

Vol.1 No. 10
Invitation Price Rs. 70

Kerala

in Mumbai

November 2010

**SIGNIFICANCE
OF DIWALI**



**KOZHIKODE
CITY OF SPICES**

**FIGHTER FOR
PUBLIC CAUSES**

Kerala in Mumbai Vol 01, No.10 November 2010

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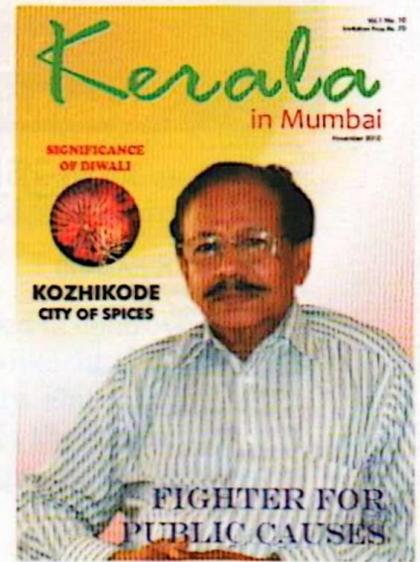
Kerala in Mumbai is a monthly magazine edited by P K Ravindranath and published and printed by P V Vijay Kumar on behalf of Vibrant Printing & Publishing Pvt. Ltd. And printed at Sharprints, Mumbai-400 019.

Vibrant Printing & Publishing Pvt Ltd.
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EDITORIAL

Debasement Of Higher Education

The recent shameful capitulation of the Vice Chancellor of the hallowed Mumbai University to the politically motivated demand for the withdrawal of an English textbook for non-detailed study, raises the question who decides the curriculum of colleges -the lumpen political activists or erudite educationists ?

The appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor was itself shrouded in controversy over his credentials for the august office once adorned by giants like Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Sir Phirozeshah Mehta and M R Jayakar. His abject surrender to noisy street level protests within a record 24 hours only proves his incompetence to uphold the best interests of higher education and freedom of expression. The less said about this matter, the better since it is now sub judice.

The sequence of events only justifies the contention of Dr Aroon Tikekar, the historian of Mumbai University, that each succeeding Vice-Chancellor has shown the previous one in better light. Since a series of Vice-Chancellors had, in the past, been appointed for political convenience rather than their qualification or competence, quality is sacrificed. Politicians seek the company of their equals, shunning wiser, more competent men or women, for fear of exposing their own incompetence and ignorance.

What was said of Vice-Chancellors of Mumbai University also holds good for the Chief Ministers of the State. What the current Chief Minister has done in supporting the Vice-Chancellor is scandalous. He has not read the book, except some portions marked for his attention and passes judgement over a literary work beyond his comprehension.

Contrast this with the attitude of the first Chief Minister of the State, Y B Chavan, who in a similar situation called for a copy of the controversial book, read it all by himself, and then said publicly that he found nothing objectionable in it.

In the present controversy, sad to say, the heads of the two major political parties forming the coalition government has not read a line of the book, and yet, they have ardently supported the withdrawal of the book from the B A syllabus of the University.

The question arises: who rules whom? Are our worthy ministers subject to orders from the lumpen lots in society or are they working for the good of the entire community? In the recent action, they have betrayed the oath they swore by when assuming office to work for the good of the people without fear or favour.

It is good that college students have taken up the matter, registering their protests on facebook and in twitters, lampooning the rulers who are ruled by mobs of illiterate politicians who seek the limelight for their narrow ends. If they do not have the guts to stand by their own convictions, or justice, they should take their bow now.



GOOD SHOW CONGRATS

I received the October issue of Kerala in Mumbai. I should say each of your issue is a significant improvement of the earlier issue and covers a lot of news and information on Kerala activities in Mumbai and Kerala personalities. The style of writing is also informal and informative. I wish your team all success in future.

K S Neelakandan
Chairman, Chembur Fine Arts, Mumbai

GOOD GOING

I am very much impressed by your magazine *Kerala In Mumbai*. I found it interesting. I would be happy to subscribe to it.

K R Narayanan, Malabar Hill

VALUE FOR MONEY

As a keen watcher of the media, I find a bright future for *Kerala In Mumbai* among all periodicals published by Keralites for Keralites. Your selection of articles and the presentation are quite good, on par with the leading periodicals on the national level. Keep going!

- Joseph Mathew, Bandra (W)

QUALITY MAGAZINE

I congratulate you for the new magazine *Kerala In Mumbai* which you are bringing out. The contents and quality of the magazine is excellent. The magazine gives us a lot of information about Kerala and Keralites settled in Mumbai. Keep the good work up!

P V Bhaskara Varier
Kandivli

GOOD COVERAGE

I am a regular reader of *Kerala In Mumbai*. Your features covering various occasions and festivals of Kerala as also news about Kerala are very nice. I also enjoy news about the Keralites and their social and cultural activities in Mumbai.

Rajan V Nair
Thane

ONAM SPECIAL ISSUE

I saw the August issue of *Kerala in Mumbai* and I am very much impressed. The magazine is covering various fields. It is interesting and informative. Now I became a well wisher of *Kerala in Mumbai*. I wish more news and information (expect politics) about Kerala are to be published and thus *Kerala in Mumbai* will be more popular among Keralites.

Parameswaran,
Trivandrum

NAVARATHRI MANDAPAM MUSIC FESTIVAL

I have great pleasure to find that the Navarathri festival at Navarathri Mandapam at Trivandrum is given importance in the article written by Lakshmi Venkatachalam. The article, no doubt is highly informative as per the historical aspects are concerned, particularly how the idol of Saraswathi came to the hands of Chera Kings. The author could have referred to the nine songs of Swati Tirunal ie. Navarathri Kirtanas rendered by eminent musicians during the festival

choosing a particular raga every day. In any case the author needs congratulations for the very valuable information on Navarathri Mandapam at Trivandrum.

Dr. Bhuvanewari.G.
Head of the Dept of Music,
Ernakulam Maharajah's College.

NEED MORE

Malayalees in Mumbai are interested not only in information about the Kerala ethos but also in fiction and poetry. We look forward to see such items in your esteemed magazine.

Rajesh Nair, Mira Road

We welcome responses from readers. Please forward your responses and suggestions about various happenings concerning Malayalees residing in this part of India. You may send them via e-mail to keralainmumbai@gmail.com or by post to Editor, *Kerala In Mumbai*, 105-B, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Mumbai 400 059.

December issue of **KERALA IN MUMBAI** will focus on Andheri (W) and January issue will be on Vashi. Organisations and personalities of these areas may forward their reports/opinions along with relevant photographs to the Editor, **KERALA IN MUMBAI**

Attention Subscribers !!!

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GEORGE U CHALAPURAM

SPIRITED FIGHTER FOR PUBLIC CAUSES

If the name George Chalapuram strikes terror in some corporate hearts, one can be sure that there has been some element of exploitation, overcharging or even fraud where consumers, customers or the unwary public have been cheated.

The public causes George has taken up over the last forty years are legion. He came to be noticed in the late sixties when the monopoly telephone provider, Bombay Telephones, was synonymous with corruption, indifference to public needs and total neglect of Chembur, then emerging as a thriving suburb with multifarious charitable, educational and social activities.

Chembur was fast shedding its image as the "Gas Chamber of Bombay" at the time, getting rid of all pollutants in the suburb. More and more residential areas cropped up in Chembur, with cottages and bungalows sprouting up in profusion. Raj Kapoor had set up his R K Studios, and a large number of film stars had moved into Chembur.

BARC came up in the vicinity, along with a number of small industries. All this led to huge demand for telephones. People had to wait for upto seven years for their applications for telephone connections to be considered by the authorities. To ease the situation the

Government had set up the Telephone Advisory Committee which could recommend installations for doctors, social workers and other needy institutions on priority basis.

All this, however, did not prevent an unimaginative bureaucracy inflicting damage on the system by its ill-advised moves. An active citizen's action group had come into being and George came to be acknowledged as its leader.

Just then the Bombay Telephones diverted a new telephone system earmarked for Chembur to Malabar Hill under political pressure. Then as now, Malabar Hill had the largest gathering of industrialists, ministers and political leaders. The long-suffering public of Chembur could not take this affront. A spontaneous agitation took shape under the leadership of George Chalapuram.

Prominent doctors and lawyers and other professionals, who needed the facility of a telephone badly joined the campaign. They took out processions, plastered Chembur with posters, held mock funerals of dead telephones and conducted the last rites ceremoniously in the compound of the Chembur Telephone Exchange. Hundreds of telephone subscribers and applicants for new connections kept the agitation going with daily demonstrations, public

meetings and dharna. The campaign got a boost when Hashu Advani, a local Congress leader and educationist threw his weight behind George. He allowed regular meetings of the Chembur Telephone Users' Association in the premises of Vivekanand College, of which he was a Trustee.

As the agitation picked up the Minister for Communications directed officers of Chembur Telephone Exchange to attend and participate in meetings of the Association. Two senior officers obeyed the ministry's orders, but made every effort to thwart the functioning of the Association. At one stage false cases were foisted on George and he was about to be arrested, when friends impressed with George's missionary and selfless work blocked his arrest. George plunged into his campaign with renewed vigour.

Slowly, Chembur was taken off the Bombay Telephone's list of "difficult" exchanges. With globalization and liberalization in the 1990s Bombay Telephone's monopoly came to an end. But, George's fight continued, with charges against the new players who had entered the scene to provide telephone facilities for the citizens of Mumbai. Frequent and persistent complaints of overbilling and similar malpractices cropped up against the Reliance Infrastructure Limited.



Thanks to the efforts of George and the Mumbai Citizen's Welfare Forum, that succeeded the Chembur Telephone Users' Association, complaints against RIL have tapered off. They are fewer, but George is sworn to continue the fight till the citizens are provided with trouble-free and complaint-free facilities by the providers, who still retain an attitude worse than that of the disreputable East India Company. "They were far more decent, in their dealings," George laments.

George is now actively campaigning for a switchover from RIL to Tata Power Company Ltd, for all electric supplies. Their rates are at least 30% less, he points out. Besides, they do not indulge in fraudulent manoeuvres like overbilling and tampering of meters, he adds.

The Chembur Telephone Users' Association has been renamed the Mumbai Telephone Users' Association with George Chalapuram as Chairman, to cover the entire island city.

From telephones to electric supply, George found Reliance Energy indulging in malpractices to the detriment of consumers. With the threat to discontinue electric supplies for non-payment of bills, Reliance Energy continues to overcharge. Their modus operandi is simple. Eighty percent of the consumers do not protest. Out of the other 20 percent, the company can easily negotiate and settle disputes. Even here, George points out, the overcharged amount is never paid back, but adjusted in monthly instalments in their running bills.

The crores of rupees the company thus collects from hapless consumers help make Reliance one of the richest industries in the world.

CIVIC ISSUES

George, by nature, reacts violently to any injustice done to anyone. Without any invitation he would rush to correct the situation and see that justice is done to him or her.

George and the Mumbai Citizens' Welfare Forum have undertaken a number of projects in Chembur to make life easier for citizens. Among them are clearance of water logging in Sahakar Nagar, laying a new road in Diamond

Garden, plantation of trees in Chembur for beautification and for fighting pollution. He also had street lights put up in several areas of Chembur, and an end to unauthorized parking of vehicles below the flyover and several other inconveniences to residents.

The nuisance of hawkers and encroachment of pavements are other issues he has helped resolve. George's letters to various public figures and government offices evoke prompt response, along with assurances that his complaints would be remedied.

An engineer by profession, George landed in Mumbai in 1965 and joined Metal Box. He left this job soon to found his own company, Xylord Eng. Pvt Ltd, of which he is the managing director. Married in 1970, George has a son and daughter. The son is a software engineer, the daughter married and well settled. His son-in-law is also a software engineer.

Over the years the family has had several moments of tension and anxiety, as George would receive threats to his life. On one occasion, a man barged into his office with a loaded gun. George firmly asked him to leave his cabin and wait for his call. The moment the man went out George called in the police.

Undeterred by threats and blandishments, George Chalapuram continues to espouse public causes with a finesse and ease one rarely finds in professional "social workers" who count the votes or other benefits before taking up public grievances. George likes a fight and dons his fighter boots with great alacrity.



Nair Welfare Society, Mulund held their Kudumba Sangamam on October 3rd. Office Bearers of the Society lighting the lamp on the occasion. Dr Bijoy Kutty was the Chief Guest.



G.H. Ananthanarayanan

DEEPAVALI THE FESTIVAL OF GODDESS LAKSHMI

Deepavali, often shortened to Diwali, is a major Indian festival that is very significant in Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism. Known as the "Festival of Lights," it symbolises the victory of good over evil, and lamps are lit as a sign of celebration and hope for humankind. Celebrations focus on lights and lamps, particularly traditional *dīpa* or *deeya* (earthen lamp). Fireworks are associated with the festival. Diwali is a colloquial name used in North India, while the festival is formally called Deepavali in South India.

Deepavali is celebrated for five consecutive days at the end of Hindu month of Ashwayuja or Karthik. It usually occurs in October/November, and is one of the most popular and eagerly awaited festivals in India. Deepavali comes exactly twenty days after Dussehra. Hindus and Sikhs alike regard it as a celebration of life and use the occasion to strengthen family and social relationships. For Hindus it is one of the most important festivals, and beginning of the year in some Hindu calendars.

There are several beliefs regarding the origin of Diwali. One legend is that Hindus celebrate Deepavali to mark the time when Lord Rama achieved victory over Ravana. The soft glow of Diwali diyas, the illuminations all over the place, the crackers lighting up the dark night sky and bursting with a deafening sound, the rockets shooting up with a hiss and coming down in a shower of multi-coloured sparkles- the entire country reverberates with a festive fervor.

There is another legend regarding the origin of Diwali. It is in connection with the annihilation of Narakasura.

In Hindu mythology, Narakasura or Naraka is the *asura* son of the Goddess of Earth *Bhudevi* (*Bhumi*) and Lord Vishnu in his *Varaha* (boar) *avatar* (incarnation). He obtained a boon from Brahma that he could be killed only by his parents, surmising that no parent would kill the offspring.

Narakasura became evil, in association with another *asura* named Banasura. Drunk with power of the boon, he brought all the kingdoms on earth and the heaven under his control. His reign of oppression was in full swing. Addicted to power, he abducted 16,100 women and imprisoned them in his palace. He



Krishna and Satyabhama fighting Narakasura's armies -Painting from the Metropolitan Museum

stole the earrings of Aditi, the heavenly mother goddess, and usurped some of her territory.

All the Devas, led by Indra went to Vishnu and pleaded to save them from Narakasura. Vishnu promised them that he would do the needful at the appropriate time.

Vishnu was born as Krishna. Aditi, who was a relative of Krishna's wife Satyabhama an avatar of Bhudevi, approached Satyabhama for help. When Satyabhama heard of the Narakasura's ill treatment of women and his behaviour with Aditi, she was enraged. Satyabhama approached Lord Krishna and demanded that he help her to put a stop to Narkasura's evil doings. Krishna attacked the great fortress of Narakasura, riding his mount Garuda with wife Satyabhama. The Lord slew him and also killed Mura, Narakasura's general. Thus Krishna is called *Murāri* (the enemy of Mura). Before, dying, the *asura* requested a boon that his death anniversary should be celebrated by all people on earth. This day is celebrated as 'Naraka Chaturdashi' - the first day of Diwali.



The story of Narakasura finds mention in Mahabharata, Ramayana, Harivamsa, Vishnu Purana, Kalika Purana and Bhagavata Purana.

The message of Naraka Chaturdashi Parva is that the good of the society should always prevail over one's own personal bonds. It is interesting to note that Bhudevi, mother of the slain demon Naraka, declared that his death should not be a day of mourning but an occasion to celebrate and rejoice. It is said Lord Krishna had an oil bath to rid himself off the blood splattered on his body when Naraka was killed.

In many parts of India it is celebrated as Lakshmi Puja. It is celebrated over five nights around the new moon night that follows *Sharad Purnima*. The festivals are Dhanteras, or Dhan trayodasi, on the 13th day of the waning moon, Naraka Chaturdasi on the 14th day, Lakshmi Puja, on the *Amavasya* night, Bali Pratipada and *Yama Dvitiya* (Bhai-Dooj).

On Bhai-Dooj, brothers visit the homes of sisters and present them gifts and sweets. This custom symbolizes the reinforcement of the bond between brothers and sisters.

In West Bengal, during Diwali, Kali in a benign form is worshipped.

In Tamil Nadu Diwali is celebrated by having an oil bath in hot water, early morning before sun rise, wearing new clothes, and bursting crackers. Water is heated and the vessel containing hot water is placed in the bath room. Goddess Ganga is invoked to enter this water to make it pure and holy. The first Diwali after a daughter's marriage is a very important celebration in a Tamil household. The daughter and son in law along with his family are invited to a sumptuous feast with varieties of sweets and gifts are given.

For Diwali small clay lamps filled with oil are lighted. These lamps signify the triumph of good over evil. It is also customary to welcome Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. *Rangolis* are drawn on the ground in front of the houses.

Businessmen treat Diwali as New Year and start their accounting year. They invite their customers for the Lakshmi Puja and beseech them to clear all outstanding credits and start transactions afresh. All customers are presented with basketful of sweets.

Diwali is also an occasion for all common people to buy new clothes, jewellery and acquire new assets. In all, it is an occasion to indulge and splurge one's savings so that fresh saving can be started again.

Lakshmi Pooja

The phases to offer puja to Lakshmi are detailed below:

1. Spread a new cloth on a raised platform: Place a handful of grains in the center and, on this, place a *kalash* (pitcher) made of gold, silver, copper, or terracotta. Fill three-fourth of the *kalash* with water and place a betel nut, a flower, a coin, and some rice grains in it. Arrange five kinds of leaves or mango leaves in the *kalash*. Place a small dish on the *kalash* and fill it with rice grains. Draw a lotus with turmeric powder (*haldi*) over the rice grains and place the idol of Goddess Lakshmi over it, along with coins.
2. In front of the *kalash*, on the right (South-West direction), place the idol of Ganesha. Also place ink and books related to your business or occupation on the platform. Light a lamp and begin the puja by offering *haldi*, *kumkum*, and flowers to the platform on which the *kalash* is placed. Then offer *haldi*, *kumkum*, and flowers to the water that is to be used for the puja. Invoke the river goddesses to be part of this water.
3. Worship Lakshmi by reciting the Vedic mantras addressed to her. One can also recite the mantras mentioned in the Puranas or simply take some flowers in your hands, close



your eyes, and think of Goddess Lakshmi being showered with gold coins by two elephants standing on either side of Her and chant Her name. Then offer the flowers to the idol.

4. Place the idol of Lakshmi in a plate and bathe it with water, *panchamrit* (a mixture of milk, curd, ghee or clarified butter, honey, and sugar) and then with water containing some gold ornament or a pearl. Wipe the idol clean and place it back on the *kalash*. Alternately, you can just sprinkle water and *panchamrit* on the idol with a flower.

5. Offer sandal paste, saffron paste, perfume, *haldi*, *kumkum*, *abeer*, and *gulal* to the goddess. Offer a garland of cotton beads to the goddess. Offer flowers, especially the marigold flowers and leaves of *bel* (wood apple tree). Light an incense stick and *dhoop*. Make an offering of sweets, coconut, fruits, and *tambul*. Make an offering of puffed rice and batasha. Pour some puffed rice, *batasha*, coriander seeds, and cumin seeds over the idol. The safe is where we keep money and jewelry. Worship this safe as a symbol of Lord Kuber.

6. Finally, perform the *aarti* for Goddess Lakshmi. Always remember that She abhors loud noise. So the *aarti* should be accompanied only by a small bell. Do not clap hands, as is the practice when performing *aarti* for other Gods. A peaceful and sublime atmosphere should prevail during the puja. Do not light crackers while the puja is on or immediately after it.

(KIM Bureau)

FORTY YEARS WITH THE TATAS



K D Skandan

I came to Mumbai in the late 50s, before Samyuktha Maharashtra was born.

A Malayalee outside Kerala, anywhere on the globe, is a potential investment but while in Kerala, he is a detrimental force. Whoever said that, it is absolutely true. Malayalees residing in Maharashtra in general and particularly in Greater Mumbai and Thane Districts should be grateful to Mumbai for accommodating and tolerating them and equally Mumbai should be thankful to the Malayalees for their contribution in all fields. It is reciprocal.

The Mangalorians first came to Mumbai in the 40s. They came by country boats and most of them settled down in the fort area working in offices, doing business in the footpaths, working in hotels, and as newspaper vendors. Later came the Tamils and Malayalees whose homes were in Dadar and Matunga areas. Most of the old timers like me came to Mumbai to get jobs and send some remittance to their parents in Kerala for their living. After passing the matriculation and learning shorthand/typewriting, pack off to Mumbai for a livelihood. There were representatives of all English companies, most of them headquartered at that time in Ballard Estate, waiting for them at Dadar station and offer them employment. There was not much of a competition for us at that time, though there were some Anglo-Indian girls who were stenographers/secretaries, receptionists, typists and other clerical jobs. Very few Malayalees migrated to places like Madras and other metro cities and the bulk of them landed in Bombay for a livelihood.

A Malayalee landing in Mumbai first goes to the local Malayalee Samajam office, to meet people, make friendship to get accommodation to stay and then for a job. Most of them were working class and some of them took to business like trade

and other professions like hair cutting, tailoring, etc. etc. By stint of hard work, they all came up in life.

It is very unfortunate but when they became prosperous, they forgot their roots and did not want the Samajams anymore. Today, we have a Malayalee or Kerala Samajam at every station right from the Fort area to Virar and Panvel in the western and central lines. The only consolation is that we don't have two Samajams in one place: Vile Parle East and Vile Parle West like North Korea and South Korea ! It will not happen in the future, since the Malayalee Samajams within a few years' time will close down. I still remember what late Mr. V K Krishna Menon said at a Malayalee crowd. " If there are three Malayalees, they should have four Samajams and that is our culture. Because of " ego clash " they will not unite and have a central body like Kerala Christian Union (KCU) which is a central body controlling all its units in Greater Mumbai and Thane districts. The Union is doing yeomen service to its community especially at the time of death and funeral.

We are celebrating the Golden Jubilee Year of Maharashtra which incidentally coincides with the formation of the Central Sanghatana of all Malayalee Samajams. Why not we celebrate in a novel but constructive way: blood donation campaign, donating eyes and bodies. I am sure our Maharashtrian bretheren will co-operate with us for this noble and laudable cause.

THE TATA GROUP

Having spent more than fifty years in Mumbai, I cannot but refer to the great Tata Organisation which I served for more than four decades. My innings of 43 years in Tatas were between the late Mr Naval H Tata and his illustrious son

Mr. Ratan N Tata, the present Chairman of the Group. About education, both Mr JRD Tata and Mr Naval Tata in their speeches and articles had always a couple of paragraphs about Kerala on the subject of family planning programme and population. If Kerala is successful, it is only because of the literacy of the State and the successful implementation of any Government, either left or right and the attitude of the people in general towards making education a great success. Tata Group had the advantage of the experience and wisdom of people like Dr John Matthai, K R K Menon, and now R K Krishna Kumar and Prasad Menon. It should make us proud that Mr Krishna Kumar was the first only non-Parsi to become a Trustee of Sir Rattan Tata Trust, the second son of the Founder of the Group, Jamshetji Tata.

Many labour welfare measures were introduced by the Group much before Government thought and enacted legislations on them, like leave with pay, maternity benefit, etc. Their commitment to social responsibilities for the people staying around the manufacturing facilities like Jamshedpur, Mithapur, Munnar etc. is admirable. It was the Founder's wish that what came from the people should go back to them hundred times more, the examples being the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, Tata Memorial Hospital, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research to name a few.

The man in the street does not know that out of every Rs.100 earned as profit by the Tata Group, Rs.83 goes to the two charity foundations created in the names of the Founder's two sons : Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust. The two foundations have donated crores of rupees for running the above institutions which are now being managed by

Government. However, it is unfortunate, when the trade union and left parties talk about industry in general, they paint everyone with the same brush as capitalists and exploiters!

