

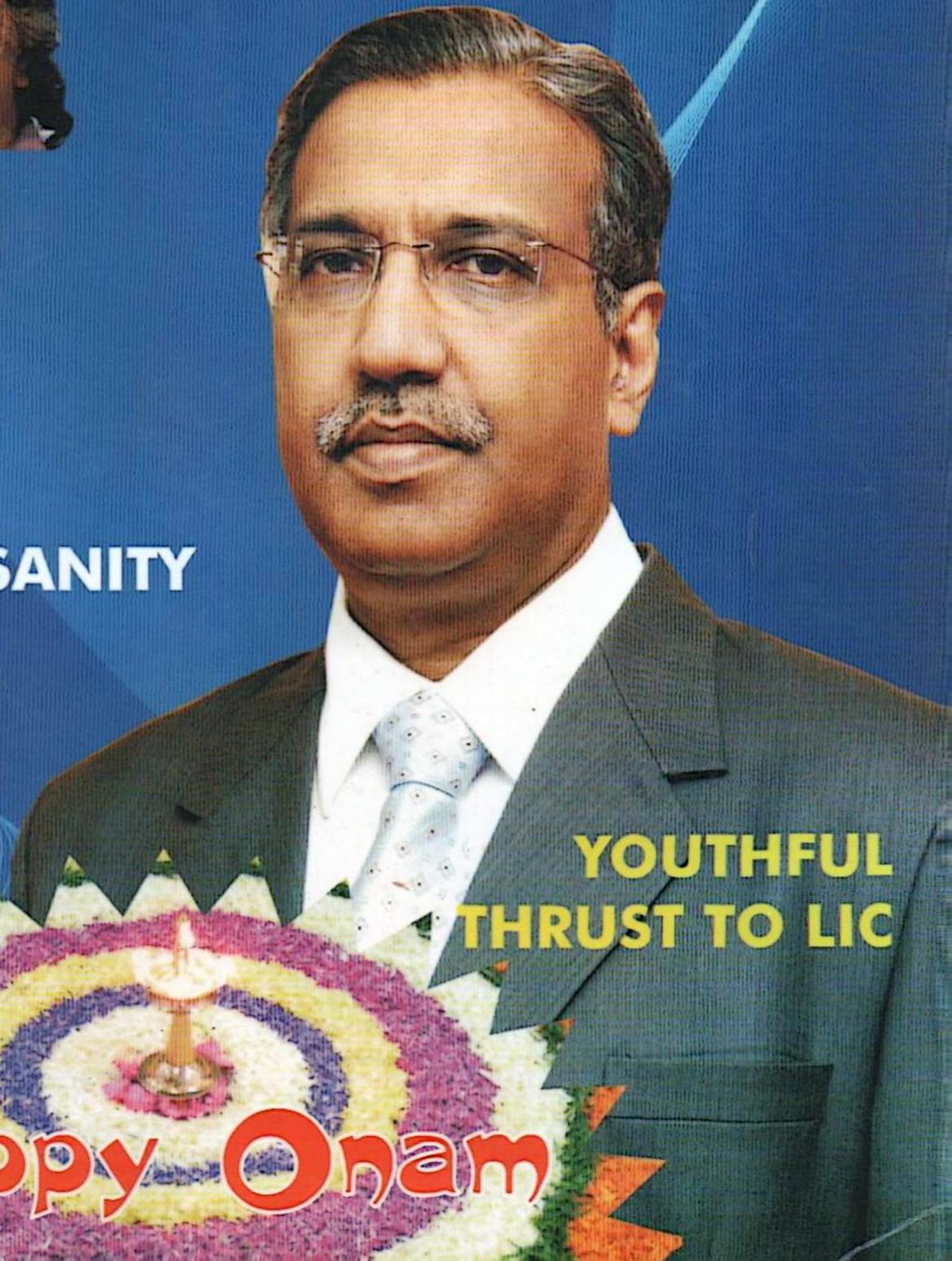
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Kerala

in Mumbai
August 2010



**VOICE OF SANITY
IN MEDIA**



**YOUTHFUL
THRUST TO LIC**

Happy Onam

Kerala in Mumbai Vol 01, No.07 August 2010

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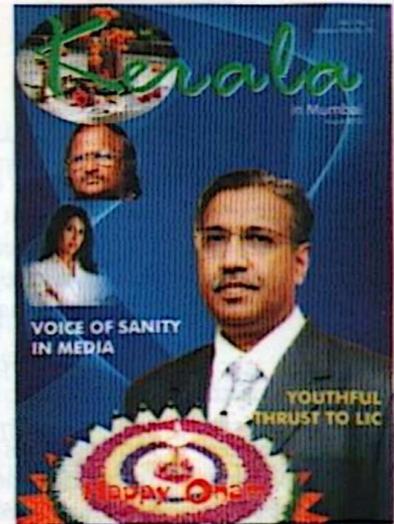
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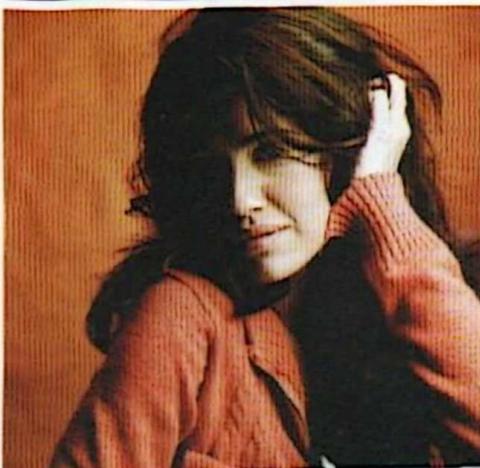
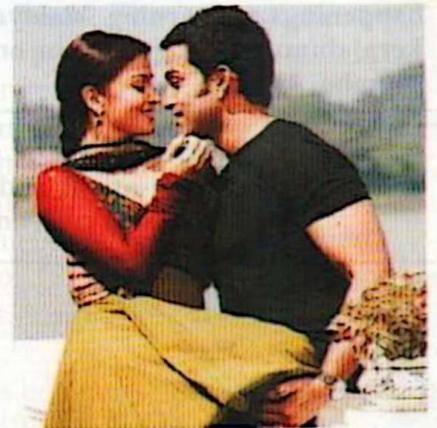
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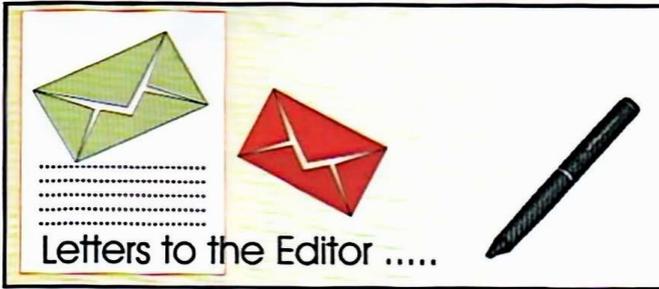
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I have gone through the July 2010 issue of your esteemed publication "Kerala In Mumbai". I did it with great interest. It has depth, variety and style, not to speak of the excellence of printing and the paper used. I am sure the magazine will be a source of both education and entertainment to Keralites in Mumbai.

- G H Ananthanarayanan

Your magazine "Kerala In Mumbai" has come as a surprise to me. This would have come a long time ago as its need was felt for quite some time Younger generation of Mumbai Malayalees was groping in the dark to pick up information about Kerala as they never learnt Malayalam to go through Malayalam books and periodicals.

Congratulations for taking initiative to address their needs!

- Sudha R Nair, Mulund (W)

Prof Vijayashankar's article on 'Kathakali' is an extensive piece of research on the history of this novel dance form of Kerala. We look forward to the future issues. Similar articles are long ignored by other Malayalam periodicals not only from Mumbai but from Kerala too.

Keep going!

- Sathi Unni, Mira Road

Having gone through your Magazine 'Kerala in Mumbai' of June & July 2010, I have great pleasure to put forth the following suggestions to include one-by-one in the forthcoming issues. The importance of pilgrimage centres spread across the 'Gods own country' :

Thriprayar Ramaswamy Temple, Guruvayoor Sri Krishna Temple, Sri Vadakkunathan Temple, Kodungallur Bhagawati Temple, Irinjalakkuda Koodalmanikyam Temple (the only Bharatha Temple in India), Chottanikkara Bhagawati Temple, Vaikkam Mahadevar Temple, Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple, Ambalapuzha Krishna Temple etc.etc. Thrissur Pooram 'Aithiyam' - Thiruvambady & Paramakkavu Bhagawatis Likewise, the importance of Churches and also Mosques spread across the state. This will not only educate the younger generation (born and brought over outside Kerala like Mumbai and other Metros) but also informative and interest reading by the Middle Aged and Senior Citizen of all states. Quality of paper and printing are too good. I wanted to give some more suggestions to improved reading that will be done gradually else there will be space constraint for other's opinion to put forth in the letters to the Editor column.

-S. Mahadevan, Thrissur. Email : smahadevaiyer@rediffmail.com

Your magazine "Kerala In Mumbai" has something to cheer about as we see a number of new writers contributing articles to your esteemed magazine. Probably their names never appeared in any other periodicals, as I an ardent reader have never seen them. It is a pleasant experience to know that we have so many Malayalee writers in Mumbai who write in English. May their tribe flourish!

- K S K Iyer, Dahisar

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 to via e-mail keralainmumbai@gmail.com or by post to Editor, Kerala In Mumbai, 105-B, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Mumbai 400 059.

September issue of KERALA IN MUMBAI will focus on Mira Road and October issue will be on Chembur. Organisations and personalities of these areas may forward their reports/opinions along with relevant photographs to the Editor, KERALA IN MUMBAI

ഓണാശംസകൾ



EDITORIAL*Onam, celebration and reflection*

Onam has always been the most important celebratory festival in the Malayalam calendar. A ten day festival, it marks the end of the harvest and the replenishment of granaries, at a time when everything is green and every conceivable flower in full bloom.

It has been an occasion for family reunions, with every peripatetic Malayalee heading for home, to be with the extended family to take in the best of the season. Till recently the migrant Malayalee received the same warm and affectionate welcome as did Mahabali, the most virtuous and considerate ruler Kerala had, according to legend.

Legend has it that he was banished from his kingdom by a conspiracy hatched in Heaven by envious Gods. They used deceit to oust him from power and deny him the company of the people he loved. While accepting banishment, even under such conditions, the virtuous model King asked for only one boon: that he be allowed to visit his loved people once a year. The people prepare for nine long days to welcome their loved ruler finally on the tenth day Thiruvonam, with feast and festivities.

Shorn of all the celebrations, this legend of yore has a moral emblazoned, no doubt, by a guilty Divine band in Heaven who justified their questionable action, saying they divested Mahabali of all his wealth and his kingdom, "since it is wealth that makes a man proud and arrogant, which would lead him to insult the world and the Gods."

In other words, Mahabali was not being punished for any default of his, but to prevent him falling prey to his delusions nurtured by the love of his people and the glory they attributed to him.

Strange as the logic may seem to be, there is some truth hidden away in this terse saying. One of our perceptive readers and well-wisher draws attention to this aspect of Onam, which we tend to ignore. (See: "The Moral of Onam.")

Over a period of time, the significance of Onam has been lost on large sections of people. Even the celebratory aspect of the festival has been eroded in recent times. This is what every Malayalee, proud of his culture and attainments has to take note of.

Till a decade ago, several Malayalee organizations used to celebrate Onam with great *elan*, drawing in their fold all those who could not make it to Kerala during this period. Now the organizations in Mumbai celebrating the festival even in a token manner are few. They cannot be blamed either. Lifestyles in metropolises have changed. Working men and women are made to put in longer hours of work with lesser holidays and leisure. Working conditions have changed. Expanding populations and increasing number of vehicles on the roads have made commuting laborious and time-consuming. People cannot even reach destinations on time for rehearsals and preparations for Onam shows.

This does not bar celebration of this national festival of Malayalees being celebrated in homes and smaller groups and clusters at the local level. That is one way still open to keep the tradition alive. Divested of Onam, the Malayalee has no other cultural crutch to fall back on.

Quote of the month

All intelligent thoughts have already been thought, what is necessary is only to try to think them again.

-Goethe

T S Vijayan

Youthful Drive for Giant LIC

-P K Ravindranath

When T S Vijayan assumed charge as Chairman of Life Insurance Corporation of India, as the youngest person to hold that office, expectations were high. He set about giving the 54-year old giant financial institution a youthful outlook.

He changed the logo of the institution giving it a young, vibrant look. He went about expanding LIC's base in geographical terms and as a generator of employment. Distribution channels were restructured and customer service delivery mechanisms were revamped. Several new products like Health Insurance and Jeevan Aastha were launched. Then, LIC entered related businesses like pension, credit cards and the micro-insurance sector.

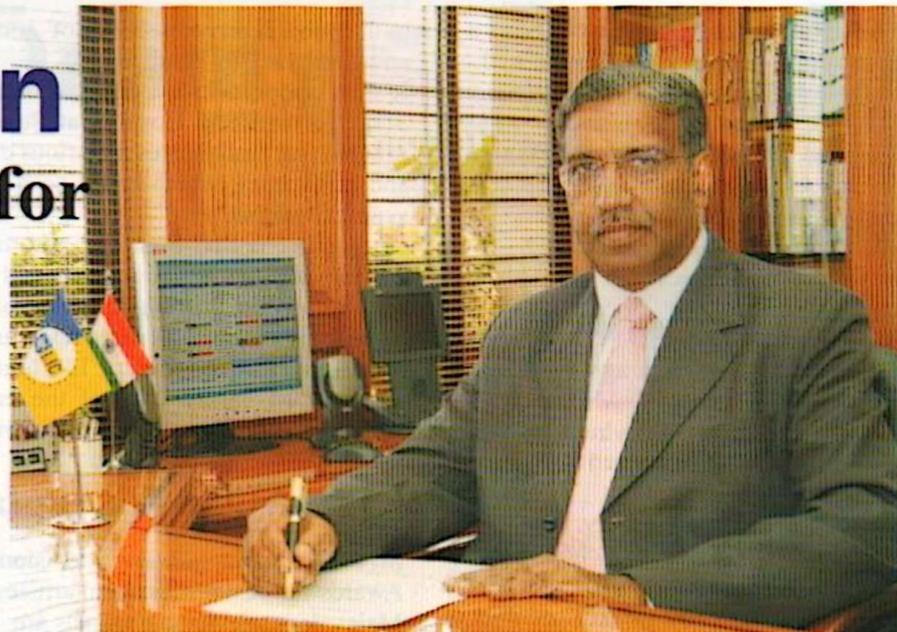
Within a short time the micro insurance policies have become significant instruments of financial inclusion.

Vijayan was driven by the fact that he would not allow LIC to remain a passive bystander to competition. When the insurance sector was thrown open to private players in 1999 no one expected that as many as three new players would start operations each year. Today there are 21 private insurance companies in India, besides LIC.

Specialising in Information Technology, Vijayan proved himself capable of handling new business and customer servicing. With a passion for creating insurance awareness, he has made it affordable to every section of society.

LIC today has about 25 crores policies and assets over Rs 12 lakhs crores. Competition to LIC started in 2006, with the emergence of national and international insurers. LIC then had a 72% market share. Today it has gone down to 65%. The nearest competitor to LIC, however, is only 1/10 th its size.

