

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LOK SABHA CONSTITUENCY

2009  
2024

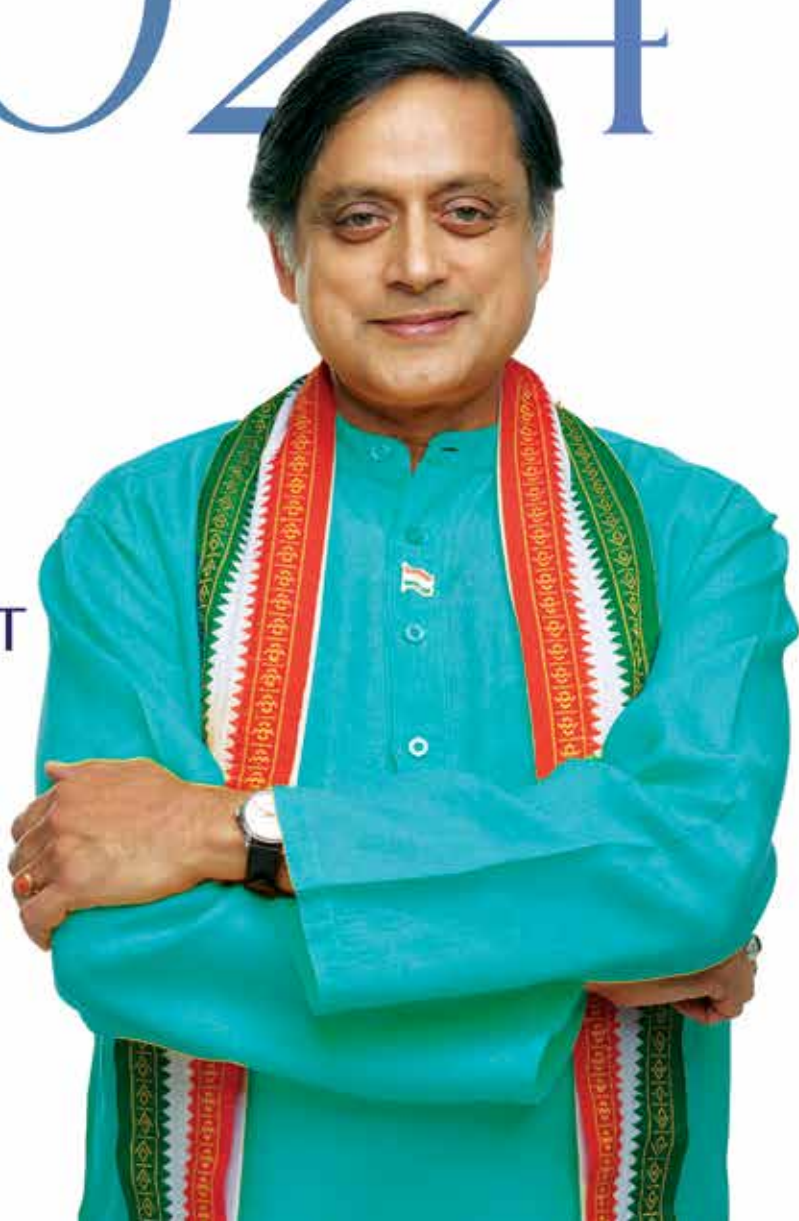
15 Fulfilling  
Years @  
Your Service

## DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- Constituency
- Parliament
- Committee

**Dr Shashi Tharoor**

Member of Parliament for  
Thiruvananthapuram &  
Chairman, Parliamentary Standing  
Committees on External Affairs,  
Information Technology &  
Chemicals and Fertilisers





Kazhakkootam

Vattiyoorkavu

Thiruvananthapuram

Nemom

Arabian Sea

Kovalam

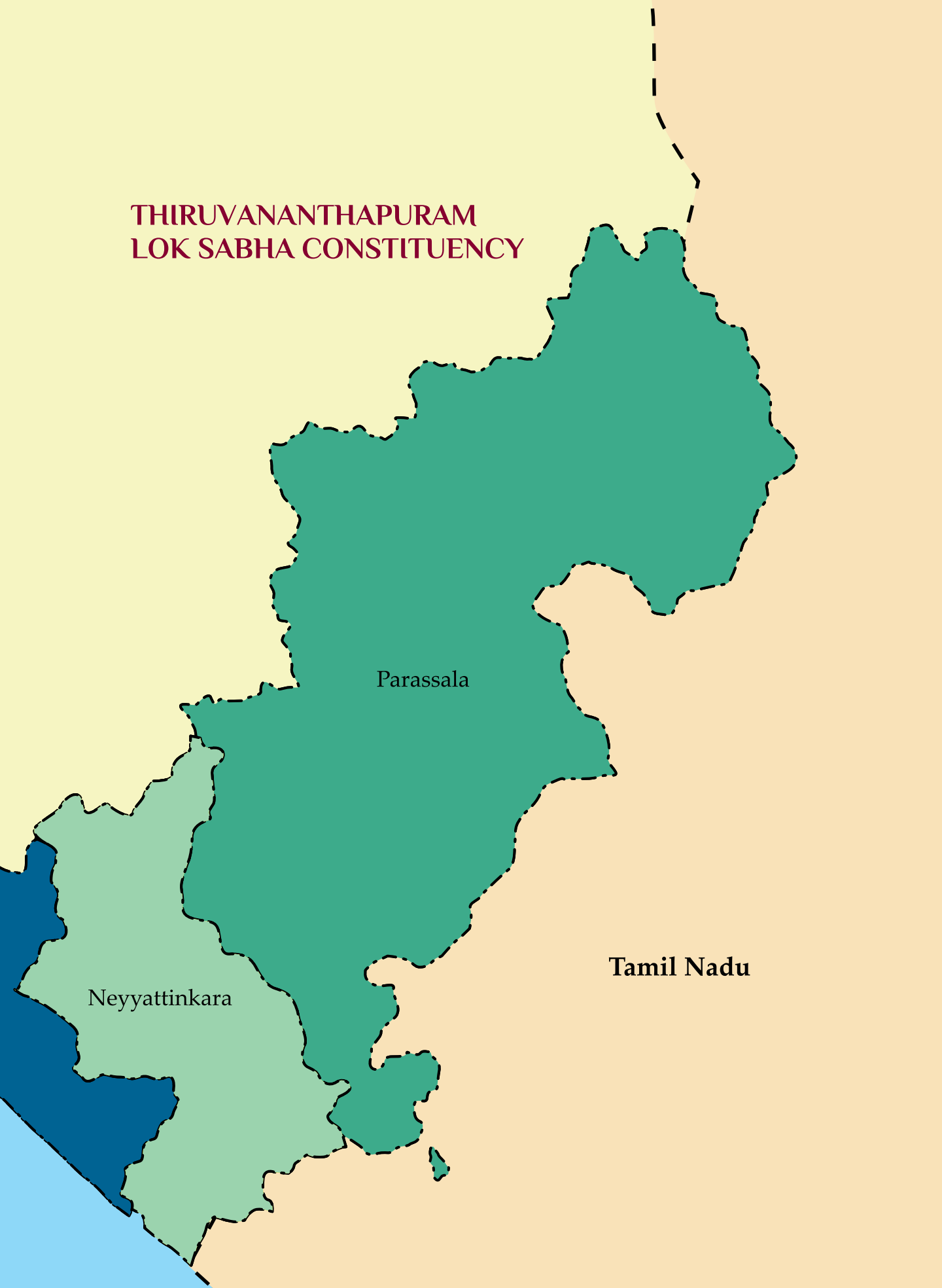


**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
LOK SABHA CONSTITUENCY**

Parassala

Neyyattinkara

Tamil Nadu

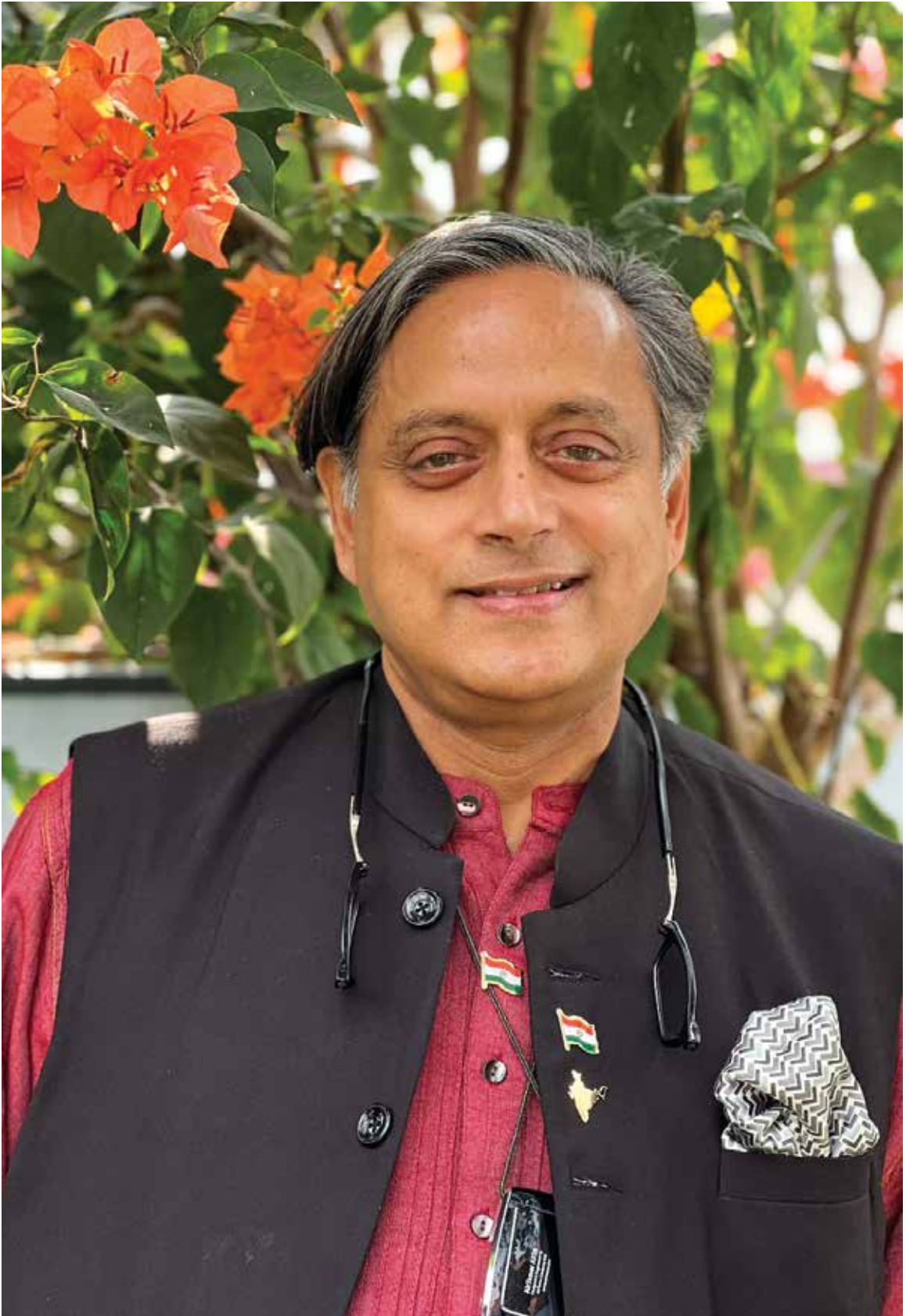


# Introduction

It has been one of my life's greatest privileges to serve as the Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram, an honour and great responsibility that the people have chosen to bestow on me for three consecutive terms. Together, we have collectively embarked on a journey to champion the development causes and aspirations that are at the heart of our great city, a journey that has been personally, and in equal measure, an instructive, rewarding and humbling experience. In my efforts to advocate the interests of my constituency in the national capital and in my championing the principles of a pluralistic and inclusive vision of India, I am deeply grateful for the immeasurable support that you, the people of Thiruvananthapuram, have given me. The trust and confidence you have placed in me have been the driving force behind every decision I have made, every action I have taken, and every initiative I have pursued.

However any relationship, especially the deep connection shared between the people and their representative, must be rooted in trust and honest introspection. These last 5 years have presented their own unique challenges and while we have successfully navigated through many, the administrative limitations imposed by political realities are undeniable. As a member of the Opposition – at the national, state and corporation levels – it has not always been easy to realise our collective dreams, despite my striving to the best of my abilities, because of resistance in some cases from those in power. I would therefore be the first to acknowledge that we still have some way to go to achieve some of Thiruvananthapuram's long pending demands.

But political establishments and ruling dispensations will always come and go, and there is much I have been able to do despite being in Opposition. I look forward to pursuing Thiruvananthapuram's dreams with renewed vigour and remain confident that we can do so together. In these last 15 years, we have achieved significant milestones and overcome numerous challenges. Through collaborative efforts and constructive dialogue, we have made significant strides, all of which have contributed to the progress and prosperity of our beloved city.



The following report aims to update my constituents with some key aspects of the work I have undertaken so far as the Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram over the last fifteen years. Given the continuity of my service from 2009 onwards, this report offers a comprehensive summary of my efforts over fifteen years and builds on the reports I have issued each term. As with my earlier reports, my effort is to present an honest and transparent account of the progress we have made and the pending issues we must continue to focus on.

Before we begin, let me stress that while I'm humbled to be the benefactor of your trust and confidence, I do not take this support for granted. I am acutely aware of the immense responsibility that comes with being your elected representative, and I am committed to upholding the trust you have placed in me with unwavering dedication and integrity.

As the report highlights, our work is far from over. As we stand at the cusp of a new era filled with both opportunities and challenges, I will soon turn to you, for your support and partnership once again. The journey ahead demands both vision and determination, and I remain confident that we can collectively build upon the foundations we have laid in these last 15 years to forge ahead with renewed vigour and resolve.

Sincerely



**Dr. Shashi Tharoor**  
Thiruvananthapuram

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## Parliament

## Parliamentary Standing Committees

## MPLADS



# MILESTONES

## NH Bypass : Kazhakkootam – Karode : 2011-2024

I am extremely pleased that the remaining work on the NH 47 Bypass from Kazhakkootam to Karode has been successfully completed, a conclusion to the commitment I had made to the people of Thiruvananthapuram since my first term as your MP.

This landmark project connecting our city with Tamil Nadu (passing through 6 out of 7 Assembly segments in the constituency) is a historic, first-of-its-kind project in Thiruvananthapuram since Independence, both in terms of scale and costs. In addition, its potential for increasing the economic development of the district is unmatched, which is why I, as your MP, gave the implementation of this mega infrastructure project the topmost priority.

The Kazhakkootam-Karode Bypass is undoubtedly the most satisfying achievement in my 15 years of service as MP for Thiruvananthapuram thus far. In 2009, I took on the challenge of reviving this project, which had been lying dormant for over 40 years then and was consistently written off by many, because of my conviction that 4-lane connectivity could open tremendous development possibilities for the region while also bringing to an end the suffering of hundreds of families whose land was notified decades ago for

acquisition for this project, but who were given neither compensation nor freedom to sell or build a home in the intervening period.

As a practical measure, I was successful in persuading the Government and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to split the project into 2 phases – the Kazhakkootam-Mukkola and Mukkola-Karode stretches respectively – with the first converting the existing two-lane road to a four-lane highway, and the second creating a greenfield four-lane road from scratch. **Work on both phases got underway in 2012 and is almost complete.** Starting in 2013, compensatory packages for 97% of the acquired land have already been disbursed. The total project cost is more than ₹ 2000 Cr, and both direct and indirect benefits from this investment are already visible in the region at large.

### Phase 1 - Kazhakkottam-Mukkola Stretch:

**Total Distance of 4-lane Road: 26.8 Kms**  
**Project Cost: ₹ 1056.5 Cr**  
**Status : Completed**

### Phase 2 - Mukkola-Karode Stretch:

**Total Distance of 4-lane Road: 16.5 Kms**  
**Project Cost : ₹ 1226 Cr**  
**Status : Completed**

Compensation for Land Acquisition:  
Total Number of Beneficiaries :  
1735 Persons

Total Number of Villages : 5  
(Kottukal, Kanjiramkulam, Chenkal,  
Karode and Thirupuram)  
Total Amount Disbursed: ₹ 460 Cr

### Timeline :

**2012 : 3 (A)1 Notification for Land Acquisition published in the Gazette**

**2013 : 3 (D) Notification for Land Acquisition published in the Gazette**

**2014 : Compensation disbursed to owners of the Acquired Land**

**2014 : 1st and 2nd BoT Tenders issued, followed by EPC Tenders**

As MP, I did not just take an active interest in this project, but took on an active role in its approval, implementation and execution, conducting several on-site inspections of the ongoing work with NHAI officials, contracting staff and local community leaders. In the process, I was able to identify and resolve several bottlenecks, address issues raised by local communities affected by road construction, and successfully persuade officials in Delhi to make the necessary modifications. I believe that development does not happen by auto-pilot; as the completion of the bypass shows, sustained

engagement is vital to the successful completion of any such ambitious project.

My office has worked continuously to raise related matters that we have received from constituents who have sought attention to the conditions of our constituency's highway-related problems and infrastructural shortcomings. These include:

- Construction of Kazhakoottam Flyover
- Construction of Several Foot Over-Bridges
- Issues related to at-Grade junctions, Service Roads and Connectivity
- Construction of Vehicular Over Pass connecting Pazhayakada and Mavilikkadavu

### New Projects for ₹ 93 Cr including Flyover at Enchakkal

The EPC contract for the construction of 180-metre long Flyover at Enchakkal, Service Road Bridge at Thiruvallam, VUPs at Anayara and Pazhayakada have been awarded for a cost of ₹ 93.115 Cr and the work will start soon.