Mr. Ratan Tata realized that all political parties need money to fight elections mainly to Parliament. He made it transparent by getting the approval of the concerned government agencies like the Election Commission, the Company Law Board and others.

He was mainly responsible to create a Trust to look after the disbursement of the funds and the Trustees are not at all connected with any political party, corporate and government. They are mainly drawn from educationists, academicians and professionals who have an unblemished record of honesty and integrity. It is distributed on the basis of the party's performance at the last election. Many like-minded corporate bodies have also now adapted similar approaches.

At one of the Press conferences during his parliament election campaign, one Malayalee journalist was irritating him with uncomfortable questions during the one month campaign and Mr Naval Tata used to give him convincing answers in a cool and calm way. At the last press conference, Mr Tata told him "look, today is my chance to ask you a question" and the journalist was surprised. The question was 'What is the difference between a pick-pocket and a politician' and he could not answer. Tata gave him the answer: "A pick-pocket first picks your pocket and then goes to jail whereas a politician goes to jail first and picks your pocket...I have done neither"

HELPING THE UNDERDOG

Apart from helping several institutions and individuals who sought his help, Mr. Tata, has, on his own, helped many poor people in cash and in kind. One such instance needs mention.

Mr. Tata had a bearer by name Appu working at his residence Tata House in 1988. He was from Kerala and did not know any other language except Malayalam. Since he was honest and good in his work, Mr. Tata retained him. His young wife and three children stayed in Kerala. After a month of his joining Mr. Tata, he started getting letters from his wife that she and their three children were being threatened by Appu's stepmother and his cousin and she wanted Appu to return to Kerala immediately for the safety of the family.



K D Skandan with Naval Tata

Appu approached Mr. Tata but since he could not speak any language other than Malayalam, he asked him to see me in the office and explain the whole matter. After talking to him, I reported to Mr. Tata his problems. Mr. Tata asked me whether I could help him and he would follow whatever way I would suggest to assist Appu.

I vividly remember what he told me: "Skandan, Appu is a son of your soil and you should help him all the more" Through the help of a friend, Mr. T Damu at Trivandrum, the Police interfered in

the matter and protected Appu's wife and children. However, Mr Tata's regret was that, inspite of doing all that he could, Appu let him down. After a few days, he went on leave to Kerala and never returned.

(The writer's book NAVAL TATA REMEMBERED was published in 1999 by the late Soli P Godrej, Chairman of Godrej Group of Cos. He has acted in a number of Malayalam plays including Experimental Theatre's KSHETRAM).

Editor

92 year old Malayali Donates her eyes

Mrs. Thangam Anantharam, 92, died peacefully on 25 October at her residence in Matunga. She was the wife of K. S Anantharam. Editorial Assistant in "The Times of India", Mumbai, and mother of feature writer and editorial consultant K A Viswanathan.

Mrs. Anantharam's death was sudden. She had finished all her routine work in the morning and stretched out on her drawing room sofa, complaining of giddiness and pain in the chest. She then told her son "I am going to die" and breathed her last within minutes.

Thangam Anantharam had expressed her desire to donate her eyes after her demise. The Aditya Jyot Eye Bank, Wadala, sent a team to take her eyes. Expressing satisfaction over this donation from an old lady

Dr. S. Natarajan head of the Bank said Mrs Anantharam's eyes will provide vision to two corneal blind people, who would be able to see the colourful world through her eyes. According to Dr. Natarajan, she was probably the oldest in Mumbai to donate her eyes. Dr. Natarajan said "one out of every 150 persons in India is affected by corneal blindness which mostly affects children and people from poor social economic strata of society". Out of the one million deaths that occurred in the country last year, a mere 42,000 had opted for eye donations. There is a demand for about 3,00,000 eyes per annum, he said. "We are one of the fastest growing economies in the world today and ironically, we also shoulder one of the largest populations of the visually impaired amounting to almost one-fourth of the world's blind population living in India" revealed Dr. Natarajan. Thangam Anantharam hailed from Kalpathy, Palakkad.





Chembur

In this Issue, also, like our October Issue, we are focusing on the suburb of Chembur. There are various cultural, social, educational and religious organisations and institutions in Chembur

founded by Keralites . They contribute to the welfare of the residents there. We are covering some of them.

'Chembur Personalities' focuses on some more residents of this suburb who express their impressions of Chembur. There are many more people and our wish is to include all of them. Maybe it will be done some time in the future.

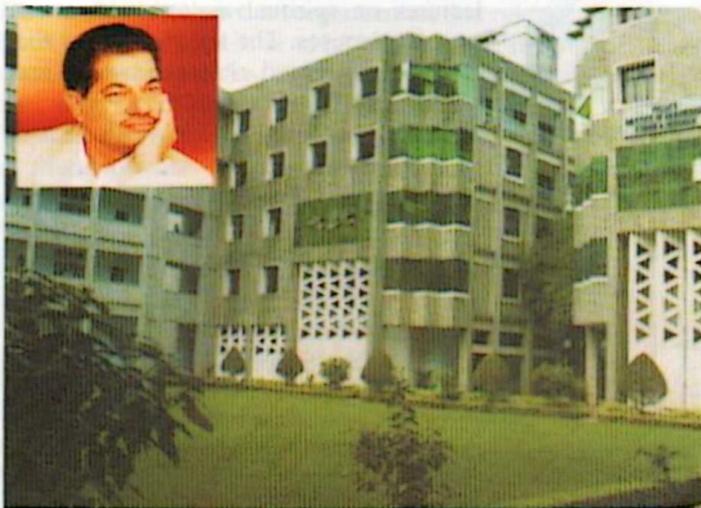
MAHATMA EDUCATION SOCIETY

Pillai's Group of Institutions

Pillai's Group of Institutions is a famous landmark in Chembur in the educational field. In the year 1970 the Society started the Chembur English High School. Today the Mahatma Education Society is a vast educational organization, having more than 48 educational Institutes providing quality education from kindergarten to Post- graduation professional courses in the faculties of Engineering, Architecture, Management, Teachers Training, Arts, Science and Commerce. They have campuses at Chembur, Powai, Borivali, New Panvel and Rasayani. More than 35,000 students learn from these Institutions.

At all their Institutions, poor students are taught free. Profit is not their aim. The fees for higher education and advanced courses are also nominal.

The Mahatma Education Society is headed by Dr K M Vasudevan Pillai who is its CEO and Secretary. Dr Daphne Pillai is the Jt Secretary and Chairperson of the Management Board.



Pillai's Institute of Management Studies and Research.
Inset: Dr K M Vasudevan Pillai



Fine Arts Society, Chembur

All their colleges have world class infrastructure well stocked libraries, computer centres with internet connectivity, and student friendly amenities.

Excellent results,100 % placement, interaction with the corporate world and global exposure are some of the special features of these Institutions.

Institutions managed by Mahatma Gandhi Education Society are affiliated to the University of Mumbai , approved by AICTE/COA/ NCTE and recognized by the DTE, Government of Maharashtra and accredited /graded by NAAC/NAB/DTE.

Dr Pillai's motto is to provide a holistic education based on new generation academics so that his students become competent players in the global field and also key contributors to the community and society they live in. They strive to achieve 'Nation building through character building.'

FINE ARTS SOCIETY

Founded on 26th January 1962 by a handful of music lovers for dissemination of knowledge about fine arts and preserving our cultural heritage, the Fine Arts Society stands out as Chembur's pride in a central location.

The person who conceived this idea of Fine Arts Society setting its own premises was C V Radhakrishnan a youth from Chelakkara who landed in Mumbai in 1947 and moved into Chembur in 1953 .Motivating about 20 dedicated and loyal volunteers he took the initiative and emerged as the architect of the Fine Arts Society.

Today the Fine Arts Society is a landmark in this suburb. In recognition of the Society's contribution to the community, the Mumbai Municipal Corporation and the Government of Maharashtra have named the junction in front of the Society's premises as "The Fine Arts Chowk".

The Fine Arts cultural centre has an art plaza, a centrally air conditioned deluxe auditorium with excellent acoustics, an air conditioned spacious community hall with attached self-contained rooms, air conditioned suite, special dining area and kitchen.

With a membership exceeding 2000, the regular activities of the centre consist of monthly cultural programmes for its members, a prestigious week long Annual Festival of Music, drama, and dance, a 3 day Carnatic Music Festival, a two day

All India Music Conference and many other cultural activities.. Besides, celebrations of most of the traditional festivals including Onam and Ona *Sadya* have become popular. It also conducts bi-monthly health care awareness lectures by eminent specialists and special programmes to channel the energies, potentials and aspirations of the youth.

The Fine Arts Society conducts a Music School for imparting basic to advance level - Hindustani and Carnatic styles- besides Kuchipudi dance. There are over 500 students receiving education in eight styles of Hindustani and Carnatic music from about 25 renowned visiting faculties. The Centre now

plans to extend its music school into an Academy of Fine Arts and College of Music and Dance.

The Fine Arts has a Board of Trustees who include K S Neelakantan as Chairman, Jairam Ramnath and G G Bharathan as Vice Chairmen, T N Subramanian as Secretary and P Sethuraman as Treasurer. There are six Trustee members . The Managing Committee includes K Ganesh Kumar as President, Janaki Ramakrishnan and Leela Devi as Vice- Presidents, Balu Ishwar and S Meenalochani as Secretaries, K R Ranganathan as Treasurer. Other members are P D Balakrishnan, S Viswanathan, Radhika Ananthkumar and Maya Hariharan.

SHRI AYYAPPA SEVA SANGHAM.

In the year 1965 a group of Malayalees , all of them residents of Township Colony, now known as Tilak Nagar in Chembur, started Ayyappa Bhajans on Saturday nights. This was the beginning of the Ayyappa Seva Sangham. *Ayyappan Vilakku*, *Ayyappan Pattu*, and *Mandalam* celebrations during the *Mandalam* month, that is mid- November every year was the next move. This was first started on the Tilak Nagar grounds and later shifted to Shell Colony grounds, some two hundred meters away from today's Tilak Nagar Railway Station.

A temporary abode (*pandal*) made for the Lord on that occasion was decorated with ivory plantain stems, golden coconut leaf *nurukku* and *kuruthola*. Devotees came in thousands and watched with piety the *Ayyappan Vilakku* with *Ayyappan pattu* describing the Lord's life story by well known guruswamis who came all the way from Kerala in response to the Sangham's special invitation.

With the passage of time, the annual celebrations included Kathakali, Ottam thullal, Chakyar Koothu and Bharata Natyam. Renowned musicians like P Susheela, P Leela, Dr K J Yesudas, P Jayachandran and many other celebrities gave concerts every year on special invitation by the Sangham and enthralled the vast congregation. In fact, Yesudas has performed here for 18 years consecutively, during the *mandala* pooja celebrations.



Shell Colony Ayyappa Temple

The piety and sincerity of the public encouraged the Sangham to go forward . In the early 90's a full fledged temple complex with Lord Ayyappa as the presiding Deity was consecrated at Shell Colony by Brahmashree Thanthra Visharad Vasudevan Namboodiri . The temple now conducts regular poojas and also houses deities of Ganapathy, Bhagavathi and Sri Guruvayoorappan. *Srimad Bhagavatha Saptaham*, *Bhagavat Geetha*, *Devi Bhagavatha navaham* and other spiritual discourses are conducted here on a regular basis in the temple premises. *Prathishta* Day is celebrated every year on the zodiac *punartham* in the month of *Edavam* (May-June)

Chedda Nagar Temple

In Chembur, we have a religious structure of unique architectural excellence, reminiscent of the temples of South India, with a typical *gopuram* and mythological reliefs embedded over that. This is the Lord Subramania (Murugan) temple. The first two floors are built on reinforced concrete according to modern architecture, while the third floor is built of granite stones according to *agama sastras*.

The main deity of Subramania with His Consorts Valli and Devayani is surrounded by Ayyappa, Guruvayoorappan (Lord Krishna), Durga, Ganesha, Nataraja and the *navagrahas*. They are all housed on the same floor - a unique assem-blage and the only one of its kind anywhere in India.

Brahmashree Anjam Madhavan Namboodiri was the chief advisor and inspiring force behind the construction of a sanctum sanctorum for Guruvayoorappan in the Chedda Nagar Temple



Chedda Nagar Temple

Complex. Earlier he used to perform *Bhagawatha Saptaham* for seven days every year in the temple. Even now this tradition is continued by other visiting scholars who deliver lectures on spiritual matters within the temple premises. The temples follow the tantrik tradition and rituals and poojas are performed by Namboodiris from a Guruvayoor family who have dedicated themselves to the temple.

Special poojas are performed on *Gokula Ashtami*, *Vishu*, *Thiruvonam* days and the first Thursday of every month. Over the years, this temple has earned a reputation for the fulfillment of devotees' prayers for matrimonial alliance and many marriages are performed here.

The same complex also houses Lord Ayyappa along with His consorts Poorna and Pushkala. *Mandala pooja* and *Vilakku* are performed in the temple all through the 41 days of the

mandala period. Devotees take the vow and wear the sacred mala before this Lord at the commencement of the *mandalam* for visiting Sabarimala every year as also *kettunira* prior to the pilgrimage. On December 25 every year there is *Sastha Preethi* and a grand Kerala style feast, followed by feeding the poor.

This temple is not confined to spiritualism alone. In recent years the temple has emerged as a nodal point for community welfare and community related activities. Attached to the temple complex, there are three fully air-conditioned community halls, which are open to the public for social functions like marriages and other social functions. Shanmukhapriya is a Charitable

Trust, founded by the temple authorities and dedicated to social, educational, medical, cultural and community welfare activities. It runs a *veda paatasala* and a school for classical music and dance. The temple trust also provides scholarships to needy and deserving students recommended by 10 schools. It distributes clothes, fruits and biscuits to poor and needy patients in hospitals/rehabilitation centres and also conducts free health check up camps.

Another contribution of the temple to the community is *Prem Kutir* a huge old age home complex in Karjat with all facilities for accommodating senior citizens.

SREE NARAYANA MANDIRA SAMITI

Sree Narayana Mandira Samiti, Mumbai is the biggest organization in the name of Sree Narayana Guru, outside Kerala. It was established in the year 1963 for propagating the teachings and philosophy of Sree Narayana Guru, the saint, poet, philosopher and social reformer who professed One Caste, One Religion and One God for mankind. The area was a small marshy land. The Samiti purchased this land and developed into a great educational complex. To stop encroachers around the area, the founders of the Samiti had set up housing societies around the Complex.

The Samiti has 12,500 life members and 850 Patrons. The main complex of the Samiti is located at Sree Narayana Nagar in Chembur. It has 17 Guru Centres and 26 units in and around Mumbai. The Chembur Complex of the Samiti is spread over seven acres of land. Here it is running Sree Narayana Guru High School (English and Marathi medium), Sree Narayana Guru College of Commerce, Sree Narayana Guru College of Education, and Kumaranasan Pre-Primary School. Around 5000 students are studying in these educational institutions.

Plans are afoot to start a Science College and Management Courses in a newly constructed multi storeyed building in Chembur.

The Samiti has a *Samskarika Vibhagam* that is engaged in spreading the messages of Sree Narayana Guru. The Womens' Wing organises family get togethers and works towards organising various programs for the overall upliftment of women. The Youth Wing is busy with various programs for the future. The Marriage Bureau regularly organises Marriage



Chembur Samiti complex

Alliance Meet once in six months. The Samiti publishes a quarterly magazine namely *GURURATNAM* to keep members and well wishers informed about the activities of the Samiti, propagate Sree Narayana Guru's teachings and deal with matters of general human interest.

Dr K K Damodaran is the Founder Chairman and President of the Samiti for the last 40 years. M I Damodaran is the Chairman, and K Natarajan is the Vice Chairman. N S Salimkumar is the Secretary and K K Susmeran Treasurer. P K Venu is the Asst Secretary and V K Hiralal Asst Treasurer.

Membership to the Samiti is open to Malayalees in particular and South Indians in General, irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

DHARMISHTA MITRAN

Dharmishta Mithran is an organization that reveals the caring heart of the Keralite. It is an NGO that is mainly dedicated to conduct funeral and last rites. It was founded in 2001 by V G Parameswaran fondly called Muthumani, who hails from Thrissur, was brought up by his parents in Kochi and has settled in Mumbai since 1962. Dharmishta Mitran's mission is to assist in conducting funerals and performing the last rites of mortals who have passed away, more so in emergency and premature deaths cases where the close relatives are numb with shock at the sudden demise of their loved ones. In a span of 9 years, it has overseen more than 1000 funeral rites. It has at its service round the clock ambulance and a refrigerated box to keep the body and its services are offered to residents in Chembur, Trombay, Ghatkopar, and Kurla and on specific request even in the distant suburbs of Mumbai. Dharmishta Mitran has on its roll, 13 patrons, 551 life members, and 219 ordinary members. Apakriya Centre, (last Rites Centre) was first housed at Saibaba Industrial Centre. Later with the help of



AGM held on 08-08-10. From left: K R Sriram Vice Chairman, N N Rajagopalan Ex Sec. V G Parameswaran Chairman, K Parameswaran K V Subramaniam

ex MLA late Pramodji Shirwalkar, Dharmishta Mitran got a place at Jai Ambe Nagar to run the Centre. In return Mitran used its influence and provided 24 hour drinking water to the earlier

salt pan workers at Jai Ambe Nagar, gave books to school going children and imparted vocational training to women to become self employed and also offered free medical assistance. Electricity and improved roads were other facilities enjoyed by the inhabitants of Jai Ambe Nagar due to Mitran's efforts.

In recognition of the good work by the Dharmishta Mitran, BMC has named the road leading to Jai Ambe Nagar as Chakyar Rajan Marg, after the illustrious late K K Rajan who was an exponent of Chakyar Koothu, an age old traditional art of

Kerala. In 2009 the Mitran has opened a Shraadha cum Community Development Centre at Deonar. There is infrastructure here to conduct six kriyas a day and people from several parts of Mumbai come here to give their loved ones a decent final farewell. Muthumani is ably assisted in all this by Sriram who is the son of Chakyar Rajan and is the Vice-Chairman of Dharmishta Mitran.

Apart from helping in the last rites, Mitran has a legal cell to render assistance to those wanting to write a Will, have it registered or in the execution of a Will.

Mar Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church

The Mar Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church is considered a mini parumala or kochu parumala of Mumbai. It is situated near the Diamond Garden in Chembur. Parumala is a small town in Pathanamthitta district in Kerala. It is renowned for the presence of the Tomb of St. Gregorios (Parumala Thirumeni), the greatest saint of India belonging to the Indian Orthodox Church (The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church).

Born on 15th June 1848 at Mulanthuruthy near Cochin, Kerala, the saintly bishop was called to his eternal home on 2nd November 1902. Gee Varghese Mar Gregorios, after he took the vows, became involved with not only religious affairs but also wanted to improve the social conditions. He put in efforts to bring Dalits and Untouchables into the fold of the church. Besides, he was a pioneer in promoting English Education. He founded many schools and encouraged modern systems of education. Many charitable institutions and hospitals have sprung up in his memory. Hundreds of churches and shrines have been built in Kerala and other parts of India in the hallowed name of Saint Gregorios of Parumala.

The Church in Chembur is one of its leading churches in Mumbai. In 1997 a *deepa shika* was brought here from Parumala and even today the flame is kept burning at the Church premises. Hundreds of devotees, without distinction of caste and creed, light candles here for prayers granted and wishes fulfilled. Way back in the sixties, the parish was part of St Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church at Dadar. But by the end of the 60's the residents of Chembur wanted a church of their own in their vicinity. There were about seventy families. With their untiring efforts and persistence, the foundation stone was laid By Bishop His Grace Dr Mathews Mar Athanasios on February 13, 1972. The Vicar was Father C V John. C V Thampi, M M Mathew, K M John, P J Varghese, MG Daniel



Mar Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church

and A K Kuruvilla are some of the founding members, and are still actively involved in the affairs of the church.

The Feast day of St Gregorios *ormaperunnal* is on November 2 every year. Many people flock to Parumala for worship. The *perunnal* festivities are being celebrated this year in the Mumbai Church on November 6 and 7. Rev Father NS Varghese is the Vicar/ Chairman, Rev Fr M B George Asst Vicar, M S Joy Vice Chairman, CY Jose Secretary, Pavalov C Varky Jt Secretary and V C Paulose Treasurer and there is an eighteen member Managing Committee. The present Bishop is His Grace Gee Varghese Mar Coorilise. The prestigious St Gregorios School, an ICSE affiliated school in Chembur was founded by the Church.

ST GREGORIOS HIGH SCHOOL

The St. Gregorios Education and Medical Trust in Chembur was formed in 1992 by a few members of the Orthodox Christian community of Kerala origin living here. These people wanted to do something for the society that nurtured them. They felt the best way to work for the improvement of the society was through education. Thus was born the Gregorian Nursery and Kindergarten in 1993. Its first classes were held within the Orthodox Church Hall. Under the chairmanship of C V Thampi and support of like-minded Malayalees, the trust built St Gregorios High School. The foundation stone for the school was laid by His Grace Dr Philipose Mar Theophilus. It started in 1994 with 21 students in Std I, today it stands tall having classes right up to Std XII and with around 1750 pupils in both the preschool and main school sections. The school is affiliated to the ICSE Board and occupies a pride of place among educational institutions in not



St Gregorios High School

only Mumbai but also the whole of the country. It is a co-educational one and prepares students for the ICSE and ISC examinations. Completely secular, the school strongly believes in placing the interest of the country before self.

The thrust is on the all round development and complete growth of the children so that each student from this school not only has an edge over others in this competitive world but is also a balanced individual, who becomes an asset to the society.

KAIRALI SEVA SAMITI

Kairali Seva Samiti, in Chedda Nagar, a purely social and cultural organization, devoid of any political affiliation was formed in 2003 by a few enthusiastic Keralites of Chedda Nagar, with the prime objective of promoting fellowship, not only among the 250 Malayalee families of the area, but also instill brotherhood and fraternity among other communities. To fulfill this goal, the Samiti encourages cultural, artistic and literary activities, arrange get togethers at least twice a year, annual programmes, variety entertainments etc.

With a view to making the children of the community familiar with our mother tongue, the Samiti has been conducting regular Malayalam classes. The Samiti's "Educational Endowment Fund", apart from granting educational awards to SSC and HSC toppers of Chedda Nagar, also helps the students of economically weaker sections of the society through free distribution of note books and uniforms and in some cases even sponsoring their educational expenses. In collaboration with Marathi Sanskrutik Mandal, it also organizes Marathi classes for the non-Marathi public. Periodically, the Samiti conducts workshops on personality development, public skills and other empowering programmes.

The Samiti conducts medical camps every month and invites specialists on such occasions. In the event of sudden sickness of any member, the Samiti renders all possible help by way of urgent medical aid including hospitalization arrangements. When any unfortunate death takes place in a family the Samiti

The present Principal of the School is Ranjini Krishnaswamy who won the National Award for Teachers from the President of India in 2009. She attributes the success of her work to the Management who has always permitted the school to be creative and innovative.

The Trustees and the Staff of St. Gregorios High School are qualified and dedicated professionals, who share the same vision- "Better individuals make a better country".



M C members: Kurien Joseph- Member, G Mohanan Pillai -Vice-President, Ramaswamy-Intl.Auditor, Shivaramakrishnan-Intl Auditor, P A Radhakrishnan- President, N Sathyavathan-Secretary, V V Vijayan- Member, O M B Nair- Treasurer, and members: T Vijayan, N R Mahadevan, Vinod Nair, K G M Kurup.

also extends its help through moral and emotional support and funeral arrangements.

In the recently held elections Shri P A Radhakrishnan has been elected the President and G Mohan Pillai, the Vice-president. N Satyavrathan and T.K.Neelambaran were elected as the Hon. Secretary and Jt.Hon. Secretary, respectively, while O M B Nair has been elected as the Treasurer. Other members of the Committee are K G M Kurup, Kurien Joseph, V V Vijayan, T Vijayan, N R Mahadevan and Vinod Nair.

ADARSHA VIDYALAYA

Adarsha Vidyalaya, the model school, situated in Shell Colony, Chembur, came into existence 50 yrs ago, as a result of the collective thinking and initiative of few progressive minded people under the banner old Kerala Education Society thereafter merged with the present Management of Kerala People's Education Society in 1961. The management of Adarsha Vidyalaya (KPES) is now celebrating its golden jubilee (50th year) with various programmes.

