

Kerala State Higher Education Council
Minutes of the 21st Executive Body meeting held on 16.03.2026

The 21st Executive Body Meeting of the fourth Council was held on 16.03.2026 at 11.00 am through online mode. Prof. Rajan Gurukkal P.M., Vice Chairman presided.

The following members attended the meeting.

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| 1. Prof. Rajan Gurukkal P.M. | : | Vice Chairman, KSHEC. |
| 2. Dr. Sabu Thomas | : | Member, Executive Body, KSHEC |
| 3. Dr. M.S. Rajasree | : | Member, Executive Body, KSHEC |
| 4. Sri. Paul V. Karanthanam | : | Member, Executive Body, KSHEC |
| 5. Dr. P.P. Ajayakumar | : | Member, Executive Body, KSHEC |
| 6. Dr. Rajan Varughese | : | Member Secretary, KSHEC |

The following agenda was transacted and decisions taken.

Item No. 1 Report on Higher Education Empowerment Implementation Plan.

After detailed discussion it was resolved to approve the report on Higher Education Empowerment Implementation Plan (2025-2026) and to request the government to extend the Higher Education Empowerment Implementation Plan for 2026-27 and the contract period of staff engaged in the plan for one more year. The meeting also requested the government to transfer at least 50% of the fund approved in the plan during the year 2026-27 for the effective implementation of various schemes/ initiatives approved under the plan. (Report as Annexure -I)

Item No. 2 Appointment of Auditor for 25-26.

It was resolved to appoint M/s Mohan & Mohan Associates as Statutory auditor for auditing Council's Account for the accounting year 2025-26 as they have quoted the least amount of Rs.. Rs.1,25,000/- + GST (Rupees One Lakh Twenty Five Thousand + GST only)

Item No. 3 Report on Centres of Excellence (CoE).

After detailed discussion, it was resolved to approve the following report on KSHEC Centres of Excellence

Introduction

The Department of Higher Education, Government of Kerala, through the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC), has initiated the Centres of Excellence (CoE) programme to strengthen the research ecosystem, enhance academic quality, and promote innovation in the higher education sector of the State. A Centre of Excellence functions as a specialised autonomous academic and research institution focusing on a particular domain of knowledge and acting as a hub for advanced research, collaboration, specialised training, and knowledge dissemination involving faculty,

researchers, students, and industry partners. These centres are envisaged as flagship institutions to promote interdisciplinary research, policy-oriented studies, and academic networking across universities and institutions in Kerala.

The following **Centres of Excellence** have been established and are currently functioning:

- **Kerala Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation (KISTI)** – hosted at Mahatma Gandhi University.
- **Kerala Language Network (KLN)** – hosted at Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University.
- **Kerala Institute for Gender Equity (KIGE)** – hosted at Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady.
- **Centre of Excellence for Teaching, Learning and Training (CETLT)** – functioning at KSHEC Headquarters, Thiruvananthapuram.
- **Kerala Network for Research Support in Higher Education (KNRSHE)** – functioning at KSHEC Headquarters, Thiruvananthapuram.
- **Kerala Institute for Policy Studies (KIPS)** – functioning at KSHEC Headquarters, Thiruvananthapuram.
- **Kerala Institute for Advanced Studies (KIAS)** – functioning at Munnar.
- **Kerala Knowledge Consortium Centre (KKCC)** – headquartered at KSHEC, Thiruvananthapuram, focusing on collaborative knowledge production involving universities, research institutions, local bodies, industries, and civil society organisations.

Sub-Centres and Collaborative Units

To extend their activities across regions and institutions, several Centres of Excellence have established sub-centres and collaborative research units in universities and colleges.

Kerala Language Network (KLN)

The Kerala Language Network currently operates three sub-centres:

- Ponnani – functioning at the CCEK campus.
- Irinjalakuda – currently functioning in a temporary rented facility, while permanent space has been approved in the Irinjalakuda Education Hub.
- Kalliasseri – functioning as a regional sub-centre supporting language research and academic activities.

Kerala Network for Research Support in Higher Education (KNRSHE)

As part of developing a statewide research support infrastructure, the following sub-centres of KNRSHE have been established:

- Government Women's College, Thiruvananthapuram
- Kannur University, Payyannur Campus
- Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur

Further Collaborative Initiatives under CoE

Additional Centres of Excellence and collaborative initiatives are also being established:

- Centre for Indigenous People's Education (CIPE) – discussions are currently ongoing with the University of Calicut for its establishment.
- Kerala Centre for Analytical Services – proposed to be established at Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT); the MoU has been agreed upon and is expected to be signed shortly.