**PMGSY ROADS 2019-2024**

| SI No | BLOCK         | NAME OF ROAD   | LENGTH (KM) | TOTAL COST | Present status                                  |
|-------|---------------|--|-------------|------------|---|
| 1     | Athiyannur    | Suvarna jubilee-Kuttiplavila-Kattachalkuzhi-Peringammala-Mangalathu nada | 3.9         | 241.34     | Tarring completed                               |
| 2     | Athiyannur    | Attaramoola Punnakulam Prayumoodu Vattavila Mukkola road                 | 4.761       | 309.66     | Work completed                                  |
| 3     | Parassala     | Chenkkal prayumoodu avankkinvila manvilakadavu road                      | 4.465       | 255.37     | 2nd layer of metaling completed for 2km         |
| 4     | Perumkadavila | Thottipalam-phc Manakkala Vattaparambu Chemboor                          | 4.353       | 252.31     | Tarring completed (Mechanised Surface Dressing) |
| 5     | Perumkadavila | SN Puram Plampazhimji Attoor Manchacode Emmanuval College road           | 3.226       | 266.74     | Under tendering procedure                       |
| 6     | Perumkadavila | Chakkapara Puravimala road   | 7.746       | 694.41     | DPR submitted to Central for approval           |

**Central Road Fund (CRF)**

The Central Road Fund (CRF) is a nonlapsable fund created under Central Road Fund Act 2000, procured out of the Cess/Tax imposed by the Central Government on the consumption of Petrol and Diesel. The Centre approves a minimum number of projects out of a longer list submitted by the State government. Effective liaison work in New Delhi with the Ministry has been necessary to get projects of interest to the constituency included in the final list for implementation. These major projects came about as a result of my interventions:

**2022 - 2023**

- Balaramapuram – Vizhinjam – Poovar – Pananinna – Marappalam - Avanakuzhy MDR (27.4 Kms - ₹ 29.2 Cr)

**2017 - 2018**

- Jagathy-Killippalam- Kaimanam-Thiruvallam MDR (8 Kms - ₹ 7 Cr)
- Neyyattinkara-Pazhayakada-

Poovar and Pattiyakala-Paraniyam Road (15 Kms - ₹ 15 Cr)

**2014 - 2015**

- Venpalavattom-Kochuveli-Madavapuram and All Saints-Madhavapuram-Veli-Station Kadavu-Perumathura Road (10 Kms - ₹ 7 Cr)
- Balaramapuram - Kanjiramkulam-Poovar MDR (15 Kms - ₹ 12 Cr)

**2009-2014**

- For 7 different road projects a total of 72.75 Cr. was spent in the constituency.

**Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)**

PMGSY is aimed to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected villages and has been useful to fulfil some of the demands of my rural constituents, particularly since it is not possible to allocate substantial sums for road development out of MPLADS. In my last

term, a total of ₹ 21.8 Cr was spent for the construction of 15 roads and the details of the projects are as below:

- Kattachalvila-Maninadu-Vandithadam-Mannamkode-Narani Road ₹ 5.03 Cr.
- Pazhanjipara-Padappilthottam - Anavoor - Manvari Road : ₹ 2.81 Cr.
- CSI Church-Thundumaradi Road ₹ 1.05 Cr.
- Panayarakunnu-Perittumala Road ₹ 1.71 Cr.
- Nellimoodu-Nediyakala Road ₹ 1.39 Cr.
- Mariyapuram - Market Junction - Mullamkulam Road ₹ 2.43 Cr.
- Chitoorkonam-Chekkalamukku Road ₹ 1.03 Cr.
- ₹ 6.31 Cr. for :-
  - i) Anjalikonam - Kuzhinjamvila Road
  - ii) Samudayapotta- Chirakulam Road
  - iii) Kannaravila - SN Road,
  - iv) Kallikadu-Thurappil Road,
  - v) Kavinpuram- Attaramoola Road,
  - vi) Marappalam- Muttloor Road,
  - vii) Paraneeyam-Panankala Road, and
  - viii) Mariyapuram-Kodangara Road

*Similarly, we have also achieved significant landmarks for sanctions under the scheme in my current term (2019-2024).*

- Under the scheme, I proposed 7 projects in Thiruvananthapuram District at Perumkadavila, Athiyanoor, and Parassala. The newly build roads cover 34 kms, costing around ₹ 25 Cr.
- In Perumkadavila, the 4 new completed works cover 20.8 km costing ₹ 1607.47 lakhs. They are Kuttippumoodu DalumughamAlicodeChammavillaAruviyodu Road, MRL06-Thotttipalam-PHC ManakkalaVattaparambuChempoor Road, SN Puram PlampazhimjiAttoor-ManchacodeEmmanuval College Road, and ChakkapparaPuravimalaThenmala Road.

- In Parassala, the MRL16- Chenkal - Prayamoodu - Avankkinvila - Manvilakadavu road we proposed is 4.5 km long and utilized ₹ 288.74 lakhs.
- In Athiyanoor, I proposed 2 of the completed works covering 8.7 km and spent ₹ 604.38 lakhs in its expenditure. These roads are MRL17-Suvarna Jubilee-Kuttiplavila-KattachalKuzhi-Peringammala-Mangalathunada Road, and MRL01-Attaramoola PunnakulamParumooduVattavilaMukkola Road.

### Karamana-Kaliyakkavila State Highway

When Kazhakoottam to Karode Bypass was announced the NHAI informed the State government their decision to hand over the old highway from Karamana to Kaliyakkavila to the State NH division of PWD.

Subsequently, the UDF government started the first phase of widening of the stretch from Karamana to Pravachambalam in 2014. The second phase of widening from Pravachambalam to Kodinada started in 2019. Together, the widening of 11 kms till Kodinada is completed now.

The land acquisition proceedings of 1.5 kms stretch from Kodinada to Vazhimukku are still going on. The remaining 18.3 kms stretch from Vazhimukku - Kaliyikkavila is under consideration. It is disappointing to note that the widening of a 31 kms stretch is not even halfway through in 10 years. But, one should also understand it is a state government project and the local MP has no executive role to expedite the work.

At the same time, I was able to successfully intervene with Central Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari to allot ₹ 21 Cr. under a one-time maintenance scheme for the stretch from Vazhimukku to Kaliyikkavila in 2022, which helped the state government resurface the road.





## Vizhinjam Port

The Vizhinjam International Transshipment Port, one of Thiruvananthapuram's most significant connectivity and infrastructure projects, is on the verge of becoming a reality. On the 15th of October, 2023, the port welcomed its inaugural ship, a cargo vessel, and will soon be cleared to commence commercial operations that stand to transform the economic affairs of both the city and the state at large.

The first phase of the project amounts to ₹ 7,700 Cr. Indian rupee, and the combined cost of all four phases, including the remaining three, is ₹ 23,300 Cr. making the total cost ₹ 31,000 Cr. The Vizhinjam Seaport project is the first and only port project in India to receive VGF funding.

As the longest-serving member of the director board of VISL, the Government-owned company owning the port, I have been fortunate to be part of this journey since 2009, during my first term as the MP of Thiruvananthapuram, and remain proud of my efforts to make the

port a reality, in the face of the numerous challenges that have arisen along the way.

As the local MP as well as an active Member of the Board of VISL, I have been able to be actively involved and contribute in the following areas:

### Timeline

- Providing inputs into the Master Plan to ensure a future-ready port
- Persuading the leadership of Adani Ports to participate in the bid process after the 4th bid failed to attract any viable bidders
- Promoting the political consensus for choosing the single viable bid
- Finalizing the Terms of Reference for the 3-Season Environmental Impact Assessment Study
- Granting of Environmental Clearance from Ministry of Environment and Forests, GoI
- Giving my inputs into the preparation of the RFQ, RFP and concessionaire agreement
- Pushing for road connectivity to the



### NH Bypass

- Securing of 20% Viability Gap Funding from GoI
- Obtaining relaxation of the Cabotage law from GoI
- Fighting for adequate compensation for those affected by the project, especially in the coastal communities, and
- Being available to guide those involved at every stage of the project.

There are two principal reasons for my unwavering advocacy for the port. For one, Vizhinjam, located just ten nautical miles from the main shipping routes between Europe and Asia, and with an undredged depth of 24 metres, can host the biggest container ships and dramatically reduce our vulnerability to foreign ports. It therefore has all the necessary ground conditions to emerge as a source of major revenue for Kerala for decades to come. At the same time, Vizhinjam will also play a key role in enhancing India's national security, because it is intended to be our first major container port capable of taking on the transshipment of goods, most of which currently are trans-shipped via foreign ports -- especially Colombo, a port largely under Chinese control.

When it realises its commercial potential, Vizhinjam will pave the way to become a gateway that connects our city to the world and with it, endless business and trading opportunities resulting in jobs, growth and wealth in the whole region. Together, with the NH 4 lane bypass, which has been completed from Kazhakootam to the Tamil Nadu border (and its expansion to Tirunelveli is making progress), Thiruvananthapuram is in a prime position to host a dynamic industrial corridor that will ignite the economic aspirations of the people of the city.

## Railways

As has been the case in each of my terms as your MP, I have played a key role in voicing concerns relating to railways in our constituency while also working with

stakeholders in government to ensure that necessary infrastructure and rail-related improvements are made promptly.

Some key figures relating to efforts to improve rail connectivity and traveller experience in stations in our constituency during 2019 – 2024 are listed below:

- The foundation stone for the redevelopment of Thiruvananthapuram Central Railway Station at the cost of ₹ 497 Cr was laid in Apr 2023. The work is progressing and is expected to be completed by June 2027
- The first goods shed in Thiruvananthapuram district has been recently commissioned in Kazhakootam. This will not only cater to the needs of the constituency but will also serve as a vital connectivity pillar alongside the Vizhinjam port and the completed highway (including goods traffic towards neighboring districts of Tamil Nadu).

### New train services :

- Train 20633/20634 : Kasargod-Thiruvananthapuram-Kasargod Vande Bharat Express (via Kottayam)
- 20631/20632 : Kasargod-Thiruvananthapuram-Kasargode Vande Bharat Express (via Alappuzha)
- 22655/22656 Trivandrum - Nizamuddin - Trivandrum Weekly Superfast Express via Alleppey
- 22653/22654 Trivandrum - Nizamuddin-Trivandrum Weekly Superfast Express via Kottayam
- 19331/19332 Kochuveli - Indore - Kochu Veli Weekly
- 16355/16356 Kochuveli-Mangaluru Junction bi-weekly Antyodaya Express (via Alappuzha)
- Kollam - Trivandrum - Nagercoil MEMU service (2012)

## New train stoppage :

- Stoppage at Kazhakkootam for Amritha Express.

## Train Extension:

- 22627/22628 Thiruchirapally-Thirunelveli Intercity Express has been extended to Thiruvananthapuram

## Prior Stoppage :

- Stoppage at Kazhakootam for 56715/56716 Punalur - Kanniyakumari Passenger.
- Train stoppages at Parassala for: Ananthapuri Express, Jayanti Janata Express, Parasuram Express, Hapa Express, Memu Express.

## Some other notable improvements are:

- Speed raising work for the Thiruvananthapuram-Kayamkulam section has been proposed which will raise speed from 100 kmph to 110 kmph
- Two new lifts at Kochuveli station
- Upgradation of Neyyattinkara station under Amrit Bharat scheme
- In terms of electrification works, sidings to the length of 12.81 RKM have

been completed (which includes those at Kochuveli)

- A new retiring room as well as one with online booking facility has been operationalised at Thiruvananthapuram Central.
  - Platform shelter bays at Kochuveli station
  - New AC waiting halls at Thiruvananthapuram Central and Kochuveli
  - Provision of wheelchairs for disabled passengers at Thiruvananthapuram Central
  - Donation of a pair of plastic recycling machines for Thiruvananthapuram Central station
  - Doubling works on the Thiruvananthapuram-Nagercoil section is proceeding in a timely manner
  - Lobbying successfully for the renaming of Nemom and Kochuveli stations as Thiruvananthapuram South and North, respectively, to facilitate increased ticket sales to these destinations.
- During the previous terms, I had advocated and ensured additional stops at



Thiruvananthapuram Pettah/ Kochuveli stations to remedy the undue delay caused by the Integrated Block Signalling System. I have also written to the Minister seeking his intervention for the timely implementation of the signalling system which would address ongoing issues of congestions. Similarly, several representations were made to increase stops at Kazhakkuttam and to reinstate passenger trains that have been stopped due to Covid.

My office has held extensive discussions on the expansion of CCTV installation, additional AC coaches, Wifi facilities within trains, Railway Reservation Centers at RCC Thiruvananthapuram and such facilities that would enhance the railway infrastructure. Most representations have seen favourable replies – resulting in enhanced operational efficiency and a more ambient travel experience for our people. The office has also made interventions to seek a continuance of the Railway Recruitment Board and has voiced the concerns of several constituents who have faced issues regarding their service conduit.

During the previous term also, I have been able to bring some significant improvements to the railway amenities in my constituency, A snapshot is given below.

#### New Initiatives :

- New current reservation systems/ counters installed at Thiruvananthapuram Central.
- Almost 104 new coaches added to the trains from/to Thiruvananthapuram
- Free Wi-Fi services commissioned in Thiruvananthapuram Central station
- Two nos. of limited-use subways were constructed as replacement to the existing level crossing, both between Nemom and Neyyatinkara, LC No. 7 - km.233.845 on 21.1.2016 and LC No. 5 - km.229.745 on 20.05.2016

## Station Infrastructure Development :

### Thiruvananthapuram Central

In Thiruvananthapuram central station, Integrated Security system was installed and improvements were made to the parking area, fountains and landscaping, retiring room, and platform shelter costing ₹ 1.23 Cr. done. Women facilitation center is now available at Thiruvananthapuram station.

Provision of Divyang toilets in island platforms, provision of new auto & taxi paid counter with shelter for queuing area, improvements to passenger information center, enhancement of parking space are in progress.

Electrification of the Thiruvananthapuram-Nagercoil-Kanyakumari Railway line ₹ 57 Cr.

Above all, this year, I have proposed for installation of 10 three seater perforated stainless steel chairs, industrial reverse osmosis plant and sanitary napkin vending machine in Neyyatinkara, Parassala through my MPLADS. For Dhanuvachapuram railway station, four three-seater perforated stainless steel chairs have been proposed for installation this year.

### Kochuveli

Second Coaching Terminal Phase II works, which includes Island Platform- 1, three new Platform lines, two pit lines, sick line shed with 3 pits - and one service building, costing ₹ 15 Cr are the works implemented in Kochu Veli station.

Besides that, automatic ticket vending machines were installed in the station. Provision of Foot over bridge at Kochu Veli station connecting platforms, main entry & second entry costing ₹ 2.48 Cr. is in progress.

### Kazhakoottam

Provision for unreserved ticketing,

Passenger Reservation System (through IUTS) facility are made available. ₹ 12.5 Lakhs were spent for installing benches and shelters.

Among other works new waiting hall was constructed and automatic ticket vending machines were installed at Kazhakuttam station.

### Balaramapuram

Extension & raising of platform, provision of Shelter costing a total ₹ 55 Lakhs were completed.

### Neyyattinkara

The station is now equipped with Automatic Ticket Vending Machine for booking unreserved train tickets.

### Dhanuvachapuram

Construction of new station building and waiting hall were completed in the station.

### Parassala

In Parassala station, roofing was constructed above the foot-over bridge and provision for passenger amenities was enhanced.

### Renaming of Kochuveli station and Nemom Station

Since my first term as your MP, I had consistently urged the government to consider a proposal I had made to rename two satellite stations in our constituency, ie, Kochuveli and Nemom. I had made the case that such a move would be beneficial to constituents and those traveling via Thiruvananthapuram for multiple reasons.

As I pointed out in meetings and letters to the two Railway Ministers under the NDA government, such a change would help address a major source of confusion for rail passengers, especially those who are not familiar with these two satellite railway stations. Often, for the purposes of their travel, it would be in the passenger's

interest to alight at one of these stations, instead of Trivandrum Central, given the proximity of these stations to their final destination; but sadly, due to the confusion regarding the question of whether these stations are indeed in Thiruvananthapuram, many often do not end up choosing these stations as their point of disembarkation. Equally, the renaming of these two stations, alongside allied efforts such as increasing the frequency of trains that are scheduled to halt at these two stations, would help address the major ongoing issue of significant congestion at Trivandrum Central and would not only be beneficial to passengers but would allow for increased efficiency within the railway system.

Thanks to my efforts, the Union government finally accepted my proposal and has given approval for the renaming of these two stations, with the concurrence of the state government, a move that will usher in greater ease of convenience for rail travellers in our district. The state government has recently concurred to the proposal of renaming the railway stations.

## Airport

In each of my terms I have been an unwavering advocate for the growth and expansion of our city's airport. As many of you are aware, I was a strong supporter of the move to adopt the PPP model for the operation, management and development of Trivandrum International Airport, despite opposition from the LDF and even my own party. The reason for my stand is simple: With the LDF-led state government's competing interests in 3 other airports in the state, under the supervision of the state government, Thiruvananthapuram Airport had systematically been neglected with poor facilities and the majority of additional flights being allocated to either Kochi or Kannur.

As a result, the residents of Thiruvananthapuram have been facing major travel woes, connectivity issues and high flight





tariffs. According to a survey of 700 frequent flyers conducted by the Trivandrum Airport Users Forum, over 50% of the respondents pointed out that they preferred travelling from CIAL over TVM due to better connectivity and lower fares. We have also witnessed multiple instances of major airlines ceasing operations from Trivandrum. To my mind, given these circumstances, the professional management of all aspects relating to the operational side of our airport would arrest the decline of our airport and pave the way for both greater connectivity as well as better facilities for those seeking to travel via the Trivandrum airport.

I believe that my consistent advocacy and support for our airport in the state capital has been vindicated on multiple levels.

#### Major Projects :

- International Airport Terminal  
₹ 300 Cr - 2011)
- Air India Hanger Terminal  
₹ 50 Cr - 2011

#### In terms of facilities:

- 2 new lounges have been opened for the convenience of passengers in T1&T2.
- Retail and F&B outlets have been increased from 21 to 80+, which has

allowed for a better passenger experience within the airport.