Admissions for children to the school is given on first-come-first-serve- basis without any donations or capitation fee. There is no fee from 5th to 10th Std and the nominal fee collected as per the Govt. rules from 1st to 4th std is deposited in Mumbai Municipal Corporation bank account. They mainly cater to the lower strata of the society 52% come from slum areas, 57%

Children come from families whose monthly income is less than 3500 p.m., 54 per cent belong to backward community.

For the last three consecutive years the school has achieved 100% SSC results with 5 merits and 40 distinctions. One of the students stood first in the Malayalam language examination. The mission of the school is to provide high quality, transparent, inexpensive, all round education appropriate to the changing needs. Apart from studies, career guidance workshops, medical

check ups and personality workshops are conducted regularly for the students.

The Managing Committee comprises of R S Naman as President, K R Raghunandan Dr K K Thekkedeth, K.Pavithran, H V Hariharan K V Pillai, as Vice Presidents. H V Hariharan is Gen. Secretary, K V Pillai is Jt Secretary, M Ramachandran Jt Secretary, and K P Ramachandran is Treasurer. Leena Nair is the Principal of the Secondary Section, and Lathika Balakrishnan of the Primary Section. There are about 3700 students studying in this school.



Adarsha Vidyalaya

Chembur Personalities

K Haridas

K Haridas is a practising advocate, dealing with cases in the criminal and family courts. He is a member of the Mumbai Police Peace Committee. He is a committed social worker and works for the upliftment and welfare of any individual in need or distress. Hailing from Palakkad, Haridas has been living in Chembur for more than 40 years with his wife Lathika and only daughter. He is associated with many Malayalee Organisations.

He recalls the suburb as it was in the seventies:

“Chembur with its greenery resembled Kerala very much and Malayalees felt at home on reaching Chembur. At one time Shell Colony, Subhash Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Chedda Nagar and Pestom Sagar used to be inhabited by Malayalees. Over the years Malayalees have dwindled considerably. Younger generation is



hardly seen here. You get good Malayalee food at Udaya, Sunny and in the few messes around. Malayalam weeklies, dailies, magazines and vegetables and snacks which are peculiar to Kerala are available at Chembur market.”

Haridas says people have got a cosmopolitan outlook and there is absolute communal harmony. Local natives here are extremely good and co-operative and at times they come out of the way to help one another.

He says that there are numerous temples in and around Chembur. According to K Haridas, significant social changes are underway in this suburb. “A few decades ago, Malayalees would meet at their Samajam office or in the libraries run by them, to indulge in heated discussions on politics, literature, cinema, union activities or any other subject they fancied. The Malayalee Samajam dominated their lives. Today, Malayalees are fast losing their once-prized identity in this mega city.”

VIJAYAN T WARRIER

Vijayan T Warriar is a civil engineer by education. Today he is Executive Advisor BA in Tata AIG Life Insurance. Hailing from Irinjalakuda, Vijayan came to Mumbai in 1965. Since 1966, he has been staying in Chembur and since 1975, he is in Chedda Nagar. When he came to Mumbai he worked with the BMC. Later in 1991, he took VRS and started his own construction and fabrication company. Since two years he is with Tata AIG.

Vijayan is a very active member in various social organisations. He is the founder and first President of Giants International Chembur and is now serving as President for the second time. He is closely involved with the Shell Colony Ayyappa Seva Sangham



and the Chedda Nagar Temple near which he resides. He is also the founder member of Chembur Kairali Samajam. Vijayan is Special Executive Officer of Maharashtra.

Compared to the year '75, when he first shifted to Chedda Nagar, Vijayan feels the suburb has developed very much. Those days there were more marshy places in Chedda Nagar. Today things are different. Many residential buildings have come up. Many facilities and amenities are available now in Chedda Nagar. The temple is an added attraction. According to Vijayan, Tilak Nagar, and Shell Colony have also developed considerably and the infrastructure has improved.

Vijayan's wife Sreedevi hails from Chelakkara in Thrissur. They have one son married and settled in US, and one daughter married and settled in Dubai.

CVTHAMPI

Cheeran Varghese Thampi has been living in Chembur since the early sixties. His native place is Chalissery in Kunnankulam. He is a post graduate in Economics. When Thampi came to Mumbai, he started his own business of dealing with hill produce from Kerala like cardamom, pepper, ginger and arecanut. He bought them in consignments of not less than 65 kgs each and sold them in wholesale markets for distribution all over the country. This business picked up. He later diversified into real estate and construction line. In the seventies land was available in plenty in Chembur and Thampi invested in land. Many buildings and



offices around the Diamond Garden have been Thampi's plots which he developed and sold.

But commercial interests alone was not Thampi's motive. With the community interests in mind, he gave land to build Mar Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church and St Gregorios High School near Diamond Garden in Chembur. The former is an important place of worship for Kerala Catholics. The School is ICSE oriented Syllabus and has an excellent academic record. He is one of the founder members of both these institutions.

Chembur, was once an agricultural area, according to Thampi. But today this has changed and vacant land is not available.

“What was once a 30 feet road is today the busy Sion Trombay Road one of the arterial roads of Mumbai.” Thampi recalls.

Thampi's wife Jolly is from Aranmula. They have two sons and one daughter. They are all married and settled.

SASHI NAIR

Sashi Nair has been a resident of Shell Colony in Chembur for the past thirty years. He is a native of Tellichery while his wife Rohini is from Thiruvalla in Kottayam. They have two daughters, one married and the other working, both of them in Mumbai. He started his career by working with an export organization. He changed fields and now he is Asst General Manager, Maharashtra Region of Sree Gokulam Chits and Finances Co (Pvt) Ltd. This is one of the biggest chit funds in India with 260 branches all over the country and ten branches in Mumbai alone.



Chembur, and in particular, Shell Colony has developed very much, he feels.

“We can call Chembur as one of the hubs of Mumbai” Sashi Nair says. “This suburb is like Kerala. We have the oldest Ayyappa temple in Shell Colony. The infrastructure has improved. When the link road is completed we will be able to reach the airport on the western suburbs in twenty minutes,” he prophesies. With the monorail and the metro rail projects getting functional, Chembur will be a nodal point, according to Sashi.

Sashi Nair is actively involved with many social organizations including the World Malayalee Council.



Hotels in Chembur where Kerala fare is available

KVRAMAKRISHNAN

K V Ramakrishnan came to Mumbai in 1946 from New Kalpathy Palakkad. The changes this elderly gentleman has seen in the suburb are phenomenal. Staying for some time in Matunga and later Goregaon, Ramakrishnan moved to Chembur in the 60's.

In 1965, Ramakrishnan started a manufacturing unit Rapid Manufacturing Co Ltd, making connectors and electro mechanical assemblies in the switchgear industry. Today the company has diversified and manufactures railway signaling



components like signaling and control panels. His wife Rajam is from Chelakkara. They have two daughters, and one son, all married and settled. The company is now managed by Ramakrishnan's son Shankar.

According to Ramakrishnan, the Chembur of the sixties was hardly developed. "With the Mankhurd - Versova Metro rail, and the monorail from Jacob's Circle to Chembur, connectivity will increase. With the completion of the elevated road from D' Mello Road to Chembur, construction of which is going at full speed, traffic congestion at Chembur will ease."

PARUR S GANESAN

S Ganesan has been a resident of Chembur, since 1962. He was born in North Parur in Kerala and had his schooling there.

Ganesan is involved with many community service programmes. He was Special Executive Magistrate in 1990, and at that time along with like-minded men founded the Pestom Sagar Citizen's Forum. The Forum took up beautification and development of the area, and open space were developed into parks, and playgrounds. With the Forum's efforts, public toilets were provided with water, and slum dwellers were urged to stop roadside squatting. By 2001, Pestom Sagar was described as a clean area and attained a zero garbage status. He also played an active part in the agitation for upgrading the Chembur MTNL exchange and followed up with the authorities to



construct a subway between Pestom Sagar and Cheda Nagar thus reducing accident risks on the Eastern Express Highway. He has published several books.

"Between 1962 and now I see the cataclysmic change in this suburb- I recall that in 1964, I cycled all the way from here upto Thane in the newly constructed Eastern Express Highway which had no traffic then. It was an adventurous trip along with some of my friends. I became part of this suburb and after marriage I settled down here in Pestom Sagar."

"Today Chembur has become a strategic location accessible from any part of Mumbai with Navi Mumbai just 15 minutes drive, the airport 30 minutes and connected with all parts of Mumbai, Chembur has of late become a hub of growth. The proposed Santa Cruz-Chembur link road expected by next year will further augment its importance. I see Metro work is also going on connecting it to western suburbs," he adds.

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Great Poets of Malayalam

Cherusseri Namboothiri

-Satyanaath

MALAYALAM WRITERS

KERALA IN MUMBAI is privileged to start a new series on poets and writers of Malayalam. This should interest our readers and serve as an introduction to the rich literature in that language. Kerala, with a population of three crores has three daily newspapers selling more than

Ten lakh copies a day, several periodicals selling in lakhs of copies and a thriving book publication industry.

We expect to introduce our readers to the best of Malayalam literature gradually.

We start with Cherusseri, one of the earliest poets, who wrote even before Malayalam script was evolved.

-Editor

Cherusseri Namboothiri (1375 to 1475 AD) is the first Malayalam poet before the advent of the Malayalam script as we see today. He is also the author of *Krishna Gatha* and Cherusseri Bharatham, poetic works done on a non-Sanskrit meter. Those days, poems written on Dravidian meter were not considered good enough and the writer was not recognised as a poet of any merit.

Cherusseri was born in Kaanathoor village in Kolathunadu in Kannur District. Cherusseri is the name of his ancestral home. Historians believe that he is Punathil Sankaran Namboothiri. It is believed that Cherusseri was a court poet of Udayavarma Raja of Kolathunadu. Cherusseri was the originator of the Gatha (the meter Manjari) style of poetry in Malayalam. His masterpiece is *Krishna Gatha*. The poem is considered a landmark in the development of Malayalam literature, and the first Mahaakaavyam. It describes the story of Lord Krishna based on the Srimad Bhagavatham, a Puranic text believed to have been written by *Veda*

Vyasa. Cherusseri was inspired by a lullaby and he followed its pattern for the composition of *Krishna Gatha*. Some scholars believed that he is not the poet who wrote *Cherusseri Bharatham*. But now it is proved by extensive research that it was also written by the great Cherusseri. His famous *Krishna Gatha* has 1600 lines and it is devotional in nature.

The importance of *Krishna Gatha* can be ascertained from the fact that it was written in Vattezhuthu in the absence of a proper script for Malayalam. Though Malayalam historians claim the works of Poonam Nambuthiris and the Chambus are in Malayalam, the present day Malayalis might find them difficult to comprehend because of the excessive use of Sanskrit and dialects of yore. In the case of *Krishna Gatha*, it is clear, crisp and comprehensible. The popularity of *Krishna Gatha* increased when a script was modeled for Malayalam.

The sonorous poetry *Krishna Gatha* has the same importance of *Adhyatma*

Ramayanam of Ezhuthachchan. Cherusseri's importance lies in his clear inclination towards the native tongue, by which his poetry became popular among the people of Kerala.

Till *Krishna Gatha*, common words used for conversation were not used in poetic works. With the arrival of Cherusseri, the validity of the use of the spoken word for literary works received an impetus and ultimate justification. Unlike the language of *Ramacharitam* and the works of the *Niranam* poets the language of *Krishna Gatha* marks the culmination of a stage of evolution.

Cherusseri excels by the simplicity and limpidness of his diction and imagery.

Krishna Gatha is an epic in Malayalam written in a popular Dravidian meter, evolved from the folk meter. It is also not as rigid in the use of uncommon words, as in the case of *Ramacharitam* and *Kannassa Ramayanam*. Cherusseri's forte was sweetness and light instead of vigour and seriousness. He freely used local tongue and clichés. His descriptions of life in Mathura and Vrindavan would make us feel that these places are in Kerala. His narration is spontaneous, vivid and melodious.

There is some dispute about the author's name and his identity. Some scholars are of opinion that he was the same as the Punam Nambudiri of the Chambus. The difference between the styles of *Krishna Gatha* and any one of the Chambus should point to the improbability of this misconception. Even a casual reading of the work will convince one of the uniqueness of its style. Later poets have learned a lot from him, but no one can successfully imitate him. The distinctive Cherusseri stamp is deeply marked on every line of his poem. His use of figures of speech, his pleasant diction and his mastery over the metrical structure (especially the pause and the caesura) are borne out by almost any part of the poem. Here is an example, a description of Poothana's arrival in

Cherusseri, Melpathur and Ezhuthachchan

It is said that when Cherusseri completed his *Krishna Gatha*, he submitted to Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, the author of *Sreemad Narayaneeyam*. After rushing through the work of Cherusseri, Melpathur was reported to have remarked that "there are less vegetable pieces in the 'erisseri' of Cherusseri." The remark, undoubtedly hurt Cherusseri and he became despondent. Guruvayurappan, the deity of Guruvayur, did not like Melpathur's comments and his rheumatism returned to him at night and he was in great pain. Next day, Melpathur was advised about the God's anger and he soon called upon Cherusseri and apologised for his rude remarks. Melpathur was then relieved of his rheumatic pain. The interesting aspect is that the life span of Cherusseri was widely accepted as between 1375-1475 AD and Melpathur was believed to have been born in 1560 AD.

It was also believed that Thunchathu Ezhuthachchan inspired Melpathur to compose *Narayaneeyam*. There is no evidence to the period in which Ezhuthachchan lived and therefore, historians of Malayalam literature depend on the period in which Melpathur wrote his magnum opus. Though Melpathur had not recorded the year in which it was written, he is said to have concealed the time-frame in his work in a codified manner. Thus, Malayalees believe that Acharya was alive during the 16-17th century.

Though we can strongly reject the first story as baseless, we are compelled to believe the second for the sake of Ezhuthachchan.

Contd. on page 27

News from Kerala

Ayyappan, the poet, is no more

Ayyappan, the poet without a home and a family, died at Thiruvananthapuram on October 21. He was found dead on the Thampanoor road and the police took him to General Hospital where he was declared dead. When the body was removed to the mortuary next day morning, the employees recognised him.

Ayyappan, 61, is known for his powerful poems that showed youthful attractiveness and petulance. He lived his life like his poems. He wrote his poems on any paper, even on the blank side of pamphlets and crumpled pieces torn from notebooks of school note books. Even when he died, the police recovered a poem kept in rolled up sleeves of his soiled shirt.

His friends have published a few books of his collected poems and many remained on the pages of various periodicals. Many awards, including that of Kerala Sahitya Akademi, have come on his way and he was to receive a prestigious award from the Asan Memorial Society of Chennai on next day at the hands of Maharashtra Governor K Sankaranarayanan. Now the award will be presented later to his sister who stays at Thiruvananthapuram. The award carries a purse of Rs.30000 and the statute designed by renowned artist Kanayi Kunhiraman.

Born in 1949 to gold smith Arumukham and Muthammal at Nedumangad, Ayyappan lost his parent quite early in his life. Towards the end he was staying with his sister Subbalakshmi at Nemam. He was an ardent student of the styles of R Sugathan, the CPI activist, John Abraham, the film director, and Pavanan, the Editor of 'Navayugam'. He also edited a magazine 'Aksharam' and always encouraged upcoming young writers.

Ayyappan never worked for an income. He is said to demand money from known persons with a question, "Do you owe me any money?" and after some time his friends started



Ayyappan

avoiding him. He was a devoted lover of modern cinema and was a regular at the International Film Festivals held at Kairali theatre. He traveled long and wide. He had friends in Delhi, Andhra and Tamilnadu. He used to go to these places and spend a lot of time there with friends. Every narrow lanes of Kasargode to Kanyakumari was familiar to him. Ayyappan's death created a political controversy soon after. The State government decided to cremate his body with state honours. Instead of cremating his body at the earliest as per the

traditions, the government decided to cremate on Monday and very soon postponed to Tuesday citing the inconvenience to the leaders to attend it on account of ongoing elections to the local government bodies. Sukumar Azhikode and other popular leaders came out strongly against this postponement. Minister M A Baby defended the decision stating that it was done in consultation with Ayyappan's relatives. Azhikode retorted saying that the relatives are not powerful enough to oppose the Minister's decision, especially when he was summoned to the Minister's office.

A translated version of his poem found on his body is given below:

"The arrow may pierce my back at any moment
Am running for life beyond the hut of the hunter
A few are sitting around a hurricane lamp
Eagerly waiting for the taste of my meat
No tree gave me cover
I heard a roar coming out from the rear of a rock
And I became a prey on his way.
Like me, you too see me as a fool
You too are a cover against the sunshine in the patio."

Vulgar rich but utter cheat

Kololambu Kandathu Valappil Siddique (48) was arrested by Ponnani C I K Sudarsanan and S I M Madhavan Kutty for cheating hundreds of individuals promising high returns for their deposits. Police said that the total amount involved would run into ₹2500 crores. There was an Interpol alert against Siddique. He was arrested at Ponnani when trying to flee to gulf countries.

Siddique is the main link in a gang of six that promised people an interest ranging from ₹5,000 to ₹15,000 per month for a deposit of ₹1,00,000. Since 2003, the gang was in this business. Running the business successfully for a couple of years, the gang disappeared with a huge amount. Even in the gulf countries, there are about 61 cases involving financial irregularities filed against him. While stay in the gulf countries became tough, he returned to India and was shifting residences to various cities like Bangaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore and Kozhikode.

A school dropout, Siddique went to Abu Dhabi with his elder brother and started his career as a cook in a hotel there. Later he bought that hotel and ran the hotel. In the meanwhile, he

joined his friends and started a real estate business and started collecting deposits from people from Kerala and gulf countries. Soon he bought a car costing more than ₹2 crores and started staying in star hotels. He is said to have bought properties such as land and flats worth several crores of rupees in India and gulf countries.

Puja to annihilate 'enemy'

Mohan Abraham, the director of government run Civil Service Academy is alleged to have performed a puja to annihilate his enemy. Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan wanted to suspend him for alleged corruption but the minister in charge of the Academy, Education and CPM Central Committee member M A Baby did not agree for the punishment. When Baby visited the Academy premises, he saw the materials required for puja and questioned the staff and then it was revealed that Mohan Abraham conducted the puja to eliminate his enemy and to get an uninterrupted long tenure as Director of the Academy. Though VS confirmed the puja and its purpose, he refused to name Mohan's enemy.

Kozhikode

Where history sleeps



- Traveller

Kozhikode earlier known as **Calicut** is the third largest city in Kerala after Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi. It has a prominent place in the history of India as the first European traveller Vasco da Gama landed here in 1498 and opened the way for a plethora of European explorers such as the Dutch, French and British. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Arabs had a strong business link with Kozhikode where they used to trade in spices. Because of this connection, during the Middle Ages, Kozhikode was dubbed the "City of Spices". During the British rule and till the formation of Kerala state, Kozhikode was the capital of Malabar.

Legends

When the last Cheraman Perumal decided to leave for Arabia, after embracing Islam, he distributed his land and other assets among his chieftains. When almost the entire assets were given away, his two lieutenants Mānichan (Mānavedan) and Vikkiran (Vikraman) came to pay obeisance to him. Cheraman Perumal regretted that he could leave nothing to them. He then bestowed his Royal Sword to them and gave permission to occupy a portion of land where the crowing sound of a cock (*Kozhi*) could be heard. It is believed that the name of the place is thus acquired. Both these warriors belonged to the caste Eradi, who were outside the traditional warrior tribe of *kshatriyas*.

Soon the Eradis captured vast land by defeating other chieftains and established their supremacy. They came to be known as Samoothiris (Zamorin). Even today, the senior-most member of the Samoothiri family assumes the name of Manavikraman on ascending the throne.

Samoothiris were in constant conflict with the royal family of Kochi and captured parts of their territory. They captured Guruvayoor, a part of the Kochi territory and brought the temple under their administration.

There are many fables about the cold war between Samoothiri and Kolathiri, the rulers of Kolathunadu, the present north Kerala comprising Thalasseri, Kannur, Chirakkal and

Kasargode. Samoothiri is credited to have a highly intelligent Chief Minister in Mangattachchan and a very powerful Naval Chief Kunjali Marakkar. With their help, he dominated the entire Malabar. The Samoothiri was always shown as a king with a heart of gold and trusted everyone who approached him and it was always left to his minister Mangattachchan to save him from situations he got himself trapped into. Many humorous stories are still remembered where the Samoothiri was intrinsically embroiled and Mangattachchan got him out of it. Kolathiri was jealous of the prosperity of Kozhikode and the Samoothiri and always plotted the downfall of the latter. The Samoothiri experienced excruciating pain in his right shoulder and sought guidance from Mangattachchan, who ignored the king's complaints. Once a physician from Kolathiri called on

him and advised him to place a wet towel over the shoulder. Heeding his advice, the Samoothiri felt relief. When Mangattachchan called on him, the king told him about his relief. The Minister immediately cried saying it was the dance of the goddess Mahalakshmi that caused the pain and the prosperity of the kingdom would soon vanish. He rushed out and caught Goddess Mahalakshmi walking away in anger. He pleaded with her and requested her to wait till he returned from an errand. The Goddess agreed and the minister rushed to the palace and locked himself inside a hall where fire powder was stocked. He set fire to the fire powder and committed suicide. People still believe that Goddess Lakshmi is still waiting for the return of Mangattachchan and thus the prosperity of Kozhikode is thus intact while the decline of Samoothiri started.

History

The city of Kozhikode was founded on a marshy tract along the Arabian coast in 1034 A D by the Eradis of Nediyrrippu after a prolonged battle with the Porlathiris of Polanad. Access to the sea helped the Eradi chief called the Samoothiri develop the city into one of the major trading centres of the Eastern world in a wide variety of goods like pepper, textiles, lac, ginger, cinnamon, myrobalans, and zedoary. Vessels of various sizes from around the world arrived on the shores of Kozhikode.

About two centuries later, a Portuguese naval fleet arrived in Kozhikode in May 1498 led by Vasco da Gama. The Portuguese failed to secure any valuable treaty with the Samoothiri and came into direct conflict with the Arab merchants and the Samoothiri himself. A Dutch fleet led by Steven van der Hagen arrived in Kozhikode in November

1604 and marked the beginning of the Dutch presence on the Indian coast. The Dutch had a more favourable relation with the Kozhikode and were provided greater participation in the ongoing trade. The British reached



Kozhikode in 1615, led by Captain William Keeling.

After the Europeans, a brief period of attacks emerged from the Mysore state under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan from February 1766 as they desperately sought to capture the flourishing trading ports of Malabar for strategic interests.

Early glimpses

IBM Battista (1342-1347), who visited Kozhikode six times, gives us the earliest glimpses of life in the city. He describes it as "one of the great ports of the district of Malabar" where "merchants of all parts of the world are found". Ma Huang (1403 A.D), the Chinese Muslim sailor part of the Imperial Chinese fleet under Cheng Ho (Zheng He) lauds the city as a great emporium of trade frequented by merchants from around the world. He notes that there were 20 or 30 mosques built to cater to the religious needs of the Muslims, the unique system of calculation by the merchants using their fingers and toes (followed to this day) and the matrilineal system of succession.

Abdur Razzak (1442-43) the ambassador of Persian Emperor Sharohk finds the city harbour perfectly secured and notices precious articles from several maritime countries especially from Abyssinia, Zirbad and Zanzibar. The Italian Nicola de' Conti, perhaps the first Christian traveller who noticed Kozhikode, describes the city as abounding in pepper, lac, ginger, a larger kind of cinnamon, myrobalans and zedary. He calls it a noble emporium for all India, with a circumference of eight miles. The Russian traveller Athanasius Nikitin or Afanasy Nikitin (1468-74) calls 'Calecut' a port for the whole Indian sea and describes Kozhikode as having a "big bazaar". Other travellers who visited Kozhikode include the Italian Ludovico di Varthema (1503-08) and Duarte Barbosa.

