

After tapping Silicon Valley, TN planning to reach out to Tamil diaspora across the world

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The three-day virtual conclave will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami (File photo | EPS)

By **C Shivakumar**

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CHENNAI: After reaching out to Tamils in Silcon Valley in the United States, the state is planning to expand the Yaadhum Oorae Global Conclave initiative, the brainchild of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, to link Tamils from 38 countries across the globe through a three-day virtual conclave starting on October 29.

Launched in 2019, the initiative has paid dividends as investments have started trickling in from start-ups chosen by the American Tamil Entrepreneurs Association (ATEA), formed by the Tamil Nadu diaspora in the US. ATEA co-founder Lena Kannapan had told *The New Indian Express*, "We plan to have major investments from the US diaspora in the state," while highlighting the role of the state government in promoting US-based start-ups from the Tamil diaspora.

ATEA is participating in this event as the US partner to support and promote the startup ecosystem. Their involvement includes the invitation of speakers for the business panels and coordination with business organizations and chambers of commerce across the globe. Coinciding with this Global Conclave, ATEA is reinforcing two key programs -- ATEA Digital Accelerator and ATEA MentorConnect.

Lena says that the majority of entrepreneurs are from Tier-II cities and are keen to launch their ventures there. Tamil Nadu already has investment from start-ups in San Jose including Srivaru Motors Pvt Ltd which has proposed to establish a project for manufacture of E-bikes with an investment of Rs 150 crores and an employment potential for 2000 persons. The company is presently in the process of identifying land in Coimbatore district. The other major investment is from US-based Cloud Enablers which has proposed to establish autonomous and continuous governance for the Enterprise Cloud project with an investment of Rs 35 crore in Chennai.

Prior to 2019, the state had never been able to tap the strength of the diaspora while neighbouring states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala have been successful in doing so. "Even the Union government has launching the Pravasi Divas. "We later found that among the successful Indians abroad, more than 50 per cent of them are from Tamil Nadu," said a top industries department official.

The idea behind tapping the Tamil diaspora is to promote the state abroad. "The diaspora could be the real ambassadors of the state as they can highlight the strength of Tamil Nadu," said the official. He said many in the diaspora who want to start businesses in the state are dependent on middlemen and brokers. "Now the state wants to be a bridge in promoting investments from the diaspora," he added.

The theme for this conclave is "Redefining the engagement with the Tamil diaspora". The event will celebrate the Tamil fraternity's spirit across the nations – with its inherent vibrant traditions, Tamil language and international trade. This global celebration will include several events, including a hackathon, startup pitches, writers launchpad, ~~and have been successful in doing so. Even the Union government~~ has launching the Pravasi Divas. "We later found that among the successful Indians abroad, more than 50 per cent of them are from Tamil Nadu," said a top industries department official.

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Ar Rm Arun, President, South Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry told *The New Indian Express* that the conclave will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and a coffee table book will be launched.

"We have reached out to 400 Tamil associations and expect a participation of around 5,000 to 10,000 delegates, said Arun. he said that SICCI is also helping the state government in coming out the Yaadhum Oorae portal. "We plan to hold the event every year. The event is not focused on one area. It will cater to arts, literature, business etc.," he said.