- Online taxi service has been implemented
- Duty free shops have been reopened for passengers.
- We now have an E-bus service connecting both terminals and the main city.
- New building for ARFF has been commissioned.
- E Gates and Bar code scanners for smooth passenger flow have been operationalised.
- Digiyatra services for expedited movement of passengers will be implemented soon
- New ALS, RRM and Friction testing machines for runway safety
- Pranaam service is now available for the provision of personalized hospitality.
- D-Level ambulance service for the emergency health needs of passengers.
- New domestic cargo terminal has been approved.
- WiFi coupon kiosks in both terminals
- Bullet Resistant vehicle for CISF
- Automated parking system with Fastag
- EV charging stations @ landside and airside



- Runway strip widening to 110 M completed

From a connectivity perspective:

- The airport now boasts of increased connectivity (both domestic and international terminals) as well as reduced fares.
- New destinations have been opened up for passengers including Kuala Lumpur, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Nagpur, Pune etc
- New Airlines are currently operating from our airport including Malaysian, Salam, Air Asia Berhad and Akasa Air.
- Air Traffic Movement, which was 43 in 2021 has more than doubled to 96 (as on February 1, 2024).
- Similarly PAX handle has nearly tripled from 5288 in 2021 to 14,246 (as on February 1, 2024).
- Number of destinations served has increased from 7 Domestic/10 International (2021) to 9 Domestic/12 International (2024)

My decision to support the PPP model for the operational management of our airport was made primarily based on the need to go beyond our partisan politics and focus on the needs of air travellers from Trivandrum. As these statistics reflect, my decision has been vindicated by the development of a more dynamic, vibrant and active airport. I will continue to bat for the airport so that we can build on these gains and ensure that our airport becomes the best one in our state.

## COVID Relief Initiatives

While the devastation unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic represents a dark chapter in our lives, I am proud of my efforts both to use the resources at my disposal to aid relief efforts, as well as to leverage my personal relations with

senior ministers of the government and the international diplomatic community in an attempt to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in our constituency and bring stranded Keralites back home.

In the short time between the commencement of the lockdowns and the suspension of all MPLAD funds through a misguided decree of the union government, Thiruvananthapuram became the first city in the country to deliver urgently-needed Testing kits and PPE equipment for medical personnel and to introduce thermal imaging cameras at the Thiruvananthapuram Airport, in order to screen incoming passengers for possible symptoms, all purchases managed through my MPLADS funds. Similarly, I also used these funds to provide medical equipment such as ICU cots, Defibrillators, and Dialysis Equipment for COVID-19 wards at MCH and General Hospital.

**When authorities brought the continuing serious shortage of testing kits to my attention, I immediately reached out to the then Korean Ambassador H.E Shin Bongkil, whose nation's company SD Biosensor was engaged in the production of antigen test kits. In collaboration with my office, my intervention led to the timely despatch of 5000 antigen kits which were handed over to the district health authorities.**

**To ensure the health and safety of our frontline workers, we also distributed 9000 PPE kits, 3000 Rapid RT-PCR Kits, 250 non-contact InfraRed thermometers, and 100 EBAS (Emergency Breathing Assistance Systems). I was pleased to be able to ensure these were procured shortly before the Union government announced the suspension of all MPLADS funds for two years.**

## Repatriation

During the course of the international lockdowns, my office and I received several hundred requests for repatriation Keralites

stranded abroad and, understandably, desperate to come home. These requests came from Keralites stranded in over 25 countries, including students in countries like Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Haiti and the Philippines, to fisherfolk stranded in Iran and Gulf countries, to caretakers in places like Israel and France. I maintained regular personal contact with the Foreign Minister and the Civil Aviation Minister, both personal friends, and developed a mechanism wherein each of these cases was forwarded to a designated individual in their offices and were followed through till their timely repatriation was ensured. On the domestic front, I received numerous requests, including from fellow MPs and on social media, which brought me queries from political leaders in Bihar, Bengal, Maharashtra, and even Nagaland for such temporary migrants from their states in Thiruvananthapuram, for all of whom my constituency team arranged help. Equally, when truck drivers from Kerala (including from Thiruvananthapuram), were stuck in Maharashtra, I intervened through social media and telephone with the government there and got them released to go back to Kerala. I worked with the police authorities in Rajasthan to arrange the road transport of migrants in that state back to Kerala when train services were suspended. Another request I was pleased to fulfil was to record messages in Hindi and Bengali for migrant workers in Kerala at the request of the Malayala Manorama, which turned out to be effective in reassuring them and discouraging their attempted return to their home states, which could have caused chaos in Kerala.

I was also pleased that my personal intervention with the Ministry for External Affairs and with the Ministry of Civil Aviation paved the way to ensure that permissions for several chartered flights (mainly organised by expatriate Keralite welfare groups) were provided in a timely manner, which ensured that hundreds of Keralites across the world were able to return home. I was particularly touched when one expatriate organisation even sponsored a chartered flight from Bahrain to Thiru-

vananthapuram in my name, as a gesture of gratitude for my efforts in this regard. At the same time, I was also able, in many instances, to intervene with the authorities, particularly the DGCA, to ensure that necessary permissions were provided in a timely manner for those seeking to return to foreign countries to resume their livelihood. In particular, we were successful in ensuring that hundreds of Keralite caregivers were able to travel back to Israel after I intervened with airlines like Air France and the DGCA, including for one patient seeking to urgently travel to resume his treatment for cancer in Israel.

Finally, keeping in mind the various challenges faced by expatriates seeking to return home, students facing the challenge of giving examinations and submitting dissertations in the middle of the lockdown, cases of assault being faced by doctors and inadequate social security provisions for these professionals as well as the enhanced economic challenges faced by already vulnerable communities like our fisherfolk, I also shared strong recommendations and policy suggestions through letters to the Hon'ble PM, Governor of Kerala, CM and the External Affairs Minister, in addition to other important stakeholders like the heads of academic institutions. On a related note, I was also pleased that my personal intervention with the Hon'ble Speaker paved the way for a modification of rules relating to MPLAD purchases which allowed MPs from across the country to use these funds to purchase critical relief equipment in a timely manner. ■



# COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



## Coastal Communities

Coastal erosion is the major problem affecting Pozhiyoor and the coastal area at large. Several houses have been lost in sea inundation. The solution lies in building groynes and seawalls, which Tamil Nadu, just across the border, has done. I have raised the matter repeatedly with both the state government and the central government but other than passing the buck to each other, nothing has happened. From my meagre MP funds, I have allotted ₹ 1 Cr to build seawalls in 2 fishing villages in Pozhiyoor which have been completed now. But I should add sadly that not an inch more has been added to that by either the state or the central government. In Nov 2019, as the reply to my Rule 377

intervention in Parliament demanding construction of seawalls along the coastline of Thiruvananthapuram, Union Jal Shakti Minister Shri Ratan Lal Kattaria wrote to me saying that States are responsible for protecting the coastline and help under the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme is not feasible until the 12th five year plan is over. At that time, I had written to the Kerala CM also pointing to this reply from Centre and seeking expeditious action by the state Government. My recent parliamentary interventions on coastal issues include:

### 2019

- Special Mention (Coastal erosion in Thiruvananthapuram)
- 377 (Sea walls along Thiruvananthapuram Coastline)



## 2020

- Zero Hour (Ockhi)
- Zero Hour (Economic Relief for Fisherfolk community)

## 2021

- 377 (Draft Blue Economy Policy)

## 2022

- 377 (Coastal Erosion along South Kerala Coastline/Vizhinjam Seaport Protest)

## 2023

- Lack of Fishing Harbours in Thiruvananthapuram

## Vizhinjam Agitation

When the Vizhinjam project was started in 2015 by the UDF government, I had taken steps with the Chief Minister to ensure that this project would not cause distress to anyone in the area, and that those affected would benefit from a rehabilitation pack-

age of ₹ 475 Cr., which authorised by the State Cabinet in 2015-16 and was to be implemented in five years. The failure of the LDF state government to fulfil this solemn commitment lies at the root of the recent Vizhinjam agitation.

Fair prices were given to the owners of the land acquired. The 67 families who lost their houses were resettled with state assistance. Compensation packages were also worked out for those who had lost their livelihoods due to the project. But in 2016, the new government took over and unfortunately, did not pursue the implementation of approved and ongoing commitments to the local community. An agitation ensued that resulted in the state government filing unjust charges against community leaders and senior Churchmen which I have demanded be withdrawn. I have been involved in some of the discussions held with the community leaders and



supportive of mediation efforts by Cardinal Mar Baselios Cleemis and others. I hope the state government will fulfil its promises and the local community's grievances are resolved without further delay.

### ESA Notification

In 2022, the government released a draft Ecological Sensitive Area (ESA) Notification on Western Ghats, based on the recommendations of the Kasturirangan Committee Report. The notification had demarcated 123 villages in Kerala as falling under the ESA category, including the villages of Kallikadu, Amboori and Vazhichal from our constituency. This notification, which would have displaced a significant number of constituents and affected many livelihoods, was naturally a source of great concern and anxiety, particularly for residents of these villages.

I immediately reached out to the Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change and pointed out that the inclusion of these three villages were flawed on multiple grounds. In each of the three villages, the total area under ESA was well below the 20% criterion that allows for exclusion. At the same time, the existing population density in these villages was well above the '100 persons/km<sup>2</sup>' which would also have allowed for their exclusion. Finally, I also pointed out that none of these villages were home to any significant industrial or other polluting economic units, nor harbouring the presence of any rare and protected biodiversity. Based on these three factors, I was successfully able to convince the Union government in subsequent meetings with the Minister and senior officials, to exclude our three villages in the revised notification that was issued subsequently, a move that will allow residents of these villages to continue with their way of life without the threat of disruption or displacement.

## HEALTH

### SCTIMST

The Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology is one of our premier autonomous medical research facilities, and an Institute of National Importance established in 1973 at Thiruvananthapuram. Since my first term, I have taken a keen interest in the functioning of this prestigious, lifesaving institution. I have also served as a member of the Institute Body during my first five years as MP and again during my third term.

The Institute has been facing difficult times with respect to funding for existing commitments and for its proposed expansion. I have held successful talks with successive institution heads of SCTIMST as well the Minister of Science & Technology in Delhi and, as always, extended my fullest cooperation and support in ensuring the





growth of SCTIMST, especially in their much-needed expansion plans in the land (adjacent to their existing building) allotted to them from the estate of the Trivandrum Medical College. I also intervened at the request of the Director to defuse a public and media controversy over a necessary hike in fees charged to patients by the Institute. I am pleased to welcome the decision of the Central Government, which I had requested, to provide ₹ 230 Cr. in funding for SCTIMST in that fiscal year, with ₹ 120 Cr. from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and ₹ 110 Cr. from the Department of Science and Technology, both of which I had written to and spoken to in support of this request. PMNRF

**The 170-bed capacity PMSSY block of the institute constructed at a cost of ₹ 230 Cr. is coming up in 83.4 cents.** With the completion of this new block, the institute expects to serve an additional 10000 in-patients and 15000 out-patients as well as 105000 review outpatient cases per year.

### Regional Cancer Centre

I have fought for some time for additional resources to the Regional Cancer Centre in Thiruvananthapuram, though my efforts, both in Parliament and in direct contact with the Minister of Health, to get the RCC upgraded to a Centre of National Importance have not yet proved successful. Nonetheless, the Government has agreed to support the RCC as a State Cancer Institute. In response to a question I raised in Parliament, the Minister of Health announced that an amount of ₹ 46.957 Cr would be released under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) as the first instalment of the Government of India contribution to the RCC. This sum has been released to the State Government during the financial year 2016-17. In 2021, keeping the financial strength of

the institute in mind, I was also able to successfully intervene with the Power Grid Corporation, which provided the institute ₹ 20 Cr. from their CSR funds for the purchase of certain critical and state of the art medical equipment.

### Medical College

Super Speciality Block at MCH under PMSSY ₹ 120 Cr. - 2011

## CENTRAL SCHEMES

### PMNRF & RAN

Scores of financially constrained constituents approach me for help to cover their medical expenses. One of the ways by which assistance is extended is through the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or the Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi scheme under the Ministry of Health. Between 2014 and 2016, I have forwarded close to 170 such cases and out of which, 109 persons have been allotted around ₹ 1.70 Cr.

Between 2019-2024 I have forwarded an additional 560 cases for consideration under this scheme, of which 172 persons have been allotted around ₹ 2,29,87,500/-. More modest amounts are provided out of my own personal resources through the Chandran Tharoor Foundation.

### PMSAGY – Village Adoption Scheme

Though announced with great fanfare, the PMSAGY is a scheme that has no dedicated funds for its execution. Hence, understandably enough, there has only been limited success with the scheme. Nevertheless, Kottukal Panchayat in Kovalam, which also includes the densely populated fishing village of Adimalathurai, was selected for the first phase of the SAGY scheme. In later years, the scheme was extended to Amboori, Kulathoor and Chenkal.

## Central Ayurveda Institute

New building of Central Ayurveda Institute at Poojappura ₹ 10 Cr.

## Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute

Central assistance to Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute unit in Vizhinjam ₹ 8 Cr.

## Swachh Bharat

I accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to me to serve as one of his original "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" Ambassadors in a spirit of national service for a non-political cause, despite the political criticism this attracted. As my personal project for Swachh Bharat, I undertook the cleanup of a prominent section of Vizhinjam Beach, taking care to involve the local community as stakeholders in the effort. Local residents living across from the beach and members and office-bearers of the Muslim Jama'ath, together with Congress party workers, joined me in the cleanup. I visited the area thereafter to ensure it remained clean. It has since been further beautified in a Tourism Department project for which I had obtained central funding under the previous government.

I also took the opportunity to write to the Prime Minister to ask for something more substantive than this symbolic action. With the assistance of the Collector, I submitted a 75-page detailed proposal for the revival of the historic Parvathy Puthanar canal in Thiruvananthapuram. I pointed out that cleaning it alone would not be enough, since it would be filled with waste again unless more comprehensive action was taken. I called for a scheme that would not only clear the garbage and sludge from the canal and flush it with clean water, but would be supplemented by a project to connect the houses on both sides of the



canal to the city's sewage system and provide the residents alternative sites to dump their waste instead of dropping it, as at present, into the canal. With such a major project the root causes of the problem would also be solved, but it was beyond the capacity of the MP or the local authorities and required Central Assistance. Sadly, I am yet to hear from the Prime Minister on my proposal.

I have further taken up, in meetings with the sanitation officials, the need to link a number of houses in Beemapalli to the Muttathara sewage plant. I continue to pursue the implementation of sanitation and sewage projects in my constituency.

## Vizhinjam Lighthouse Modernization

The lighthouse at Vizhinjam is situated at a very picturesque spot and, given its immense tourism potential, I obtained

from the Ministry of Shipping ₹ 2 Cr. in 2014 for its beautification and renovation. A new lift has been installed, tiles laid and a viewing gallery prepared. While this work was going on, I also got the structure included in the list of lighthouses handpicked to be developed as tourism destinations by the Director General of Lighthouse & Lightships under the PPP model. By the end of 2019, a grand total of ₹ 3.86 Cr. was spent for the development of Vizhinjam Lighthouse, to add amenities such as cafeteria and for beautification, including a musical fountain, which has made it one of the premier tourist destinations of the area.

### Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple

Sree Padmanabha Swamy is the celebrated guardian deity of Thiruvananthapuram, a city whose very name is connected with the Lord who reclines on the majestic Anantha, representing Infinity. Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme aimed at the integrated development of theme-based

tourist circuits by the Ministry of Tourism, the temple precincts will benefit from infrastructure development worth ₹ 76.26 Cr. I had requested the Central Government for a larger grant of ₹ 300 Cr. considering the historic and spiritual importance of the temple, but as the first allotment, the current one marks a satisfactory beginning. My requests for similar funding for the Sabarimala and Kurishumala pilgrimage sites is currently pending with the Government.

### Smart Cities Project

I had raised strong and sustained objections to the omission of Thiruvananthapuram from the first round of selection for the Central Government's Smart Cities project and since stressed to the Urban Development Minister the need for the inclusion of all State capitals in the scheme. As a result of these efforts, Thiruvananthapuram was back on the list of beneficiaries, was included in the Smart City 1.0 project and received funding of ₹ 1135 Cr. These projects including the construction of smart



roads, an integrated command and control system, an integrated traffic control system 100 E-buses for KSRTC and solar panels for government institutions are currently underway.

Thiruvananthapuram is the only city in Kerala earmarked for the Smart City 2.0 project which focuses on waste management initiatives. ₹ 150 Cr. will be the first instalment to implement the proposal for waste management at the source.

### Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY)

I could effectively intervene in the selection of Mathipuram Colony in Vizhinjam as the pilot project of the Rajiv Awas Yojana in the State during my previous term. The project is to rehabilitate 1032 families into modern individual housing units with parks, anganwadis, and other amenities to improve the overall socio-economic condition of the fishing village at a cost of ₹ 72 Cr. The first phase began in 2014 and 81 units were handed over in 2015 and 140 units in 2018. The second phase consisting of 321 units was handed over in 2022. The current Union government has regrettably since discontinued the RAY scheme.

## INSTITUTIONS

### National Centre for Earth Science Studies (NCESS)

The transformation of State government-run Centre for Earth Science Studies into a National Centre for Earth Science Studies under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, GoI, in 2014 was not only a recognition of the three decades of meritorious service rendered by the reputed scientists of the institution, but also a strong indication of the vital role it will play in the future in unraveling the mysteries of our planet. With its new mandate and resources, this Thiruvananthapuram-based institution will have a significant role in promoting modern scientific and technological research and development studies that are of importance to India in the field of Earth Sciences.

NCESS imparts an all-encompassing and multidisciplinary approach to understanding the earth in its totality, transcending the boundaries of organized disciplines and gaining knowledge of the interactive and competing processes that shape the earth, from its evolution to the present status that is witnessing an ever-increasing demand for natural resources.