Among all the candidates who appeared for the direct recruitment of officers in 1977, Vijayan was the only one who came from a Malayalam medium college and had little hope. He was selected and sent to Mumbai. From there he had stints at



Nagpur, back to Mumbai, Thiruvananthapuram, Satara, Kalyan, Nagpur and Thiruvananthapuram again. LIC today is a huge, gigantic organisation with 852 satellite branches all over the country and employs over 1,90,000 persons.

LIC has 13.5 lakh agents. Vijayan plans to double this number by 2015. The aim is to ensure that LIC's products are consistent with needs of policy holders and the ever changing market scenario.

Vijayan, who prides on being a common man, is fully aware of the need to ensure the corporate social responsibility of LIC. During the Golden Jubilee Year in 2006 he set up the Golden Jubilee Foundation specifically to promote education, health, relief of poverty and distress. The Foundation has a corpus of Rs 70 crores. Till fiscal 2009, it had promoted 59 projects worth Rs. 7.5 crores. Among them are highly relevant ones like computer labs, youth hostels, a vocational training hostel, a hall for 50 blind students at the National Association for the Blind in Mumbai, 36 scholarships for blind students, a mobile blood donation ambulance and HIV-Aids Rehabilitation Centre.

Over the years, LIC's total assets have grown to Rs 8,73,551 crores. Vijayan plans to set apart 10% of the net profits of LIC each year for fulfilling its Corporate Social Responsibility.

Expanding overseas, LIC set up its first office abroad at Singapore in 2008. Since then it has got into Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UK, Fiji, Mauritius, Kenya, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It plans to expand to Sydney by setting up a business office.

In the four years he has been Chairman of LIC, Vijayan has ensured commen-

dable growth in business, in customer base and in the public perception of the organisation, as a dynamic, youthful and customer oriented body. He restructured the distribution channels and revamped the customer service delivery mechanism. The customer touch points became active and responsive.

LIC today is an embodiment of what an organisation can do to create an awareness of the benefits of insurance countrywide. It also leads in the sphere of insurance education in India.

The absolute volume of First Year Premium for the two quarters, upto September 2009 was Rs 25,814 crores, which was 35% more than the figure for June to September 2009.

LIC holds about 66% market share in new business premium. The market share of the next rival is only 6%.

During the fiscal 2009-10 LIC won the World Brand Congress Global Award for Brand Excellence 2009, Brand Leadership Award (Overall) 2009, and the Brand (Banking and Financial Services Category) Award. It also won the Asia-Pacific HRM Congress's Innovative HR practices Award 2009.

Vijayan launched a number of projects supported by the LIC Golden Jubilee Foundation. Among them are many for the advancement of education. Among them are:

The Assansol Braille Academy, Burdwan, a residential school for the blind, where free food, lodging, education and study material are provided.

The LIC Hostel at the Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Seva Ashram, at Annapur, which promotes education and health care for tribal girls, providing shelter for more than 75 inmates.

The Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Sarvajani Shikshan Mandal's Lok Vidyalaya, Talsani, Kolhapur Division

The LIC school here provides a well equipped laboratory, computer room, library and Gymnasium for about 270 students in a rural area.

Vocational Training Centre Sanskrit School, Umang, New Delhi, with 100 students, mostly dropouts from Government schools.

The LIC Library, Kharagpur Priyanath Roy Vidyaniketan, Malancha in Kharagpur Division, which provides reading facilities for about 1000 students and teachers and the public.

LIC Computer Laboratory, Snehalaya Guwahati Don Bosco School, which caters to 2000 students of Snehalaya mostly economically weaker sections of society.

LIC Medical Gymnasium, Asha School, Jabalpur, for physically challenged students of defence personnel and civilians.

LIC Orphanage, Paramanand Mission, Burdwan. It provides a home to 252 orphan and destitute children.

LIC School, Mohitnagar, the only Girls' High School in the area with 750 students. There are several such other projects taken up by LIC under the Golden Jubilee Foundation, which render yeomen service

to the poor, deprived sections of society and the physically handicapped.

It also supports the Cochlear Implant Surgeries at KEM Hospital at Pune. It runs several ambulances in various cities and rural areas, which badly need such support systems.

Vijayan is one LIC Chairman who takes his job seriously, and devotes all his attention on refurbishing the image of the organisation to make it more relevant to every day life in the country. LIC touches the lives of hardly 25% of the entire population of the country. His ambition

has been to bring in 50% of the population into the LIC network one way or the other.

Happily married to Gladys, Vijayan has two children: a daughter married and settled down, and a son, who is a medical intern at the Nair Hospital in Mumbai. The Vijayans have one grand daughter, Rhea.

The giant financial institution that LIC is, Vijayan believes it has yet to take giant strides to touch the lives of every family in the country, if not all the billion odd people.

Sri Malavika Saptaswara Television Awards

Sri Malavika Saptaswara Television Awards for best professional artistes of Malayalam television channels are being announced on August 15, the organisers Malaviaka Manoj Kumar and Prem Kumar informed. The selection of award winners is made through a gallop poll. The awards will be presented on August 28, at a special function to be held at Chembur Fine Arts Hall. For the maiden event, the awardees are selected for the last three years as most serials take about three years to conclude.

T N Gopakumar of Asianet and Music

Director Sarath are chosen for Life Time Achievement Award and Nada Pratibha respectively.

Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best News Reader and Debutant Presenter (Male and Female) are the categories open for gallop poll. Fans can send their votes by email to smsawards@gmail.com or by filling in forms published in prominent news papers and periodicals.

Award function will also witness a music programme by Idea Star Singer prize winners. For details contact 93245 06491 / 98200 89069.

Wish you all Happy Onam

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Website: www.manislunchhome.com

Fable on Ōñam

-Revati

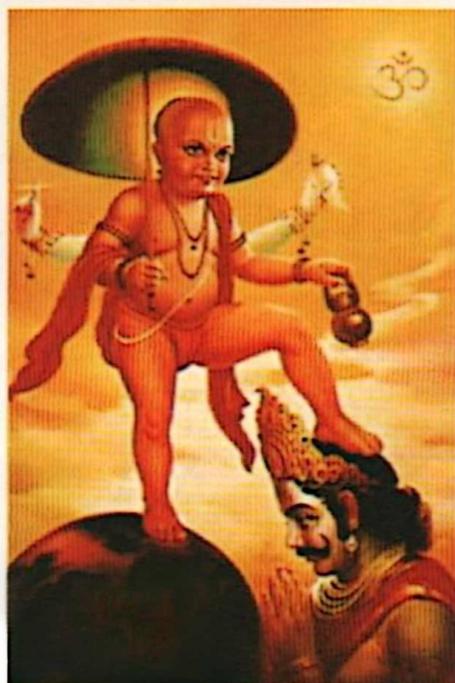


മാവേലി നാടു വാണീടും കാലം
 മാനുഷരെല്ലാരുമൊന്നുപോലെ
 ആമോദത്തോടെ വസിക്കും കാലം
 ആപത്തങ്ങാർക്കുമൊട്ടില്ലാതാനും
 ആധികൾ വ്യാധികൾ ഒന്നുമില്ലാ
 ബാലമരണങ്ങൾ കേൾപ്പാനില്ലാ
 പത്തായിരമാണ്ടിരിപ്പുമുണ്ട്
 പത്തായമെല്ലാം നിറവതുമുണ്ട്
 എല്ലാകൃഷികളുമൊന്നുപോലെ
 നെല്ലിനു നൂറുവിളവുമുണ്ട്
 ദുഷ്ടരെ കൺകൊണ്ടു കാണാതില്ലാ
 നല്ലവരല്ലാതെയില്ലാ പാരിൽ
 ഭൂലോകരാകെയുമൊന്നുപോലെ
 ആലയമൊക്കെയുമൊന്നുപോലെ
 നല്ല കനകം കൊണ്ടെല്ലാവരും
 നല്ലാരണങ്ങളണിഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ട്
 നാരിമാർ ബാലന്മാർ മറ്റൊന്നും
 നീതിയോടെങ്ങും വസിക്കും കാലം
 കള്ളവുമില്ലാ ചതിയുമില്ലാ
 എള്ളൊളുമില്ലാ പൊളിവചനം
 വെള്ളിക്കോലാദികൾ നാഴികളും
 എല്ലാം കണക്കിനു തുല്യമായി
 കള്ളപ്പറയും ചെറുനാഴിയും
 കള്ളത്തരങ്ങളുമൊട്ടുമില്ല
 നല്ല മഴയും വേണ്ടുംനേരം
 നല്ലപോലെല്ലാവിളവും പോരും
 മാവേലി നാടു വാണീടും കാലം
 മാനുഷരെല്ലാരുമൊന്നുപോലെ

Māvēli nātu vāneetum kālam
 Mānusharellārumonnu pōle
 Āmōdaṭṭōte vasikkum kālam
 Āpathañarkkumottillāṭānum
 Ādhikal vyādhikal onnumillā
 Bāla maranañal kēlppānillā
 Paṭṭāyiramañtiruppumugṭū
 Paṭṭāyamellām nirhavaṭṭuṭṭū
 Ellākṛshikalumonnupōle
 Nellinu nūrhuvilavumugṭū
 Dushtare kankondu kānmānillā
 Nallavarallāṭeyillāpārilpāril
 Bhūlōkarokkeyumonnupōle
 Ālayamokkeyumonnupōle
 Nalla kanakamkoṭellāvarum
 Nallābharaṇañalāṇiññukoṭṭū
 Nārimār bālanmār maṭellārum
 Nīṭiyōteṅnum vasikkum kālam
 Kāllavumillā caṭiyumillā
 Ellōlāmillā polivacanam
 Vēlīkkolādikal nāzhikalum
 Ellām kaṇakkinu ṭulyamāyi
 Kāllapparahayum cerhunāzhiyum
 Kāllāṭṭarangalumottumillā
 Nalla mazhayum vēṇṭum nēram
 Nallapōlella vilavum pōrum
 Māvēli nātu vāneetum kālam
 Mānusharellārumonnu pōle

Transliteration: Ā, ā = ആ, ാ; c = ച, ch = ചര, D, d = ദ, Dh, dh = ധ, Ḍ, ḍ = ള, Ḍh, ḍh = ഴ, Ē, ē = ഏ, ഐ; ī = ി; jh = ജയ, Ḷ, ḷ = ള; Ñ, ñ = ഞ, ṅ = ണ, ṇ = ണ; Ō, ō = ഓ, ഔ; ū = ു, ū = ൂ; ṛ = ള; Ś, ś = ശ; T, t = ട, Ṭ = റ, Th, th = റ, Ṫ, ṭ = റ; ṭh = റ

The above poem tells us the state of affairs existing in Kerala when Māvēli or Mahābali, the demon king ruled during Satyayug. A truly utopian world which all socialist and communist theoreticians of today dream of but are very sure of not achieving ever. It reminds us of Alfred Tennyson's Lotus Eaters. Mahābali was the son of Virōcana and grandson of Prahlāda, and ruled his kingdom in such a way that none of his subjects had any kind of problems, socially, financially nor they had any illnesses or diseases. People were very honest, no cheating, thieving nor lying. Our epics say that when the ruler is truthful and benevolent, no hardship comes to the citizens. Mahābali's kingdom was so prosperous that Dēvēndra felt threatened and approached Vishnu to find a solution. Vishnu consoled him and promised relief.



Soon he took the disguise of a Brahmin dwarf (Vāmana) and approached Mahābali seeking alms. So proud was Mahābali of his achievements and riches, that he promised Vāmana any thing he asked for. Vāmana requested him to grant a small piece of land admeasuring three steps in length measured by his own foot. Mahābali felt demeaned at this silly request and plodded Vāmana to ask for more. But his Guru Shukra foresaw through the mischief of Vishnu and warned Mahābali to be cautious. When Mahābali refused to heed, Shukra took the shape of a beetle and blocked the path of waterway of Mahābali's Kamandal. Vāmana took a small needle and stuck into the waterhole. Agonised, Shukra gave way and Mahābali granted the boon to Vāmana. Soon Vāmana took the amānusha roop of Vishnu and started measuring the land. In one step He finished the entire earth and in another, the entire space and netherland were covered. When He demanded space for the third step, Mahābali, humbled and humiliated, asked Vishnu to place His foot on his head. Vishnu, feeling so contented and happy with Mahābali's devotion and dedication, allowed him to visit his subjects once a year and sent him to Pātāla, the netherland. Onam is celebrated to welcome Māvēli on his annual visit to his subjects. It is a paradox that artists in Kerala portrayed Mahābali as a person with a pot-belly and as a feudal lord whereas the epics portray him as a man who is well versed in physical combat and defeated Indra in combat. Some artists portray him as a character in Tamil plays with a big moustache and a crown. When Onam is celebrated by social groups, someone with a potbelly and unfit physique acts as Mahābali. This is an injustice to that noble character who is treated with reverence by all Keralites.

Ōñam Rituals

-Reshma R Nair



If Vishu indicates the arrival of the agricultural season, Ōñam marks the end of the season. It falls in the Malayalam month Chingam (Simha). This is the longest Hindu festival. It starts on Aṭṭam day and ends on Chaṭayam day.

Traditionally paddy cultivation has been the main agricultural activity in Kerala. Harvesting over, all households are in a celebratory mood and Ōñam gives them a genuine reason. While men are busy disposing the excess paddy after meeting their household needs, women slightly free from the tiring routine of looking after the agricultural labourers, engage themselves in cleaning the home. Children also get busy. Their chores begin with the plucking of flowers that bloom on open fields, fencings, ponds, hill sides etc. Being the end of monsoon, nature is in its seductive best, decorated with flowers of

all colours and sizes, and children would have a good time moving from place to place looking for flowers. This job starts on the previous evening of Aṭṭam.

On Aṭṭam day early morning, children decorate the frontage of their homes with patterns of fresh flowers. This collection of flowers and decorating the frontage continue till Moolam day. Adult male members or servants unearth the soil and with the help of water, mould the soil into a vertical shape with a square base tapering upward. This will be about 1-1½ feet high. On Pooratam day, early morning, the courtyard of the home is cleaned with liquid cow dung and some circular designs are made with rice paste. A wooden plaque is placed in the middle and a plantain leaf is kept over the plaque and the idol made out of mud is kept on it. The rice paste is reverentially poured over the idol.

The same process is repeated for Utratam and Thiruvonam days but with two additional idols, one of the same size as the previous one and the other one slightly bigger. Thus on Thiruvonam day there would be five idols and they are worshipped. These five idols remain for two more days and at sunset on Chatayam day, they are removed.

In modern times when land in possession gets reduced and servants are no more available and people have no time to perform these rituals, some people keep



Thrikkakara Vamana Moorthy Temple

Thrikkakara Temple is one of the very few temples in India dedicated to Lord Vamana. It is situated in Thrikkakara, a village panchayat near Kochi. The temple houses some lithic records of historic significance. The most important event of the religious calendar here is Onam. The Onasadya or the Onam feast is held in a grand manner in the temple with a large number of people cutting across religious barriers participating in it.

At the Vamanamoorthy temple in Thrikkakara, the annual temple festival coincides with Onam.

idols made of wood, which can be used year after year.

Many people believe that Maveli or Mahabali is being worshipped in the form of the above idols. In fact, Vamana, one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu is offered Pooja but people do remember Mahabali on this occasion as he was the most benevolent king Kerala had. But as he was a demon king, no pooja is offered to him.

