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The Unmatched Journey of Dr. Pauline Babu



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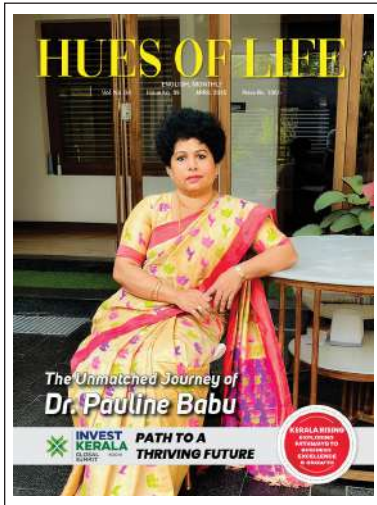
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HUES OF LIFE

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Editor's Desk

Dear Readers.

As we enter the vibrant month of April, we are delighted to introduce an action-packed edition of Hues of Life—one that takes you on a deep dive into Kerala's transformational path towards becoming an economic giant in the world. This month, we explore the latest trends that are redefining the state's industrial map, setting the stage for a sustainable and thriving future.

Kerala is moving into a new phase of industrial development, with a strong foundation in sustainable development, digitalization, and green energy technology. The policies of the state, combined with incentive strategies, are building fertile ground for both start-ups and existing businesses to grow. Kerala's geographical position, a high-quality workforce, and innovation-oriented strategy make it a more desirable place for investment across a range of sectors—artificial intelligence and biotechnology, aerospace and wellness tourism, and so on.

In this edition, we examine Kerala's fast-expanding industrial ecosystem closely, putting the spotlight not just on big-ticket initiatives but also on the thriving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are part of the state's economic growth. One of the highlights of Kerala's industrial growth is its focus on gender-inclusive growth. Efforts such as the Year of Enterprises campaign are revolutionizing the business scene, empowering women entrepreneurs and helping to create more than 3 lakh new businesses in recent years.

We also seize the moment to congratulate Kerala on its unwavering commitment to innovation. From building India's first digital university to fostering a thriving startup ecosystem with the Kerala Start-up Mission (KSUM), the state is establishing a robust base for a knowledge economy. Focused firmly on entrepreneurship, innovation, and the development of world-class infrastructure, Kerala is beginning a new chapter of industrialization and sustainability.

As you flip through this edition, we hope to inspire you by the phenomenal leaps Kerala is taking, not only in industrialization, but towards a more sustainable and inclusive economic landscape. The road ahead beckons with possibility, and we are eager to present to you stories that spotlight the dynamic drivers propelling Kerala towards a glorious future.

Warm regards,

Nijith Raj

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KERALA'S PATH TO A THRIVING FUTURE

INSIGHTS FROM THE INVEST KERALA GLOBAL SUMMIT 2025

The Invest Kerala Global Summit 2025, held from February 20 to 22, marked a defining moment in Kerala's journey towards becoming a global investment hub. The three-day event brought together policymakers, industry leaders, investors, and entrepreneurs to discuss Kerala's economic potential, industrial policies, and infrastructure development. With an emphasis on sustainable growth, digital transformation, and investor confidence, the summit showcased Kerala's commitment to long-term economic progress.

The first day of the summit, held on February 20, began with an inaugural session that set the stage for discussions on Kerala's investment future. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan addressed the gathering, outlining the state's industrial ambitions and its roadmap for economic expansion. He emphasized the importance of creating an investor-friendly ecosystem

that balances development with environmental sustainability. The day witnessed multiple high-profile panel discussions focusing on Kerala's strategic advantages, including its skilled workforce, digital infrastructure, and potential for innovation-driven industries. Investors from across the world participated in interactive sessions, expressing confidence in Kerala's business landscape.

The discussions on the opening day revolved around strengthening Kerala's infrastructure to support large-scale investments. The government highlighted ongoing projects such as the expansion of the Vizhinjam International Port, the development of the National Highway network, and improvements in logistics and transportation. The day concluded with a networking session where global investors explored collaboration opportunities with Kerala-based entrepreneurs and industrialists.

On February 21, the summit moved towards sector-specific dialogues, with a focus on manufacturing, IT, tourism, and renewable energy. Business leaders and policymakers discussed Kerala's potential as a manufacturing hub, emphasizing the role of industrial parks and special economic zones in attracting global investors. The government outlined its vision for





developing technology-driven industries, particularly in the fields of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and aerospace. Several multinational corporations expressed interest in setting up operations in Kerala, recognizing its highly skilled workforce and progressive policies.

Tourism, a key pillar of Kerala's economy, was another major topic of discussion. Industry experts highlighted the growing global demand for experiential and wellness tourism, positioning Kerala as a premier destination for Ayurveda-based health tourism. There were discussions on leveraging Kerala's natural beauty and cultural heritage to attract high-value tourists while ensuring sustainable practices. The session on renewable energy explored investment opportunities in solar and wind energy projects, reinforcing Kerala's commitment to green energy solutions.



As the day progressed, Kerala's startup ecosystem took center stage. Entrepreneurs showcased innovative business models, and discussions focused on the role of government policies in nurturing startups. The Kerala Startup Mission received praise for its efforts in fostering innovation and supporting young entrepreneurs. Investors engaged in B2B meetings, exploring funding opportunities and potential collaborations with Kerala's growing pool of startups.



The final day of the summit, February 22, was dedicated to policy discussions and long-term investment strategies. The valedictory function began with a welcome address by APM Mohammed Hanish IAS, Principal Secretary (Industries & Revenue - Waqf), who highlighted the remarkable success of the summit. P Rajeev, Minister for Industries, Law & Coir, delivered the presidential address, setting the tone for discussions on industrial policy advancements. He emphasized the government's commitment to strengthening Kerala's position as a preferred investment destination.

K N Balagopal, Minister of Finance, officially inaugurated the session, reinforcing Kerala's vision for economic growth. He spoke about the importance of stable industrial policies and economic resilience in fostering investor confidence. He highlighted the strategic significance of ongoing infrastructure projects, including the Vizhinjam Port and National Highway expansion, and reaffirmed Kerala's role in contributing to India's trillion-dollar economy.

The Chief Guest, George Kurian, Minister of State for Minority Affairs and Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, addressed the gathering, outlining the central government's vision to make India a developed nation by 2047. He spoke about upcoming policy reforms, including digital business regulations, and Kerala's role in national economic development. He also announced the launch of an Integrated Aquapark in Kerala, further

reinforcing the government's commitment to innovation and sustainable economic growth.

A special address by Krishna Ella, Chairman and Managing Director of Bharat Biotech, highlighted Kerala's position as a hub of innovation. He praised the state's strengths in wellness tourism, aerospace, and information technology, emphasizing transparency in governance as a key factor in attracting investment. The discussions throughout the day focused on Kerala's future as a global investment destination, with experts stressing the importance of fostering entrepreneurship and embracing emerging technologies.

In his concluding remarks, Deputy Leader of the Opposition P K Kunjalikkutty underscored the significance of investment awareness and the public-private partnership model in driving industrial growth. He pointed out that Kerala's development strategy must be inclusive, ensuring that both large-scale industries and small businesses benefit from investment policies. He highlighted the role of KINFRA in promoting industrial development and reiterated the need for collaborative efforts to sustain economic progress.

Summing up the key takeaways from the summit, P Rajeev stated that this event was not an end but a new beginning in Kerala's industrial journey. He described the summit as a milestone that sets the stage for future investments and transformative economic



growth. A major announcement was made confirming that the Invest Kerala Summit would now be held annually, with the UAE government hosting the 2026 edition, reinforcing Kerala's global investment potential.

The summit saw an overwhelming response from investors, with 374 investment companies expressing interest in reinvesting in Kerala. These commitments are expected to contribute to a consolidated investment of one lakh crore through various investment communities. Additionally, 66 organizations showed interest in future investments, further strengthening Kerala's industrial and economic landscape. Key announcements included advancements in graphene distribution, the implementation of work-from-home initiatives for international professionals, and new policies promoting equal opportunity employment.

As the event drew to a close, S Harikishore IAS, Managing Director of KSIDC, delivered

the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the investors, organizers, participants, and media for making the summit a resounding success. He acknowledged the role of the investment community in shaping Kerala's economic future and reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring that investment opportunities translate into real progress on the ground.

The Invest Kerala Global Summit 2025 has laid a strong foundation for the future of Kerala, reinforcing its position as a progressive, investment-friendly state. The discussions and commitments made during the summit indicate a promising trajectory for Kerala's economy, driven by policy reforms, technological innovation, and sustainable industrial practices. As the state moves forward, it is evident that Kerala is not just embracing change but leading the way in shaping a dynamic and resilient economic future.



THE WOMAN WHO ROSE WHERE NO ROAD WAS LAID

The Unmatched Journey of Dr. Pauline Babu, the one and only lady plastic surgeon in the history of Indian Military

Dr. Pauline Babu's name stands among the most revered in the illustrious chronicles of Indian military medicine, commanding admiration, reverence, and enduring respect.