### NISH University

The National Institute of Speech and Hearing (NISH) in Akkulam, is an initiative to provide high quality education to people with disabilities. The critical role it played

#### *Central Institutions started in Thiruvananthapuram at my initiative during my tenure as Minister of State in UPA-2*

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|--|---|
| ■ Passport Seva Kendras PSKs in Vazhuthacaud & Neyyattinkara | ■ AICTE Regional Office, Chavadimukku                               |
| ■ Bio Innovation Center of RGCB, Akkulam                     | ■ ESI Corporation, Sub Regional Office (Panchadeep Bhavan), Thycaud |
| ■ NCESS (formerly Center for Earth Science Studies), Akkulam | ■ Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Pattom                              |
| ■ CBSE Regional Office, Pattom                               | ■ Capital Centre, Central University Of Kerala, Pattom              |
| ■ CPWD Regional Office, Poonkulam                            |   |
| ■ Bharatiya Mahila Bank, Manacaud                            |   |



in the society as well as the need for a research centre offering education and treatment for visually impaired, autism affected and mentally challenged persons resulted in the demand to turn it into an institute of excellence, which the Central Government agreed to. NISH was declared as a University in the Finance Minister's 2015 budget speech. According the budget declaration, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment was to spend ₹ 390 Cr. for the first five years of expansion of the university which would have infrastructural as well as operational components.

But even after years since the budget declaration, the Central Government has not yet introduced the NISH University bill in the Parliament. I have formally reminded the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment in early 2018 to expedite the same and continued to raise the issue in my Parliamentary interventions.

### CMFRI, Vizhinjam

In a bid to expand the breeding and seed production for Indian Pompano, the National Fisheries Development Board under Ministry of Agriculture had sanctioned ₹ 5.64 Cr. in 2017 for the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Vizhinjam. The MP report of 2009-2014 had previously mentioned about the completion of a new building for CMFRI. As MP I continue to keep an eye on the progress of this important institution.

### Privatisation of HLL Lifecare

HLL Lifecare is a premier Central public sector enterprise in my constituency which has been running a profit for the past 50 years. The recent decision by the Central government to privatise the PSU has provoked widespread resistance from the employees and opposition from all the trade unions.

I strongly supported the demand of the employees' unions to consider HLL's record on the merits. Along with their representatives, I met the then Central Finance Minister personally and urged an immediate freeze to the privatisation move. The Minister had assured me that he would place the matter on hold but the level of orders provided by the Central Government to HLL has fallen significantly resulting in layoffs and subsequent losses which has affected the future of the institution. I would urge the Union government to limit privatisation to loss-making enterprises and allow a thriving public sector company to flourish.

### Retention of ICCR Regional Office

The decision taken by Indian Council of Cultural Relations to merge functions of its Thiruvananthapuram Regional Office with Chennai office got deferred, after my intervention on the matter with the Minister of External affairs, along my follow-up meeting with the Deputy Director General of the Council. I had pointed out that the excessive distance between Thiruvananthapuram and Chennai could strain students while pursuing needed assistance from the Council.

I also explained the significance of having a regional office in Kerala to catalyse various cultural and academic activities, fostering relationship between foreign nations and the State of Kerala. The present decision adds much to the relief of students and employees in ICCR's Thiruvananthapuram Regional Office.

### BrahMos Aerospace Thiruvananthapuram Ltd (BATL)

BATL is a fully owned subsidiary of BrahMos Aerospace Limited, a joint venture between the Defence Research

and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India and the Federal State Unitary Enterprise NPO Mashinostroyeniya (NPOM) of Russia. The BrahMos missile is named after two rivers, the Brahmaputra and the Moskva. BATL was a Kerala State PSU named KELTEC before its takeover by the Defence Ministry.

Over the years, BATL, an institution with huge potential in defence manufacturing, has been facing issues related to fund infusion, manpower recruitment and employee benefits. All the employee unions, cutting across the political divide, had approached me to take up the issue with the Defence Ministry as their local MP. I first met with them in detail to understand the issues, and then held a joint meeting with union representatives and BATL management to seek to iron out the problems.

In late 2016, I followed up the matter in a very productive meeting with the then Defence Minister in the presence of the CEO and MD of BrahMos, as well as the MD and senior staff of BATL, to iron out the issues and to create a sustainable road map for future growth. Some of the solutions discussed are yet to be fully implemented. With subsequent changes of guard in the Defence Ministry, I have been following up the matter by correspondence and have undertaken other rounds of discussion with the unions. More recently, I wrote on behalf of employees of the BrahMos Staff Association urging the government to raise the retirement age of those working at BATL and to bring it at par with the parent company.

## Information Technology

I am pleased to note that Technopark has grown rapidly in the last few decades and has added substantial employment opportunities for residents of our city. However, one aspect in which we were lagging

behind other cities was in our ability to attract world-class companies to establish offices in Thiruvananthapuram and provide employment opportunities for our local talented and skilled professionals.

I took this up as a challenge from my very first term and was pleased to have played a strong role in this regard, particularly in my successful efforts to persuade and bring **US tech giant Oracle Corp to our city**. I could also play a major part in bringing the global automobile maker **Nissan Motor Corp's Nissan Digital to set up their first digital innovation hub in Technopark**. Similarly, I was also able to convincing EY to stay in our city and expand its presence in Technopark.

Another particularly challenging but ultimately successful initiative was to bring **Tech Mahindra** to Thiruvananthapuram. This took some time as they first wanted direct flight connectivity with Pune, which is where their headquarters are located. To address this concern, I was able to convince Indigo to start a direct flight operations from Thiruvananthapuram to Pune and, once this was in place, as was previously assured, Tech Mahindra has started their facility in Technopark. Currently they employ 200 persons but with their own campus on the way, this will soon grow to 2000.

At the same time, other major Indian IT giants like TCS, Infosys and UST Global which are already in Thiruvananthapuram are flourishing and expanding. Similarly, **Embassy Taurus Techzone (ETTZ)** project in Technopark spread over an area of 12 acres, which I have mentored since the beginning of its very conception, has inaugurated their first SEZ building called Niagara with 1 million sq. ft of leasable space in Jan 2024. Their second SEZ building Victoria will also have 1 million square feet of leasable space and

its construction is expected to commence later in 2024.

## INTERVENTIONS

Through letters, questions or statements in Parliament, and conversations and meetings with the concerned stakeholders and ministers on the subject.

### Student Community

Both during COVID and subsequently, I have repeatedly raised and intervened on issues faced by our student community. During the pandemic, I intervened on multiple occasions with the state government and the Hon'ble Governor on issues including distress caused to students of Kerala University, Kerala Technological University, KUHS and Mahatma Gandhi University by sudden announcement of examination schedules in the middle of the pandemic (on multiple occasions), the limited number of NEET centers for students based in GCC regions, the need to relax deadlines for thesis submissions for students at JNU and the need to reconsider abrupt decision at the time to resume classes for UG and PG students enrolled in universities in our state. More recently, I also intervened on behalf of MDS interns from the COVID-afflicted 2018 batch, who were deemed eligible to appear for the March 18 date of the NEET MDS exam.

I also intervened on other issues faced by students over the course of my current term including registration challenges faced by FMCG medical students, the disruptions caused to their studies on account of the pandemic, travel restrictions and the Ukraine War, the discontinuation of scholarships for diaspora students, the need for additional NEET centers, difficulties faced by students appearing for the Kerala Legal Entrance Examinations and distress faced by Class 12 CBSE students due to the nature of their examinations and assess-

ments, among others.

I have also repeatedly written to the authorities on financial issues faced by students, including delays in releasing increments for MPhil and PhD holders and significant delays in release of UGC and other fellowships for students. More recently, I also wrote to the Chief Minister on behalf of hundreds of applicants who had successfully cleared the Civil Police Exam (under the Kerala Police) but whose recruitment had been facing inordinate delays. I also wrote to the Governor on the alarming rise of violence in our state's campuses, particularly on account of criminal SFI operations and urged for a comprehensive and consultative review of the culture of student politics on our campuses as well as calling for a central investigation to look into the recent tragic demise of a young student following harassment by SFI members.

### Ananthapuri FM and Doordarshan :

Following the merger of Ananthapuri FM and Akashvani AM, I appealed on behalf of Ananthapuri FM Casual Assignees urging the Minister to reconsider the nature of the merger which would have resulted in job losses for many dedicated workers of this broadcasting service. I also highlighted that the nature of the merger would impact the quality and diversity of radio programmes and it would, therefore, also affect the cultural and informational needs of nearly 4.5 million loyal listeners.

I also intervened on behalf of the Association of Radio and Television Engineering Employees on the subject of the proposal to shut down Doordarshan's analogue terrestrial transmitters in the state and replace them with digital terrestrial transmitters. In my appeal to the Minister, I pointed out that the analogue transmitters played a vital role in disseminating key information especially during heavy weather conditions (such as during the Kerala floods)

and also urged him to consider converting broadcasting centers in the state intended for closure to AIR FM transmitters to address the shortage of AIR coverage in the state.

### ISRO, VSSC and BrahMos

I have consistently voiced my support for and intervened on behalf of employees associated with ISRO, VSSC and BrahMos. For instance, I have intervened on behalf of VSSC and ISRO workers for the long pending establishment of a Joint Consultative Mechanism within the organisation to address grievances of employees (and also raised this issue in Parliament).

### Doctors, Nurses and Medical Professionals

Following the tragic demise of young Dr Vandana Das, I both wrote to the Minister urging for a comprehensive law to protect our medical professionals and also presented a model Private Member's Bill that sought to protect medical professionals and institutions from violence at the workplace. During the pandemic I also urged the PM to take cognisance regarding the various instances of stigma faced by medical professionals (such as being asked to vacate their places of residence etc) despite their brave and courageous efforts to insulate us from the effects of the pandemic. I have also repeatedly raised issues relating to our nurses including the delay in implementation of revised pay scales for nurses across the country, the need for a streamlined and accessible transfer policy for non faculty cadre working in medical institutions under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and also intervened with the Minister on behalf of the Kerala Government Nurses Union after they had reached out to share their difficulties in finding an examination center in either Kerala or Tamil Nadu in order to appear for the JIPMER Nurses Examination.

### HIL

On behalf of the HIL Retired Employees' Association, I appealed to the Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers to restore the post-retirement medical insurance policy scheme that had been previously extended to them through HIL India. In my letter, I pointed out that these workers work under difficult conditions, including exposure to hazardous material and deserve the necessary health support especially in their retirement years. During the tour of the Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers that I chaired, I also made it a point to make the committee visit the HIL factory at Udyogamandal where we met with worker unions to discuss the large number of grievances they had primarily on account of delayed payments and lack of social security benefits.

### Cyclone Ockhi

Cyclone Ockhi devastated parts of Southern Kerala and Tamil Nadu, particularly the fishing hamlets in Thiruvananthapuram and took the lives of hundreds of fellow human beings. I witnessed first-hand the aftermath of the Ockhi disaster on the shore and its terrible toll on marginalized fishermen in Thiruvananthapuram who, owing to the lack of a timely cyclone alert, had ventured out to sea, unaware of the impending danger.

On the day after it struck the sea and the coast, I joined the fishing communities desperate to know about the whereabouts of their family members out in the sea, concerned and confused about the rescue mission. Sitting in the Parish office in Poonthura, along with my senior party colleagues, Diocese heads and representatives of the District administration, I followed up personally by telephone with the Defence Minister, the Shipping Minister, the Coast Guard and the Navy and stayed with them until the rescue missions



got into full swing. I also ensured that a message from the Director General of Shipping was transmitted to all the ships travelling close to our international waters to look out for survivors and missing persons, which resulted in several rescues of valuable lives.

I travelled to each and every fishing village in my constituency affected by the cyclone, to console the families, step-up the rescue efforts and bring in relief. I visited every single home that had been affected by the loss of a loved one in the disaster.

In the aftermath of the disaster, I was able to mobilize the Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy for their assistance in search and rescue operations. The Indian Meteorological Department failed to inform the fishermen who went out to the sea, 24 hours before the cyclone struck. In the Parliament I had asked Government as to what steps it had taken to improve the Four-Stage warning system on the Western Coast. Unfortunately, the Government has failed to provide any response on the matter and has even claimed that the Doppler Radar in Thiruvananthapuram worked effectively during the period of Ockhi, without explaining as to why the tragedy took place, if it indeed was effective. During the parliament session, I raised concern over IMD's existing four stage warning system and the present effectiveness of the Doppler Radar system.

Additionally, I held discussions with the Central Finance Minister and the Agriculture and Fisheries Minister seeking immediate comprehensive assistance to the fisherfolk affected by Cyclone Ockhi and pursued the grant of additional relief to the victims.

I also proposed to the concerned ministries that they form the marine equivalent of our Territorial Army, training selected fisher folk on how to carry out search-and-

rescue operations in partnership with the Coast Guard and the Navy. Such a reserve unit will be highly effective in the fallout of any disaster that hits the coast. The proposal is still pending with the Union government.

### Shifting of Neyyattinkara RDO

The recent decision of the State government to form a new revenue division in Nedumangad, which included 21 villages of Neyyattinkara and Kattakada taluks from Thiruvananthapuram revenue division created resentment among people of Neyyattinkara and raised concern about the distress it could cause the people. I had opposed this decision and urged the Chief Minister either to retain Neyyattinkara taluk in Thiruvananthapuram revenue division itself or establish a new revenue divisional office in Neyyattinkara. The revenue offices at the civil station in Kudappanakunnu were much more convenient to the people of Neyyattinkara and other taluks. Instead, the new arrangement has created disruption, as people are now required to travel excessive distances. I have brought the matter to the attention of the Chief Minister.

### AAI Colour Coded Zoning Map

I closely engaged with the crisis affecting 20 wards around Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, emanating from the implementation of the Colour Coded Zoning Map (CCZM) which placed severe restrictions on construction in the neighbourhoods around the airport. My letter to the Minister of Civil Aviation demanded reconsideration of AAI's guideline, sought that residential buildings up to 6 metres in height be exempted from the NOC requirement, and that occupancy permits be issued to those individuals who rightfully secured building construction permits before the notification came into effect. My request received a swift response from the Minister, who assured all support on

the issue. A revised guideline was later issued by AAI which reduced the red zone area from 20 km to 5km, providing relief to many.

### Shifting of CGHS Dispensary in Sasthamangalam

Following my intervention, the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, withdrew the decision to shift the dispensary under Central Government Health Scheme from Sasthamangalam to Kannur. However, I also welcomed establishment of more CGHS dispensaries in the state instead of relocating existing ones, since the total card holders registered in Kerala, which stood at 14,896, demands far more than the existing three dispensaries in the state.

### Malayalam option in Railway Examinations

Following my intervention on 16 February, 2018, the Minister of Railways has reinstated Malayalam in the list of languages that applicants can choose as the medium of examination.

The Indian Railways will now conduct its recruitment exams in six regional languages - Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Odia, Telugu and Bengali. A previous notification had excluded Malayalam. It is to be noted that over 1.47 Lac candidates have since then availed this opportunity.

### Increase in basic pay to AIIMS nurses

I have stood by the demand of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Nurses Union with my intervention for increasing the basic pay of nurses citing the recommendation of the 7th Central Pay Commission, and the demanding nature of their jobs and the stringent qualification requirements of the Indian Council of Nurses.

### UGC recognition of SDE courses under KU

Over 50, 000 students pursuing distance education under Kerala University were severely affected when the University Grants Commission (UGC) de-recognized courses offered by the School of Distance Education (SDE). I successfully appealed to the Distance Education Bureau of University Grants Commission, demanding immediate steps to address the crisis, and also urged the Kerala authorities to take the necessary steps to fulfil UGC requirements. The crisis was then defused.

### Increase in Medical PG entrance and AIPG dental seats

The disproportionately low allocation of postgraduate dental seats for All India Postgraduate quota (AIPG), caught my attention in March, 2016 for the then postgraduate counselling sessions at different colleges in Kerala. I took up this matter with the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, seeking his consideration, citing the Hon'ble Supreme Court's judgment in Ashish Ranjan Vs Union of India directing all State governments to allot 50 percent of postgraduate seats in government medical colleges to AIPG quota.

Similarly, I noticed an insufficiency in exam centres for postgraduate (PG) MD/MS/ M. Ch./ MDS entrance examinations conducted by National Board, after all slots for centres within Kerala filled up within a period of two days, leaving a number of students unable to write exam in Kerala. My appeal was strongly pressed, leading the authorities to raise the number of exam centres in Kerala.

### Conservation of Vellayani Lake

I have submitted my proposal for conserving the freshwater ecosystem of Vellayani Lake to the Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change. Despite an area of 490 hectares, this home of more than

100 species of birds and 42 species of fish is being threatened due to rapid urbanisation along with unchecked increase in farmlands. The Central Government blamed their non-response on the lack of an official request from the State Government, to which I have also raised the issue.

### Malayalam Language Bill

The Malayalam Language Bill, passed by the 13th Kerala State Assembly under the UDF government in December, 2015, aimed at protecting and promoting the Malayalam language in schools. However, the bill was pending transmission to the Rashtrapati Bhavan despite submitting it before the Ministry of Home Affairs. My request to the Minister of Home on this matter helped to expedite the process leading to its ratification by the Hon'ble President of India.

### More funds for Integrated Power Development Scheme

In July 2016, I appealed to the Minister of State for Power to allocate more funds to Thiruvananthapuram for the implementation of the Integrated Power Development Scheme. In spite of the Needs Assessment Document's (NAD) estimate of ₹ 127 Cr. for Thiruvananthapuram, only ₹ 26.35 Cr. was allocated initially. My intervention helped the Central Government to identify the urgency and deficiency in funds, for which Thiruvananthapuram later received a revised allocation.

### Affiliation for the Distance Learning Centre

The revocation of affiliation for the Distance Learning Centre of the Kerala University was brought to my attention by its Vice Chancellor. I immediately wrote



to and personally met the UGC Chairman and the Minister of HRD to discuss the issue, which is still under active consideration of the Ministry.

### **AICTE Approval to Vattiyoorkavu CPT**

In the case of denial of AICTE approval to the Vattiyoorkavu Central Poly Technic, I visited the Central Polytechnic and also personally met and exchanged correspondence with both the AICTE Chairman and the Minister of HRD requesting the reinstatement of affiliation.

Since the intervention of the State Government was imperative in both the cases, I also met the State Education Minister and discussed the issues in detail to initiate the necessary steps required to tackle these problems. I am pleased to report that the affiliation has now been restored.

