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KERALA

A tapestry of triumphs

From pioneering PPP in infrastructure development to becoming a global brand in tourism and achieving remarkable growth in the services sector, the Kerala Model of development continues to shine with innovation, entrepreneurship and inclusive growth

» A CORRESPONDENT

Kerala has much to offer the world — banking to Public Private Partnership (PPP) and tourism to human capital.

The outstanding success of Kerala in social and human development indices is known across the world. But lesser known is the success of the State in the world of entrepreneurship and innovation.

For instance, Kerala was the pioneer in PPP for infrastructure development, long before the concept gained traction at the national level. The Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) is one of the finest and most successful examples of PPP in the country. It holds the distinction of being the first-ever airport fully powered by solar energy, generating a remarkable 73 million units of clean and green energy on an annual basis. The airport stands as a testament to the boundless potential of innovation.

The State has also made some outstanding achievements in making the Ayurveda system of medicine a globally recognised brand. The success of gold retailers and gold loan companies is another good example of the innovative spirit of Keralites.

There is a growing trend of people from Kerala achieving remarkable heights in the global business arena and making significant investments in the State. The shopping mall culture is the most illustrative example of such investments. Similarly, Keralites at the forefront of cutting-edge knowledge economies in the U.S. and other advanced countries are looking seriously at setting up research and development facilities in their homeland. Going forward, this is likely to emerge as a major trend in Kerala.

Services-led success

When it comes to services-led growth, Kerala has shown the way to the rest of India. The much-acclaimed 'Kerala Model' of development stands to the test of time as the State economy has been growing at a faster clip than the national average.

State's Finance Minister KN Balagopal said in the budget for FY24 that the Kerala economy "is projected to grow at a rate of 11.2 per cent in 2023-24 to ₹11.3 lakh crore over the previous fiscal". This is compared to 6.5 per cent growth for the national economy by the RBI for FY24 fiscal.

A sizeable chunk of growth would come from the services sector, which covers a vast array of activities — education, health, key infrastructure, construction, financial services and the like.

According to official data, services or the tertiary sector accounts for around 63 per cent of the State's Gross Value Added, while 28 per cent by the secondary or industrial sector and 8 per cent from the primary or agricultural sector. Of the services sector, a lion's share is attributed to financial services which include commercial banks and non-banks.

Much before formal banking expanded its footprint in the rest of the country, Kerala was home to a dozen-odd banks. Their number

shrank in the course of time as some bit the dust and some merged with others for varied reasons. The chief reason for the presence of dominant commercial lenders may be attributed to the very structure of the Kerala economy which has been dominated by two dominant segments; an over-sized State sector and a non-resident economy.

Both needed formal financial institutions to function smoothly while creating economic surplus for the State. In a way, both underscored the relevance of each other.

Favoured travel haven

Kerala has also emerged as a much sought-after tourist destination, making it a global brand, thanks to its natural beauty, rich heritage, culture and culinary traditions. The State has been positioned as an all-weather destination for short duration as well as extended stays packed with excitement. Kerala's trendsetting marketing campaigns have ensured top-of-the-mind brand recall as well.

Kerala has also been able to showcase itself by developing new products and highlighting its age-old traditions and organising eclectic and high-octane events, festivals and celebrations. The famed houseboats on the backwater and ayurvedic rejuvenation therapies during the monsoons have helped the tourism sector grow.

The success of Kerala Tourism is also largely due to the robust PPP of the ecosystem. The government has come out with many hand-holding schemes for entrepreneurs and service providers to revive their activities after the pandemic. Kerala has successfully implemented a people's participatory model in tourism which ensured the participation of the local populace, particularly women in tourism-related activities, ensuring empowerment and inclusiveness.

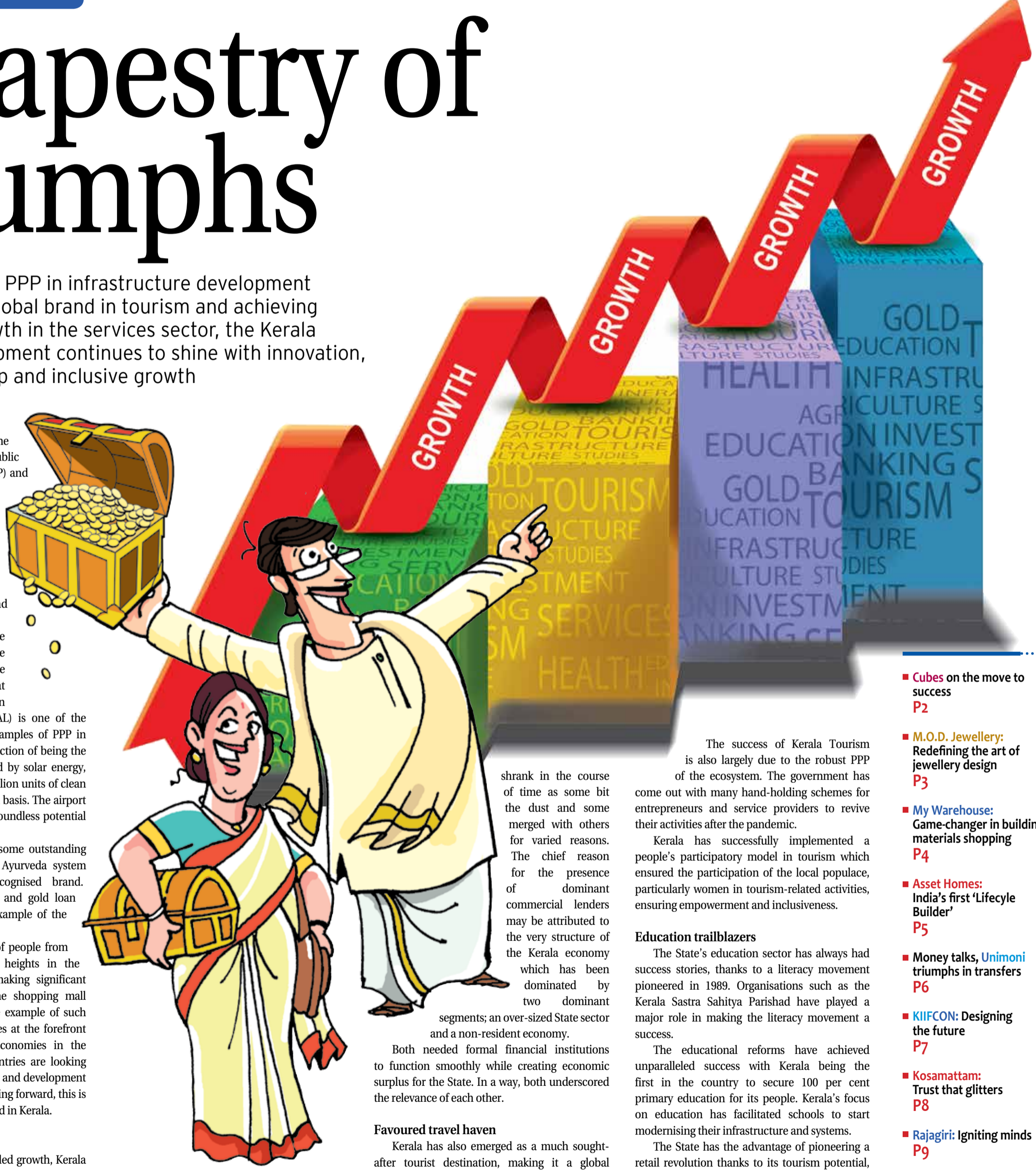
Education trailblazers

The State's education sector has always had success stories, thanks to a literacy movement pioneered in 1989. Organisations such as the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad have played a major role in making the literacy movement a success.

The educational reforms have achieved unparalleled success with Kerala being the first in the country to secure 100 per cent primary education for its people. Kerala's focus on education has facilitated schools to start modernising their infrastructure and systems.

The State has the advantage of pioneering a retail revolution thanks to its tourism potential, increased per capita income and high literacy. The inclusion of retail setups right from grocery to food and the presence of a large women workforce has offered a conducive atmosphere for the success of the retail industry.

In the real estate sector, the State has witnessed a boom, posting growth last year in terms of the number of projects than that the previous year. The figures revealed by the Kerala Real Estate Regulatory Authority indicated that 159 new projects were registered last year compared to 114 in 2021. Of these, 148 were residential projects. The total built-up area of the projects posted a 97 per cent growth in 2022.



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INFRASTRUCTURE

Building Kerala's future

Robust infrastructure projects, including road networks, rail connectivity, airports, seaports, inland water transportation and a metro rail system contribute to Kerala's transformation into a major economic hub

» VIVEK GEORGE

Kerala is known for its high levels of social development, and this is popularly referred to as the 'Kerala Model'.

Strong social indicators such as literacy rates, higher life expectancy, access to healthcare and low infant mortality rates have made Kerala different from the rest of the country.

Beneath the celebrated Kerala Model lies a confluence of factors that contributed to its social development feat — robust social welfare programs, a steadfast focus on education and an unwavering commitment to gender equality. Beyond the accolades for its social strides, Kerala's infrastructure development stands as a quiet force,



often overshadowed. Interestingly, the State's recent substantial investments in infrastructure are beginning to reap rewards, fostering rapid growth and a plethora of projects that promise to elevate the lives of its populace.

Pathways of progress

With an extensive road network of over 70,000 km, Kerala boasts one of the highest street densities in India. The State government, in collaboration

with the Centre, is making substantial investments in road infrastructural improvements, including the Kochi-Thrissur-Palakkad Expressway and Kannur-Thalassery Highway, which are set to enhance connectivity and drive economic growth.

Enhancing rail connectivity

Kerala's well-developed rail network, totaling over 2,100 km, has undergone electrification for 99 per

cent of its lines. Although challenges remain in projects like K-Rail, the introduction of Vande Bharat Express trains has been a game-changer, improving travel experiences and overall lifestyle for Kerala residents. Exploring high-speed railway lines seems more promising, offering potential for future development.

Airport expansion

The State proudly boasts four

international airports, demonstrating Kerala's prowess in air connectivity. The Cochin International Airport, a celebrated success as the world's first green airport developed through PPP, is attracting an increasing number of chartered services. The recent private jet terminal launch in Kochi has further boosted businesses.

Maritime growth

Kerala's long coastline has played

a vital role in its economy for centuries. Now, the state is investing heavily in seaport development, transforming the maritime sector. The Vallarpadam Container Transhipment terminal and the upcoming Vizhinjam project are revolutionising cargo movements, enhancing foreign trade and attracting international tourists.

Waterways of tomorrow

Inland water transportation has been integral to Kerala's transportation history. The Water Metro project, with its fleet of 75 water buses operating on a network of 28 routes, is set to revolutionise passenger and goods movement through the State's waterways, promoting sustainable and efficient transport.

Impact of Kochi Metro

The Kochi Metro has been a game-changer for Kerala, boosting connectivity, reducing traffic congestion, elevating property values and generating employment. This successful model is inspiring other cities to embrace similar metro rail projects, leading to allied developments like flyovers and road redesigns, transforming city landscapes.

Kerala's remarkable infrastructure growth can be attributed to strong political will, efficient administration, public-private partnerships and Gulf investments. The State's resolute focus on infrastructure development, even during financial crises, has ensured timely and budget-conscious project completions. The confluence of these factors has propelled Kerala towards becoming a major economic hub, underscoring the State's dedication to progress and prosperity.

CUBES INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS

Cubes on the move to success

Cubes International Logistics tailors efficient solutions for a diverse clientele, leaving an indelible mark in the logistics landscape

The Cubes International Group, established in 2011 and led by the enterprising and visionary Shareef Muhammed, embarked on an ambitious journey into the logistics industry in 2017 with the inception of Cubes International Logistics.

In a remarkably short span of five years, the company quickly emerged as a dominant force in the logistics business, not only within India but also across borders, establishing a significant presence in Qatar and the UAE. As part of its strategic global expansion plans, Cubes International Logistics made strategic inroads into the highly competitive U.S. market, intending to leave an indelible mark on the North American logistics landscape. Through astute business acumen and a customer-centric approach, the company triumphed by offering bespoke, efficient and reliable logistics solutions tailored to meet the unique requirements of their diverse clientele, adeptly turning challenges into opportunities for growth and success.

The arrival of Covid-19 on the global stage presented an unprecedented and unforeseen challenge for Cubes International Logistics when it was just two years old. The pandemic wreaked havoc on the global economy, bringing international cargo flights to a standstill for an extended duration. However, under the adept leadership of Shareef Muhammed, the company swiftly

turned adversity into an opportunity and scripted an inspiring success story. To navigate the restrictions and ensure uninterrupted service to its customers, Cubes International Logistics strategically pivoted its focus to capitalise on the business of moving perishable goods from Kerala to the Gulf region via sea transport, making strategic investments in reefer or refrigerated containers. This tactical move not only ensured the safe transportation of essential commodities but also earned the trust and confidence of exporters and suppliers who relied on the company's seamless and efficient services during this challenging period.

Cubes International Logistics played a vital role in assisting exporters and suppliers in understanding the advantages of sea freight for transporting goods during this time, emphasising the reliability and safety of their services. In July 2020, the company successfully executed its first reefer container shipment, transporting fresh vegetables from traders in Kozhikode to Dubai. To uphold their commitment to delivering quality services, Cubes made a conscious decision to accept orders only within their operational capacity, ensuring every customer received the utmost attention and exceptional service.

The company's strategic focus on perishable items during the pandemic proved to be a fortuitous move that not only helped bolster its clientele but also

propelled its growth trajectory. Today, Cubes International Logistics boasts an illustrious roster of blue-chip companies among its esteemed clientele, a testament to the trust and confidence placed in the company's services. This trust is further validated by the impressive volume of shipments it handles every month, with over 500 TEUs serviced for the India-Middle East trade lane exports alone.

Cubes International Logistics stands tall with a robust presence in both air and ocean freight solutions, providing comprehensive and top-tier logistics services that rival those of industry giants. Leveraging state-of-the-art infrastructure and a team of dedicated professionals, Cubes has earned a reputation for handling shipments of any size with unmatched efficiency and precision, while ensuring competitive pricing for its esteemed customers.

The bouquet of services offered by Cubes International Logistics is comprehensive. From facilitating seamless e-commerce logistics to ensuring same-day delivery

under its express parcel delivery services, the company has left no stone unturned in providing a wide range of solutions tailored to meet the evolving needs of its valued customers. Under their contract logistics services, Cubes has been at the forefront of innovation, offering unique and customised solutions that encompass single and multi-user facilities, in-house logistics and value-added services, catering to a diverse array of industries and businesses.