A woman who has walked the tightrope of precision and compassion with astounding grace, she holds the rare and exceptional distinction of being the only woman plastic surgeon to have ever served in the Indian Armed Forces. Today, she continues to break new ground in her dual role as Senior Consultant and Head of the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, and Chief of Medical Services at Mar Sleeva Medicity Palai, a position that allows her to blend leadership, clinical excellence, and mentorship under one umbrella. But Dr. Pauline's legacy is far more than her professional titles. Her life is a living testament to unwavering determination, inner strength, and the quiet fire of a woman who never stopped believing in herself.

Dr. Pauline's roots trace back to Kurinjilavu, a remote, hilly village nestled in the Kottayam district of Kerala. Born into a traditional farming family as the eighth of nine siblings, she grew up in an environment where there was no weight of patriarchy shackle the wings of a girl child. Pauline was blessed with a mother whose vision for her children soared beyond the mountains that ringed their village. Pauline's mother stood firm in her belief that every single one of her children should pursue a postgraduate education—regardless of gender. That tenacity and forward-thinking spirit were not just maternal affection; they were life lessons that Pauline would carry with her into operating theatres, command stations, and everything in between.

Daily walks to school through slippery slopes and difficult terrain weren't just part of her routine—they were the crucible in which her resilience and discipline were forged. She

understood early that success demanded endurance. That insight guided her through the corridors of Kottayam Medical College, where she completed her MBBS. It was during her medical college days that destiny placed in her life Dr. Mahadevan, a senior neurosurgeon with an extraordinary eye for talent. He noticed something extraordinary in her—her steady hands, calm demeanour, and innate sense of precision in high-pressure situations. He encouraged her to consider a future in surgery, then considered a male-dominated specialty. That encouragement was the spark that ignited a lifelong passion for surgical science in her.

Following her MBBS, she pursued further training in neurosurgery at Medical Trust Hospital, Ernakulam, a decision that would shape her path in unexpected ways. It was during this time that her family received a marriage proposal from the family of Babu Joseph, a young and promising Air Force engineer. After thoughtful consideration and mutual consent, the marriage was arranged, laying the foundation for a relationship built on shared values and unwavering support.

Following their wedding, she accompanied her husband to various Air Force stations across India—from the bustling vibrancy of Punjab to the conflict-affected zones of Kashmir, where insurgency was a daily challenge. Though she briefly returned to Kerala to continue her medical training, she soon realized that being separated from her husband—living as two individuals at opposite ends—didn't align with her vision of marriage. Choosing togetherness over distance, she returned to him, a decision that ultimately led her to step into the world of military medicine herself.



The Making of a Military Medical Maverick

In 1993, fuelled by a mix of patriotism and professional ambition, she applied to join the Indian Air Force as a doctor. The selection process was rigorous—written tests, interviews, and exhaustive medical evaluations—but she passed each with flying colours. Her commission into the Indian Air Force marked the beginning of a career that would redefine what it meant to be a woman in uniform and in the surgical field.

Initially inducted as a general medical officer, she didn't allow her vision for surgical mastery to dim. She sat for the entrance exam for postgraduate training in General Surgery at the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune, one of the most prestigious institutions in the country. Many around her doubted whether a woman could survive the physically demanding and mentally gruelling training. But Dr. Pauline not only cleared the entrance impressively but went on to thrive in the program. Her time at AFMC became a transformative period—she honed not only her surgical skills but also emerged as a leader among peers, known for her grace under pressure and clarity of thought.

Upon completing her training, she was posted to Command Hospital, Bangalore, a top-tier medical facility under the Armed Forces. Here she worked under Dr. Anil Behl, an eminent plastic surgeon and a mentor who would open new doors for her. Under his guidance, Pauline discovered the multifaceted world of plastic and reconstructive surgery—a field that required not only technical acumen but an artistic eye and emotional intelligence. She excelled, combining her surgical precision with an aesthetic sensibility that made her stand out. Her work was noted for its attention to both function and form, especially in trauma reconstructions, burns, congenital deformities, and post-cancer reconstructions.

In 2008, she reached another pinnacle when she cleared the super-specialty entrance exam in plastic surgery at AFMC, becoming the only woman in

the Armed Forces to achieve this distinction that year—a record that still stands. This was a watershed moment, not just in her life, but in the history of women in Indian military medicine.

Her service saw her posted across various parts of India, rising through the ranks to become Commanding Officer of the 12 Air Force Hospital in Gorakhpur. Her leadership was inclusive, ethical, and compassionate. One of the most dramatic moments in her career occurred here when a young Air Force soldier sustained a traumatic brain injury in a motorcycle accident. With no neurosurgeon available and time running out, Dr. Pauline—drawing upon her neurosurgical training—performed an emergency craniotomy. The operation was a success, and the young man's life was saved. For this act of valour, she was awarded the Chief of Air Staff Commendation, a prestigious honour recognizing both her competence and courage.

Her ability to stay composed and decisive in life-or-death situations also came to light during her tenure at the Naval Hospital in Kochi, where she treated a Filipino sailor with extensive burns. The case was complex, the burns severe, and language and cultural barriers presented additional challenges. Yet, through relentless dedication, she ensured a full recovery. The sailor's family was deeply moved by her care, and their gratitude remains etched in her memory as one of the most touching moments of her professional life.



Dr. Pauline's surgical repertoire is broad and deep. Over the years, she has conducted thousands of procedures covering everything from post-trauma reconstructive surgeries to corrective surgeries for congenital deformities, burn scar revisions, oncoplastic reconstructions, and cosmetic surgeries. For her, every surgery is not just a clinical procedure but a chance to restore dignity and hope. She is often heard saying, "A scar is a surgeon's signature—it must be beautiful." This philosophy captures her blend of scientific rigor and artistic compassion.



While plastic surgery is often misunderstood or stigmatized in conservative societies, Dr. Pauline has been an ardent advocate for destigmatizing cosmetic enhancements. She believes in the empowering potential of these procedures, especially for individuals recovering from trauma, burns, or congenital defects. Her clientele ranges from soldiers and civilians to individuals seeking to reclaim confidence through cosmetic changes. In every case, her goal remains the same: to uplift the human spirit.

Her influence doesn't stop at the operating table. A committed teacher and mentor, she has guided dozens of young surgeons, many of whom now head departments across India. Her teaching style emphasizes hands-on precision, ethical clarity, and emotional intelligence. She teaches not only surgical skills but the importance of listening—truly listening—to patients, a quality that distinguishes a good doctor from a great one.

Art, Earth, and Everything in Between: The Soul Behind the Surgeon

Dr. Pauline's leadership acumen, sharpened by military training, is now applied in the civilian domain. Since retiring from the Armed Forces, she has taken on leadership roles in healthcare with the same discipline and empathy. At Mar Sleeva Medicity, she ensures that hospital operations run smoothly, surgical practices follow international standards, and that patients are always treated with dignity. Her contribution goes beyond patient care—she's involved in policy-making, medical ethics training, and emergency response planning. A true multi-talent beyond her surgical brilliance, she is also an avid painter, baker, and DIY craft lover. Her flair for interior decoration, designing, and tailoring reflects the same precision she brings to the operating table. A passionate gardener and devoted cat lover, she embraces every role in life with creativity, warmth, and grace. These hobbies are not just pastimes but her way of finding balance amidst a demanding

career, mirroring her belief that beauty and care belong not only in surgery, but in everyday life.

Despite the many accolades, Dr. Pauline remains grounded. She attributes her success to three forces in her life: her mother's unshakeable belief in education, her husband's constant support, and the opportunities given by the Armed Forces. She often speaks about the importance of education, resilience, and self-worth, not just as abstract virtues, but as tools of liberation—especially for women from underserved backgrounds.

She remains deeply engaged in community health programs as a speaker, where her insightful talks and commanding presence continue to inspire awareness and action. She has inspired audiences across the country with her talks on gender equality in medicine, leadership in crisis, and work-life balance for women professionals. Her story is not just a personal triumph—it is a roadmap for every girl in every remote village who dares to dream beyond boundaries.

Even after transitioning to civilian life, Dr. Pauline continues to serve the nation. Through every life she touches, every young doctor she mentors, and every barrier she dismantles, she reaffirms her place as a trailblazer. She is a woman who has led from the front, performed surgeries under enemy threat, saved lives under impossible conditions, and still made time to be a mentor, wife, and a daughter rooted in gratitude.

In a world where women in scrubs and uniforms are often underestimated, Dr. Pauline Babu takes her place among the greats—a symbol of strength, surgical brilliance, and soulful leadership. Her journey from a quiet hillside hamlet in Kerala to the elite corridors of Indian healthcare epitomizes modern Indian inspiration. She is not just a doctor. She is a force—a woman of steel and scalpel, a living example of what happens when brilliance meets belief, and when one woman dares to rewrite history with her hands, her heart, and her courage.

PASSION, PRECISION AND PERFECTION

TRANSFORMATIVE TOUCH OF DR. NAFINA JASMINE



An innovative Dermatologist turned Entrepreneur, Dr. Nafina Jasmine is redefining excellence in skin and aesthetic care with a hands-on approach to patient treatment. At Dr. NJ Skin & Hair Clinic, she combines advanced dermatological sciences and personalized treatment solutions with a holistic approach. At the forefront of innovation in skin and hair care, she mastered clinical dermatology, dermatosurgery, and aesthetic medicine through intensive training. The breakthrough in her

medical journey began with outstanding academic achievement—securing a high rank, her postgraduate dermatology entry into Kasturba Medical College, Manipal MAHE, in 2013.

