects, including rural IT parks in Kollam, Alappuzha and Thrissur districts at the forthcoming Emerging Kerala Global Connect in September, to high-profile entrepreneurs gathering at the three-day summit.

New IT parks have been proposed at Kundara on the banks of Ashtamudi Kayal east of Kollam district; Pallippuram near Cherthala, Alappuzha, 25 kms south-east of Kochi; and Koratty in Thrissur district by the side of National Highway and 12 kms from Kochi international airport.

The rural IT park concept will be setting up a new benchmark for the next-generation IT revolution in the country at a time when giants in the field who set up bases in big metros are looking for greener pastures in smaller towns to improve the bottom line by shedding extra costs while maintaining skilled manpower.

"Kerala is going to be the ideal platform to experiment this third wave of IT revolution in the country. The first wave was confined to big metros like Bangalore and Hyderabad, while the second was expanded to smaller metros like Kochi and Pune. Apart from the connectivity, the skilled manpower and better logistics in smaller Kerala towns can set pace for the new wave of IT revolution. As much as 53 per cent of Kerala techies hail from rural pockets."

Kerala, which pioneered an IT revolution with Technopark in 1992, had a chequered growth in the sector. After a lull, it is now bubbling with the vibrancy of Smart City, whose construction in Kochi began in October last year. Now the proposed rural IT parks is expected to take this momentum forward in a big way given the advantages the state’s rural pockets have when it comes to availability of skilled manpower and better logistics.

The rural IT parks are going to be pioneering models as big companies in IT, ITeS (IT-enabled services) and BPO (business process outsourcing) are driven by the cost advantage factors.

IT is still one of the rising sectors for Kerala, contributing more than Rs 3,500 crores in export revenue. It is growing at a rapid pace. Considering the state’s repository of qualified and trained IT professionals, the cost of start-up projects are low when compared to other major IT destinations like Bangalore and Hyderabad in the country.

It was in 1998 that the state government announced its First IT Policy. The follow-up came in the form of IT Policies in 2001 and 2007, each providing comprehensive support for further development of this sector. They helped Kerala emerge as a preferred IT/ITeS investment destination and a leader in e-governance. The new IT Policy 2012 will be issued in August.

Apart from the new path-breaking IT policy, Kerala has quite a few factors that give the state an advantageous position. These include high connectivity with the Kochi gateway that handles 70 per cent of the country’s data traffic, the state’s high literacy rate, tele-density that is double the national average, talent pool of English-speaking people, just 10 per cent employee attrition, schemes to groom students as future techies and engineering colleges producing 50,000 engineers every year, besides the moderate climate of the green state.
On the path of sustainable development
Out of the 26 areas that will be showcased to global delegates at Emerging Kerala as potential for growth and investment, the core sectors include, IT and IT-enabled services, Tourism and Medical Tourism, Healthcare Services, Food and Agro Processing, Knowledge and Education, Green Energy, Biotechnology and Nanotechnology. These are all sectors with a strong focus on sustainability. Integrating environment and development is one of the biggest challenges for nations across the world. We want to demonstrate that it can be done very successfully. Take IT for instance. Technopark in Trivandrum today is home to some of the country’s most innovative businesses, R&D centres and incubators. More importantly, it is one of greenest IT parks in the world – and that is the model we intend to replicate across the state.

- V. Somadundaram
Additional Chief Secretary (Industries)

Kerala is fast emerging as one of the most preferred investment destinations in the country. The State has shown tremendous growth in its industrial and services sectors in the past decade. A large number of investment projects were presented in the State in the ‘Global Investor Meet’ held in 2003. This paved the way for new projects. There are large investment opportunities across various sectors, like Tourism, IT, Education & Healthcare, Food Processing, Logistics, etc. There is also vast scope for private investment in major infrastructure projects like Vizhinjam Port, Cochin Metro Rail, High Speed Rail Corridor, Cochin-Coimbatore Industrial Corridor, Kannur International Airport, Oceanarium etc. In order to attract potential entrepreneurs to invest in these sectors, the State needs to highlight its advantages to the investor community and showcase the vast investment avenues available in the State.

With a proactive Government and administration in place, there is little doubt that Emerging Kerala will find its target.

- T J Mathew
Secretary, I & PRD
Run Up to Emerging Kerala

As a precursor to the event a series of domestic road shows were held: the diplomat’s meet at New Delhi, the country’s capital, at the economic hub, Mumbai, and the second fastest growing city of India and the Silicon city, Bangalore. Excerpts of Chief Minister Oommen Chandy’s speech at these events are reproduced below.
The Diplomats Meet at Delhi on 20–4–2012

Kerala has already achieved a reasonably good track record in human development, it is now ripe for faster and sustainable economic growth in today’s knowledge-based environment. We have convened this Meeting to seek your co-operation to achieve active participation from all over the world in this ‘Emerging Kerala 2012’. I am happy to inform that the State Government has a clear development agenda which is tailor-made to attract investments to the State. Our aim is to achieve long-term all-round development of the State, through global co-operation and everybody’s participation.