Cubes International Logistics' expertise spans a multitude of industries, making it a reliable and preferred partner for businesses in FMCG, retail, high-tech, automotive, industrial, aerospace, defence and healthcare sectors. Their versatility and impeccable services have earned them accolades and recognition, with the company receiving the Freight Forwarder (Kochi Region) award at the 2023 South East CEO Conclave.

Cubes International Logistics LLP takes a keen interest in fulfilling its obligations to society by providing educational aid to less privileged students and medical aid to the elderly and those in need.

<https://cubeslogistics.com>

Shareef Muhammed, Chairman and Managing Director of Cubes International Group



BANKING

Kerala's banking sector thrives on an abundance of NRI remittances, robust financial inclusion and a burgeoning ecosystem for startups, reflecting the State's exceptional economic development and entrepreneurial spirit

» S ADIKESAVAN

At Kerala's only banking museum in the capital city of Kerala maintained by the country's largest lender, State Bank of India, there is an extract from an 1862 proclamation issued by Maharaja Ayilyam Tirunal Rama Varma of erstwhile Travancore permitting acceptance by his subjects of the "paper currency" issued by the then Government of India and put into circulation by the Bank of Madras branch in Kochi. It was only on May 1 that year that the first branch of the Bank of Madras had been opened in Kochi.

For serious students of economics and banking related to Kerala, this historical nugget becomes a milestone in the development of modern banking in the regions of Travancore, Kochi and Malabar, which constitute the linguistic State formed as part of

Time to bank on a breakout strategy



a post-Independence reorganisation in 1956.

For long, the popular Hundi system (promissory notes) was the means of financing mode in the land strip that is Kerala now but with a clear difference that there was no traditional "caste" (class plus caste) of the Vaishya or the Baniya in this part of India. This is a useful point of reference in understanding the economic development of modern Kerala as well as entrepreneurship studies about this tiny State.

If we fast forward to the present, Kerala can boast of a strong banking network of 6,788 branches of

commercial banks. Let us remember that the land area of the State is about 39,000 sq. km, and this means that there is a full-fledged bank branch for roughly every 5 sq km of landmass (including forests and uninhabited areas). This would indicate the density and the penetration of banking. Quite remarkable by any standards.

The total deposits outstanding stood at ₹ 7,19,000 crore, of which the NRI deposits alone contributed ₹ 2,41,000 crore, roughly 30 per cent, the highest for any State in the country and the subject matter of any discussion regarding finance and the State economy. This indicates that

30 per cent of the savings/deposits is the result of economic agents at work outside the country and offers no scope for funding by the banks. This material understanding is crucial to any discussions on bank funding for the State, issues like the C-D ratio which are mindlessly bandied about as an alibi for the State's laggardness in industrial development by a defensive 'establishment'. Clearly, they ought to be searching for reasons elsewhere — such as the Ease of Doing Business parameters, the rigidities on the labour front and the tendency to see even small entrepreneurs as 'capitalists'.

Be that as it may, the total loans from the banking system itself stood at ₹4,93,000 crore, a decent figure, yielding a Credit-Deposit ratio of 69 per cent, which is a fair barometer of the credit deployment by bank branches.

Thus, in any evaluation of the contemporary Indian banking system, Kerala would be a special vignette with its preponderance of NRI/migrant remittances, the overlay of micro, small and medium enterprises under its loan portfolio, a vibrant services sector, very little of high-ticket corporate business, low level of NPAs and a comparatively low level of frauds.

The average Keralite does his banking straight — like in their everyday life; they like to use simple, straightforward financial products like fixed deposits and savings accounts and if they borrow, mostly it will be for building houses, palatial mostly, or buying cars, higher-end or vehicles, or for consumption which may cover education and health, both of which are close to the 'Mallu Manas'.

Banks have also succeeded in financial inclusion. Pathanamthitta, comprising hill tracts and the famous shrine at Sabarimala, around which the Scheduled Tribes still live, was adjudged the first in the country on the basis of 'Crisil Inclusix', an index to monitor the spread of financial inclusion. The same goes for digitisation. Kerala was recently declared the first in the country to go digital in its banking service, putting the State on a par with countries like Singapore or other financial centres like Dubai or London regarding digital banking usage. It may surprise many that developed countries such as the U.S. have not been so successful in digital adoption as they still have a generation used to cheque-banking

whereas in developing India, the newly onboarded customers straightway graduated to mobile/ATM/card/internet/UPI usage without even knowing what a cheque would look like.

Another defining characteristic of Kerala's banking landscape like the NRI segment is the widespread cooperative banking network, perhaps the largest in any State with their deposits estimated at nearly ₹1 lakh crore, including those of the countless cooperative societies. The primary agricultural cooperatives often use the term 'bank' as part of their name, a problematic matter that remains unresolved and has governance issues as revealed by recent reports of collapses. These primary cooperative 'banks'/societies touch numerous lives at the grassroots, which is why such unresolved issues do not linger.

Looking ahead, what is the next best opportunity for bankers given the fact that the State is not going to afford opportunities for big-ticket lending, that it is a consumer State and even accepting that services may offer incremental lending choices? The big breakthrough can come from support for startups and new financial models for the active IT sector. The ecosystem is highly kinetic and banking solutions need to be novel. More of the same will not do.

Can the banks come out with innovative solutions to support the new class of entrepreneurs/techies? For instance, an exclusive Start-up Branch with comprehensive support. Anyone? Innovative strategies are required here. Bankers will find their efforts well and truly rewarded in Kerala.

(The author is an independent commentator on banking, finance and the economy)

M.O.D. JEWELLERY

In the heart of Pala, Kerala, Mattathil Jewellery has woven a mesmerising legacy that spans five generations, blending the allure of gold with refined artistry. Founded by a visionary spice trader, their story is a symphony of craftsmanship and dreams.

The arrival of Ashaa Sebastian Mattathil into this esteemed jeweller family with a profound passion for the art of jewellery design marks a major milestone in this journey to make Mattathil the renowned M.O.D. Jewellery of today. The pivotal moment of Ashaa's engagement to Sebastian Joseph Mattathil and her collaboration with a skilled artisan to craft her own exquisite jewellery, left guests awestruck by her artistic prowess. There began Ashaa's dream-cum-true journey of rolling out vivid gold jewellery designs that have caught the imagination of both young and old alike.

Her approach to jewellery design is a fusion of instinctive ideation and effective communication. "By introducing a diverse range of designs, I could breathe new life into traditional meenakari, kundana and polki jewellery, catering specifically to the discerning tastes of Keralite buyers," she says.

She sought to introduce the allure of precious stones, striking a harmonious balance that resulted in exquisitely designed pieces. Her creations showcased not only impeccable craftsmanship but also remained affordable. For Ashaa and her son Akshay, who focusses on brand positioning, the essence of designer jewellery lies in its wearability, ensuring that it enhances the wearers' beauty without overpowering their overall appearance.

Exploring avenues

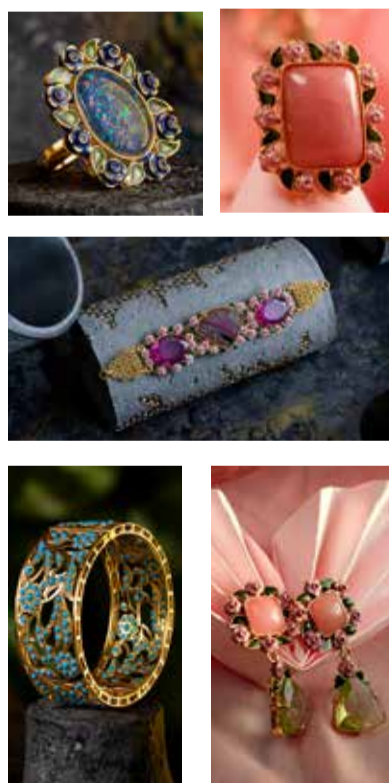
Ever the visionary, she identified an untapped market in children's jewellery, moving away from the

M.O.D. Jewellery: Redefining the art of jewellery design



Ashaa Sebastian Mattathil, founder and creative head, M.O.D. Signature Jewellery, and her son Akshay Sebastian Mattathil, co-founder.

traditional focus on gold. Drawing inspiration from everyday objects such as fruits and toys, she meticulously transformed these motifs into jewellery, enabling her young clientele to revel in the joy of wearing pieces that mirrored their favorite childhood elements. She infused her designs with a sense of longevity, allowing for minor alterations as the child grew older, ensuring that their cherished



memories would never become outdated. Guided by architectural influences and ancient temple jewellery, she skillfully modernised ornaments, incorporating pastel shades and darker tones to create a truly captivating collection.

Building the M.O.D. Signature Jewellery brand was an organic journey that prioritised customer satisfaction and empowerment. Relocating from Pala to Kochi, the brand embraced a bottom-up approach, engaging primarily with brides who proudly adorned

With M.O.D. Jewellery, refined artistry meets the allure of gold

M.O.D. Signature Jewellery on their special day. These radiant brides shared their images on social media, transforming the brand into a specialist in bridal jewellery.

"By eschewing sales pressure and providing a serene shopping experience, M.O.D. Signature Jewellery empowers customers to make decisions at their own pace, ensuring that each visit is a delightful personal experience," says Akshay. The brand's Kochi flagship store, situated on the ground floor, complemented by a clothing brand on the first floor led by Ashaa's daughter Tiya and her label T&M Signature, facilitate seamless cross-selling opportunities for customers seeking matching attire to accompany their jewellery.

Preserving craftsmanship

In an era dominated by chain stores, M.O.D. Jewellery stands out by fiercely safeguarding its forte: design. Firm in its



commitment to preserving artistry and craftsmanship, M.O.D. Jewellery has adopted a gradual and organic approach to ensure that the integrity of its creations remains paramount.

M.O.D. Jewellery's range encapsulates classic styling, elegance, and a harmonious fusion of traditional and contemporary elements.

Ashaa takes great pride in the instant recognition of her work, a testament to the power of word-of-mouth promotion that has solidified

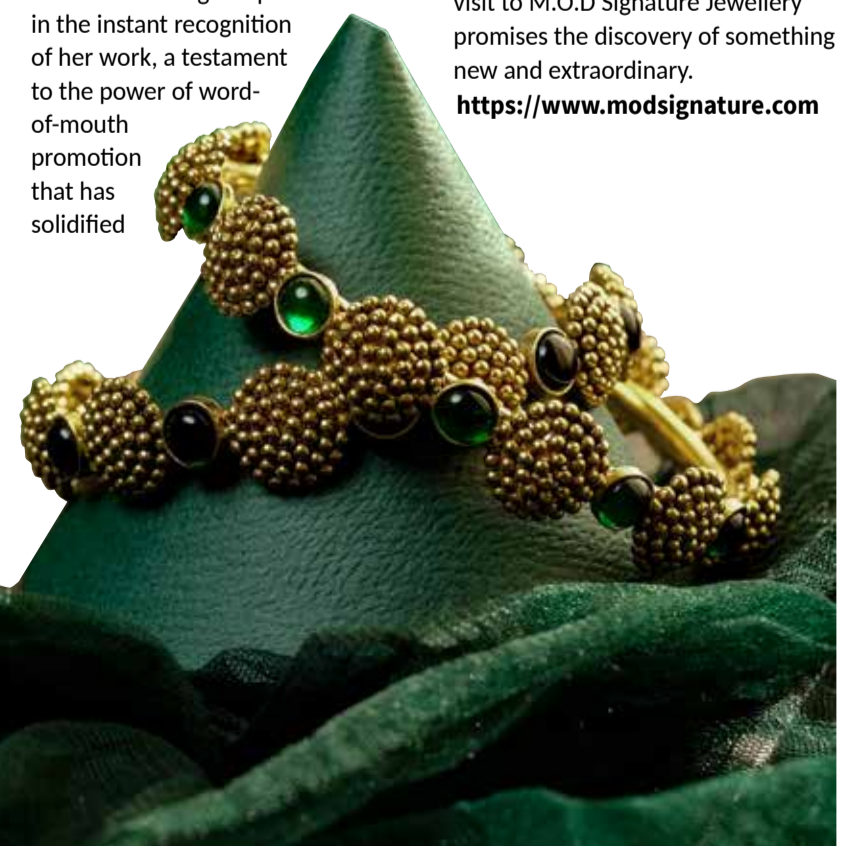
M.O.D. Jewellery's reputation. Visitors have discovered M.O.D. Jewellery through recommendations from satisfied customers and through social media.

M.O.D. Signature Jewellery's commitment to creating timeless designs has earned the brand global acclaim. The brand was honoured at the Global Luxury Awards in Dubai, where the Indian Ambassador recognised M.O.D. Jewellery as one of the finest luxury brands in the jewellery sector. This esteemed accolade serves as a testament to the brand's unwavering dedication to crafting exquisite pieces that transcend time and trends.

Exclusivity meets convenience

M.O.D. Signature Jewellery manifests on social media by curating rare and unseen designs that are sure to captivate discerning customers. With precious and semi-precious stones, each piece embodies a fusion of artistry, durability and exquisite finish. Every visit to M.O.D. Signature Jewellery promises the discovery of something new and extraordinary.

<https://www.modsignature.com>



REAL ESTATE

Rising foundations, soaring prospects

A resilient surge post-pandemic unveils impressive growth in Kerala's real estate sector

» SN RAGHUCHANDRAN NAIR

The Real Estate Sector in Kerala has shown remarkable resilience and growth after the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The establishment of RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Authority) has also streamlined the sector.

In 2022, an impressive total construction area of 16,36,577 sq. m (equivalent to 1,76,15,751 sq. ft) has been actively developed across the State. These developments encompass a diverse range of 12,018 units, each with an average size of 1,466 square feet, spread across 148 Residential Real Estate Projects. Among these projects, there are 50 Villa Projects and 19 Commercial-cum-Residential Projects, contributing to the flourishing real estate landscape in Kerala. In the realm of construction and real estate in Kerala, the numbers paint a vibrant and thriving picture. The construction turnover stands tall at an impressive ₹5.28 lakh crores, with a noteworthy annual turnover of ₹1.76 lakh crores.

Meanwhile, the sales turnover over three years has reached a remarkable ₹9.69 lakh crores, translating to an annual figure of ₹3.23 lakh crores. The Central and State governments reap the benefits of this robust industry through various avenues such as



Permit Fees for Building License, Fee for Fire Clearance, Inspectorate, Pollution Control Board, Kerala State Electricity Board, GST, Cess, Stamp Duty Registration and Income Tax, accumulating a substantial 38 per cent of this turnover, which amounts to staggering ₹1,22,740 crores annually.