Dr. Nafina's unparalleled experience, innovation, and dedication have revolutionized dermatological treatments, creating new standards in next-generation treatments, individualized patient care, and holistic skin and hair solutions. Her extensive influence on the profession has led to far-reaching

appreciation by peers and patients everywhere. A perfectionist to the core, she keeps inspiring future professionals and industry leaders alike with her dedication to excellence in dermatology and aesthetics. Through the fusion of science and art, she inspires people with confidence and well-being, establishing herself as a genuine pioneer in the field.



Returning to Kerala, Dr. Nafina assumed a central role as a dermatology consultant in a multi-specialty hospital in Trivandrum. While managing a substantial patient load during the day, she spent her evenings on aesthetic medicine, shaping cosmetic dermatology practice. During a period when the profession was still in its nascent stage, she played a key role in creating tailor-made treatment programs that improved the outcomes of her patients. This led to the exponential growth of the department in the initial four years, making her a lead name in medical and aesthetic dermatology.

COVID-19 hit at a time when Dr. Nafina shifted to Kozhikode. Rather than getting her care and practices obstructed by the geographical limitation, she remodelled her services by providing teleconsultation facilities to her patients in Trivandrum with no break in care. She created structured follow-up protocols for her staff, demonstrating her capacity to innovate and lead during times of pandemic. Her commitment to patient care, regardless of distance, further cemented her role as an innovative specialist dedicated to excellence.

Post-pandemic, she was back to her hectic travel schedule, traveling alternately between Trivandrum and Kozhikode every two weeks to see patients. Her acumen and leadership were further established when she became Head of Dermatology Department at a multi-specialty hospital in Vadakara, where she established the department from base, adding advanced procedure rooms and fine-tuning patient care protocols. Even as she performed this task to perfection, her dream for independent practice took form. Through careful planning, she envisioned her ideal clinic, integrating innovation, functionality, and state-of-the-art dermatological technology to bring to life a facility that represents her philosophy of precision-based skin and hair treatment.

Dr. NJ Skin & Hair Clinic: A Pinnacle of Excellence

Dr. NJ Skin & Hair Clinic, her vision, is a quality dermatology clinic that revolutionizes patient care with its commitment to excellence. Operated by extremely qualified professionals with more than six years of clinical experience, the clinic provides a blend

of dermatology, dermatosurgery and aesthetic medicine. Equipped with the latest technology and patient-focused practices, it provides personalized treatments for various skin and hair issues. In contrast to traditional beauty clinics that concentrate on mere aesthetic appearance, her clinic focuses on science-based, outcome-oriented skincare specifically designed for each patient. The inauguration day itself reflected the overwhelming trust and anticipation her work had inspired—starting with 50 consultations immediately after the ribbon-cutting ceremony. She stresses that genuine skin health transcends treatments—it involves strict care through hydration, protection from the sun, and balanced living. Her practice features a mix of clinical knowledge with advanced techniques in order to ensure that each treatment will yield long-term results instead of mere temporary improvement.

Apart from dermatology, Dr. Nafina's dedication to healthy well-being led to the foundation of NJ Fitness Fusion, which is a vanguard wellness facility that combines exercise, dance, and health plans, mainly addressing women. To address the immense link between systemic well-being and skin health, she advocates a 360-degree lifestyle of interior as well as exterior care.

Her ability is well renowned among academic circles as well as professional communities. A popular speaker at state and national conferences, she has been awarded several distinctions, such as the Best Speaker Awards at connected medical institutions and the Shashi Tharoor Appreciation Award for her oration at the Doctors' Forum.

Exhibiting her leadership in several medical bodies such as the Indian Association of Dermatology (IADVL), Dr. Nafina holds the position of State Arts & Sports Convener 2024-25. She has served as Secretary of the Women's Wing of Indian Medical Association (IMA) Trivandrum in the past, she is also an associate life member of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP).

Dr. Nafina's professional life is a testament to accuracy, innovation, and uncompromising dedication to patient-focused dermatology. Through Dr. NJ Skin & Hair Clinic, she continues to raise the bar in dermatological and aesthetic medicine, providing science and expertise-supported cutting-edge solutions. Her path is not only a personal one of achievement but also of transformative influence, establishing new paradigms in the skincare and wellness world.



KERALA

A MODEL OF WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIVEABILITY

Kerala, often referred to as “God’s Own Country,” is not only a land of breath-taking landscapes but also a state that has set benchmarks in infrastructure, connectivity, and quality of life. With a strong transportation network, well-planned urban and rural infrastructure, and sustainable development, Kerala stands out as one of India’s most liveable and progressive states.

From its expansive road and rail networks to world-class airports, seaports, and digital connectivity, the state has continually invested in modernizing its infrastructure. This seamless connectivity enhances economic activity, improves ease of living, and ensures that Kerala remains at the forefront of sustainable development in India.

Kerala boasts four operational international airports—Trivandrum, Cochin, Kozhikode, and Kannur—ensuring excellent global and domestic connectivity. A fifth airport is under consideration, further strengthening the state’s accessibility. This extensive air network has made Kerala a gateway to

South India for global travellers, business executives, and tourists alike.

The Cochin International Airport (CIAL) is a pioneer in green energy, being the world’s first fully solar-powered airport. Such innovations reflect Kerala’s commitment to sustainability in infrastructure development.

Kerala’s strategic coastal location makes it a key player in maritime trade. The state has two major seaports and 17 mini ports, enhancing both domestic and international trade. The Vallarpadam International Container Terminal in Cochin, one of India’s largest trans-shipment hubs, and the Vizhinjam International Deepwater Seaport near Trivandrum, which is set to be a game-changer for global shipping, position Kerala as a critical player in global logistics. These facilities not only support Kerala’s thriving export economy but also attract multinational companies and investors to its shores.

The state’s expansive road network ensures seamless intra-state and inter-state connectivity. With vast

networks of National Highways crisscrossing the state, Kerala has one of the most well-developed road systems in India. The upcoming 600+ km six-lane National Highway project will enhance the north-south corridor, making road travel faster and more efficient. Additionally, the 625 km Coastal Highway and Hill Highway will further improve connectivity across diverse terrains, ensuring even remote regions have access to modern infrastructure. These developments facilitate smoother trade, tourism, and daily commuting, reducing travel time and improving overall efficiency.

Rail connectivity in Kerala is equally robust, with a dense railway network linking all major cities and towns. The state is also witnessing a shift toward high-speed and modern rail transport, with proposed projects significantly reducing journey time while boosting economic development.

The introduction of Vande Bharat Express trains has already improved intercity travel, offering passengers a faster, more comfortable experience.

Kerala's inland water transport system is another vital component of its infrastructure. The state is home to National

Waterways 1, 2, and 3, which play a crucial role in eco-friendly cargo and passenger transport. The Kochi Water Metro, India's first integrated water transport system, is a shining example of sustainable urban mobility, reducing congestion on city roads while offering a scenic and efficient mode of transport.

Beyond physical infrastructure, Kerala has embraced digital connectivity and smart urban planning. The state has one of the highest internet penetration rates in India, enabling seamless communication and business operations. The Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON) project, which aims to provide high-speed internet access to every household, is set to bridge the digital divide and make connectivity a fundamental right. This investment in digital infrastructure is transforming Kerala into a technology-driven economy, attracting IT companies, start-ups, and global investors.

Kerala's commitment to infrastructure development extends to healthcare, education, and sustainable living. The state leads in human development indicators, with India's highest Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.758 and a Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) of 95.34, the best among Indian states. It has consistently ranked first in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index by NITI Aayog since 2018, reflecting its focus on equitable and inclusive growth.

The state's proactive policies in urban planning, green energy, and environmental conservation contribute to its high quality of life. Kerala's average Air Quality Index (AQI) of 26 is significantly better than the national average, making it one of the cleanest and least polluted states in India. This focus on sustainability ensures that infrastructural

growth does not come at the cost of environmental degradation.

Kerala's industrial infrastructure is also witnessing rapid expansion, with logistics parks, business hubs, and technology parks being developed across the state. The Kerala Logistics Park Policy provides incentives and support for

companies in the logistics sector, making it an attractive destination for warehousing, e-commerce, and supply chain industries. The state's thriving IT hubs, such as Technopark (Trivandrum), Infopark (Kochi), and Cyberpark (Kozhikode), continue to attract global tech giants and start-ups, driving employment and economic growth.

With its world-class infrastructure, sustainable development model, and strong connectivity, Kerala is setting an example for other states in India. Whether it is seamless transportation, efficient urban planning, or cutting-edge digital connectivity, Kerala offers a high quality of life that blends modernity with sustainability. As the state continues to invest in infrastructure, it is poised to become not only a national leader but also a global benchmark for liveability and ease of doing business.





LINEN

THE TIMELESS FABRIC REDEFINING FASHION

Linen has always been more than just a fabric—it is a statement of elegance, comfort, and sustainability. In an industry driven by trends that come and go, linen has remained a constant, proving its versatility time and again. This centuries-old textile, woven from the resilient flax plant, is now experiencing a renaissance, making its way into high-fashion runways, luxury boutiques, and everyday wardrobes. From its breathable nature to its eco-friendly production, linen is redefining modern fashion, proving that style and sustainability can go hand in hand.