From Aṭṭam day onwards, special pooja is offered at Trikkakara Temple where the presiding deity is Vamana Moorthy.

It is said that despite being benevolent, the downfall of Mahabali was caused by his ego, that he was the best king and the greatest devotee of Vishnu. Even God does not tolerate any kind of ego and humility is expected from every devotee, knowledgeable masters say.



Mathevar at Courtyard

Ōñam feast

-Narayana Swamy

Onasadya

The most impressive part of the grand festive Onam is the 'Onam Feast'. It is very elaborate, delicious, and splendid. The Feast consists of traditional authentic thirteen varieties of essential main dishes. It is a feast which if enjoyed once, is relished for years. The Onam Feast or the so called 'Onasadya' is prepared on the last day of Onam celebration "Thiruvonam". Hence the Onasadya is also called "Thiruvonasadya". There is a saying in Malayalam that "Kanam Vittu Onam Unnanam" which means "We should have



A live Photograph of Mani's Onam Feast Meals, took by Antoine Lewis for Cook-Book Magazine & American Express News Paper magazine "Departures"

the Onam lunch even if we have to sell all our properties". Onam lunch on Thiruvonam day is given a lot of importance. The meal is served in a creative way on a tender banana leaf with the end to the left. It should be eaten with our hands and not by a spoon or fork. There is a strict order in the serving of the dishes one after another and also where they are to be placed on the banana leaf. The first course of serving is paruppu, salt, pappadam, pickles, chips and all the curries one after another. Then the main dish rice is served with pure ghee. The next course is sambar over rice. Next rice followed by rasam over rice. The next course is payasam. The feast is completed with serving yogurt over the rice.

Onam Feast Menu

Paruppu

Pulp of cooked split red gram

Kuttukari

This is a prominent dish, yellow in colour consisting of vegetables yam, Ash gourd cooked with Bengal gram dal (channadal) and coconut

Erissery

It consists of vegetables yam and raw bananas cooked with channa dal and coconut.

Pachadi

This consists of boiled vegetables added to curd with coconut. It can be made with a variety of vegetables such as pumpkin, mango, bitter gourd or with fruits such as pineapple.

Kichadi

It is made of curd and cucumber in

raw form.

Kurukku Kalan

It is prepared by boiling and thickening curds with cooked vegetables, raw banana and yam.

Olan

It is the simplest watery ash gourd & pumpkin dish.

Avial

It is a very popular semi-dry preparation of all vegetables cooked with curd and coconut

Inji Kari

Mixture of curd and ginger

Inji Puli (Puleenji)

Dark brown in colour made up of tamarind pulp, ginger, green chilies and jaggery.

Thoran

This is a dry dish made of vegetables cut into small pieces.

Sambar

This is a very popular dish relished by the whole of India prepared with split red grams and variety of vegetables & tamarind pulp.

Rasam Prepared from tomatoes treated with tamarind juice and split red gram pulp. It has high medicinal value.

Banana Chips Salty

Sarkarapuratty Sweet banana chips

Pazhanurukku

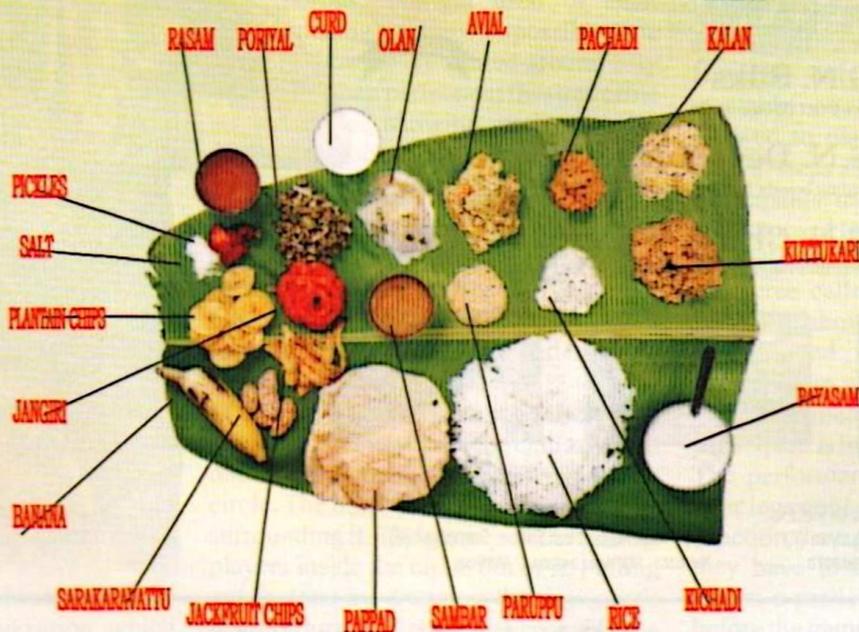
Cooked ripe plantains

Pickles

Pappad

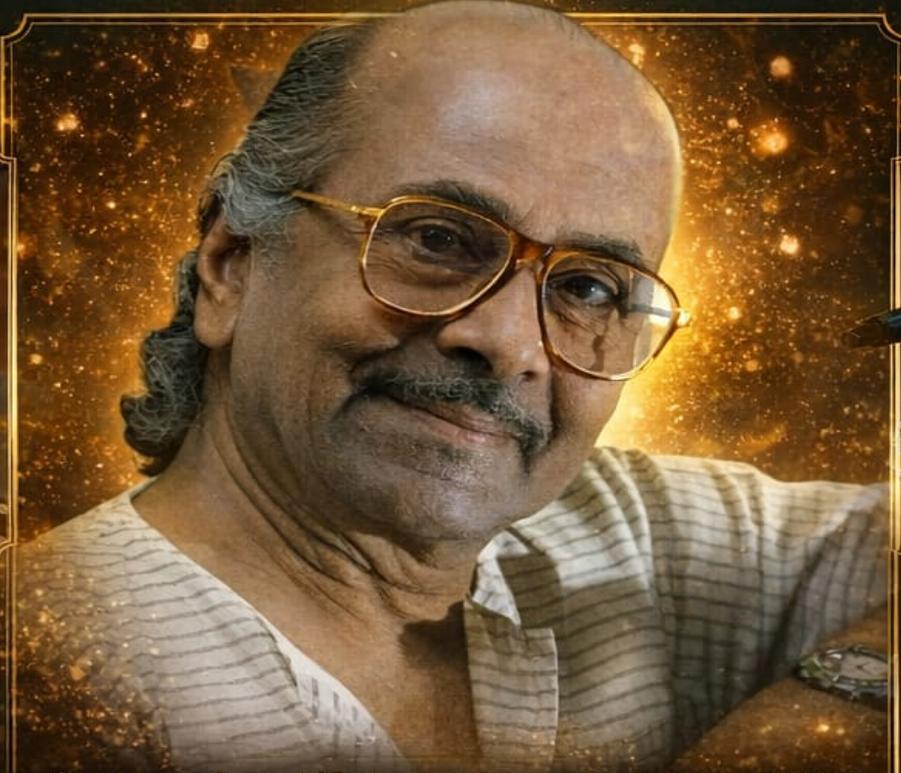
Payasam Paladapradhaman

Sweet dish made with milk and rice flakes.



KIM-
RAAGALAYA
AWARDS 2026

Raagalaya proudly presents the
KIM-Raagalaya Awards 2026,
celebrating musical excellence and cultural
commitment within the Kerala community in in Mumbai.



The Raagalaya Lifetime Achievement Award 2026
is reverentially dedicated to the legendary
late Salil Chowdhury,
whose timeless music continues to inspire generations.

The evening also features the **Kerala In Mumbai
Excellence Awards 2026,** honouring distinguished
contributions across arts and culture.

Venue: Mysore Association Hall, Matunga

**Date & Time: Saturday, 11 April 2026 |
6.00 PM onwards**



Ōñam Games

-P. V. Vasudevan

Ōñappanthu kali

This game is very similar to today's cricket. Each team will have ten players. As in cricket, one player of the striking side, as the batting side, faces the opposition's ten players who are spread all over the ground. A stump of approximately 2' and 4" wide is fixed to the ground vertically.

It is played in the afternoon of Thiruvōnam day in a ground belonging to the village temple or local school or any other ground that is similar to a cricket ground.

The ball is made with dried leaves of plantain tree with a few small stones inside to give it a spherical shape and tied tightly with the fibrous tape made out of the plantain tree layers. The stump is fixed on one extreme side of the playground, almost in the middle of the boundary. No player is allowed behind the stump as the ball is never allowed to be played behind the stump.

There are seven phases, each being played three times by a player. When the striker plays the ball, the fielders are expected to catch it before the ball touches the ground. If they fail to do so, the nearest player throws the ball to the stump to hit it. If the fielder catches the ball or hits the stump, the striking player is given out. If the striker completes any phase successfully, he moves to the next phase. If he is given out, the next player of the striking team replaces him and restarts that phase, i.e. each striker has to play all three balls of each phase. Once all the seven phases are successfully completed before all ten players are given out, that team's innings is completed. Before the innings is completed, if all the players are given out, to win the game, they have to get the opposition out at least one phase before. The sequence of seven phases played is described below.

1 Thalama: This is played by the player facing the stump, throwing the ball with one hand and striking the ball with the other hand, towards the fielders.

2 Otta: Throw the ball with the striking hand upward and striking the ball with the same hand towards the fielders. In this, the striker's back is towards the stump as he faces the fielders.

3 Iratta: In this the ball is thrown up with one hand and with the other hand the ball is struck.

4 Murha or Azha: In this phase, the striker asks the captain of the opposition, which

one is to play. Azha is played with one hand kept on the waist and the ball is thrown up and struck with the other hand. In murha, the non striking hand holds the striking hand at the elbow from behind. Thus the striking hand's movement is restricted. With the striking hand, the ball is thrown up and when the ball comes down, it should be struck with the same hand.

5 Thutama: In this, the ball is thrown up with the striking hand and before the ball comes down, the striking hand should slap the thigh once and then the ball is struck with the hand.

6 Naatta: In this one leg is raised to the waist level, with its knee bent into 90° and the ball is thrown up through the bent leg. Before the ball comes down to the striking height, the raised leg is put down and the ball is struck forward with the hand.

7 Otti or Ōti: In Otti, the ball is thrown forward and kicked away with the upper side of the foot. If the opposition opts for Ōti, the striker should run a few steps and the ball is struck as in Otta.

8 Petta thalama: This is last phase of the play and played exactly like thalama. Each inning is called a Petta and hence the name.

Ōñappanthukali met a natural death when the cinema theatres started their afternoon shows on Thiruvōnam days every year. Those days cinema theatres in Kerala had only two shows i.e. during evenings and nights after 9 p.m. Since the cinema houses those days were thatched with dried coconut leaves and the doors were porous, sunlight used to enter inside, making the show impossible. The matinee shows were started around fifty years ago when permanent theatres came up and started showing matinee shows around 3'o clock.

Āttakkalam

Āttakkalam is a game for the male adults and it is like an uneven weaponless fight. Speed and agility are the hall marks of this game. It is between two teams, each consisting of about 5-10 males (each should have equal numbers).

In the middle of the ground, a circle with diameter of about six feet is drawn and one team is made to stand inside the circle. The other side is outside the circle surrounding it. The game is about pulling players inside the circle out of it. Pulling out is done by dragging the opponent's hand or arm while the player inside the

circle would defend himself by slapping the opponent. While the player inside can slap he cannot fist or kick. However the players outside cannot counter attack.

Once all the players inside the circle are pulled out, the teams change their roles. After playing equal number of times, the team that remains inside the circle for the longest time is declared winners but all participants are gifted with Onapputava.

The game is considered very manly and to prove one's agility and physical strength. It attracts huge crowds and the ground is filled with their shouts and roars.

Onathallu

Onathallu, otherwise known as 'kayyankali', is a game based on physical strength and agility. In this no arms are



used except one's own hands. Onathallu is popular in central Kerala, especially on the banks of the river Nila. Earlier this was played before the ruling class during Onam days. When it is performed during other times, it is known as 'kayyankali'. Lots of thought has gone into it and slowly it started getting performed in a structured and a systematic form. However only a very few artists are available now. Only trained persons are allowed to participate since it requires martial steps and may cause risk to some participants, including death. Performers are supposed to follow the strict rules and regulations of the game.

A referee called 'Chayikkaran' controls the entire show. Traditionally, aged and experienced players would act as Chayikkaran who should be an expert to provide immediate treatment in case any participant is injured.

The performers are not allowed to use their legs nor hit or kick or use nail while in action. Two groups face each other and they have to fight against one another within a predefined area that is marked before the game. If anyone by any chance

steps out of the area, he is dropped from the team.

During the performance, they use the following *vaitharies* like Dha, Aytha, Ayyathada etc as warning to the opponent. Before they start the performance, they would take blessings from the masters and chayikkarans.

Kaikottikkali



This is exclusively for grownup girls and women. It is normally played during Thiruvonam, Chatayam days. Women from the neighbourhoods gather at a particular house, normally the local chieftain's house where they would have enough place to play as well as engage in gossips, after lunch. Women in their best clothes worn traditionally, form a circular pattern with a brass lamp, Thulasi or jasmine plant in the centre and dance around this in rhythmic steps with their arms and fingers moving gracefully. The songs to which they dance are normally about well known epic tales written in Malayalam. Most common songs are about Parvathy's romantic feelings for her beloved Shiva, starting with a slow pace, moving to a faster one towards end.

Villu Pattu

At the outset of the Onam season, people working on bamboos (Panar community) make Villu (bow made of bamboo pieces), each about four feet long, made of a single split bamboo piece with slots at both ends to enable hold another bamboo stick finely crafted to very thin length as its string. Another bamboo stick, about one foot long, is provided to play on the villu. About four to five decades ago, people belonging to this community used to visit affluent houses in the locality and sing folk songs related to epic stories or about

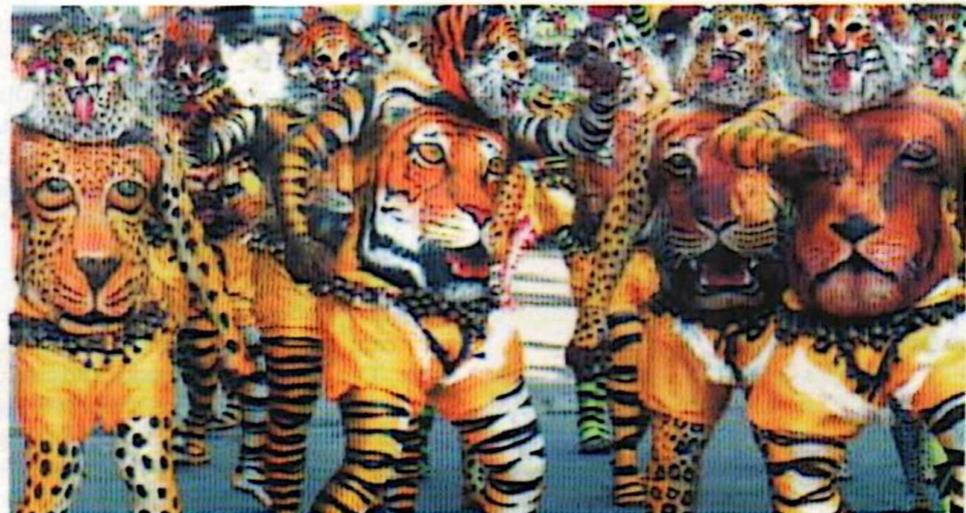
heroes of yore, striking rhythmically on the villu. They also present villu to the children of the house and receive gifts in return, in the form of rice, paddy, clothes or money. Experienced children used this villu as an instrument of ensemble. This is quite different from the Villatichan Pattu of Kochi-Thiruvithamcore region.