Beyond the numbers, the real estate and construction sectors emerge as the biggest employers in Kerala, second only to tourism. An impressive annual employment value of ₹52,800 crores is generated,

equivalent to 30 per cent of the construction value of ₹1.76 lakh crores. This provides a staggering 52.8 crore man-days of labour, engaging a workforce of 17.80 lakh skilled and unskilled laborers daily.

The construction sector's pivotal role in achieving ambitious economic targets is undeniable, as it is expected to contribute 20 per cent, amounting to a substantial 1 trillion dollars, towards the 5 trillion dollar economy target by 2026-27, as indicated by the Union Minister of Commerce

and Industry Piyush Goyal. The future holds immense promise for this sector, poised to continue as a formidable driving force of growth and prosperity in Kerala.

The challenges ahead

Amidst the vast landscape of Kerala's real estate market, a significant challenge arises from the large-scale migration of youth, impacting the sector to a considerable extent. The key lies in fostering overall economic growth in the

State, attracting more investments to stimulate growth in this domain. As the senior citizen population grows, a shift towards assisted living as an asset class becomes apparent.

Considering the limitations of land availability and infrastructure, Kerala's real estate sector is expected to witness a vertical growth of around 10 per cent in the upcoming years, distinguishing itself from other states. As a consumer-centric State, the promotion of warehousing emerges as another promising vertical that can

flourish in a grand manner.

To tackle these challenges and propel the sector forward, several measures come to the forefront. Overcoming the aftermath of the pandemic remains a priority, ensuring that its lingering effects are mitigated. Curtailing the migration of youth requires thoughtful strategies to provide opportunities and retain talent within the State.

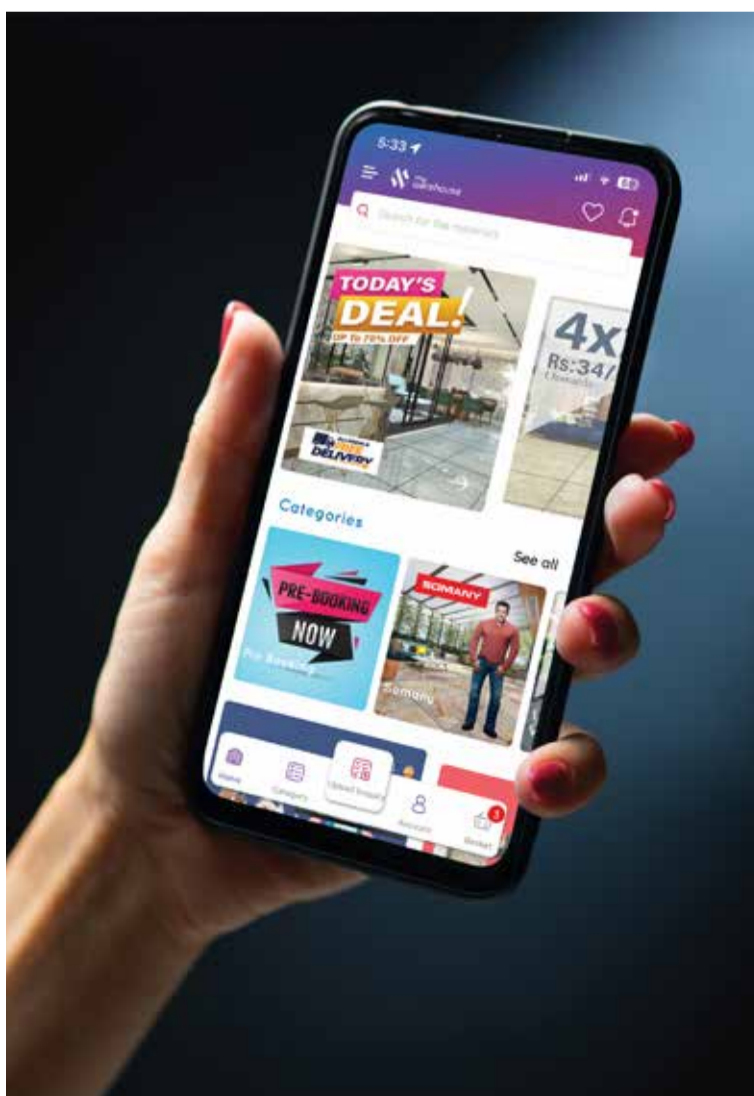
Addressing housing loan interest rates will be instrumental in encouraging more people to invest in properties. Controlling inflation becomes pivotal to stabilising construction costs and maintaining affordability. Amplifying IT benefits for housing loans can act as a significant incentive for potential buyers. Rationalising Building Rules and Master Plans, in consultation with stakeholders, helps in reducing ambiguities and streamlining processes. Making government policies more industry-friendly and vigorously promoting Ease of Doing Business create an environment conducive to growth and investment in the real estate sector.

By thoughtfully addressing these challenges and implementing progressive measures, Kerala's real estate market can chart a prosperous course, promoting sustainable growth and paving the way for a brighter future.

(The author is a Member of the National Executive of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India and Convener General of its Kerala branch)

MYWAREHOUSE

'Mywarehouse' App: Game-changer in building materials shopping



The pioneering digital showroom application is transforming the way consumers purchase building supplies

When it comes to shopping for tiles, sanitaryware and other building materials, a common challenge persists – lack of clarity on how these items will look once installed.

Traditional brick-and-mortar stores often fall short of providing customers with an accurate visualisation of the final outcome, leading to uncertainty and hesitation in the decision-making process. The conventional display of products in limited settings or small samples makes it difficult for customers to imagine how the colours, patterns, and textures of the materials will complement their existing decor or match their envisioned design theme. This uncertainty often results in customers settling for less-than-ideal choices or delaying their purchase decisions altogether, fearing they might waste time and money on products that do not meet their needs. Addressing this crucial pain point in the building



material shopping experience is 'Mywarehouse', a pioneering digital showroom application in India. The app is set to revolutionise the way consumers buy building materials and fittings by providing an innovative solution to visualise how these products will appear in their specific spaces.

With the help of advanced 3D imaging technology, 'Mywarehouse' enables customers to preview different tiles for their living room, dining area, kitchen or bathroom surfaces before making a purchase.

Price benefits for customers

The user-friendly interface of 'Mywarehouse' App empowers customers to explore a wide range of building materials, complete with essential details such as product prices, all without the need for assistance from a salesman. The app offers the convenience of making purchases from anywhere in the world, with the added benefit of free door delivery, initially available in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

A standout feature that sets 'Mywarehouse' App apart is its commitment to transparency and cost-effectiveness. By eliminating middlemen and hidden charges that inflate commodity prices, the app connects customers directly with manufacturers, ensuring competitive pricing and access to the latest, in-demand product batches.

The driving force behind the success of 'Mywarehouse' App is a team of seasoned professionals with over 25 years of experience in the building material industry. Their expertise and dedication have resulted in an impressive number of over 50,000 downloads of the app, with a growing base of satisfied customers.

To enhance customer experiences further, 'Mywarehouse' App is on a mission to establish experience centres in each district headquarters of the States it operates in. These centres will offer an unparalleled shopping journey, providing customers with a level of convenience and satisfaction they have never experienced before.

User-friendly interface

Despite catering to a diverse clientele, the primary focus of 'Mywarehouse' App remains on serving the middle-class demographic, which constitutes a significant portion of customers in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. "The team firmly believes that high-quality, hassle-free shopping should be accessible to all, irrespective of budget constraints," says Niyas Ahmed, Founder, MyWarehouse.

With unlimited digital mock-ups, an extensive range of building materials to choose from, transparent pricing, free delivery, premium quality products and a seamless shopping experience, 'Mywarehouse' App is poised to revolutionise the landscape of building materials shopping in India.

For those seeking to be a part of this exciting journey and contribute to redefining how building materials are bought and sold in the country, 'Mywarehouse' welcomes inquiries and collaborations at enquiry@mywarehouseonline.com. The app may be downloaded from Google Play Store and App Store.

<https://www.mywarehouseonline.com>

Asset Homes weaves every home into a valuable investment, blending unwavering excellence, customer-centric innovation and a passion for crafting extraordinary living experiences



Asset Homes: India's first 'Lifecycle Builder'

Asset Homes lives up to its name. It understands that for every buyer, a home is a valuable asset.

"When we build a home, we understand that we are creating a truly special place for its owners. It will be the setting where they'll experience the best moments of their lives. Hence, we leave no stone unturned to ensure that the place is truly exceptional. Our top priority is to add value and fulfil the investment and dreams of our buyers," says V Sunil Kumar, the Founder and Managing Director of Asset Homes.

Asset Homes has handed over 76 projects to its customers from 2007 to 2023. In Kerala, the company has ongoing projects in Kannur, Kozhikode, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram.

"Each and every one of our projects has been delivered on time. As I go to bed each day, I take great comfort in knowing that over 25,000 people are sleeping comfortably and happily in the homes built by us. The goodwill they've placed in Asset Homes and the trust we've earned through our dedicated services help me sleep soundly at night," Sunil Kumar adds.

Like an artist carefully selecting the perfect canvas, Asset Homes embarks on a project by meticulously choosing the location, guided by a myriad of parameters. With an unwavering commitment to excellence, the Asset Team thinks from the customer's perspective, treating each project as if it were their own cherished home. This customer-centric attitude resonates throughout the entire journey, from inception to the eagerly-anticipated handing over of keys. This value system propels Asset Homes forward, consistently surpassing customer expectations by delivering more than what is ever imagined. Going above and beyond, the organisation provides an array of facilities that exceed statutory requirements, a testament to its dedication to creating extraordinary living experiences.

"For example, Asset Homes is the only builder in India to provide an insurance cover for 25 years from the day of key handing over. We provide a peaceful home where you can build sweet memories with your loved ones without any fear of unexpected disasters. All our apartments come with a comprehensive insurance for 25 years covering natural calamities from earthquakes to unforeseen events such as terrorist attacks. We take great pride in this," says Sunil Kumar.

Asset Homes proudly holds the distinction of being the trailblazer in introducing service apartments in the Ernakulam region, further solidifying its position as the industry leader in redefining the way people live and experience their homes.

Homes for all stages of life

The organisation has reimagined the concept of the life cycle, offering four distinct categories of housing to cater to diverse needs.

The first category, known as 'Selfie Apartments', presents a 96 sq. ft flat designed for absolute convenience, ideal for single residents seeking a versatile space that can transform from an office during the day to a cosy bedroom at night. This



Prithviraj and Asha Sharath, brand ambassadors for Asset Homes



Through dedication and innovation, we have earned our position as the industry's foremost brand and we look forward to continuing this legacy of excellence in all our future endeavours."

**V Sunil Kumar,
Founder and Managing Director,
Asset Homes**



Asset Homes has always been in the forefront of bringing innovative offerings to the market. This has been our fuel to cross the milestone of the 104th project launch in Kerala. The housing industry in India will witness faster growth as new segments such as singular living and senior living are clearly emerging."

Tony John, CEO, Asset Homes



We are geared to optimise and streamline the project planning, execution and completion period by joining hands with organisations that have the capability to bring in the latest construction techniques and cutting-edge strategies. The infusion of IT tools and AI in planning, construction and monitoring is helping us to be on time with greater precision."

Mahesh L, Chief Technical Officer, Asset Homes



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

I booked a flat with Asset Homes after making enquiries about various builders. The company honoured its promise and delivered the apartment on time. Asset Luminaire, where I bought the apartment, is close to SA Road and other important locations."



**Dr Jose Tharayil, Plastic Surgeon,
Lakeshore Hospital, Kochi**

What is very striking about the Asset Homes project is its location. My apartment at Asset Versatile in Palarivattom is close to hospitals, shopping complexes and the stadium. Asset Homes understands customers' needs and delivers what they aspire for."



**Dr Shakila T Shamsu, Officer on Special
Duty, Dept of Higher Education, Ministry
of Education, and Former Secretary to the
Committee to Draft National Education Policy**

I have an apartment at Asset Luminaire, Kadavanthra, Kochi. From the time of booking to delivery and the after-sales services, the Asset Team is doing an exceptional job. I'm truly impressed by their dedication and if they come up with a project that suits me, I'm more than happy to invest again in Asset."



**P C Nambiar, Director-Group EXIM,
Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi**

micro flat is equipped with essential facilities such as an attached bathroom, a kitchenette and a storage system.

'Down to Earth' residences cater to young couples and aspiring professionals, offering a budget-friendly option that does not compromise on convenience, security and lifestyle facilities. These homes are thoughtfully designed for comfortable living without unnecessary extravagance.

For those yearning for opulence and luxury, the 'Exotica' range of homes fulfils their desire to experience the pinnacle of luxury living. Tailored to cater to achievers and those at the peak of their success, these homes offer the finest in high-end living, celebrating their accomplishments in both career and life.

Recognising the importance of catering to people at all stages of life, Asset Homes has also introduced 'Senior Living', a haven for those who have retired from their jobs but not from life itself. Here, seniors embark on the fulfilling second innings of their lives, cherishing a space designed with their unique needs and comforts in mind. "As an organisation

committed to fulfilling dreams and evolving with its customers, Asset Homes has curated a diverse array of living options, ensuring everyone finds a perfect place to call home, regardless of their life stage," says Sunil Kumar.

World-class quality control

Asset Homes takes quality control seriously. It has engaged the services of Bureau Veritas, a world leader in audit and certification services, to be more efficient, more methodical and more trustworthy in its journey towards a more sustainable business and a more sustainable world.

"The audit and certification help us meet the challenges of product and service quality, cost, safety and timeline. The eagle-eyed auditor watches every step — from the selection of resources to execution," states Sunil Kumar.

The efforts have yielded results. Asset Homes proudly stands tall as a recipient of numerous prestigious awards and recognition, both at the national and international levels. CRISIL, renowned for its discerning evaluations, bestowed upon Asset

Homes the highest rating of DA2+, a prestigious achievement maintained steadfastly for consecutive years.

Further adorning the organisation's illustrious track record is the Chairman's Commendation Award from CIDC (established by Niti Aayog and the construction industry), lauding Asset Homes as the best professionally managed company in the ₹100-500 crore category. Recognised for its unwavering commitment to safety, Asset Homes has been granted the coveted National Safety Council's 'Most Safe Construction Site' certificate, alongside the esteemed 'Most Safe Apartment Award'.

