CRISIL TOP RATING A VALUABLE
ACCOLADE FOR TECHNOPARK

In yet another feather in Technopark's cap, global analytical company CRISIL has upgraded its rating of Technopark Thiruvananthapuram to 'CRISIL A' based on the latest review in June 2019. CRISIL is the leading agile and innovative global analytics company with a mission to make markets function better.

"The rating continues to reflect the firm's steady cash flow with healthy occupancy and diversified clientele, and healthy financial risk profile. These strengths are partially offset by exposure to risks related to vacancy, fluctuations in interest rate, and project implementation due to continuous development," said a report by the S&P company following the announcement of the rating.

It is the first time Technopark has received 'A/Stable' rating in the last 10 years of ratings done by CRISIL. From D rating in 2014-15, Technopark has gradually moved to B, then to BBB and finally now to A. The upgrade reflects the improvement in Technopark's cash flow due to leasing of additional commercial space across its Phases I, III and Technocity, leading to 15 per cent growth in operating income in the financial year 2018-19.

The upgrade also factors in significant strengthening of liquidity in the form of fixed deposits (FDs) and reduction in project implementation risk due to the near completion of

construction of phase IV of the IT Park, the CRISIL report added.

"The A rating is expected to attract more investments and build credibility among financial institutions to support the Park's strategic expansion plans," said Jayanthi L, Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Technopark hinting at the possibility of more foreign investments in the future.

At present, more than 430 companies, including five international companies function at Technopark, employing over 60,000 people. In the last couple of years, the IT Park witnessed big-ticket investments, including that of Japanese automotive giant Nissan Motor Corporation, American tax preparation giant H&R Block, Canadian land registry services firm Teranet and American real estate firm Taurus Investment Holdings.

According to experts, besides an increased visibility, Technopark has also improved its cash flow making the Park a stable and potential off-shore development site for international companies.

"CRISIL A rating is truly a defining moment for Technopark as it reflects the progressive track of financial stability of the organisation in total. It is a recognition of the measures adhered to over the years in achieving this milestone, which will help us go a long way in attracting more investor focus and credibility among the industry," said Hrishikesh Nair, CEO, IT Parks Kerala.

"CRISIL believes Technopark will continue to benefit from steady cash flow because of its diversified clientele, healthy debt protection metrics and liquidity," said the report.

UST GLOBAL HONORED WITH STEVIE AWARDS®

UST Global has been recognised with two Stevie Awards® at the 17th Annual American Business Awards. The company was named a bronze winner in 'Human Resources Team of Year' and silver in 'Technical Professional of the Year' categories.

The American Business Awards are the USA's premier business awards program. More than 3800 nominations from various organisations were submitted and more than 200 professionals participated in the judging process to select this year's Stevie Award winners.

UST Global was awarded 'Human Resources Team of the Year' for their People Capability Development team. In an effort to drive digital transformation and build a culture of high performance, UST Global has developed a new program to engage in talent transformation. Through this initiative, the traditional annual performance appraisal system was replaced by a continuous Performance Management

model built on clear goals, real-time feedback and collaboration among individuals and teams across various levels.

"The outstanding recognition by Stevie for UST Global's new Performance Management approach by the HR Team directly aligns with the company's vision of 'Transforming Lives' and making a positive impact on our company and for our employees." said Manu Gopinath, Chief People Officer, UST Global.

UST Global was additionally recognised for the company's technical talent and capability globally. Adnan Masood, Chief Architect – AI & Machine Learning – UST Global, was named the winner of the Silver Stevie® Award in the 'Technical Professional of the Year' category. Dr. Adnan Masood is an artificial intelligence and machine learning researcher, visiting scholar at Stanford AI Lab, and Microsoft MVP (Most Valuable Professional) for Artificial Intelligence.

PI DATACENTERS TO SET UP SHOP AT INFOPARK KOCHI

Pi Datacenters, a data center and enterprise cloud organisation, is setting up Kerala's first Uptime Institute Tier-IV-certified data center in Infopark Kochi. This will be the company's second facility coming up in the country with its flagship data center.

The Pi-Kochi project was launched in the presence of M Sivasankar IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of IT & Electronics; S Suhas IAS, District Collector, Ernakulam and Hrishikesh Nair, CEO, IT Parks Kerala at Four Points by Sheraton Infopark Kochi. Suhas launched the logo of Pi-Kochi at the event.

A state-of-the-art greenfield data center, Pi-Kochi is being set up in Infopark Phase II on a six-acre land with a planned investment of Rs. 400 crore.

"Driven by the vision to cater to the digital needs of the country, Pi Kochi will eventually become a one-stop shop for all IT infrastructure needs of enterprises across government, public and private sectors," said Kalyan Muppaneni, Founder & CEO, Pi Datacenters. Pi-Kochi is expected to be fully operational by March 2020.

"Though our IT industry has been thriving for the last two decades, most of the companies here used to

rely on their data back up from outside Kerala or of global companies. Setting up of Pi-Kochi will bring in a great paradigm shift especially for the government and public sector offices by offering a local centre for all their critical data. Pi-Kochi datacenter is a great milestone for Kerala's IT Industry," Hrishikesh Nair, CEO Infopark, said.

Geo Kurian, Director & Head – Kerala, Pi Kochi was also present at the launch.

KERALA PARTNERS WITH CISCO TO DEVELOP
SMART, CONNECTED FARMING ECOSYSTEM

In alignment with its Country Digitization Acceleration (CDA) program, Cisco has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kerala State IT Mission (KSITM) to bring the benefits of digital technology and data science to the farming communities in Kerala.

The first phase of this initiative will be launched in 15 panchayats across Kannur district. Pursuant to the MoU, Cisco will build an Agri-Digital Infrastructure (ADI) Platform and set up Village Knowledge Centers (VKCs) for knowledge delivery and to provide access to e-learning and advisory services to the farming and fishing communities in Kannur.

Harish Krishnan, Managing Director, Public Affairs & Strategic Engagements, Cisco said, "The impact of technology can be transformational for those who need it the most, elevating standards of living and fostering economic development."

The comprehensive ADI Platform will provide access to a data store having complete farming data of paddy and prawns farms of the region along with land and farmer profile databases. This Cisco ADI Platform will be supplemented by a custom-built Smart Agricultural Platform that uses IoT sensors, Non-IoT databases, Satellite/UAV Images to gather and relay real-time intelligence on soil content, moisture, weather conditions and other paramaters. This platform will become a centralised knowledge hub which will provide data-based recom-

mendations and insights to improve agriculture planning, reduce the risk of crop mortality and overall operational costs. Through VKCs farmers can also access essential information on government policy updates, crop advisory services, market trends, rates and best practice videos.

M Sivasankar IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of IT & Electronics, Govt. of Kerala said: "The government's vision is to turn the State into a knowledge society with sustainable economic growth, technological advancements and better quality of life."

BRITISH ENVOY MEETS CEOs AT CYBERPARK

An interactive session was held at Sahya IT building with delegates from Department of International Trade, British Deputy High Commission and London & Partners towards inward trade and investments in technology. Upasana Srikanth, Inward Investment Advisor,

Trade and Investments, British High Commission and Divya Bajaj, VP, London & Partners met CEOs of IT companies at Cyberpark. The delegation briefed the companies on the overall investment prospects and the kind of assistance provided by British High Commission. The session

was informative to the companies as most of them are startups. Nireesh C, General Manager – Marketing & Operations, Cyberpark Kozhikode, Harris, President, CAFIT (Calicut Forum for Information Technology) and Abdul Gafoor, Secretary, were present for the session.