

Kerala Budget Analysis 2025-26

The Finance Minister of Kerala, Mr. K. N. Balagopal, presented the Budget for the state for the financial year 2025-26 on February 7, 2025.

Budget Highlights

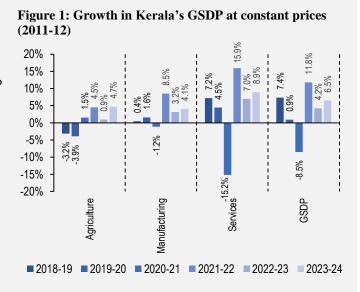
- Kerala's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for 2025-26 (at current prices) is projected to be Rs 14,27,145 crore, amounting to growth of 12% over the revised estimates for 2024-25.
- **Expenditure (excluding debt repayment)** in 2025-26 is estimated to be Rs 1,98,582 crore, an 11% increase over the revised estimates of 2024-25. In addition, debt of Rs 1,14,961 crore is estimated to be repaid by the state.
- Receipts (excluding borrowings) for 2025-26 are estimated to be Rs 1,53,544 crore, an increase of 15% as compared to the revised estimate of 2024-25.
- Revenue deficit in 2025-26 is estimated to be 1.9% of GSDP (Rs 27,125 crore), as compared to a revenue deficit of 2.3% of GSDP (Rs 29,196 crore) at the revised estimate stage in 2024-25.
- Fiscal deficit for 2025-26 is targeted at 3.2% of GSDP (Rs 45,039 crore). In 2024-25, as per the revised estimates, fiscal deficit is expected to be 3.5% of GSDP, marginally higher than the budgeted 3.4% of GSDP.

Policy Highlights

- Land Revenue: Basic tax rates on land will be increased by 50%.
- Vehicle tax: Road tax on two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and private cars older than 15 years will be increased by 50%. The life-time tax of private electric cars will be fixed relative to their cost.
- Cooperative Housing: A cooperative housing project to create affordable housing in rural and urban areas has been announced. At least one lakh houses are aimed to be built in the next two years.
- Coastal Development: A special package for coastal area development has been announced. In the first phase, Rs 100 crore has been allocated for geo-tube off-shore break water projects.
- Green Hydrogen Valley: A project to generate hydrogen using renewable sources will be piloted with an initial outlay of five crore rupees.

Kerala's Economy

- GSDP: In 2023-24, Kerala's GSDP (at constant prices) is estimated to grow by 6.5% over the previous year. In comparison, India's GDP is estimated to grow by 8.2% in 2023-24.
- **Sectors:** In 2023-24, agriculture, manufacturing, and services sectors are estimated to contribute 10%, 24%, and 66% of Kerala's economy, respectively (at current prices).
- Per capita GSDP: In 2023-24, Kerala's per capita GSDP (at current prices) is estimated to be Rs 3,17,723, an increase of 11% over 2022-23. In 2023-24, India's per capita GDP is estimated to increase by 9% over 2022-23 to Rs 2,11,725.



Note: These numbers are as per constant prices (2011-12) which implies that the growth rate is adjusted for inflation.

Sources: MoSPI; PRS.

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Budget Estimates for 2025-26

- Total expenditure (excluding debt repayment) in 2025-26 is targeted at Rs 1,98,582 crore. This is an increase of 11% from the revised estimate of 2024-25. This expenditure is proposed to be met through receipts (excluding borrowings) of Rs 1,53,544 crore and net borrowings of Rs 40,848 crore. Total receipts for 2025-26 (other than borrowings) are expected to register an increase of 15% over the revised estimate of 2024-25.
- The state estimates a **revenue deficit** of 1.9% of GSDP (Rs 27,125 crore) in 2025-26, as compared to a revenue deficit of 2.3% of GSDP as per revised estimates for 2024-25.
- **Fiscal deficit** for 2025-26 is targeted at 3.2% of GSDP (Rs 45,039 crore), lower than the revised estimates for 2024-25 (3.5% of GSDP). In absolute terms, fiscal deficit is estimated to increase in 2025-26 (Rs 45,039 crore) over the revised estimates for 2024-25 (Rs 44,747 crore). Due to the 12% growth estimated in GSDP, the fiscal deficit for 2025-26 as a percentage of GSDP is estimated to be less than the revised estimate for 2024-25.