Delight 17 Services

Asset Homes has a long-term relationship with its customers. Its Delight after-sales service centres take everyday hassles away from the lives of customers. The services include

Transit

Home Facility (privileged customers who visit Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Thrissur, Kannur and Guruvayur can stay at fully furnished, well-maintained guest houses at absolutely no cost), Medicare (medical check-ups, delivery of medicines), D-Loc (laundry services), pre-monsoon building check-ups, prompt maintenance services, Delight Drive (transport services), Delight De Assist (assistance for monthly bill payments), Delight Decor (interior decoration services), Delight Shine (vehicle wash services) and Daily Delight (supply of provisions and essentials through reliable agencies).

Synergy in action

At Asset Homes, the heartbeat of success is its result-oriented team members, driven by a senior team that guides the top management towards a promising future. "We attribute all our achievements to them," says Sunil Kumar.

Embracing a unique tradition, the organisation conducts monthly senior management meetings on the second and third days of each month, where select customers are invited to voice their opinions openly. "These valuable insights have fuelled innovations such as the revolutionary 'Selfie apartment' concept," adds Sunil Kumar.

With a strong belief in societal responsibility, Asset Homes has launched an array of impactful corporate social responsibility initiatives. Amongst them, 'Mathruvandanam', a heartfelt tribute to the mothers of Asset Homes team, stands out. The organisation takes pride in building homes for the less privileged, fulfilling their dreams in a time-bound manner.

Envisioning a business world that embodies social justice and environmental consciousness, Asset Homes initiated the Beyond Square Feet (BSF) tri-annual lecture series on sustainable development, commemorating World Environment Day, World Water Day and World Habitat Day.

Pioneering industry best practices, Asset Homes broke new ground by introducing the concept of a brand ambassador in the housing sector, enlisting the renowned actor Prithviraj for this role. This bold move set the trend. Over the past decade, Asset Homes' enduring professional relationship with Prithviraj has flourished, and later, the organisation also welcomed the talented actor-dancer Asha Sharath as its brand ambassador.

Expanding business

As Asset Homes charted its path towards future projects, a fortuitous alliance was forged with Taurus Holdings, an American real estate private equity firm based in Boston. In a strategic partnership, Taurus and Asset Homes joined hands to propel projects to fruition, with Taurus extending all strategic support including funding during the implementation phase.

Asset Homes has set its sights on expanding its presence in other domestic markets, targeting states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Odisha for robust growth. Simultaneously, it has set its sights on the Dubai market, where people across the world seek to build their dreams.

The organisation is renowned for delivering 'the Asset Value' to its esteemed customers. "Through dedication and innovation, we have earned our position as the industry's foremost brand in customer delight and we look forward to continuing this legacy of excellence in all our future endeavours," adds Sunil Kumar.

<https://www.assethomes.in>

Kerala's silent industrial revolution

A hushed but powerful industrial revolution has taken root, unveiling a plethora of innovative Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sprouting in every hidden corner and cranny of Kerala.

Venturing forth, the ambitious endeavour initially set its sights on the registration of one lakh novel MSMEs during the fiscal year 2022-23 (a remarkable surge from the yearly average of 10,000 registrations), an audacious objective that was astonishingly accomplished three months ahead of schedule.

Fuelling the momentum even further, an updated target of 1.5 lakh enterprises has been set for the final three months of the financial year. The genesis of the campaign was rooted in the acknowledgment that the immense potential of the MSME sector had been vastly untapped, and the outcome exemplified the entrepreneurial spirit of the people, responding with an exuberance that harkened back to the annals of history. Numerous government agencies collaborated harmoniously, culminating in over 10 times the customary yearly tally of registrations.

"The intrinsic nature of MSMEs makes them an ideal catalyst for industrial growth in a State like Kerala, as they possess the virtue of being less pollutive and do not necessitate vast tracts of land for operation," said Industries Minister P Rajeeve. This

MSMEs flourish, exceeding registration targets, paving the way for greener growth, gender diversity and new opportunities

has significant implications for a land-scarce region endowed with a delicate ecological balance. The Minister further underscored the sector's relatively high employment-to-capital ratio, championing its positive impact on the economy unlike any other.



Kerala Industries Minister
P Rajeeve

Witnessing this grand success, the Industries Department stood proud, for they had envisioned and achieved it all.

Tracing the origin of the conception and launch of the campaign, Rajeeve cited a GST-based analysis conducted

internally by the Industries Department, divulging intriguing findings. An astounding ₹1.09 lakh crore worth of commodities are annually imported from outside the State and sold within its borders. A striking example of this is the ubiquitous packaged drinking water, with a staggering annual procurement cost of ₹260 crore. The Minister



contended that the State could potentially produce at least a fraction of this demand, thereby promoting thousands of new job opportunities.

Single-window system

Nonetheless, it would be naive to assume that all has been smooth sailing for MSME entrepreneurs. Rajeeve acknowledged the recurrent grievances about bureaucratic bottlenecks and red tape, often encountered when seeking statutory clearances for their ventures. The authorities responded promptly, easing norms and introducing a policy exempting new ventures from licenses for the initial three years. These permits would only be required after three years of operation, granting an additional six-month grace period for compliance. A unified single-window

system was instituted to streamline the process further.

The government's responsibility did not conclude with these legal and administrative reforms. Collaboration with the State-Level Bankers' Committee yielded a loan scheme for MSMEs, offering entrepreneurs a loan initiation rate of four per cent, with the Industries Department subsidising the remaining interest component. Thousands of young aspirants availed themselves of this scheme to breathe life into their cherished dreams.

A pivotal factor on the ground, catalysing the success of the campaign has been the recruitment of a fresh cohort of facilitators, comprising MBA and B.Tech. interns, whose presence at the grassroots proved instrumental in driving the entrepreneurial message and identifying budding

talents. A total of 1,151 interns were appointed by local bodies, wholeheartedly dedicating three to four days a week to engage with entrepreneurs, providing valuable assistance throughout formalities. Their dedication was acknowledged. They have been encouraged to explore the extension of the campaign into FY 2023-24, motivated by the prospect of participating in executive training programmes at the Kerala Digital University.

MSME clinics

The collective investment from these ventures is projected to exceed an impressive ₹5,600 crore. Among these, 30 per cent are operating in the trade sector, and 18 per cent are engaged in food processing. At least a quarter of these entrepreneurs are

women, with a few representing the transgender community.

While helping these visionaries launch their dream projects stands as the first crucial stride, the Ministry remains cognizant of a sobering national survey that unveiled an estimated 30 per cent of all MSMEs tend to cease operations within their inaugural year. To combat such a potential predicament in Kerala, the government has established MSME clinics across all districts, offering expert services in management, marketing, technicalities, and finance, all of which are made available to entrepreneurs seeking collective solutions free of cost. Furthermore, the establishment of common facility centres, accessible to related enterprises through rental arrangements, aims to reduce substantial capital investments in certain industries.

For fledgling entrepreneurs, locating the right market often proves to be a formidable challenge. Acknowledging this, the Ministry has orchestrated taluk-level trade fairs, convening MSME entrepreneurs from various regions and providing a platform for the introduction of their products to local markets. A comprehensive e-commerce platform is in the works, aiming to unite these diverse ventures under one digital umbrella. A long-term ambition takes shape — forging a series of products proudly bearing the 'Made in Kerala' label. Essential tests, including food safety certifications, will be administered in specialised laboratories under the Industries Department's purview.

UNIMONI FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD

Unimoni Financial Services Ltd revolutionises money transfers, providing faster, cheaper and more accessible options, while also expanding into gold loans and exploring Non-Banking Financial Company activities

unimoni

Gone are the days when sending money abroad was an arduous and expensive task, exemplified by never-ending chains of middlemen, manual paperwork and hidden charges. Developments in the money transfer industry mean that people and even small-to-mid-sized businesses can now enjoy faster, cheaper and value-added foreign money transfer services, a privilege that was not available for the common man Unimoni Financial Services Ltd (UFSL), a pioneer in the money transfer business in India, holds an appeal as an affordable and simple way to move money to and from India. Established in 1999, at a time when the massive remittance economy was not even considered a primary market and foreign exchange business was almost unheard of, it attempted to solve the challenges and changed the way Indians moved their hard-earned money between countries.

Starting out as an Inward Money Transfer Service under the Money Transfer Services Scheme of the Reserve Bank of India in 1999, the company diversified into the travel and ticketing business a couple of years later and further ventured into Foreign Exchange business, Retail Loans, Mobile Wallet and insurance business. Unimoni has expanded its portfolio of offerings within money transfer and proven its expertise in remittance inside India and remittance



Krishnan R,
Director and CEO, Unimoni India

Money talks, Unimoni triumphs in transfers

abroad after getting licensed by the RBI under Category II Authorised Dealer of Foreign Exchange and Payment System Operator under Prepaid Instruments. According to Krishnan R, Director and CEO of Unimoni India, UFSL is well aware of the fact that price is not the only factor that customers consider when moving money. Hence, it aims to provide not only a price-

competitive service but also a secure and convenient one for the customers as a digital proposition. It currently has a network of 300 plus branches and 5,000 plus agents serving customers across rural and urban India. One of the top five foreign currency exchange and overseas remittance service providers in India, it also commands a strong presence in South and East India in the gold

loan business. An approved Passenger Sales Agent by IATA and recognised by the Union Ministry of Tourism, the company also offers affordable Travel and Holiday services through its branch network, nine IATA locations, along with its online presence at www.unimonitravel.com. "The enterprise has based its business

strategy on the 'Phygital business model' to connect with customers both online and offline. We reckon that lending business will be the future while the business of overseas remittance will witness a corresponding growth on the back of an increasingly mobile global workforce," he explained.

The value potential of the company is going to be fully unleashed. The company has been recently acquired by Wizzpay India Holdings Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of WizzPay Tech Holdings AG (a Switzerland entity), which in turn is majorly owned by Prism Group AG.

Having built a niche for itself by capitalising on low and transparent money transfer costs, UFSL has branded itself well among its clientele base, especially under the categories of overseas students and Indians migrating abroad.

The growth of UFSL over the years has helped the firm to build a platform of customers who have validated the service and allowed it to iterate as an efficient technological proposition. With its business operating at scale, Unimoni is leveraging its customer base to explore additional revenue opportunities through ambitious plans for expansion, particularly in Non-Banking Financial Company activities and significantly increasing the number of branches. Its strong foothold in Rural India and enduring customer relationships position Unimoni as a trusted gold loan company, particularly in rural and suburban regions.

"Ours is a financial supermarket with extensive coverage in rural areas where people are deprived of financial services. We play an active role in financial and digital inclusion of India, and support the government initiatives of Digital India," the company says.

www.unimoni.in



» SATYAJEET RAJAN, IAS (RTD)

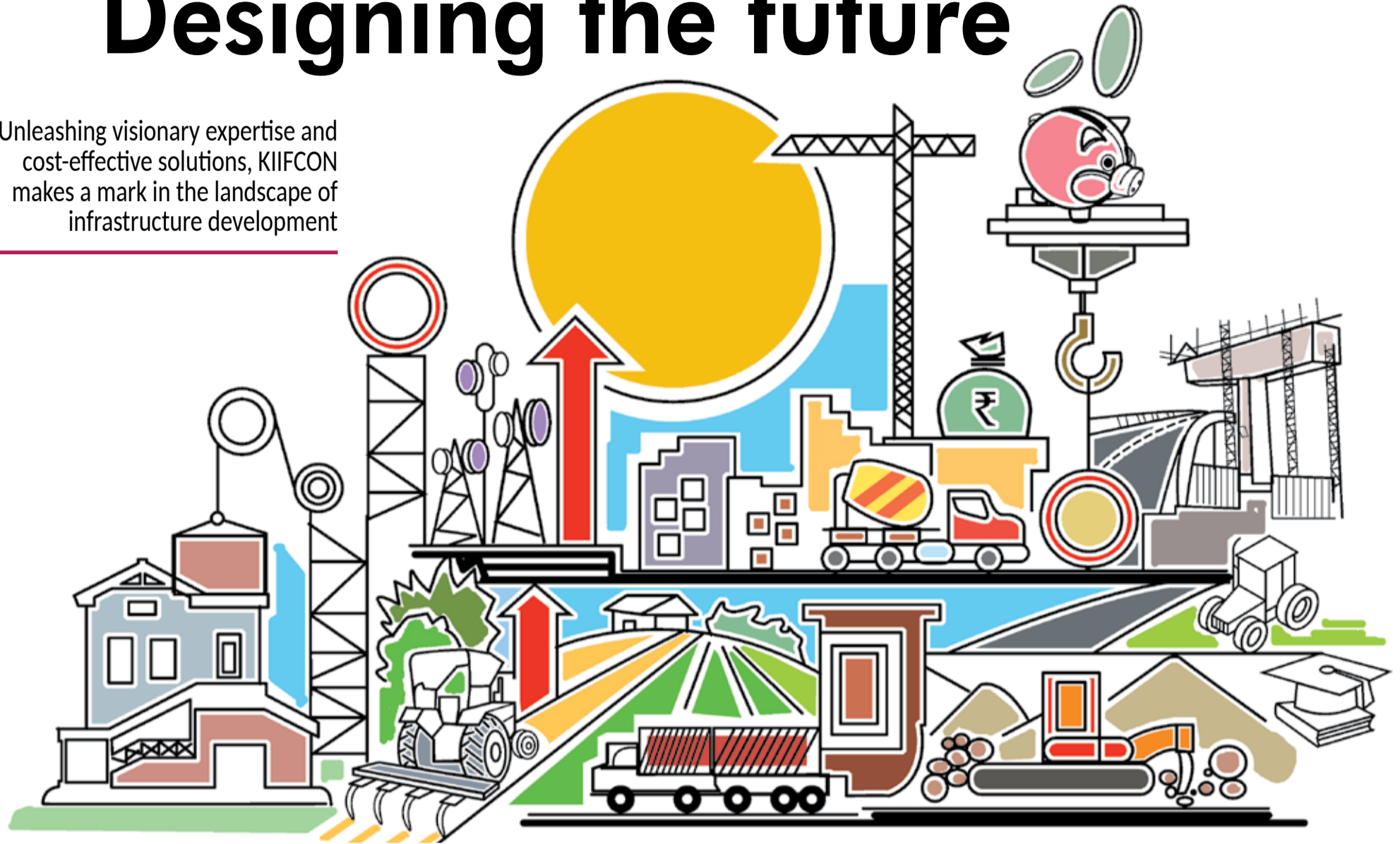
KIIFCON is a private limited company, a 100 per cent subsidiary of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Board (KIIFB) under the Finance (Infrastructure) Department of the Kerala government.

Anchored by KIIFB, a driving force in Kerala's development landscape, KIIFCON emerges as a catalyst in meeting the region's escalating infrastructure demands. With its roots tracing back to the 1999 Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund (KIIF) Act, KIIFB has assumed a pivotal role as the primary funding arm of the Government of Kerala, mobilising funds for critical infrastructure projects State-wide.