Ambeythu

This is generally for the boys below thirteen years. Small bows made out of bamboo of about two feet long, with strings made of vegetable creepers. Arrows are made of bamboo sticks, sharpened at one end. Children carry these arrows around in the compound and aim their arrows on trees, thus getting some training to hunt with lowly weapons. Mostly the targets are plantain shrubs as they are easy to pierce.

Puli kali

This is not a game in the normal sense as there are no contests but a pure medium of entertainment to the onlookers.



Youngsters with the faces of tigers, cheetahs etc drawn on their bodies and face covered with suitable masks dance on the streets to the rhythm of the percussion instruments such as chenda, thakil etc while a man with a European suit follow them as a hunter. Often he pretends to aim his rifle on the tiger.

Pulikali also known as 'kaduvakali' is a recreation in which performers go from house to house, painted like tigers in bright yellow, red and black, dance to the loud beats of percussion instruments like the 'udukku' and 'thakil'.

This is played in Thrissur district and south of it.

Kummatti kali

Kummatti kali is a dance where teams of



both kids and young men cover their bodies up in leaves or grass ('kumatti' grass or 'parppadaka' grass) patches and wear painted masks representing Bali (monkey king), Rama, Hanuman, demons and other characters from the epic Ramayana, as goddess Durga (Kali), an old woman 'thamma' etc. Then they dance clapping their hands together going from house to house. The dance is accompanied by devotional songs and with a bow like instrument, 'onavillu'. The dance is related to the Shaiva myth. The main character 'Thamma', an old woman who walks in front with the help of a stick is believed to be the mother of every being and everything.

Boat Race

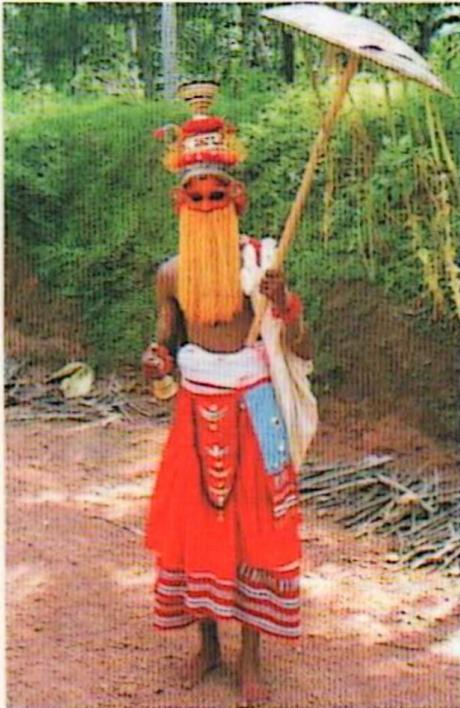
During Onam season, in the areas south of Kochi, where there are backwaters, boat races are organised with boats of special design, called Chundan Vallam (snake boats), with more than a hundred rowers and a captain to give direction and leadership to the oarsmen. This is done as a race and many boats participate in the competition and nowadays, prizes touching to lakhs of rupees are given to the winning boat.

The important boat races are held during Onam season at Champakulam, Aranmula and Kottayam.

The most significant and popular boat race known as 'Nehru Trophy' was inaugurated in 1952 by the first Prime Minister of India. Nehru Trophy is the most colourful water sport. It is conducted at Punnamada Lake in Alappuzha on the second Saturday of every August. It attracts thousands of people from all over the world.

Onapottan

This is a tradition in the north Malabar region where a man dresses up in



Kummatti style and visit each house in the region. He is believed to be playing the role of Mahabali. He carries a bell in one hand and an umbrella made of palm leaves and bamboo sticks in the other hand. When he reaches the houses, he announces his arrival by ringing the bell and the household receives him with respect by lighting oil lamps etc. He blesses the household and accepts whatever the householder offered him.



Boat Race

Kutukutu (Kabaddi)

Kutukutu is another popular and simple game in which two groups participate. A lot of spectators watch the game with enthusiasm. A line drawn at the centre divides the court into two, with outer lines drawn at the edges making the whole court a rectangle. One man from one group advances from the middle line towards the opponent's area uttering "Kutu Kutu Kutu....." in one continuous breath and rushes to the line of the opponents trying to touch them and run back to the central line without being caught. If he is physically caught

and his breath goes out he is declared out. This process continues alternatively between the two teams until all players of one team are declared out. Huge crowds gather to witness these events.



Onam Customs

Onakazhcha

On the ninth day of Onam, tenants, dependants and hangers-on of the family present the fruits of their labor, such as vegetables and coconut oil, to the 'Karanavar', (the eldest member of the family) in a ritual called 'Onakazhcha'. In return, they are treated to a sumptuous feast on the main day of Onam. It is also customary for the village artisans to present the Karanavar of each Nair Tarawad, a specimen of his handiwork in return for the presents of cloth or rice he has received.

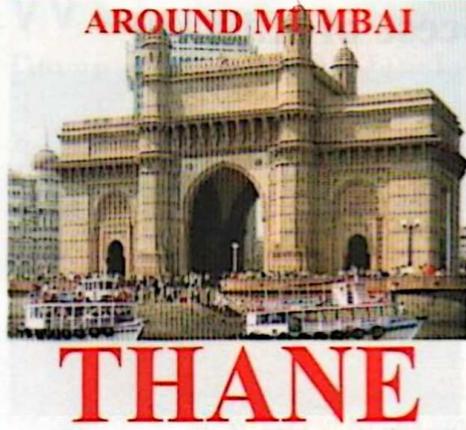
Maveli Puja

Maveli Puja is one of the prominent rituals of Onam. Specific to the Malabar (northern) part of Kerala, people residing there perform the Maveli Puja on the Uthradam (ninth day) and Thiruvonam (tenth day) of Onam. In order to perform the puja, three small sized figurines, made of red

sand are erected, in the verandah of households. The puja is performed early in the morning as well as in the dusk, by the prominent man (generally the bread-winner) of the home. The three red sand figurines are regarded as king Mahabali.

Tripunitura Athachamayam

Tripunitura Athachamayam is a grand procession held at Tripunithura, in Ernakulam district of Kerala. The custom is being followed for ages. The grand procession marks the beginning of Onam celebrations in Kerala. According to historical records, this was the royal tradition followed at the time, when Maharajas of erstwhile Kochi State travelled to Tripunithura Fort, accompanied by their entire entourage. Today, even in the absence of the King, the custom retains its legacy and charm. Caparisoned elephants are the highlight of the procession.



Present Managing Committee Members: (From left to right Sitting) K Venugopalan, V K Unnirajan,, E K Kurup, A K B Panicker, K V Kunhiraman, RS Vadhyar, K R Bhaskaran, P Unnikrishnan and T V Chandran. (Standing) Laji Cherian, P N Dineshan, C C Ramakrishnan, K R Harikumar, Mathew Joseph, P K S Nair, V V Muralidharan, Adv Chandrakumar, Raj Narayanan, K P Surendran, V N Madhu Nair, K Gangadharan, N K Babu and V N Ashoka.

WEMA

Wagle Estate Malayali Association (WEMA) came into existence in 1975 out of sheer necessity. Wagle Industrial Estate was one of the largest industrial areas in India and a large number of Malayalees were employed there and naturally they brought their families too. The first Managing Committee was headed by late P S Philip, as its President and K Swaminathan was the Vice President. Now WEMA is busy in implementing its objects by promoting social, cultural and educational activities. WEMA entered into the field of education during its Silver Jubilee Year in 2000, starting with pre-primary school and steadily reached the pinnacle now by having upto VIII standard. In the absence of a single school building, they are managing their classes in various rooms, though disconnected, in a building and in rented rooms in another building. Acquiring adequate land and erecting a building with ultramodern facilities is a dream every member of the Association carries in his or her mind. Considering the poor financial conditions of the local people, the school is charging a meager fee for its students and this is an impediment to faster growth.

WEMA is also holding a Employment Cell, Marriage Bureau, Children's Library and Computer Training Centre. Their frequent health camps are also very popular among the local people. WEMA has an active Women's Cell called Kutumbashree. And there are about 100 women as its members. During Onam, they conduct a 'Onam Chanda' for the benefit of Malayalee population. The Association is an associate of Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana and All Thane Malayalee Association (ATMA).

The principal office bearers of WEMA now are K V Kunhiraman (President), A K B Panicker (Secretary) and K R Bhaskaran (Treasurer).



Office bearers of Kutumbashree: (From left to right Sitting) Ratnavalli Ramakrishnan, Sreelatha Sankar, Prameela Surendran and Santha Panicker (Standing) Sobha Chandran, Ambika Thambi, Omana Pillai and Sushma

ATMA.

All Thane Malayali Association (ATMA) was formed in the year 2002 with the objective of creating a single platform for all the Malayali Associations in and around Thane to face common challenges arising out of social, cultural, educational and healthcare needs. ATMA is striving to build (1) a community hall for people of Thane in general and Malayali minority interests in particular (2) educational institutions (3) promotion of Malayalam language (4) promotion of interaction with other Indian

languages such as Marathi, Sanskrit, Hindi etc. (5) a centre to promote sports and games (6) hospitals for traditional and specialized treatments / therapies (7) a cultural centre for promotion of traditional performing arts and fine arts of Kerala and (8) a web site to cover all aspirations of Thane Malayalees.



A M Balan
(President)



Sasikumar Nair
(General Secretary)



V Raghunathan Nair
(Treasurer)

Mother of Victory Shrine - Tiku-jini-wadi (Diocese of Kalyan)

The statue of Mother of Victory was brought from the great pilgrim centre Wigratgbad in the diocese of Augsburg in Germany. This center attracts the faithful from various parts of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France and Italy.

The pilgrim center at Wigratgbad is closely related to the diocese of Kalyan, because a replica of Mother of Victory statue was brought to Tikujiniwadi church, accompanied by Rev. Fr. Thomas Maria Rimmel, Director of the pilgrim center. On February 2, 2003, Mar Thomas Elavanal, bishop of Kalyan consecrated the Mother of Victory Church at Tikujiniwadi as the Shrine of our Diocese. Every day the rosary is recited in the shrine, besides, on Wednesdays, a special Novena (both in Malayalam and in English) and Eucharist is offered in honor of our Mother. The Feast of the Mother of Victory is famous all over Maharashtra where people belonging to different sects flock in with great faith and devotion.

Diocese of Kalyan established on April 30, 1988 by Pope John Paul II, with Magr Paul Chittilappilly as its first Bishop. The Diocese comprises the civil districts of greater Bombay, Thane, Nasik, Raigad, Pune, Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli, Solapur, Sindudurg, Ratnagiri, Dhule, Jalgoan, Ahmednagar. On Bishop Chittilappilly's transfer to Thamarassery diocese, Kerala Bishop Thomas Elavanal was appointed on February 8th 1997. The diocese has an area of 1,45,663 sq.kms and Catholic population of more than 100,000 members.

In fact 1987 onwards priest belonging to Syro Malabar Catholic from Kerala started efforts for this diocese by uniting all Syro Malabar

Catholics and fostering them towards the path of God and created an atmosphere of godly presence, leading them together to this holy path of divinity.

Rev Fr. George Edakkalathur started wholehearted activities & prayers based in Majiwada and Manpada and co-ordinated all believers in to Jesus Christ and finally Holy Mass started in these two family centers.

To further nurture and flourish these two parishes of Majiwada & Manpada and lead them forward on the path of God, various priests were given the charge for specific tenures beginning with Rev Fr Thomas Klapura, Fr Vincent Parayil, Fr Jacob Edakkalathur, Fr Johnson Olakkengil, Fr Thomas Choondal, Fr Paul Pulikottil. All of them had put in their efforts for the upbringing of these two parishes. By the year 2001, under the leadership of Parish Priest Fr George Porathur and with support of Asst Vicar Fr Justin Kallely of Thane, Varthak Nagar, Majiwada and Manpada, the parishioners of Majiwada and Manpada decided to combine themselves to have a common parish.

To make the community spiritually unified, it was necessary to combine different activities of Majiwada and Manpada and establish a common parish. Bishop Mar Thomas Elavanal has given his consent for combining these two parishes. Accordingly a committee was formed from 120 families who worked relentlessly for the fulfillment of the dream of establishing an independent parish call Bl Kuriakose Elias Chavara Parish and started the search for a suitable place. To boost up the people's morale and lead them to the path of success and give timely directions to the committee, Rev Fr George Porathur and Justin



Tiku-jini-wadi Mother of Victory Shrine

Kalleli had put in their unflinching efforts which remain memorable.

In the year 2002 Fr Justin Kalleli was transferred and Fr Rajesh Mathew was given the charge as Asst Priest.

On 22nd December of 2002 the historical event of the blessing of Bl. Kuriakose Chavara Community Centre took place under the auspicious presence of Vicar General Msgr Thomas Thalachira. This achievement was made possible mainly because of the strong prayers and restless efforts of Fr Rajesh Mathew along with trustees Mr K T Verghese and Mr E P Francis and committee members. Ever since Mother of Victory has landed in India in Tikujiniwadi, she has shown her presence felt in the hearts of distressed and needy. There are unbelievable miracles that have made this shrine of Mother of Victory renowned not only in Thane but all over Maharashtra and even in Kerala and other parts of country. People keep pouring in with their petitions to offer novenas and she just like mother, answers all the prayers.

-KIM News Bureau

Prominent Citizens

Rajan V Nair

Do you have a problem? Solution is just a phone call away! That is Rajan V Nair, the unassuming but popular social worker of Thane.

He hails from a modest Nair family of Cheruvathur, near Shornur but across River Nila. Born to Sethumadhavan Nair and Lakshmikutty Amma, the eldest of the three sons, Rajan Nair after passing SSLC from Cheruthuruthy High School, worked for some time in a private company and then in 1974 boarded train to Mumbai in search of his future.

His initial abode was at Sion Koliwada and the first job took him to Thane. He worked hard to gain in-house experience of engineering while undergoing a diploma course in Mechanical Engineering. He then moved to another reputed engineering firm at Thane and has continued to work there till today. When organizational loyalty is becoming rare, this phenomenon is worth emulating. He maintains a very good relationship with all whom he comes in contact with. He believes in friendship with all and confrontation with none. While staying at Sion Koliwada, he joined Bombay Keraleeya Samajam and since then, has been always at the forefront of social activities. He is not an office bearer of any organisation with which he has close connections and has

always insisted on staying away from positions. He believes that this attitude of his has helped him being dear to all and feels he has no enemies.

Any function of any organisation in which Rajan Nair has sympathies to, is incomplete without his physical presence. He gives them his time and money so that the deserving people get

benefits. Every year he distributes free note books and study materials to deserving students of Kalyan under the auspices of Lok Kalyan Malayali Samajam. He also takes active interest in Sri Ayyappa Temple, Kalwa, Ponnuru Guruvayurappan Temple, Mulund and Kairalee Cultural Association, Vrindavan Complex, Thane.

He is married to Vanaja, a native of Palakkad and has a son Vivek Raj. Vivek has obtained a Diploma in Industrial Engineering from Fr. Agnel's and a degree in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering from SIES Engineering College, Nerul. Very recently he joined Caps Gemini after a campus interview.