Transport

The city has a reasonably well developed infrastructure for inter city, national and international travel. Intra- city transport



A view of Kozhikode railway station

is managed by private bus operators. These city buses are painted green and regular services exist throughout the corporation and neighbouring area. All private buses to the urban and nearby towns ply from the Palayam Bus Stand. However, the city has three bus stands. Private buses to adjoining districts and cities including Palakkad, Thrissur, Kannur, Kasargod, Ernakulam, Sulthan Bathery, Malappuram etc. are stationed at the New Bus Stand on the Indira Gandhi Road (Mavoor Rd.). Buses operated by the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) ply from the KSRTC Bus Stand on the same road. Regular KSRTC bus services exist to nearby towns and cities and also to Ernakulam, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Thiruvananthapuram, Coimbatore, Ooty, Madurai, Bangalore, Mysore etc. Private tour operators maintain regular luxury bus services to Bangalore, Ooty, Madurai etc and mainly operate from the Palayam area.

*Kallai River**Palayam Junction*

The history of railways in Malabar dates back to 1861 when the first tracks were laid between Tirur and Beypore. Kozhikode is presently connected by rail to important cities like Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Coimbatore, Chennai to the south and Mangalore, Mumbai, New Delhi to the north. Track doubling work between Kozhikode and Kannur is complete while that between Kozhikode and Shoranur is in progress.

Kozhikode International Airport is located 22 km from the city at Karipur near Kondotty (Malapuram Dist). Regular domestic services are operated to major Indian cities. Almost all international flights are to the Gulf. There are daily flights to Mumbai, Bangalore and the Middle East. The Chennai flight also touches Coimbatore and Madurai.

There are a handful of direct trains connecting Bombay (Mumbai) with Kozhikode via the picturesque Konkan Railway route. Typically, these trains take about 24 hours to cover around 1200 kilometers between Mumbai and Kozhikode.

Economy

Kozhikode is one of the main commercial cities of Kerala. The economy is mainly business oriented. The town of Allay represents a past city that was the biggest timber trading center in Asia throughout history.

A large proportion of the male population is employed in the Middle Eastern countries, and their remittances are an important part of the local economy.

Kozhikode has witnessed a building boom in recent years. Other planned projects include the Birla IT Park (at Mavoor),

Cyber Park and Malaysian satellite city (at Kinaloor). KINFRA has plans to set up a 400 acre industrial park.

Ethnicity

Kozhikode has been a multi-ethnic and multi-religious town since the early medieval period. Hindus form the largest religious group, followed by Muslims and Christians.

The Hindus engage in beliefs spanning all forms of theism as well as atheism. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu pantheon are worshipped. Many places have temples with local deities, more often a Goddess (*Devi*). Festivities like Theyyam, Thira and art forms like Ottamthullal, Kathakali are performed on stages attached to temples. Many temples have associated acres called *Velichappad*. Serpent worship and ancestral worship are also practised. The Muslims of Kozhikode are known as Mappilas, and according to the official Kozhikode website "the great majority of them are Sunnis following the Shafi school of thought". There are also some smaller communities among the Muslims such as Dawoodi Bohras. Many of the Muslims living in the historic part of the city follow matrilineal system and are noted for their piety. Though Christianity is believed to have been introduced in Kerala in 52 CE, the size of community in Malabar (northern Kerala) began to rise only after the arrival of the Portuguese towards the close of the 15th century. A few Christians of Travancore and Cochin have lately migrated to the hilly regions of the district and are settled there.

A number of Brahmins too lived in the city mostly around the Hindu temples. Regional groups like the Tamil Brahmins,

*Calicut Medical College**IIM - Kozhikode*



Main gate of Mananchira Square



View of Mananchira from ComTrust

Gujaratis and Marwari Jains became part of the city at various periods and lived around their shrines. The story of Kozhikode is the story of all the communities. However, the social groups that exerted the greatest influence in the history of Kozhikode have been the Nairs and the Mappilas.

The Nairs formed the rulers, warriors and landed gentry of Kozhikode. The Samoothiri had a ten thousand strong Nair bodyguard called the *Kozhikkottu Pathinaayiram* (The Ten Thousand of Kozhikode) who defended the capital and supported the administration within the city. He also had a larger force of 30,000 Nairs in his capacity as the Prince of Eranadu, called the *Kozhikkottu Muppatinaayiram* (The Thirty Thousand of Kozhikode). The Nairs also formed the members of the suicide squad (*chaver*) raised by local chieftains to challenge the might of Samoothiri. The aristocratic Nairs had their *Taravad* houses in and around the capital. Several Nairs in the city were traders too. The Nairs could not be imprisoned or fettered except for serious crimes like cow slaughter, criticizing the King etc. The Mappila community of Kozhikode acted as an important support base for the city's military, economic and political affairs. They were settled primarily in Kuttichira and Idiyangara. Their aristocratic dwelling houses were similar to the *tharavad* houses of the Nairs and the Thiyyas. Two Ghazis were recognized as their spiritual leaders. Travellers like Barbosa were intrigued by the extent to which the Mapillas blended into the local society, who spoke the same language and looked like any other Nair (except for the round caps and long beards).



A view of Kozhikode beach from the southern end

The Thiyyas formed the *vaidyars* (physicians), local militia and traders of Kozhikode. Several aristocratic Thiyya families such as 'Kallingal madom' were settled in and around the city. The Tamil Brahmins (*pattar*) are primarily settled around the Tali Siva temple. They arrived in Kozhikode as dependants of chieftains, working as cooks, messengers, cloth merchants and moneylenders. They have retained their Tamil language and dialects as well as their caste rituals. The Gujarati community is settled mostly around the Jain temple in and around the Valiyangadi (big bazaar). They owned a large number of establishments, especially textile and sweetmeat shops. They must have arrived in Kozhikode by the 14th century. They belong to either the Hindu or the Jain community. A few Marwari families, who were basically moneylenders, are also found in Kozhikode.

Kozhikode Beach

The beach is the most popular retreat for locals. In spite of beautification works and lax coastal management, it remains unexploited and visually pleasing. This shore has been a witness to many historic events, including pitched naval battles and the arrival of ships from distant lands. Uddanda Shastrikal, the Sanskrit poet in Samoothiri's court, said: "The ocean, the father of the goddess of riches (Indira is a synonym of Lakshmi) seeing that his daughter has settled down in *Kukkatakroda* (Sanskrit for Kozhikode), is embracing the place, presenting shipful of jewels". Several national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Khan Abdul Gaffer Khan, Indira Gandhi and Krishna Menon have addressed people here. The 'Beach Road' was renamed Gandhi Road from Evan's Road after Mahatma Gandhi's visit in January 1934. Two dilapidated piers can be seen extending into the sea. The 'Iron Screw-pile' pier to the north was built in 1871, 120 m long with a 'T' end. Numerous cranes on these piers once loaded spices and other goods destined to foreign ports like Aden, Genoa, Oslo, London, Bremen, Hamburg, New York etc.

Near the northern pier is a park maintained by the Lions club of Calicut, a children's park, the lighthouse built a hundred years ago, with a seafarer's memorial and a marine aquarium. Near the south pier is a place called 'Horse's Jumping Point' where horses brought from Gujarat and Arabia were made to jump into the water, swim and would gallop along the shore and be displayed for sale. The beach offers a pleasant view at times of fishermen entering the sea with their tiny boats, fighting the waves and returning with their catch.

Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar)

Valiyangadi is not a typical 'place of interest' one would want to visit. The noise, rush and heat of this narrow lane would test any visitors' mettle. Nevertheless, not many streets can boast a 600-year-old history and still be functioning as one of the main commercial centre of a city. In spite of creeping signs of modernity over hundreds of years, this crowded part of the city offers the best chance to visualize daily life at a commercial hub in medieval Kozhikode. Muslim, Jain and Hindu *Seths*, Gujarati and Marwari moneylenders and Tamil and Andhra *Chettis* can be seen busy with their businesses, as they did for centuries.

Mananchira and nearby institutions

Mananchira is a large tank in the heart of the city. *Mananchira* or Mana Vikraman Tank seems to have been the drinking water source for the entire Palace complex. Surrounding the Mananchira are several important institutions. The Town Hall was constructed in 1891 by the salt merchants (previously called Salt Abkari Town Hall) and has been an important stage for several popular agitations and ceremonies during the freedom movement and thereafter. The *Pattalapalli* or 'Military Mosque' was originally built for the Mysore soldiers who had surrounded the Palace during the 'Mysore invasion'. The ComTrust Textile Factory (previously the Commonwealth Weaving Factory) was established in 1884 by the Basel Mission from Germany. To the western side of Mananchira is located the C.S.I. Church, Basel Mission Complex and the BEM (Basel Evangelical Mission) Girls' School (1848). The Mananchira ground along with the older Ansari Park (named after the freedom fighter Ansari) has been developed into a well-maintained park called 'Mananchira Square'. It has a green carpet lawn fenced with laterite-sculpted walls. The entire complex is circled by 250 lamp posts designed in 'colonial' style. The 'Square' has an artificial stream, a musical fountain, an open-air theatre and a music stage.

S M Street

S M Street is a buzzing shopping and commercial lane north of Mananchira Square. The name *Sweetmeat* is thought to have been derived from a kind of sweet (locally called 'Halwa') which was called 'Sweetmeat' by European traders. S M Street, like the lanes of Valiyangadi, is about 600 years old and was occupied by the residences and shops of sweet manufacturers from Gujarat. A now-abandoned Parsi cemetery called *Anjuman*, built during 17th century, is located here and finds mention in William Logan's *Malabar Manual*.

Sarovaram Park



An Uru under construction



Kappad Beach

Sarovaram is an eco-friendly development adjacent to Canoly Canal. The project has been developed with an eco-friendly theme and the construction has been done in traditional Kerala style. It is one of the more popular spots in the city to spend an evening.

Tali Siva Temple

The Tali Siva temple was one of the two Brahmanical royal temples patronized by the Samoothiri (the other being the Valayanaattu *Kavu*) and to this day remains one of the most important spiritual and cultural centres in Kozhikode. The temple is said to have been built during the foundation of the city itself in the 12th century or before. The temple is surrounded by gigantic walls of 'elephant belly' (*aana palla*) type with broad base and narrower-neck at the top. One of the two tanks attached to the temple can be seen to the right. The temple hosts the annual 'competition for scholars' called *Revathi Pattathanam* attended by eminent scholars and photospheres of Bharatiya Mimamsa, Prabhakara Mimamsa, Vedanta Mimamsa and Vyakarana. The temple was also the site for the famous anti-caste agitation of 1911 organized by Krishna Vakil (editor of *Mitavadi*) and advocate Manjeri Rama Ayyar for the rights of 'low-caste' people to use the road between the tank and the temple.



Panniyankara Bhagavati Temple

The Bhagavati temple on a hillock to the south of Kallai River is one of the two pre-Kozhikode temples known to historians, built at least two centuries before the foundation of the city. This area must have come under the territory of Porlathiri during the reign of Cheraman Perumal. It is a typical Chera period structure with a square *garbhagruha* and *mandapa*. Two granite slabs dating to the 10-11th century AD were recovered recently carrying three inscriptions in *vattezhuthu*, and they established the period of the temple as 9th century.

Thiruvannur Siva Temple

This ancient and beautiful Siva temple has an apsidal *garbhagruha*, decorated with typical Chola pillars and pilasters, *panjaras* and *vyalimukhams*. The central shrine has escaped any repair or change and is relatively well preserved. An inscription unearthed records a land grant given to Tiruvannur Patarakar by Raja Raja Chera. The record has been dated to 1044 A.D.

Kappad Beach

Kappad (Kappakkadavu) Beach is located 16 km to the north of Kozhikode along the Kannur road at Tiruvangoor. Apart from the fact that it is a beautiful rocky beach with high potential for tourism, it is the site where Vasco Da Gama landed on 27 May 1498 with three vessels and 170 men. A monument erected here commemorates this 'historic landing'. However, many authors have questioned the emphasis given to the Portuguese sailor who was one amongst hundreds of traders who reached the shores of Kozhikode and was guided by a Portuguese-speaking Arab. An ancient temple on a hillock, facing the sea, is an added attraction.

Beypore

Beypore is a small port town situated 10 km south of Kozhikode at the mouth of Chaliyar River. Beypore is famous for its ancient shipbuilding industry that constructed the Uru, trading vessels more popular during the medieval periods and still used by the Arabs and others for commerce and tours. The place was formerly known as Vapor and Vadaparappanad. Tippu Sultan named the town "Sultan Pattanam". It is one of the important ports of Kerala and has been a major trading centre for centuries. The dilapidated *Kovilakam* (palace) of the Parappanad Rajas and a small Basheer Museum (former house of the writer Vaikom Muhammad Basheer) can be found here. Towards the sea shore is a big complex that includes a port, a boat yard, a fish landing platform, breakwater project, marine ware shop, ship-breaking unit, etc. There are two man-made extensions to the sea to facilitate easy access for fishing boats. The 2 km breakwater made of stone is another attraction. The Beypore lighthouse is located to the south of the Chaliyar.

Other places of interest

- **Art Gallery** - paintings of Raja Ravi Varma and Raja Raja Varma.
- **Canoly Canal** Ideal for boating. There are many opportunities in the Canoly Canal to take a boat and just stroll down the canal for enjoyment
- **Dolphin's Point** - Just 15 minutes from the city centre is a place called Dolphin's Point, where one can see dolphins playing in the sea early morning.
- **Elathur** Ideal for boating. A very beautiful town as it has a



Mishkal Masjid

lake on one side and a river on the other side.

- **Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium** - Located opposite the musical fountain where you get a chance to unravel the mysteries of outer space.
- **Kadalundi** It is a bird sanctuary and has facilities for boating.
- **Kakkayam** Ideal for those who love trekking and rock climbing through river path, enjoying numerous water falls. It has a dam and a hydroelectric power station.
- **Kallai** - Once the bustling nerve-centre of Kozhikode's timber trade, said to have been the largest such trading centre in Asia. Today, though some business does take place, hard times have fallen on the timber trade and Kallai is just a shadow of its busy past.
- **Kirtads** - Special museum that shows us glimpses of the past. The main area of concern in the Museum is The Kerala tribe communities of the ancient times. You can find many tools and weapons that were used in the era of the Kerala. In addition, there is a vast anthropological library and an archeological library that has much information on the past history and tribal life styles of ancient India.
- **Korapuzha** It is the venue of the Korapuzha *Jalotsavam* (water festival).
- **Krishna Menon Museum** at East Hill, Kozhikode is dedicated to V K Krishna Menon, former Indian High Commissioner to Britain, Indian representative to UN and Union Minister of Defence.
- **Kozhippara Water Falls** - Ideal location for trekking and swimming, with river side forests, situated in Kakkadampoyil on the Malappuram -Kozhikode district border, can reach there by road.
- **Lalitha Kala Academy**, behind town hall, Kozhikode.
- **Meenchanda** - Samoothiri royal family's palace is now NSS high school.



Planetarium



Pazhassi Raja Museum



Peruvannamuzhi



A model of Pathumma's goat at Mananchira. The goat was one of the principal characters in Basheer's novel.

- **Mishkal Mosque**, a historic Mosque built 650 years ago.
- **Payyoli** is a historical place and has an old fort and mosque of Kunjali Marakkar.
- **Pazhassi Raja Museum** - Copies of ancient mural paintings, antique bronzes, coins, temple models and megalithic monuments are displayed here.
- **Peruvannamuzhi Dam** Has facilities for boating, birds sanctuary, crocodile farm. There are boat services and a crocodile sanctuary. The Experimental Farm of the Indian Institute of Spices Research which maintains large collections of black pepper, ginger, turmeric, nutmeg, clove, cinnamon and garcinia is also located here.
- **Thikkoti Light House** It was built in 1847.
- **Tusharagiri** - Famous for trekking tracks, with waterfall, evergreen dense forests with exotic birds and wild animals on the way.
- **Vadakara** - A city on the bank of Kuttiyadi River has a famous 1500 year old Lokanarkavu Bhagavathi Temple, rock cut caves with murals and carvings. This temple is associated with Kalaripayattu. **Vellari Mala** - waterfalls, velvet green landscapes, place for trekking.
- **Wayanad Ghats** - Enroute to Wayanad with nine hairpin bends.
- Water pipe enthusiasts should look out for the **Koyilandy Hookah**, made in the nearby town of Koyilandy. Preparation of an average hookah requires up to 1.5 kg of copper, 1.5 kg of zinc and half kg silver. It takes a week to prepare a Hookah. Available in different sizes (12 to 24 inches), these Hookah are sold anywhere around rupees 500 to 1500. Specially crafted Hookah come at rupees 15,000.
- **Koduvalli** is a small township on the outskirts of Kozhikode, where you would not find any shops or hotels (not even a small tea shop) except shops selling gold ornaments.

Culture

In the field of Malayalam language and literature, Kozhikode has made many significant contributions. The district is famous for folk songs or ballads known as *Vadakkan Pattukal*. The most popular songs among them are those which celebrate the exploits of Thacholi Othenan and Unniyarcha. One of the favourite past times of the Muslims of the district is singing *Mappila pattu* and *Oppana*. The songs are composed in a composite language of Arabic and Malayalam. The famous intellectual debate for Vedic scholars to win the coveted position of *Pattathanam* takes place at Tali temple during the month of *thulam*. Kozhikode also has strong associations with *ghazals* and football.

Cuisine

Kozhikode offers fare to suit every palate. Vegetarian fare includes the *sadya*. The non-vegetarian food offered in the city is a unique mix of Muslim and Hindu preparations. Some popular dishes include the *biryani*, ghee rice with meat curry, seafood (prawns, mussels, mackerel) and paper-thin *Pathiris* to provide accompaniment to spicy gravy.

Another well-known Kozhikode specialty is banana chips, which are made crisp and wafer-thin. The Kozhikode *halwa* is very popular, even overseas.

Film industry

Kozhikode is not only the place of writers and food but also of versatile actors. K P Ummer, the late Kunjandi, the late Balan K Nair, Mamukoya and the late Kuthiravattam Pappu are some of the popular Malayalam actors who made a great impact in the Malayalam film industry. The late Gireesh Puthenchery, arguably one of the best lyricists ever produced in Malayalam film industry, hails from Kozhikode. Among writers, P C Kuttikrishnan, M T Vasudevan Nair, K T Mohammed, S K Pottekkat, N P Muhamed and many others were nurtured by Kozhikode.

Print Media

Kozhikode occupies a prominent position in the history of Malayalam journalism. The origin of journalism in the district can be traced back to 1880. The *Kerala Pathrika* is the earliest newspaper published from Kozhikode. *Keralam*, *Kerala Sanchari* and *Bharath Vilasam* are among the other newspapers that were published from Kozhikode. Kozhikode is the 'birthplace' of the widely circulated Malayalam dailies *Mathrubhumi* and *Madhyamam*.

Writers

Many prominent writers of Malayalam literature hail from Kozhikode. Among them are M. T. Vasudevan Nair, S. K. Pottekkat, and Thikkodiyan. Other noted writers who made Kozhikode their second home include Sukumar Azhikode, N P Muhamed and Uroob. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer lived in Beypore on the outskirts of the city for long and is affectionately known as the 'Beypore Sultan'.

Radio

The Kozhikode station of All India Radio was commissioned on 14 May 1950. It presently has two transmitters- Kozhikode AM (100 kilowatt) and Kozhikode FM [Vividh Bharati] (10 kilowatt).

There are F M Radio stations operated by private agencies also.

Television

A television transmitter has been functioning in Kozhikode from 3 July 1984, relaying programmes from Delhi and Thiruvananthapuram Doordarshan. Doordarshan has its broadcasting centre in Kozhikode located at Medical College.

Asianet Cable Vision popularly known as ACV telecasts daily city news. Spidernet is another local channel. Other local operators include KCL and Citinet.

All major channels in Malayalam viz. Asianet, Surya, Kairali, Amrita, Jeevan, India vision and Jaihind have their studios and news bureaus in the city.

At Your Service

Right to Information & Good Governance



Jacob Koshy

Information means any material in any form including records, documents, memos, e-mails etc and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any law for the time being in force.

It implies that the information held or under the control of any public authority can only be accessible. This privilege or right to information cannot be exercised from a private sector body. One can seek the information under this Act by way of inspection of work, documents, records, taking notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records, obtaining information in electronic form if such information is stored in a computer or other such devices.

Right to Information Act (RTI) has been passed in the Parliament on 12th October 2005 and it extends to the whole of India except the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

RTI provides for Citizens the facility to get information of the Government's actions and decisions at a nominal fees of Rs 10/- and the law mandates that requisite information has to be given to the applicant within 30 days.

How does the RTI impact good governance?

Accountability of the Officials bring in lowering of corruption, impacting policy decisions which in turn ensure better governance at all levels.

Citizens must take the advantage of this law as it wields enormous power in their

hands in a democratic system of governance.

Public Information Officers (PIO) have been designated in every Government Departments/Offices and citizens can access them through their web sites or their published materials.

It is important to draw the attention of the PIO by seeking information by framing appropriate questions on a matter needing transparency at a policy level. By doing so the Officials are made aware that any notings or records for a favor done to an interested party could get exposed to public scrutiny and action.

However, the PIO can deny the information on the grounds that dissemination of information would be prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India or forbidden by law or invasion of privacy etc.

Depending upon the response from the PIO, citizen can proceed with acceptance of the information or prefer an appeal before the appellate authority. Officials are personally liable under the RTI Act and subject to penal provisions which is a welcome move for good governance.

The format of application under the Act (Form A) is very simple and basic in nature. It contains name, address of applicant, subject of information, period to which information relates, brief description of information sought, how the information is to be given viz

post or in person and whether the applicant is below poverty line.

Similarly the forms of Appeal (Form B & C) too are very simple and basic which involves minimum paperwork.

The awareness about RTI amongst citizenry is just not enough for achieving the desired objectives. A few websites who provide useful information are: www.cic.gov.in, www.rti.gov.in, www.parivartan.com, www.cic.gov.in, www.rti.gov.in, www.parivartan.com etc.

Under the RTI, providing information is the rule and denial an exception. Any attempt to constrict or deny information to the citizen of India without the explicit sanction of the law will be going against the rule of law.

Right to Information as part of fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression is well established in our constitutional jurisprudence and any restriction on such rights of the citizens in a democratic polity is always looked upon with suspicion and is invariably preceded by a great deal of thought and reasoning.

In conclusion, each one of us must act as a catalyst for change. It's apt to revisit the famous words of M.K.Gandhi, "if you want to see change, you be the change".

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Contd. from page 18

Ampadi with the intention of causing baby Krishna's death through milk poisoning:

As she saw the place from a distance
She went close and shyly sneaked in
Even as the python stealthily goes
Close to the perch of the king of birds.

She stood there for a while

Watching the darling's charming face,
As though she waited in impatience
She went forward and stood touching
Why the lord of death had not come.

That flower-soft body, softer than
tender leaves,
As if touching real fire taking it for a
jewel.

Then she picked up the darling child

Like taking a serpent for a rope.

In this string of similes, the poet shows both insight and wit, the figures anticipate her future course. Here is an eloquent picture of the pitiful position in which she puts herself unknowingly. Bhakti, Vatsalyam (love of children, etc.), Karuna, and Srngara: these are the dominant moods in Cherusseri's poetry. ■

Malayalam Movie World

-KIM News Bureau

Kavya and Nishal file joint application for divorce

Actress Kavya and husband Nishal submitted a joint petition before the family court of Ernakulam. In the petition they have stated that their marriage has irrevocably failed and hence a life together as husband and wife is impossible. They also stated that all issues between them are settled out of court. It is agreed between them that all three cases filed by Kavya regarding recovery of her jewellery, cruelty and divorce would be withdrawn. The case will be considered soon by the court.

Kavya and Nishal were married on February 5, 2008 at Kollur Mookambika Temple and also under Special Marriage Act. Kavya lived with Nishal at his Kuwait residence till June 27. After coming to Kerala, she refused to return to him. All efforts by friends and relatives failed to unite them. This led to the divorce petition.