The State Government has identified various Core Sectors for the sustainable and eco-friendly development of the State. These are selected on the basis of our inherent strengths and opportunities for growth available in these sectors. The Government has worked out a pro-active Industrial & Commercial Policy for the State. The Policy is intended to transform Kerala into a vibrant entrepreneurial society with faster and inclusive growth. It aims to promote Kerala as a prime destination for industrial investment while ensuring environmental protection.

The IT Policy aims to create a knowledge-based economy with global opportunities. The focus is on creating a digitally literate Kerala society. The Tourism Policy of the State aims for sustainable development of tourism, which is already a significant contributor to the economic progress of the State. We have also worked out a fair and equitable Labour Policy and a Single Window Clearance Mechanism for investment decisions. These policy initiatives are targeting to create an investor-friendly environment for the long-term economic growth of the State. Emerging Kerala 2012 will show case the enabling environment for investments in the State. The Confederation of Indian Industry and NASSCOM, our key partners for the conduct of the Event, will provide all necessary facilitation to ensure the successful conduct of the event.

“Emerging Kerala” will be a platform for the eminent personalities and business leaders to converge and deliberate on subjects of economic growth and development of the State. Government is facilitating a CEO Summit, and various Business to Business and Business to Government Meets during the event. Various Sectoral Sessions for showcasing potential and opportunities in Kerala will be held at ‘Emerging Kerala – 2012’. ‘Emerging Kerala – 2012’ will open up new areas of bilateral trade and economic co-operation between Kerala and other countries. This will certainly further our mutual interests.

Business Meet at Mumbai on 15/05/2012.

The Government of Kerala is giving top priority to this global summit. We view this as an opportunity to show-case Kerala “God’s Own Country” – to the whole world. We expect many Heads of Governments, foreign dignitaries, business leaders, CEOs, visionaries and thought leaders to participate in this event. Kerala has already achieved commendable progress in human development. We hope to use this event to launch us on a path of faster and sustainable growth.
for the entire country. It is expected to open up new areas of business and investment in Kerala. The Business-to-Business and Business-to-Government Connects will help in crystallizing new projects and ideas.

Business meet Bangalore

“Emerging Kerala” is not just an investors’ meet in the traditional sense of the term. It is much more than that. Our intention is to showcase Kerala. We want people from other parts of the nation and the world to have a first-hand knowledge of the opportunities that Kerala offers in various spheres. As part of this overall objective, it is intended to reveal possible investment opportunities in projects, concepts and technologies which could be converted into profitable business. It will also give an opportunity to Kerala based entrepreneurs to build connections with business interests abroad and in other parts of the country. The event will not only concentrate towards manufacturing industry or IT, but will also highlight opportunities in other important areas such as tourism, education, health, finance and infrastructure.

Ease of doing business, I am told, is the most important factor for the business leaders. We intend to bring about real simplification of procedures to ensure granting of clearances within a specific timeframe. We have asked the Industry representatives to specify clearly the points of delay. The Government will take immediate decisions to remove these obstacles to make Kerala the most investment-friendly State.

Availability of power is another important consideration. To remove doubts about any constraint on this account, we have chalked out a definite program for doubling power generation capacity during the 12th Plan period. Work on this has already begun. I can assure you that availability of power is not going to be a constraint.

Availability of skilled manpower is another major consideration. I need not remind you that Kerala has the advantage of being the national leader in the fields of public health, literacy, education and so on. We are now in the process of launching a massive skill development program so that our pool of educated skilled manpower increases year by year. Thus, as far as the human resource is concerned, we are behind none in the whole country.

I would also like to mention that the most often quoted concern about labour unrest is, thankfully, a thing of past. The industrial climate in Kerala, in the past few decades, is much better than the rest of India. I assure you that there is no reason to worry on account of labour in Kerala.

The event is planned - not as a regional meeting - but as a national/international event. The Prime Minister, several Union Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, delegations from abroad, representatives of foreign companies and top media personnel at the national and international level will participate in this event.

Government does not consider “Emerging Kerala” to be a one-shot event. This event is only a starting point for continuing engagement with business and other interests outside Kerala. The purpose is to build long term, abiding relations which could fructify after the event. Our aim is to repeat the event every two years and to establish it as an important occasion on the international and national calendar. There will also be a technology exhibition organized by the Kerala Council for Science and Technology where a range of available technologies, which could be put into commercial use, will be displayed. This will include technologies developed by CSIR, DRDO, CST and various academic/private institutions. Kerala’s 12th Five Year Plan puts great emphasis on commercial development of technologies through industry incubators and programs to make people aware of industry opportunities in new technologies.

It is not the Government’s intention to just promote signing of MoUs during the event. The idea is to showcase and create opportunities rather than generate MoUs. I am sure that event will be a huge opportunity for all to learn more about Kerala and to be a partner in the State’s endeavor to become one of the most globally advanced societies.
A Right Step in the Right Direction

Yousuf Ali
Government of Kerala deserves all praise for its initiative to showcase Kerala as an emerging investment destination to the whole world. I am sure this global connect event will present Kerala's potential and opportunities to global investors. This meet will greatly help to remove the wrong perceptions about various issues of this state. An awareness campaign about the changing situations and trends in Kerala among the potential investors is very essential and I am sure the Emerging Kerala initiative will serve its purpose.