The History of Linen: A Fabric Woven in Time

Linen's history stretches back over 4,000 years, making it one of the oldest textiles in existence. Ancient Egyptians considered it a symbol of purity and wealth, using it for garments, household items, and even burial shrouds for royalty. The Greeks and Romans embraced linen for its lightweight quality, wearing tunics and robes made from the fabric to stay cool in warm climates. As trade routes expanded, linen found its way to Europe, where it became a staple fabric for aristocracy and working-class people alike.

Over the centuries, linen has maintained its reputation as a luxurious yet practical fabric. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was widely used for undergarments and home textiles due to its breathability and durability. However, with the rise of industrialization and the introduction of cheaper synthetic fabrics, linen took a backseat. Now, as consumers shift towards mindful fashion choices, linen is making a powerful comeback, appealing to those who value authenticity, sustainability, and timeless style.

Why Linen is the Fabric of the Future

Linen's resurgence in contemporary fashion is no coincidence. As sustainability takes center stage in

the fashion industry, linen has emerged as one of the most eco-friendly textiles available. The flax plant requires minimal water and pesticides compared to cotton, making linen a sustainable alternative with a significantly lower environmental impact. Additionally, every part of the flax plant is used in production, reducing waste and ensuring a zero-waste manufacturing process.

Beyond its environmental benefits, linen is incredibly durable, often lasting decades when properly cared for. Unlike fast-fashion materials that degrade quickly, linen softens and improves with age, making it a long-term investment. Its breathability and moisture-wicking properties make it an excellent choice for warm weather, while its insulating qualities provide warmth in colder months. This ability to adapt to different climates makes linen a year-round essential, perfect for individuals who prioritize comfort without compromising style.

Linen in High Fashion and Everyday Wear

Once associated with casual summer wear, linen has transcended its reputation to become a fabric of high fashion. Designers around the world are experimenting with linen's texture, structure, and drape, crafting garments that range from effortlessly chic to sharply tailored. From oversized linen blazers to flowing linen gowns, the fabric's versatility allows for a wide array of fashion-forward designs.

Luxury fashion houses have embraced linen, incorporating it into collections that celebrate natural beauty and understated elegance. Linen trousers paired with silk blouses create a look that is both refined and relaxed, perfect for business meetings or casual outings. Meanwhile, linen dresses in earthy tones capture a bohemian charm that resonates with modern minimalists. Even bridal fashion is embracing linen, with wedding dresses designed from the fabric offering an ethereal yet rustic appeal.

Men's fashion, too, has embraced linen with renewed enthusiasm. Linen suits have become a summer staple, offering a breathable alternative to heavier fabrics. Paired with a crisp linen shirt, a linen blazer exudes effortless sophistication, perfect for both formal and semi-formal occasions. The natural texture of linen adds character to any outfit, giving it a lived-in elegance that synthetic fabrics simply cannot replicate.

The Rise of Sustainable Linen Brands

With the shift towards ethical fashion, many designers and brands are championing linen as a sustainable alternative to conventional fabrics. From small independent labels to global fashion giants, brands are investing in linen production, highlighting its minimal environmental footprint and timeless appeal. Ethical fashion brands focus on organic flax farming, ensuring that linen remains free from harmful chemicals and pesticides.

In addition to clothing, linen has found its way into accessories and lifestyle products. Linen scarves, handbags, and even footwear are becoming popular, proving that the fabric's versatility extends beyond garments. Interior designers are also incorporating linen into home decor, with linen bedding, curtains, and upholstery adding a touch of natural luxury to living spaces. The growing demand for linen across various industries speaks to its enduring appeal and sustainable future.

Embracing Linen's Natural Beauty

One of the defining characteristics of linen is its slightly wrinkled texture, which some might see as imperfection but is, in reality, part of its charm. Unlike synthetic fabrics that demand perfection, linen embraces its natural creases, adding character and authenticity to each piece. This relaxed aesthetic aligns with the growing appreciation for slow fashion—an approach that values craftsmanship, longevity, and individuality.

Caring for linen is relatively simple, though it does require attention to maintain its quality. Hand washing or using a gentle machine wash cycle with mild detergent helps preserve the fabric's softness. Linen should be air-dried whenever possible, as excessive heat from dryers can weaken the fibers. While some prefer ironing their linen garments for a crisp finish, others embrace the natural wrinkles, allowing the fabric's raw beauty to shine through.

Linen and the Future of Fashion

The return of linen is not just a passing trend—it signifies a broader shift in the fashion industry towards mindful consumption. As consumers become more aware of the environmental impact of their clothing choices, linen stands as a beacon of responsible fashion. Its ability to blend luxury with sustainability makes it an ideal fabric for the modern world, where aesthetics and ethics go hand in hand.

With climate change concerns and a push for ethical production, linen's eco-friendly nature makes it a frontrunner in the future of fashion. Brands are not only exploring linen in its traditional form but also experimenting with linen blends, creating innovative textiles that combine the best properties of multiple fabrics. The integration of technology in textile production is paving the way for even more sustainable and versatile linen fabrics, further solidifying its place in fashion's evolution.

A Wardrobe Essential for Every Generation

Linen's appeal extends across generations, making it a fabric that transcends age and fashion cycles. Millennials and Gen Z consumers are drawn to its sustainable qualities, while older generations appreciate its timeless elegance. Whether styled for a contemporary look or worn in its most traditional form, linen offers endless possibilities for those who appreciate both comfort and sophistication.

For those looking to build a wardrobe that stands the test of time, investing in linen pieces is a wise choice. A classic white linen shirt is a staple that pairs effortlessly with jeans, skirts, or tailored trousers. Linen jumpsuits offer a modern take on effortless dressing, perfect for those who prioritize both style and convenience. Accessories like linen tote bags and scarves provide subtle yet impactful ways to incorporate the fabric into everyday wear.

As we move towards a future where fashion prioritizes sustainability, linen serves as a reminder that true luxury lies in quality, craftsmanship, and longevity. It is a fabric that connects us to the past while guiding us toward a more responsible future. Whether worn for its breathability, admired for its texture, or chosen for its eco-friendly attributes, linen remains an enduring symbol of timeless fashion.

The rise of linen is more than just a revival—it is a revolution in the way we perceive clothing. It challenges the disposable nature of fast fashion and encourages a return to mindful dressing. As we embrace a world where fashion is not just about looking good but also doing good, linen stands at the forefront, proving that simplicity is, indeed, the ultimate sophistication.

SRELANX CLOTHING

TURNING IDEAS INTO WEARABLE ART

In the ever-evolving world of fashion and entrepreneurship, success often comes to those who embrace innovation and dare to step outside the conventional path. Ranjana Thacharoori, a native of Kozhikode, Kerala, is one such visionary. At the age of 47, when many hesitate to take risks, she boldly entered the world of customized fashion and founded Srelanx Clothing in 2022. Today, her brand is a rising name in the custom apparel industry, catering to both local and international markets.

The idea for Srelanx Clothing stemmed from Ranjana's keen observation of trends. Printed T-shirts have long been a universal fashion statement, appealing to people across all age groups and backgrounds. Whether for personal expression, corporate branding, or event-specific attire, custom-printed clothing offers a simple yet impactful way to create a sense of identity. Recognizing the growing demand for personalization in fashion, Ranjana envisioned a business that would cater to this niche while ensuring high quality and accessibility.

Starting a business, however, was no easy feat. One of the major challenges she faced was the lack of local stitching expertise. Many skilled tailors in her region were reluctant to take on large-scale garment production. Instead of letting this obstacle slow her down, Ranjana took a strategic approach—she established a stitching unit in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, a city renowned for its textile industry. This decision

allowed her to source premium-quality fabric, have it stitched in Tirupur, and then bring the garments to Kerala, where her team would complete the customized printing process.

While many competitors in the industry focused solely on bulk production, Ranjana saw an opportunity to stand out by offering customization even for single-piece orders. This customer-friendly approach helped Srelanx Clothing gain traction quickly, attracting individual customers, small businesses, and event organizers. Within just a short period, the brand had successfully completed over 300 diverse orders.

Beyond business success, Ranjana was deeply committed to creating a positive impact on society. Having worked in the private sector before, she was inspired by the employee-friendly culture in corporate environments and wanted to replicate the same within her own company. One of her core missions was to empower women by providing them with stable employment opportunities. Today, Srelanx Clothing operates a women-led production unit in Feroke, Kozhikode, where female employees handle printing and finishing processes. This initiative has helped many women gain financial independence and professional growth.

The expansion of Srelanx Clothing did not stop at local markets. The brand's reputation for high-quality prints, unique designs, and reliable service soon led to bulk orders from international clients. Today, Srelanx





exports customized apparel to Oman, Israel, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore, solidifying its place in the global market.

One of the key elements behind the brand's success is its advanced printing technology. Srelanx Clothing utilizes state-of-the-art techniques to produce vibrant, long-lasting designs. Customers can choose from a range of high-quality fabrics, ensuring comfort along with style. Whether it's a small, intricate design or a large bulk order, Srelanx ensures precision and durability in every print.