Table 1: Budget 2025-26 - Key figures (in Rs crore)

Items	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 Budgeted	2024-25 Revised	% change from BE 24-25 to RE 24-25	2025-26 Budgeted	% change from RE 24-25 to BE 25-26
Total Expenditure	2,33,872	2,55,386	2,87,997	13%	3,13,543	9%
(-) Repayment of debt	74,366	71,058	1,09,226	54%	1,14,961	5%
Net Expenditure (E)	1,59,507	1,84,327	1,78,772	-3%	1,98,582	11%
Total Receipts	2,29,603	2,46,845	2,83,856	15%	3,09,353	9%
(-) Borrowings	1,04,355	1,07,047	1,49,832	40%	1,55,809	4%
of which central capex loans*	0	100	2,600	2500%	2,750	6%
Net Receipts (R)	1,25,248	1,39,798	1,34,025	-4%	1,53,544	15%
Fiscal Deficit (E-R)	34,258	44,529	44,747	0%	45,039	1%
as % of GSDP	3.0%	3.4%	3.5%		3.2%	
Revenue Deficit	18,140	27,846	29,196	5%	27,125	-7%
as % of GSDP	1.6%	2.1%	2.3%		1.9%	
Primary Deficit	7,272	15,835	15,008	-5%	13,215	-12%
as % of GSDP	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%		0.9%	
GSDP	11,46,109	13,11,437	12,75,412	-3%	14,27,145	12%

Note: BE is Budget Estimates; RE is Revised Estimates. *Central government has been providing 50-year interest-free loans to state governments for capital expenditure since 2020-21. These loans are excluded from the calculation of the state's borrowing ceiling. Sources: Annual Financial Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

Expenditure in 2025-26

- Revenue expenditure for 2025-26 is proposed to be Rs 1,79,476 crore, an increase of 11% over the revised estimate of 2024-25. This includes the expenditure on salaries, pension, interest, grants, and subsidies.
- Capital outlay for 2025-26 is proposed to be Rs 16,938 crore, an increase of 20% over the revised estimate of 2024-25. Capital outlay indicates the expenditure towards creation of assets.
- In 2025-26, loans and advances by the state are expected to be Rs 2,168 crore, 16% lower as compared to the revised estimate of 2024-25.

50% cut in plan expenditure proposed

In 2023-24, Kerala's total receipts (excluding borrowings) were 8% less than the budget estimate. Total expenditure (excluding debt repayment), subsequently, was 9% less than the budget estimate. When receipts are less than estimated, states have to borrow to meet the shortfall. If borrowing is insufficient, then expenditure must be reduced. Between 2015-16 and 2022-23, Kerala underspent their budget estimates by 8%. During the same period, revenue was overestimated by 11%.

In August 2024, the Kerala government issued an order to assess the expenditure on schemes included in the state's five-year Plan. If the schemes are found to be inessential, plan expenditure would be reduced by 50%.

Table 2: Expenditure budget 2025-26 (in Rs crore)

Items	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 Budgeted	2024-25 Revised	% change from BE 24-25 to RE 24-25	2025-26 Budgeted	% change from RE 24-25 to BE 25-26
Revenue Expenditure	1,42,626	1,66,501	1,62,126	-3%	1,79,476	11%
Capital Outlay	13,584	15,663	14,070	-10%	16,938	20%
Loans given by the state	3,296	2,163	2,576	19%	2,168	-16%
Net Expenditure	1,59,507	1,84,327	1,78,772	-3%	1,98,582	11%

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Sources: Annual Financial Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

Committed expenditure: Committed expenditure of a state typically includes expenditure on payment of salaries, pension, and interest. A larger proportion of budget allocated for committed expenditure items limits the state's flexibility to decide on other expenditure priorities such as capital outlay. In 2025-26, Kerala is estimated to spend Rs 1,05,398 crore on committed expenditure, which is 69% of its estimated revenue receipts. This comprises spending on salaries (29% of revenue receipts), interest payments (21%), and pension (19%). In 2023-24, as per actual figures, 73% of revenue receipts were spent towards committed expenditure.