The Government of Kerala's efforts to bring in investments has been highly successful even in the past. As we all know, our Cochin International Airport is India's first international airport constructed under Public Private Participation (PPP) with the joint participation of Non-resident Keralites. This airport is even today a success story. Many national and international companies have done case studies on the success of this airport. It is heartening that the political leaders in Kerala are in consensus to support projects beneficial to the people irrespective of their political differences.

Gone are the days when Kerala was noted only for its natural beauty. Today not many states can match the facilities Kerala offers for industries that operate in the knowledge sector. The State has some unique advantages and facilities when compared with the other states in India. One among them is the pool of well-trained human resources to meet the demands of global business needs.

Today, Kerala is rapidly emerging as one of the most preferred destinations for economic activity in India. The long term sustainable and inclusive economic growth is the topmost objective of the Government. The State provides all its investors with the perfect environment for growth. For example, our Lulu International Shopping Mall which is going to be Asia's largest shopping wonder coming up at Kochi, the business hub of Kerala, is our biggest project in Kerala. The project, which has a total investment of INR 1600 Crores, envisages direct job opportunities for 8000 people and indirect employment for more than 20000 people.

The Non-Resident Keralites have always supported the economy of India, especially that of Kerala with their remittances. There are 3.5 to 4 million NRKs in the Gulf out of which 70% are skilled and semi-skilled workers. They cannot start a business or project on their own, but, are ready to invest their hard-earned money for the development of the state. There are a lot of projects Non-Resident Keralites are interested and in which small, medium and large investors can invest. I think that these projects should also be included in this event. Three such projects are:

1. Air Kerala
2. NRK Bank
3. NRK University

AIR KERALA

The Government of Kerala should take initiative to start a new budget airline company namely Air Kerala International Services. The Non-resident Keralites are ready to wholeheartedly support this project and to participate in the same. This can be implemented in the PPP model as in the implementation of Cochin International Airport. Government can participate either in the ratio of 25:75 or 76:24. If implemented, this will be a great blessing to the millions of NRKs who face great travel difficulties due to increased airfares in the Gulf sector.

NRK BANK

It has been reported that more than 50,000 crores deposited by NRKs is lying unutilized in various banks in Kerala. If an NRK Bank is started with the participation of the Government of Kerala small, medium and big investors can invest their hard-earned money in this bank to obtain good returns and profits. This can also be implemented in the model of a PPP project like our Cochin International Airport where the Government of Kerala can also participate.

NRK UNIVERSITY

Children of NRKs are finding it extremely difficult to find a seat for their higher education especially in the IT and other Professional education. As they are finding it difficult to obtain quality education, an NRK University with the participation of Kerala Government is proposed, which will help the NRKs to meet all their educational needs in our state.
Joy Alukka plans 1,500 crore investment in Kerala within the next 3 years
Joy Alukkas’s dream for Kerala is, to see the people of Kerala as global citizens and the state as an international destination with infrastructure and talent that compares to the best in the world. This visionary who runs the multibillion dollar global conglomerate ‘Joyalukkas’ believes in ‘enhancing peoples lifestyles’ and his primary focus now is to also rapidly expand his business in Kerala. Joy Alukkas’s mission in Kerala is to compliment the development of the state and create as many employment opportunities as possible in the state.

He is planning to invest a whopping Rs. 1,500 crore in Kerala, within the next 3 years. His plans for Kerala include setting up a state-of-the-art 300 bed Cancer speciality hospital in Trissur. Procuring 2 more aircrafts for his luxury air charter business ‘Joy Jets’. Build 8 ‘Mall of Joy’s’, open 8 ‘Jolly Silks’ & 7 new Joyalukkas Jewellery showrooms across Kerala. His plans also include opening 50 Joyalukkas Money Exchange centers in Kerala. The 1,500 crore investment Joy Alukkas has planned will create 6,000 additional job opportunities in Kerala.

Joy Alukkas is a man on a mission, he says “I want to see Kerala as the most progressive and world-class state in India. All this has been possible not from any other country or state but from our own Kerala. Come, Dream big and invest here. You will reap rich dividends. For the potentials are great.”
The TPL Story and its lesson for Trivandrum

Balagopal
TERUMO PENPOL recently celebrated the 25th year of its operation. The company today employs over 1,000 skilled men and women at its plant in Trivandrum and in its sale offices in various parts of the country. The Blood Bag plant produces about 20 million blood bags every year and the products are shipped to 56 countries. This is probably the third largest such facility in the world. TPL has won the Top Exporter Award or the Second Best Exporter Award for Medical Disposables every year from 1994 onwards.

Located at Vellapilly Panchayat, about 10 km from the city, the Blood Bag Plant today is one of the biggest employers in the district and has helped to transform a once poor rural area. Shops, barbershops, tailors, etc. have all come up in the area to cater to the people working and living near the factory. The Medical Systems Group located in leased premises near GH Junction makes sophisticated special purpose equipment for use in modern Blood Banking. Both facilities have obtained all relevant ISO and CE Mark certifications, having been among the first to get these in the State and the country. In fact, the Blood Bag Plant has just completed two cycles of surveillance audits, probably one of the few to do so.