Ranjana firmly believes that custom printing is more than just a business—it is an art of preserving memories and creating meaningful connections. Whether it's a T-shirt with a heartfelt quote, a design that reflects a movement, or matching outfits for a group event, personalized prints add a touch of uniqueness to every occasion. Inspired by the popularity of customized gifts like printed mugs, keychains, and glassware, she saw immense potential in expanding this concept to fashion. Today, Srelanx Clothing is known not just for its stylish prints but also for its ability to turn ideas into wearable art.

Customer satisfaction has always been a priority for Ranjana. From the initial consultation to the

final product delivery, Srelanx ensures a seamless experience. Many customers have shared stories of how their personalized T-shirts became conversation starters, made special moments even more memorable, or helped promote their businesses in a creative way. This strong word-of-mouth reputation has played a vital role in Srelanx's growth.

Looking ahead, Ranjana envisions expanding Srelanx Clothing to more international markets,

introducing new sustainable printing techniques, and launching an exclusive range of eco-friendly customized apparel. She also hopes to set up more women-led production units, providing employment opportunities and encouraging entrepreneurship among women.

Her journey is a guide to the power of determination, innovation, and the willingness to take risks at any stage in life. What started as an ambitious idea has transformed into a thriving business that blends fashion with personal expression, proving that with the right mindset, success knows no age limits.

As Srelanx Clothing continues to grow, one thing is certain—this brand is not just printing designs on fabric; it is weaving stories, memories, and aspirations into every piece it creates.



THE COCONENT REVOLUTION

FRESHNESS WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Entrepreneurship often begins with a mere idea—one that finds and fills a niche in the market, and eventually becomes a successful venture. In the case of Preeja Nair P.G., the creator of coconent, the inspiration was a desire for quality and easy coconut products. Not having come from a food background, having trained as a banker, she had not considered a career in food; however, a series of circumstances pushed her to take the leap. Her brand is now committed to dehydrated grated coconut, offering a solution that provides authenticity, nutrition, and convenience to the modern consumer.

Her entry into the business went beyond business; it was all about reinventing the way people interact with coconut-based products. With her husband, Shinil, she carefully studied market trends, researched processing methods, and built a brand that focuses on quality and sustainability. The result is a product that maintains the freshness of coconut with a longer shelf life without additives or preservatives.

The concept of entering the food industry was presented to them at a time when change was inevitable. The sudden shift as a result of Covid-19 prompted the couple to rethink their future, looking for an opportunity that was scalable and sustainable. Their quest led them into the world of coconuts, an industry with rich cultural and economic value in Kerala. Discussions with industry experts, including representatives from the Coconut Development Board, established the potential of coconut products in global markets. With extensive research, they established that there was a gap in the market, which was for good quality, ready-to-use grated coconut.

coconent was built on the values of quality and transparency. Right from day one, Preeja made it a point to source raw materials directly from farmers in the locality. By cutting middlemen out of the picture, the brand gives fair prices to farmers while maintaining strict quality controls. Carefully sorted coconuts are then subjected to processing according to state-of-the-art dehydration technology. Not only is the natural flavour, texture, and nutritional value of fresh coconut retained, but the shelf life is enhanced without the addition of artificial preservatives.

What sets coconent apart is its production process. Though efficiency is enhanced with modern equipment, traditional techniques are still necessary for sorting and quality control. Each batch is carefully monitored to ensure consistency, and the end product offers the same rich flavour that home cooks and professional chefs require. Used in traditional Kerala recipes, baked products, or contemporary recipes, coconent's dehydrated grated





coconut seamlessly fits into a variety of culinary uses.

Besides the quality of products, ethics and sustainability are also highlighted by the brand. Supporting local farmers is the core business model of coconent. By offering price guarantees and long-term contracts, the company gives farmers financial security, taking away market volatility risks from their shoulders. The encouragement of chemical-free cultivation also addresses increasing consumer demand for natural, minimally processed food products.

Distribution and marketing have played a key role in the development of coconent. Due to the power of the internet, the company has leveraged social media and online shops to increase its customer base. By



combining offline stores with online marketplaces, coconent can distribute its products to both local and foreign customers.

Preeja's path is a testament to grit and determination. The shift from a career in banking to the unknown landscape of entrepreneurship required grit and good planning. The ability to be adaptable in the face of change, conduct extensive research, and build a company from scratch is a testament to the spirit of an entrepreneurial visionary. With coconent, not only did she create a brand that resonated with consumer demands but also contributed to the larger cause of sustainable and ethical food production.

With demand for natural, quality food products increasing, coconent is poised to take its reach to a strategic expansion. Committed to remaining innovative while not straying from what has worked, the company represents a new wave of entrepreneurial spirit—this one paying homage to heritage while embracing the promise of tomorrow.



FROM TINY STEPS TO GIANT LEAPS

THE JOURNEY OF NEWBIE ROOTS

Newbie Roots Preschool has been slowly but steadily changing the face of early education since its launch in July 2017 in Kochi. Conceived by Vincy Mathew, who believed that just as a building needs a strong foundation, a child needs a strong foundation for learning - to develop into an 'A Foundation for Great Education'. Newbie Roots Preschool was inspired with the idea to provide 'A Foundation for Great Education'.

Vincy's was an unusual journey into preschool education. With an IT background and working as an assistant professor, she stepped into this line of work while pregnant with her son. What started off as curiosity eventually led to an intensive five years of research into child psychology, emotional growth, and learning strategies. It was all about development in children in their formative years, how they cope with different environments, and what has to be done in helping them to become well-adjusted individuals. That is why she started Newbie Roots: for children to be educated and become confident, compassionate human beings.

Understanding the Needs of a Changing Society

Earlier, kids used to grow up in joint families, and they learned things like sharing, caring, and respecting the elders naturally. But with the growth of nuclear families, children now lack such exposure. Besides this, new-age lifestyles have isolated them from nature, depriving them of interacting with the environment. Newbie Roots was founded with the understanding that a preschool should not just focus on academics but also instil social and moral values that prepare children for life.

Recognizing that preschool is often the first place where children are separated from their parents, Newbie Roots has created an environment that prioritizes emotional security. The settling is made as easy as it can be—kids are greeted with a friendly hug every day, and school times are slowly phased in to allow them to become settled. Instead of imposing a strict regime from the beginning, they are allowed to settle in gradually to make sure they feel safe and secure. A number of parents have commented that this method yields visible improvement in their child's behaviour and self-assurance.

A Safe and Well-Designed Learning Environment

Each aspect at Newbie Roots has been thoroughly



thought about so as to deliver a safe and enriching environment. Equipment and materials, ranging from chairs and carpeting to slides and swings, are the highest safety standards. To guarantee this, Vincy personally visited Dubai to choose only the finest material.

The preschool curriculum is well-planned but also offers flexibility, combining academics with necessary life skills. Every month, children are involved in activities that foster their personal, social, and emotional growth. They learn the value of using courteous words such as "sorry," "thank you," and "may I" through everyday situations that are designed to promote these values. Table etiquette, hygiene habits such as proper hand washing, and self-care skills such as dressing independently are taught in a fun and interactive manner.

They also learn how to recognize their feelings and how to express them. They are taught about good and bad touch, dealing with strangers, and when to say "no" through stories and role-playing. These hands-on, experiential approaches to learning make the lessons stick deeply in their minds.





Connecting with Nature and Fostering Creativity

At Newbie Roots, the learning does not just stop within the classroom. Kids are inspired to interact with nature through various activities such as planting seeds to grow plants. They learn the names of the different parts of a plant and the satisfaction of watering and taking care of them on a daily basis. The parents are also included, conducting hands-on activities such as teaching personal hygiene and non-fire cooking, enriching and making learning more holistic.

One of the most important elements of the preschool's philosophy is establishing good habits early. Parents are instructed on when and how to introduce necessary life skills, like how to eat independently rather than using distractions like cartoons. This focus on independent learning and self-reliance enables children to develop confidence and responsibility at an early age.

There's something new every day at Newbie Roots, with activities aimed at inspiring curiosity and creativity. Academic programming is thoughtfully designed to make learning a fun experience for children. The preschool offers various age groups, from toddlers to playgroup, nursery, kindergarten, after-school programs, and day care services.

A Unique Approach to Early Learning

Every new generation of kids is distinct, with a few demonstrating progressive mental capabilities while others experience growing challenges. Every child's progress is affected by a variety of factors, which range from parenting stress to lifestyle and diet. No child in Newbie Roots is ever identified as 'difficult' or 'problematic.' Rather, efforts are aimed at comprehending their unique requirement and offering apt assistance.

For two- and three-year-olds, activities such as crayons, scribbling, and finger painting assist in the development of hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. Play sessions are well planned so that their energy is utilized constructively, which also enables them to pay attention during learning periods. Through segments such as art and craft, literacy, and numeracy, children are progressively familiarized with basic ideas in an entertaining and enjoyable way.

