Kochi-based Startup Village CEO invited to U.S. leadership program

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Sijo Kuruvilla George, the Chief Executive Officer of Startup Village, has been invited to take part in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in the United States.

It is a prestigious professional exchange program conducted by the U.S. Department of State to foster professional ties and mutual understanding with other countries.

Sijo is the only Indian among eight participants, all of whom have been identified as potential leaders, at the IVLP on 'Influential Voices'.

They will travel to the US this week to meet their professional counterparts and visit US public and private sector organisations related to the project theme covering digital citizenship, social activism, public-private partnership and good governance. The three-week program begins on May 3.

"I see IVLP as a fantastic opportunity to observe the best practices in US governance and decision making, to meet experts and build professional and personal networks that I hope will help me serve the community better," said Sijo.

He further said: "The project has a distinct focus on information technology as a tool for effective administration and socio-economic growth - a subject close to my heart."

Launched in 1940, the IVLP connects current and emerging foreign leaders around the world with their American counterparts.

According to the US government more than 200,000 international visitors have engaged with Americans through the IVLP, including more than 330 current or former chiefs of state or heads of government.

Notable former participants from Kerala include Union Minister Shashi Tharoor and State Planning Board Member and Technopark Founder-CEO G Vijayaraghavan.

After the IVLP concludes on May 24, Sijo will travel to Silicon Valley to meet participants of the Rajeev Circle Fellowship program initiated by venture capitalist Asha Jadeja Motwani in memory of her husband Rajeev Motwani who was a professor at Stanford and one the world's most highly respected computer scientists.

Now in its second edition, the Rajeev Circle Fellowship identifies select entrepreneurs from India and flies them to the Silicon Valley for an intense two-week-long mentorship and networking program.

While at the Silicon Valley, Sijo will also meet a few key people to discuss the setting up of the 'landing pad' for
the Startup Village's SV Squared program.

Earlier this week the Kerala government had announced it will set up a permanent centre in the US to facilitate the visit of student entrepreneurs to the US under SV Squared.

"I hope the discussions will help build a much stronger entrepreneurship corridor between Silicon Valley and Indian tech startup ecosystems," said Sijo.