Table 3: Committed Expenditure in 2025-26 (in Rs crore)

Committed Expenditure	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 Budgeted	2024-25 Revised	% change from BE 24-25 to RE 24-25	2025-26 Budgeted	% change from RE 24-25 to BE 25-26
Salaries	38,541	40,675	41,002	1%	44,114	8%
Pension	25,644	28,609	27,582	-4%	29,460	7%
Interest payment	26,986	28,694	29,739	4%	31,824	7%
Total	91,172	97,978	98,323	0.4%	1,05,398	7%

Sources: Annual Financial Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

Sector-wise expenditure: The sectors listed below account for **44%** of the total expenditure on various sectors by the state in 2025-26. A comparison of Kerala's expenditure on key sectors with that by other states is shown in Annexure 1.

Table 4: Sector-wise expenditure under Kerala Budget 2025-26 (in Rs crore)

Sector	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 BE	2024-25 RE	2025-26 BE	% change from RE 24-25 to BE 25-26	Demand Provisions (2025-26)
Education, Sports, Arts, and Culture	22,373	24,256	23,597	26,398	12%	 Rs 3,149 crore has been allocated towards government primary schools, of which Rs 3,147 crore is for wages and allowances. Rs 644 crore has been allocated towards the PM Poshan Shakti Nirman scheme.
Social Welfare and Nutrition	8,506	13,473	15,306	16,054	5%	 Rs 13,340 crore (83% of expenditure on this sector) has been allocated as assistance to Kerala Social Security Pension Limited.
Health and Family Welfare	9,577	10,087	9,583	10,874	13%	 Rs 2,688 crore has been allocated for allopathic health services in urban areas, and Rs 1,379 crore in rural areas.
Agriculture and Allied Activities	6,368	7,742	7,092	8,259	16%	 Rs 1,539 crore has been allocated for crop husbandry. Rs 600 crore has been allocated towards the rubber production incentive scheme.
Rural Development	2,704	7,365	3,785	8,021	112%	 Rs 4,120 crore has been allocated towards MGNREGS. Interest subsidies towards HUDCO for implementing the Life Mission (Rural) has been allocated Rs 256 crore.
Transport	4,193	5,287	3,961	5,411	37%	 Rs 2,870 crore has been allocated as capital expenditure on roads and bridges. The Kochi Metro Rail system has been allocated Rs 289 crore.
Police	4,423	4,714	4,660	5,098	9%	 District police has been allocated Rs 3,466 crore. Rs 112 crore has been allocated towards the modernisation of police.
Welfare of SC, ST, OBC, and Minorities	2,793	3,284	2,335	3,488	49%	 Rs 1,175 crore has been allocated for the welfare of scheduled castes, and Rs 537 crore for scheduled tribes.
Urban Development	1,206	1,720	1,580	2,049	30%	 Rs 218 crore has been allocated for the Life Parppida Mission (Urban). The AMRUT scheme has been allocated Rs 1,083 crore.
Water Supply and Sanitation	1,470	1,311	1,628	1,299	-20%	Rs 560 crore has been allocated for the Jal Jeevan Mission.
% of total expenditure on all sectors	41%	43%	42%	44%		

Sources: Annual Financial Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

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Receipts in 2025-26

- Total revenue receipts for 2025-26 are estimated to be Rs 1,52,352 crore, an increase of 15% over the revised estimate of 2024-25. Of this, Rs 1,10,660 crore (73%) will be raised by the state through its own resources, and Rs 41,691 crore (27%) will come from the centre. Resources from the centre will be in the form of state's share in central taxes (19% of revenue receipts) and grants (9% of revenue receipts).
- **Devolution:** In 2025-26, state's share in central taxes is estimated at Rs 28,617 crore, an increase of 12% over the revised estimate of 2024-25.
- **Grants from the centre** in 2025-26 are estimated at Rs 13,075 crore, an increase of 67% over the revised estimates for 2024-25. In 2024-25, Rs 7,847 crore is estimated to be received as grants from the centre, 32% less than the budget estimate (Rs 11,533 crore).
- State's own tax revenue: Kerala's total own tax revenue is estimated to be Rs 91,515 crore in 2025-26, an increase of 12% over the revised estimate of 2024-25. Own tax revenue as a percentage of GSDP is estimated at 6.4% in 2025-26, the same as the revised estimates for 2024-25. As per the actual figures for 2023-24, own tax revenue as a percentage of GSDP was 6.5%.