When academics are concerned, Newbie Roots approaches things in steps. For example, children are

taught patterns and simple strokes prior to learning alphabets. Rather than starting with A to Z straight away, they learn simple lines and curves and naturally move on to letters. It lays a firm foundation for handwriting while maintaining learning stress-free. Storytelling is another crucial aspect of the curriculum, with monthly moral stories told in a manner that engages young minds. Circle time is utilized to promote vocabulary growth, enabling each child to be heard and grow in confidence. Stage activities assist them in conquering shyness, preparing them for future performances before bigger audiences.

A Place Where Every Child Matters

Newbie Roots is not another preschool but a well-planned learning environment where every child is given personalized attention. Contrary to schools that focus on high enrolments, this preschool has a low teacher-to-student ratio. For two- and three-year-olds, the ratio is 5:1, in nursery it is 8:1, and in kindergarten, it is 16:1. This way, every child receives the care and guidance they require to grow.

Future Scope: Unveiling Inclusive Education

The future vision of Newbie Roots is to build an inclusive learning community where every child, irrespective of their background, ability, or challenge, can learn and grow. The preschool sees itself growing its practice to ensure the holistic development of children by providing individualized support and building a culture of acceptance, understanding, and respect. Their future vision is to incorporate inclusive practices in every area of education so that every child feels valued, included, and empowered to achieve their full potential. By building this foundation, Newbie Roots hopes to raise children who are not only academically prepared but also socially and emotionally resilient, capable of making a positive contribution to society.

Vincy Mathew sees Newbie Roots as more than a school—it is an institution that moulds young minds into responsible, empathetic individuals. Teachers receive ongoing training to remain current with the newest in early childhood education, keeping Newbie Roots at the forefront of preschool learning. As the school expands, so does its mission: to provide an environment in which children are not merely taught, but truly equipped for life.



KERALA

A THRIVING HUB FOR INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Kerala has emerged as a powerhouse of industrial infrastructure, policy innovation, and economic growth, creating a business-friendly ecosystem that caters to a wide range of industries. The state's strategic location, skilled workforce, and well-developed industrial parks make it an attractive destination for investors. With over 140 industrial parks, dedicated sector-specific hubs, and policies that encourage entrepreneurship, Kerala has successfully built a strong foundation for industrial and economic expansion.

At the heart of this industrial transformation are key agencies such as the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA), Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC), Kerala Bureau for Industrial Promotion (K-BIP), Directorate of Industries and Commerce, and Kerala Small Industries Development Corporation (SIDCO). These organizations play a vital role in planning, developing, and promoting industrial projects that align with Kerala's economic vision.

Strengthening Industrial Infrastructure

Kerala's industrial parks and estates provide the

necessary infrastructure for businesses to thrive. The state has established sector-specific parks catering to industries such as food processing, life sciences, defence, spices, rubber, petrochemicals, and Ayurveda. Mega projects like the 1700+ acre Industrial Smart City in Palakkad and the 350+ acre KINFRA Global City near Aluva are designed to attract large-scale investments and drive high-tech industries.

To encourage private participation, Kerala introduced the Private Industrial Estate (PIE) Scheme, allowing entrepreneurs with over 10 acres of land to develop industrial estates with government support. With ₹3 crore in infrastructure subsidies and 31 private industrial estates approved by November 2024, this initiative is driving industrial expansion beyond traditional hubs.

Another innovative approach is the Campus Industrial Park Scheme, which integrates industrial units within college campuses, fostering industry-academia collaboration and strengthening Kerala's knowledge-based industries.

The Industrial Policy 2023 was designed to transform Kerala into a major investment destination. This policy focuses on 22 priority sectors, offering 18 different

incentives to investors, including financial subsidies, tax exemptions, and regulatory simplifications.

To further support industrial development, the Kerala Logistics Policy and Export Policy were introduced, aiming to enhance trade infrastructure, facilitate exports, and streamline supply chain management. Additionally, the Unified Industrial Land/Building Allotment and Disposal Regulations enable businesses to set up units on KINFRA and KSIDC land with an upfront payment of only 10% of the land cost, making land acquisition easier and more affordable.

Driving Innovation and Start-ups

Kerala is at the forefront of fostering technology-driven industries and innovation. The state has made internet access a basic right and established India's first digital university, underlining its commitment to a knowledge-based economy.

The Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC) functions as a strategic think tank, promoting innovation, research, and entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) provides financial assistance, incubation facilities, mentorship, and global market access, making Kerala one of the most vibrant start-up ecosystems in India.

Institutions like the Kerala Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization (KITCO) and the Kerala Bureau of Industrial Promotion (KBIP) assist businesses in project planning, infrastructure development, and investment facilitation, further strengthening the industrial sector.

A Strong MSME Sector

Kerala has one of the most dynamic MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) ecosystems in the country. Under the Year of Enterprises campaign, over 3,43,058 enterprises have been established in the last 2.9 years, creating 7,27,582 jobs and attracting ₹22,016.79 crore in investments. Notably, 1,09,236 enterprises have been started by women entrepreneurs, reinforcing Kerala's commitment to gender-inclusive economic growth.

To support MSMEs, Kerala has introduced loans up to ₹10 lakh at just 4% interest, MSME insurance schemes, business clinics for struggling enterprises, and the Kerala Brand initiative to promote local products. A unique initiative, Mission 1000, aims

to scale up 1000 MSMEs to an average turnover of ₹100 crore, providing growth-oriented support to selected businesses.

Kerala's industrial parks offer ready-to-use infrastructure, developed land, built-up spaces, and shared facilities like power, water supply, waste management, and transportation. By reducing setup costs and ensuring seamless operations, these parks attract new and emerging businesses.

To streamline approvals and minimize bureaucratic delays, Single Window Clearance Boards have been established at the park level. This ensures that businesses receive faster clearances, reduced regulatory hurdles, and a smoother investment process.

Financial and Strategic Support for Enterprises

The Kerala Financial Corporation (KFC) plays a significant role in funding and supporting industrial ventures, offering loans, venture capital, and credit facilities to both startups and established businesses. The Kerala Small Industries Association (KSIA) acts as a bridge between MSMEs and policymakers, helping businesses navigate challenges related to finance, regulations, and market expansion.

At the state level, the Kerala State Planning Board (KSPB) ensures that industrial growth is aligned with sustainability and inclusive development goals. These policy measures, combined with targeted incentives and investor-friendly reforms, make Kerala a preferred destination for industrial expansion and economic growth.

With a strong focus on industrial expansion, infrastructure development, and policy innovation, Kerala is emerging as a leading hub for businesses, startups, and large-scale industries. The combined efforts of KINFRA, KSIDC, SIDCO, KITCO, KSUM, KBIP, KSIA, K-DISC, and other key institutions have created a business-friendly environment that promotes investment, job creation, and sustainable economic growth.

As Kerala continues to embrace technological advancements, strategic industrial policies, and global partnerships, the state is well-positioned to become a national leader in industrial development and innovation. With a commitment to inclusive growth, sustainability, and investor confidence, Kerala's industrial future is bright and full of possibilities.



FITNESS FOR OBESITY

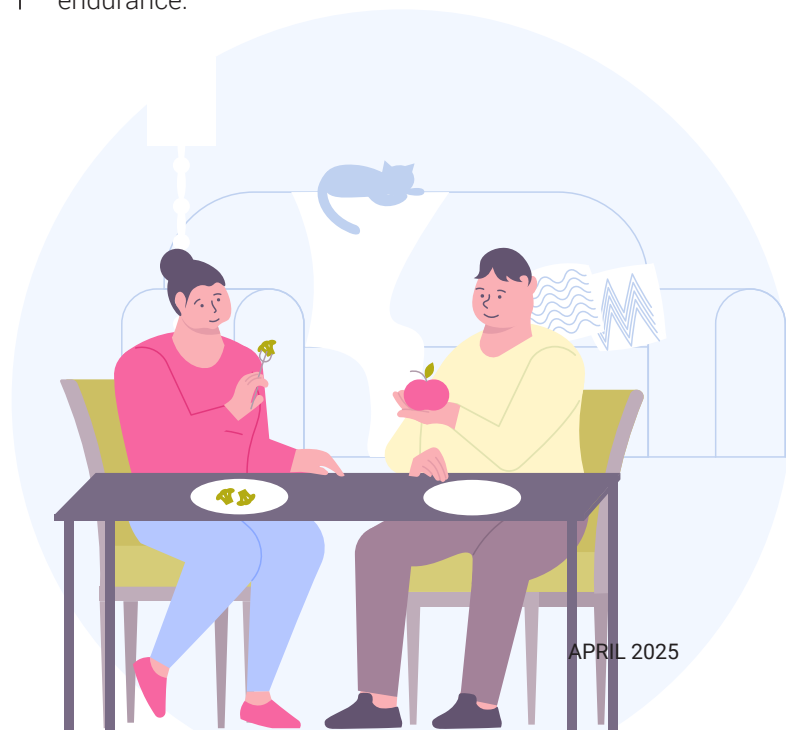
SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE WORKOUTS

Obesity is not simply a matter of weight; it influences total health, mobility, and mental health. Exercise is an important factor in obesity management, not only for weight reduction but for good heart health, increased metabolism, and flexibility too. Yet, for those who are overweight, not all exercise is appropriate. High-impact activities tend to be joint-busting and cause injury or pain. The trick is to embrace a low-impact, gradual approach to exercise that conditions the body to gain endurance, strengthen muscles, and enhance mobility without putting stress on the body.