Kerala Knowledge Consortium Centre (KKCC) Initiative

As part of the initiatives under the Kerala Knowledge Consortium Centre, the Madhava Knowledge Centre in Mathematics has been established at Irinjalakuda. The centre has commenced its activities and is currently functioning in a temporary facility.

The centre aims to promote research, academic discussions, and knowledge dissemination in mathematics and the history of mathematics, particularly highlighting the contributions of the Kerala School of Mathematics. In the long term, the activities of the Madhava Knowledge Centre are expected to be linked with the Kerala Language Network sub-centre at Irinjalakuda, which has been allotted space in the Irinjalakuda Education Hub. This will enable the development of shared academic infrastructure and strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration.

Financial Details

Administrative sanction has been accorded for ₹11.40 crore for implementing the Centres of Excellence initiative, and the first instalment of funds was released to KSHEC in October 2025. However, the Government has stipulated that fund transfers to the centres should be routed through PSTSB accounts, and delays in mapping and authorising these accounts by the Finance Department have affected the timely transfer of funds to some centres.

Under the budget head 2202-03-103-48-P, the allocation for 2025–26 for the K-REAP and Centres of Excellence initiative is ₹1340 lakh, of which ₹268 lakh has been released. As on 12 March 2026, the expenditure incurred under the Centres of Excellence component amounts to ₹46,55,878, while ₹34,40,249 has been requested as reimbursement towards operational expenses, fellowships, infrastructure, equipment maintenance and related activities.

During 2024–25, funds were utilised for the establishment and operational activities of centres such as CETLT and KNRSHE, financial assistance to KISTI and other sub-centres, workshops and training programmes, and the International Conclave on Next Generation Higher Education. The total expenditure recorded under the scheme during that year was ₹154.49 lakh.

Conclusion

Through these Centres of Excellence and their distributed network of sub-centres and collaborative research units, KSHEC aims to build a robust statewide academic and research

ecosystem. These initiatives will support advanced research, interdisciplinary collaboration, policy studies, language development, and inclusive knowledge production, thereby significantly contributing to the long-term development and global competitiveness of Kerala's higher education system.

Item No. 4 Allotment of funds for KNRSHE - Sub Centre in Govt. College for Women, Tvpm - Kerala State Higher Education Council – Centre of Excellence (CoE) – Kerala Network for Research Support in Higher Education Sub-Centre – CIRL/CNRF at Government Women's College Thiruvananthapuram – Renewal of AMC of NMR Spectrometer – reg.

The Centre for Instrumentation and Research Laboratories (CIRL) and Central Nuclear Research Facility (CNRF) functioning at Government Women's College, Thiruvananthapuram operate as a sub-centre of the *Kerala Network for Research Support in Higher Education (KNRSHE)* established under the Kerala State Higher Education Council. The NMR Spectrometer installed in the above facility is being regularly used for advanced research and analytical work.

As per reference Letter No. B7/2225/2016/GCW dated 07.02.2026, the Principal in Charge, Government Women's College, Thiruvananthapuram has forwarded a proposal for the renewal of the Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) (Service Contract Agreement No. J1/AMC/AI 25-038 submitted by JEOL INDIA Pvt. Ltd. through e-mail dated 20.02.2026.) of the NMR Spectrometer currently in use at CIRL/CNRF. In connection with this, the Service Contract Agreement for AMC, has been submitted by JEOL INDIA Pvt. Ltd., the service provider.

The details of the AMC proposal are given below.

Description	Contract Period	AMC Amount (INR)	LHe Amount (INR)	Total Amount including GST (INR)
JEOL NMR JNM ECZ400S/L1	I st Year	2,50,000/-	6,65,000/-	10,79,700/-
	II nd Year	2,50,000/-	7,31,500/-	11,58,170/-
	III rd Year	2,50,000/-	8,41,225/-	12,87,646/-
Total Amount		7,50,000/-	22,37,725/-	35,25,516/-

Resolved to give in principle approval for the proposal submitted by the Principal, Government Women's College, Thiruvananthapuram for Total AMC amount Rs. 35,25,516/- (Rupees Thirty-Five Lakhs Twenty-Five Thousand and Six Hundred and Sixteen only) and the first year amount of Rs. 10,79,700/- (Rupees Ten Lakhs Seventy-Nine Thousand and Seven Hundred only) shall be released in the current financial Year (2025 - 26). It was also decided to direct the sub centre to give wide publicity of the NMR spectrometer facility in the college in the academic community and organise seminar& seek industry collaboration.