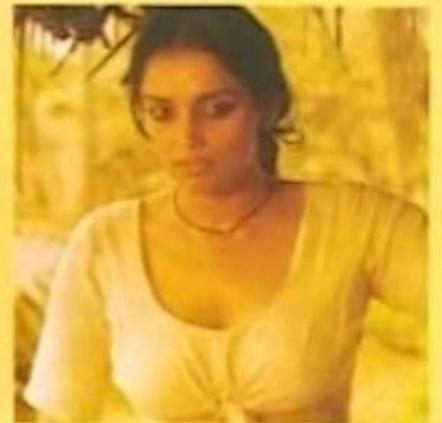


Shweta is disappointed with National film awards

Shweta Menon, the award winner of the State Government for the best actress for the year 2009, expressed her displeasure against the selection of Malayalam films for consideration at the National level. Deserving films were not sent for the consideration at the national level and the selection smacked favouritism, she stated.

She was addressing a press conference at Dubai where she was attending the celebrations of Federation of Kerala Colleges Alumni FEKCA, as Chief Guest. All films, won State awards under different categories, should be recommended for the national awards. The awards given away this year did not generate any happiness to her, Shweta said.

She is quite happy to receive the State award, she agreed.



Movie actors should keep away from

T V shows: Salim Kumar

Popular comedian Salim Kumar is against movie stars appearing in television shows. According to him, their TV appearances are adversely affecting the prospects of Malayalam films. In this aspect, he is in full agreement with the statement of Suresh Gopi.

Television and films are different media and the people also approach them differently. Nevertheless, the same faces appearing in both would repel audience from theatres. This would adversely affect the finances of film industry, he said.

Salim Kumar revealed that he had rejected many offers from the television channels to become judge in their shows. Appearance on TV channels would make the film actors irrelevant and they would soon be sidelined. Film personalities should leave channels for the television personalities and concentrate on their respective fields.

Salim Kumar was on a visit to Dubai with his wife Sunitha and children Aromal and Chandu.



Salim Kumar entered Malayalam film industry as a comedian after establishing himself as a mimicry artiste and ensured a prominent place in the movies in a short time. His role, as the father of three daughters in the film 'Achchanurangatha Veedu', earned him laurels as a powerful character actor. He was chosen the second best actor by the State Government for this portrayal. He also won the Asianet Award for the best Comedian in 2008.

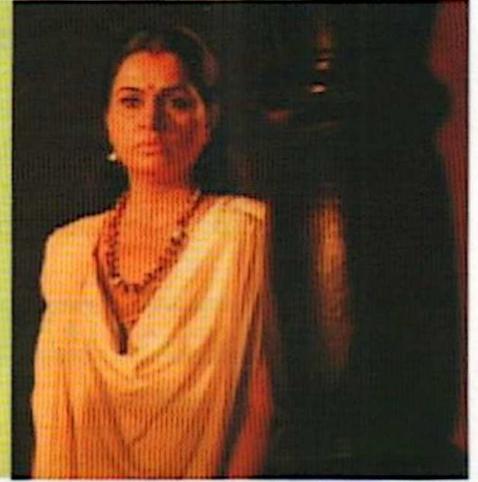
Padmini Kolhapuri in Malayalam movie

Padmini Kolhapuri is acting in a Malayalam movie. V K Prakash, a reputed ad film maker, is giving her an important role in his forthcoming Malayalam movie *Karmayogi*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

In the movie, Indrajit is enacting the role of Hamlet and Ms Kolhapuri enacts the role of his mother. Padmini Kolhapuri who acted in Hindi film flicks like *Ishq Ishq*, *Dream girl*, *Premrog* and *Ahista Ahista* retired from the film world at a young age after she got married. After her son grew up she returned to acting through Marathi films and Hindi serials.

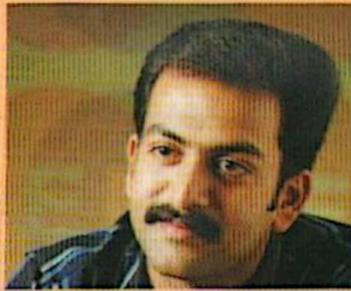
Padmini said that she was attracted to this movie because of its powerful script and confidence in the director.

RD Rajasekhar is the cameraman and the film is briskly progressing in Kannur.



Prithviraj's foray into Hindi films

The young superstar of Malayalam films Prithviraj may soon enter Hindi film industry, as an actor. If reports are to be believed, he may soon appear in a Hindi movie to be directed by Anurag Kashyap. The actor who rejected a few offers from Hindi film industry earlier, is said to be in serious discussion with Anurag Kashyap who made *Dev D*. The director himself plans to produce the film. However, the proposed movie will be directed by his assistant.



'Gaddama' to expose the plight of house maids in Gulf

K U Iqbal, a journalist working in Riyadh had written a story depicting the sad plight of women going to Gulf countries as house maids. Now this story is being filmed under the title 'Gaddama', the Arabic word for servant maids. The screen play is written by Girish Kumar and the movie is directed by Kamal. The shooting commenced at Sharjah.



Environment Minister Suresh Shetty formally inaugurates Marol Education Academy's Junior College. MEA President Prof Vijaya Shankar, Chairman Janardhanan and Principal Vijayalakshmi are also seen

Old is Gold

-Satyanath

Mayiladumkunnu (1972)

Lyricist: Vayalar Ramavarma
Music Composer: G Devarajan
Singer: K J Yesudas **Ragam:** Harikamboji

Sandhya mayangum nēram...grāma Cantha piriyunna nēram..
 Bandhurē rāga bandhurē nī Enṭinī vazhi vannu...
 Enikkenṭu nalkān vannu... (Sandhya mayangum)

Kāttu ṭārhavukāl iṇakālē ṭirayum kāyalin arikilūte....
 Kataṭṭu ṭonikalil āle kayarṭum kalloṭukkukalilūte...
 Ṭaniccu varum ṭarunyamē...enikkullā
 Prathiphalamāṇo ninte nāṇam...ninte nāṇam....(Sandhya mayangum)

Kākka cēkkērum kilimara ṭaṇalil kāṭara mizhikalote....
 Manassin ulil oliccu pitikkum swapna raṭna khaniyōte....
 Orungi varum soundaryamē...enikkullā
 Marhupati āṇo ninte maunam...ninte maunam....(Sandhya mayangum)

Transliteration: Ā, ā = ആ, ഓ; Ē, ē = ഏ, ഘ; Ī = ഴ; Ō, ō = ഓ, റോ;
 Ū, ū = ഊ, ഘ, ũ = ~;

C, c = ച, ch = ച, D, d = ട, Dh, dh = ഡ, Ḍ, ḍ = ള, Ḍh, ḍh = ഴ,
 jh = ജ, Ĺ, ĳ = ള; Ñ, ñ = ഞ, ṅ = ണ, ṙ = റ, ṛ̇ = റ; ṛ = റ;
 Ś, ś = ശ; Ṣ, ṣ = , T, t = ട, Th, th = റ, Ṭ, ṭ = ത; ṭh = മ,
 സന്ധ്യ മയങ്ങും നേരം ഗ്രാമചന്ത പിരിയുന്ന നേരം
 ബന്ധുരേ രാഗ ബന്ധുരേ നീ എന്തിനീവഴി വന്നു?
 എനിക്കെന്തു നൽകാൻ വന്നു... (സന്ധ്യ മയങ്ങും)

കാട്ടുതാറാവുകൾ ഇണകളെ തിരയും
 കായലിനരികിലൂടെ കടത്തുതോണികളിൽ
 ആളെ കയറ്റും കല്ലൊതുക്കുകളിലൂടെ
 തനിച്ചുവരും താരുന്നുമേ എനിക്കുള്ള
 പ്രതിഫലമാണോ നിന്റെ മൌനം (സന്ധ്യ മയങ്ങും)

കാക്ക ചേക്കേറും കിളിമരത്തണലിൽ കാതരമിഴികളോടെ
 മനസ്സിനുള്ളിൽ ഒളിച്ചുപിടിക്കും സ്വപ്നരത്നഖനിയോടെ
 ഒരുങ്ങിവരും സൌന്ദര്യമേ എനിക്കുള്ള
 മറുപടിയോണോ നിന്റെ മൌനം.. നിന്റെ മൌനം.. (സന്ധ്യ മയങ്ങും)



Muttathu Varkey



Vayalar Ramavarma



G Devarajan



K J Yesudas

This movie is based on the novel 'Mayilatunkunnu' by the prolific Malayalam novelist Muttathu Varkey. He was so prolific in writing that it was said that his seven novels were serialized in various Malayalam periodicals simultaneously. Well known playwright K T Mohammed wrote the dialogue for the movie. Prem Nazir, Jayabharathy, K P Ummer, Sankaradi, Adoor Bhasi, Muthukulam Raghavan Pillai, Sreelatha, Sujatha and Adoor Bhavani were the main actors.

- Quiz: 1. Name the first film based on Muttathu Varkey's story.
 2. Name two novels by Varkey, made to successful films.
 3. Name the movie for which Varkey wrote the dialogue and not the story.

- Answers to the last quiz:
 1. Rosy (P N Menon) and Nirmalyam (M T Vasudevan Nair)
 2. Kaalam Marunnu

Dr Ajikumar

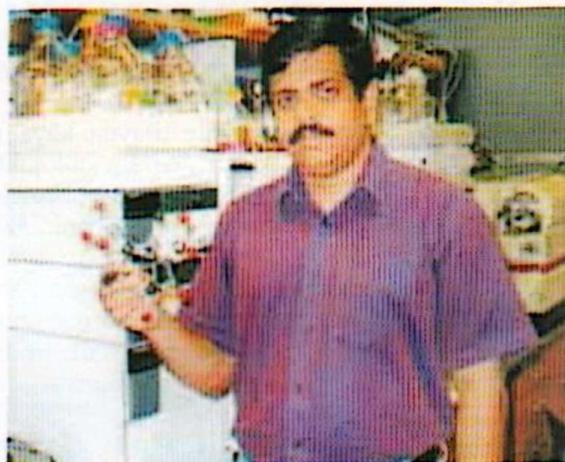
Malayali presence in Anti-Cancer Offensive

Dr Parayil Kumaran Ajikumar and his team of ten scientists have discovered an anti-cancer drug that can be manufactured at a comparatively low cost. He is a research scientist in Biochemical Engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Ajikumar, a native of Muvattupuzha in Kerala, made this sensational invention so that even common man in India and other under-developed and developing countries could afford treatment for various types of cancer. The present drug against cancer is Taxol (Paclitaxel). It is a powerful cell-division inhibitor commonly used to treat ovarian, lung and breast cancers. It is also very expensive about \$10,000 per dose, although the cost of manufacturing that dose is only a few hundred dollars. (Patients usually receive one dose.) The production of this drug by synthetic method is highly expensive and hence inaccessible to common man. Now, Ajikumar has extracted this drug from the chemicals from the digestive tracts of human bodies, such as *Escherichia coli* (*e-coli*). By his method, the cost of production would be reduced to about one-tenth of present cost. This invention will lead to discovery of drugs against Alzheimer's and hypertension.

This was reported recently in the October issue of Science journal under the title "Isoprenoid Pathway Optimization for Taxol Precursor Overproduction in *Escherichia coli*" and was soon hailed as a revolutionary invention by prominent scientists working in this field all over the world. The team worked under the guidance of Prof. Gregory Stephanopoulos. Currently Taxol is isolated from the bark of the Pacific yew tree. The bacteria can produce 1,000 times more of the precursor, known as taxadiene, than any other engineered microbial strain.

Dr Ajikumar has a Ph D degree in Peptide Chemistry from Mahatma Gandhi University. He has also done post doctoral research under Alliance Program of Massachusetts Institute's Singapore chapter. He has done projects under Metabolic

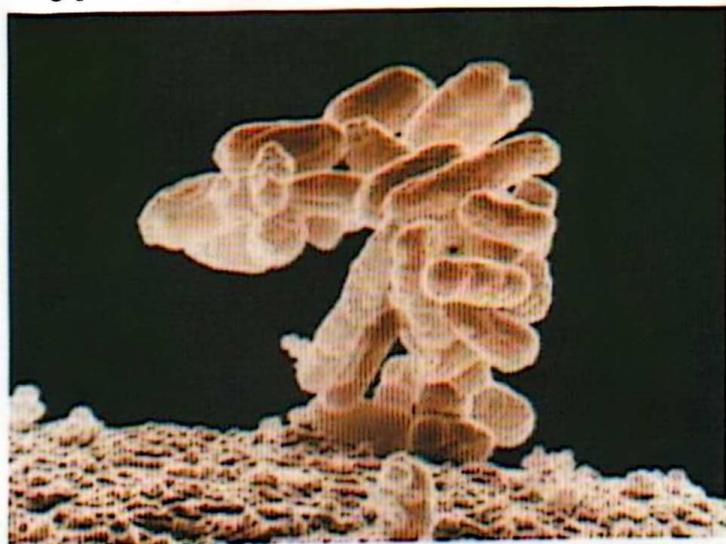


Engineering, Synthetic Biology, Chemical Biology and now is a post doctoral associate in the Department of Chemical Engineering of MIT.

Two to four Pacific yew trees are required to obtain enough Taxol to treat one patient, so in the 1990s, bioengineers came up with a way to produce it in the lab from cultured plant cells, or by extracting key intermediates from plant material like the needles of the decorative yew. These methods generate enough material for patients, but do not produce sufficient quantities for synthesizing variants that may be more potent for treating cancer and other diseases. Organic chemists have succeeded in synthesizing Taxol in the lab, but these methods involve 35 to 50 steps and have a very low yield, so they are not economical. Also, they follow a different pathway than the plants, which makes it impossible to produce the pathway intermediates and change them to make new, potentially more powerful variations.

"By mimicking nature, we can now begin to produce these intermediates that the plant makes, so people can look at them and see if they have any therapeutic properties," said Stephanopoulos. Moreover, they can synthesize variants of these intermediates that may have therapeutic properties for other diseases.

The complex metabolic sequence that produces Taxol involves at least 17 intermediate steps and is not fully understood. The team's goal was to optimize production of the first two Taxol intermediates, taxadiene and taxadien-5-



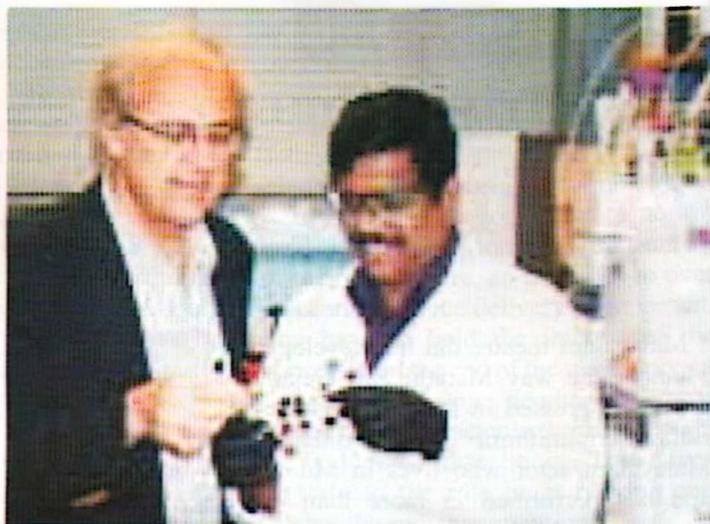
"If you can make Taxol a lot cheaper, that's good, but what really gets people excited is the prospect of using our platform to discover other therapeutic compounds in an era of declining new pharmaceutical products and rapidly escalating costs for drug development," said Stephanopoulos, the W.H. Dow Professor of Chemical Engineering at MIT.

Development of the new technology was funded by the Singapore-MIT Alliance, National Institutes of Health and a Milheim Foundation Grant for Cancer Research. MIT has filed a patent on the technology and new strain of *E. coli*, and the researchers are considering licensing the technology or starting a new company to commercialize it, said Stephanopoulos.

alpha-ol. *E. coli* does not naturally produce taxadiene, but it does synthesize a compound called IPP, which is two steps away from taxadiene. Those two steps normally occur only in plants. MIT postdoctoral associate Ajikumar Parayil recognized that the key to more efficient production is a well-integrated pathway that does not allow potentially toxic intermediates to accumulate. To accomplish this, researchers took a two-pronged approach in engineering *E. coli* to produce taxadiene.

First, the team examined the IPP pathway, which has eight steps, and focused on four of those reactions that had been determined to be bottlenecks in the synthesis that is, there is not enough enzyme at those steps, so the entire process is slowed down. Parayil then engineered the bacteria to express multiple copies of those four genes, eliminating the bottlenecks and speeding up IPP production.

To get *E. coli* to convert IPP to taxadiene, the researchers added two plant genes, modified to function in bacteria, which code for the enzymes needed to perform the reactions. They also varied the number of copies of the genes to find the most efficient combination. These methods allowed the researchers to boost taxadiene production 1,000 times over levels achieved by other researchers using engineered *E. coli*,



Professor Gregory Stephanopoulos and Dr Ajikumar Parayil in their laboratory at MIT. (Photo: Simon Carlsen)

and 15,000 times over a control strain of *E. coli* to which they just added the two necessary plant genes but did not optimize gene expression of either pathway.

Following taxadiene synthesis, researchers advanced the pathway by adding one more critical step toward Taxol synthesis, the conversion of taxadiene to taxadien-5-alpha-ol. This is the first time that taxadien-5-alpha-ol has been produced in microbes. There are still several more steps to go before achieving synthesis of the intermediate baccatin III, from which Taxol can be chemically synthesized. "Though this is only a first step, it is a very promising development and certainly supports this approach and its potential," said Blaine Pfeifer, assistant professor of chemical and biological engineering at Tufts and an author of the *Science* paper.



Maharashtra Governor K Sankaranarayanan being felicitated on his birthday at Raj Bhavan by P K Ravindranath and P V Vijaykumar of Kerala In Mumbai

Artiste of the month

Balan Tripunithura

“Acting is my Passion”

“Malayalam theatre did not develop in Mumbai the way Marathi and Gujarati drama progressed in Mumbai,” laments Balan Tripunithura, alias Balaji, a Malayalam actor who lives in Mumbai and has performed in more than 400 shows.

“In the eighties, there were many stage troupes who regularly conducted Malayalam dramas during Onam, church *perunnal* and Ayyappa Mandala celebrations. But lack of professionalism, a systematic approach to the theatrical performance, nuances of acting, working in depth on the characterisation - all these were sadly not there, and the Malayalam scene today is not very bright,” Balan feels.

“Right from my childhood, I was fascinated by drama. During my schooldays at Tripunithura, stage troupes used to come to our town and do rehearsals at the temple premises. I used to hang around there watching the rehearsals. I did odd jobs for the actors, so that I could see the rehearsals. One day the actors noticed me and asked if I was interested in doing the role of a poor boy in *Vidarunna mottugal* directed by Kalamandalam Ramu and KTS Padannayil. This was in 1957. I was eight at that time. Then followed other roles in *Nilavuam Velichavum*, and *Nakshatra vilakku*. This is how I started acting in Tripunithura. I did a memorable play, *Manalkadu* there,” Balan reminisces. “Though I did not have formal training in acting, I consider K T S Padannayil and Kalamandalam Ramu as my gurus,” he says.

“I came to Mumbai in 1968. I realized that acting was my passion. I found out that there were people in Mumbai who were interested in Malayalam plays and participating in them. I came to know of various Malayalee Samajams that hosted Malayalam dramas. K T G Nair introduced me to the well-known director V Achuthan. It was through the Bombay Kerala Samajam that I started my acting career in Mumbai. My first drama in Mumbai was *Samasya* in 1975”. Since then Balan had joined Kavitha Theatres in Dombivili, Aadham Theatres, Kairali theatres, Pratibha Theatres and others and



Balan Tripunithura

acted in their plays. I learnt a lot about acting from Venu (S P Nair) and E K Namboodiri who owned Pratibha Theatres.

“With Pratibha I got an opportunity to do challenging roles. For instance in *Jwalanam* I play the role of an unemployed youth whose mother is a prostitute and whose father is in jail because he has murdered his wife's lover. I hate my mother and want to kill my employer who dismisses me from my job. However, I have great regard for my father who succeeds in preventing me from committing the murder. This is the story of *Jwalanam*”.

Another play that Balan remembers is *Pavam Usman*. The play written by P Balachander was directed by Madhu Sankaramangalam, a student of National School of Drama. It was staged by Natya Kshetra a newly formed Mumbai Malayalam theatre organization that wanted to stage meaningful theatre performances. Sankaramangalam brought into this play native arts of Kerala like *oppana*, *aravanamuttu* and was thus a trail blazer in the Mumbai Malayalam Theatre scene. Balan recalls that for this play he and the other actors of the 24 cast team had to learn the nuances of acting like graceful stage movements, voice modulation, dialogue mugging and group scene co-ordination.”

“It was two months of rigorous rehearsals. But the play won a lot of critical acclaim and was a pathbreaking one in the Malayalam theatre scene in Mumbai.” Balan says. The play was such a success that Natyakshetra got Sankaramangalam to direct three more plays for them. In all these, Balan acted meaningful roles.

To improve the Malayalam theatre scenario, Vinod Ranganath, assistant to the wellknown theatre personality Satyadev Dubey, conducted a four month theatre workshop.

“It was a wonderful learning experience for the actor in me,” Balan admits. “Though the workshop started with 45



Balan and Mangala in *Vishwaroopam*, Malayalam play

people, at the end of 4 months, only ten people were there who continued till the end of the workshop. "This is the situation in the Malayalam drama scene. Many people in the theatrical field think that drama means just giving a forceful dialogue on the stage and making a dramatic entry into and exit from the stage. However, this is not the truth. The workshop taught me the finer shades of acting, the importance of improvisation, voice modulation, body movements, natural acting and the need to get into the skin of the character one is playing."

He acted in some plays staged by the workshop and directed by Vinod Ranganath. *Avinash, Ormagal Unarthhaathe, Mumbaide Kaakkagal* are some of them.

Balan has also acted in Hindi and Malayalam films like *Chandni Bar, Sneham, Daya, Loudspeaker, Millenium Stars, Tilakkam*, to name a few. He has also acted in Film Division documen-

taries. He has won some honors and awards. His wife Meenakshi is also a drama actress and has acted in Film Division documentaries. They have two daughters, one married and the other doing her graduation.

Balan at present is acting in a couple of Malayalam films, *Christian Brothers, Track with Rahman*, and a Tamil/English venture film *Oraayiram Parvai*. He is also acting in a Marathi/Malyalam film venture *Trinetra* and *Trikannu*. Shooting is going on in all these projects.

Apart from acting, Balan co-ordinates with the Malayalam producers, actors and directors when they come to Mumbai in connection with their film productions. He was the co-ordinator for the award winning *Pazhassi Raja* in Mumbai when the unit came for production mixing which was done here.

Speaking on the differences in acting in films and acting on the stage, Balan explains, "In films, we can finish the

work, once the shot is over. However, theatre is live and we have to be aware everytime we enter the stage. I would say that theatre acting helped me in my film acting. Thanks to Venu, E K Namboodiri, Madhu Sankaramangalam and Vinod Ranganath, I learnt how to emote, how to hold emotion, how to improvise from all of them. In theatre, an actor has to over react and dialogue delivery is important. You have to hold the interest of the viewers until the end of the play. Once an actor enters the stage, he must remember that he is the character in the play and not the individual that he is. This gives veracity to the role he is playing and catches the audience attention."

Balan was working with the Times of India newspaper. Now he is with Times Now, their Entertainment division.



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OFF FIELD, ON AIR

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

The profusion of Little Magazines in Mumbai in the past one year appears to be the harbinger of good times for the small print media.

Beginning with KERALA IN MUMBAI early in the year, we had witnessed the launches of VAAKU, KAAKA and CHENDA in quick succession.

Some of them uphold high standards of literary quality. Their contents are chosen with care and presented equally meticulously. This augurs well for small-time publications, at a time when bigger publications are facing a severe financial crunch.

Even though no newspaper has yet closed down for want of financial support, many are facing acute problems matching their income with outgoings.

The small magazines, it has been found, can do with generous local support from a wider circle of well-wishers, unlike the bigger publications which need advertising support on a much bigger

scale. This also brings in undesirable trends in the media. Since the need is greater, the extent to which one has to bow down before money bags is much greater than in the case of the smaller publications.

The recent trend among the bigger publications has been the compromises they have to accept in order to persuade their clients to loosen their purse strings. The bigger the newspaper, the more the genuflection and the better the rewards.