Walking is one of the easiest and most effective exercises for the obese. It is low-impact, easy to begin, and can be varied in pace and duration as fitness increases. Starting with short walks and gradually adding time and intensity can greatly increase stamina and calorie burn. For those with joint problems, a treadmill with incline settings can add benefit without undue strain.

Water-based exercises like swimming and aqua aerobics are excellent choices as water reduces

joint pressure while providing natural resistance for muscle engagement. Moving in water strengthens the body without the risk of injuries, making it ideal for those with knee or back pain. Even gentle movements like water walking or leg kicks can improve cardiovascular health and endurance.



Cycling on a stationary bicycle is another arthritis-friendly cardio workout. It engages the entire lower body, enhancing circulation and fat burning while limiting stress on the knees. An aerobic cycling class at moderate levels can be good for metabolism, as well as cardiovascular health. Strength training also forms a basis for any exercising regimen, specifically for the overweight. Muscle toning burns a greater number of calories even without activity and better optimizes the body's physique. Basic dumbbell, resistance band, or bodyweight resistance exercises can be quite effective. Leg lifts while sitting, chair squats, and wall push-ups are excellent options, building up strength without causing too much stress. Two or three times a week, working on controlled movement, can over time improve muscle tone and stamina.



Stretching and yoga flexibility and balance exercises enhance mobility and decrease stiffness. For obese people, reduced flexibility may make day-to-day movement difficult. Slow-motion yoga movements, such as seated forward bends and modified stretches, can enhance range of motion, decrease stress, and lead to relaxation. Breathing techniques also assist with stress reduction, which is very important in weight management over time.



Functional exercises that simulate daily tasks, like sit-to-stand movements and step-ups, increase mobility and independence. They enhance the capacity to carry out everyday activities like climbing stairs or bending without pain. Functional training is especially beneficial in avoiding injuries and enhancing coordination.

For individuals who have developed some fitness, a variation of high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can be effective. Rather than high-impact jumping or sprinting, quick bursts of low-intensity exercise, like light step-ups or arm swings, with periods of rest in between, can be effective at burning fat without wearing out. Still, HIIT must be done under guidance and after achieving some level of general fitness.

Beginner's pace is the key to any fitness regimen. Overexertion leads to setbacks, so gradual intensity increase guarantees long-term success. Consistency beats intensity—four to five days a week for 30 minutes per session gives better results than sporadic high-intensity workouts. Adequate hydration and nutrition help further with workout recovery and fat loss. Consulting a professional from a certified trainer or physiotherapist can also assist in creating a customized workout plan that suits specific needs.

The purpose of exercise for obesity is not merely to lose weight—it's to enhance strength, mobility, and overall health. A well-designed, low-impact exercise routine creates a healthy and sustainable journey toward improved health.



CLASSICAL GEMS

REDEFINING PREMIUM ART EDUCATION IN KERALA

Art has long been considered a pastime or hobby, relegated to cultural functions and individual pursuits, but brothers Kalamandalam Aswathi Prakash and Athul Prakash are challenging the conventional thinking with Classical Gems, Kerala's first premium arts academy. This path-breaking start-up from Kozhikode is changing the face of classical art education by blending tradition with entrepreneurship in the 21st century, thereby making top-class art training accessible to the world.

A Journey Based on Passion and Commitment

Right from a tender age, Aswathi Prakash had a deep passion for the world of dance. At the age of five, she began her training under the guidance of her first guru, Bina Kozhikode, and by the time she was ten, she had reached the coveted milestone of performing her arangetram at the hallowed Guruvayur Temple, an action that set her on the road to excellence. Her deep passion for dance soon took her to Kerala Kalamandalam, the hallowed school where she trained in Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam for eight years under the guidance of great masters like Kalamandalam Sangeetha Prasad and Dr. Kalamandalam Rachitha Ravi.

Her interest in the arts went beyond early pursuits. She then also studied for a postgraduate diploma in Bharatanatyam at Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit at Kalady, thus broadening her training and experience in classical dance. Aswathi did, however, look beyond the limits of conventional performances—she dreamed of an institution where classical arts would be made accessible, adaptable, and professionally fulfilling.

A Bold Blending of Art and Business

Her brother, Athul Prakash, a management executive with an MBA in Management and Governance from Italy, formulated this vision. After five years in a multinational company, he took the courage of quitting to help his sister achieve her dream of setting up a world-class art academy. They came together and formed Classical Gems, uniting Aswathi's art skills with Athul's entrepreneurial skills.

In contrast to conventional art schools that maintain strict schedules and location-based training, Classical

Gems employs flexible models of training. The students can attend both offline and online classes, thereby pursuing their interest in dance, music, and visual arts without sacrificing their professional or academic schedules. This flexible framework has drawn students from across the world, including working professionals and expatriates who otherwise would not have had access to higher-level classical art training.

Setting New Standards for Classical Arts Education

The key to Classical Gems is a strong commitment to excellence. The academy boasts a talented faculty of artists trained at prestigious institutions like Kerala Kalamandalam, Kalakshetra, Sree Sankaracharya University, Chembai College, and Swathi Thirunal College. The course is well-rounded, offering instruction in Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam, Carnatic music, painting, mural art, instrumental music, and a one-year diploma in Bharatanatyam leading to a recognized certificate.

Unlike conventional training schools, Classical Gems places equal emphasis on creativity and discipline. Whether dance, music, or painting, students are encouraged to develop their own artistic voice and not merely imitate the prevailing forms. The academy is of the view that innovation must be fostered within tradition so that students can develop as individual artists.



Linking Practice to Real Learning

In addition to formal schooling, Classical Gems also promotes career prospects and creativity. The academy is not just a school, but also an artistic employment center that provides careers in teaching, information technology, and human resources, thereby ensuring that the arts industry benefits from professional skill sets.

In a first-of-its-kind venture, Classical Gems has hosted a painting exhibition by students at the Lalithakala Academy, thus giving budding artists a prominent stage to showcase their talent. In order to offer an experiential learning opportunity, the academy also extends invitations to online students to attend an intensive four-day training course, where they get to take part in classroom classes and present their maiden performance. In addition, masterclasses are taken by expert artists, offering students intimate insight into their art.

Creative Opportunities Outside the Classroom

Expanding beyond traditional learning, Classical Gems offers specialized programs that bring Indian classical arts to broader audiences. The Arangetram Roadmap is intended for young professionals and adult aficionados getting ready for their first solo full-length dance performance. Through online and offline classes, customized coaching, and sequential lesson plans, learners are empowered to perform on stage.

For music lovers, Private Carnatic Music Concerts elevate events to higher levels with concerts by seasoned artists. Similarly, Performance Booking Services allow event planners to include Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam, Kuchipudi, or Jugalbandi fusion songs in cultural festivals, corporate events, and private parties. The academy also produces dance musicals based on Bharatanatyam, skillfully blending historic choreography and modern stagecraft, thus rendering them appropriate for school, college, and cultural functions.

Embracing Kerala's Cultural Heritage

Classical Gems is very much dedicated to the preservation of Kerala's cultural heritage. The



academy arranges bookings for Kathakali, Kalaripayattu, Ottamthullal, and Chakyar Koothu, thereby making these entertaining performances accessible to the world. Whether at a cultural festival or corporate event, these performances pay tribute to the rich stories, elaborate costumes, and rhythmic movements that characterize Kerala's

traditions.

In the case of future performers, there are also drama training courses that allow students to acquire skills in voice modulation, body movement, and acting. This course extends the range of performing arts training so that students can acquire various skills in artistic performance.

A Positive Space for Artists

Recognizing the need for professional creative space, Classical Gems also offers studio rentals to artists, dancers, and musicians. With excellent acoustics and a friendly environment, the studio is a hub for rehearsals, workshops, and artist collaborations. Whether one is rehearsing for a grand performance or planning an art camp, the facility is set up to encourage creativity and innovation.

A New Era for Classical Arts

By its eclecticism, Classical Gems goes beyond the general definition of an arts academy; it is a movement. By the integration of tradition and modern technology, Aswathi and Athul are breaking the barriers that have traditionally limited access to classical arts. Their mission ensures that eager learners, regardless of their geographical location or availability, can gain access to the rich heritage of Indian classical traditions to the fullest.

By providing a world-class learning experience, creating job opportunities in the arts sector, and integrating traditional and contemporary models of education, Classical Gems is redefining arts education. Through this, Aswathi Prakash and Athul Prakash are demonstrating that art is not just a passion; it is a sustainable and profitable business.

HEALING, HER WAY

THE SOULFUL STORY OF ARANYAVEDA

Born from the shared vision of two compassionate Ayurvedic physicians, Aranyaveda is more than just a wellness clinic—it is a tribute to the strength, grace, and quiet endurance of women. Nestled in Thiruvananthapuram, this sanctuary was founded by Dr. Roshni J. S. and Dr. Shalini Rema Sekha to offer holistic healing tailored exclusively for women, especially new mothers navigating the tender postnatal phase.