Table 5: Break-up of the state government's receipts (in Rs crore)

Items	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 Budgeted	2024-25 Revised	% change from BE 2024-25 to RE 2024-25	2025-26 Budgeted	% change from RE 2024-25 to BE 2025-26
State's Own Tax	74,329	84,884	81,627	-4%	91,515	12%
State's Own Non-Tax	16,346	18,356	17,906	-2%	19,146	7%
Share in Central Taxes	21,743	23,882	25,550	7%	28,617	12%
Grants-in-aid from Centre	12,068	11,533	7,847	-32%	13,075	67%
Revenue Receipts	1,24,486	1,38,655	1,32,930	-4%	1,52,352	15%
Non-debt Capital Receipts	762	1,143	1,095	-4%	1,192	9%
Net Receipts	1,25,248	1,39,798	1,34,025	-4.1%	1,53,544	15%

Note: BE is Budget Estimates; RE is Revised Estimates.

Sources: Annual Financial Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

- In 2025-26, **State GST** is estimated to be the largest source of own tax revenue (41% share). State GST revenue is estimated to increase by 12% over the revised estimates of 2024-25.
- Revenue from Sales tax/ VAT in 2025-26 is expected to be 10% higher than the revised estimates for 2024-25.
 Revenue from state excise is estimated to be 7% higher in 2025-26 over the revised estimate of 2024-25.
- Revenue from electricity duty is estimated to be Rs 1,100 crore in 2025-26. As per revised estimates, this duty is estimated to generate Rs 100 crore in 2024-25, as opposed to a budget estimate of Rs 1,100 crore.

Table 6: Major sources of state's own-tax revenue (in Rs crore)

Finance Commission (FC) Grants

The 15th Finance Commission (2021-26) recommended that various grants be given to states from the centre's resources. These include revenue deficit grants, grants to local bodies, grants for disaster risk management, sector-specific grants. In 2025-26, Kerala has estimated to receive Rs 2,797 crore as FC grants. This is 13% higher than the revised estimates of 2024-25.

Kerala estimates to receive Rs 383 crore as grants for disaster risk mitigation and response in 2025-26. Rs 1,301 crore is estimated to be received from rural local body grants, and Rs 1,113 crore from urban local body grants. Note that about 60% of grants to rural local bodies and 73% grants to urban local bodies are tied to specific purposes.

Head	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 Budgeted	2024-25 Revised	% change from BE 2024-25 to RE 2024-25	2025-26 Budgeted	% change from RE 2024-25 to BE 2025-26
State GST	30,564	35,875	33,582	-6%	37,763	12%
Sales Tax/ VAT	27,690	30,267	30,451	1%	33,591	10%
Taxes on Vehicles	6,340	6,704	6,847	2%	7,397	8%
Stamps Duty and Registration Fees	5,695	6,662	6,620	-1%	7,343	11%
State Excise	2,944	3,107	2,949	-5%	3,150	7%
Taxes and Duties on Electricity	85	1,100	100	-91%	1,100	996%
Land Revenue	712	842	762	-10%	843	11%
GST Compensation Grants	738	-	67	-	-	-

Sources: Annual Financial Statement, Revenue Budget, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

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Deficits, Debt, and FRBM Targets for 2025-26

The Kerala Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003 provides annual targets to progressively reduce the outstanding debt, revenue deficit and fiscal deficit of the state government.

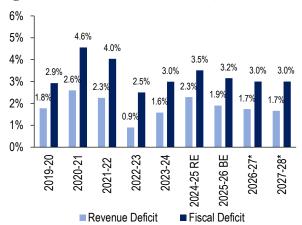
Revenue deficit: It is the difference between revenue expenditure and revenue receipts. A revenue deficit implies that the government needs to borrow to finance those expenses which does not increase its assets or reduces its liabilities. The budget estimates a revenue deficit of Rs 27,125 crore (or 1.9% of the GSDP) in 2025-26.