### **Non Resident Malayalees and Indian Travellers Abroad**

As a Member of Parliament as well as former Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, I continue to receive a large number of requests daily from non-resident Malayalees abroad, or recent returnees, or members of their families, for assistance in a variety of situations. These have ranged from the repatriation of mortal remains, aid to people in distress, maltreatment by employers, non-payment of dues by employers, complicated passport-renewal cases and similar problems, to cases involving Indians under arrest or in custody abroad. The overwhelming majority of such cases relate to Indians in the Gulf countries. I have been able to assist a large number of people in such situations through timely intervention and follow-up with Indian Embassies and Consulates in the countries concerned.

In a number of cases, I have also been able

to assist constituents seeking to travel abroad to obtain visas, through my relationships with the Embassies of a number of foreign countries. In many cases individuals whose applications were initially rejected received favourable reconsideration after my intervention.

### **Fishermen Caught Abroad In Sri Lanka and Diego Garcia**

Thiruvananthapuram has a long coastline that is home to a large number of fishing villages. Occasionally, some fishermen drift into deep sea and are lost for days, finally ending up in other countries' waters, in particular, Sri Lanka. On a few occasions, they end up as far as Diego Garcia, a US Naval and Military base under British Administration located in the British Indian Ocean Territory. In the last two years alone, there have been three incidents of batches of fishermen held in custody by the British authorities who were released after my intervention through the British High Commission in India.

### **Interventions :**

In addition, I have intervened on a number of miscellaneous matters, including a substantive number of cases of visa-related delays faced by students and working professionals from our constituency, APS certification challenges faced by those seeking to travel to Germany, as well as several hundred cases of individuals facing serious challenges abroad (particularly in GCC countries) or the repatriation of mortal remains of deceased individuals by intervening with the concerned Embassy or Consulate (both domestic and foreign as the case in question required).

I have also raised matters relating to a number of other professional organisations including subsidies for MSME enterprises in Kerala, the tourism industry in the





state, challenges faced by PWD workers, postal workers associations, retired BSNL employee groups, Air India cabin crew employees, apiculturist organisations and bank employees.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Diplomatic Missions in Trivandrum

In 2010, when I was Minister of State for External Affairs, I made a request to the Foreign Minister of the UAE that they open their second Consulate in India in Thiruvananthapuram. Efforts were sustained in the years thereafter, culminating in the announcement by the Foreign Minister of the UAE of the decision to open their consulate in Thiruvananthapuram in 2014. The Consulate building is now fully functioning in Manacaud with key staff including the Consul-General based in Thiruvananthapuram.

With the presence of the Consulate of Maldives, Honorary Consulates of Sri

Lanka (also brought in at my initiative) and Russia and the visa facilitation centre of Germany, Thiruvananthapuram is for the first time becoming a city of diplomatic importance.

### Monumental Flagpole at Kanakakunmu

I put forward and successfully pursued the 'National Flag Foundation of India' to install a 65-metre long stainless steel Monumental Flagpole at the Kanakakkunu Palace grounds in Thiruvananthapuram city. It can carry 72 feet long and 48 feet wide atop national flag, one of the tallest and largest in the country which has become a spectacular adornment to the city today.

### Lifestyle

Thiruvananthapuram is a city of rich heritage and history. In recent years, a complaint has emerged among younger citizens and IT professionals that despite the excellent quality of life, with clean air, moderate traffic and a temperate climate, our city lacks modern lifestyle amenities found in other cities of the country with

which we compete in the IT and Services field. Numerous CEOs of major IT companies have also personally told me that this has been an obstacle in bringing top talent to work in Thiruvananthapuram.

I took this up as a challenge and managed to persuade three world-class lifestyle developers to open outlets in our city: the Mall of Travancore near International Airport, the LuLu Mall at Akkulam, and the Taurus Downtown complex in Technopark Phase 3. In addition, I have been an avid supporter and promoter of the Trivand-Run, the Walk for Health and the Sports Hub, and make every effort to support similar activities and institutions that encourage healthy living in our city. I also continue to support efforts to bring cultural, musical and literary events to Thiruvananthapuram, most notably the Mathrubhumi Literature Festival which I inspired, initiated and serve as Patron of, and which was a huge success, attracting tens of thousands of attendees and being confirmed by its sponsors as an annual event on the capital's cultural calendar.



## 35th National Games of India

As Chairman of the Games Relations Committee, I played a part in steering the preparations of the 35th National Games in Thiruvananthapuram. This involved chairing meetings during the preparatory phase, inspecting arrangements relating to the facilities provided for the distinguished guests and other visitors, joining the Minister of Sports in a press conference and speaking to national media. The Games were widely hailed as a major success for the State.



## CHANDRAN THAROOR FOUNDATION

In the course of my work as an MP, I frequently come across situations of distress requiring help that cannot be assisted out of the central government funds available to a Member of Parliament. Rather than declining assistance, I provide what little aid I can through the Chandran Tharoor Foundation, a family charity which is financed principally through my own resources. The Foundation accepts no government funds and pays no salaries, devoting its modest resources to alleviating a variety of human problems. These have frequently included: marriage aid to poor couples, medical assistance to beneficiaries in need, educational scholarships, and sponsorships of meals and outings for the Federation for the Blind and the Home for the Aged. In addition, somewhat more unusual cases involved assistance in meeting cremation expenses for a very poor family, the purchase of a boat for an island community, and the issuance of an air ticket for a 70 year-old athlete to enable him to participate in an International veterans' competition. ■

# PENDING MATTERS

## High Court Bench in Thiruvananthapuram

My tireless efforts to restore the High Court Bench in Thiruvananthapuram, which has been a core focus area since my very first term as your Member of Parliament, have still not resulted in the successful outcome we are all looking for. Some have been critical of the delay in securing this long-pending demand and have suggested that the MP should be doing more.

The reality is that I have explored every feasible avenue towards realizing this dream. In addition to raising this issue with three consecutive Hon'ble Chief Justices of the Kerala High Court — including Justice Manjulla Chellur, who formed a committee of judges at my request to look into my proposal – as well as in meetings with the Law Ministers of the current government, I have also presented Private Members Bills in 2014 and, more recently, in 2021, that offers the government a model legislation that can be adopted by them to address this demand. My recent bill, which was originally drafted in 2019 but whose formal introduction was delayed by parliamentary disruptions, proposes to provide for the establishment of permanent Benches of the High Courts in State Capitals where the principal seat or a permanent Bench of the High Court concerned is situated at a place other than the State Capital. It, therefore, proposes a legislative solution to the establishment of a High Court Bench in Thiruvananthapuram, which is a long-standing demand of the people of the State Capital of

Kerala that has so far been resisted by the powers that be.

The principal obstacle remains that the Government of India cannot move to create a bench in Thiruvananthapuram without the consent of the Chief Justice of Kerala who, in turn, speaks for the High Court judiciary as a whole. No Chief Justice of Kerala, in over six decades, has so far given his or her consent to the establishment of a bench. Recent Union Law Ministers have also not been sympathetic to our request. The matter remains an emotional issue for the people of Thiruvananthapuram, and I will continue to lobby the judiciary and the executive on the matter. On a related note, I have also urged the government on multiple occasions to also consider establishing dedicated tribunal benches, including debt recovery tribunals, in Thiruvananthapuram to cater to the majority of cases that are first considered within tribunals.

## Thiruvananthapuram-Barcelona Twinning Initiative

Another key manifesto commitment that we have not yet been able to see through on account of partisan politics was the Thiruvananthapuram-Barcelona Twin City Project, an initiative that I had first brought up in my 2009 manifesto. The rationale for this endeavour is worth remembering.

As a port city and with considerable experience in hosting mega international events like the 1992 Olympics, Barcelona had great expertise in civic matters such as waste



management, city planning, rejuvenation of water bodies and provision of drinking water which it could share with Thiruvananthapuram, a city that it had many geographical similarities with. The twin city programme would also have opened doors for tie-ups between the educational institutions of both cities as well as a range of other benefits, including on areas like sports—as a football crazy city, Barcelona could have provided world class coaching facilities as well as organise exhibition matches of FC Barcelona in Thiruvananthapuram. And, most importantly, Barcelona had a budget for international cooperation which could be easily deployed to support the initiative.

From my side, I pushed the envelope as far as possible. Using my connections, I reached out to the Barcelona City Council and made a visit to the city in 2009, during which I met with senior leadership of the city council including Mayor Jordi Hereu. At my request, a high-level delegation from Barcelona headed by Mr. Joseph Roca, Director of the council's international relations department, arrived in Thiruvananthapuram where they held a first round of talks with representatives from the city corporation, and jointly identified areas of cooperation, following which in January, 2010, the Barcelona council approved a draft proposal and passed a resolution in favour of the twinning agreement with Thiruvananthapuram, clearing the decks for formalisation of the pact. All that was needed was for our city corporation to pass a similar resolution.

Sadly, the LDF-led city corporation administration failed to take any initiative on this matter including passing a simple resolution that would take this agreement

forward. When their cynical politics was objected to, the corporation attempted to claim that it did not have the authority to sign such an agreement and would have to send it to the Ministry of Urban Development – a claim that was laid bare by the Ministry which categorically pointed out that there was no issue in the corporation signing this agreement and it only needed a simple clearance from the Ministry of External Affairs that would not be an issue. Despite this, the LDF-led government did not bother to pass a resolution in the corporation and as a result failed to seize a golden opportunity that would not have cost the city or the corporation financially but would have given them access to many benefits from Barcelona. Sadly, following their inaction, the offer from Barcelona has lapsed and the election of a new government in that city has laid this proposal to rest. It is galling that petty politics on the part of the LDF deprived us of such a supremely beneficial project.

### AIIMS in Thiruvananthapuram

Another ongoing concern is the long overdue establishment of an AIIMS in Kerala, which was originally promised by the current BJP government nearly a decade ago in 2015. Due to my efforts and advocacy, the then UDF government in the state had included a location in Parassala as one of five possible areas in the state for an AIIMS to be established. Sadly, the significant delays in processing this request by the Union Government coupled with the cynical politics of the State Government have resulted in this vital project for our constituency to remain as a pipe dream.

As I continue to advocate, there are a number of reasons that would have made Thiruvananthapuram an outstanding choice of



location for the AIIMS in Kerala, including its geographical location, the high density of quality research centres that are located in the capital, and the presence of one of the best medical college in the state – all of which would have facilitated the prospect of establishing a world class AIIMS in the constituency. The location that was identified at the time was also in close proximity to the Tamil Nadu border and would have, therefore, also catered to the medical needs of patients from the neighbouring districts of Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli (if not a larger geographical area). Despite all of these clear advantages, the current LDF government chose to omit the Thiruvananthapuram option from the revised list it has shared with the central government, choosing to include just one option from Kozhikode. With land procurement and allied logistical requirements falling under the purview and administration of the state government, it is likely that our shared dream of an AIIMS in Thiruvananthapuram will not materialise till the state government realises the error of its ways.

### Thiruvananthapuram Metro

As many are aware, I have constantly advocated the need for a Mass Rapid Transit System for Thiruvananthapuram, a particularly urgently required addition to the city's public transport networks keeping in mind the growing number of vehicles on our roads, road accidents, traffic congestion and allied issues like pollution. During my first term, the then UDF government, in December, 2012, had launched an initiative for a Monorail network, which was handed over to DMRC in order to prepare a DPR.

A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) named the Kerala Rapid Transit Corporation Ltd. was constituted the same year. But the

global tenders floated for the Thiruvananthapuram Monorail could attract only one consortium, led by Bombardier Transportation. There were also challenges associated with the Monorail technology which led to the conclusion that it would not make a suitable conduit for Trivandrum's connectivity needs.

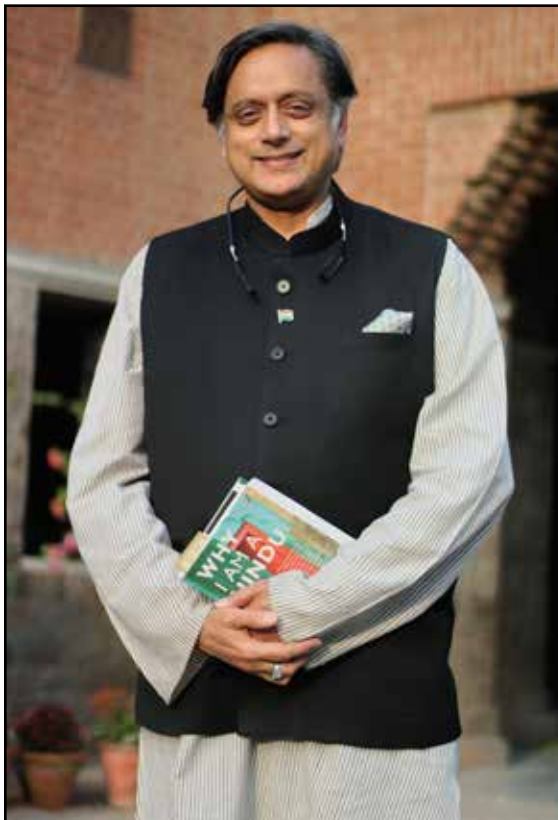
Given these twin challenges, the UDF government decided to turn the project into one of Light Metro. Though costlier, Light Metro has several advantages, such as easy raising of capacity, DMRC's expertise in the field and the potential to attract a greater number of companies who can bid for the project. However, the opaque approach adopted by the state government and KMRL in terms of developing the DPR for the proposed Light Metro has been alarming and I have repeatedly engaged with them to voice the genuine concerns that have been raised by constituents.

When there were little efforts made in terms of conducting a public consultation with key stakeholders from Trivandrum with regard to the planning of the Metro, I pointed out that key decisions like the route taken by the Metro, its timing and choice of technology can make or break its economic viability and the extent of the positive impact it can have on the community.

To this end, I argued that it was critical to engage with all key stakeholders before deciding on the key details of the project proposal. For example, elected representatives, infrastructure-focused organizations and the business community in general can provide invaluable insights including the general growth trajectory of the city as well as specific development initiatives

such as the build-out Technopark Phase 3 and 4. As a case in point, my discussions with some of the stakeholders have revealed that the previous study conducted by the same agency for the proposed second line connecting Technopark failed to take into account major developments that have happened in the recent past. That study also failed to take key stakeholders into confidence and to seek their inputs.

As the MP of Thiruvananthapuram, I strongly agree with the myriad keenly concerned and interested stakeholders that we have to put forth the most pragmatic proposal for the Trivandrum Metro. This includes ensuring the Phase 1 route encompasses the highest density traffic axis and connects critical traffic hubs like Technopark Phases 1-3, VSSC, the Central Business district, the Medical College health-care cluster, and key transportation hubs,



and chooses the best technology available, such as going underground in the CBD and through Technopark to minimize disruption to the lives and commerce of citizens.

All of these elements have to be discussed with the relevant stakeholders before the report is finalized, after UMTC/KMRL organizes a consultation and provides a proper brief as to the various options under study. Considering that the feasibility report will likely form the basis for the State Government's approval for the project and thereafter for the DPR and Central Government approval, any shortcomings in the report under preparation will severely impact the feasibility of the landmark project and will likely be amplified in future stages of the approval process.

### Poovar Shipyard Project

Vishakapatnam on India's east coast and Cochin on the west coast are two of India's leading shipyards. However, as India will need larger ships in the future, we need more and better equipped shipyards. In this regard, I sought to persuade the Ministry of Ports that Poovar is geographically, socio-economically and ecologically, the ideal location for the construction of a new shipyard, thereby bringing a lifeline to a long-dormant project.

At present, the project for developing Poovar as India's number one Shipyard-cum-Maritime hub is still in its conceptual stage. There is some hesitation at the prospect of constructing a major coastal facility so close to the port of Vizhinjam that is currently coming up, and further talks are needed. Though there are obstacles along the way, I am continuing to work on this project while supporting the further development of Vizhinjam. ■

# PARLIAMENT



As I have done in each of my innings as your representative, I have continued to maintain an active presence in Parliament, regularly raising the concerns of Thiruvananthapuram in the House as well as contributing to discussions and deliberations on key national issues, opposing contentious legislation and participating in key debates on the floor of the House.

The basic statistics relating to my performance speak for itself. Whether it is in terms of overall attendance (93%) or number of debates I have participated in (101), number of questions raised (275) or the number of Private Members Bills I have submitted (13), which are all well above the national and state average or in terms of key conversations and issues I have raised on the floor of the House, I believe that I have justified the faith you have reposed in me as your representative in the 17th Lok Sabha.

At the same time, I have contributed to a number of key debates in the House. These include the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, the Union Budget, debates on COVID mismanagement, the Ukraine crisis and other conversations including a bipartisan and spirited discussion on the success of Chandrayaan-3 Mission. I have also spoken out against contentious bills that the government has used its legislative majority to bulldoze through the House, including the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Bill and Digital

I have also used the full range of interventions that are available to an MP (such as Zero Hours and 377s) to raise issues of critical importance to Thiruvananthapuram and key communities, including the crisis of rampant coastal erosion, the need to build sea walls and the need for a **special economic package for our vulnerable fish-**



**ing community;** matters relating to railway and tourism infrastructure in Thiruvananthapuram, **setting up of a High Court bench and AIIMS in Thiruvananthapuram,** as well as other ongoing issues like water management systems in our district, the need to preserve the biodiversity of key locations like Vellayani Lake, the challenges faced by professional groups like workers of ISRO, medical professionals, teachers and research scholars.

As your MP, I have on every occasion sought to enhance the quality of education and employment opportunities. I have spoken frequently and consistently in favour of better standards of education in our country, for freedom of expression on campuses and for enhanced security for our students. I brought up the need to ensure academic freedom on campuses, and ensure the security of students in universities to the attention of the house. I have participated in direct discussions with the then-Minister of Human Resource Development on the draft New Education Policy, being one of barely a dozen MPs who attended his first round of consultations on the subject and the only one to follow up with individual meetings. In my interventions, I have called for increased funding, better training for teachers and a massive overhaul of Information Communications Technology (ICT), amongst other things. Moreover, I also obtained information from the Government through my questions in Parliament about the failure in the implementation of the RTE in numerous states across India, following which, I wrote to the Chief Minister of Kerala suggesting ways in which the implementation of the RTE can be improved in our state.