A Sanctuary of Safe Healing

Unlike conventional wellness centres, Aranyaveda was born from the understanding that women's health must be nurtured not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually. It is particularly dedicated to the care of new mothers, offering therapies that address the profound transformation of motherhood—often tender, often overwhelming.

What sets Aranyaveda apart is its unwavering focus on mental well-being, especially in the sensitive postnatal phase. Here, there is no rush, no judgement, no clinical coldness—only time, trust, and attentive care. Each consultation is unhurried, allowing clients to be seen and heard in their entirety. For many, it is the first time they have been asked, "And how are you really feeling?"

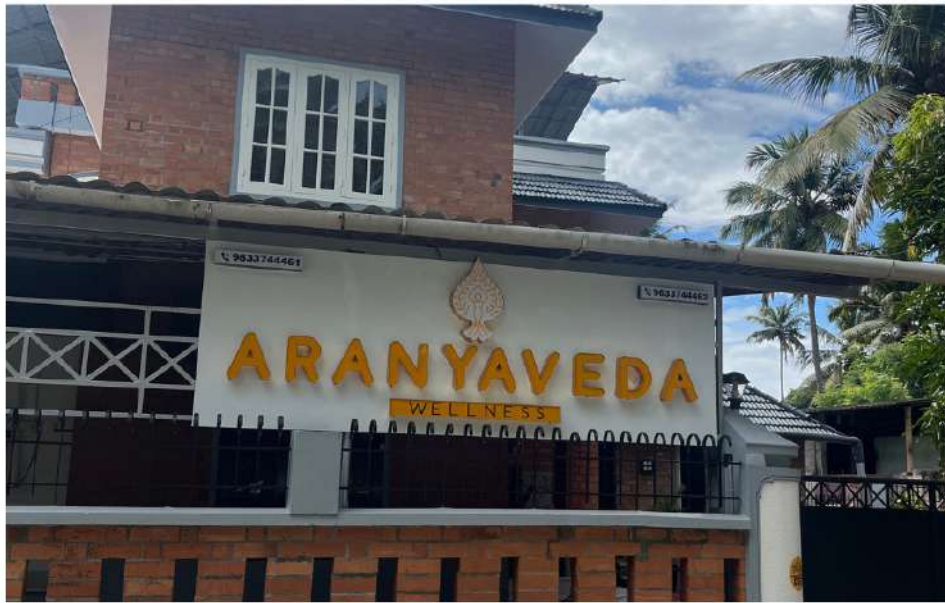
The centre addresses not just the body's discomforts but the silent weight women often carry within—the anxieties, the fatigue, the unspoken worries. Through Smriti Meditation, an Ayurvedic psychotherapy technique, Aranyaveda helps women gently unpack emotional burdens, particularly those associated with postnatal blues and anxiety. Within just months of its founding, the clinic has earned heartfelt testimonials from women who arrived seeking rejuvenation and left with a renewed sense of peace.

Dr. Roshni and Dr. Shalini speak often of the invisible load women bear—how they tend to the emotional and physical needs of the entire family, while their own well-being quietly takes a back seat. At Aranyaveda, this cycle is lovingly interrupted. The clinic doesn't believe in quick fixes or superficial treatments. Instead, it seeks to restore balance, nourish the spirit, and bring the client back to herself.

The treatments offered at Aranyaveda are rooted in the time-honoured traditions of Ayurveda, yet refined for the contemporary woman. Unlike some centres where clients may be overwhelmed by strong smells or lack of hygiene, Aranyaveda offers a pristine, calming, and sensorially soothing environment. Every detail—from the subtle aroma of herbs to the cleanliness of therapy rooms—has been thoughtfully curated to support healing.

Clients often describe the experience as indescribable joy—a kind of emotional reset. Whether it's a weekend rejuvenation package or a consistent weekly routine, Aranyaveda's offerings include therapeutic massages, breathing practices, meditation techniques, personalized diets, and herbal supplements. Each program is tailored to align with the natural rhythm of a woman's life.





Within just six months of operation, Aranyaveda has not only built a loyal community of clients but has also been receiving increasing inquiries for in-patient care. Inspired by this overwhelming response, the founders now envision expanding the centre into a homely Ayurvedic hospital within a year—a place where wellness is not clinical but deeply comforting. Supporting this dream are Dr. Roshni's husband, Dr. Peeyush, and Dr. Shalini's husband, Aneesh, an HR professional, who have both played integral roles in nurturing the centre's growth.

The Wisdom of the Forest

The very name Aranyaveda—The Wisdom of the Forest—echoes the essence of the centre's philosophy. It reflects a profound reverence for nature and a belief that true healing lies in returning to the roots. Forests have long held a sacred place in Ayurveda, offering both the raw materials and the spiritual grounding needed for restoration. Through their work, the founders advocate for this harmony—drawing from the curative powers of natural herbs, ancient techniques, and the quiet guidance of nature itself.

Aranyaveda is not just a clinic; it is a calling. A reminder to every woman that her wellness matters—that healing is not a luxury, but a birth right. And within its calm walls, the age-old wisdom of the forest continues to whisper: come home to yourself.



THE ALCHEMY OF SPICE CAKES

WHERE PASSION RISES AND FLAVOURS REIGN



Before it became a beloved brand found on countless festive tables and in fond memories, Spice Cakes was a quiet promise made in a cosy kitchen—a promise to fill homes with joy, one lovingly crafted slice at a time. In the serene town of Chalakudy, amidst the comforting hum of family life and the quiet strength of a woman balancing motherhood and memory, a delicious dream was rising. That woman was Sily Raphael, a former pharmacist turned baker-entrepreneur. The story of her own cake brand, like her cakes, is rich with layers—each one baked with intention, care, and an unwavering love for the craft.

Sily's innate flair for flavours and a deeply personal connection to the kitchen became the foundation for what would blossom into one of Kerala's most trusted names in packaged cakes. But Spice Cakes was never merely a business venture; it was born out of pure passion and a soulful desire to create something that could bring joy, one bite at a time.

In those early days, as she gracefully juggled her roles as a mother and homemaker while her husband Benny worked overseas, Sily's kitchen became her sanctuary. A sacred space where she didn't just cook—she created. Whisks replaced wands, flour replaced fairy dust, and every batch of cake she pulled from the oven carried with it a sprinkle of magic. She experimented with textures, explored new flavour combinations, and, above all, infused every creation with heart.

Before the brand had a name, it had fans. Friends and family were the first to taste her homemade cakes, each one received with admiration and requests for more. These weren't commercial offerings—they were heartfelt gifts, wrapped in warmth and sprinkled with generosity. As word spread, so did the orders. And what was once a festive tradition evolved into a full-fledged venture that combined creativity, science, and the art of baking in its finest form.

In December 2009, Spice Cakes was officially launched. It was a moment of quiet revolution in



Kerala's homegrown food landscape. With her husband Benny stepping in with wholehearted support, what was once a dream started to rise like a perfectly baked sponge. By 2012, Spice Cakes had moved into a modern factory setup—a significant milestone that marked its evolution from a passion project to a brand poised for legacy.

Spice Cakes' journey has always been about staying true to values—uncompromised quality, honest ingredients, and consistent flavour. Each cake that leaves the oven is not just a product, but a promise. While many competitors chased volume, Sily and her team chose precision. Whether it's a rich plum cake, a velvety marble slice, or a signature pudding cake, the taste remains unwaveringly perfect, every single time.

One of the brand's most significant innovations came as a response to a common challenge—shelf life. With no desire to overload her cakes with preservatives, Sily led her team into a phase of intense research. The answer was vacuum packing—a method that would preserve both freshness and flavour, locking in the richness of the cake

from oven to customer, without compromising its soul. This move not only set Spice Cakes apart but also highlighted the brand's commitment to combining tradition with innovation.

What truly defines Spice Cakes, however, is the thoughtful artistry behind each recipe. From handpicked fruits to freshly cracked eggs, from the finest flour to the careful balance of sweetness that never overpowers—every ingredient is chosen with care. The cakes are known for their soft, moist interiors, crumb-free elegance, and melt-in-the-mouth textures. It's a sensory experience that lingers, a signature that customers recognise and trust.

More than a bakery, Spice Cakes is an emotion—an ode to nostalgic flavours and modern finesse. It is a brand that values depth over dazzle. A slice of Spice Cake is never just dessert; it's a memory waiting to be made. And with each passing year, the brand continues to evolve—exploring new varieties, expanding reach, and yet, holding firmly to the spirit that started it all.

Today, Spice Cakes caters to an ever-growing clientele, from individual cake lovers to corporates seeking quality and class. The brand's fanbase includes customers who have stayed loyal since its inception—proof that true taste needs no advertisement. It speaks for itself, bite after delicious bite.

Looking ahead, the roadmap for Spice Cakes is filled with flavourful ambition. Plans for expansion, new product lines, and broader market presence are already in motion. Yet, at the heart of it all remains the original recipe: a generous scoop of love, a pinch of perseverance, and the ever-rising passion of Sily Raphael.

Spice Cakes is not just Kerala's pride—it is a testament to how a dream, when nurtured with purpose and patience, can rise beautifully, just like the perfect cake in the oven. With each batch baked and each customer served, Spice Cakes continues to spread sweetness—not just across tables, but across hearts.



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