Thus one finds in the columns of our bigger newspapers stories and articles that smack of money, which betray the extent to which they have gone to please their patrons and help them make it easier to write out their cheques.

Almost all leading English newspapers and some in other languages which have stooped to the basest level to mop up all stories, reports, feature articles provided by "Content providers." One could accept them on face value if they were well written, properly edited and

presented in a readable manner. They are not. Most of them are amateurish, badly edited and are easily distinguishable from other reports and articles by their headings. They stand out complete with an exclamation mark or a question mark at the end. If the story is sensational, it should stand out on its own without the support of a sensationalized heading. That is the basic principle of good journalism. But the problem is that the "content providers" are not trained journalists. They are hardly aware of the ethics of good journalism or even good writing and editing.

This goes for television also, where most channels now specialize in BREAKING NEWS with little concern for the kind of reports that qualify for such treatment. If the anchor thinks the item is really breaking news, the viewer has to accept it without question.

The small journals have no such limitations or inhibitions. Let them thrive.

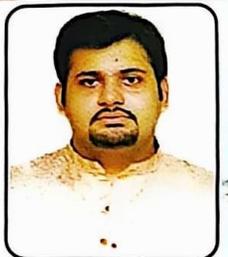
INSIDER

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup bengal gram flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 1/2 cups ghee
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 tsp cardomom powder

Method:

Sieve the bengal gram flour (besan). Roast it on a hot griddle/ tava for 2-3 minutes stirring constantly. Set aside. Heat half the ghee (clarified butter) (1 1/4 cup) in a pan. Put the sugar in another pan and add 1 cup of water to it. Cook till it becomes sticky syrup. It should not become stringy. Add the roasted flour to the sugar syrup stirring constantly. Take off the flame for a second while you get the melted ghee ready.

Manoj NairE-mail: accessmanojnair@gmail.com*Recipe for***Diwali Sweet****MYSORE PAK**

Pour the ghee in a steady stream into the flour and sugar mixture while stirring. You need an extra hand here. Add the rest of the ghee and stir in. Cook till the mixture turns light brown and becomes porous and spongy like bread. Sprinkle the cardamom powder over the mixture and turn out immediately into a 9" shallow cake pan or a thali. The mixture sets within a minute. With a sharp knife cut into 1 1/2 inch squares at immediately

LORD AYYAPPAN THE GUIDE AND GUARDIAN



Lakshmi Venkatachalam

Among Keralites the period from mid November to end December, is called *Mandala Masam*. This period is sacred to Lord Ayyappan, a popular deity among the people of Kerala. Lord Ayyappan's temple is at Sabarimala and many people go on a pilgrimage to Sabarimala during this time. In earlier days, Ayyappan was worshipped by Keralites alone. But today Sabarimala and Lord Ayyappan have become well-known and thousands of people not only from Kerala but Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and even the northern, eastern and western states make a pilgrimage to the tiny town in Pathanamthitta to visit the temple there. With no distinction of caste and creed, faith impels many devotees from all parts of the country to visit Sabarimala and seek Ayyappan's blessings.

There are many temples dedicated to Dharma Sastha or Ayyappan all over Kerala and even in temples dedicated to other Gods, there is a shrine to Ayyappan. However legend has it that there are four important temples dedicated to Ayyappan along the hilly Western Ghats in south Kerala consecrated by the sage Parasurama. Dharma Sastha is represented in different stages in these temples. In Kulathupuzha, Ayyappan appears as a *balaka* or child, in Aryankavu as

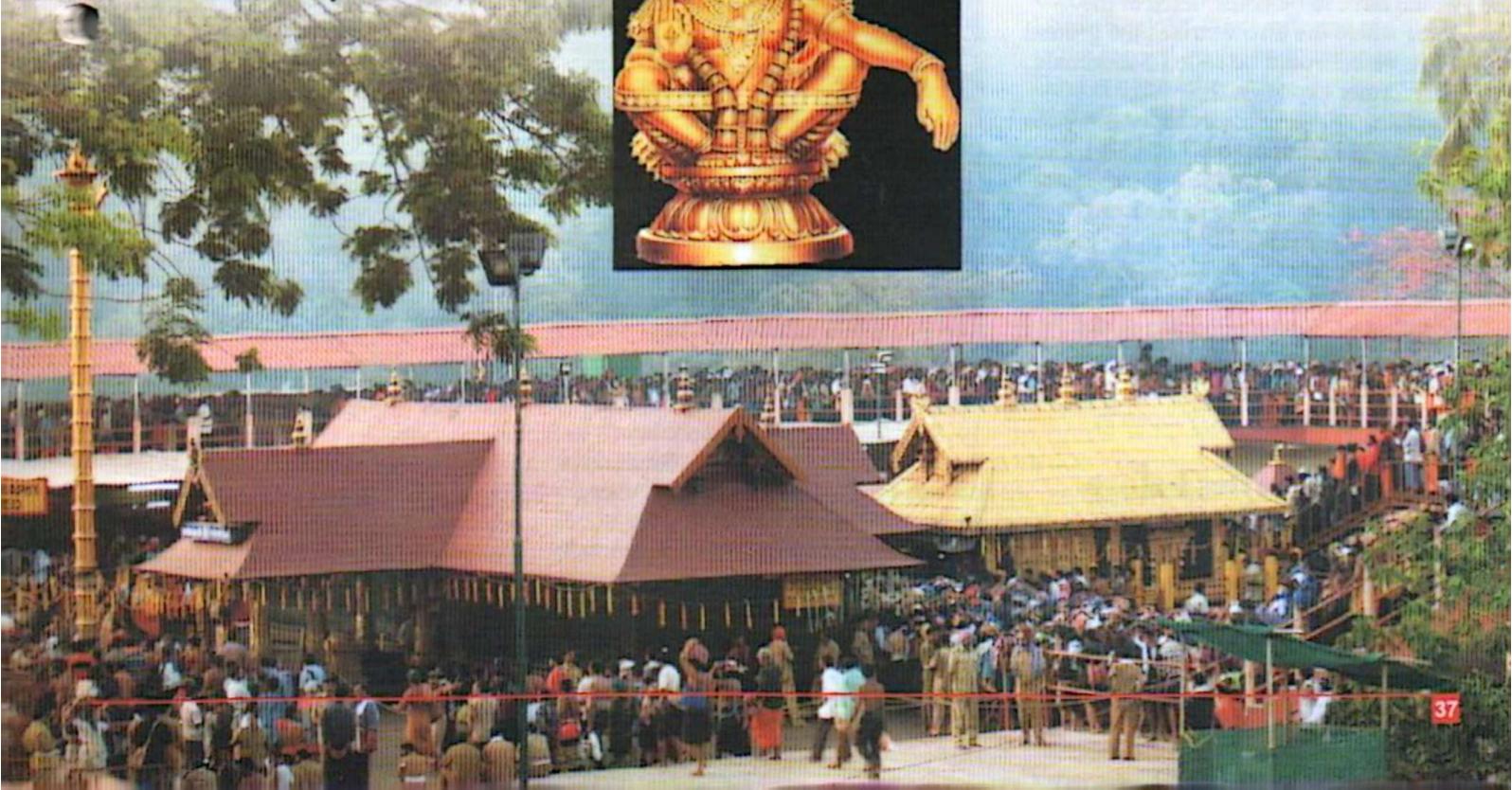
brahmachari, at Achankavu with His consorts Poorna and Pushkala and at Sabarimala as *vanaprastha*. At Ponnambalamedu or Kantamala Ayyappan is believed to appear as the highest *yogi*. This place which has not yet been explored is believed to be built by sages at the spot opposite Sabarimala on the eastern side where the miraculous light appears as *makara jyoti* on the day of *makara sankranti*. However Sabarimala shrine is the most important and popular of Sastha temples in Kerala. It is also the most significant because pilgrimage to this shrine symbolises the struggle of the individual soul in its onward journey to the abode of bliss and beatitude. A pilgrimage to Sabarimala involves a number of religious disciplines which have to be followed strictly. Just as the path to spiritual awakening is long and difficult, the journey to Sabarimala has its own set of austerities so that when we adhere to them and reach the temple, we become receptacles of His grace and are truly blessed.



The Story of Ayyappan

Lord Ayyappan is born not out of union of man and woman but by the union of Hari (Vishnu) and Hara (Shiva). Vishnu had once taken the form of Mohini, to prevent the *asuras* from possessing *amrut* during the churning of the ocean, and thus protect the *devas* from the *asuras*. Shiva is enamoured of the form of Mohini when he sees her. Out of their union is born Hariharaputra. But this is not a union in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a fusion of the two divine forces of Shiva and Vishnu with a specific purpose. The baby is found by the king of Pandalam while he takes rest after a hunting expedition and takes him to the palace. The king has no children and he and his Queen bring the child up as their own. Since the baby boy has a bell round his neck when he is found on the field, he is named Manikandan.

In due course Manikandan grows up to be a lad of 12 years, well-versed in all fields and dutiful to his parents. By this time the Queen gives birth to a son. Poisoned by the king's Diwan, the Queen becomes jealous of Manikandan



and wants her own son to become the heir to the throne. So they both plot to get rid of Manikantan. The queen feigns headache. The Diwan prevails upon the doctor who examines the Queen, to convince the King that a leopard's milk alone would cure the Queen's headache. They are sure that Manikantan would volunteer to go and bring the leopard's milk. This being an almost impossible task, both the Queen and the Diwan, think that it would bring about the end of Manikantan.

As expected Manikantan volunteers to go out into the forest to bring the leopard's milk. The worried king asks him to take a three eyed coconut representing his family deity Lord Shiva, to protect him from all evils on the way. So he carries a bundle on his head with the three eyed coconut and some food for use on the way. In the forest, the demoness Mahishi who has been troubling and oppressing the *devas* attacks him. But Manikantan defeats and kills her. This is the real purpose of Manikantan's *avatar* on earth.

After killing Mahishi, Manikantan mounts on a tiger and brings the leopard's milk to the palace for the Queen. Now the king realizes that Manikantan is no ordinary mortal but the Lord himself. And pleads with him to live with the king permanently. But Manikantan says that he will leave the kingdom. At the King's repeated requests, Manikantan asks the King to build a temple on the Neeli hills where Sabari the *sanyasini* is awaiting immortality at His Hands. He adds that he will shoot an arrow and the temple would have to be constructed at the place where the arrow strikes the ground. This place would be called Sabarimala, he further explains.

Manikantan generously gives away the throne and kingdom to his brother. The Queen and the Diwan are also repentant and ask for forgiveness to the Lord. Legends say that the Lord further gave instructions on how the temple is to be built with 18 steps, and the austerities to be followed before undertaking the pilgrimage. The king agrees to follow His requirements. Manikantan then vanishes to appear as Ayyappan in Sabarimala.

Rituals and rites before going to Sabarimala.

Every year millions of devotees without any distinction of caste and creed from many parts of India especially the South make the trip to Sabarimala. This is

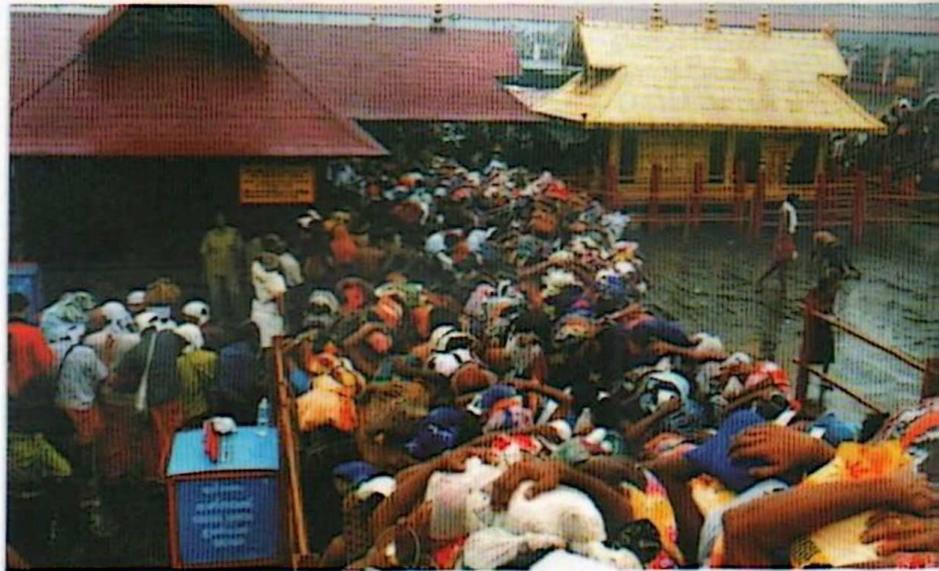
Thiruvabharanam and Makara Jyothi

Thiruvabharanam are sacred ornaments of Ayyappan. These golden ornaments are believed to have been made at the orders of the King of Pandalam who adopted Ayyappan as his son. They are kept in the Pandalam Palace premises. Every year on January 12, before the *Makara Vilakku* on January 14, the holy caskets containing the ornaments of the Lord are carried in a procession towards Sabarimala. A team of representatives carry the ornaments on their heads. The royal representative of the king of Pandalam accompany the procession. They are joined by hundreds of devotees and armed policemen. The procession takes the traditional route through forests, hills and rivers. It is interesting to note here that every year, a kite hovers above the holy casket till the procession reaches Sabarimala and circles over the temple while the ornaments adorn the Lord's body. People believe the kite to be Vishnu upon Garuda and fondly call it *Sree Krishna Parunthu*. On the way the procession is warmly welcomed by associations and temples along the route. Around six in the evening, the procession reaches the shrine of Sabarimala. The *melshanthi* and *tanthri* receive the sacred jewels even as the devotees chant *saranam ayyappa*. The *thiruvabharanam* consists of a diamond crown, golden bracelets, necklaces and a sword. The priest adorns the Lord with these. At the same moment, a brilliant light appears in the northeastern side of the temple or the opposite mountain in a place called Kantamala. It is believed that this brilliant flame of light is the *aarathi* performed by the *rishis* and *devas*. This is the *makara jyothi* and this event marks the culmination of the pilgrimage to Sabarimala.

After the *jyothi*, on that night Malikappuram Devi, mounted on an elephant comes in a procession to the *patinettampadi* and returns back to her abode. This is the beginning of the *Makara Vilakku* festival. The festival lasts for seven days.

After the festive season, the *thiruvabharanam* are taken back to Pandalam palace in a procession along the same route.

Many pilgrims stay back till the *Makara Vilakku* festival is over and *kuruthi puja* (offering of water mixed with lime and turmeric powder to the forest deities) is performed.



Pilgrims with Irumudi at the shrine

done from mid November to January 14 till *Makara Jyothi*. In addition to these days, the temple at Sabarimala is opened for the first five days of every Malayalam month and during *Vishu*.

A pilgrimage to Sabarimala is generally done under the guidance of a guru called guruswamy. He is a person who has gone to the temple for many years and knows the rites to be followed.

Whoever decides to go to Sabarimala needs to observe (*vritham*) religious discipline for 41 days preceding the pilgrimage. They have to observe celibacy and abstain from sex in thought, deed and word when they are observing the penance. Men should not shave their faces nor cut their hair. Women are not allowed entry into the temple excepting small girls who have

not attained puberty and elderly women whose monthly periods have stopped. The Ayyappans as the pilgrims are called are clad in black dark blue or orchre clothes. These colours help in moulding the mind of the pilgrim to the ascetic's path. They should avoid non vegetarian food, alcohol and cigarettes, and eat fresh *sattvic* food. Before setting out on their pilgrimage, the Ayyappans, participate in the Ayyappan puja under the guidance of the guruswamy and wear the *tulasi mala* on their necks. Once they wear the *malas*, they are addressed as Swamis or Ayyappans, should not even look at women and utter *Saranam Ayyappa* as often as they can. The most important of the preliminaries is the preparation of what is called the *irumudi*, a cotton bag in two compartments, one in front and the other behind which is carried on the head throughout the pilgrimage.

In the front compartment is kept the *neithenga* (ghee filled coconut); the ghee is inserted through the third or soft eye of the coconut and securely sealed and corked. It also contains the offerings to the Lord and Malikappuram Devi. The other bundle contains turmeric powder, *kumkum* powder, *karpooram*, *chandanam*, *avil*, *pori*, *malar*, *karkandu*, *munthiri* and rice powder. The filling of the coconut with ghee is reminiscent of the King giving the three eyed coconut to Manikantann when he went to get the leopard's milk. It also symbolises the journey of the soul, the ghee is man's soul and the coconut his body. The ghee is emptied at the Lord's shrine for *abhishekham* and the coconut is thrown into the fire. The pilgrimage is complete only when the *irumudi* is emptied at the shrine in Sabarimala.

The Holy Trek

Guruswamy G KV Pillai of Powai Ayyappan Vishnu Temple has been

taking Ayyappans to Sabarimala from Mumbai for the past 19 years. He says that the first stop for all pilgrims to Sabarimala is Erumeli. There is a shrine dedicated to Vavar a Muslim devotee here. All the pilgrims gather here, the *kanni Ayyappans* (First time pilgrims) carry a stick with a bundle of vegetables tied on it between their shoulders, and all of them do *petta thullal*. They smear coloured powder on their bodies and to the shouts of *swamy thinthakathom* and *Ayyappan thinthakathom* they dance their way to the Ayyappan temple opposite Vavar's shrine along with the other pilgrims. Vavar was a Muslim Chieftain whom Ayyappan defeated and later he became the Lord's trusted lieutenant. Later the different groups of pilgrims go their individual ways to reach the temple.

The longest and the oldest and most difficult route to reach the temple from Erumeli is through the forests and mountains, a distance of about 72 kms. It is believed to be the route that Ayyappan himself took when He went to bring the leopard's milk. After crossing the two mountains, Azhattu and Karimala, the pilgrims would reach the banks of the river Pampa. This path is taken by a few devotees even now.

GKV Pillai says that many pilgrims go by vehicular road up to the banks of the river Pampa. This is also the main halting point for pilgrims going to Sabarimala. From here, one has to walk 4 to 5 kms to reach the temple. The pilgrims take a bath in the cold waters of the Pampa river and begin their trek to the temple. On reaching the temple, the devotees, climb the sacred 18 steps and reach the Lord presence.

Divine Darshan

As the Ayyappans climb these steps, they shout repeatedly *Swamiye*

The sacred Eighteen Steps

The eighteen steps that the devotee climbs to reach the Lord's presence has a special significance. These steps beginning from the bottom symbolise the five senses of man, the next eight steps are symbolic of the eight base emotions of love, anger, avarice, lust, pride, unhealthy competition, jealousy and boastfulness. The next three steps are symbolic of the three *gunas*, *satva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance). The last two symbolize knowledge and ignorance. The fundamental symbolism is that the man who climbs these sacred eighteen steps has gained control over himself and risen to a spiritual state and is eligible to unite with His Creator.

Saranam Ayyappan, the soulful cry of utter abandonment to Lord Ayyappan. Finally they stand in front of their Lord. They see their beloved God sitting in *Yogasana* with *pattabandha* and *chinmudra* indicating 'thou art That'. The *irumudi* ghee is poured in *abhishekham* to the Lord, offerings are made with a devout heart, and the pilgrims leave the premises with a sense of absolute bliss within their heart. They collect the *prasadam*s of ghee, *aravanapayasam*, *appam*, *chandanam*, *vibhuthi*. There are shrines dedicated to Ganapathy and Muruga within the temple complex. The devotees then visit Malikappuram Devi temple, This is the shrine of the Lord's Shakti where offering are made to the Devi. According to legends, this Devi is none other than the reformed Mahishi who has changed into a true devotee of Lord Ayyappan.

Mandala Pooja Celebrations In Mumbai

In many suburbs of Mumbai there are Ayyappan festivals for three days where Mumbai Keralites celebrate Mandala celebrations like the one in Sabarimala and seek His blessings. This is done during the month of November and December. A temporary *mandap* is made, the picture of the Lord with 18 steps and rows of lamps and other paraphernalia are arranged and people of the locality gather to offer pujas and prayers in the morning and evening. The whole day there are various programmes like *vilakku puja*, *narayaneeyam parayanam*, and others. In the evening there are music and dance programmes and

religious discourses. On the third day, there is a community feast, *Annadanam*, and in the evening after a *sastha preethi* at a nearby temple, the idol is taken in a procession from the temple through the streets with *talapoli* and beating of *panchavadyam* with many devotees accompanying the procession back to the *mandap*. *Nirapara* offerings are made, crackers are burst, camphor is lit on each of the 18 steps. To the chants of *swamiye saranam Ayyappan*, and the beats of *panchavadyam* a *mahadeeparadhana* is offered to the Lord. A part of Kerala culture has been replayed in Mumbai.



Rajan Kadanappally, Premkumar and Anandi in Swati Thirunal

MALAYALAM PLAY SPELLS REVIVAL OF THEATRE

(KIM Drama Critic)

Just when everyone was lamenting the death of Malayalam stage plays, comes a stupendous effort by a Mumbai troupe to put it back on its feet. Saptaswara's SWATI THIRUNAL could be the harbinger of the revival of Mumbai's glorious days of good theatre.

Supported by Sree Malavika SWATI THIRUNAL recaptures the significant contribution of the famed ruler of Travancore (1813-1846) to music and dance, as much as to ward off predatory interference of the East India Company into the internal affairs of his kingdom.

With as many as 18 characters (of whom five are women) Saptaswara took almost a year to stage the show. Despite gruelling difficulties of arranging rehearsals and assembling the cast, the organizers have devoted considerable attention to mounting the production to make it as authentic as possible in terms of costumes, sets and backdrops. Attention has been given to minutest details.

The intrigues that go on in any court, along with the machinations of the East India Company to gain control of the State by utilizing the weakness of the Maharaja for music and dance, forms the background of the play by Pirappankode Murali.

The confrontation between the Maharaja and the English Resident at his court offer the dramatic moments in the play. The Resident, played by Rajan, stood out for a

true-to-life enactment.

Swati Thirunal played by Prem Kumar was the dominant character of the play. The singer and musician in him stood out over scenes where the Maharaja appeared as the astute ruler.

Anandy, Rajan Kadanappally and C K K Poduval as the harassed farmer and the Dewan offered credible performances.

While the play borrowed a couple of songs of Swati Thirunal composed by the late G Devarajan, the musical score was provided by Prem Kumar who also produced and directed the play.

SWATI THIRUNAL is scheduled to be

enacted again at Payyanur, setting a precedent for a Mumbai troupe to stage a Mumbai production in Kerala. By November end when it is re-enacted, the troupe could make it a slicker presentation, learning from its Mumbai experience.

The second issue of Malavika Publication's VAAKU was released on the occasion by eminent poet, Krishnan Parappally. Others who spoke on the occasion included N K Bhupesh Babu, Rajan Nair, Lawyer Sreejith and U Gopi Nair.



Maharaja Swati Thirunal in Court



Dances of Kerala

Kathakali

Part 6



Prof. Ammanath Vijayashankar

Angika abhinaya (The art of acting through body):

It is the body language of *Kathakali* communicated through body kinetics- movements of limbs, face and body as whole. According to *nāṭya sāstras* body is divisible into 3 parts: *anga-* comprising head, hands, chest, flanks, waist and feet; *upanga-* eyes, eyelids, eyebrows, nose, lips, cheeks and chin; and *pratyanga-* back of shoulder, arms, belly, thigh, and shanks. Absolute control over entire body gained through long and rigorous training and practice equips one to effectively express gentle and restrained as well as rough and aggressive actions with underlying emotions and moods. Body of a consummate *Kathakali* artist is a vehicle (*ratha*) driven by inner urge (*sārathi*) for transporting emotions (*rathi*) to be experienced by spectator (*sahrudaya*) as aesthetic delight (*rasāmubhūti*).