The company has been a model employer, paying among the best packages among private sector manufacturing companies in Kerala. There are several Trade Unions, but industrial relations have been cordial, with no disruptions of work experienced so far. The company has taken special efforts to employ people from the locality where the plant is located, and this has helped earn the company local goodwill.

When the location of the factory is compared to the smart campuses of Technopark, it is clear that manufacturing has not received the same attention that IT is today receiving. The Industrial Estates at Pappanamcode, Manvila, and Veli are suited to Thiruvananthapuram. Given the skilled and educated workforce available here, hi-tech industries should be assisted to relocate to less expensive locations away from the city, and turn over these prime areas to higher value adding and hi-tech ventures. This will enable a critical mass of such business to come up at Trivandrum, which will lead to more skilled people in these disciplines wanting to work here. This will set off a virtuous cycle of more industries coming here. Already, a medical devices cluster is planned but this has to be located far away, as the best land is already used for low tech industries, most of which are sick and closed.

Such a cluster concept will enable the R&D resources already existing at Trivandrum to be optimally used, to generate more projects and business ideas, setting off more virtuous circles. The development of the international airport, NH bypass linking the city to Kochi port in the north and Tuticorin in the south, and the excellent railway network will all help support the business growth in such a direction. The planned International Containers Transhipment Port at Vizhinjam will give it the boost that the local hinterland needs, as containers from ports like Kochi and Tuticorin, and also from Chennai and other parts of the coast, are brought here for loading on a mother vessel that can berth safely due to the deep draught and the excellent railway network all will help support the business growth in such a direction. The planned International Containers Transhipment Port at Vizhinjam will give it the boost that the local hinterland needs, as containers from ports like Kochi and Tuticorin, and also from Chennai and other parts of the coast, are brought here for loading on a mother vessel that can berth safely due to the deep draught.

The city is home to a large number of well known colleges among which the University College, Mar Ivanios College, Mahatma Gandhi College, All Saints College, NSS College for Women, SCT College of Engg, Arts College, Law College, Law Academy Medical College etc. There are also many well known schools both private and government that have earned a name for excellence over many years. The biggest establishment at Trivanndrum is the VSSC, of the ISRO, where over 5000 engineers and scientists have been working on India’s space program since the late 1960s. This large number of highly qualified people drawn from all over India represents one of the largest collections of scientific manpower anywhere in the country.

Trivandrum can therefore justiﬁably claim to be a “knowledge city,” where large numbers of highly trained people are educated, trained, live and work. In addition, the city is the State Capital and houses all the main ofﬁces of the State Government. Various important Central Government ofﬁces including the Accountant General’s Ofﬁce, Reserve Bank of India, Bureau of Indian Standards, etc. The Headquarters of the Southern Air Command are located at Akkulam near the city, and the Cantonment with the Brigade HQ at Pangode. All this ensures Trivandrum has a mix of people drawn from all over the country.

Low tech or no-tech industries of the type seen at the industrial estates mentioned earlier are not the kind of industries that are suited to Trivandrum. Given the skilled and educated work force available here, hi-tech industries should be given priority. These include electronics, healthcare, bio-tech centers, components, consumer products, plant bio-diversity based products, etc. The facilities of the R&D establishments located in Trivandrum can serve as incubators for such ventures, freeing them from the need to invest in expensive research equipment, and enabling them to get expert guidance.

As Chennai is now doing, existing industrial units in the industrial estates should be assisted to relocate to less expensive locations away from the city, and turn over these prime areas to higher value adding and hi-tech ventures. This will enable a critical mass of such business to come up at Trivandrum, which will lead to more skilled people in these disciplines wanting to work here. This will set off a virtuous cycle of more industries coming here. Already, a medical devices cluster is planned but this has to be located far away, as the best land is already used for low tech industries, most of which are sick and closed.

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Our experience is that government and citizens need to take the larger view of their city and district, and see the special resource and factor endowments here, and plan a course of development that suits this region. Otherwise, just like the TPL plant, it will become an island of hi-tech with little or no connection to the surrounding area, having little multiplier effect on the development of the region. Such industries like TPL will also have to look to far off places for skills and raw materials, which would otherwise become locally available once the cluster concept becomes a reality. That is the lesson of TPL.
Kerala is on its way to enviable growth

E.M. Najeeb
It is evident that Kerala is emerging as a bountiful state in many ways. The biggest asset of the state has always been the people who are educated, cultured, and well exposed to the world. Nature is at its attractive best and the weather is comfortably moderate. The economic activities of the state have been so far in a slower pace, and now we have reached a stage to have a leap towards faster growth and development. Inspite of the various strengths we have, we still are dependent on other states for our many needs. It is high time that we changed this label of a consumer state to a productive one. Thoughtfully selected areas of economic activities suited to the state should be triggered off to attain the next stage. I am happy to see the Government is in a fast mode to innovate and implement activities and projects for the quick growth of the state. Emerging Kerala event taking place on September 12 – 14, 2012 is a creative step towards catalyzing growth through attracting investments in carefully identified projects. It is a right step, provided the carrying capacity of the state is taken in account and our assets are intelligently managed.