Item No. 5 Report and Expenditure on NRC and Kerala Higher Education Expo 2026.

The National Research Conference and Kerala Higher Education Expo 2026 was organised jointly by the Department of Higher Education, Government of Kerala, and the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) in association with the Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram, and was conducted over three academically intensive days from 9 to 11 February 2026. During these three days, the campus functioned as a vibrant academic forum bringing together policymakers, scholars, researchers, and students for serious intellectual engagement and dialogue on research, innovation, and higher education reforms.

The Conference was designed to balance policy perspectives, academic discussions, and research capacity building. Day One focused on pre-conference sessions, policy deliberations, workshops, and the Kerala Higher Education Expo, setting the agenda for research and innovation in the State. Day Two was devoted to thematic parallel sessions, oral presentations, and poster sessions, representing the academic core of the Conference. Day Three included plenary reflections, the formal inauguration, and the valedictory session, enabling a synthesis of discussions and forward-looking assessments.

Across the three days, the Conference hosted multiple plenary and keynote sessions, more than twenty parallel academic sessions, workshops, and seminars, organised under nine broad thematic streams covering the social sciences, humanities, basic sciences, life sciences, health sciences, engineering and technology, commerce and management, and interdisciplinary policy research. The Conference witnessed several hundred research contributions, presented through oral presentations and poster sessions, ensuring active participation from early-career researchers and doctoral scholars. Each thematic stream included invited lectures by nationally and internationally recognised scholars, supported by experienced session chairs to maintain academic rigour and meaningful dialogue.

A distinctive feature of the Conference was the strong participation of early-career researchers, including Chief Minister's NAVA Kerala Post-Doctoral Fellows, Kairali Research Awardees, and numerous doctoral and postgraduate research scholars, who actively presented and engaged in scholarly discussions across sessions. This participation highlighted the growing strength and confidence of Kerala's emerging research community. The Conference also included an important session on Global Institutional Shifts and Lessons for Kerala's Higher Education System, which brought together diaspora scholars from universities in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan, participating both physically and online. The discussions focused on global experiences in university governance, research funding frameworks, interdisciplinary institutional models, and international collaboration, offering valuable insights for Kerala's higher education reforms.

Running alongside the Conference, the Kerala Higher Education Expo 2026 served as a major academic platform with participation from universities, Centres of Excellence, affiliated and autonomous colleges, research and innovation institutions, skill development agencies, and academic publishers. The Expo provided an interface where students, researchers, institutions, and policymakers could interact directly, creating greater awareness about opportunities in higher education, research, innovation, and employment. Nearly 60 Higher Education Institutions/ Agencies/ Publishes participated in the three day Higher Education Expo.

The successful organisation of this major academic event was made possible through the support and cooperation of several institutions and individuals. The organisers gratefully

acknowledge the encouragement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala and the Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education and Social Justice, as well as the cooperation of the Principal Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Vice-Chancellors, academic administrators, teachers' organisations, media professionals, and ASAP Kerala. Special appreciation is due to the Principal, faculty, non-teaching staff, and students of the Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram, whose dedicated efforts enabled the campus to host this national-level academic event.

Expenditure

1. Total Expenditure on accommodation /

Honorarium/Travel/Printing / Memento etc	16,39,797/-
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2. ASAP	Food and related arrangements	24,34,682/-
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	Stall arrangements	22,20,420/-
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	Stage arrangements	33,10,642/-
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	Total Amount for ASAP	79,65,744/-
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3. Website, Portal Registration etc	1,16,442/-
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4. Other Expenses	4599/-
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Grand Total Expenditure **Rs. 97,26,582/-** (Rupees Ninety-Seven Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty-Two only)

After discussion it was resolved to approve the report on National Research Conference and Higher Education Expo 2026 and also resolved to approve the total expenditure of Rs 97,26,582/- (Rupees Ninety-Seven Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty-Two only) incurred for conducting the National Research Conference & Higher Education Expo 2026. It was further resolved to utilise the funds allotted for Centre of Excellence related to KNRSHE for the expenditure incurred for the conduct of NRC & Higher Education Expo 2026. It was also decided to arrange a brainstorming programme of the scholars who participated in the conference and Prof Sabu Thomas (Former Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi University) expressed his willingness to lead the programme.