Mudras (Hand gestures):

While face is paramount in reflective expression of emotions, hand is the principal organ that uses gestures, *mudras*, for interpretive expression of ideas and objects. *Kathakali* artists do not verbally deliver dialogues. The lyrics, sung by vocalists, are interpreted through sophisticated gestural language codified in *Hasta Lakshna Deepika*. The art acquired it from *Kootiattam* and adapted with necessary modifications. For an artist, *mudras* are like letters of alphabet used to form 'words'; and in sequence the 'words' are concatenated to form sentences. They are highly technical and hard

to comprehend for dilettante. Same *mudra* may imply many things. In different combinations and sequences they convey myriad things depending on situations, and must be understood in conjunction with other aspects of *angikabhinaya* and *vāchika*, the lyrics. There are basically 24 *hasta mudras* mentioned in *Hasta Lakshna Deepika*, which are used to convey over 600 objects or ideas. A few like *mrigashirsha* and *anjali* are from *Abhinaya Darpana*. Over years many have been altered or added. Beauty of the system is that a gifted artist, on stage, has freedom to modify *mudras* or introduce new combination and be innovative in *abhinaya*.

Mudras may be single-handed (*asamyukta mudra*), double-handed with both hands showing same *mudra* (*samyukta mudra*), or double-handed with two hands showing different *mudras* (*misra mudra*). *Mudra* that conveys different things in different situations is *samāna mudra*. For instance, *Patakam mudra* as *asamyukta mudra* indicates day, tongue, forehead, travel, thus, sound, envoy, shore, tender leaves etc. As *samyukta mudra* it conveys 36 concepts through different positions and body movements; like sun, king, lion, elephant, flag, waves, chariot, buttocks, wheel, cold, feet etc. There are *mudras* signifying 'parts of speech' and grammar. Plural of a noun is indicated by *Suchimukham*; the preposition 'in' with *Ardhachandram*, and adjectival form with *Mudrakhayam*. Presentation of *mudra* varies from *kalari* to *kalari*. Symbolism of *mudras* becomes full and meaningful only in the context of related postures, steps, movements and most notably *bhāvas* expressed through *mukhābhinaya*.

Presentation of *mudras* in *Kathakali* is an elaborate process. For example to show lotus, the artist standing erect with feet slightly apart, first lowers body to indicate low level of lotus pond. Looking at the pond, with eye movement he describes circular outline of lotus; then through facial expression enjoys fragrance of the flower, partly closing eyes and inhaling deep. He then opens eyes wide showing wonder (*adbhutam*) with whole face simultaneously glowing with smile expressing marvel at the beauty of lotus. Then, hands are held across in *mushti mudra*, and rotating wrists palms are opened and held upright facing and touching each other in *kapota hasta* symbolizing lotus bud under water. The *mudra* is slowly raised simulating bud struggling to reach surface. All this time eyes diligently hover over the lotus and finally with daintily trembling fingers opening of petals is portrayed. Blooming of the flower is reflected in eyes through *mukhābhinaya*, with harmonized movements of pupil, eyelids and eyebrows; at the same time lips spread in beam of ecstasy. As lotus blossoms hesitantly, drums play lightly, reverberations attendant on trepidation to complete background. Finally, as the lotus opens fully, artist's face brightens and he takes its beauty and fragrance. With no set time limit for such *abhinaya* artist exploits own imagination (*manodharma*) and talent, depending on time constraints of the show.

Before portraying an object the artist symbolically indicates it with movements of eyes. He then dances a few steps and assumes



Arjuna in Santanagopalam



Bahuka and Damayanti

specific stance to show *mudra*. The stances are preceded by set modes of jumps (*chattam*). Thus presentation of *mudras* is developed in stages to give full impact to *abhinaya*.

Kalāsams They are pure dance (10 types) accompanied by percussion ensemble but without vocal. As part of enactment, *kalāsams* are decorative dance units between *padams*, like punctuation marks, that enhance and embellish personality and mood of *vesham*, and the situation. *Kalāsams* are not interpretive but support expression of emotions. The dance is slow and soft for tender scenes of love and compassion but fast and aggressive for scenes involving anger and violence.

Sāttvika abhinaya: (The art of expressing inner emotions). *Sāttvika abhinaya* covers subtle elements of *abhinaya* that depicts inner emotions and mental states of character. It is through face, particularly eyes, supported by breath, that artists gain rapport, psychological communication, in *sāttvika abhinaya*. Face though an *anga* of body emotive expression through eyes (*rasābhinaya*) in *Kathakali* goes beyond the concepts of *angika abhinaya*. One of the meanings of the Sanskrit word *sattva* is *prāna*, 'life breath'. *Angikabhinaya* to be effective *prāna* is to be infused into the body parts concerned, like fingers for presentation of *mudra* (*viralil vāyu kodukkal*), and *kannil vāyu kodukkal* for *rasābhinaya*.

Integral to *sāttvika abhinaya* is expression of *bhāvas*. Sanskrit word *bhāva* defies precise translation in English. It has variously been translated as 'emotions', 'mood' or 'state of mind'. It is the *bhāva* of actor that creates aesthetic delight (*rasanubhuti*) in *sahrudaya*. The actor does not experience *rasa*; through acting he creates *rasa* in spectator which is the very purpose of *abhinaya*. There are nine *rasas*, *Nava Rasas*. They are *sringāra* (romantic love), *hāsya* (mirth), *karuna* (compassion), *raudra* (anger), *vīra* (heroism), *bhayānaka* (terror), *bhibhatsa* (disgust) and *adbhuta* (wonder), and the ninth one is *sāntham* (peace or tranquility of mind) not in *Nāṭya Sāstra*. For each of the *asta rasas* of *Nāṭya Sāstra*, there are innate *bhāvas* which are of three kinds. *Sthāyi bhāva* is the enduring state of mind. It is supplemented by fleeting secondary psychological states of mind- *sanchārini bhāvas*; then is spontaneous reflective expression of emotion- *sāttvika bhāva*. *Sāttvika bhāva* develops into *rasa* with the support of other two when situation or cause (*vibhava*) arises. Imagine a person caught all alone deep in a forest and a lion appears in front. He is struck with fear, trembles and tries to run away. Fear is his *bhāva*, and lion is the creature causing fear (*alambana vibhava*). Forest, lion's roar and other actions are situations enhancing fear (*uddheepana vibhava*). The man's reactions like crying, trembling and efforts to run away are *anubhava*. His feeling of helplessness and looking for help are *sancharini bhāva*. *Rasa* that *sahrudaya* experience is *bhayanakam*.

In *sringāra rasa* (romantic love) male is *alambana vibhava* (cause) evoking *rathi bhava* in female and vice versa. Picturesque landscape, garden with chirping of birds, cool and gentle breeze

etc. are *uddheepana vibhava* enhancing *rathi bhava* (*sthai bhava*-emotion of love). Amorous glances, caressing each other, embracing and kissing are *anubhava* (reactions) rising *bhava* to *rasa*. *Sringāra* is basically of two types. One is *sambhoga sringāra*-union of lovers which is pleasurable; as in honey moon scene of Nala and Damayanthi in *Nala Charitam* Second Day by Unnayi Varrier. The other is *vipralambha sringāra*- the sad state of separation of lovers (*Nala Charitam* Third day), which in *abhinaya* is of 4 kinds. Depending on situation and character depiction of *bhavas* differs. Love scenes between Nala and Damayanthi are refined and gracious; more open and amorous is love of Ravana towards wife Mandodari. Keechaka's moves towards Draupadi in *Keechaka Vadham* are lecherous.

In *sattikabhinaya* are employed 4 *mukharagams* (colors of face) through breath control. Color of the face, as such, does not change, but the intensity of feeling is reflected on face making *abhinaya* livelier. Besides, are specific gazes, *rasa drishti*, associated with each *rasa* giving full impact to *abhinaya*. In addition to *nava rasas* are a few *rasas* used in *abhinaya*- *vātsalya* (elder's affection to children), *sauhrida* (friendship) and *bhakti* (devotion) all of which are variations of *rathi bhava*, love being common to all.

Sāttvikābhinaya is the soul of *abhinaya* in *Kathakali* as it enlivens *abhinaya*, and makes it touching through graphic depiction emotions and inner feelings.

Vāchikābhinaya (The art of verbal expression with musical accompaniment):

In *Kathakali*, *vāchikābhinaya*, rendering of lyrical text (*padam*) is by two playback singers accompanied by percussion ensemble. Main singer (*ponnani*) provides *tālam* with a metal gong (*chengila*) while an assistant (*sinkiti*) plays a pair of small brass cymbals (*elattaalam*). There are two main percussion instruments- *maddalam* and *chenda* to provide dramatic sound effects. With *maddalam* (a horizontal heavy drum) the drummer simulates the delicate sounds of humming of bees, song of cuckoo etc. *Chenda* is used for sound effects of thunder, roaring of lion, snoring of demons, sound of tuning *veena* or *mridangam*, as well as delicate sound effects of caress, kiss etc. *Maddalam* and *chenda* played by versatile artists provides perfectly suited ambience for *abhinaya*. *Edakka*, a sort of small drum-like instrument played with slender stick provides moderately resonant sound for *lāsya* movements of noble *stree vesham*. An accomplished vocalist with good, pleasing and clear voice provides apt dramatic support to *bhāvas* enacted by the dancer, and gives audience full emotional import of *attakath*. The vocalists modulate voice by adjusting *svara vāyu* (air movements to and from voice box) to give proper *bhāva* to song. Perfectly marking time on *chengila* he is the conductor of the show, controlling the dancer. It is *ponnani* who coordinates all operations on the stage.

Kathakali music is developed from *Sopāna Sangeetham*; the style of singing *ashtapadi* of poet Jayadeva, in front of sanctum



keechaka's lecherous advances

Book Review

CHANAKYA AS MANAGEMENT GURU

VISHNUGUPTA (aka Chanakya) who wrote the Arthashastra under the penname of Kautilya, about 2400 years ago is what Plato (437-347), Socrates (469-399) and Aristotle (384-322) put together enunciated in the field of political science. His Arthashastra has survived two and a half millennia and lent itself for re-interpretation as a manual for modern day management strategies.

Dr Radhakrishnan Pillai's CORPORATE CHANAKYA does precisely that with great success. Arthashastra helped Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka run their Mauryan Empire efficiently as a model administration. Dr Pillai applies the basic principles of Kautilya to modern day management of corporates and business houses. He is eminently qualified for this on two counts: his incisive study of the 6000 sutras of Arthashastra and his expertise in management and consultancy. He holds a doctoral degree in the Arthashastra. He offers ancient Indian wisdom in the modern day context.

CORPORATE CHANAKYA has the flavour of Dale Carnegie in the style of writing: precise, crisp, small chapters not exceeding two pages. The 317 page book is divided into 175 chapters classified under three parts - Leadership, Management and Training.

Arthashastra comprises 15 books explaining how a king can run his kingdom successfully: by counsel, by might and by energy. Dr Pillai quotes Kautilya saying: Everyone is gifted with some intelligence, but hardly anyone is taught to use their intellect. And therein lay most problems of management.

The most pertinent dictum of Chanakya is "Just as elephants are needed to catch elephants, so does one need wealth to capture more wealth."

In the hands of Dr Pillai all Kautilya aphorisms lend themselves to interpretations in terms of modern management technology. Many of them are valuable tips on how to increase business, run a cohesive organisation, and blend various elements in the organisation to give of their best with complete team spirit.

The section on Leadership exhaustively covers tips on how power should be exercised by a leader, the qualities a leader should have, how he should handle competition, how to handle employees and what a leader should never do.

The section on Management also details various factors an effective manager should do in respect of employees, finances ensuring team work and formalising strategies.

For Training Kautilya's prescriptions are analysed in detail to take in how trainees should be handled, how the Boss has to be tackled and how systems have to be put in

place to run an organisation successfully. The book, thus, emerges as a complete Bible for handling all corporate problems, finding appropriate solutions and making a success of any undertaking.

For those who seek to better their prospects, Kautilya's advice is:

"One, who is conversant with the ways of the world, should seek service with the king, endowed with personal excellence and the excellence of material constituents, through such as dear and beneficial (to the king.)" Dr Pillai's interpretation is "Such an experienced person, who is equipped with the knowledge of his work, should definitely seek higher responsibilities. If not he will feel depressed, stressed and underutilized."

The king here represents the leaders of the organisations. In asking for a promotion or a higher job, one should bear in mind the benefits he can bring to the owner (of the enterprise) not just to himself.

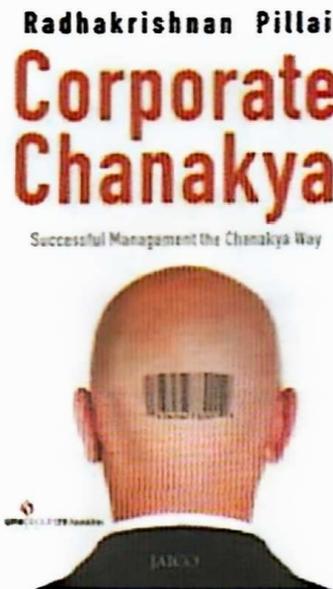
The book is full of such simple, straightforward snippets of advice, which can easily be translated into action by any novice.

The author starts off with the conviction that the Arthashastra is a very logical treatise. To grasp it better he endorses Kautilya's plea that those who want to master the book, should first study a subject called "Anveekshike," which would help develop the student's ability in logical thinking.

The book, six months since its publication has already sold 10,000 copies a record in Indian literary achievements.

CORPORATE CHANAKYA
By Dr Radhakrishnan Pillai
Jaico Publishing House
Pages 318, Price ₹275

- P K R



sanctorum of temples. *Sopāna sangeetham* has only two *bhāvas-bhakti* (devotional love) and *karuna* (divine compassion) to express. *Kathakali* being a total stage art its music of necessity embrace whole range of emotions. Late Venkata Krishna Bhagavathar, a doyen in the field, embellished Kathakali music with elements from *Carnatic* music. Also, style of rendering *padam* was refined with techniques from *Hindustāni* music. Bhagavathar's disciple late *Kalāmandalam* Neelakanthan Nambeesan popularized the system. *Kalāmandalam* Hyderali, *Kalāmandalam* Haridas and *Kalāmandalam* Sankaran Embranthiri were the trinity of Kathakali vocalists of modern era noted for grace of style of singing and clarity of diction. Many common and a few rare *rāgas* (*Navarasam*, *Indisa*, *Gopikāvasantham* etc.) of *Carnatic* music are used for their potential to evoke appropriate *bhāva*. A few *rāgas* are used to evoke different *bhāvas*. Eg., *Kāmbhoji rāga* is used in *Kirmeera Vadham* for *karuna bhāvam* (grief and sorrow); for *sringāra bhāva* in love scene between Arjuna and Subhadra in *Subhadraharamam*, and *vira*, heroic *bhāva* for Bhima in *Kalyāna*

saugandhikam.

However talented the performer, vocalists and percussionists may be, success of *abhinaya* depends on the dramatic element in the story, musical quality and beauty of lyrics. 18th century, the period of Kottayathu Tampuran and Unnayi Varrier, is the Augutenian era of *Kathakali attakkata*. Immediately following them is Irayimman Thampi (*Uttara Swayamvaram*, *Keechaka Vadham* and *Dakshshyāgam*). Works of Kottarakkara Tampuran (mid 17th century) written for *Ramanattam* now forms part of *Kathakali* repertoire. Though there are hundreds of *attakkathas* written by many, may be none except *Kirātam* by Irattakulangara Rama Varrier and *Karnasapatham* by Shri Madhavan Nair have gained much popularity. It is surprising that Shri Vallatol, himself a great poet and well versed in the nuances of *Kathakali* has no *attakkatha* to his credit.

As for the future of *Kathakali*, hope lies in the adage: 'The future is inextricably linked to the present and to the past'. In the incessant flow of time, logically, one can hope for a promising future.

THE CHERA EMPIRES

THAT BECAME KERALA



K. R. NARAYANAN

There is a legend regarding the origin of the Indian peninsular land now known as Kerala, abutting the Indian Ocean. According to it, the Warrior Sage, Parasurama, (considered as the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, stood on a lofty cliff at Gokarna and ordered the turbulent sea to recede, by throwing his axe at it. The sea withdrew up to the point where the axe fell and the land surfaced. This land is sometimes called Parasurama Kshetram. It was rich in resources and the Sage gifted it to the Brahmins as atonement for the sins committed by him in killing the Kshatriyas, the ruling class. This is an oft repeated story, passed on from generation to generation, and upheld by the ancient work called "Keralotpatti".

The geographers and historians, nevertheless, do not accept the legend in toto. They do agree that the present Kerala used to be submerged in the Indian Ocean and the Indian subcontinent stretched only up to the present south Karnataka-north Kerala region. According to them, the heavy downpours in the Western Ghats resulted in rather continuous landslides, which ultimately filled the coastal seas and gave birth to a new stretch of land - the present Kerala. Such withdrawals of the seas and land formations are not uncommon in Oceanology.

Also, the historians do not accept the theory that the Namboothiri Brahmins who were of Aryan origin - were the first inhabitants of Kerala. The Aryans migrated to Kerala from the north only around the fourth century A.D. and thereafter. They brought Hinduism to Kerala. A few historians are of the view that the King Mayura Varma sent Brahmin families to Kerala from Ahichatra in North India.

It seems that the people of the ancient times deliberately avoided the forests of Kerala, which used to be infested by



Parasurama bidding the Sea God (Varuna) to withdraw the waters

Malaria-bearing mosquitoes and man-eating tigers. No relic of the Stone Age, or a single authentic Neolithic implement, has been discovered there.

It should be believed that the present Kerala region used to be inhabited after the Neolithic times. Dolmens belonging to this period have been unearthed from Idukki district. Similarly, the Edakkal Caves in Wayanad has inscriptions dating back to the Stone Age. A cave near the Edakkal caves in Thovaramala (Wayanad district) - popular as "Ezhuthupara" - also carries pre-historic carvings dating back to many millennia. Subsequently, in the course of history, the Dravidian civilization flourished here and brought in political and economic stability in this land.

Mankind is said to have appeared on Kerala soil as an Iron-Age builder of megaliths. "Man seems to have come late to Kerala even though Kerala today is the most heavily over-populated region of India -4% of all Indians live on 1% of India's land", observes Dr. Zacharias Thundy, in his Kerala Story. He further observes "Megaliths" or huge burial

stones carved by iron implements are scattered all along the ghats of Wynad in the north to Trivandrum in the south".

It is believed that the Dravidians, who had enjoyed a glorious time during the Indus Valley Civilization, were pushed down to the southern peninsular region of the country by the invading Aryans. From this civilization arose the powerful Dravidian kingdoms of yore like the Pallavas, Cheras, Cholas, Pandyas, and the Chalukyas. Of these, the first (before 500 AD) and the second (800-1200 AD) Chera Emperors are believed to have ruled the present day Kerala.

These two powerful kingdoms also contributed to its maritime trade, a new language called Malayalam, a new Malayalam Calendar, peculiar local art forms, Malayalee culture and the like.

The Chera Rule

The anthologies of the Sangam literature are perhaps our main source of information regarding the early Chera Kingdoms of Southern India. Scholars, by and large, agree that this literature belongs to the first few centuries after

Christ. The chronology of events within these works, however, is not without controversy. The Sangam literature is full of names of the kings, their families and other royal persons, and also of the poets who extolled them. Despite a rich literature that depicts the life and work of these people, at times, the information of the past is unable to relate to the history of these kingdoms. Therefore, present days' knowledge on the history of these south Indian kingdoms of yore appears to be a mix of facts, legends and myths.

The Cheras were the earliest prominent rulers of the present Kerala region. The Chera rule could be divided into two periods - with an interim Kalabhra period in between. The first dynasty of Cheras is said to have perished in the third Century AD. After this, this territory passed through a dark period that lasted for about four centuries. This dark era is known as the 'Kalabhra Interregnum'. At the end of the eighth century, South Indian kingdoms such as the Pallavas, the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas and the Pandyas succeeded in overthrowing the Kalabhras.

At the end of the eighth century, when the Kalabhras were deposed and routed out, a new kingdom founded by the saintly Kulasekhara Alvar emerged from the Dark Age. This kingdom was known as the Second Chera Empire (800 - 1102 A.D). The other two major Tamil dynasties at that time were the Cholas in the eastern Coromandel Coast (Chozhamandalam) and the Pandyas in the South Central Peninsula. Chera rulers engaged in frequent wars and also established alliances through marriages with the Pandyas and Cholas.

The Chera, Chola and Pandya dynasties are said to be the siblings and descendants of the rulers of the ancient Tamil Speaking World (Thamizhakam).

The First Chera Kingdom

The first Chera Dynasty, ruled southern India from before the Sangam Era. (BC 300 - AD 250), until the third/fourth century AD. The Early Sangam Literature describes the Cheras as the Villavar (Hunter) people. Similarly, these ancient Tamil inscriptions refer to the Chera kings as Villavar Kon - the king of Villavars (hunters). The insignia of the Chera rulers and their flag always had a bow and arrow on them, symbolizing the hunting devices of yore. The Sangam works treat the Chera kingdom as the Hill Country (Malainadu), while the kingdoms of Pandyas as the Old Country. The Chola territory was the New Country and the

Pallavas were a branch of theirs, according to them.

The early Cheras ruled the present Kerala and the Kongu Nadu region (Coimbatore, Erode and Salem districts) in the Western Tamilnadu. The capital was Vanchi Muthur - the present-day's Karur in the present Salem district of Tamil Nadu. There are some arguments that Vanchi Muthur was perhaps in Kanthallur-Kizhanthur region of the present Idukki District of Kerala, and the administrative capital was shifted to Karur (Karur Vanchi) only in the second century. The unknown author of Periplus of the Erythrean Sea mentions Cheras as Cerobothra (Keralaputhra) with their capital at Karur, while Pliny - the Roman historian of the first century - calls them Caelobothras.

The Cheras controlled a large territory of the present Kongu region. Chera Chenguttuvan is said to have won a war against Kongar or Ganga people. They also ruled the Kodunthamizh regions of Venadu (present days' Travancore) and the Malabar territory on the West Coast through vassals. They were in contact with the Satavahanas in the north and with the Romans and Greeks. Trade flourished within the territory and overseas and there was a considerable inflow of gold and silver coins, as proved by the archaeological evidences and documentations.

Throughout the reign of the Cheras, trade continued to bring prosperity to this Tamil Country (a part of which was the

modern-day Kerala. The spices, ivory, timber, pearls and gems were exported to Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Phoenicia and Arabia from this kingdom. The Romans are reported to have brought vast amounts of gold in exchange of 'Kari' (Black Pepper) from the Malainadu of the Chera Kingdom. The Europeans are said to have known the taste of spices for the first time through the imports from this land.

Evidence of extensive foreign trade during the ancient period is available throughout the Malabar Coast, from the Greek, Roman and Arabic coins unearthed from Kollam, Kodungallur, Eyyal (near Thrissur), etc in Kerala. Muziris has been mentioned by many ancient writers, like the author of the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, as an inland port probably near Kodungallur. Chera coins and inscriptions of the Sangam era are reported to have been found in Pattanam, near Kodungallur in Kerala, Karur, Namakkal, Erode and Coimbatore regions of modern-day Tamil Nadu.

Both the first and second Chera Rulers followed Hinduism. It is believed that the early Cheras were Saivites, while the Vaishnava cult developed during the second dynasty. Other religions like Buddhism came to this area during the period of the Chera Kings. Jainism came to Chera Kingdom by the second century BC. It is said that Cheraman Perumal who ruled the Chera Dynasty in the late 8th century accepted the Islamic faith.

To be continued



B K S celebrated Onam on 26th September with various cultural programmes followed by Onasadya. Rajiv Patil, Mayor of Vasai Vikas Municipal Corporation was the Chief Guest at the function. P V K Nambiar, President B K S lighting the lamp during the function.

Your Home



HANDY HINTS FOR BETTER LIVING

Around the House

The best way to make a room look attractive and spacious is to avoid crowding it with too many things, be it furniture, showpiece items or anything else. A single painting or artefact should be the focus and the others should be added around this. This gives a specific character to the room. Avoid clutter. What is not needed goes out either to charity, or to the dustbin. A clutterless room exudes positive energy..Also ensure that natural light enters the room during the day.

Wipe glass surfaces with a tissue paper. The surface sparkles like new.

Sprinkle talcum powder in the box in which rubber bands are stored. They will not stick together.

To remove stains from walls of the room, rub a little toothpaste on the stains. After half an hour, wipe the spots with a damp cloth, dipped in hot water. The stains will disappear.