I have great happiness to see infrastructure being built-up, production is increased, and trade & business flourishing in the state, as an entrepreneur based in Kerala. I have spent my time, and invested recourses in this state. In the mid 70’s when I could go abroad seeking opportunities, I decided to stay back in Kerala to be an entrepreneur. The travel company, Airtravel Enterprises India Ltd started in 1976 flourished in the course of ten years and we diversified into other areas like tourism, consultancy, hospitality, healthcare management, housing & construction, advertising, information technology, and so on. Today the Kerala based ATE group, a 400 crore turnover organization with 18 locations across India and 4 offices abroad.

Though Kerala has its own problems, I consider the state as an excellent destination for investments. The good connectivity by air through the three international airports in Kerala, the railway and surface transport links, are so very conducive for tourism and travel as my core business. I am glad that for the last couple of decades I could contribute to the tourism development efforts of the state. Today the brand Tourism Kerala is noticed by important source markets in the world. Leading international media acclaim Kerala, as one among the few must see destinations in the world. The tourism industry in the state enjoys a great fraternity. This is the first state that has created a healthy partnership between the Government and the Private sector to develop tourism. This model of Public-Private partnership has been well received by other states and some states are even initiating to emulate this model for tourism development. Here the Government interfaces with the Private sector and takes their views. Any Government that comes to power irrespective of the parties is positively for the development of tourism, and supports the industry all out. The Kerala Travel Mart, the unique destination mart being conducted every two years in Kerala is a joint effort by the Private sector industry players and the Government. It is one of the most innovative promotional ventures of this partnership. The state registers a gradual increase in the tourist arrivals and now records a figure of 7.33 million Foreign Tourists and 9.4 million domestic visitors. The state records a tourism spending of Rs. 4222 crore equivalent of Foreign Exchange Earnings through Foreign Tourist Arrivals. The private sector has invested huge amounts in tourism and hospitality sector. They have developed attractive ethnic styled boutique properties, luxury transport, houseboats, tour-operating companies, restaurants, theme parks, and so on. Kerala’s beautiful natural landscape is studded with beautiful hotels and hospitality centres making the beaches, backwaters, hills and cultural locations excellent products to market.

When I take a look back, I am only encouraged by my investments in Kerala as the future is bright in tourism. I have an excellent team of manpower to support my activities and they are learned and techno-savvy. I always derive a great sense of satisfaction that I am contributing my humble best to the economic growth of the state. Major initiatives of the group, KIMS Healthcare Management, KIMS Hospitals and the KIMS Cancer Care Institutions are successfully contributing to the Kerala society through high quality tertiary care medical treatment and Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.

Commmenced as a 250 bed hospital, KIMS in a short span of ten years has grown exponentially with a turnover of around 200 crores in its India Operations. True to its founding principles, the group has made quality healthcare accessible to the people of Kerala, Tamil nadu and overseas. It has become an institution of trust, and a beacon of hope and a Centre for excellence.

2004, KIMS ventured into GCC by opening up KIMS Bahrain Medical Centre in Bahrain. The year 2006 saw KIMS rapidly scaling up its operations and infrastructure by adding 200 additional beds and also laying the foundation stone of an additional multi storied complex now known as KIMS North.

In 2006 KIMS launched its freewheel ambulance service and established KIMS Voice Foundation. In the same year KIMS received one of its most significant achievements in its never ending pursuit for quality and safety. KIMS becomes the first hospital in the country to receive accreditations from Australian Council on Healthcare Standards International and National accreditation for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers.

The year 2008 saw KIMS setting up a world class Multi disciplinary ICU. In the same year KIMS also started its single window health check up facility – The Wellness Lounge.

In the year 2009 KIMS GCC presence was extended in Oman with a 50 bed hospital in Dar Sal, Polyclinics in Jubail, Saudi Arabia and Al wakhra, Qatar. To make quality care affordable and accessible, KIMS ventured into peripheral care by starting a 50 bed hospital in Balaramapuram.

KIMS presence in GCC was further accelerated by setting up a 70 bed hospital in Salmaniya, Bahrain. KIMS also expanded in Kerala by starting its operations in Kochi with a 130 bed hospital at Edapally. In the same year KIMS ventured into cancer care by establishing a state of the art cancer treatment facility – KIMS Pinnacle Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

A primary care facility at Kuravankonam KIMS Wellness Centre was also initiated in 2011. Today, there are a number of humanitarian schemes initiated by KIMS, which includes ‘Hridaya Spandanam’ for the financially backward heart patients, ‘Guru Vandaram’ for the retired teachers who suffer from knee problems and ‘Touch A Life’ for the cancer patients.

KIMS has employed about 2710 direct employees and 1150 contract employees in the KIMS Healthcare management Group in India and GCC.

I would not say that the state is devoid of limitations. We need much better infrastructure, skilled manpower, and an overall positive attitude for hard-work. I see positive changes taking place in these areas as the Government itself is initiating steps to bring about changes. The Government from the Chief Minister, Ministers, bureaucrats, and officials are encouragingly approachable and ready to look into our problems with support. I strongly feel that we are a unique state, on its way to higher levels of growth. We are surely changing, growing, and emerging as an outstanding state. Kerala is emerging
Kochi
The Venue of
Emerging Kerala 2012

Kochi is proud of its world-class port and international airport that link it to many major cities worldwide. It is historically an entry point for traders and travelers visiting Kerala. This bustling city is noted for its historic landmarks and settlements of Jewish community and also those from other parts of India like the Konkans and the Gujaratis.
Kochi (colonial name Cochin) is a vibrant city situated on the south-west coast of the Indian peninsula in the breathtakingly scenic and prosperous state of Kerala. Its strategic importance over the centuries is underlined by the sobriquet “Queen of the Arabian Sea.” Informally, Kochi is also referred to as the Gateway to Kerala. From time immemorial, the Arabs, British, Chinese, Dutch, and Portuguese have left indelible marks on the history and development of Cochin.