In a triumphant collaboration, the visionary leadership of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, State Finance Minister KN Balagopal and Dr KM Abraham, the esteemed Chairman of KIIFCON, has orchestrated a groundbreaking transformation in the realm of infrastructure development within the State. Their astute guidance has been the catalyst that propelled KIIFCON to new heights, redefining the very landscape of progress in Kerala. From inception to completion, KIIFB skillfully manages the entire lifecycle of infrastructure ventures, earning accolades for its precision monitoring and performance benchmarking. It has further solidified its standing by extending its trusted consultancy services for infrastructure development to various government departments and organisations at both State and central levels.

Central to KIIFCON's prowess lies its profound synergy with KIIFB, which empowers the consultancy with a pool of distinguished technical experts boasting both national and international experience with major corporate and multinational giants. This skilled

Unleashing visionary expertise and cost-effective solutions, KIIFCON makes a mark in the landscape of infrastructure development



technical workforce forms the bedrock of KIIFCON's operations, with expertise spanning diverse stages of projects, from feasibility studies to design, planning, execution, contract management, and quality assurance across sectors like transportation, buildings, energy, aviation, sports, offshore structures, tourism, water supply and sewerage. Leveraging state-of-the-art technology, such as LiDAR, Building Information Modelling, GIS and Digital Twin development, KIIFCON's team delivers innovative infrastructure solutions with a focus on sustainability.

In its debut year, KIIFCON

made an indelible mark, ensuring reduced Project Management Consultancy (PMC) fees for Cochin Smart Mission Limited and Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Ltd. Through seamless handholding services during the changeover phase of one PMC to another for the Smart City Thiruvananthapuram project, KIIFCON showcased its efficiency and resourcefulness. Notably, KIIFCON's role as PMC for Cochin Smart Mission Limited (CSML) has yielded remarkable progress and achievements, bolstered by its technical expertise and timely decision-making. The KIIFCON-led PMC Cochin Smart

City Mission Project, secured through competitive bidding at a fee of ₹13.68 crore (merely 50 per cent of the previous PMC's fee), has facilitated significant advancements in projects such as the Ernakulam market (₹73 crore), a multi-storied housing complex for the slum-dwellers in Fort Kochi (₹44 crore), smart roads and parks, and addressing waterlogging issues through innovative equipment procurement. KIIFCON's commitment to cost-effectiveness, enabled by KIIFB's strategic engagement of critical manpower, has driven successful ventures and yielded a net profit of ₹2 crores

despite competitive pricing. Looking ahead, KIIFCON remains steadfast in embracing challenging projects, including the Industrial Rubber Park at Velloor, Kottayam, and the Urban Sustainable Land Reconstitution Project in Kochi, heralding its aspirations for future growth.

Moreover, KIIFCON embarks on Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects, streamlining the operational efficiency of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) through Network Planning and Route Rationalisation. Transaction Advisory projects for KSRTC seek to optimise the commercial use of underutilised

land parcels while enhancing public usage and cash flow.

Driven by KIIFB's dedicated team of experts entrenched in high-end infrastructure work, KIIFCON epitomises cost-effective excellence, shaping the infrastructure landscape of Kerala with unrivalled passion and commitment. As KIIFCON continues to scale new heights, its unwavering resolve and visionary approach herald a promising future for Kerala's infrastructure development.

(The author is the Additional CEO, KIIFB, and CEO, KIIFCON)



Cochin Smart Mission Ltd

Kochi's transformation under the Smart Cities Mission

Behold the metamorphosis of Kochi, in the first smart city project in Kerala, as it undergoes a breathtaking and rapid transformation. At the helm of this revolutionary endeavour stands the Special Purpose Vehicle, Cochin Smart Mission Limited (CSML), an entity solely devoted to bringing to life the visionary strategies that will shape the city's intelligent future. With CSML's unwavering commitment, Kochi sets a brilliant example for other cities to follow, embracing the possibilities of the digital era and steering towards an even smarter tomorrow.

The focus of the mission is on rejuvenating the urban landscape through Area-Based Development. The key initiatives encompass the development of smart roads, multi-storeyed housing complexes, educational and healthcare facilities, as well as intelligent city surveillance and smart parking systems.

The major work includes the development of smart roads including Amaravathy and Calvathy Roads, KB Jacob Road and other roads; the construction of a multi-storeyed housing complex at Thuruthy, Fort Kochi; construction of the Fort Kochi Taluk Hospital, Mattanchery, Women and Child Hospital and Calvathy Higher Secondary School; redevelopment of the Ernakulam Market; development of Electrical Infrastructure; implementation of Smart LED lighting; Intelligent City Surveillance System and Smart Parking.

With a commitment to progress and improved urban living, Kochi sets the stage for a future that blends efficiency, sustainability and enhanced well-being.

Industrial Rubber Park



Revolutionising natural rubber-based businesses

Embracing the vision of promoting and optimising the advantages of natural rubber production, Kerala Rubber Ltd stands as a commendable Government of Kerala initiative. At the forefront of this transformative project lies a mission to revolutionise natural rubber-based businesses by harnessing cutting-edge technology and innovations, propelling the sector towards international competitiveness and sustainable growth. Unlocking the potential of 162.45 acres of land in Velloor on the Muvattupuzha River bank, the proposed Rubber Park shall emerge as a top-notch facility, fostering the development of thriving rubber-based enterprises. As the journey unfolds, Kerala Rubber Ltd takes pride in shaping a brighter future for the State's rubber industry, one innovation at a time.

Restop Project

Elevating road travel experience

Witness the rise of Rest Stop, a trailblazing chain of rest areas adorning Kerala's roads, poised to redefine road travel pleasure and safety on an international scale. Spearheaded by Overseas Keralities Investment & Holding Ltd, a government organisation dedicated to empowering returning NRIs to contribute their expertise for the State's ongoing progress and to offer non-resident Keralites lucrative investment prospects. This ambitious venture marks the inaugural project, promising a brighter future where travellers can indulge in unparalleled comfort and convenience while traversing the beautiful landscapes of Kerala.



Beach development



Tapping Kovalam's tourism potential

In the enchanting realm of Kovalam and its neighboring beaches lies a treasure trove of untapped potential, destined to be sculpted into an international tourist hotspot. As the dream takes flight, the augmentation of infrastructure in Kovalam becomes the pivotal force to catapult the tourism industry, weaving a tapestry of societal and economic prosperity. The project's essence lies in crafting Kovalam and its adjacent beaches into the most sought-after haven, a place where wanderers find solace and delight. Progress unfurls in two phases, encompassing transformative infrastructural development at Light House Beach and Hawa Beach, the exquisite renovation of Anantha Park at Hawa Beach, strategic development of Corporation land, seamless connectivity enhancements, a gateway to IB Beach and thoughtful land demarcation at the neighboring shorelines. Promoting a vision that transcends borders, the project paints a promising tomorrow where Kovalam shines as a beacon of global allure.

EDUCATION

Knowledge society to knowledge economy

Kerala has for long been hailed as a Knowledge Society, founded on a high literacy rate, universal primary education, high Human Development Indices (HDIs), inclusivity in all walks of life and broad spread of physical and digital learning infrastructure.

Today, Kerala is forging ahead to become a fully digitally empowered Knowledge Society that is ready to take on the latest challenges in the spheres of, among others, teaching, learning, research and application.

Kerala has a long and impressive history of achievements in the field of education. It has consistently had one of the highest literacy rates in India. The State has also been successful in reducing the gender gap in literacy and ensuring equal access to education for all, including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the differently abled and transgenders.

When it comes to education, Kerala has always placed as much importance on quality as on numbers. This has helped the State produce a skilled and educated workforce, who have fanned out to every corner of the globe, thus contributing to the State's economic development.

The facilities in government schools across the State have undergone a sea change over the past decade. As a result, there has been a reverse flow of students from private schools to government schools.

Kerala, a knowledge society, progresses towards becoming a digitally empowered hub for learning and research, marked by numerous accolades and innovative initiatives in education

Kerala was among the first States in India to introduce IT education in schools. The State government has also implemented various digital learning initiatives, such as Smart Classrooms, to enhance the learning experience for students from a very early stage. A pioneer in promoting vocational education, Kerala's Vocational Higher Secondary Education (VHSE) programme has helped students acquire practical skills, enhancing their employability.

The University of Kerala has been accorded A++ ranking by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), which is the highest grade offered for educational institutions in the country. Besides, 23 colleges and the University of Calicut, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, and the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) have been accorded the A+ grade. Several students from universities in Kerala have won the Eras Mundus Scholarship.

Kerala has been pursuing the goal of becoming a Knowledge Economy in

order to stimulate economic growth and enable sustainable development. Microbusiness units with modern facilities and startups are being set up in the campuses of engineering colleges, polytechnics, ITIs, and arts and science colleges. Steps are also on to establish translational research centres in university campuses to transform inventions into applications, technologies and objects of daily use.

Each university in the State has been allotted ₹20 crore for translational research. Funds have also been sanctioned liberally to start new professional courses. As many as 150 Chief Minister's Navakerala post-doctoral scholarships are now available to the most brilliant young minds. The goal is also to make Kerala an attractive destination for foreign students. Work is on to create an additional 1,500 new university hostel rooms, including 250 international hostel rooms for foreign students.

Skill Parks are being set up in all the districts under the leadership of the Knowledge Economy Mission. The



required 10-15 acres of land for each park is being made available through the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB). A sum of ₹350 crore is being made available for setting up the District Skill Development Parks from KIIFB. Half the space in the Skill Parks is being kept apart for leading institutions that have proven expertise. Arts and science colleges, polytechnics and ITIs are also encouraged to conduct skill courses.

As much as ₹140 crore has been set apart for financial assistance to academic institutions undertaking courses in collaboration with the Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC). A Medical Technology Innovation Park is being set up in Thiruvananthapuram with an outlay of ₹100 crore. Envisaged as a consortium of all institutions working in the area of medical technology, the innovation park will create a "medical entrepreneurial ecosystem" in Kerala.

Another new idea being floated is the setting up of a Centre of Excellence in Microbiomes to

study the inter-relationship among human beings, animals and the environment. An amount of ₹50 crore has been earmarked for the first phase of the Kerala Genomics Data Centre, a five-year ₹500-crore project initiated by the K-DISC. A high-capacity data centre capable of storing and processing large genomic data will be set up in collaboration with Kerala University and it will be a crucial platform for research institutes, hospitals, bioinformatic research centres, diagnostic startups and biotech companies. This will be beneficial for the study of critical genetic disorders.

Yet another project under the works is the setting up of a Centre of Excellence in nutraceuticals, which will be an integration of nutrition and pharmaceutical sciences with traditional knowledge and medical practices imparted by indigenous communities around the world. K-DISC will facilitate a programme to integrate research centres, startups, and other institutes in the field. An expert committee is being formed

to prepare a blueprint for this nutraceutical project in Kerala.

Kerala's diverse initiatives in the field of education have won it several laurels. Kerala is consistently ranked among the top States in India in NITI Aayog's School Education Quality Index (SEQI), which assesses the quality of school education based on various parameters like learning outcomes, access, infrastructure and equity.

Kerala has also received high praise for its Educational Development Index (EDI), which measures the level of educational development in a State. The State's focus on primary education, literacy campaigns and inclusive education has contributed to its high EDI scores. Kerala was awarded the prestigious UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in 1996 for its efforts in eradicating illiteracy and promoting literacy campaigns, especially among women and marginalised communities. The State has also won the UN Public Service Award for promoting literacy and providing accessible education to all sections of society.

Kerala schools have received Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (Clean School Award) for maintaining clean and hygienic school environments, promoting cleanliness, and emphasising student sanitation and health awareness. Kerala students have been receiving the National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement for successive years for their outstanding achievements in academics and extracurricular activities.

Kerala's education system has also been commended for its innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Various institutions and educators from the State have received Education Innovation Awards for their innovative educational practices.

KOSAMATTAM FINANCE

Kosamattam Finance: Trust that glitters

With a steadfast 150-year trust-based legacy, Kosamattam Finance Limited is rapidly enhancing its relationship capabilities with key stakeholders. Formerly renowned for chit funds and now known for gold loans, the Kosamattam Group endeavours to set itself apart through customer-centricity, innovation, entrepreneurship, trustworthiness and value-driven operations while considering the interests of its customers, employees and civil society.

Kosamattam Finance Ltd, a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), specialises in offering gold loans to individual customers and small businesses. Established in 1987, the company has emerged as a reliable and trusted financial institution, catering to diverse financial needs nationwide. Over the years, Kosamattam Finance has earned acclaim for its customer-focussed approach, transparent practices and efficient services.

Under the guidance of its Managing Director, Kosamattam Mathew K Cherian, the institution is extending its gold loan services to more locations across the country.

Additionally, the company provides ancillary services such as money transfers, insurance, microfinance, foreign currency exchange, agriculture, air ticketing and power generation.

Unique features

Wide network of branches: Kosamattam Finance has an extensive network of branches across India, making its services easily accessible to customers in both urban and rural areas. The company's presence in various locations ensures convenience and

Kosamattam aims for an IPO in the next financial year as part of its growth strategy



Mathew K Cherian, Managing Director, Kosamattam Finance

enables them to serve a diverse customer base.

Quick disbursal of loans: One of the key advantages of Kosamattam Finance is its ability to provide quick loan disbursals. The company's efficient evaluation process and minimal documentation requirements allow customers to receive funds promptly, often within a few hours of applying.

Competitive interest rates: Kosamattam Finance strives to offer competitive interest rates, making its gold loans an attractive option for those seeking short-term credit solutions. The interest rates are calculated based on various factors such as the loan amount, tenure and the purity of the gold pledged.



Flexible repayment options: The company offers flexible repayment options to suit the financial capabilities of its customers. Borrowers can choose from various repayment plans and can opt for regular monthly installments or repay the entire loan amount at the end of the loan tenure.

Transparent transactions: Kosamattam Finance places a strong emphasis on transparency in its operations. Customers are provided with all the necessary information related to the loan terms, interest rates and repayment schedules, ensuring clarity and trust throughout the loan journey.

Customer-centric approach: The company's success can be attributed to its customer-centric approach. Kosamattam Finance understands the unique financial requirements of its customers and tailors its offerings accordingly. Moreover, the staff is trained to provide personalised assistance and support to borrowers, ensuring a seamless and pleasant experience.