Rajan V Nair stays with his small family at Vrindavan, Thane. Complex, Thane.



V V Achuthan

Doyen of Mumbai Malayalam Theatre

-Ashwati

V V Achuthan, the veteran Malayalam stage performer of Mumbai is today deeply saddened at the total lack of creativity of playwrights.

Most of the veterans have stopped writing and the new ones are yet to achieve a level of acceptance and recognition. The situation in Kerala as well as in Mumbai is not quite different. Writers in Kerala are totally out of tunes with the times. In Mumbai, available talent is busy in eking out a living, having no time for rehearsals or participation.

Achuthan had received a few offers to enter Malayalam film world but could not take them up as the assignments called for long absence from Mumbai.

For Achuthan, the stage was never a career but a hobby and a passion unparalleled. The assignments he left behind later turned out to be very successful films.

Achuthan is not willing to declare that Malayalam theatre is dead. It is in slumber or in coma demanding urgent attention. Many factors are responsible for this situation

Television channels

The exponential expansion of television channels in Malayalam and other languages adversely impacted our theatre. Television provided the cheapest entertainment and pastime in a homely atmosphere. The channels' dependence in turn, on movies is an anachronism, he says. To draw people out of their homes to the movie halls and theatres, need a



Vasantha and Achuthan at a felicitation ceremony

concerted attempt from many quarters like powerful scripts, directors, producers and dedicated performers. It is the contemporary, socially relevant and powerfully built scripts that can sustain good theatre and attract audience.

Drama literature

The recent alienation from theatre has made Malayalees strangers to it. Achuthan recalled periods when professional and amateur drama troupes provided healthy competition. The demise of libraries and reading rooms from small towns and villages in Kerala hit Malayalam theatre. This in turn, he lamented, resulted in the disappearance of Malayalam literature. In a way Malayalam novels and drama provided very strong scripts to Malayalam cinema as most of the successful plays were made into successful movies like Mutiyanaya Puthran, Mooladhanam, Agniputhri, Doctor, Althara etc, he

pointed out.

Achuthan is very proud of his collection of Malayalam plays. Though he has not been producing plays in recent times, he owns a collection of more than 500 plays. To select one play for the stage, he used to read at least a dozen plays. A script that does not create a storm in the mind cannot be a successful play, he asserts.

Ignorant and vested critics

Achuthan blamed some critics for lowering the morale of the artists. Considering that Mumbai Malayali artists are dependent on their career jobs for which they have migrated to this city, an unfounded criticism by some Malayali critics would help only to discourage them. While some critics wrote adverse remarks in the media without seeing the play, some wrote on a play that was not staged at all. When one play of Ezhikkara Ambujakshan (Achuthan was not involved in this) was cancelled at the last moment due to unavoidable circumstances, one prominent critic wrote in the print media next day, severely criticizing it as if he had seen it. It appeared that the report was made and despatched to the paper before the scheduled time of the play, without realizing that the play had been cancelled. Such critics are primarily responsible for killing Malayalam theatre in Mumbai. Nevertheless, constructive criticism is always welcome as it would help improve performance and other short comings.

Increasing cost of

Production

The cost of production of Malayalam drama is prohibitive unlike Marathi plays. While male actors may perform free of charge, female artistes need to be paid a considerable amount, as actresses are very few. A Malayalam stage actress



Achuthan and Jayashree in 'Vishwaroopam'



Prakash, Achuthan and Vasantha in 'Deepasthambam Mahashcharyam'

demands almost ten times the fee a Marathi actress gets. While local theatre is given all encouragement by the state government and other bodies, we are left in the lurch. Rent of halls and other expenses are a deterrent for Malayalam plays. In the absence of a patronizing audience, this is a main impediment, Achuthan states.

Powerful scripts

Among all the 70 plays in which he was involved, Achuthan said, his favourite role was that of Balagopalan of 'Viswaroopam' by Surasu. Whatever he has achieved on the stage, would not have been possible without the active co-operation of his colleagues on and off



Vasantha, wife of Achuthan

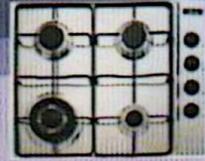
stage, friends who continuously supported him and the audience. He owes a lot to them and to take names would be beyond him, he admitted.

When pointed out about the various powerful characters on the world stage, Achuthan regretted that he had no opportunity to venture into such characters or to understand the psyche of such characters. He is open to such characters if proper introduction is made to such universal characters.

Though age and physical ailments are impediments, if a good character is offered, he is willing to put on the actor's mantle once again and give it a try.

The true and real Achuthan came out at an unguarded moment and we realised that it was time to bid au revoir.

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Our mother tongue - 5

Malayalam Script Evolution and Usage

In this issue, we are discussing the similarities between Malayalam and other languages. First we shall discuss the comparison between the Malayalam and Tamil scripts.

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|-------|---|---|----|
| | A | Ā | u | ū(oo) | o | ō | au |
| Tamil | அ | ஆ | உ | ஊ | ஓ | ஔ | ஔ |
| Malayalam | അ | ആ | ഉ | ഊ | ഒ | ഓ | ഔ |

The elongation of 'അ' is adopted from 'ஆ' of Tamil. 'ഉ' is the same in both the languages. The 'ണ' (when used alone, it is pronounced as Malayalam ഊ ൊ a) is used with 'ഉ' and ഊ, to form the vowels ഊ as in ഊ but when used with ഊ, this ഊ is pronounced as 'au.' In Malayalam this vowel is generated by adding the 'ൗ' character to ഊ as in Tamil. But 'ൗ' is used with ഊ as in ഊ or with ഉ as in ഊ, to get their elongated form. Elsewhere, when 'ൗ' is preceded by a consonant, that consonant is to be pronounced with a sound of 'au'. (Eg.: കൗ is to be pronounced as 'kau')

A couple of decades ago, any consonant with the sound of 'au' was written as shown in the table below. (For example Gouravam, ഗൗരവം, കേരളവഥം). However, later in Malayalam, 'ൌ' sign was dropped but in Tamil it is still followed.

There are some anomalies that come in the way when a non-Malayali tries to learn our language. This problem is to be resolved by the linguists with the approval of the government.

Each of these vowels has an independent standing in our language. These vowels can appear as a leading character as in the case of consonants but never in any other place in the word. If they are to appear anywhere except as the first character, their substitute signs, as given below, are to be used.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vowels | അ | ഈ | ഊ | ഉ | ഊ | ഔ | ഏ | ഈ |
| Symbols | ഔ | ഈ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ |
| Symbol in Tamil | ഔ | ഈ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vowels | ഏ | ഈ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ |
| Symbols | ഏ | ഈ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ |
| Symbol in Tamil | ഏ | ഈ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ |

Another confusion is about the use of sign 'ൌ'. Preceding 'ഏ' as in (ഏ), the pronunciation of the vowel is 'I', the same as English I. But when it is to be used with consonants, its symbol is 'ഏ'. But the same sign preceding the consonant followed by 'ൌ', that consonant is to be

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| അ | ആ | ഇ | ഈ | ഉ | ഊ | ഔ |
| ഏ | ഈ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ |
| അ | ഏ | ഈ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ | ഊ |
| ക | ഖ | ഗ | ഘ | ങ | | |
| ക | ഖ | ഗ | ഘ | ങ | | |
| ച | ഛ | ജ | ഝ | ഞ | | |
| ച | ഛ | ജ | ഝ | ഞ | | |
| ട | ഠ | ഡ | ഢ | ണ | | |
| ട | ഠ | ഡ | ഢ | ണ | | |
| ത | ഥ | ദ | ധ | ന | | |
| ത | ഥ | ദ | ധ | ന | | |
| പ | ഫ | ബ | ഭ | മ | | |
| പ | ഫ | ബ | ഭ | മ | | |
| യ | ര | ല | വ | | | |
| യ | ര | ല | വ | | | |
| ശ | ഷ | സ | ഹ | ള | റ | ഴ |
| ശ | ഷ | സ | ഹ | ള | റ | ഴ |

pronounced with a twist of 'ൌ'. In Tamil, 'ഈ' is used with all consonants in the same way as in Malayalam, preceding the consonant, but in the place of 'ഏ', they use 'ഏ' with most consonants except for 'ൌ' (ൌ in Malayalam). For the latter, they use 'ഏ' as in ൌ.

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tamil | ക | ഖ | ഇ | ഈ | ഊ | ഔ |
| Malayalam | ക | ഖ | ജ | ണ | ന | ല |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tamil | വ | ഛ | സ | ഠ | ഊ | ഔ |
| Malayalam | വ | ഷ | സ | ഹ | ള | ഴ |

A close look at the characters of both Malayalam and Tamil, reveals that in many characters as well as in some symbols, they are identical or similar. ക , ജ , ഷ , ക്ഷ, സ, ഴ etc are indebted to Tamil. This proved that while Malayalam alphabet was developed, our masters had borrowed liberally from Tamil, a much older language. The main difference between these two languages is that being a modern language, it has the advantage of all good aspects of other languages. While ല is different from Tamil, it is used when two 'ല's are used as a diphthong as ല്ല, the second one is taken from Tamil.

For two different pronunciations of ന as in 'നന്മയന്നു' in Malayalam, Tamil has two different scripts as ന, ണ. In Malayalam, when 'ന' appears first in a word, it is pronounced as 'ന' as the first script in 'നന്മയന്നു' and anywhere else is pronounced as the second 'ന' of the same word. Though a Malayali will not have any difficulty in reading it, a non-

Malayali may find it difficult. If this difficulty could be removed by adding a new letter, it would save the trouble for them.

Since Malayalam is indebted to Sanskrit to a large extent by adopting a large number of words, it needed a vast number of characters as in 'Devanagari'. Since Tamil language had limited characters, Malayalam had to adapt and adopt characters from other languages too, like Telugu (ഈ, ഊ).

Telugu language, like Malayalam, heavily borrows words from Sanskrit and has a script equal in number as ours though they are different. Telugu and Kannada are like Tamil and Malayalam.

Another complication in Malayalam is about the usage of 'ൌ' (it is called *anusāram*). In *Devanāgari*, usage of this *anusāram* is very clear and it is denoted by the symbol 'ः'. While transliterate ഞ, ണ, ന words into English, they use 'n' unlike South Indians who use 'm'. Most of the Malayalees do not know the pronunciation of this sign and assume it as the half sound of 'ൌ' (ma).

In fact, it is the half sound of five characters. In Malayalam as in most of the Indian languages, the major consonants are divided into five groups (*vargam*) starting with the characters ക, ച, ട, ത, പ. These 'കച്ചതപ' groups have their fifth members as ഞ, ഞ, ണ, ന and മ respectively. The half sound of all these fifth members of the five groups is represented by the *anusāram* 'ൌ'. However, Malayalees use ഞ, ണ, ന in conjunction with the other consonants. For example: പഞ്ചമംഗം (പഞ്ചം), ഗംഗ, സംഘം (*samgham*):

The first 'ൌ' is half of 'ൌ' in both the words but the second 'ൌ' of the second word is that of 'ൌ'. Whenever the *anusāram* appears at the end of the word, it is the half sound of 'ൌ'. In ഞംഞം, both belong to 'ൌ'.

Malayalees however use ഞ, ണ, ന in diphthong with other consonants to get their half sounds such as മഞ്ജരി (ൌ+ജ), കാണാം (ൌ+ഞ), നന്മ (ൌ+മ)(they are written in *Devanāgari* as मंजरी, कांड़, चंमा etc).

Though Malayalam can boast of having 53 characters now and hence can transliterate most of the languages, we feel short of two characters to represent Z and F in English and फ़ in *Devanāgari*. Wherever we have to

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Gateway to Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram is the capital of Kerala. It is situated towards the southern end of Kerala.

A beautiful seaside city it has a long coastline, renowned beaches, and scenic backwaters. The city is built on seven low hills. So the land stretches in undulating patterns with winding streets and curving roads. Palaces, bungalows and flats dot the city. There are some quiet alleys that seem to belong to an older era, while in the busy commercial streets, the most modern facilities and commodities are available. All kinds of restaurants serving Kerala and South Indian cuisine as well as

-Lakshmi Venkatachalam

North Indian, Gujarati, Chinese and Continental dishes, exist here. Generally a tour of Kerala, God's own country, starts from Trivandrum which has an international airport. The city has a rich tradition and history. Due to its antiquity, it has a number of palaces and historic monuments. Being the capital, it houses the Secretariat, Legislative Assembly, Government offices and a number of good educational institutions. Trivandrum also has a techno-park and many leading software companies have their offices in the city.

History

Thiruvananthapuram literally means "the Abode of revered Anantha", the Sacred Serpent on which Sree Anantha Padmanabhaswamy or Lord Vishnu reclines.

Till the 10th century, the Ay dynasty was the ruling power here and the regions lying south to it. But by the 12th century the rulers of Venad, a small principality lying between Quilon and Trivandrum attained independent status and the rulers started becoming powerful. The greatest of them was Marthanda Varma who came to power in 1729. During this time all the principalities were fighting for power among themselves. After a series of terrible wars with the neighbouring principalities and much bloodshed, Marthanda Varma defeated their kings and annexed their kingdoms. He founded the State of Travancore (Thiruvithamkoor) in 1750 and made Thiruvananthapuram the capital city of Travancore. He also dedicated his kingdom to the ruling deity Sree Padmanabhaswamy by placing his sword at the Feet of the Lord. He would rule the kingdom as 'Dasa' or Servant of the Lord ruling it, as the Lord's representative.

This tradition was continued by the subsequent rulers of Travancore.

Like the Portuguese and the Dutch, the English also came to Kerala first for trade purposes. In due course, the State of Travancore was recognised as an independent kingdom but under British rule. A British Resident was appointed and the King had to abide by his directions in the administration. This continued till India became independent.

All the Kings who ruled Travancore were known by the name of the Zodiac stars they were born under. The kingdom was ruled by many illustrious kings. Swathi Thirunal's was a golden era for cultural and economic prosperity. The king himself was a great Carnatic music Composer. The first English school was opened during his time. During the reigns of later kings like Ayilyam Thirunal, Moolam Thirunal and Chithira Thirunal, many schools, colleges, hospitals and a Women's college were opened. In 1924, a political conference of the Congress was also held in the state. When India became independent, Thiruvananthapuram continued to be the capital of Thiru-Kochi and later the newly formed Kerala State.

Tourist Attractions

There are many places of tourist interest in and around Thiruvananthapuram.

Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple

This is the most well-known tourist spot and an important



landmark of the city.

The temple is situated inside the Fort in the heart of the city and is considered one of the holiest abodes of Lord Vishnu. The main market of Thiruvananthapuram is very close to the temple. The Temple has a towering seven-storied intricately carved Gopuram, with seven golden domes. There are four entrances or *Nadas* facing the East, West, North, and South. The East entrance has a flight of steps. The ground floor under the Gopuram on the East side has a Nataka Sala (theatre) where Kathakali is staged during festival times. There is an impressive 80 ft gold encased flagstaff inside the temple. The temple has a corridor with 365 sculptured granite stone pillars with elaborate carvings. This corridor extends from the eastern side to the sanctum sanctorum.