Over the years, Kochi has emerged as the commercial and industrial capital of Kerala and is perhaps the second most important city on the west coast of India (after Mumbai). Kochi is proud of its world-class port and international airport that link it to many major cities worldwide. It is historically an entry point for traders and travelers visiting Kerala. This bustling city is noted for its historic landmarks and settlements of Jewish community and also those from other parts of India like the Konkans and the Gujaratis. Kochi has a full-fledged seaport and an international airport, which is the first of its kind in the history of civil aviation in India to be realized through public-private partnership. By virtue of this, Kochi has been the world’s favorite trade destination for centuries.

Today, Kochi is poised for a dramatic leap into the future. As the ambitious Vallarpadam International Container Transshipment Terminal (Country’s first) takes shape, Kochi is all set to overtake Colombo and even challenge the status of Hong Kong, in maritime business activities. Thanks to its strategic proximity to the Pacific Rim sea route. Further, Kochi attains prominence, as the coveted energy supplier for the entire state of Kerala and the western coast, with the completion of the proposed LNG Petronet Terminal.

Kochi is already one of the major IT hubs in the country, where the Smart City project is coming up. It is the meeting point of the high bandwidth underground IT highway that connects the eastern hemisphere with the western hemisphere. It is the only spot in India where both submarine cables SEA-ME-WE3 and SAFE land. This advantage places the city several notches above other IT destinations, as the high bandwidth facilitates faster data transfer. Realizing this potential, many global IT stalwarts have already arrived in Kochi - Infosys and Wipro, to name a few.

Home to people from many walks of life, culture and religion, Kochi also has the presence of one of the best facilities when it comes to hospitals, options for entertainment, hotels, schools, colleges and banks. It is also a shopping centre for branded products in Kerala. With all these advantages, the future smiles over Kochi.
Sadya
The Traditional Malayali Feast
The traditional feast of Kerala is purely vegetarian. The feast is a sumptuous spread of rice, with a number of curries, pickles, chips, sarkkaravarattis, payasams, and banana. Decades back, at royal places and big nambudiri ilams 64 items were served at sadhya.

Traditional sadhya as first served for the sake of God. In the sense that each and every item should first be served in the plantain leaf with a cup of water in the floor after lighting the lamp placed in front of God.

The plantain leaf should be ‘thoosanila’ i.e. tip of the banana leaf. It has to be placed towards the left hand side of the person who sits on a mat in the floor.

There is an order in which all these items are to be served. It is on the extreme left of the banana leaf they start serving the crispy treats like pappadam and chips. Next item in the corner are chips and sarkkaravaratty. Then it is the turn of pickles with mango, big lemon (kariaranga), ginger, etc. Next to pickles are various thoducurries like pachady, kichadi, etc. Pachady can be prepared with cucumber, ripen mango, jackfruit, banana and pineapple. Kichadi with Ladies finger, cucumber and bitter gourd.

Erissery occupies a prominent place in the sadhya. It can be made either with banana or with pumpkin. Raw jackfruit can also be used for this curry. Next comes one sweet curry. Kottukary, thoran, kalan and avial are also served one by one. Avial is considered as a complete curry because it is very nutritious since it contains several vegetables.

At the first course, rice is served on the bottom half of the leaf with dishes like parippu with a drop of ghee. For parippu we will divide the rice into portions on the righthand side. Portion of rice parippu and ghee are served. For the second course, the rice in the left side should be brought to the right and above that sambar is served. The third course is payasam (a pudding prepared in molasses) is served. Along with the payasam banana is mashed and eaten. We should taste hot and sour pickles in the midst of sweet payasams to enhance the taste. The next course is rice with olan (white curry with Ashgourd in coconut milk). Pulissery with pineapple or ripen Mango or banana is poured above the rice. The fifth course is boli and palppayasam. This white payasam is prepared either with rice or with Ada. But with Boli it is rice palppayasam that suits well.

The sixth course is rice and rasam. Some people will take rasam without rice. Rasam is a rangy peppery garlicy soup. Its purpose is to facilitate digestion. The hot burning pepper sensation is quenched by the last course of rice with sambharam, a butter milk to settle down the expected heaviness after such a huge meal. Towards the end don’t forget to drink the water which is placed on the left side of the leaf in the floor.

After this sadhya, only a Malayali with his pot belly can manage to get up without a helping hand.
Saree

The Quintessentially Indian Dress
There are dresses and dresses and dresses, but when it comes to sheer elegance and class, there is nothing to beat the saree. That a long unimaginative looking piece of rectangular cloth can, by the way it is draped around a woman, transform itself into a fashion statement is one of the sartorial wonders of the world. The saree, India’s gift to female pulchritude, has staved off threats from other Indian and western attires to carve a permanent niche for itself in the world of clothes through its adaptability and aesthetic appeal. Whether it is wound around a seductive Zeenath Aman in Raj Kapoor’s famous film Sathyam Sivam Sundaram or is used as a very utilitarian and modest uniform by the sisters belonging to Mother Theresa’s Missionaries of Charity, the saree lends itself easily to diverse needs.