Fiscal deficit: It is the excess of total expenditure over total receipts. This gap is filled by borrowings by the government and leads to an increase in total liabilities. In 2025-26, the fiscal deficit is estimated to be 3.2% of GSDP. For 2025-26, the central government has permitted fiscal deficit of up to 3% of GSDP to states. Additional borrowing space up to 0.5% of GSDP will also be available for undertaking certain power sector reforms.

As per the revised estimates, in 2024-25, the fiscal deficit of the state is expected to be 3.5% of GSDP. This is marginally higher than the budget estimate of 3.4% of GSDP (for 2024-25).

Outstanding debt: Outstanding debt is the accumulation of total borrowings at the end of a financial year. At the end of 2025-26, the outstanding debt is estimated to be 33.8% of GSDP, marginally lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25 (34.2% of GSDP).

Figure 2: Revenue and Fiscal Deficit (% of GSDP)



Note: *Figures from 2026-27 onwards are projections. RE is Revised Estimates; BE is budget estimates.

Sources: Medium Term Fiscal Policy and Strategy Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

Figure 3: Outstanding Debt (as % of GSDP)



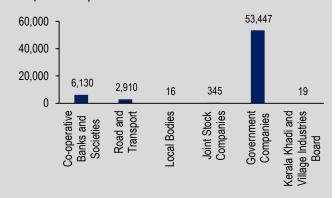
Note: *Figures for 2026-27 onwards are projections. BE is budget estimates

Sources: Medium Term Fiscal Policy and Strategy Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

Outstanding Government Guarantees: Outstanding debt of states do not include a few other liabilities that are contingent in nature, which states may have to honour in certain cases. State governments guarantee the borrowings of State Public Sector Enterprises (SPSEs) from financial institutions.

As of March 31, 2024, the state's outstanding guarantee is estimated to be Rs 62,868 crore, which is 5.5% of Kerala's GSDP. Of this, Rs 53,447 crore has been given to government companies. This figure increased to Rs 65,713 crore as of September 30, 2024. Of this, the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) has outstanding guarantees of Rs 20,213 crore. Kerala State Financial Enterprises Limited (KSFE) has outstanding guarantees of Rs 19,724 crore.





Source: Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; PRS.

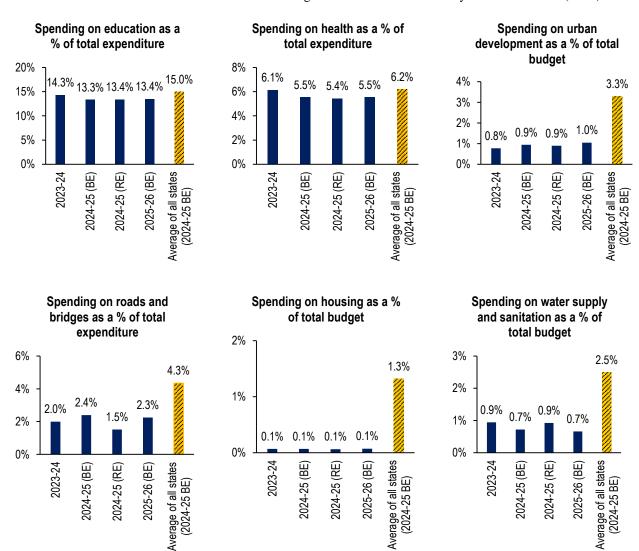
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Annexure 1: Comparison of states' expenditure on key sectors

The graphs below compare Kerala's expenditure in 2025-26 on six key sectors as a proportion of its total expenditure on all sectors. The average for a sector indicates the average expenditure in that sector by 31 states (including Kerala) as per their budget estimates of 2024-25.