The Garbhagruha, in which the idol is installed, is carved out of a huge single stone and hence called 'Ottakkal Mandapam'. One has to climb the Mandapam to have darshan of the Lord. The 18

fit long idol of Lord Vishnu is depicted in a reclining position with the five-hooded Adi Shesha or Anantha over his head, his right hand hangs over Shiva. From His navel rises a lotus stalk with Brahma sitting atop the lotus flower. The Utsava Murti of Lord Vishnu with His consorts Sree Devi and Bhoo Devi are also visible. The deity can be viewed through three doors on the Ottakkal Mandapam. Only the King of Travancore can prostrate on the Mandapam as he is Padmanabha Dasa.

The idol is made of 12000 *saligramas*, brought with fanfare on elephants from the banks of the river Gandaki in Nepal. Katu Sarkara Yogam, a special ayurvedic mix with many medicinal herbs was used to make a plaster on top of the *saligramas*. This was to keep away pests from the idol. The idol is adorned with gold and precious stones.

Opposite to the Ottakkal Mandapam there is a many pillared Abhisheka Mandapam where one can sit and meditate in front of the deity.

There are other shrines inside the complex dedicated to Krishna, Narasimha, Ayyappa, Ganesha, Hanuman, Veda Vyasar and Aswatthama.

There are two main festivals, one in Meenam (March-April), the other in Thulam (October-November) continuing for ten days each and ending with Arattu (purifactory bath of the idols in the Arabian Sea). The idols of Lord Padmanabhaswamy, Lord Narasimha and Lord Krishna are taken in a ceremonial procession to the accompaniment of nadaswaram and drums. The ex- Maharajah with sword in hand and escorted by armed guards, mounted police, and officers lead the procession. A caparisoned elephant leads the way and six more caparisoned elephants follow. Once every six years, the entire temple complex is lit with lamps and Lakshadeepam is celebrated with Vedic chants and prayers. The next Lakshadeepam falls in

January 2014.

The Padmanabhaswamy temple is an architectural wonder with a mix of Kerala and Dravidian styles. Inside the temple there is a marvel in stone called Kulasekhara Mandapam or Ayiram Kaal Mandapam. Its numerous stone pillars produce musical notes when tapped.

In front of the Krishna shrine there is the Navagruha Mandapam where the ceiling displays nine planets. In one carving in the Seeveli Mandapam outside the sanctum sanctorum, the figure appears like a bull with horns from one side while from the other side it looks like an elephant with tusks.

In front of the temple on the Eastern side is the temple tank called Padmatheertham clearly reflecting in its placid waters the temple tower.

Temple timings: 4 a m to 5 a m, 6.30 to 6.45 a m, 8.45 a m to 11.15 a m and 5 p m to 7 p m.

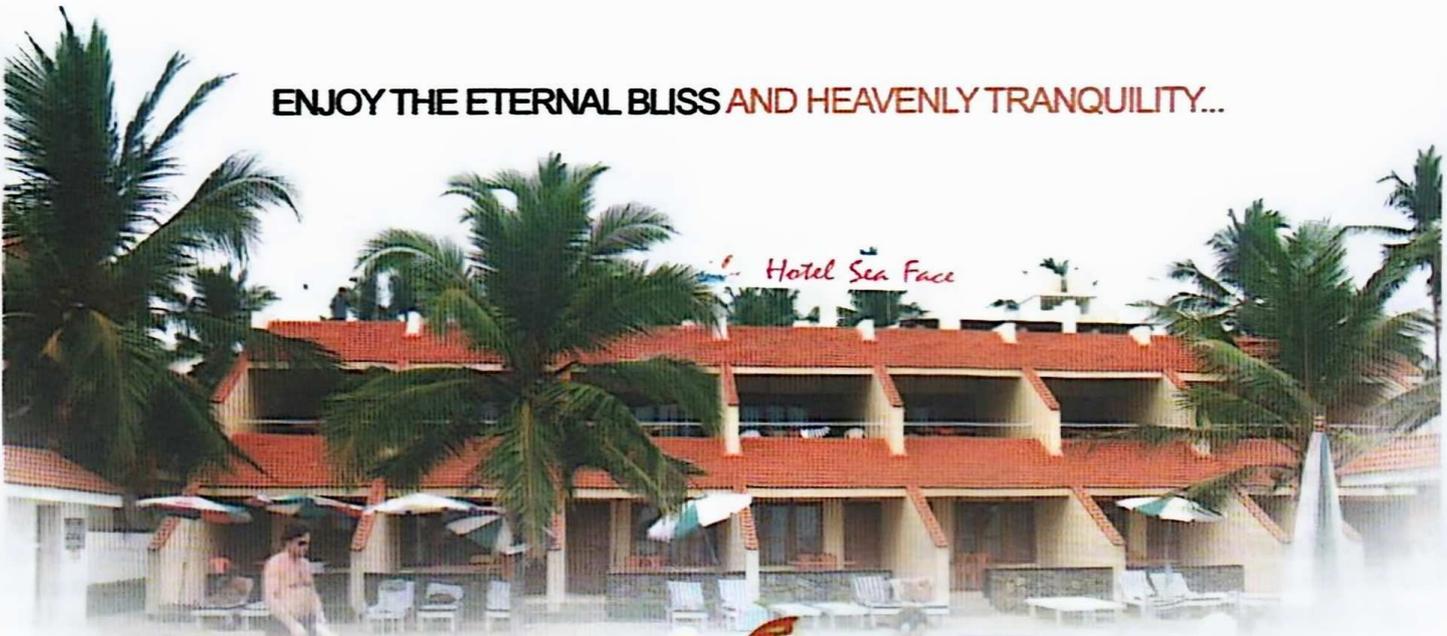
Kuthira Malika Palace

Near the East Nada of the Padmanabhaswamy temple, there is a palace called Kuthira Malika or Horse Palace, so called because of the wooden carving of 150 horses in prancing position along the entire length of its upper floors. It was built in 1844 by Swati Thirunal who called carpenters from Tanjore to build the palace. Kuthira Malika or Puthen Malika as it was earlier called, is now a museum housing rare artefacts belonging to Travancore kings, various types of weapons and includes a three dimensional painting by Nicholas Roerich.

Navarathri Mandapam

Navarathri Mandapam is also situated near the East Nada of the temple. It is the venue for the annual Navarathri celebrations in honour of Goddess Saraswati. The Mandapam is decorated with fresh flowers and fruits on all the nine days, lit by oil lamps, and

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ft long idol of Lord Vishnu is depicted in a reclining position with the five-hooded Adi Shesha or Anantha over his head, his right hand hangs over Shiva. From His navel rises a lotus stalk with Brahma sitting atop the lotus flower. The Utsava Murti of Lord Vishnu with His consorts Sree Devi and Bhoo Devi are also visible. The deity can be viewed through three doors on the Ottakkal Mandapam. Only the King of Travancore can prostrate on the Mandapam as he is Padmanabha Dasa.

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musicians from all over the country give Carnatic classical concerts. An interesting feature of this Mandapam is the placing of inverted earthen pots of varying thickness from the ceiling at various angles, in such a way that there are no echoes produced during the music concerts.

Methan Mani

This is another tourist attraction near the above two palaces. It is a clock tower with the face of a bearded man and two goats on either side, on top of the clock dial. Every hour when the clock strikes, the man opens his mouth and the two goats jump to hit his cheeks on either side.

Inside the Fort and near the Temple, there are many more palaces which were used by the Travancore rajas and their guests. Today they remain architectural masterpieces.

Temple vicinity

Close to the main temple there is a Ganapathy temple that is always crowded by devotees who make promises to break coconuts in the temple once their wishes are fulfilled.

CVN Kalari, the famous Kalaripayattu centre for getting



Palayam Church

training in this Kerala martial art form is situated here. There is also Vasudeva Kailasam, an Ayurvedic health centre, nearby.

It is interesting to note that the entire East Fort area has been declared as a heritage site and we get glimpses of a bygone era here. As we walk from the East Fort through MG Road, the main road of the City, we can see the Secretariat, the Legislative Assembly, Queen Victoria Memorial Hall, Public Library and the University College. The Connemara Market is situated in Palayam. And to the north of this market, in Palayam we have the famous St Joseph's Cathedral and the Jama Masjid Mosque.

Kovalam

Kovalam is 13 kms from Trivandrum and a major tourist attraction. Rocky promontories with the waves constantly



Kovalam Beach

beating on them, rows and rows of green, swaying coconut palms on the shoreline, and level beaches with shallow waters between the rocks are the highlights of this place. There are three main crescent-shaped beaches separated by rocky headlands. The larger beach is called Light House beach. It gets its name from the 35 metre Vizhinjam Light house built on top of the palm covered Kurumkal Hill jutting into the sea. The second one is called Hawah Beach. Both these beaches are separated by a rocky promontory and frequented by tourists. The third beach is named Asoka Beach and houses the Government Guest House and the picturesque Halcyon Castle. There is also the Samudra Beach where local fishermen ply their trade. Here one can take a walk on the stretch of sea wall that is built by the sea and enjoy the sight of waves crashing on the rocks. In Kovalam there are many hotels and resorts, ayurvedic and recuperative salons and spas catering to Indian and foreign tourists.

Kovalam is a favourite tourist attraction for many Europeans and others. They come here mainly for the sun and the sea. People can take a safe sea bath in Kovalam. Catamaran ride and snorkelling are some activities that Kovalam offers. We can have good sunset views from the beach. The beaches are still unpolluted and the waters are crystal blue. In Kovalam the sands are partially black because of the presence of ilmenite and thoracite. Good seafood as well as Continental food is available. The best season is from October to March. Tourists flock here to unwind, soak in nature's beauty, take an ayurvedic rejuvenative therapy and return home, relaxed and de-stressed. In the month of January an entire village with *nalukettu*, temple astrologer, artisans etc of a bygone rural Kerala is set up in Kovalam as a tourist attraction. Displays of cultural performances like kathakali, theyyam, koodiyattam are also held during this time.

Vizhinjam

Vizhinjam, 2 kms from Kovalam, is a busy and natural fishing harbour, important for the local fishing community. It has



boat building yard and an ice plant. Vizhinjam has also a Marine Aquarium which houses different types of fish.

There is a rock cut cave temple which has a sculpture of Vinandhara Dakshinamurti. There is also a church and two old rock cut mosques here.

Thiruvallam

On the way to Kovalam, 10 kms from Thiruvananthapuram, this is a backwater stretch, famous for its canoe rides, kayaking and cruises in kettuvallams. This is a popular spot for tourists who want to experience boat rides in the backwaters. One can also visit coir manufacturing units by boat from here.

Parasurama Temple

Seven kms from Thiruvananthapuram, in Thiruvallam, is the only temple dedicated to Sage Parasurama, believed to be the



creator of Kerala. This is a 2,000 year old temple on the banks of the Karamana River. This is also the place where offerings are made to ancestors (*bali*), where devotees take a holy dip in the river and make their offerings.

Shankumukham Beach

Another beautiful beach in Trivandrum is the Shankumukham beach near the airport. The beach is a popular getaway for the local citizens. It has an indoor recreation club, a 35 m long sculpture of a mermaid - Matsya kanyaka, and a starfish shaped restaurant. These are major tourist attractions here. The waters are clear blue while the sands are white. There is a Devi temple, a church known as Vettukadu, and a mosque called Beemapally mosque. The mosque is dedicated to a pious Muslim lady called Beema Biwi gifted with divine powers and the *chandana kudam*



festival is an important festival that takes place here every October.

It is one of the most distinguished mosques in Kerala, which draws large gatherings. Pilgrims of all ages from all over the nation can be seen heading towards the shrine along all the routes during this festival.

Veli Lake & Tourist village

Nine kms from the city lies the Veli Lake. It is separated from the Arabian sea by a narrow sand bar. At the place where the



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lake and the sea meet, there is the Veli Tourist Village. It is a beautiful picnic spot. There are boating facilities available and a Children's Park with huge sculptures by artist Kanai Kunjiraman. There is a floating restaurant too. One has to walk on a floating bridge to go to the beach here.

Akkulam Tourist Village

Ten kms from the city, this is a popular picnic spot with a children's Park and boating facilities.

Thiruvananthapuram zoo

This is one of the oldest zoos of India, 5 kms from the city. Several varieties of animals are kept in clean surroundings. Most of them are in open enclosures. The zoo has an attractive design and layout, a lake, sprawling lawns and winding pathways.

Napier Museum

This is close to the zoo and named after a former British Governor of Madras, Napier. Large collections of bronzes,



historical ornaments, temple chariots and ivory items are on display here.

There is a Reptile House as well as Natural History museum on these grounds.

Sree Chithra Art Gallery is another outstanding monument on the Napier Museum grounds. It has a good collection of Raja Ravi Varma's and Roerich's paintings and copies of paintings from Rajput, Mughal and Tanjore Schools of Paintings. There are collections of Paintings from China, Tibet, Japan and Bali. The gallery is an Art Connoisseur's delight.

Science and Technology Museum

The Kerala State Science and Technology Museum is situated near the Napier Museum, 3 kms from the city. It records the impressive growth of Science and Technology in India. The Museum is of great educative value to students of Science and Technology. It also houses the Priyadarsini Planetarium that is a huge tourist draw.

Kanakakunnu Palace

This palace is near the Napier Museum. The Royal family once



entertained their guests in this palace, situated on top of a hill. Now it belongs to the Government. The Palace and its sprawling grounds are now the venue for many cultural meets, dance programmes and government conferences.

Kowdiar Palace

This is the palace where the ruler of Travancore, Maharaja



Chithira Thirunal Bala Rama Varma stayed. His descendants continue to live there. It is a sprawling building, majestic in appearance.

Aruvikkara waterfalls

16 kms from Trivandrum is the Aruvikkara water falls and gardens. There is also a dam here and a Bhagavathy temple on top of the rock by the edge of the stream.

Folklore and Numismatics Museum:

Koyikkal Palace

Twenty kms from the city in Nedumangad, Koyikkal Palace was built during 17th century in the traditional *nalukettu* style. Today the palace is a museum and has two wings -one for



folklore and the other for numismatics. The folklore wing exhibits antique musical instruments and household items, reflecting the art, culture and lifestyle of ancient Kerala. The numismatics wing displays the largest coin collection in India. It includes coins from different countries of the world as well as the old coins of India and Kerala.

Neyyar Dam and

Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Neyyar Dam is 35 kms from Trivandrum. The richly forested Agastya Hills form a magnificent backdrop to the dam. On the banks of the dam is the famous Sivananda Yoga Centre. One can go boating here.

Eight kms from Neyyar Dam there is Kottur which has an elephant Rehabilitation Centre that trains elephants. Tourists can go for elephant rides here.

The Neyyar Wild life Sanctuary is spread over 12,000 hectares in the forests of Western Ghats. It is wildlife at its best.

There are Lion Safari, Crocodile Park and Deer Park. But we need permission from the Forest Department to go there. The Department provides their vehicle with a guide. For adventure

tourists, this is a real treat.

Ponmudi Hill station

This hill station is 61 kms from Trivandrum. One can enjoy nature in her pristine beauty with mountain springs, rivulets and colourful mountain flowers. Ponmudi is 912 mts above sea level. The hill station offers trekking trails and camping



opportunities.

Agastyakoodam

This hill is situated 34 kms from the city and forms part of the Sahyadri Range of Mountains. Over 1890 m above sea level, it is a densely forested area and abounds in rare medicinal herbs and plants. Trekking is allowed from December to April with prior permission from the Forest Department.