The saree is believed to be the oldest dress in the world that is still worn in everyday life. It is unclear when women in India began to wear it. Legend has it that a weaver imagined the sheen of a woman’s tears, the cascades of her long flowing hair, the colours of her moods and the softness of her touch and wove these imaginings into the cloth he was weaving and smiled when he saw the result...Thus the saree was born as the epitome of a woman.

The first recorded evidence of the saree is believed to be in The Mahabharata where the incident of how the never ending garment draped around Draupadi protected her virtue is described. Unstitched cloth has long been considered pure in India. Ancient Indian sculptures and paintings that depict women wearing something that resembles a saree give credence to the belief that it has been worn in India for a very long time.

The word ‘saree’, also spell ‘sari’, comes from the Sanskrit word ‘chira’ which means a ‘strip of cloth’. Referred to as ‘sadi’ in colloquial Hindi, ‘saree’ in Malayalam, ‘podavai’ in Tamil and so on, a saree is generally five and a half metres in length, though the longer version, called ‘the nine yard wonder’, is worn by members of the Brahmin community of Tamil Nadu in what is called the ‘madisaar’ style. The famous painter Raja Ravi Varma had selected the nine yard saree as the ideal female garb.

Just as the saree is referred to differently in different states of India, it is also worn in varying styles. Raja Ravi Varma has, in his painting titled Indian Musical Instruments, beautifully depicted women wearing sarees in traditional styles playing music on different instruments.

There are more than a mind boggling fifteen ways of draping a saree, but the most common one is the ‘nivi’ style. According to this style, one end of the saree is tucked into a full length petticoat that is also referred to as the lehenga or the pavada, taken round the back to be brought again into the front where it is arranged into pleats and tucked into the petticoat. These pleats are called ‘kick pleats’ as they help in walking freely, or as freely as one can in such an attire. Then the rest of the saree is wound again and brought to the front over the bosom and allowed to hang down from the left shoulder to form what is called the ‘pallu’ or ‘pallav’ (the word is believed to have been derived from ‘pallava’ since this style began during the time of the Pallavas). The saree is worn with a close fitting blouse called the ‘choli’.

Kerala Sarees

In the midst of a riot of colour and a range of costly silks that are unique to various states of India, the simple and elegant Kerala cotton saree stands classily apart. Made of unbleached cotton and adorned only with a slim single coloured border, it is not just soothing to the eye, but is also tailor made for the sultry Kerala weather. This Kerala saree is also called the ‘set saree’ and is woven traditionally in Balaramapuram, a town in Thrissur district that is famous for its handloom industry.

The Kerala saree is a more convenient alternative to the traditional attire of Kerala - the two piece saree known as ‘mundu’ and ‘neriyathu’ that it closely resembles. The mundu is worn like a dhoti around the waist and the neriyathu is worn like a half saree and both are made out of unbleached cotton with a border of a single colour. Often the border is made of zari or golden thread. This attire symbolizes the Malayalee woman. Raja Ravi Varma has, in some of his paintings, brought out the elegant splendour of the Malayalee woman in mundu and neriyathu.

The saree's perennial popularity could stem from the fact that it is flattering to any kind of figure. It has the magical ability of making the fat ladies look slimmer and the slim ones look more rounded. Besides, no one can dispute its charm and elegance when worn at weddings, parties and formal functions. In spite of stiff competition from the salwar kameez that keeps threatening to put it on the endangered attire category, there need be no fear that, given its unique history and its obvious advantages, this lovely pan Indian attire will hold its own.
Mohiniyattam
The dance of the enchantress
Mohiniyattam the dance of the enchantress is Kerala’s classical dance form. The Mohiniyattam dancer is clad in white saree with plenty of neatly ironed folders, with fine decorative borders. She is supposed to be very good in looks as she represented the Mohini, who can bewitch anybody with her beauty. She is called the enchantress who captivates the minds of the viewer, by her beauty, proficiency in acting, and the lyrical movements of her body in rhythm. It is a visual treat and half of the battle is won by the dancer through her good looks. The hair style with a particular coiffure is also very attractive. The eyes are darkened by a special treatment, if the eyelashes are long it will be more attractive while acting the eye balls have to be rolled to the sides, and up and down, for which the dancer has to take regular exercises. Various eye-movements are prescribed for expressing various emotions like, love, hatred, kindness, shyness, fear, anger etc.

A lasya type of dance which developed over many centuries. It is a very fascinating dance in slow tempo, with body movements quite different from those of other dances. The movement of Mohiniyattam dancer is often compared to the swaying of paddy plants in the breeze, so spontaneous, and the kinetics of Mohinyattam cannot be described in words: It is to be seen and enjoyed.