Health issues in the constituency remain a priority for me in Parliament. I have raised

in the Lok Sabha the need to set up the proposed National Institute of Medicinal Plants in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, and in my speech on the Budget, mentioned this as well as the need to upgrade the Regional Cancer Centre to an Institution of National Importance.

Among other issues, I raised, as a matter of urgent public importance, the need to provide additional funds for the **National Rural Drinking Water Programme in Kerala.** In addition I have raised the cleanup of Parvathy Puthenar (as described in the section on Swachh Bharat above) also in parliamentary interventions to the Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources and during discussions of the Swachh Bharat Scheme. I have described the need to provide financial support to the artisans of Balaramapuram in Kerala by including the handloom industry there under the Mega Cluster Scheme of the Government.

In all these cases I have followed up my Parliamentary interventions with personal meetings, for instance, with the Hon'ble Minister for Textiles after my interventions in Parliament on the weavers' issues or the Minister for Fisheries on issues affecting the fisherfolk.

The matters facing our servicemen and women are a matter of concern to me as your MP. In this regard, I have on several occasions raised the issues of the 7th Central Pay Commission, through questions in Parliament, as it affects pensioners and military personnel, in addition to following up with the Minister of Health and Family Welfare **to express my concern and protest against a proposed move to shift the CGHS wellness centre at Sasthamangalam to Kannur.** I have also met the Min-



ister of Defence to personally see to it that the concerns of the Brahmos workers are addressed at the earliest.

I have also met with the **contract workers of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Center in Trivandrum** to hear their concerns and seek a solution to the challenges they face, following which I raised the issue in Parliament under Rule 377, and will continue to speak up for their rights.

The issue of demonetization was one that deeply affected our constituency. From the chaos in our banks to the dumping of vegetables on account of low consumption, I was deeply troubled by the burden passed on to our citizens by the Central Government. I have spoken in the Lok Sabha on behalf of the Congress Parliamentary Party on this issue, and in my remarks, sought assurances from the Government on the then immediate injection of cash money into our State's economy.

I have also used Parliamentary interventions to raise issues relating to human rights. I spoke in Parliament about the need to enact a comprehensive refugee & asylum law to correct the gaps in the **present treatment of asylum seekers**. I have also raised interventions on the need to abolish the death penalty, as well to ensure **the safety and security of women athletes in Sports hostels and SAI centres**, and to expand the rights of transgenders and other sexual minorities.

Following the horrors and destruction wrought by **Cyclone Ockhi** across not just Thiruvananthapuram, but the Kerala coastline at large, I raised the issue of the lukewarm government response and the failure of the Central Government's agen-

cies to adequately warn citizens or prepare for cyclone circumstances, through a range of interventions and questions in Parliament, including by speaking about the issue under Rule 193. I also urged the Government to grant a comprehensive compensation package to assist those affected by the Cyclone, especially the fishing communities which lost their breadwinners and means to earn an income, particularly through my response to the budget proposal of Minister of Finance for 2018-19.

Further, noting the difficulties **that local fishermen are facing due to coastal erosion**, I also suggested, through my questions in Parliament, that the Government should incorporate a special component under the 'National Scheme of Welfare of fishermen' to provide assistance to these fishermen, which, unfortunately, was not accepted by the Government.

Through my interventions, I spoke on the acute shortage of clean drinking water in Thiruvananthapuram due to increasing pollution and urged the government to take concerted action to **clean up the principal fresh water resources in the district namely Killi-Karamana river system and the Vellayani Lake under the National River Conservation Plan**.

I also raised and drew the attention of the Honourable Minister of Health and Family Welfare towards the plight of Indian medical students, many belonging to Kerala, whose education has been interrupted due to the ongoing war in Ukraine. I urged the Minister to identify alternate means through which these students can complete their medical education, in the interest of their future and that of the health of the people of our country.

Through my interventions, I spoke on the **alarming increase in usage of narcotics and narcotics-related cases in Kerala** and a need for co-operation between the State and Union Government to eradicate the production and distribution of banned narcotic-substances.

In another one of my interventions, I raised the matter concerning the cyber-attacks on the IT servers of AIIMS, Delhi that resulted in data losses which have impeded its normal operations, including patient registration, consultation booking and availability of medical records.

I raised, as a matter of urgent public importance the urgent need to restore the railway fare concessions for Senior Citizens, which were withdrawn in March 2020, to prevent non-essential travelling during Covid-19.

Through my interventions, **I spoke on the shocking decision of the Railway Board to drop the Nemom Coaching/Satellite Terminal Project** in my constituency of Thiruvananthapuram, which is imperative for the decongestion and functional extension of the Trivandrum Central Station and the development of the Kochuveli Station.

In another one of my interventions, I raised the matter regarding the urgent need to make payment of salaries and pensions to the staff of **Kazhakootam Sainik School—the only military school in Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram—to prevent its closure.**

Through one of my interventions, I raised the matter to address the damaged sewerage pipeline under the reinforced earth wall between Enchakkal and Kumarichantha on the NH 66 bypass, causing heavy traffic congestion and causing inconvenience to motorists.

I raised, as a matter of urgent public im-

portance the **plight of the workers of Vijayamohini Mills**, situated in Thiruvananthapuram, which had witnessed a series of closures and shut-downs since March 2020 and to urge the Minister to consider reopening the mill industry in Thiruvananthapuram and expedite compensation to those affected by the shutdown and severely reduced pay.

An intervention was made by me to draw the attention of the Honourable Minister of Earth Sciences to the concerns surrounding the released draft of the Blue Economy Policy and to release copies in all regional languages, extend the window for seeking comments, undertake consultations with fishing communities and relevant stakeholders, and introduce the Policy only after their recommendations have been incorporated so that a comprehensive Policy can be devised that contributes effectively to the growth of our blue economy.

Through one of my interventions, I spoke of the need to improve tourism infrastructure in Thiruvananthapuram as it is recognized for its historic inter-religious co-existence and pluralistic heritage, and to improve the convenience of the devotees, I urged the Government to build a circuit between these centres, and to recognize Thiruvananthapuram under **PRASAD or HRIDAY Schemes.**

Through a recent intervention, I spoke for an increase in the number of unreserved and sleeper coaches in Passenger trains passing through Thiruvananthapuram Railway division for the ease of travel and convenience of a large number of commuters.

An intervention was made by me concerning the lack of Indian Meteorological Department's preparedness for weather



forecast and its failure to issue red alerts for heavy rain in a timely manner in Kerala. I urged the Minister to expedite the setting up of 100 Automatic Weather Stations in Kerala as promised by IMD in the aftermath of the 2018 floods and to implement a protocol to ensure that weather alerts of such sensitive nature are issued promptly.

Through my interventions, I have spoken frequently on the rising incidents of violence against doctors and other healthcare professionals in recent years and a need for a Comprehensive Central Legislation.

I raised, as a matter of urgent public importance the reduction in funds allotted for the provision of nonsubsidised kerosene through the Public Distribution System and urged the Minister to further increase the quota of non-subsidised PDS kerosene available to Kerala, keeping in mind its immense importance to the State's economic well-being as well as that of the fishing community. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I also drew the attention of the Minister of Fisheries to the **grave and urgent plight**

**of fishermen living in the coastal stretch from Pallithura to Pozhiyoor** in Thiruvananthapuram and to provide additional relief to the State Government to expedite compensation and other assistance to fisherfolk.

Through my intervention, I drew the attention of the hon. minister for Shipping to the differential treatment being meted out in two ports of Kerala, Vizhinjam port which had to pay lighthouse dues during crew changes, while the same was not levied at nearby ports including the port of Kochi.

I raised, as a matter of urgent public importance the concerns of lakhs of nurses in private hospitals, who have been fighting for minimum wage benefits. I urged the government to implement these wage increases, citing the Expert Committee's recommendation of ₹ 20,000 monthly for private nursing professionals.

Through my intervention, I drew the attention of the hon. minister to the concerns of the handloom sector which has suffered from unviability and lack of financial

support and caused mass unemployment amongst weavers. I urged to extend support to ensure the sustainability of the revived sector by proposing an effective scheme for young weavers with immediate financial assistance and local benefits to inspire young weavers back to their traditional occupation.

An intervention was made by me to the Ministry of Railways to provide for **much-needed train halts at Kazhakoottam railway station** as it had been a long-standing request by over 50,000 employees of the Technopark, the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and other establishments in the vicinity of Kazhakootam.

Through my intervention, I raised the matter concerning the urgent need to rehabilitate the people who were displaced due to establishment of Rocket Launching Station in Thumba, Kerala.

An intervention was made by me concerning the Central Government's dropped plans to **upgrade the National Institute of Speech and Hearing** in Thiruvananthapuram as the National University of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, despite most groundwork being completed. I urged the Government to revise its stand, implement the assurance that was made to the people of Thiruvananthapuram.

Through my intervention, I drew the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the issue of Trivandrum-bound trains currently being regularly held up at the outer areas of Trivandrum Central Outer due to non-availability of platforms and overall congestion levels at Trivandrum Central railway station. I sought the government's intervention through improvements in the

signalling system, including the possible adoption of advanced automatic signalling, to serve the larger interest of the commuting public.

## Legislative Work:

I have introduced several private member bills which deal with a variety of issues of national importance and reflect my persistent attempts in Opposition to expand the frontiers of freedom and political liberty in India.

### These include:

- **The Establishment of Permanent Benches of High Courts at State Capitals Bill, 2014**, which provides for the establishment of a permanent high court bench in all state capitals to address the massive backlog of cases across our nation's courts;
- **The Public Records (Amendment) Bill, 2014**, to facilitate the automatic declassification of public records by amending the Public Records Act 1993 in an effort to establish a strong mechanism for accountability and transparency;
- **The Asylum Bill, 2015**, to establish an effective system to protect refugees and asylum seekers by means of an appropriate legal framework to determine claims for asylum and to protect the rights of refugees in line with India's legacy of being a haven for persecuted communities, whilst ensuring national security at the same time. The Bill also seeks to align our process of granting asylum with international best practices;



- **The Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2015**, to redefine ‘sedition’ by revising section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 to ensure that citizens are not deprived of their right to legitimate protest;
- **The Domestic Workers Welfare Bill, 2016**, to provide for the rights and the provision of good working conditions for domestic workers;
- **The Constitutional (Amendment) Bill, 2016**, to reform Urban Local Bodies and to provide for the direct election of Mayors so as to increase the direct delivery of services to citizens;
- **The Protection of Traditional Knowledge Bill, 2016**, to protect the livelihood of our artisans and custodians of Traditional Knowledge, such as practitioners of Ayurveda and the weavers of Balaramapuram by ensuring that the accumulated Traditional Knowledge will be kept free from patents and private ownership for profit; and
- **The Anti-Discrimination and Equality Bill, 2016**, to seek an end to social discrimination through a humane and comprehensive legal framework including the creation of a National Equality Commission.
- **The Data Privacy and Protection Bill, 2017**, to establish an effective regime to protect the right to privacy of all-natural persons and personal data concerning them, to set out conditions upon which surveillance of natural persons and interception of communications may be carried out and to constitute a Privacy Commission to protect the fundamental right to privacy;
- **The Death Penalty (Abolition) Bill, 2017**, to abolish the death penalty in India, due to the lack of deterrence it serves and due to the arbitrariness on part of Courts in awarding the death penalty;
- **The Protection from Lynching Bill, 2017**, to punish acts of lynching on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, language, dietary practices, sexual orientation, political affiliation, ethnicity, to punish acts of dereliction of duty on part of functionaries of the State, as well as to provide for designated courts for the expeditious trial of such offences and for rehabilitation of victims of lynching and their families;
- **The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2017**, to designate serious criminal offences such as stalking, sexual harassment and voyeurism as non-bailable offences. I also met the Home Minister on this matter, and he has assured me that he will consider my proposal;
- **The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2018**, to remove the pre-censorship powers of the Central Board of Film Certification and to restrict the powers of the Government to ban films in India.
- **The States and Union Territories Reorganisation Commission Bill, 2019**, to set up a statutory States & Union Territories Reorganisation Commission to recommend the reorganization

of States based on factors such as administrative efficacy, population, and economic interests.

- **The Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2019** to remove Sections 354 and 509 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 which criminalizes force against women to 'outrage her modesty,' and penalizes acts insulting a woman's modesty, respectively. These reflect outdated notions and are redundant due to the comprehensive provisions introduced by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.
- **The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2019** (Substitution of new article for article 9, etc.) to amend the Constitution, to pave way for statutory reform to allow dual citizenship stating that Indians who migrate for job opportunities or take foreign citizenship to get equality in benefits and in their treatment in their place of residence, should not be seen as disloyal to India.
- **The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2019** (Insertion of new article 14A, etc.), to amend the Constitution with a view to include Right to Vote as a Fundamental Right and also to lower the age of contesting elections to the House of the People, Council of States, State Legislature and Panchayats to eighteen years.
- **The Data Privacy and Protection Bill, 2019**, to establish an effective regime to protect right to protect data privacy, to put a person in control of his/her own data and further permits them to make an informed choice concerning its use, to further provide an industry friendly model of co-regulation that aims to foster a higher degree of certainty for the private sector.
- **The Asylum Bill, 2021** to create a legal framework for protecting refugees and asylum-seekers, to end a system of ambiguity and arbitrariness which, too often, results in injustice to a highly



vulnerable populace and to enable the government to manage refugees with more accountability and order, while balancing humanitarian concerns and security interests of the State.

- **The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Repeal Bill, 2022** to repeal the frequently misused Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act which contravenes constitutionally mandated provisions which protect against arbitrary or unlawful interference with a person's privacy.
- **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2022** (Amendment of section 86) to make all offences under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 for which punishment if imprisonment of three years or above, cognizable.
- **The High Court of Kerala (Establishment of a Permanent Bench at Thiruvananthapuram) Bill, 2023**, to provide for the establishment of a permanent Bench of the High Court of Kerala at Thiruvananthapuram.
- **The Healthcare Personnel and Healthcare Institutions (Prohibition of Violence and Damage to Property) Bill, 2023** to address the alarming rate of abuse faced by healthcare workers, to make all acts of violence against healthcare personnel, including verbal abuse, a cognisable and non-bailable offence, to broaden the definition of healthcare personnel to include paramedical students and workers, administrative staff, and ASHA workers and to ensure timely investigation and

sentencing, with designated special courts in every district for time-bound trials.

In addition to submitting and introducing Private Member Bills, I have also submitted numerous amendments to important Government Bills. These include:

- **Amendment to the Employee's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, 2016:** The Bill requires that employees in companies of a certain size should be informed about their rights in writing. I moved an amendment where the rights need to be conveyed to employees orally as well, since a large number of workers in India are illiterate. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated in the Lok Sabha;
- **Amendment to the Repealing and Amendment Bill, 2017**, to remove the offences of sedition, blasphemy, criminalization of same-sex relations, from the Indian Penal Code, 1860. I also moved an amendment to remove the legal immunity to marital rape, however the amendments were not taken up owing to disruptions in Parliamentary proceedings;
- **Amendment to The Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017**, to ensure that the benefits under the Bill would apply to employees in the private sector, in line with the benefits received by employees in the public sector. The amendment was not accepted, as the Bill was hurriedly passed in the Lok Sabha by the Government, without any debate;
- **Amendments to The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016** to enable couples

apart from married heterosexual couples to have surrogate children, to align the definition of infertility under the Bill with WHO standards, to curb the excessive delegated powers of the National Surrogacy Board, and to enable couples to have surrogate children even if they suffer from medical reasons apart from infertility;

- **Amendments to The New Delhi International Arbitration Bill, 2018**, to restrict the control of the Government over the proposed New Delhi International Arbitration Centre, as well as to ensure that the Centre works in a transparent and efficient manner, in order to build India's image as an arbitration hub;
- **Amendments to The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018**, to enable the Government to take action against fugitive economic offenders even if the siphoned amount involves less than ₹100 crores, to remove the unconstitutional aspects of the Bill, and to remove arbitrary powers of the Government;
- **Amendments to The Consumer Protection Bill, 2018**, to hold Government service providers accountable to their consumers, to remove the arbitrary powers of the Government in order to ensure that consumer forums under the Bill are independent and efficient, and to prevent companies from circumventing the powers of the consumer forums by making consumers enter into contracts with arbitral clauses or limited liability clauses.

**of The People (Amendment) Bill, 2017**, to remove the restriction of only allowing proxy-voting for overseas citizens, thereby giving NRIs the choice to adopt E-postal ballots in future.

In addition, in situations where I believe that the amendments alone won't cure the defects in the Bills or policies proposed by the Government, I have provided detailed suggestions to the Government through letters and emails to the concerned Ministries. These include:

- **Comments on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016**, sent to the Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, urging him to re-draft the Bill so as to supplement the constitutional rights of the transgender community, as recognized by the Supreme Court in *NALSA v Union of India*;
- **Comments on the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018**, sent to the Hon'ble Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, providing various suggestions to strengthen the law in favour of consumer rights;
- **Comments on the Draft National Forest Policy, 2018**, sent to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, highlighting the need to involve the forest dwelling communities in the management of forests, as well as the need to reflect the safeguards under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 and Constitutional provisions, in the proposed policy;

- **Amendment to the Representation**

- **Comments on The Trafficking of**



**Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018**, sent to the Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development, highlighting the need to incorporate the suggestions of the Supreme Court appointed Panel Report on Trafficking, the need to amend the ITPA as well as to involve sex workers' collectives in the fight against human trafficking.