Varkala Beach

This is 45 km from Trivandrum and the beach is also called Papanasam Beach. There is an old temple dedicated to Janardhana, another form of Lord Vishnu. Unique features about this beach are the steep cliffs rising from the beach with unique geological formations and natural springs, known as Varkala formation. The town is also an important pilgrim centre for devotees of Sree Narayana Guru since this social reformer's Samadhi and his Sivagiri Mutt are here. Recently it has become a favourite tourist spot for foreigners because of the curative properties of the mineral-rich water springs there that are used in spa treatments. Varkala also has backwater stretches of immense natural beauty. There is the famous Varkala tunnel built by the British, which is another tourist attraction. An old British Fort called Anjengo Fort is near Varkala. Today we can



Attukal Bhagavathy temple

'Trivandrum' is considered as the English name for Thiruvananthapuram. But it is the literal transliteration of the colloquial way by which the natives call their city 'Tri-van-drum' (ത്രി-വന്ദ്രം).

see ancient tombstones and a garden inside the Fort.

Attukal Bhagavathy Temple

Two kms within the city is the famous Attukal Bhagavathy temple, where Attukal Pongala is conducted every year during February-March. A sea of women on Pongala day offer freshly cooked rice, coconut and jaggery to a Hindu deity in what the Guinness Book of World Records says is the largest gathering of



Attukal Pongala

women on earth. Millions of women devotees pray to Attukal Devi, the reigning deity of the Bhagavathy Temple, to fulfill their wishes. The climax of the ritual on the ninth day is the ceremonial lighting of hearths for these offerings.

At 10.45 a.m., the temple priests light the ceremonial hearth in front of the temple amid chanting of devotional hymns, fireworks, Panchavadyam and chenda melam. This provides a signal for thousands of devotees across the city to light up their hearths to prepare various kinds of naivedyam, the offering to the deity. Public address systems also relay the cue to the pilgrims. A huge pall of smoke rises over the city. The festival ends after a statue of the Goddess is brought back in a procession from the Sree Dharma Sastha temple at Manacaud.

Padmanabhapuram Palace

About 64 kms from Trivandrum, lies the magnificent Padmanabhapuram Palace. It was the residence of the former rulers of Travancore (1550 -1750 AD). Though now the palace is in Tamilnadu, it comes under the administration of the Government of Kerala Archaeology Department. It is a



sprawling elegant building of teak wood, granite, and stones. It is an excellent example of Kerala's indigenous style of architecture. It is interesting to remember that many scenes of the award winning Malayalam film "Manichithrathazh" are shot there.

Changing Times and Malayali Identity

ONAM - A REMEMBRANCE

The character of Malayali ethos is changing rapidly in comparison with that of any other Indian community. When lifestyles, thoughts, appearances and attitudes are changing every day, the Malayali is considered a slave of consumerism. This peculiar situation results in the disappearance of Malayali identity. The change is visible in the nature and environment in which he lives. Perhaps, the environment influences the mental state of Malayalees.

The transition of a Malayali from the tribal to agricultural and then to commercial consumer living in a small land sandwiched between hills and a sea, compelled him to absorb the changes taking place elsewhere in the world. This is a phenomenon that does not exist anywhere else. The proximity of the sea and seafarers have brought him the changes that have swept other countries. He never had an opportunity to witness the industrial culture and hence failed to absorb its values.

The new religious systems reached him centuries ago and took deep roots here. Their philosophies had a great influence on him. This taught him the virtues of co-existence and tolerance. In modern times, colonial influences taught and trained him to accept anything alien and make it a part of himself. The natural resistance of tradition could not withstand the changes. Earlier Sanskrit was the language of learning and wisdom but it was replaced by

English. Society watched with awe the people who could speak English 'fluently.' When a Malayalam 'munshi' was paid Rs.50 as salary, the English teacher was paid Rs.100. The result? The affluent went after the English language. Today every Malayali strives to have an English medium school in every village. When students in such schools happen to talk in Malayalam, they are punished with 'fines' and sometimes a 'shave' of the head.

When love for world literature grew steadily, the people of 'Mahe', which was under French colonial rule, spurned French literature that produced one of the greatest litterateur Victor Hugo. The reason could be the realization that it is better to learn English than French, to seek employment in international cities. This realization confined the epics like Ramayana and Krishna Katha to the pages of school text books. When the identity was lost, Malayali culture was dictated by the city culture of affluent nations.

When the influence of New York reached Tokyo and that of the latter reached Kondotty and Chavakkad via Abu Dhabi and Muscat, the small towns in Kerala made a giant leap into the electronic culture and the Malayali entered the new civilization of web sites and e-mails.

The big joint families of bygone era are now divided and dwell in flats. To a Malayali, Onam now is mere nostalgia. When flowers from Tamilnadu decorate the courtyards of Kerala houses, his kali

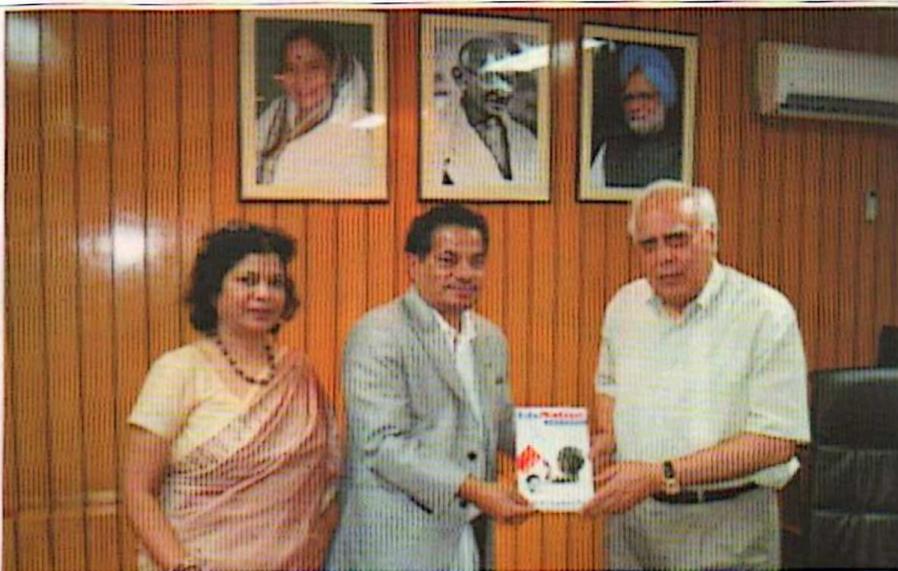


Dr K K N Kurup

Thumba, Kaakkappoo, Athirani poo and Mukkuty are gradually becoming alien. The Navara (wild paddy) and sheaf of paddy (Nelkatta) from the fields have become rare sights. Paddy fields are progressively becoming part of fables and 'poovili, Onathallu and Onapottan are now fairy tales. The tunes of Thiruvathirakkali and Kaikottikali are now heard from television channels on Onam days. The Malayali identity is now totally lost and even lifestyles are slowly changing. Our temple tanks give way to showers while our Olan, Kalan, avial, erisseri etc are replaced by Biriyani and pulao. The jackfruit, once the pride and craze of Kerala is no more in demand. After a few years, our children may do some research to find out what this big fruit is all about. Once Tipu Sultan levied a tax of four annas on Jackfruit trees as they were a source of food. Even the British government, following Tipu's foot steps, continued this practice. The land of jackfruit would never face starvation deaths, especially during Onam season, they contended. After eating a pineapple, its remains are thrown into the soil and these give rise to new pineapple plants. Such a phenomenon cannot be witnessed anywhere in the world, Dr Nataraja Guru once pointed out. Mother Nature is very loving here and her love is celebrated as a festival of harvest. The Malayali identity now exists only in nostalgia. We have now become a generation that has lost its roots and moved away from our soul. More than a festival, Onam has now become a strong state of remorse.

Dr K K N Kurup has authored many books on a variety of subjects. He was a former Vice Chancellor of University of Calicut. He is now the Director General of the Centre for Heritage Studies, founded by Government of Kerala.

The above article, reproduced with his permission, was written a decade ago and was published in Mathrubhumi Onam Special, 2000.



Dr K M Vasudevan Pillai, the eminent educationist from Mumbai called on Union Minister for Human Resources Development Kapil Sibal for a discussion and presented him a copy of 'EduNation' authored by Pillai. To his right is Dr Daphne Pillai, Chairperson, Management Board, Mahatma Education Society.

Old is Gold

-Satyanath

Minimol മിനിമോൾ (1977)

Lyrics: Sreekumaran Thampi

Composer: G Devarajan

Rāgam: Sankarabharanam

Singer: K J Yesudas

കേരളം കേരളം കേളികൊട്ടുയരുന്ന കേരളം
 കേളീകദംബം പൂക്കും കേരളം
 കേരകേളീസദനമാമെൻ കേരളം (കേരളം)

പൂവണിപ്പൊന്നും ചിങ്ങപ്പൂവിളി കേട്ടുണരും
 പുനെല്ലിൻ പാടത്തിലൂടെ
 മാവേലിമനന്റെ മാണിക്യത്തേരു വരും
 മാനസപ്പൂക്കളങ്ങളാടും . ആടും (കേരളം)

നീരമലകളാൽ പൂവിടും മാനം കണ്ടു
 നിളാനദീഹൃദയം പാടും
 തോണിപ്പാട്ടലിയുന്ന കാറ്റത്തു തുള്ളുമോളം
 കൈകൊട്ടിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ തൻമേളം മേളം (കേരളം)

Transliteration: Ā, ā = ആ, ാ; c = ച, ch = ചെ, D, d = ട, Dh, dh = ട, Đ, đ = ഡ, Đh, đh = ഡ, Ē, ē = ഏ, ; ī = ി; jh = ജ, Ĺ, ĺ = ജ; Ñ, ñ = ഞ, ṅ = ണ; Ō, ō = ഓ, -ഓ; ū = ു, ũ = ൃ; ř = റ, ṛ̌ = റ; Ś, ś = ശ; T, t = ട, Th, th = ത, Ṭ, ṭ = ത; ṭh = മ

Kēraḷam Kēraḷam kēlikottuyarunna Kēraḷam
 Kēlikadambam pookkum Kēraḷam
 Kērakēleesadanamāmen Kēraḷam (Kēraḷam..)

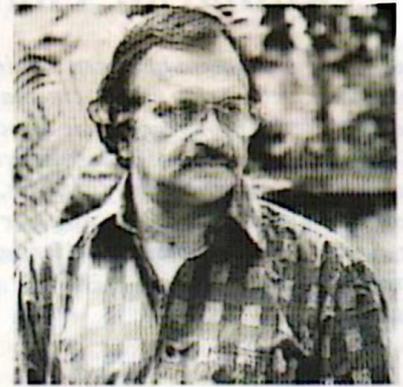
Pooṇaṇipponnum chingappooṇi kēttuṇarum
 Punnellin pātathiloote
 Mavēlimannante māṇikyathēru varum
 Mānasappookkaḷāṇālātum... Aatum... (Kēraḷam..)

Neeradamaḷakalāl poovitum mānam kaṇṭu
 Nilānadeehṛdayam pātum
 Ṭōṇippāttaliyunna kāṭaṭṭu tuḷlumōḷam
 Kaikottippāttukaḷ tanmelam... melam... (Kēraḷam..)

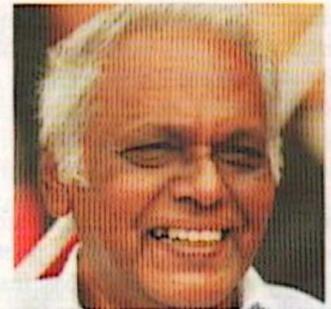
This Śāsikumār-directed movie was based on a story by Pāppanamcode Lakshmaṇan and screenplay and dialogue were written by the famous novelist Kāḷkanādan. It had Prēm Nazir, Vidhubāla, Adoor Bhāsi, Bahadoor, Ṭikkuriśī Sukumāran Nāir, Jose Prakāś, Unni Mary and Reena as actors. Other songs are *Mizhikal mizhikal*(KJY), *Chandrikathalikayile* (P Jayachandran, T Santha), *Ambassidarinu* (C O Anto,

Madhuri) and *Alinganangalil*.

There were a few songs dedicated to Kēraḷa and Kairālī in Malayāḷam movies during earlier days. Some of them are *Kalānikētē Kēraḷamāte namastē namastē* (Prasanna), *Janani jayikka neenālī Malayāḷamē* (Āśādeepam), *Namastē Kairālee* (Jail pulli) and the above song was the fourth.



Sreekumaran Thampi



G Devarajan



K J Yesudas



Vidhubala, Nazir

Sreekumaran Thampi on his songs, films

Sreekumaran Thampi has been Engineer, poet, lyricist, storywriter, screenplay writer, cinema director, film and television serial producer, music director.... he excelled in all that he entered into. He has written several novels and poems. Won several awards for lyrics, film direction etc. He has written more than 1000 songs for Malayalam films. He promptly responded to the 10 questions put to him by Kerala In Mumbai.

Read on:

In the early fifties and sixties, you-Haripad Sreekumaran Thampi- became known as a novelist as your novels 'Kaakkathampuratty' and 'Kuttanad' were serialized in 'Janayugam' weekly. This perception was of people who were outside Kerala and in North Kerala. Will you please elaborate your transition from a novelist to a poet and later to a leading lyricist?

Compared to present day poets and lyricists, your works are on a much higher level, in structure and in content. Was poetry in your genes or did you acquire it by sheer hard work? If so, your inspiration and circumstances.

I started writing poems and short stories at the age of eleven. I did not make a transition from poetry to prose or vice versa. It came to me simultaneously. My inspiration came from my two elder brothers P.V.Thampi, the famous novelist and civil lawyer who wrote several novels like *Krishnaparundhu*, *Homam*, *Pallivetta* etc and Advocate P.G.Thampi (Former Director General of Prosecution, Kerala State and former Chairman Kerala Bar Council; and President, Kerala Bar Federation).

My eldest brother P.V.Thampi published a book of short stories at the age of 12. My brother P.G.Thampi was more into poetry and he too brought out his first collection of devotional poems at the age of 13. My mother and grandmother were also interested in music. My father was a landlord. He too was a keen lover of music and an ardent fan of M.K.Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, P.U.Chinnappa and Kamukara Purushothaman.

My first poem and short story appeared in a handwritten magazine named 'Pookkula' of which I was the editor, writer and publisher when I was in Std VII. My teachers of Haripad UP School for girls where I studied upto III form (std 8), happened to read my magazine and they handed it over to the Headmaster Mr. Chandrasekharan Nair. I was very scared of being punished by him. But the Headmaster summoned me to his room, embraced and blessed me and gave me his fountain pen as a token of his appreciation. As far as I am concerned that was my first award I won for writing. Not much later, my stories and poems began to appear in the Children's corners of famous publications like Malayalarajyam weekly, Kaumudi weekly, Kuttigalude Deepika. The Samastha Kerala Sahithya Parishad, in connection with their 'All Kerala Conference' at Kottayam in 1957 conducted a poetry competition (Dhrutha kavanam extempore poetry writing) for students below 18 in which I won the 2nd prize. In the next two years, I won the 1st prize for poetry and 2nd prize for short story from the Kaumudi Weekly. Editors began to publish my articles along with those of senior writers.