Mohiniyattam stems from the old devadasi tradition, of beautiful damsels dedicated to the lord and the temple who danced Dasyattam. This dance form later left the sacred precincts of the temple and got sheltered in royal patronage and then to the benign eyes of feudal lords; and there was the inevitable decadence.

After an interregnum, the form got revival at the hands of Maharaja SwathiThirunal who composed the most beautiful lyrics for its recital. Again after a brief spell Mohiniyattom had its hey days at Kerala Kalamandalam.

Today Mohiniyattom has emerged into the most fascinating, alluring dance of the divine Mohini, the enchanters - many artistes have taken to hundreds of fora in and outside the country and it enjoys a wide acclaim as it represents the cultural heritage of Kerala and India of two parallel streams of cultures - The Aryan and Dravidian. It also represents the rich romantic and spiritual aspirations of people. And expresses even the subtle nuances of the human thoughts and experience. A Mohiniyattom recital is really a visual treat and its visual appeal can linger long in the mind of the viewer eliciting sweet reverberations.
Kerala and its Inseparable Elephant

Kerala has given the animal pride of place by featuring it on the emblem of the Government of Kerala, taken from the Royal Arms of erstwhile Travancore and Cochin kingdoms.
The State of Kerala and its elephants are inseparable. The pachyderms played a prominent role in the lives and times of the state from time immemorial and have found their rightful place in the state's emblem. They were an inseparable part of the fairs and festivals of the state. There cannot be a bigger symbol of vanity and lost glory in Kerala than the elephant who were once the poster boys of a household's prosperity. An elephant is a not uncommon sight in our hallowed land of coconut trees. Tamed and domesticated, the gentle giant is a proud possession of rich traditional households not averse to flaunting their opulence. It is a status symbol for its owner like its automobile cousin the Mercedes in the porch. It is an unmistakable feature of temple festivals. A once preferred worker, now facing competition from the ubiquitous JCB.

Our government has given the animal pride of place by featuring it on the emblem of the Government of Kerala, taken from the Royal Arms of erstwhile Travancore and Cochin kingdoms.

Gold caparisoned elephants have the onus of carrying the deity during annual festival processions and ceremonial circumambulations in Hindu temples. Elephant riders hold
muthukkuda (tinselled silk parasols) and sway venchamaram (white tufts) and aalavattam (peacock feather fans) to the rhythm of panchari melam. No fewer than seventeen elephants doing the daily ceremonial rounds in Kudalmanikyam temple is a famous instance in point.

Naturally, elephants are the centerpiece of attraction at the magnificent Thrissur Pooram, an annual festival at the Vadakkunnathan Temple in Thrissur on Pooram day in the Malayalam month of Medam. The large assembly of elephants in their majestic splendor is a sight for the Gods even as the accompanying percussions charge up the atmosphere to a frenzied crescendo. Close to fifty elephants, decorated with nettipattam or caparison, bells and other ornaments are paraded in the temple premises on that day. Kudamaatam display is a spectacle done atop the elephants. Punnathur Kotta, now renamed as Anakotta houses the elephants of Guruvayoor temple where Gaagam and Anayoott are important rituals. Probably the most reputed and respected resident elephant of a Kerala temple is the late Guruvayoor Kesavan.

Expensive to maintain, owners often lease out elephants to temples and timber mills where the treatment they are subjected to may not exactly be termed pampering. The poor animals are invariably made to endure long parades, loud firecrackers, teasing crowds, nasty flames; congested lorry rides and walks on tarred roads in the scorching sun. Sometimes they are ill-fed and ill-rested even. The mahouts or paappans drink to excess, sometimes give liquor to their wards and both of them wander through the roads in an inclined condition. The sight of the mahout sleeping in the shade under belly of his elephant while it stood motionless in the sun is no an uncommon sight. Pushed to the limit, the elephants sometimes react by throwing tantrums or running amok.

"Ntupoopakkoranendarnnu," a timeless tale by the towering Malayalam litterateur Vaikom Muhammed Basheer (there is a commendable English translation ‘Me Grandad ‘ad an Elephant’ by Prof. R.E. Asher) has the protagonist Kunjupathumma boasting to her lover about her “grandfather’s elephants”. Little wonder that when M.F. Hussain chose Kerala as the topic of his coffee-table book of paintings ‘God’s Own Country’, he liberally spiced it with the elephant in many picaresque poses. Incidentally the movie that the maestro directed was titled ‘Gaagamini’ meaning she who walks like the elephant. Long gone are the Raj days when Travancore rulers proudly strode elephants seated in elaborate howdahs. The population of this species has also drastically dwindled, thanks to illegal poaching for ivory. However yeoman efforts by the governments Forestry and Tourism departments have ensured that the pachyderm tribe has increased in numbers in Kerala’s wild. The elephant shelter as part of Konni Ecotourism project and the reserve in Kodanad are steps in that direction.

A few years back, while working in the Thiruvananthapuram Technopark, this writer was witness to routine elephant line-ups by a major company there, as part of their reception for international clients. The adventurous among these bemused guests got to mount the animals for that top of the world feeling. Quiet and harmless, herbivorous and playful, the elephant is an animal that deserves all our affection and certainly more sensitive handling. The Anapremi’s (Elephant lovers) who have an association in the state will go to any length to see an elephant walk, eat, and sleep. The writer is a freelancer

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