Safety and security of gold: Kosamattam Finance takes utmost care in handling the gold pledged by its customers. The gold ornaments are stored in secure vaults, adhering

to strict security protocols to safeguard the valuable assets of borrowers.

The Kosamattam FinKo App: One of the significant technological advancements introduced by the company is the Kosamattam FinTech App, also known as the Kosamattam FinKo App.

Visionary leadership

Under the visionary leadership of Mathew K Cherian, Managing Director of Kosamattam Finance, the company has experienced remarkable growth and success. His dedicated involvement and passion for the business have played a pivotal role in propelling the company towards continued progress. Laila Mathew, wife of Mathew Cherian, is also actively engaged in the business. Cherian, with decades of experience in the financial sector, brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise, enabling Kosamattam to adeptly adapt to changing market dynamics and customer preferences.

Kosamattam embraces a strong legacy of family values and entrepreneurship. The next generation has also stepped

up, significantly contributing to the company's growth and development. Three of Mathew K Cherian's sons-in-law have assumed crucial roles within the organisation, infusing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas into the mix.

Ethical practices ensure transparency

Kosamattam embraces the value of a robust leadership team comprising seasoned professionals from diverse domains. The company strategically appoints ex-bankers, experienced personnel and industry professionals to oversee critical functions such as management, compliance and customer service. This varied pool of talent brings a well-rounded approach to the company's operations, ensuring stability and excellence in service delivery. Acknowledging that branch officials serve as the frontline ambassadors of the company, Kosamattam places significant importance on their training and development. Comprehensive training programmes are invested in, equipping branch officials with essential skills and knowledge to deliver exceptional customer service and maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

Corporate governance stands as a cornerstone of Kosamattam's operations. Upholding ethical practices, ensuring transparency and embracing responsible business conduct, the company strives to cultivate long-term trust and confidence among all stakeholders. Kosamattam's commitment to corporate governance not only strengthens its position as a reputable financial institution but also reaffirms its dedication to

servicing the financial needs of its customers while upholding the utmost standards of integrity and professionalism.

Gold loan market expands

The gold loan market in India harbours tremendous potential for future growth in the upcoming years. Kosamattam Finance stands poised to capitalise on this opportunity. As business shifts from unregulated segments to organised sectors, the gold loan market will experience sustained expansion, promoting financial inclusion and bolstering the nation's economic development. Through technological leverage and unwavering dedication to customer satisfaction, Kosamattam and other NBFCs are positioned to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of India's gold loan market.

Kosamattam has been making remarkable progress in its journey. The company's debentures are already listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), showcasing a commitment to transparency and financial governance. As part of its growth strategy, Kosamattam now targets an Equity Initial Public Offering (IPO) in the next financial year. This move aims to fortify its capital base, expand business operations and provide investors with an opportunity to partake in its success story.

Beyond its financial services, the Kosamattam group actively engages in various social and community development initiatives. Contributing to the welfare of society, the company supports education, healthcare, hospitality and other social causes.

<https://www.kosamattam.com>



Rajagiri: Igniting minds

Rajagiri nurtures future leaders with a global perspective through accredited programmes, international collaborations and an entrepreneurial spirit

The Rajagiri Business School (RBS), the crown jewel in the Rajagiri Group of Institutions run by the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) congregation, serves as an ideal place for aspiring leaders to shape their careers. Its reputation in creating corporate leaders confident of their values and role in the industry has been underpinned by consistently high ratings.

RBS holds the coveted international accreditation from AACSB & EFMD, and national accreditation from NBA. Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, the parent institution, has been bestowed with an A++ NAAC Accreditation, achieving the highest score in the fourth cycle in the country (3.83/4).

In the latest NIRF ranking survey by the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences secured the 30th position. Rajagiri Business School has earned the 20th spot as the best private B School in the country, according to *Competition Success Review*, and it is recognised for its outstanding infrastructure and industry interface by *Business World*. Furthermore, UGC has honoured Rajagiri College with the 'Potential for Excellence Status' and Business Today ranks it 10th in terms of future orientation of students and 14th for placement performance. The Social Work Programme at Rajagiri is ranked second in the country both by *India Today* and *Outlook*, while *Times of India* and *Education World* place it as the 10th and 12th Best B School in India, respectively.

A range of courses

The Rajagiri Group operates across two campuses. The Rajagiri Valley Campus is home to Rajagiri Business School and the Management Department of the College of Social Sciences. Meanwhile, the Hill Campus of Rajagiri houses various departments, including Social Work, Psychology, Library and Information Sciences, Commerce, Computer Sciences and Live Labs. The Biosciences Department is a non-academic research centre which is a Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (SIRO) by the Union Ministry of

Science and Technology.

RBS offers a comprehensive two-year full-time Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) program, which is recognised and approved by the All-India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) and is equalised by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) of UGC, with MBA. RBS offers the esteemed Fellow Programme in Management (FPM), a doctoral-level research program. The Department of Business Administration offers a two-year full-time MBA program and a two-year full-time MA-HRM program, both spread over four semesters. School of Management also serves as the Ph.D. Research Centre of Mahatma Gandhi University.

With a broad curriculum, and options to specialise, its degrees are designed to nurture the soft skills demanded by blue-chip companies – leadership, empathy and global awareness. For future managers, it helps with bigger goals, such as setting out strategy, direction and imbuing organisational culture, managing change and improving productivity. Increasingly, the degree offered

by RBS appeals to would-be entrepreneurs, with the institution also offering ongoing support for those with a desire to head off on the startup journey.

Having established vibrant academic ties with leading universities worldwide, Rajagiri provides students and faculty members with international exposure and facilitate resource sharing for faculty training, curriculum development, research and consultancy. Rajagiri has signed MoUs with distinguished universities in countries such as the U.S., the U.K., Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Laos, Thailand, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Kenya and Somalia.

With a steady influx of overseas students, RBS has also joined an international elite of B-schools. The institution boasts a cohort of international students actively participating in Semester Abroad, Twinning and Dual Degree programs. Moreover, it attracts students with scholarships through the Study In India program from nations such as Kenya, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda,

Afghanistan, Uganda, Nigeria, Malawi, Burundi, Ghana, Swaziland, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Nepal.

International tie-ups

Twinning Programme: This programme enables students to study part of the foreign universities' programmes at Rajagiri and the remaining part at the foreign university, earning a degree from the latter.

Dual Degree Programme: Students have the opportunity to enroll in a Dual Degree partner university of Rajagiri, obtaining degrees from both Rajagiri and the foreign university.

Semester Abroad Programme: Students spend a semester or trimester in a foreign university, and the earned credits are recognised by Rajagiri and the partner university. **Summer Schools / Winter Schools / Monsoon Schools:** Short-term study and visit programs for students centered around specific themes. **Cross Teaching / Co-teaching:** Faculty members from Rajagiri and partner universities mutually teach students of each other.

Co-hosting conferences/seminars/workshops: Rajagiri collaborates in hosting international conferences of partner universities. **Combined Research and Publications:** Collaborative research



between Rajagiri and partnering universities leading to publications. **Faculty Lead Study Abroad (FLSA) Programme:** Faculty-led study trips to foreign universities or vice versa for short periods, centred around a theme.

Routine visits and interactions/course audits: Faculty members regularly visit different universities for international exposure.

Combined classes / shared modules: Joint classes with students from Rajagiri and partner universities, fostering cross-cultural learning.

Fellow Programme in Management (FPM): The Fellow Programme in Management (FPM) is a distinguished doctoral-level program aimed at nurturing high-quality academicians, researchers and management thinkers. The programme encompasses interdisciplinary education and research in management, complemented by comprehensive training in research and teaching.

Graduates of the programme are conferred the title of 'Fellow, Rajagiri Business School, Kochi' and are encouraged to contribute to

the advancement of management thinking and practice through their research.

RBS supports Research Fellowship to the candidates on a monthly basis for five years and also offers research grants. A 10-month Visiting Scholar Program (VSP) wherein candidates visit any reputed institute/university abroad for strengthening their research work also forms part of its research initiative.

Indo-Pacific Quiz Competition 2022: RBS organised the Indo-Pacific Quiz Competition 2022, with funding from the U.S. Consulate, aimed at creating awareness about the opportunities, challenges, socio-cultural and historic heritage of the Indo-Pacific region. The competition engaged young adults from universities and colleges across the Indo-Pacific region in a multi-stage competition, fostering knowledge sharing and international collaboration.

The demand for MBA — the gold standard management degree — has sparked an academic gold rush with a whole lot of institutions setting up business schools. The degree from RBS stands out for its unique blend of business acumen and ethical consciousness. Innovation and enterprise form part of its DNA and the academic atmosphere stays vibrant, with impact, innovation and entrepreneurship oozing out of the campus. This culture, combined with a highly research-intensive curriculum that promotes a multidisciplinary approach, has helped students demonstrate fast-track professional development, which is important when they enter the job market after graduating and as they progress further down the line throughout their careers. Rajagiri remains committed to exploring new programs and experiences proposed by academic partners worldwide, constantly striving to promote cross-cultural interactions and learning beyond geographical boundaries. It cherishes the ambitious plan of growing all of this further.

<https://www.rajagiribusinessschool.edu.in>



Wellness wonders: Kerala's Ayurvedic revival

Kerala leads the way in enriching Ayurveda, attracting global attention and transforming into a thriving medical tourism hub



Kerala has a long history of being the pioneering State in the enrichment of Ayurveda as a prominent medical system.

As one of the country's oldest healthcare practices, Ayurveda is in fact a way of life for thousands. The State is synonymous with Ayurveda as several generations have embraced it to overcome their various health challenges, ensuring a healthy and sustainable life.

With the State playing a perfect host, Ayurveda has grown leaps and bounds as a path-breaking healthcare system worldwide and turned out to be a success story. This century's old traditional system of medicine not only cures the disease but rejuvenates the body as well, eliminating all toxic imbalances from the body and providing good health and immunity.

D Ramanathan, Managing Director of Sitaram Ayurveda, said this traditional system of medicine had been the USP of health tourism in Kerala, leading many of the VVIPs to visit God's Own Country for rejuvenation as well as specific health therapies. The recent visit of former Indian Presidents Ram Nath Kovind, Pratibha Patil, former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga, the chairman of the All-India Anti-Terrorist Front MS Bitta, former Chelsea football coach Thomas Tuchel for treatment proves the reliability and success of Ayurveda offered by Kerala. Post-pandemic, the Ayurveda industry has witnessed stupendous growth, registering a significant hike in export as well as investments.

To continue this success, he said there

was a need to maintain resources to ensure high-quality raw materials in order to preserve the authenticity of treatments. The treatment method followed in Kerala needs to be systematically documented with case studies and included in the academic syllabus for future generations.

ET Yadu Narayanan Mooss, Executive Director of Vaidyaratnam Group, highlights Ayurveda's strong foundation in Kerala, with specialized toxicology and pediatric practices, and attributes its success to the region's proximity to the Western Ghats and its rich flora, ensuring abundant availability of medicinal herbs for the establishment of Ayurvedic pharmacology.

In the early 20th century, the learning of Ayurveda transitioned from traditional gurus to colleges and hospitals, enabling the incorporation of contemporary knowledge into the syllabus, while Kerala's thriving tradition in tourism further bolstered Ayurveda's global recognition.

Mooss underscores the importance of Ayurveda's protocol-based approaches for both illness and wellness care, setting it apart as a scientifically distinct practice and sees great potential in focussing on preventive health and embracing research and data-based platforms, using advanced technologies like AI and predictive analysis.

Looking forward, he emphasises the need to explore centuries-old principles using sophisticated tools without compromising its core ideas and practices, ensuring Ayurveda's continued relevance in contemporary times.

S Sajikumar, Managing Director, Dhathri

Ayurveda suggested introducing technology in the entire value chain, pointing to the surging demand for telemedicine services during the lockdown days. Customers from rural areas for video consultations are on the rise. In future, more patient visits to the clinics can be replaced by online consultations. This augurs well for the industry, as telemedicine data can be a goldmine of information.

"We can digitise, capture and document all the details of the doctor-patient interactions and healthcare outcomes. And with the help of Big Data and Machine Learning, the data can be used to create quantitative evidence of the clinical efficacy of Ayurveda with a whole host of communicable and non-communicable diseases," he said.

Another potential is the introduction of blockchain to store digital information. By saving the information on ayurvedic products on the blockchain, greater transparency could be brought for consumers to discover, among others, the origin and journey of each ingredient the products were made of, he said.

By connecting Artificial Intelligence and Ayurveda would give solutions for ensuring quality raw materials, diagnosis and treatments. "Like one medicine for one particular disease, one medicine for multiple diseases, multiple formulations for one disease and multiple formulations for multiple diseases," he added.

Kerala is certainly on the way to transforming from a leisure tourism destination into a medical tourism hub. Quoting statistics of Kerala Tourism before Covid, he said around 11.89 lakhs foreign



tourists and around 1.83 crore domestic tourists visited the State in 2019, earning a total revenue of around ₹45,010.69 crore. Of this, 30 per cent is from Ayurveda Tourism.

Now, Tourism is almost back to normal. Kerala's Ayurveda revenue has the potential to double its size within the next five years. To realise this potential, he urged the Ayurveda industry to adopt a two-pronged strategy -- establish Ayurveda centres of excellence for certain important medical specialties, and to strengthen its partnership with allopathic hospitals to provide Integrative Medicine.

The ayurveda market in Kerala, according to various estimates, is around ₹1,000 crore and is registering a growth of 15-20 per cent. A business consultancy organisation report says that the ayurvedic product market is expected to register a CAGR of nearly 20 per cent in the next five years to reach a total business of over ₹153,600 crores in 2027.

The central government's decision to introduce Ayush visas for traditional medical treatments would also help facilitate Kerala's ayurvedic industry to grow. Moreover, the Ayush visa is expected to facilitate good investment opportunities in the sector. The Heal in India initiative which focussed on positioning India as a global leader in health would support ayurveda medical tourism in Kerala and grab a pie of the business currently offered by Sri Lanka.

CAREON HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

Carry on Careon

Careon Healthcare Solutions, which manufactures advanced healthcare products such as sterile surgical drapes and gowns, aims to expand its global presence through joint ventures and partnerships

The name has the motto embedded in it. Careon Healthcare Solutions takes care of not only the patient but also the healthcare professionals who get involved in the challenging process of restoring the health of the patients in different ways, including surgeries. In the process, Careon keeps the reputation of healthcare institutions intact.

The Nipah scare and then the dreaded COVID-19 tested our resilience to the hilt. Careon rose to both occasions to fortify healthcare professionals and provide a safe and secure environment for both healthcare givers and patients.