- **Education:** Kerala has allocated 13.4% of its expenditure on education in 2025-26. This is lower than the average allocation for education by states in 2024-25 (15%).
- **Health:** Kerala has allocated 5.5% of its expenditure on health in 2025-26. This is lower than the average allocation for health by states in 2024-25 (6.2%).
- **Urban development:** Kerala has allocated 1% of its expenditure on urban development in 2025-26. This is lower than the average allocation for urban development by states in 2024-25 (3.3%).
- **Roads and bridges:** Kerala has allocated 2.3% of its expenditure on roads and bridges in 2025-26. This is lower than the average allocation for roads and bridges by states in 2024-25 (4.3%).
- **Housing:** Kerala has allocated 0.1% of its expenditure on housing in 2025-26. This is lower than the average allocation for housing by states in 2024-25 (1.3%).
- Water Supply and Sanitation: Kerala has allocated 0.7% of its expenditure on water supply and sanitation in 2025-26. This is lower than the average allocation for this sector by states in 2024-25 (2.5%).



Note: 2023-24, 2024-25 (BE), 2024-25 (RE), and 2025-26 (BE) figures are for Kerala. Sources: Annual Financial Statement, Kerala Budget Documents 2025-26; various state budgets; PRS.

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¹ The 31 states include the Union Territories of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Puducherry.

Annexure 2: Comparison of 2023-24 Budget Estimates and Actuals

The following tables compare the actuals of 2023-24 with budget estimates for that year.

Table 7: Overview of Receipts and Expenditure (in Rs crore)

Particular	2023-24 BE	2023-24 Actuals	% change from BE to Actuals
Net Receipts (1+2)	1,36,427	1,25,248	-8%
1. Revenue Receipts (a+b+c+d)	1,35,419	1,24,486	-8%
a. Own Tax Revenue	81,039	74,329	-8%
b. Own Non-Tax Revenue	17,089	16,346	-4%
c. Share in central taxes	21,425	21,743	1%
d. Grants-in-aid from the Centre	15,866	12,068	-24%
2. Non-Debt Capital Receipts	1,008	762	-24%
3. Borrowings	78,104	1,04,355	34%
Of which central capex loans	0	0	-
Net Expenditure (4+5+6)	1,76,089	1,59,507	-9%
4. Revenue Expenditure	1,59,361	1,42,626	-11%
5. Capital Outlay	14,606	13,584	-7%
6. Loans and Advances	2,123	3,296	55%
7. Debt Repayment	49,551	74,366	50%
Revenue Deficit	23,942	18,140	-24%
Revenue Deficit (as % of GSDP)	2.1%	1.6%	
Fiscal Deficit	39,662	34,258	-14%
Fiscal Deficit (as % of GSDP)	3.5%	3.0%	

Source: Kerala Budget Documents of various years; PRS.

Table 8: Key Components of State's Own Tax Revenue

Tax Source/Head	2023-24 BE	2023-24 Actuals	% change from BE to Actuals
Taxes and Duties on Electricity	573	85	-85%
State GST	35,983	30,564	-15%
Sales Tax/ VAT	28,646	27,690	-3.3%
Taxes on Vehicles	5,858	5,695	-2.8%
State Excise	2,975	2,944	-1%
Stamps Duty and Registration Fees	6,112	6,340	4%
Land Revenue	610	712	17%

Source: Kerala Budget Documents of various years; PRS.

Table 9: Allocation towards Key Sectors

Sector	2023-24 BE	2023-24 Actuals	% change from BE to Actuals
Rural Development	7,038	2,704	-62%
Urban Development	1,856	1,206	-35%
Social Welfare and Nutrition	12,411	8,506	-31%
Housing	136	107	-21%
Agriculture and Allied Activities	7,853	6,368	-19%
Irrigation and Flood Control	1,128	937	-17%
Transport	4,835	4,193	-13%
of which Roads and Bridges	3,702	3,113	-16%
Welfare of SC, ST, OBC, and Minorities	3,109	2,793	-10%
Education, Sports, Arts, and Culture	24,328	22,373	-8%
Police	4,699	4,423	-6%
Health and Family Welfare	9,935	9,577	-4%
Water Supply and Sanitation	1,310	1,470	12%
Energy	106	841	695%

Source: Kerala Budget Documents of various years; PRS.

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