

KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FESTIVAL ON DEMOCRACY

The year 1956 saw reorganisation and formation of States in the Indian Union on linguistic basis. In the following year, general elections were held to form the representative governments in the newly founded States. Thus along with other States, Kerala also witnessed the formation of its first Legislative Assembly under the leadership of EMS Namboothiripad. Sixty years on, the Government of Kerala and the Kerala Legislative Assembly have initiated a number of activities to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of both the founding of the State (1956-2016) and that of Kerala Legislative Assembly (1957-2017).

The Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Kerala State was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala Shri. Pinarayi Vijayan on 1st November 2016 at the Legislature Complex, Thiruvananthapuram. The Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Kerala Legislative Assembly was extended to the districts, the inauguration of which was done by the Hon'ble Governor of Kerala on 6th June, 2017 at Tanur, Malappuram District. The year long celebrations are scheduled to come to a close in November, 2018, to coincide with the anniversary of the founding of the State.

During the course of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations a string of academic and cultural programmes were held across the State. These included seminars led by eminent persons from different fields of activity, exhibitions, Students' Model Assemblies, Debates, special Assembly visit programmes for selected sections of society etc.

As the final phase of the celebrations draws near, a 'Festival on Democracy' has been conceived including a series of national level seminars, aimed at fostering, inculcating, sensitising, reiterating and thereby strengthening the values and ethos of democracy, as envisaged in the Constitution of India. With a view to closely involve diverse sections of the society in this effort, six national level seminars as detailed below are being contemplated at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

1. National Legislators' Conference on Challenges faced by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
2. National Women Legislators' Conference
3. Special Conference on Assembly Proceedings
4. National Student's Parliament
5. National Media Conclave on Democracy
6. Consensus Conclave on Kerala Development

1. National Legislators' Conference on Challenges faced by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The 'National Legislators' Conference on Challenges faced by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes' will be attended by about 700 delegates comprising of Members of Parliament, Members of State Legislatures and members of Local Self Government Institutions from across the nation. Members belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes representing parliamentary institutions in the State along with other representatives shall form part of the Conference. The Conference will discuss the various issues faced by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes all over India and their possible remedies.

2. National Women Legislators' Conference

A national seminar with the focal theme and titled "Women in Democracy" is tentatively scheduled in 2018 September at the Assembly Complex, Thiruvananthapuram as part of the prestigious festival of democracy.

The seminar is aimed at analyzing the progress achieved towards the women empowerment in particular & gender equality in general and also the road ahead in this regard apart from highlighting the challenges & hurdles and suggesting remedial measures in order to achieve women empowerment in India. The seminar is intended as a brain storming session on the existing social legislation, government enactments & policies and gaps in their implementation, the role of various civic societies and NGOs working in the field of women empowerment and social and political dimensions of the issue of Women Empowerment in India.

3. Special Conference on Assembly Proceedings

'The Special Conference on Assembly Proceedings' will be a workshop to discuss and debate the working of Legislative Assemblies and Legislature Committees in the changed functional scenario. The participants are expected to discuss possible reforms in the process of legislation, its participatory nature and the need to evolve a more sustainable, creative and vibrant parliamentary process. The session will be attended by Members of the Kerala Legislative Assembly and Speakers, Deputy Speakers, Ministers for Parliamentary Affairs, Members and Secretaries of Legislative Assemblies from various States of the Union.

4. National Students' Parliament

The National Students' Parliament being organised by the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training of the Kerala Legislative Assembly is designed to formulate and give shape to revolutionary new perspectives and ideas that lie dormant in the minds of the young sections of the society. This National Students' Parliament is intended to inculcate democratic values and imbibe a political culture and craving for democracy as a system, thought and vision. This will be a mega three-day event with the participation of about 2000 delegates. The focal points of discussions will cover faith and affinity towards politics and parliamentary democracy, plurality of thought, the essence and spirit of the Constitution, need for ethics in public life, the vision of sustainable development and the emergence of a new world of enlightenment through information gateways. This platform shall be shared by students from selected Central Universities and academic campuses from across the nation.

5. National Media Conclave on Democracy

The role and responsibility of media in a democratic system and the ethical standards and methods being applied in media management will be discussed in detail in this conclave. The aim is to provide an opportunity to representatives of prominent national media to share, discuss and debate on relevant issues on a single platform, provided and facilitated by the Kerala Legislative Assembly with active assistance of Kerala Press Academy and other related agencies.

6. Consensus Conclave on Kerala Development

This programme aims to arrive at a consensus resolution regarding a sustainable model for developmental activities in the State, through a meaningful discussion on the challenges and experiences over the last six decades. Active involvement of all political party representatives is expected so as to arrive at a general consensus on the dos and donts regarding steps to be taken towards progress in various fields. A list of development related matters on which a general consensus can be achieved, cutting across political divide is sought. Developmental activities in areas thus identified are expected to sail smoothly towards targetted goals without political hurdles and other impediments.