During the Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala, Careon was the only company to manufacture PPE kits for the Government. This led to an association with the Government in the fight against COVID-19 and Careon was recognised as one of the major Suppliers of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) kits in the country. Careon's social commitment to preventing and controlling infection was written in golden letters on these two occasions.

Careon Healthcare Solutions was launched as a startup in 1991, giving wings to the aspirations of

an aspiring entrepreneur, Dr James George. Today it functions with more than 700 employees and specialises in manufacturing sterile surgical drapes, gowns, procedure packs and consumables for all types of surgical procedures.

Careon not only holds a major share of the Kerala market but also has an impressive pan-India presence. Exporting to Europe, the Middle East and African countries, Careon has been recognised as a global player too. It now plans to list on the stock exchange in the 2027 financial year by clocking a turnover of ₹300 crore.

Dr James George, who is the Managing Director of the company, has three decades of experience in manufacturing and marketing medical disposable products. He is assisted by Directors Elsy James and Kora James.

"It is not easy to produce high-quality single-use medical apparel to ensure the safety of healthcare professionals and control surgical site infections. We don't compromise on quality," says Dr George.

Careon excels in quality and



Elsy James, Director, Careon, flanked by Dr James George, Managing Director, and Kora James, Director

service on the strength of its team of experts and highly qualified employees. They make sure that Careon is able to provide advanced healthcare products that meet modern medical requirements. Careon has secured the reputation of being the first surgical gown, drapes and procedure pack manufacturing company in India, and the only company in Kerala to achieve all

certifications such as ISO 13485, CE-MDR, CDSCO-IMDR, Sedex, GMP and the US FDA registration.

"Human skin is a natural barrier against infections. Opening the skin during surgeries can augment the

chances of infections. One main reason for surgical site infections is the environmental conditions in the operation theatre and the usage of substandard medical disposables," points out Dr George.

"Particles in the production area will be transferred to the finished products and remain even after sterilisation. These particles can contaminate the surgical site, causing wound irritation and infections. And we rule out every chance of this in our production process," adds Dr George.

Careon has the largest and most modern manufacturing facility in India having 1.75 lakh sq. ft area including 60,000 sq. ft ISO Class eight clean rooms at Kalamassery in Kerala. Careon ensures ISO

Class clean rooms exclusively for producing particle-free products with 14 most modern Air Handling Units (AHU), which help Careon to maintain in the production area an ambience similar to that of an operation theatre. In the clean room areas, all staff of Careon follow a similar entry protocol as entering an operation theatre and are specially trained in the aseptic way of manufacturing.

Most advanced manufacturing equipment imported for mass production and timely delivery of products as per demand have enhanced the brand image and reputation of Careon. The three in-house Ethylene Oxide (EO) sterilisation plants, validated as per

European standards (EN ISO 11135), offer all products sterilised as per global standards.

For healthcare institutions and medical professionals, Careon offers customised solutions using indigenous and imported fabrics of different protection levels and comforts. Sterile and easy-to-use surgical drapes and procedure packs that bear the logo of Careon are guaranteed to give total protection throughout any surgical procedure.

Careon is partnering with hospitals in training programs also. It is creating awareness on infection prevention so as to reduce hospital stays and excessive use of medicines and antibiotics. "Surgical site infection leads to long-time use of antibiotics and can cause organ damage," says Dr George.

Director Elsy James says that the progress of Careon hinges on its work culture. "Most of the employees are women and we take care to ensure that they return home every day a happy lot. Women are the best pillars of a family," says Elsy James.

Director Kora James says that Careon not only provides the best product but also creates health awareness. "We are able to carve a benchmark in this sector and we know that there are enormous other possibilities too," he says.

Careon is now looking for joint ventures to start manufacturing surgical gowns, drapes and packs in the Middle East, Europe, the U.S. and Africa. The company is also keen on joining global market leaders to manufacture products used in the Indian operation theatres. For enquiries, mail to info@careonhealthcare.com or contact +91 956776 5568/ +91 97 4711 1101. <https://www.careonhealthcare.com>

Saintgits integrates technology with skill-based learning to leave an indelible mark in various fields, from engineering and commerce-business studies to management education and design



Saintgits: Gifts of knowledge

The Saintgits Group of Professional Education Institutions, established by a talented group of educators in 2002, has successfully integrated technology with skill-based education. Operating in the rural settings of Pathamuttam, a sleepy village near Changanassery, it has expanded over the years into five different segments of modern education and has made a lasting impression in their respective fields. The institutions run by the group are the Saintgits College of Engineering for engineering studies, Saintgits College of Applied Sciences for commerce-business studies, Saintgits Institute for Management Education and Information Technology, Saintgits Institute of Computer Applications and the Saintgits Design School.

Exposing young minds to technology

The Saintgits College of Engineering, an autonomous college affiliated with the APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University (KTU), boasts accreditation from the Institution of Engineers (IE) for all its core engineering branches. From B.Tech. to M.Tech., it offers an array of study programmes that include cutting-edge research in technical subjects.

In addition to the traditional degrees, it has rolled out several innovative courses such as Robotics and Automation, Food Technology, and B. Design, which emphasises a blend of hands-on training and classroom learning along with specialised training in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Twinning programs in the institution with leading international universities, on the other hand, are opening up new opportunities for global students.

One among the first three Engineering Colleges in Kerala to achieve autonomous status by the University Grants Commission, Saintgits was conferred with the coveted status in recognition of its academic excellence, expert faculty, industry connect, placement records, extracurricular activities and state-of-the-art infrastructure offered by the institution.

As per the results announced by the KTU in 2022, the institute is ranked at 14 out of the 150 colleges in Kerala that offer B.Tech. degrees.

Thomas T John, Director, Saintgits, attributes this achievement primarily to the focus on maintaining quality education and industry-friendly syllabi. "The autonomy has

enabled us to devise an industry-friendly academic programme. The curriculum also permits students to attend online courses from other universities and leading online education portals such as Coursera and LinkedIn as recommended by the UGC model. Over the years, many scholarships have been awarded to meritorious students to reduce the burden of their study expenses," he observes.

The curriculum is revised from time to time and new-generation courses are being launched to ensure that the students are well-versed in the latest engineering trends by understanding the innovation, cutting-edge technologies, concepts and systems in the field of engineering. In response to the rapidly evolving labour market, various short-term courses for skill development and value orientation are also included in the curriculum.

The programmes incorporate soft skills training, add-on courses, workshops, seminars and hackathons to raise the employability of students. It also fosters entrepreneurship and innovation among students, encouraging participation in national-level engineering project exhibitions and providing access to advanced technology labs.

The institution also boasts a well-equipped placement department that helps the students secure jobs in top positions in more than 200 companies in India and abroad, including IBM, TCS, Amazon and many more.

Encouraging teachers and students to undertake research projects and contribute towards knowledge creation is another common practice at the Institution. Quality control practices and accreditation from recognised institutions have stood as validations to the institution's credibility, ensuring that academic excellence is maintained and students are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need.

Developing professionals

Social changes, new trends in the industry, and further developments in modern technology have prompted business education to foray into new avenues. Online and hybrid education systems have become an integral part of education, training and campus selection in the post-pandemic period. The country's management schools



have promptly embraced these changes and introduced changes in their curricular and extra-curricular programme accordingly.

Saintgits Institute of Management is one of the rare colleges in Kerala to have autonomy in management education. The institution is climbing the ladder of excellence with brilliant achievements in the field of education including international collaboration. The institution has been offering its students an MBA program accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), New Delhi, for the past six years. The newly launched programs include the five-year Integrated MBA and MBA in Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

Integrated MBA is crafted for those ambitious students eager to embark on a path of success in this rapidly evolving world of business and management. The program ensures a panoramic transformative learning experience that visions a successful career for the student. Choosing Integrated MBA will be a significant leap for the student towards a journey of corporate leadership and management after completing Class 12 education. This early start provides the aspirant a competitive edge in this fast-growing world with adequate skills and knowledge to excel in managerial roles early in their career. Getting to do a professional degree course right after Higher Secondary Education in a specialised management school will definitely leave a mark of excellence in their career growth.

The two-year MBA programme in Logistics and Supply Chain Management is a key milestone for a transformational career journey. The world is now keenly exploring the immense opportunities of

online marketing and therefore Logistics and Supply chain management is important in a company's success and customer satisfaction. The institution provides a Logistics and Supply chain management course inclusive of management processes such as implementation, control, planning of the flow of the product or service from the supplier to the customer and monitoring of the ability of the flow of resources — goods and services. The course is designed in a way that inculcates in a student the analytical skills and required management strategies for transportation of goods and services through proper use of inventory customer service, warehouse and storage. In addition to becoming experts in the supply chain for business growth, there is a wide range of career opportunities in this field.

The unprecedented growth and tremendous opportunities in modern fields such as artificial intelligence, business/data analytics and fintech have matched corresponding syllabus reformations to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to keep pace with the changes. The new notion is that the managers, leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow need to acquire knowledge in a wide range of fields to solve complex problems and make critical decisions.

"The areas of knowledge have moved beyond the traditional domains of management such as marketing, finance, human resources, operations, analytics and entrepreneurship. The mission of modern B-schools is to inculcate in graduates the ability to think logically and foster a broad perspective on problems from multiple angles acquiring relevant experience and skills to solve real-life problems. The autonomous institutions are well positioned to effectively implement appropriate changes in their curriculum, syllabus and learning methods to match the evolving industrial scenario," explains Punnoose George, Executive Chairman of the institution.

The flexibility enabled by the autonomy also enables the institution to build stronger links with the industry and thereby secure internships and placements. The course offers a unique Corporate Interactions Programme, which ensures that the students regularly interact with industry experts to gain knowledge through

various guest lectures, industrial visits and live projects that form the core of its academic programme to develop successful management professionals.

At Saintgits, there are opportunities to specialise in new business areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Business/Data Analytics and FinTech. Its faculty team consisting a mix of industry experts and academicians, providing complete support to learning research and multifaceted personal development.

An institute that boasts a direct link with the industrial world, as well as timely completion of courses and declaration of results in the management program enables the students here to secure employment even before the completion of their studies. For instance, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), a leading multinational firm, has recruited 16 management students from Saintgits this year. Leading companies such as Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Ernst & Young (EY), South Indian Bank and Malayala Manorama have been regularly visiting the Saintgits campus for placements.

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Saintgits has pursued the mission of encouraging new spirited entrepreneurship and innovation among students right from its inception. Srishti, an annual national-level engineering project exhibition organised in collaboration with various industries, has drawn young talents across the country over the years.

The Internet of Things Lab and Fab Lab, recognised by the Kerala Startup Mission, enables students to use innovative technologies. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with C-DAC, an organisation for research and development in IT, electronics and related fields under the Government of India, to provide guidance to the researchers and students of the college. Adding yet another feather to its cap, Saintgits has also become an approved training centre for food safety training certification under the FSSAI of the Union Government.

Having carved its own niche in a highly competitive and rapidly evolving field of professional education, Saintgits has always lived up to its motto: 'learn, grow and excel'.

<https://saintgits.org>



TOURISM



Goodbye, brand weariness

Kerala's Cinema Tourism invites you to explore the breathtaking locales that brought iconic films to life

It's not unusual for one to hear about an Indian film producer or director flying abroad with crew, actors and paraphernalia in search of ideal locations to shoot song sequences or particular segments of a film.

The decision also reflects a growing aspiration amongst the country's middle class for travelling abroad. So, one has come across a progressive increase in the number of films shot abroad since the 1960s with foreign locales in films ceasing to be a novelty.

Reversing trend

Kerala is attempting to reverse this trend by giving it a slight tweak. It has launched a Cinema Tourism initiative, through which it invites tourists to bring tourists to nostalgic locations closely identified with films, including *Roja*, *Dil Se* and *Bombay*. The picture postcard-like settings of the State will be the focus of this esteemed project, whereas the support and presence of Mani Ratnam will provide a big boost to Cinema Tourism. If things go as planned, the project would be launched as part of a show to be held at the Bekal Fort in Kasaragod district, where exciting scenes

of his film *Bombay* were shot. Apart from the award-winning director, the actors in the movie are also likely to attend the programme to rev up the project.

During a meeting with Kerala Tourism Minister PA Mohammed Riyas in Kozhikode recently, Mani Ratnam promised to endorse locations that left a deep impression in people's minds after getting featured in box office hits. Mani Ratnam also expressed his appreciation of the pioneering project during his discussion with Riyas. Kerala's scenic landscape had been locations for a number of his films, especially for song sequences.

According to the Minister, the support and presence of Mani Ratnam will be a big boost to the Cinema Tourism initiative. The

latest initiative from Kerala Tourism, 2022 appears to be an attempt to break out of the rut and 'act before brand weariness settles among the buyer markets.' The latest Economic Review had warned the State about the prospect of brand weariness, saying 'there's only so much a brand can push all by itself. There is a need to develop new brands and even sub-brands by exploring lesser-known or even non-traditional destinations or products.

Another challenge is competition from neighbouring States and countries, including Sri Lanka, Maldives or South-East Asian countries.

Foreign accolades

Meanwhile, year 2022 had marked Kerala's stunning resurgence as a global travel destination in the post-pandemic phase, with the State winning a massive endorsement from no less than *The New York Times* which listed it among 52 must-visit places across the globe in 2023. Kerala was the only destination from India and listed at the 13th spot in the newspaper's annual list of places to visit. Tourists seemed to have been voting with their

feet even ahead with 2022 bringing major achievements and global and national honours as the State reopened its favourite tourist spots after the Covid-induced recess. In July, *TIME* magazine had cited Kerala as one of the '50 Extraordinary Destinations to explore'. *Conde Nast Traveller* featured Aymanam village in Kottayam district as among the 30 best places to visit, while *Travel & Leisure* chose the State for the Global Vision Award. The STREET project, part of the state's Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative, was feted at the World Travel Market (WTM), London.

Kerala Blog Express

Cut to year 2023, and Kerala Tourism has sought to reaffirm its faith with the time-tested Kerala Blog Express initiative. It is not just a blogging trip, says Minister Riyas. Instead, it aims to inspire and invite travellers from around the world to get first-hand experience of the magic of Kerala, he said while flagging off the seventh edition of Kerala Blog Express in Thiruvananthapuram. It is a celebration of Kerala's natural beauty and cultural heritage and warm hospitality and sends travel bloggers from across the globe

on a two-week-long road trip. From aboard a luxury bus, they explore curated destinations, creating stories and other content for social media platforms.