Item No. 6 Establishment of Centre of Excellence – Kerala Centre for Analytical Services in CUSAT.

Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) has conveyed its Expression of Interest for establishing the Kerala Centre for Analytical Services as a Centre of Excellence in the University. In a communication dated 20.02.2026, the Vice-Chancellor (i/c) of CUSAT informed the Kerala State Higher Education Council that the University is well positioned to host such a Centre and contribute to the initiative. The University has expressed its willingness to provide the necessary institutional support, infrastructure, and space for the proposed Centre and has highlighted that the Centre would enhance interdisciplinary research, strengthen collaborations with industry and international institutions, and promote advanced analytical research capabilities in the State.

The proposed Kerala Centre for Analytical Services is expected to function as a specialised research and analytical facility supporting universities, research institutions, and industry by providing advanced analytical services and fostering collaborative research. The Centre would also help strengthen research infrastructure and contribute to addressing important scientific and technological challenges relevant to the development of the State.

In this context, the Kerala Centre for Analytical Services is proposed to be established at Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between KSHEC and CUSAT has already been agreed upon and is expected to be signed shortly, which will formally enable the establishment and operationalisation of the Centre as part of the Centres of Excellence initiative of KSHEC.

After discussion it was resolved to approve the establishment of KSHEC Kerala Centre for Analytical Services in Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) based on the MoU for the same.

Item No. 7 Agreement for KIAS at Government Engineering College Munnar (GEM).

As per the Government directions necessary action for the transfer of land required for establishing the Kerala Institute of Advanced Studies (KIAS) at the College of Engineering, Munnar has been initiated by the KSHEC. In compliance with the said Government direction, the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) has already submitted a detailed proposal to the District Collector, Idukki, for initiating the land transfer process for establishing permanent campus of KIAS at Munnar.

It may also be noted that an agreement has been signed between the Kerala State Higher Education Council and the College of Engineering Munnar for the establishment of the Kerala Institute for Advanced Studies at the college campus. As per the agreement, the ground floor of the college library building, along with certain institutional facilities, has been made available for the functioning of KIAS.

In the above context it was resolved to approve the above action taken by the council and approve the MoU signed between KSHEC and GEM.

Item No. 8 Status report on Unnatha Vidyabhavan.

Status Report on the Construction of *Unnatha Vidya Bhavan* (KSHEC Headquarters) at KSSTM Campus, Thiruvananthapuram and status of works executed by ULCCS

The following details are submitted regarding the present status of works relating to the construction of Unnatha Vidya Bhavan, the Headquarters building of the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC), at the KSSTM Campus, Thiruvananthapuram.

Government had accorded Administrative Sanction for the construction of Unnatha Vidya Bhavan and the work was entrusted to the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society Ltd. (ULCCS) on a non-PMC basis. Subsequently, the Technical Sanction Committee, in its meetings held on 29.03.2025 and 20.08.2025, accorded Technical Sanction for Phase-I works and approved the project schedule.

The work was entrusted to ULCCS vide Supplemental Agreement No. GO (Rt) No. 677/2024/HEDN dated 13.06.2024, with a stipulated completion period of five months. The site was formally taken over by ULCCS on 01.08.2025.

As per the schedule presented by ULCCS during the Technical Sanction Committee meeting held on 20.08.2025, the structural works were to be completed by 15.11.2025, and the entire Phase-I works, including furnishing, were to be completed by March 2026.

In view of the delay observed in the progress of work, the Kerala State Higher Education Council has taken up the matter with the executing agency and directed ULCCS to furnish an explanation for the delay and to submit a revised, phase-wise, time-bound schedule for completion of the remaining works.

With regard to the present execution status, the civil works completed so far include foundation works, plinth beams, column casting (17 numbers up to a height of 3.2 metres), beam and slab works up to about 56% of the Ground Floor, and earth filling using available earth up to approximately 60% of the plinth beam level.