*I have also participated in debates in the Lok Sabha on the following Government Bills :*

- **The Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill, 2014 & The Merchant Shipping (Second Amendment) Bill, 2014:** The Bills provide for anti-fouling measures and to align the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 with International Labour Organisation's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. While I supported the amendments, I highlighted the need to provide for a grievance redressal mechanism while detaining ships, so that the interests of shipping industry are protected, as well as the need to extend the application of the law to foreign vessels in Indian waters. I expressed my concern about the Bill allowing children from the ages of 16 years and above, to be taken in as apprentices on ships, I suggested that this be raised to 18 years in order to comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2014:** The Bill permits Courts to try juveniles between 16-18 years of age, as adults, if they are accused of committing heinous offences. I opposed the Bill as there are numerous instances where the treatment of children as adults, under criminal law, has failed to control crimes committed by juveniles. Sending children to prisons instead of juvenile homes will cause them to become hardened criminals and defeat the purpose of the Bill. I also pointed out how the Bill falls foul of the Constitution of India as well as international law and urged the Government to invest in the reformatory system of juvenile justice, instead of enacting retributive laws.
- **The Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets (Imposition of Tax) Bill, 2015:** The Bill criminalizes the concealment of foreign income and assets, in a bid to deter tax evaders. I supported the Bill, however I pointed out that the Bill cannot be implemented in spirit unless the Government provides for an efficient way to obtain information about concealed foreign assets abroad. I also raised concerns about the possible misuse of the unbridled powers the Bill vests on tax authorities.
- **The Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2016:** The Bill provides for the establishment of the Regional Centre for Biotechnology as an institution of national importance. I supported the Bill, however suggested certain changes such as, a better regulatory framework and infrastructure to incentivize the field of biotechnology. I also suggested focusing on reconciling Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights with Indian patent law and to foster a greater relationship between private companies and biotechnology educational institutions.

- **The Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Ordinance, 2016:** It bars the application of inheritance laws on enemy property. I opposed the Ordinance as an urgent situation to warrant its promulgation as per Article 123 of the Constitution, had not arisen. The Bill retrospectively removes the rights that even Indian citizens have over property designated as 'enemy property', and therefore is in violation of international conventions as well as the right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution, hence I opposed the Bill.
- **The National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2016:** The Bill establishes NIT, Andhra Pradesh as an institute of national importance under the National Institute of Technology, Science Education and Research Act of 2007. I highlighted that the creation of additional NITs would not improve the quality of education in the country, rather the Government must invest greater in the infrastructure and faculty of the existing NITs.
- **The Mental Healthcare Bill, 2016:** The Bill provides for the required healthcare and services for people with mental illnesses and the need to protect their rights during the course of their treatment. I highlighted the need for counsellors in schools to assist students facing mental health problems, and the need to provide mental health facilities to military personnel. I also suggested that the list of mental health practitioners in the Bill should be expanded to include psychoanalysts, psychotherapists and counseling psychologists.
- **The Employee's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, 2016:** The Bill mandates companies of a certain size to inform their employees about their rights in writing. During the course of the debate, I suggested to the Government that the notification of rights to employees must be conveyed orally as well, since a large number of them are illiterate. However, this was turned down by the ruling party.
- **The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2017:** The Bill amends various provisions of laws governing excise and customs tax, to comply with GST. While I welcomed the need to amend laws, to align them GST, I also pointed out the flaws in the Bill which enables tax authorities to act in an arbitrary fashion, and how the removal of Beedi Welfare Cess and the failure to impose Water Cess on industrial use of water, is detrimental to public interest. I also suggested that the Government should allow oil companies to claim credit, for expenditure owing to VAT on goods and services used for production of petroleum products.
- **The Indian Institutes of Management Bill, 2017:** The Bill confers IIMs to be institutes of national importance to enable them to achieve standards of global excellence in the field of management. I highlighted flaws in the bill, stressing that the designation of "national importance" must be backed up by sufficient budgetary allocation as not enough money was being invested in higher education leading to a dearth in facilities, resources and faculty. I

also stressed on the inadequate reservation in faculty posts for SC/ST communities and the need to regulate the fees in IIMs taking into account the economic inequality in the country.

- **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Bill, 2017:** The Bill allows the Government construct ‘public works’ within the statutory buffer zones around ancient monuments and archaeological sites. I opposed the Bill on the grounds that it would harm ancient vulnerable structures, and I pointed out the lack of manpower and facilities with the NMA to effectively control construction which may damage these structures. I argued that the Bill threatens our national heritage and violates Article 51A and Article 49 of the Constitution.
- **The Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2019**  
The bill seeks to allow trusts to set up units in special economic zones by amending the SEZ law. I supported the bill’s objectives but criticised the government’s use of the ordinance route without a legitimate emergency. I expressed concern about the government’s abuse of legislative processes, especially the ordinance route, for its political agenda. I pointed out that the bill’s provision, delegating significant powers to the government to decide who qualifies for benefits, could lead to misuse.
- **The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019**  
I opposed The Muslim Women (Pro-

tection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019, which criminalizes instant triple talaq. While I am against triple talaq, I believe the bill unfairly targets Muslims and conflates civil and criminal laws. I called for a universal law to protect all women, regardless of religion, from abandonment. The bill, in my view, fails to provide any tangible benefits for Muslim women and only punishes men for an act already deemed void by the Supreme Court.

- **The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019**  
I raised concerns about the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019, which aimed to establish a National DNA Data Bank and Regional DNA Data Banks with various indices. I argued that the bill would institutionalize a ‘surveillance state’ and emphasized the need for a data protection law before its enactment. I highlighted that implementing the bill without such a law would impact the right to privacy. Finally, in July 2023, the Centre withdrew the bill from the Lok Sabha.
- **The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019**  
I strongly criticized the amendment bill, arguing that the government’s attempt to amend the UAPA Act to designate individuals as terrorists without the benefit of a trial is deeply worrying. I described the bill as “hastily brought,” pointing out that there are already several provisions in place to go after individuals. I also accused the government of failing to conduct pre-legislative consultation

before introducing the bill. In 2022, I also introduced a Private Member Bill to repeal the law.

■ **The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019**

The bill seeks to amend the 2005 RTI Act, granting the Centre the power to hire and fire independent Information Commissioners, along with setting their salaries and tenure. I strongly opposed it arguing that it undermines the RTI Act by centralizing control over Information Commissioners' key aspects. I criticized the lack of public consultation and suggested that the government's haste may be linked to recent CIC orders relating to Prime Minister's Education details.

■ **The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019 and The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019**

I strongly criticized the Bills arguing that it is an assault on the Constitution, inclusive idea of India, spirit of cooperative federalism and democratic practices. I added that the government has changed the basic constitutional relationship of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to the Republic of India without consulting them or their elected representatives. This blithe disregard for Article 370(3) and Article 3 is a breathtaking betrayal of our democracy and nothing short of legislative authoritarianism.

■ **The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019**

I strongly criticized the bill, emphasizing that religion should not be the

basis of citizenship. I argued that by including this provision, the BJP is inadvertently promoting Jinnah's idea of a nation where religion is intrinsic to nationhood, which contradicts Mahatma Gandhi's vision for India. Additionally, I highlighted the government's failure to adhere to basic international standards for refugee treatment, pointing out that the bill lacks provisions to improve refugee status determination or ensure their fair treatment. This, I argued, reflects a cynical political move aimed at singling out and disenfranchising a specific community, a betrayal of India's values.

■ **The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021**

The Bill amended the Acts which regulate the salaries and conditions of service of the judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court of India. I appreciated the Bill and the legislative clarification on when Supreme Court and high court judges are entitled to an additional quantum of pension or family pension on attaining a certain age. However, I used this Bill as a platform to raise critical issues of the Judiciary relating to Conditions of Service such as matters of the retirement age of Judges, particularly High Court Judges, the implications of the pendency of cases in the courts.

■ **General discussion on the Union Budget for 2022-2023**

I initiated the debate on the Union Budget for 2022-23 highlighting how COVID-19 pandemic had placed citizens in unimaginable distress who



suffered a lot of pain due to loss of lives. I stressed on some important points which had been unacknowledged by the government like the significant cuts in allocation of social welfare schemes, a glaring example was the slashing in MNREGA scheme. There were no measures to address rising inflation and targeted effort for job creation. Indians slipped into extreme poverty and the government refused to recognise the problems which they have caused and the widespread anguish they have inflicted common man.

■ **Supplementary Demands for Grants- First Batch for 2022-2023 and (ii) Demands for Excess Grants 2019-2020**

I initiated the discussion in Lok Sabha on Supplementary Demands for Grants for the remaining part of the current fiscal year, as well as on the excess grants for 2019-20. In my speech, I criticized the government's handling of the economy, emphasizing the need for a realistic portrayal and highlighting the underwhelming allocations to various sectors. I pointed out the impact of COVID-19 and demonetization on the economy, noting the reduced allocations for healthcare and social schemes. Additionally, I criticized the government for keeping fuel prices unchanged before elections and later hiking them, shifting the burden to taxpayers. I accused the government of focusing on temporary measures instead of addressing the country's core problems. I also expressed concern over the neglect of sectors like healthcare, highlighting that ordinary

citizens' spending sustains the health-care business in India.

■ **The Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023**

The Bill establishes the National Capital Civil Services Authority, which consists of the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary of Delhi, Principal Home Secretary of Delhi. The Authority will make recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor (LG) regarding transfers and postings of officials and disciplinary matters. I opposed the Bill as it violated the defining feature of a federal democracy, the division of power. It undermined the Delhi Legislative Assembly and the Delhi Government. By trying to supersede the Supreme Court's decision on the matter, the Union Government appeared to undermine the constitutional principle of federalism. I also stated that this Bill weakens the principle of representative democracy which is a basic feature of the Constitution.

■ **Discussion Regarding 'Success of Chandrayaan-III Mission and other achievements of our Nation in the Space Sector'**

I supported this motion and congratulated the scientists on the success of Chandrayaan-3 Mission. This Mission's triumph is that of across the political divide and it does not belong to any one person or one party and it was the culmination of efforts put in by all governments in the last six decades, which started under the tenure of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. I emphasised on the point that our space success is a consequence of continuity in national gov-

ernance and what has been achieved today stands on the shoulders of many past achievements. However, I highlighted that The Department of Space's budget has shockingly been slashed to ₹12,543 crores from Rs. 13,700 crore which we were presented in the budget estimates and it must be looked into.

### ■ **General Discussion on the Interim Union Budget for 2024-25**

I initiated the debate on the Interim Union Budget for 2024-25 and started by highlighting the government's reckless decisions on the economy in the past 10 years, from the reckless decision of demonetisation to the sudden no-notice lockdown and how it adversely impacted the people. I then took on the claim made by the Hon. Finance Minister that the beneficiaries of government schemes are four castes: poor, women, youth and farmers. However, all four groups were some of the worst performing groups in most categories of social and economic policy performance. The unprecedented levels of unemployment have left countless citizens, especially our young demographic workforce with few prospects for a brighter tomorrow. The Government claims it made 25 crore people free from multi-dimensional poverty in the last 10 years. Though, according to the World Bank, an astounding 80% of the world's people who slipped into poverty in 2020 due to the pandemic were from India. I attempted to highlight that the current government's track record is disillusioning.

- In addition, I challenged the External Affairs Minister's statement during



Question Hour that she was prepared to spend 400 Cr rupees of taxpayers' money to promote the use of Hindi at the United Nations. I pointed out that Hindi was an official language, but not the national language, of India, and that such expenditure would be a colossal waste of resources. If the Prime Minister or the Minister wished to speak in Hindi in the UN, they were already free to do so, with an Indian diplomat translating into English, from which the other language interpreters could translate into the other official languages of the UN. But making Hindi India's official language at the UN would deprive future External Affairs Ministers from non-Hindi-speaking states the opportunity to express themselves in a language more widely understood around the world than Hindi is. The resultant debate led to widespread discussion in the national media, with strong support from Southern states. ■

## Statistics on Dr Shashi Tharoor's interventions in Parliament 2014-2019

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of Questions Asked in Parliament                                | 410 |
| Number of Supplementary Questions asked in Parliament                  | 35  |
| Number of Issues of Urgent Public Importance Raised (Rule 377)         | 19  |
| Number of Matters of Urgent Public Importance Raised (Special Mention) | 17  |
| Number of Private Member Bills Introduced In The Lok Sabha             | 8   |
| Number of Private Member Bills Pending Submission to The Lok Sabha     | 5   |
| Number of Government Bills to Which Amendments Were Moved              | 8   |
| Number of Short Duration Discussions                                   | 3   |

## Statistics on Dr Shashi Tharoor's interventions in Parliament 2019-2024

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of Questions asked in Parliament                                | 275 |
| Number of Supplementary Questions asked in Parliament                  | 34  |
| Number of Issues of Urgent Public Importance (Rule 377) raised         | 20  |
| Number of Matters of Urgent Public Importance (Special Mention) raised | 26  |
| Number of Private Member Bills introduced in the Lok Sabha             | 13  |
| Number of Private Member Bills pending submission to the Lok Sabha     | 5   |
| Number of Government Bills to which amendments were moved              | 6   |
| Number of Short Duration Discussions                                   | 3   |

*Note: It should be remembered that the number of issues raised does not correspond to the number of efforts made to raise issues. Interventions in Zero Hour, and under Rule 377, are governed by a lottery system, and despite my submitting issues every week, I have not always been fortunate to win the balloting to speak on the subjects submitted.*

# PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

## 2014-2019 Chairman Parliamentary Standing Committee on EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, which I have had the honour of chairing since August 2014, has been an exceptionally active committee, with more than 70 sittings convened in three and a half years. In addition to hearing and approving the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs and the erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, the Committee has had several sittings to review ongoing developments in India's international relations and has done in-depth reports on several urgent matters of national importance to Indian foreign policy. The Committee has also received its distinguished counterparts from 7 foreign parliaments.

The External Affairs Committee reviewed and achieved consensus on the Constitution Amendment Bill that finally settled several complex issues surrounding the land boundary between Bangladesh and India. Hearings were held with representatives of several Ministries and the State Government of West Bengal.

The Committee's report on the recruitment, training, financing, and working of

the Indian Foreign Service, and its separate report on the use of "soft power" and cultural diplomacy in Indian foreign policy are landmark achievements. The Committee's recommendation on lateral and mid-career entry into the Ministry of External Affairs has been accepted and is being implemented initially in the Policy Planning Division of the MEA. The Committee has also engaged in a comprehensive review of several options for the provision of voting rights for Non-Resident Indians, which will allow the Indian diaspora to have their voice and say in the electoral processes back in the country

It has also reviewed, in-depth, the operations of the country's passport offices and issued a report in 2017 containing an in-depth review of India's relations with Pakistan. It has also closely engaged with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce to consider the safety and security of our nation's overseas migrant workers. In total, the committee had presented 21 reports to parliament since 2014. In 2018 it is in the process of studying India-China relations and will issue a report to Parliament on the subject later in the summer.

Throughout my tenure as Chairman, I have sought to increase governmental accountability by calling for joint meetings with representatives from other Ministries.



For instance, after the so-called “surgical strikes” across the Line of Control in September 2016, the Committee held hearings with not only the Ministry of External Affairs, but also the Defence Secretary, the Vice-Chief of the Army Staff, and the Director-General of the Border Security Force, among others. Similarly, the Committee has also closely followed matters related to Sino-Indian relations, particularly the dispute at Doklam, as well as a broader, comprehensive review of India’s multifaceted engagements with China.

Since India’s foreign policy cannot be carried out without support from the other branches of our national and state governments and from the public at large, I have also made it a point to broaden the scope of inquiry by seeking inputs from experts in the field, including senior diplomats and scholars.

In recent months, the Committee has also considered other matters of critical importance to Indian foreign policy including our relations with Sri Lanka, particularly within the context of the arrests of fishermen from both sides of the maritime border for straying into foreign waters and the resolution of this critical issue. It has also engaged with other topics of international importance to India including the developments -the Korean peninsula and the long-standing Israel- Palestine issue.

In addition, as someone who has lived abroad for a number of years, I am well aware of the hardships Non Resident Indians face when dealing with even the most basic of processes with Indian Embassies and the Government of India. As such, in an effort to streamline and make our efforts more efficient, I have convened several

meetings to discuss various issues, most recently the issue of providing Voting Rights to NRIs. (This was a meeting that was held with the representatives of the Ministry of Law and Justice as well). While strongly critical of the Government’s proposal to introduce proxy voting for NRIs, we continue to make every effort to come up with a formula that would be most effective in granting NRIs this right, while also allowing for a smooth, effective and secure voting process.

Moreover, as the Member of Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram and during my tenure as Chairman of the Committee on External Affairs, we have spent a considerable amount of time and resources to ensure that the plight of migrant workers is significantly reduced. From the need to crack down on illegal agents to ensuring that those who are stranded are returned safe to their families, the Committee has and will continue to work with the Ministry of External Affairs to bring both their considerable resources to together towards this issue. I have continued to press for a comprehensive Emigration Bill to update the grossly inadequate 1983 Emigration Act.

Finally, I have worked hard to ensure that the Parliamentary Standing Committee of External Affairs has worked more effectively and in a time-bound manner. We have and will continue to play an active part in the nation’s foreign policy by ensuring that our citizens and diplomats receive the support they need, that our reports set high standards of scrutiny and accountability, and that the nation’s foreign policy objectives are accomplished with appropriate parliamentary review and support.

## 2019-2022 Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology which I had the privilege of chairing between 2019- 2022, is a Department Related Standing Committee (DRSC) that oversaw, the Department of Posts (DoP), the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) and the Ministry of Information Broadcasting (MIB).

As a DRC, the committee oversaw the budget, new legislation and conducted a periodic review of the functioning of the various subordinate departments and ministries mentioned above. During my time as chairman, the committee had over 75 sittings with an average of 25 sittings a year.

Given the rapid scale and growth of information technology in our country our committee engaged in some critical discussions and dialogues and presented numerous reports on matters of vital importance to the nation. Some of these include: 'Safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space'; 'India's preparedness for 5G', review of the functioning of the Central board of film certification and censorship (CBFC), a critical consideration of suspension of telecommunication services throughout the country, a critical review of state-sponsored hacking attempts against critical infrastructure, preparedness of India's postal network amongst many more.

The Committee also looked at issues relating to the nation's tech sector, the regulatory framework for data security, a review of the idea of censorship and avenues to ensure that there is no misuse of governmental authority and ensuring a more coherent and effective manufacturing policy in this space.

The committee's key recommendations on issues included the need to increase significantly the nation's resource allocation towards digital security and safety. The committee also unanimously agreed that India's ability to keep its cyberspace secure is predicated on the timely and effective response by the designated authorities and the committee recommended a significant increase in both allocation and expenditure to ensure a commensurate capacity upgrade. Reviews were conducted of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the cinematography amendment bill and one of the most comprehensive reviews of Safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space. The committee also looked into the banning of news channels, censorship notices and take down requests that have been issued by governmental authorities.