Left with vitamin tablets that are long



past their expiry date? Powder them, add it in water and pour them over your potted plants. The plants will thrive in growth. The same goes for vegetable peels and skins. Put them at the base your plants. They are good, chemical free

natural fertilizers.

Oil stains on your new dress? Sprinkle some talcum powder on the spot and wipe the surface after ten minutes. The powder absorbs the oil and your dress will smell with the perfume of the talcum powder.



Around the Kitchen

Everybody likes *palak* (spinach). It is nutritious and very good for health and is available all the year round. With a little care we can cook this and consume it without destroying its nutritional value. First of all, we should wash the *palak* twice or thrice in running water to remove the mud and dirt in it. During the rainy season, we should be more careful about this. Never cook the *palak* in pressure cooker. It spoils the nutrients it contains. Neither should it be fried in oil. The best way to cook *palak* is to cook it with a little water in a vessel that is partially covered in medium flame. Add as little masala as possible. The essence of *palak* is retained in this way.

The humble *idli* made with boiled rice and udad dal is the most wholesome and healthiest of snacks. It is oil free containing carbohydrates and proteins and the ingredients indigenous and hence easy on the purse. The method of preparing the dish is also easy.

When we prepare any dish with raw plaintains, using coconut oil, instead of refined oil, increases the taste.

Use coriander and curry leaves in the side dishes. Coriander leaves are good to control gas formation in the stomach, while curry leaves not only help in digestion, but also prevent premature greying of hair.

While cooking *tur dal* for sambhar, add a spoon of *methi* in the *dal* and boil the same. The aroma of sambhar when prepared is superb. *Methi* cools our body also.



A clutter free kitchen

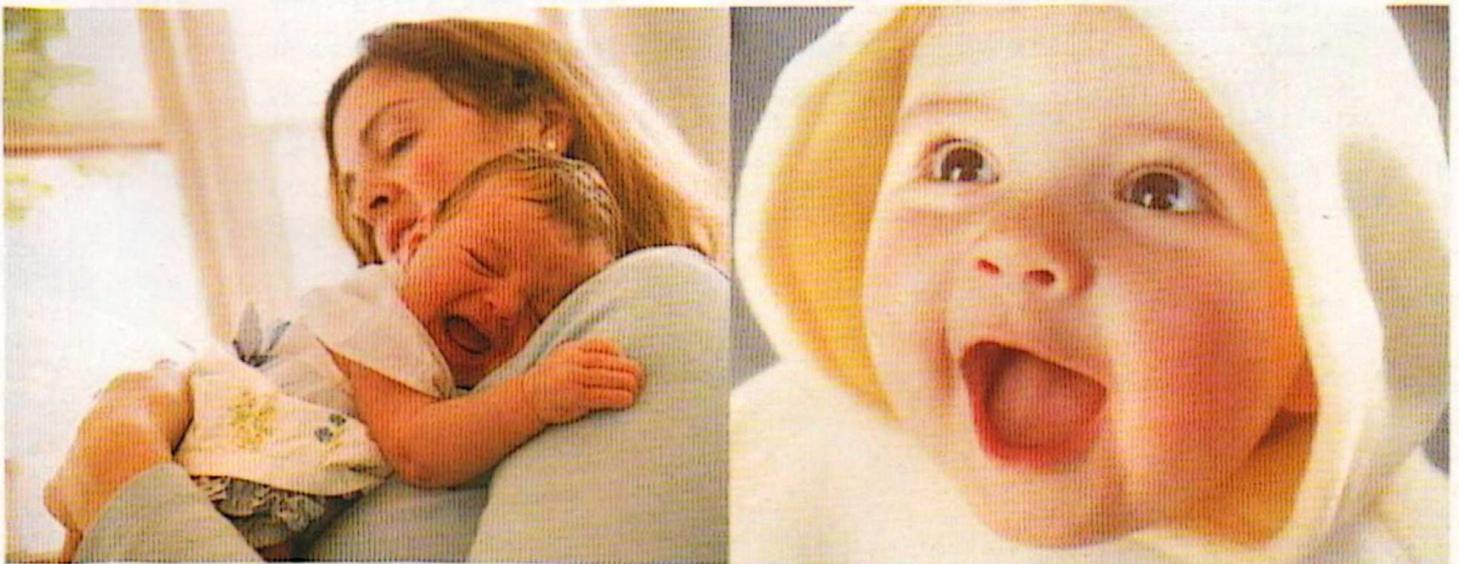
Babies and Crying

The first thing a baby learns is to cry. That is its way of communicating to the world. In fact doctors check whether a newborn is crying which is what he/she is supposed to do if he/she is normal. The cries clear the lungs of the fluid in which the baby was swimming while in the mother's womb, and make the lungs strong.

But too much crying of the baby over a long period of time should not be ignored.

A newborn may cry just to feel his/her mother's arms around it and feel the comforting warmth of the mother. So

hold the baby close to your heart in a warm hug. The crying will stop. But sometimes the reasons for crying may be more serious, especially after one year. If your child takes his hands near his ears and cry, maybe he is having ear ache and should be taken to the doctor. An untreated ear ache can lead to problems in the brain. If the baby cries out in sharp screams, maybe he/she is having pains on her hands and legs. A baby who is having temperature may cry. Give anti-fever drops and ensure the fever does not go to high levels. If the baby continues to keep on crying for more than two days, it is best to take him/ her to the doctor.



Beauty Care



Rashma Anand

Facials For looking Great and Feeling Fresh

As the festive season approaches, we all want to look our best. Many of us, I am sure have started adding one more round to our morning walks and reducing one round (be it *chappati, idli or dosa*) from our dinner. All this in anticipation of the sweets and farsan that will come our way during Diwali.

An important aspect of how we look is our face. Now is the time the neighbourhood parlour is at its busiest. All of us are in line to get our facials done. Actually the effect of a facial is visible on our faces three or four days after it is done and lasts for a month. So it is a good idea to schedule our facial two or three days prior to the big day.

What is a facial?

There are four basic steps involved in a facial. These are:

1. Cleansing
2. Exfoliation and extraction
3. Facial Massage and
4. Application of facial mask.

CLEANSING: Facial begins with a thorough cleansing using damp cotton pads or sponge. The superficial dirt and grime is wiped off using cleansing milk and other agents chosen depending on the skin type.

EXFOLIATION: This is the step where the dead cells on the face are removed away. It is the dead cells on the surface that gives our face a dull look.

There are basically two different methods of exfoliation mechanical and chemical. Mechanical exfoliation involves

physically scrubbing the skin with exfoliants such as crushed apricot kernel or almond shells, sugar or salt crystals. Facial scrubs available in the market may also be used. Steam is also a very good exfoliant. So one method most commonly used is steaming. A jet of steam is directed on to your face. This helps open up the pores to facilitate deep cleaning. Some facials may use steam towels instead. Chemical exfoliants include scrubs containing certain chemical agents like salicylic acid, glycolic acid and others. But these are normally used by dermatologists in treating skin conditions like acne and not in parlours.

Extraction: Extraction refers to the removal of impurities within the pores such as blackheads and whiteheads. Even the acne prone area is cleaned now.

FACIAL MASSAGE

Once the extraction is over, one needs to close the open pores. This is done by applying toners. The beautician

chooses a toner based on your skin type. This is followed by facial massage using creams and lotions to both relax you and stimulate your skin and facial muscles.

FACE MASK: The last step is the application of the face mask. A face mask is to be chosen depending on your skin type. The mask is kept on for 15 minutes to half an hour, till it dries up



Do yourself facial kit: Crushed apricot kernel or almond shells, sugar or salt crystals are good exfoliants. Rose water or honey with lime is a good toner.

Pulp of pear, grapes, watermelon, papaya and strawberry are good face masks for dry skin. Cucumber apple and peach pulp is good as face mask for oily skin.

Splashing of cold water on your face at least thrice a day works wonders for that refreshing look.

completely. Then you can wash your face and pat it dry.

SKIN TYPES

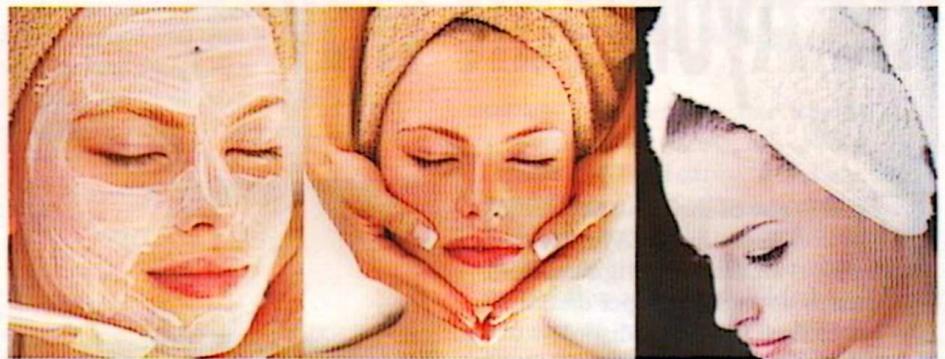
The products used in the facial will vary according to the individual's skin type. There are different types of facials for different skin types. Basically there are three skin types normal, dry, oily. The fourth is a combination skin, where there would be a combination of any two of the above skin types.

Normal Skin: Normal skin is supple, even toned, and free from blemishes and has the perfect balance of oil and dryness. In short it is the perfect skin. If you have normal skin, facial is done using products that are mild and well balanced in terms of oil control and moisture retention.

Dry Skin: For the dry skin, moisture requirement is very high. Cleanse the skin using a milky cleanser. Exfoliate using a gentle facial scrub and rub the skin in a circular motion. Keep in mind that though steaming is effective in removing the dirt, it also removes the essential oils, making the skin even drier. So use steaming occasionally and never for more than two or three minutes. Also toners tend to dry the skin. So use mild, alcohol free toners for dry skin. Finally apply a hydrating face mask. Any milk cream based mask may be used. *Multani miiti* or Fullers Earth face mask is also good for dry skin. Fruit masks containing avocado, pear, grape, watermelon, papaya and strawberry are

You can use the following method to know where the oily and dry areas of your skin are. Wash your face with a foaming cleanser. Pat it dry. Do not apply any toner or moisturizer to it for the next half hour. Press a tissue to your face an hour after washing it.

Any greasy patches on the tissue show the oily areas. Normally, the T zone, the skin from the forehead to the nose area tends to be oily, while the rest is dry. Of course, this is not always true and as we are individuals and not machine made robots, each of us may have different combination of oily and dry skin.



Three steps of a facial

also recommended.

Oily Skin: Oily skin is very greasy and needs products that will help remove excess oil. The cleansing agent should be left on for little longer so that the dirt and grime are well dissolved. Also steaming is very good for oily skin as it removes the excess oil. Steaming can be done once a week, and for five to eight minutes. A stronger toner such as an astringent may be used. And finally face masks that have the ability to

absorb oil need to be used. You can use any face mask containing cucumber, apple or peach.

Combination Skin:

You have to find out which areas of your skin are oily and which are dry. And then work out with your beautician the best facial for you.

So go ahead. Give your face the pampering it deserves. And bask in the glory of your glow.

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Your Health

Proper Eating Habits: the Ayurvedic Way



Dr Sandhya P Varier

Food is one of the basic necessities in life. According to Ayurveda almost all diseases originate from the stomach through improper diet. It is now established that many disorders of digestion and even certain other diseases are due to irregularities in diet. Regarding food many factors such as its quantity, nature and time should be considered.

One should always eat a determined quantity of food. This quantity is determined by the digestive capacity of the individual and nature of the food material. An ideal quantity is that which does not cause heaviness of abdomen, quenches hunger and thirst, and undergoes easy digestion. Ayurveda says that half of the stomach should be filled with solid foods, one quarter with liquids and another quarter should be kept vacant for air.

Our diet should be a balanced one. It should contain all the required nutrients in the required quantity and quality. There should be a balance between the various ingredients like carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. The food which we take should be warm and should contain all the six tastes namely, sweet, sour, salt, bitter, pungent, and astringent. The diet should contain fruits, vegetables, fish, milk, pulses, egg, meat, cereals etc. The staple diet may vary according to the place and one's community. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are best accepted by the body. In cold season horse gram is good

*Ayurveda advises freshly prepared food*

to restore warmth. During summers vegetables and fruits which have a lot of water content like cucumber, ash gourd, snake gourd, bottle gourd, and water melons should be included in the daily diet. Spicy and excessively salty foods are to be avoided always. After taking solid foods it is good to drink lukewarm water, butter milk etc.

It is very necessary to decide a suitable time to take food. The digestive organs and their functions get conditioned for effective digestion if this habit is maintained. It should not be taken very late in the evening and not very early in the morning. Late and early food habits

may lead to indigestion. It has become a habit these days to keep munching something or the other whenever we like. This is not a good practice as per Ayurvedic principles, as it dampens the digestive fire. There should be a gap of at least four hours between two successive meals. However fruits, vegetable soups, fruit juice, lukewarm water, tender coconut water, and warm and diluted milk, and buttermilk may be taken even in between, if necessary. Our diet has to be adjusted in such a way as to maintain the ideal body weight with reference to height. The obese should limit the use of meat, sweets, fermented food, ice creams, oils, ghee, milk, curd, black gram, banana, mango, sapota (*chikku*), jack fruit, grapes and dates. Honey, wheat, horse gram, green gram, bitter and astringent vegetables, pepper, buttermilk and gooseberry help in losing weight. Ghee, milk, and meat are fattening and may be consumed by those who wish to

Honey, wheat, horse gram, green gram, bitter and astringent vegetables, pepper, buttermilk and gooseberry help in losing weight. Ghee, milk, and meat are fattening and may be consumed by those who wish to increase their body weight. Apple, orange, papaya, and guava are suitable for all body types.

Symptoms of Indigestion

Indigestion may cause bloating of abdomen, pain in abdomen, giddiness, headache, vomiting, nausea, loss of appetite, acidity and constipation.

Tips to cure indigestion.

One teaspoon of powdered ginger, asafoetida (*hing*), and ajwain (*ayamodagam*) mixed in equal quantities is useful for relieving bloating and belching.

Buttermilk mixed with rock salt relieves abdominal pain due to indigestion. One teaspoon of powder of dried ginger, black pepper, and long pepper, mixed with buttermilk, is very effective in loss of appetite due to indigestion.

Garlic milk: 1 teaspoon garlic paste boiled in a 1 glass of a mixture of milk and water in equal quantities, is good for bloating and flatulence.

Drinking water just before food, helps in reducing the food intake and thereby results in weight loss. On the contrary, when water is taken after meals, it assists assimilation and fattens the body.

1 teaspoon ginger juice with a small piece of jaggery improves digestion.



Fruits and Vegetables are good for proper digestion

increase their body weight. Apple, orange, papaya, and guava are suitable for all body types.

In addition to the staple food, Ayurveda states that the following items need to be a part of one's routine diet. They are gooseberry, honey, ghee, pomegranate, green gram, rock salt, buttermilk and

sprouts.

Precautions during the festive season

During the festival season, Indians consume a lot of sweets and fried snacks. Especially Diwali is the season of sweets and dry fruits. Exchange of

sweets is a common practice this season. All this takes a toll on our digestive system capacity and are not good for health if taken excessively. Also they are not of much nutritive value. Anyhow they may be used in moderation and one should always avoid over indulgence. We should avoid foods that are unclean, very hot, stale, over-cooked, and re-heated. With a little precaution and proper eating habits, we can lead a life that is free from stomach troubles.

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MUMBAI NEWS DIGEST

KIM News Bureau

VETERAN EDUCATIONIST P A MENON HONOURED

The Shatabhishekam (sighting of 1000 full moons) of veteran educationist and Chairman of the Bhandup Education Society, P A Menon, was celebrated on 4th October at the V K Krishna Menon College Auditorium.

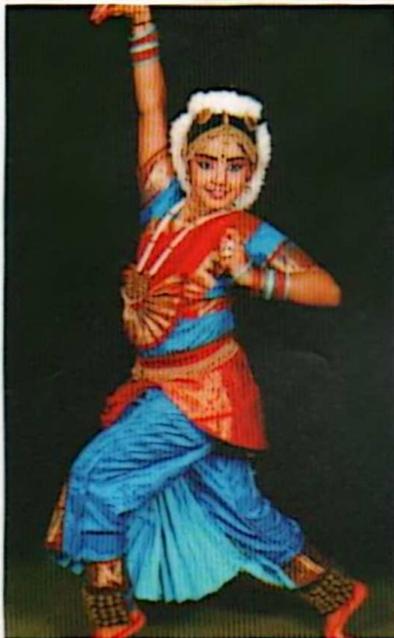
Over a dozen speakers drawn from various fields, eulogized the services of Mr. Menon in promoting education for girls and for the weaker sections of society over the last four decades.

Among the prominent speakers were former Mayor of Mumbai, R R Singh, Dr. N Radhakrishnan, S. R. Pillai, Kumaran Nair, Manorama Dina Barna Patil, Baba Kadam and PK Ravindranath.

Mr. Menon, in his reply, said strict adherence to Gandhian principles and his insistence that no injustice should be done to anybody, had enabled him to earn the goodwill of the local residents. He was glad that it had enabled him to be of service to the student community.



P A Menon escorted to the reception



Dancing with folded toes

Ten year old Jyotsna V Nair performs Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam with her toes folded. At the Onam celebrations organised by NSS at Nerul this year, Jyotsna enthralled her audience by performing a Mohiniattam number on folded toes. At her Bharatanatyam *arangetram* at Vashi, she did a piece with folded toes.

Jyotsna's mother, recalls that even as a child, she used to walk with folded toes and never complained of any pain.

She showed this ability to walk on folded toes at the age of 2. Later she started to play, jump and dance on folded toes. When the dance teacher came to know about this, she asked to do Bharatanatyam on folded toes and it opened a new chapter in her life.

All this has prompted her parents to send a video performance and a note on her talent of dancing with folded toes to the Guinness and Limca Book of World Records authorities.

Jyotsna is learning classical dance from Sushma Gopinath who conducts dance classes in her Navarasa Dance Academy in Nerul. She has participated in many dance shows organised by local bodies. She has also presented Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam at various temples in Kerala and in Navi Mumbai.

Her mother is Raji and father Vijayakumar Ottapath. Both are from Kerala. Jyotsna has one elder brother Jishnu who is studying in Std X. She is studying at DAV Public School in New Panvel and she lives with her family at New Panvel.

New Managing Committee of Shree Ayyappa Seva Samithi, Airoli

Shree Ayyappa Seva Samithi, Airoli held their 15th Annual General Body Meeting and elected the new Managing Committee for the two ensuing years. They are: C.K.Kumar (President) K.Bhaskaran (Vice President) N.Ramakrishnan (Gen.Secretary) A.Radhakrishnan (Secretary) M.M.Venukuttan Nair (Treasurer) D.Pradeep Kumar and

K.V.Vijayan Pillai (Jt.Treasurer).

Committee Members are Sivasankaran Nair, S.S.Pillai, B.Rajan Pillai, Sivankutty A.Nair, K.Sasidharan, M.T.V.Panicker, M.G.Ravindran Nair, K.Krishnadas Nair, Thachnamoorthy A.S., Sunil P.P., E.K.Ravindranath, Somasundara Menon, T.P.R.Unny and P.Raman (Internal Auditors).

The new committee decided to complete the Alankara Gopuram at the earliest. The work of Krishansila flooring has



From the Dance ballet *Panchali Shapatham*

Foundation Day celebrations of Upaasana

Upaasana Academy of Fine Arts Chedda Nagar celebrated their Foundation Day on October 2 at New SNTD Auditorium Matkopar, with a programme of Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam

Nrithya Sri Award to Swetha C Warriar

Swetha C Warriar, resident of Dombivli, Mumbai, won the *Nrithya Sri* Award at the Theatre Olympiad 2010 All India Music and Dance Competition held in Cuttack in the Bharatanatyam and Folk dance sections. The Competition was held under the auspices of Utkal Youth Sanskritik Sangh and supported by the UNESCO Cultural wing and the Cultural departments of the Governments of Orissa and West Bengal. Swetha is a Std V student of Dombivli Model English School. She is the first Malayalee and the youngest participant to win this Award. This young dancer has won many awards and prizes in many dance competitions. Swetha is the daughter of C G Chandrasekhar Warriar, President of Tru Indian, Information & Guidance Society, and dance teacher Ambika Warasier. They are residents of Dombivili. Swetha is the grand daughter of late R P Warriar, a Kathakali artist.

Kerala Asia's best Travel Destination

Kerala Tourism got a boost when the million-plus readers of the acclaimed travel portal, placed the state as the best Asian holiday destination ahead of Bali, Phuket and the Maldives in a poll conducted over 3 months across Asia (India, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, and the Middle East), Europe and North America. The only other Indian destinations to be listed in the top 10 were Rajasthan and Goa - at eighth and 10th spot respectively. Kerala's spread of morning dishes - velayappam, Uppuma, iddli, puttu, masala dosa and appams have been rated the best breakfast in the world by Travel & Leisure magazine.

Namasankeerthana Felicitation

Namasankeerthana of Dombivili is conducting a Namasankeerthana Feast and Felicitation Function 2010 on November 13 and 14 at Pragati College Dombivili East. The chief guest is Dr. M. Sambasivan Neurosurgeon and Chairman of Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage. Namasankeerthana is an organization that strives to make the youth aware of the heritage of Namasankeerthana (Signing the praise of God). It also provides scholarships to deserving students and free medical camps.

and parts of their dance ballet *Panchali Shapatham*. It was a programme dedicated to perpetuate the memory of their music Director K Narayanan who passed away that day in 2008. K Naryanan was a postgraduate in Zoology and worked as a lecturer in Madras Christian College. At the age of 32, however, he gave up his teaching job in favour of a full time career in music. He has composed music for many of Upaasana's dance ballets. The performances were staged by Upaasana's past and present students ranging from the age of six to fifty. The highlight of the evening was the rendering from the Dance ballet *Panchali Shapatham*, dedicated to their teacher K Narayanan, who had composed the music for this item based on a poem by the Tamil poet Bharathiyar. All the participants took part in this ballet. The songs were sung by Jayashree's daughter Sujatha Nair Sanjay. *Nattuvangam* and choreography was by Jayashree Nair, the founder of Upaasana.

Bharatanatyam recital by Sujata Nair

The Upasana Academy of Fine Arts also presented a Bharata Natyam recital by Jayashree's daughter and disciple, Sujata Nair Sanjay, at the Mysore Association Auditorium. The performance was noteworthy for its completeness, as the dancer did complete justice to the structural pattern of Bharata natyam and its expressions too.

Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademy's Recognition To Lalitha Kalalayam

Lalitha Kalalayam Fine Arts Academy, a fine Arts Institution in Dombivili has received recognition from Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademy, Thrissur. The recognition was awarded by Mukesh, Chairman of the Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademy, during his visit to Mumbai. The Director of Lalitha Kalalayam, Nambishan, stated that the Award was given for the efforts taken by the Kalalayam to promote Kerala and its temple arts in other States.

Talks on Man of Perfection and Discourses on Japji Sahib

Chinmaya Mission is organising talks on 'Man of Perfection' based on the Bhagavad Geeta 2nd Chapter at Olympia Quadrangle, Hiranandani Business Park from November 14-18 from 7.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. by its Director Swami Swaroopananda. He will also give a discourse on Japji Sahib based on Guru Granth Sahib from November 15-18 from 7.00 am to 8.00 a.m. at the same venue.

Srimad Bhagavatha Saptaha Mahayagnam

Shree Ayyappa Seva Sangham, Powai is organising Srimad Bhagavatha Saptaha Mahayagnam at the Sree Ayyappa Vishnu temple from November 1- 7, 2010. Swami Sanmayananda Saraswathi of Narayanalayam, Palghat will be the Yagnacharyan.

FOT members to visit Jal Vayu Vihar Gardens

Members of the National Society of Friends of the Trees (FOT) visited Jal Vayu Vihar Gardens and Nirvana Park in Hiranandani Gardens on October 24, 2010. They also attended an exhibition of Bonsai at Jal Vayu Vihar. The whole programme will be organised by Dr. Saraswati Unnithan, Ex-Curator of Birds, Bomabay Natural History Society and a Bonsai expert.



Kerala in Mumbai

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