As per the progress details submitted by ULCCS, the work executed so far is as follows:

- Earth work – 100%
- RCC footing – 100%
- RCC plinth beam – 100%
- Backfilling – 90%
- Ground floor columns – 85%
- Ground floor roof work – 65%
- First floor columns – 20%

After detail discussion it is observed that there has been a delay in the execution of the construction work, and considering the current pace of progress, completion within the originally stipulated period does not appear feasible at this stage.

It was resolved to approve the status report on construction of Unnatha Vidya Bhavan and decided to intimate the matter to the government and the implementing agency (ULCCS) for initiating remedial action.

Additional Agenda

Item No. A1 – Reporting - Visit of Dr. José Ramón Cabañas Rodríguez, Director of the Centre for International Policy Research (CIPI) in Havana, Cuba

The Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) organized a Distinguished Lecture titled “Science, Innovation and International Cooperation: The Cuban Experience” on Monday, 09 March 2026, at the KSHEC office in Thiruvananthapuram. The lecture was delivered by Dr. José Ramón Cabañas Rodríguez. Dr. Cabañas is a distinguished Cuban diplomat and currently heads CIPI, a leading policy research institution under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba. He also serves as a member of the Technical Advisory Council of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his extensive diplomatic career, he has held several important positions including the first Ambassador of Cuba to the United States from 2015 to 2020.

In his lecture, Dr. Cabañas provided a detailed overview of Cuba’s experience in building a strong ecosystem of science, public health, and innovation despite resource constraints. He highlighted the distinctive features of the Cuban healthcare system, which places strong emphasis on preventive care, community-based health services, and universal access. The Cuban model, he noted, demonstrates how sustained public investment in education, scientific research, and public health can generate globally recognised outcomes. A key focus of the lecture was Cuba’s achievements in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector, particularly through BioCubaFarma, the state-run conglomerate responsible for research, development, and production of vaccines. Reflecting on the relationship between

Cuba and Kerala, Dr. Cabañas noted several similarities between the two regions. The lecture also explored the existing and potential avenues for cooperation between Cuba and Kerala. Dr. Cabañas emphasised the scope for deeper collaboration and noted that partnerships between universities and research institutions in Kerala and Cuba could lead to academic exchanges, and collaborative programmes. Participants at the event included faculty members, researchers, and representatives from universities and research institutions across Kerala. The interaction provided an opportunity for participants to engage with Cuba's experience in leveraging science and innovation for national development and to explore opportunities for international academic collaboration. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Rajan Varughese, Member Secretary, KSHEC.

Item No. A2 Reporting - - A knowledge-sharing session between Officials of the Presidential Secretariat of Sri Lanka and representatives of the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC)

A knowledge-sharing session was held on March 6, 2026 between officials of the Presidential Secretariat of Sri Lanka and representatives of the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) to learn about Kerala's Scholar Connect platform. Scholar Connect is a digital initiative developed by KSHEC to connect international scholars—particularly members of the Kerala diaspora—with universities and colleges in the State.

The virtual meeting brought together senior officials from the Office of the President of Sri Lanka and representatives of KSHEC. The interaction was organised following interest expressed by Sri Lankan officials to understand the design and implementation of Kerala's Scholar Connect diaspora engagement model.

The session began with welcome remarks by Ms. Sarathanjali Manoharan, Senior Assistant Secretary to the President of Sri Lanka.

Delivering the introductory remarks, Professor Rajan Gurukkal, Vice-Chairman of KSHEC, explained the role and mandate of the Council and highlighted the objectives of the Erudite and Brain Gain initiative, which seeks to connect international scholars with universities and colleges in Kerala.

Dr. Rajan Varghese, Member Secretary of KSHEC, presented an overview of the higher education landscape in India and outlined key features of Kerala's higher education system, including its strong academic base and growing emphasis on equity and quality through international collaboration.

A presentation on the Scholar Connect platform was made by Eldho Mathews, Programme Officer (Internationalisation) at KSHEC. He explained the design and functioning of the platform, including the scholar-matching process, governance mechanisms, and approaches to ensuring quality assurance.

Discussions focused on operational aspects of the initiative, including identifying and engaging diaspora scholars, legal and institutional considerations, due diligence processes, and the digital infrastructure required to support such a platform.

The meeting concluded with closing remarks by Mr. H. M. K. J. B. Gunaratne, Senior Additional Secretary to the President of Sri Lanka.

The Minutes were read and confirmed

The Meeting which started at 11.00 am concluded by 12.05 pm.



Vice Chairman



Member Secretary