This was in addition to the routine, presentation and review of the functioning of ministries under the purview of the Committee through Action Taken Reports (ATRs). During my time as chairman, I am pleased to say that we invited a broad spectrum of subject experts, industry leaders and governmental colleagues to provide the greatest scope and clarity on the issues. The coherence and efficacy of the reports that a committee presented speak for themselves,



personally, I am grateful to my colleagues for their invaluable time and effort, ensuring that our committee was able to fulfil its mandate to Parliament.

### **2022-2024 Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS**

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers, which I had the honour of chairing since October 2022, has been an active committee, convening around 25 meetings in one and a half years. In addition to hearing and approving the Demands for Grants of the three Departments under the Ministry - the Department

of Fertilizers, Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, and the Department of Pharmaceuticals - the Committee has held several sittings to review ongoing developments in India's Agricultural, Pharmaceutical, and Chemical Industries Sectors. It has also conducted in-depth reports on several other issues of urgent importance. Some of these include matters pertaining to planning for Fertilizer production, the revival of sick chemical and petrochemical units, the establishment of Plastic Waste Management Centers, the promotion of the Medical Device Industry through the Production Linked Incentive Scheme, and the growth of the Pharmaceutical Industry while ensuring quality control and safety standards.

Throughout my tenure as Chairman, I have sought to increase governmental accountability by calling for joint meetings with representatives from other ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. In recent months, the committee has also considered matters of crucial importance, such as the need to continue the Urea Subsidy Scheme and the implementation of a safe usage and licensing scheme for Insecticides and Pesticides.

The Committee highlighted the imbalanced consumption of fertilizers in India, with urea accounting for 82% of nitrogenous fertilizers, leading to ecosystem pollution. To address this, it recommended developing nano fertilizers for self-reliance and to reduce foreign exchange spent on imports.



The Committee also emphasized the need for government support to public and private sector companies interested in manufacturing nano fertilizers, suggesting that the Department of Fertilizers work with the Ministry of Finance to establish a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme.

The Committee noted that while the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals has taken measures to promote the use of pesticides, their extensive use can be harmful, polluting the air, water, soil, and the overall ecosystem, leading to serious health hazards. To address this, the Committee recommended stringent implementation of pesticide promotion measures to ensure their balanced growth. Despite India being the fourth-largest producer and exporter of agrochemicals, the industry faced a trade deficit of Rs 1.8 lakh crore in 2020-21 due to a shortage of feedstocks and mining agents. I urged the government to promptly address this trade deficit issue and develop a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the chemicals sector.

The Committee also recommended lowering GST on medical devices due to the industry's nascent stage. It also suggested listing critical care medical devices as essential medicines and regulating the safety, quality, and efficacy of imported second-hand devices to protect domestic manufacturers.

I have worked hard to ensure that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers has worked more effectively and, in a time bound manner. We have and will continue to play an active role in shaping the nation's policy on Fertilisers, Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals through reports which set high standards of scrutiny and accountability. ■



# MPLADS



As your MP, I am proud of my consistent record in utilising the full range of financial resources available under the MPLADS funds for development initiatives in Thiruvananthapuram. I was the first in Kerala to fulfil 100% expenditure of the 15 crores that was granted by the Central government for MPs under this scheme in my current term. Over the years these funds were utilised for over 350+ projects for the development of our constituency, which included 150+ that have already been successfully completed. I am also pleased that we were able to use the funds for critical projects and sectors, including relating to COVID-19 mitigation, seawall protection, disability, roads/pavements, lighting/MMLs, provision of hospital equipment, school renovations, and promotion of sports.

In the following paragraphs, I have provided details of key sectors and areas for which the MPLADS funds have been utilised 2019-24. A detailed breakdown of each proposal has also been provided in the annexure. MPLADS expenditure 2009-14 and 2014-19 were listed in detail in my MP Reports for those years which are also available on [www.shashitharoor.in](http://www.shashitharoor.in).

## COVID-19 ₹ 2.5 Crores

- We were the first in India to introduce thermal imaging camera at TRV Airport purchased through MPLADS funds.
- We provided Medical Equipment such as ICU cots, Defibrillators, and Dialysis Equipment for COVID-19 wards at MCH and General Hospital.
- To ensure the health and safety of our frontline workers, we distributed 9000 PPE kits, 3000 Rapid RT-PCR & 5000 antigen test kits, 250 non-contact InfraRed thermometers, and 100 EBAS (Emergency Breathing Assistance Systems).

## Seawall ₹ 1.5 Crores

- Constructed seawalls at Kollamcode, Paruthiyoor, and Kochuthoppu.
- The primary aim of seawall is land protection of the surrounding area.
- Seawall protections aids in the preservation of local livelihoods by protecting fish markets, parked boats, and homes from land erosion and flooding.

## Schools ₹ 3 Crores

- We installed several hybrid kitchen facilities at various schools, aiming to provide fresh and nutritious lunches to students.
- At the Government Tribal LP School in Puravimala, we renovated the building multi-purpose gathering. We installed solar panels, Interactive Digital Board with short throw projector, IP Camera, Port Amplifier, and Digital Podium.

## Hospitals ₹ 60 Lakhs

- Purchased Hemo-Dialysis Machine Units with Monitors & Eco-ambulance for government hospitals, equipment for Department of Urology at the Government Medical College, and modernization equipment inpatient ward at Government Mental Health centre.
- We provided portable ultrasound scanners for Multispecialty Veterinary Hospital.

## Sub Roads / Lighting / Sports ₹ 8.5 Crores

- In promoting sports, MPLADS Funds were utilized on several construction and renovation of sports courts around Thiruvananthapuram.
- 200+ projects worth 6 crores for MMLs around the constituency.
- Other various projects for constructing footpaths, interlocked roads, and sidewalks.



## Assistance to the Differently Abled ₹ 50 Lakhs

- Sufficient MPLADS funds were dedicated for multiple Disability projects.
- We were first in the state to introduce Occupational Therapy Rooms in Kerala at SSK, also constructing exercise equipment.
- We provided foldable wheelchairs at TVC Station, equipments such as braille books and computers for Visually Impaired students at Government Blind School, equipments to stimulate Motor neuron receptors of children with Autism, and iron-cod beds at Mental Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram. ■



### MPLADS Summary 2019-2024

| Particulars                       | General        | SC            | ST            | Total          |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Total Entitlement Amount          | 13.17cr        | 2.55cr        | 1.27cr        | 17.00cr        |
| Interest Accrued & Redistribution | 1.91cr         | 0.00          | 0.00          | 1.91cr         |
| Administrative Expenses           | -0.34cr        | 0.00          | 0.00          | -0.34cr        |
| AS Accorded (amount)              | <b>14.75cr</b> | <b>2.55cr</b> | <b>1.27cr</b> | <b>18.57cr</b> |

*\*The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per Member of Parliament (MP) is Rs.5 crore/year, released in two instalments of Rs.2.5 crore each. The Government of India suspended the release of MPLADS fund entitlement during the FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 for COVID-19 mitigation.*





# Shashi Tharoor

Born to Malayali parents in London on March 9, 1956, Dr Tharoor had a pan-Indian upbringing which saw him being raised and complete his early education in Bombay, Calcutta, and New Delhi, even while his parents returned annually with their children to their ancestral villages in the Palakkad district of Kerala. As a result he speaks Malayalam, English, Hindi and French, while managing smatterings of Bangla.

An academically gifted student, Dr. Tharoor was a consistent class topper who chose, out of his interest in liberal arts, to pursue his undergraduate education in History at the prestigious St Stephen's College. At the same time, Dr Tharoor's time at the college witnessed his first engagement with public leadership when he contested and won election for the post of the college president.

Shashi Tharoor then secured admission and a full scholarship to study at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. In a feat not since repeated, Dr. Tharoor made a university record by securing three degrees—MA, MALD, and his Ph.D.- by the age of 22, becoming the youngest doctorate holder in the history of Tufts and



Fletcher. All of this, while also securing the Robert B. Stewart Prize for best student and also serving as the founding first editor of the Fletcher Forum of International Affairs, a journal now in its 48th year.

## UN Service

Days after he successfully defended his thesis, Dr Tharoor joined the United Nations in 1978, serving the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHR) at its headquarters in Geneva. In three years' time, he had to hit the ground running as he was tasked with heading the UNHCR office in Singapore during the peak of the Vietnamese boat people crisis. His passionate yet strategic diplomatic approach saw him successfully engage and negotiate with Singaporean authorities and was instrumental in the country accommodating many of the fleeing refugees pending their resettlement abroad. Again, public leadership came naturally to him, when, following his return to headquarters, he was elected by the UNHCR staff as the first popularly-elected Chairman of the worldwide Staff Council, following a global poll.

In 1989 he moved to New York to join the UN Secretary-General's peace-keeping staff at the end of the Cold War. His remarkable



skillsets encouraged the United Nations to deploy Dr. Tharoor to the forefront of the civil war in former Yugoslavia, where he was tasked with the management of peace-keeping operations from 1991 to 1996. His reputation enhanced by his capable management of that complex challenge, he became Executive Assistant to the new Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in 1997 and thereafter Director of Communications in his office. He was subsequently appointed to head the UN's department of public information (DPI) and promoted to the role of Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, tasked with the management and reform of communications of the organisation's largest depart-





ment, the comprising of over 800 staff in 77 offices worldwide. Even while at this new 'desk role' Dr. Tharoor was instrumental in revolutionising communications and outreach of the United Nations, including by organising the UN's first-ever seminar on Anti-Semitism and the first-ever seminar on Islamophobia to counter the spiralling communal tensions in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Given his impeccable and proven track record at the highest echelons of the United Nations and at the forefront of a number of humanitarian challenges that the inter-

national body was tasked with resolving, Dr. Tharoor was seen in many quarters as the natural choice to succeed then Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose successor, per the rotational charter for the post of Secretary General, had to be elected from Asia. To play a part in highlighting India's growing stature and credibility on the international stage, Dr. Tharoor joined the election to replace SG Annan and his candidature as the nominee of the government of India headed by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. Competing against the likes of a sitting president (Latvia's Vaira Vike-Freiberga), a future president (Afghanistan's Ashraf Ghani), a deputy prime minister (Thailand's Surakiart Sathirathai), a prince (Jordan's Zaid al-Raad al-Hussein) and an experienced ambassador (Sri Lanka's Jayantha Dhanapala), Dr. Tharoor, with only his UN career to bank on, came a close second across multiple rounds only to come short as a result of a US veto in the final round, which, coming from a permanent member of the Security Council, ultimately ended his widely-admired campaign.

Though the eventual winner, Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, requested him to stay on, Dr. Tharoor, though eligible



and highly qualified to continue in service (and eligible to stay on for another 15 years, since he was only 50 at the time) chose to bring an end to his storied career of nearly three decades at the UN. Rather than take up a number of lucrative options from the private sector and academia that were presented to him, Dr. Tharoor chose to return to India and commit himself to serve the people of his own country.

### India: Politics and Literature

As he famously once remarked, “India matters to me and I would like to matter to India”. Dr. Tharoor’s career in Indian politics has exemplified this approach. While all parties reached out to him to represent them, Dr. Tharoor chose to agree to the request of the Congress Party since the party’s inclusive and pluralistic values resonated deeply with his own ideological views and his aspirations for India, as can be seen, for instance, across a lifetime of Dr Tharoor’s writings. Tasked with contesting from the difficult seat of Thiruvananthapuram during the 2009 elections, a seat that the party had lost in the two preceding elections, Dr. Tharoor, despite his limited time in Indian politics, was successful in convincing the electorate to vote the Congress back to office in this hotly contested seat. This is a feat he has now repeated in three consecutive elections, despite the growing influence and outsized financial power of the BJP (it is the only seat in Kerala where the BJP has managed to come second) and made history along the way by becoming the longest serving Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram.

Dr Tharoor has distinguished himself as an outstanding parliamentarian, speaking powerfully for the Congress party in



most of the vital Lok Sabha debates of his time. He has also been a highly-respected Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committees on External Affairs, Information Technology, and, more recently, the Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers.

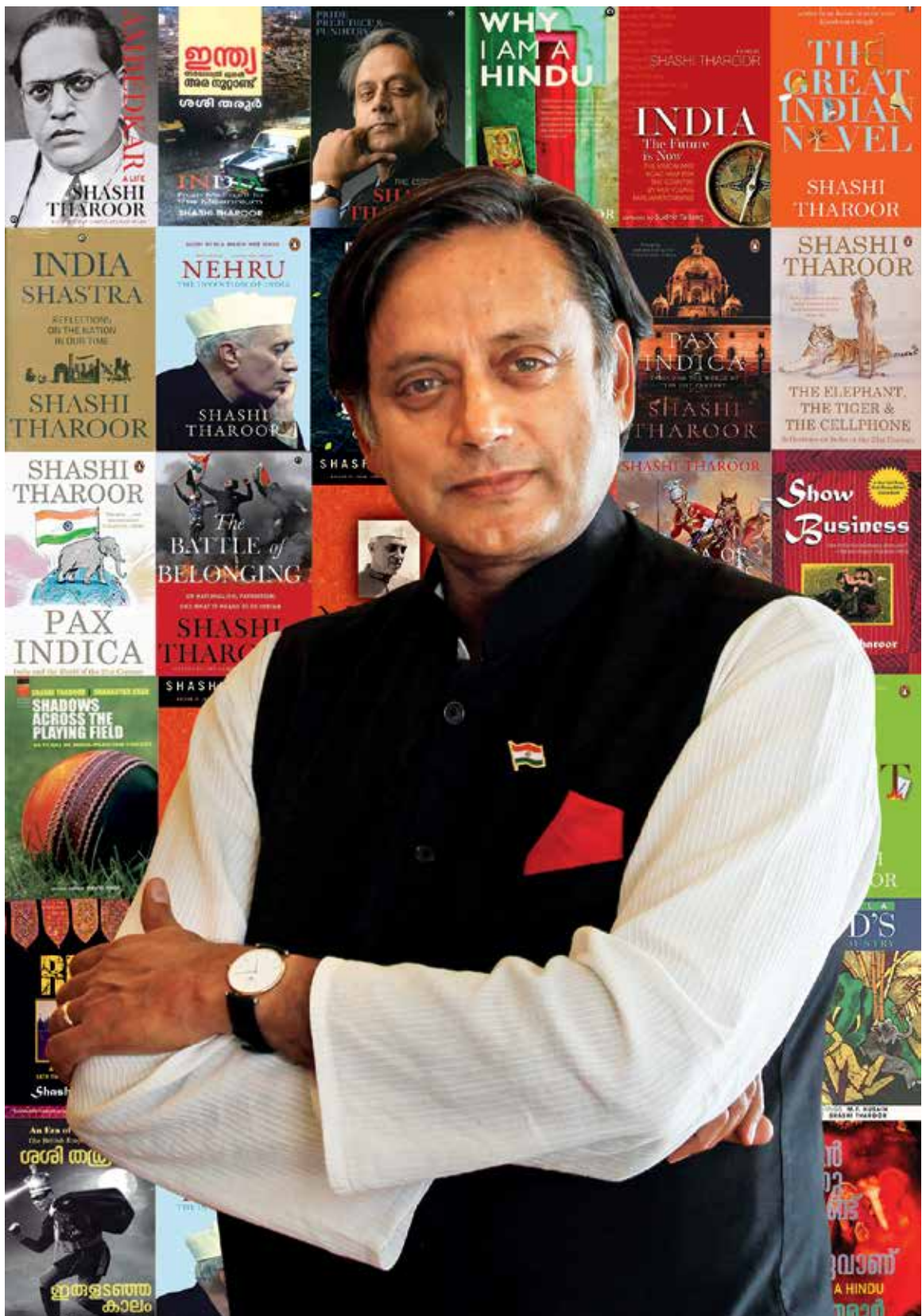
A leader with a strong global presence, Dr Tharoor has been the recipient of a number of national and international accolades, including the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman (2004), the ‘Royal and Distinguished Spanish Order of Charles III’ by the Government of Spain (2010) and France’s highest civilian award, the Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur (2022).

His writings, which include 25 books of fiction and non-fiction, have been critically acclaimed and have seen him being conferred with distinctions such as the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize, the Crossword Books Lifetime Achievement Award and the Sahitya Akademi Award. His biography of Nehru is a classic. His speeches have a mass following on YouTube, and there is no educated Indian who is unaware of his address to the Oxford Union on British colonialism. ■

## *Books written by Dr Shashi Tharoor*

- 1) **Reasons of State** (1985)
- 2) **The Great Indian Novel** (1989)
- 3) **The Five Dollar Smile and Other Stories** (1990)
- 4) **Show Business** (1992)
- 5) **India: From Midnight to the Millennium** (1997)
- 6) **Riot** (2001)
- 7) **Kerala: God's Own Country** (2002) (with M.F. Husain)
- 8) **Nehru: The Invention of India.**(2003)
- 9) **Bookless in Baghdad** (2005)
- 10) **The Elephant, the Tiger, and the Cell Phone:  
Reflections on India –The Emerging 21st-Century Power** (2007)
- 11) **Inde** (in French) **or India** (in English) (2008)  
along with photographer Ferrante Ferranti.
- 12) **Shadows Across the Playing Field:  
Sixty Years of India-Pakistan Cricket** (2009) (with Shaharyar Khan)
- 13) **Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century** (2012)
- 14) **India: the Future is Now** (Editor)(2013)
- 15) **India Shastra: Reflections on the Nation in our Time** (2015)
- 16) **An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India** (2016)
- 17) **Why I Am A Hindu** (2018)
- 18) **The Paradoxical Prime Minister** (2018)
- 20) **The New World Disorder and the Indian Imperative** (2020),  
co-authored with Samir Saran.
- 21) **The Battle of Belonging** (2020)
- 22) **Tharoorosaurus** (2020)
- 23) **Pride, Prejudice and Punditry: The Essential Shashi Tharoor** (2021)
- 24) **Ambedkar: A Life** (2022)
- 25) **The Less You Preach, the More You Learn :  
Aphorisms for Our Age** (2023), co-authored with Joseph Zacharias







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