Around 30 renowned content creators have been chosen from a pool of talented applicants. Two of them are Indians while the rest are from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Italy, Romania, the U.S., the U.K., the Netherlands, Canada, Kenya, South Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Turkey and Colombia. The itinerary takes the bloggers to Kumarakom and Alappuzha, followed by trips to Thekkady, Munnar, Athirappally, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Shoranur and Kochi, apart from their initial pit-stops in Thiruvananthapuram. They will record inspiring experiences of their travel while interacting with locals, relishing the rich and diverse cuisine and identifying themselves with the State's unique cultural realm. According to him, the annual event organised by the Department of Tourism, promises an extraordinary journey through the captivating landscapes and cultural wonders of Kerala.





Travancore Foundation:

It's all about care for seniors

As you step into Mission Valley, India's prestigious platinum-status senior living haven set up by the Travancore Foundation (TF), you're instantly transported to what feels like a luxurious resort, tucked away in the sleepy village of Karukachal, near Kottayam, boasting its exotic locale, sophisticated modern infrastructure and cutting-edge facilities, all managed by a dedicated army of caregivers tending to every resident's needs with utmost care. This delightful atmosphere exudes the air of an exclusive private club, defying the typical notions of a mundane old-age home.

TF stands at the forefront of India's senior care sector, epitomising unparalleled service, fuelled by innovation and research-based best practices — a scientific approach to care that transcends mere provision of shelter, food, and activities. Jiji Philip, Chief Executive Officer of TF, elaborates on the comprehensive spectrum of care arrangements, carefully tailored for seniors, encompassing independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing care and the continuum of care. "We strive to achieve the optimum physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of our residents and everyone is keen to go that extra mile to ensure that this vision becomes a reality. It's a journey that never ends."

Person-centric quality care

TF embarked on its journey as a humble charity organisation on September 17, 2009, brought to life by the passion and dedication of Mathew Chandy Matteethra, Jiji Philip, and Philip K John. Together, they started and set their sights on providing dignified and healthy lives to seniors, envisioning person-centric quality care with a community-based approach, and a strong focus on education and research. Weathering initial challenges, including a global economic recession and societal apprehensions towards institutional elder care, TF forged ahead, giving birth to Mission Valley, an innovative pioneer venture on a 2.5-acre property in Karukachal. With a built-up area of around 50,000 sq. ft and a team of dedicated caregivers, this project redefined the very essence of well-being, social engagement and productivity for the elderly in Kerala.

With keen attention to detail, the Centre was designed to cater to the specific needs of the elderly, boasting elder-friendly infrastructure with wheelchair accessibility, wide ramps, grab bars, anti-skid floors and elevators. The elegant in-suite units, each spanning about 400 sq.ft, come equipped with modern amenities like intercoms and Wi-Fi, ensuring residents' comfort and convenience. The presence of an automatic generator set, round-the-clock CCTV surveillance, and serene green spaces adorned with flowers and cool breezes add to the overall sense of safety and enjoyment, fulfilling the vision of creating an age-



Travancore Foundation redefines elder care with innovation and research, setting the bar for person-centric quality care and unparalleled service

friendly haven for residents to age gracefully in place, as articulated by Jiji Philip.

TF's growth trajectory saw the establishment of two more locations — Rahel Homes in Kolencherry and Presidency Homes in Kochi — serving as the State's first transitional and rehab care facilities, collectively accommodating 150 residents, offering a range of care options from independent living to assisted living and skilled care. The organisation's success and pioneering status in elder care are attributed to its exceptional management, led by the visionary Chairperson Dr Renu Abraham Varughese, a renowned clinical gerontologist with good exposure to U.S. long-term care centres, a two-time U.S. Fulbright award recipient and an academian, instrumental in shaping TF into a facility that matches international standards in elder care.

Central to TF's uniqueness is its comprehensive assessment and care planning process for each resident on admission, executed through the culturally relevant and internationally accepted Resident Assessment Format (RAF). This approach, focussed on person-centered, outcome-oriented care, is a testament to the organisation's commitment to individualised well-being, with an interdisciplinary team of experts collaborating in the assessment and care planning process, striving to uphold evidence-based, person-centred care as the

foundation of their practices.

of long-term care workers to cater to India's rapidly aging population and the growing demand for assistive care for seniors has spurred TF into action, leading the charge in geriatric training programmes to confront the challenges ahead in elderly care.

In response, the organisation established the Travancore Foundation Education and Research Centre on Aging (TF ERCA), a pioneering research and training arm that marks a unique service-academic collaboration in India, fostering career pathways for the sustained development of the sector.

Dr Varughese shares, "We are offering post-graduate diplomas in geriatric care in association with Bharatiar University in Coimbatore, Marian College, Kuttikanam, and now the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences. We are actively working towards establishing a dedicated Research and Training institute in partnership with national and international universities and research centres." This strategic move seeks to address the scarcity of research and publications from long-term care institutions, with TF ERCA stepping up to bridge this gap.

In a bold move to enhance employee skills, TF introduced a state-of-the-art simulation-based learning (SBL) lab in 2023, offering immersive experiential learning opportunities. Equipped with mannequins, task trainers and hands-on skill training complemented by pre and post-briefing segments, the SBL lab empowers staff to

hone their geriatric care abilities in realistic scenarios,

well before they embark on caring for residents. Dr Varughese's enthusiasm while demonstrating the lab's features underscores the significance of this innovation. Notably, this marks India's first-ever SBL lab within an assisted living facility, highlighting TF's unwavering commitment to employee growth and development. Moreover, the organisation ensures that all employees receive annual in-service and mandatory training, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Epitome of workplace excellence

With an unwavering commitment to quality service and a vision encompassing education and research, TF has been widely acclaimed as the epitome of workplace excellence for several consecutive years. Dr Varughese states, "We offer round-the-clock staff support with a 1:2 ratio and we take immense pride in being the only organisation with a dedicated quality control team and geriatric care managers available at all times."

While witnessing the profound impact of its extra-care model, which brings together comprehensive physical, mental, and social support along with support for caregivers, TF recognises that achieving workforce stability remains the most critical challenge in delivering unparalleled service to the elderly, as acknowledged by Dr Varughese.

Amidst its relentless pursuit of creating meaningful experiences for the elderly, TF's inspiring model extends its benevolence to the local community through its charity division, **TF-MITHRA**. This charitable endeavor continues to uplift the welfare of Karukachal's residents through diverse schemes, including TARANI (an educational scholarship programme for children from financially weaker sections), **SANJEEVANI: HOPE FOR THE AGED** (senior citizen sponsorship programme), **SUBHAM** (providing support to children with curable diseases) and **DYUTHI** (for the general category).

Future plans

Having carved an eminent niche in geriatric care, TF now sets its sights on venturing beyond Kerala's borders. Already making strides, the organisation has commenced preliminary work to establish senior care facilities in Coimbatore and Mysore. Within the State, TF envisions creating an elderly care haven at Vattappara in Thiruvananthapuram while developing another prime property in Kakkand, Kochi, reflecting its boundless dedication to the welfare of seniors in India.

<https://travancorefoundation.com>

Dr Renu Abraham Varughese, Chairperson, Travancore Foundation.





Brilliant achievements

The humble seed of knowledge sowed by three friends in the quaint town of Pala back in 1984 has blossomed into a magnificent tree of wisdom, extending its boughs not only across Kerala but also beyond. The fruition of their vision, Brilliant Study Centre, stands as a testament to transformation, reshaping the destinies of countless students.

Stellar achievements

In its inception 39 years ago, Brilliant Study Centre, Pala, embarked on a journey with only 12 students, four teachers, a 500 sq. ft building and a capital of ₹ 1,500, a princely sum for its visionary founders.

Fast forward to today, Brilliant has evolved into an esteemed institution with over 3,000 employees, including 700 professors, and an impressive 4 lakh sq. ft of workspace, along with over 100 student accommodations and a Dubai office. The prowess of Brilliant is evident through its remarkable track record, producing 23 consecutive first-rankers in medical-engineering entrance tests within the State and over 60 top-rankers in other entrance examinations.

Being the torchbearer of education in Pala, Brilliant continues its triumphant journey, attracting over 60,000 students annually. It remains the preferred choice of parents who dream of seeing their children as doctors and engineers, confident in the institute's ability to fulfill these aspirations. Moreover, Brilliant extends its reach through over 30 studios, offering online courses for employed individuals, expatriates, and those pursuing other educational pursuits.

The legacy of Brilliant Study Centre, Pala stands tall, transforming dreams into reality and shining as a beacon of brilliance in the educational landscape.

Trial by fire

Founded in 1984 as a modest tuition centre in a small shed opposite Alphonsa College at Arunapuram, Brilliant Coaching Institute started with just 12 students and a meagre capital of ₹ 1,500. Co-founded by George Thomas, Sebastian Mathew, Stephen Joseph, and later joined by Santhosh Kumar B, the institute's inception was marked by the founders themselves painting benches and desks, and dividing the space into four rooms with curtains.

The turning point came in 1985 when students enquired about entrance exam training, leading to the introduction of specialised courses. The institute's prowess

With an illustrious track record of producing top-rankers in medical-engineering entrance tests and nurturing countless success stories, Brilliant continues its triumphant journey in the competitive world of education



was evident when five out of 10 students from the first batch secured admissions to prestigious medical and engineering courses, fuelling its growth and attracting more students.

Amidst their achievements, the founders pursued their own careers, with George becoming a high school teacher, Stephen a higher secondary teacher, and Santhosh joining Kerala State Financial Enterprises (KSFE). Sebastian, the driving force, led Brilliant for the next decade.

In 2000, two co-founders left their jobs, and Santhosh took extended leave to devote himself entirely to Brilliant. This marked the beginning of an exponential growth phase, leading to the construction of a state-of-the-art campus spread

over 15 acres of land, housing multiple buildings and hostels.

Today, Brilliant Coaching Institute boasts an impressive presence, teaching students in 375 batches across seven centres in Kerala, along with 200 batches of repeater students. From its humble origins, the institute has risen to become an educational powerhouse, nurturing brilliance and shaping the future of countless students with unwavering dedication and foresight.

Foundation courses

In a fiercely competitive academic landscape, the quest to gain an edge drives students to seek early preparation through foundation courses. Brilliant Study Centre recognises the importance of



(From left) George Thomas, Santhosh Kumar B, Sebastian G Mathew and Stephen Joseph, Directors of Brilliant Study Centre, Pala.

building a strong base from an early age, offering foundation courses for IIT JEE / NEET preparation. By commencing their journey as early as Classes 6 to 10, students gain a head start in their pursuit of success.

The significance of early coaching is underscored by the development of logical, reasoning, and analytical skills, vital for cracking competitive exams. With quantitative and qualitative question exposure through foundation courses, students are primed for excellence in examinations like JEE/NEET, reaffirming the wisdom of the saying, "the early bird catches the worm."

In pursuit of fostering academic excellence and promoting healthy competition, Brilliant Study Centre introduces the Brilliant Science Olympiad (BSO) for Classes 8, 9, and 10. Inspired by the concept of Olympiads, BSO provides a platform for students to showcase their talents while honing logical reasoning and critical thinking abilities. With enthusiastic participation and engagement, BSO fosters a conducive learning environment for students across various schools and boards, with offerings catering to Classes 1 to 10.

Amidst its dedication to educational empowerment, Brilliant Study Centre plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of Scheduled Tribe students and wards of members of the fishing community. Entrusted by the government of Kerala, the institute provides medical/engineering entrance coaching to these deserving students, with the government covering their course and hostel fees. Furthermore, Brilliant students also benefit from various government scholarships, including the Samunnathi scholarship for the general category, e-grantz

scholarship scheme for Other Backward Classes students and the scholarship scheme for Scheduled Caste students. Through these initiatives, Brilliant Study Centre continues to pave the way for tomorrow's champions, leaving an indelible mark on the realm of education.

Student Maitri scheme

The institute has established a scholarship named Brilliant Student Maitri (BSM) in order to help financially weak students who excel in studies. Over 3,000 students benefit from the scholarships which enable them to continue studies with discounted fees. There are also scholarships for students hailing from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities instituted with the help of the government. The institute adopted Gopika who was made an orphan in the Pettimudy landslip tragedy of 2021, and provided her free education and accommodation. At present, she is studying in the Government Medical College, Palakkad.

Brilliant on social media

The Brilliant-owned YouTube channel is popular with 2.1 lakh subscribers, especially JEE and NEET aspirants who tune in for top-quality information on the examinations. With over 5 crore views and 4,000 plus videos, the channel provides exceptional resources for students preparing for these competitive exams. The live sessions organised by the channel are attended by no fewer than 10,000 parents and students, making it arguably the largest live event in South India focused on entrance exams.

Besides YouTube, Brilliant is also active on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and other social media

platforms, making it easier for students and parents to access these resources and stay informed about the latest news and updates.

Awards for achievers

The prize offered by Brilliant to the candidate who bags the first rank at the national level is ₹ 1 crore and a gold medal. The second ranker will get ₹ 50 lakh while candidates who win the third to the fifth ranks will get ₹ 25 lakh each. The prize for the first ranker in Kerala in the NEET examination is ₹ 10 lakh and for the second rank, it is ₹ 5 lakh and a gold medal. The management has decided to raise these to ₹ 25 lakh and ₹ 10 lakh respectively from the next year.

In addition to these prizes, students under the Kerala syllabus who score 600 marks in the subjects of physics, chemistry, and biology will be exempted from paying any fee. As a policy, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students are given concessions in fees.

Brilliant's pride

Thousands of former students stand as a living testimony to Brilliant's impact, with their achievements as doctors and engineers filling this institute with immense pride. The founders cherish indelible memories of exceptional students like Biju of Chengalam, who found success as an MBBS scholar in the first batch, and Ninoy Job Kannambally, securing the top rank in the Kerala engineering entrance exam in 2005. Jaiben George of Changanassery achieved extraordinary feats, clinching the first rank in both the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) exam and the Kerala Medical Entrance Test in 2009. Currently, he serves as a senior doctor in AIIMS' orthopaedics department.

Mohammed Munawar achieved perfection by scoring a perfect 960 out of 960 in the Kerala Medical Entrance Examination and now is as a senior doctor at AIIMS. The list of such accomplished people extends from Biju, a trailblazer from the first batch, to the exceptional top rankers of the 2022 batch, such as Vishwanath Vinod and Nandita P.

Dilip K Kainikkara, who secured the first rank in the 2011 Kerala engineering entrance exam, later cleared the Civil Services examination and now serves as the District Collector. Within Brilliant's nurturing embrace lie endless tales of aspirants turned achievers, their dreams woven into reality. Indeed, a brilliant journey of excellence!

www.brilliantpala.org