I wrote the novel 'Kakkathampuratti' at the age of 18. I sent the manuscript to various publications including Mathrubhumi but there was no response. To my wonder, the novel appeared in full form in the 'Janayugam' Onam special. Kambisseri Karunakaran, then Editor of Janayugam liked this novel immensely which was written in 'Onattukara' style of Malayalam. He insisted me to immediately write another novel

-P V Vijaykumar



to be serialized in the Janayugam Weekly. During this time I had been contributing poems and short stories which appeared regularly in Kaumudi Weekly, Desabandhu, Kerala Bhooshanam, Malayala Manorama weekly, Chandrika weekly etc.

Your foray into film lyrics was through 'Kattumallika' of Merryland of producer P. Subramaniam. Can you please let us know the circumstances leading to it and how you evaluate those events today?

Those days I used to send lyrics to AIR Trivandrum but they were very prompt in returning the whole lot. However I continued writing and singing my own lyrics. My first lyric tuned by me was sung by an eight year old girl who later became a famous comedian in Malayalam cinema. She is none other than Sreelatha Nambuthiri who is a singer and actress.

Sri.P.Subramaniam, owner of Merryland studio heard about my novel 'Kakkathampuratti' through one of my relatives one Dr. Achuthan Pillai. I was called to write the screenplay for his film based on this first novel of mine. Prem Nazir was acting for the film 'Kaliyodam' directed by P.Subramaniam at that time. I was given accommodation in Prem Nazir's room and we were room mates for 15 days. It was then I realized what a simple and down-to-earth person Prem Nazir was without any show of stardom.

On completion of the script, there was an argument between the producer and me as I did not agree to the changes in the script suggested by him. In the course of writing the script, I had also written lyrics for songs on apt situations which the producer liked very much. He firmly told me "without the changes I don't want your script. But I'll give you a break to write lyrics in one of my films. I see a nascent style in your lyrics different from P. Bhaskaran and Vayalar."

He kept his word and brought me to Malayalam cineworld in 1966 through his film "Kattumallika". My relationship with this doyen of Malayalam cinema thickened and he treated me like his own son. I wrote for his next film 'Priyatama' too. However, T.S.Muthiah's experimental film 'Chitramela' was a turning point in my life as a script writer and lyricist.

T.S.Muthiah was an ardent fan of Vittoria De Sica and it was the form of the film 'Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow' which he adapted in his 'Chitramela'. The longest film among the three was 'Apaswarangal' a musical and romantic tragedy for which I wrote the story, screenplay, dialogue and eight songs. That was the first time I teamed up with G. Devarajan. It was the first film too for which Yesudas sang for my lyrics. After 'Chitramela' I did not have to look back and I was flooded with opportunities.

'Keralam Keralam' of Minimol of 1977 is being sung even today at various cultural events of Keralites outside Kerala. What prompted you to choose that particular theme? There is a line 'Nilanadeehridayam paadam'. Why Nila and why not Pamba especially when you are closer to Pamba than Nila?

Director Sasikumar asked me to write a song praising the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Kerala for a particular situation in

the film 'Minimol'. I think I wrote this song within a few minutes because I've always loved my native village, state, mother nature and my second mother Malayalam. I preferred Nila to Pamba because this Nila has contributed more to our literature and the classical art forms of Kathakali and Mohiniyattom flourished through the patronage of Mahakavi Vallathol and Mukundan Raja on the banks of Nila. The river Pamba helped us to cultivate paddy since she flows through Kuttanad about which I have written the song Payippattattile vallomkali...

You have made more than 22 films. Which among them was most popular and which gave you satisfaction as a creator?

It is true that I produced 22 films under different banners. Rajashilpi films which made 'Chandrakantham' and 'Bhoogolam Thiriyunnu'; Bhavani Rajeswari Arts which made 14 films; Sowparnika Films which made 'Yuvajanolsavam', 'Vilichu Viliketttu' and 'Aadipathyam'; Ragamalika Combines which produced 'Mohiniyattom', 'Gaanam', 'Onde Raktha' in Kannada and 'Ore Raktham' in Malayalam. Commercially the film 'Chattambi Kalyani' written and produced by me and directed by Sasikumar stands first. But technically, I think 'Gaanam' 'Mohiniyattom' 'Etho Oru swapnam' 'Maalika Paniyunnavaar' and 'Jeevitham oru gaanam' are my favourites. 'Yuvajanolsavam' written and directed by me with Mohanlal as hero was also a hit. As a creator, I think 'Gaanam' gave me maximum satisfaction.

Many discerning persons have remarked that your poems and lyrics are spontaneous, meaningful and rhythmic, more like that of P. Bhaskaran than ONV Kurup or Vayalar Rama Varma. They also point out that you don't resort to gimmicks while Vayalar was often accused of using ear-pleasing words at the expense of meaning while ONV's works looked more laboured but meaningful. How will you comment on these observations.

With humility and all respects to the big birds who flew before me, I reserve my comments. I consider P. Bhaskaran as the pioneer lyricist in Malayalam. Since I am much younger to all the above three I treat them as lyricists who have inspired me.

Dakshinamurthy Swamy in his memoirs 'Sangeetha Rajanganathil' made a comment on a particular event connected to 'Chandrikayil aliyunnu' song. Yet he proclaimed his love for you as a younger brother and son, Did that event reinforce your relationship?

The film 'Bharyamar Sookshikuga' was produced by the veteran T.E Vasudevan, the winner of the J C Daniel award and producer of 54 films. He always gave importance to songs in his films as he believed that hit songs will boost collections at the box office. Swamy and me worked regularly for Vasu Sir's 'Jayamaruthy Productions'. We used to sit for days together composing songs for this banner. The producer would ask Swamy to compose at least five tunes for each of his songs. If all the five tunes were good then it would be selected by "lots". When we were composing for this film 'Bharyamar Sookshikuga' Swamy tuned my song 'Chandrikayil aliyunnu' in seven different styles but T E Vasudevan was not satisfied with any of the tunes. The normally patient and calm Swamy lost his temper and said in a soliloquy "I am going to stop this nasty profession. I'd rather make my livelihood through teaching music to students." When I humbly requested him to try an eighth tune he got bewildered and threw the paper at me and said "you change your lyric first.". I told him "this lyric is going to be a big hit in Malayalam because the structure of my lyrics is uncommon in Malayalam." Saying this I began to hum a Tamil song tuned by the great M S Viswanathan set to Mohana ragam. At once Swamy's mood changed. He took back the paper and sang my lines in Mohana ragam. I too compromised by changing the lyrics of the charanam according to the tune set by him. Anyway 'Chandrikayil' became a sensational hit in Malayalam. I always

consider Swamy as my guru in music.

You have an unbreakable record of being poet, lyricist, novelist, music composer, producer and director. Only two other personalities (Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair and Balachandra Menon) have done a similar feat. Among the three whom do you consider the best and why?

All the three have their pedestals to stand upon. As one of the pioneers in Malayalam film field the first place must go to Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair. As far as I am concerned I started doing things in a multi faceted way at the age of 11 itself through my magazine 'Pookkula' in which even the illustrations were drawn by me.

"To cry" is an involuntary reaction. Yet in 'Abhimanam' you wrote "Pottikaranjukondomane ..". When to cry itself is unpredictable why did you use the phrase 'Pottikaranju' that is still more complex a reaction and would result in mere acting and thus insincere. If you have to re-write these lines how would you do it?

A film song is written for a particular situation. The character of the hero need not coincide with that of the lyricist. In Abhimanam the hero was a womanizer till the day his wife fell sick. Only then does he understand the depth of married life and repents for his past behaviour towards his wife. The sudden change of a womanizer to a faithful husband is indeed a complex & traumatic situation. Hence I wrote the song accordingly.

Which is your best lyric so far and among others' works which one is dearer to you?

It is very difficult to cite a particular song. There are so many favourites. Anyway I'll quote a few:

Ponveyil manikachha

Hridayasarasile

En mandahasam.

Among P. Bhaskaran's lyrics

Thamasamende varuvan

Thamarakumbilallo mama hridayam

Nada brahmathin sagaram

Among Vayalar's

Aayiram Padasarungal kilungi

Sanyasini nin punyashramathil

Chandrakalabham

Among ONV's

Manikkya veenayumayen

Arikil nee undayirunnengi

Sagaram shanthamaganee.

How do you measure affinity of Mumbai Malayalis to you and Kerala in general? Do you have any message to "Kerala in Mumbai" and Mumbai Malayalis on the occasion of Onam?

I sincerely believe that Mumbai Malayalis are more nostalgic about their state and language than Malayalis living in Kerala and I always cherish those memories. The Sreekumaran Arjunan Nite at Shanmukhananda Hall was organized by the Jyotsna Cultural Society in 1979 itself, of which Madhavikutty (KamalaDas) and novelist Pamman were the office bearers. Sreekumaran Thampi Nite was organized at Trivandrum by the Kamukara Foundation and Swathi Arts only after many years. Now Gulf Malayalis are also interested in such programmes based on my songs.

My message to Mumbai Malayalis on the occasion of Onam is: Teach your children at least the basics of their mother tongue Malayalam. Keep your basic Malayalam culture intact.

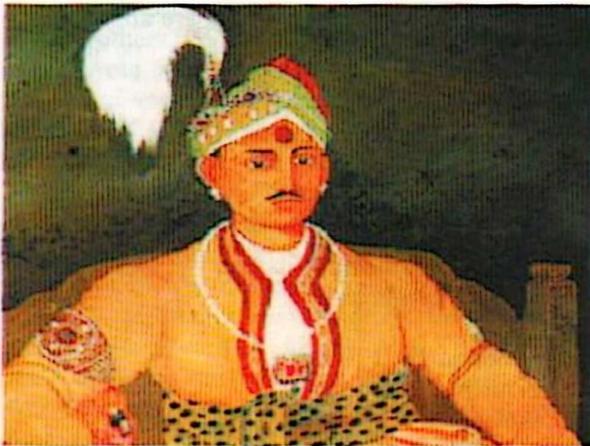


MAHARAJA SWATHI TIRUNAL

PADMANABHADASA VANCHIBHUPALA
BALARAMAVARMA BHAGYA NRUBALA
NITYA CHITRODAYA NIRMALA RUPA
NIJA SANGEETHA KALA ANUKULA

Prof. K. A. Sivaramakrishnan

Maharaja Swathi Tirunal was born on April 16th 1813 under the star Swathi in the royal family of Travancore. His full name was Padmanabhadasa Vanchibhupala Sree Rama Varma Kulasekhara Perumal. He came to be known as 'Garbhasreeman' since he was the sure heir and King even while in the womb of his mother. His parents were Rani Lakshmi Bai of Travancore palace and Raja Raja Varma Koyi Thampuram of Changanacherry Palace. From the age of 16 he was able to administer the state and was greatly successful. He introduced many reforms for the benefit of the people. During a short period of 33 years Maharaja Swathi Tirunal earned a high reputation as a composer and he took to music to earn peace of mind. He encouraged musicians and dancers by rewarding them and providing facilities to them. His compositions are varied and include Pada Varnams, Swarajathis, Padams, Bhajans and Thillanas that are suitable for dance, Dhrupadas and Khayals of the Hindustani tradition. The dominant quality of his composition is the intense Bakthi or devotion to the family deity



Padmanabhaswami. He also composed kritis in praise of many other deities like Ganapathi, Siva, Srikrishna, Saraswathi, Karthikeya, Narasimha, Lakshmi and Anjaneya. His kritis carry the mudra Padmanabha, Pankajanabha, Sarasijanabha or other variations to indicate Padma or the lotus. He has composed songs in various languages like Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindi, Telugu as he was proficient in several of them. His life of 33 years spanned the later period of the Trinity of Carnatic music. He was thus their younger contemporary. His Navarathri kritis are sung on each day during the nine day Navarathri festival in Thiruvanathapuram. Kritis like DEVA DEVA in ragam Mayamalavagowla and the Varnam CHALA MELA are favourites with musicians. Swathi Tirunal Maha Raja passed away on December 25th 1946 at the age of 33.



MAYA MALAVA GOULA "DEVA DEVA"

Indian Style

Arohanam : S R1 G2 M1 P D1 N2 >S

Avarohanam : >S N2 D1 P M1 G2 R1 S

Pallavi: Deva Deva Kalayami Te Charanabuja Sevanam

Anupallavi: Bhuvanatraya Nayaka Bhurikarunaya Mama

Bhavatapamakhilam Varaya Ramakanta

Charanam: Jatarupanibhachela Janmarjita Mamakhila

Pataka Sanchayamiya Varaya Karunaya

Ditijali Vidalana Dinabandho Mamava

Srita Vibudha Sala Sri Padmanabha Saure

Western Style

Ascending Order : C C# E F G G# B >C

Descending Order: >C B G# G F E C# C

|| Deva ||

|| Deva ||

|| Deva ||

Meaning:

Pallavi : Oh Lord of the celestials, I pay obeisance at your lotus like feet.

Anupallavi: Oh sovereign of the three worlds Please do obliterate the miseries of this worldly Life by your infinite compassion, Oh Ramakanta.

Charanam: You are adorned with golden raiment. Please obliterate the sins I have accumulated in my previous births with your grace. Oh Lord Padmanabha Saure You vanquished the clan of demons. You are the refuge for the dejected ones and the celestials. Please Protect me.

Malayalam Movie World

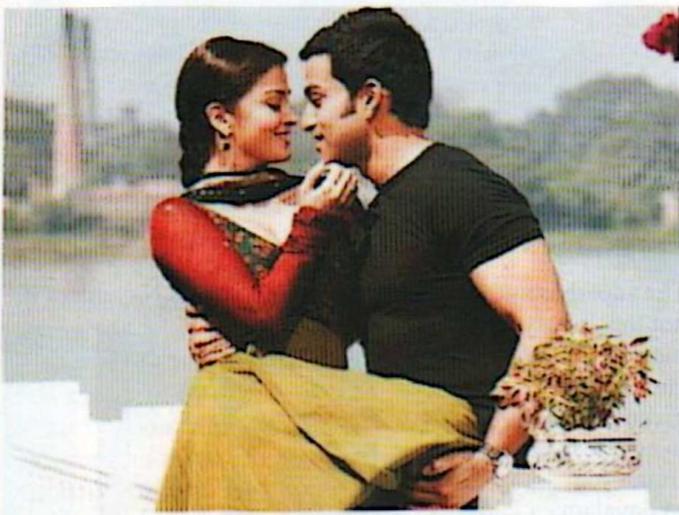


-KIM News Bureau

Prithviraj praises Raavanan as his greatest lucky mascot

Raavanan was the best thing that happened to him, according to young super star Prithviraj. When the movie was screened abroad, many enquired about him and when told that he was an actor from Malayalam film world, they were inquisitive to know more about him. Thus now they know that there is a place called Kerala and it has a film industry, Prithviraj remarks with pride. When Maniratnam invited him to Raavanan, he never anticipated such an important role. It was his dream from the very beginning to act in a Maniratnam film. Now that is fructified, he smiled. "I am grateful to him," he said.

"When the movie was premiered in London, people over there wondered at the rapid progress made by Indian Cinema". Prithviraj is yet to come out of that experience.



Re-emergence of Thulasidas

After a long hiatus, Director Thulasidas is said to have decided to come alive again. He is reported to be coming with a film similar to *Kaderbhai*, his earlier film and a hit. It is named

'*Kuwait Masthan*'. Jagadish, Asokan, Siddique and Innocent lead the cast.

Kaloor Denis writes the screenplay for the story of Kalabhavan. It is expected to bring almost all important mimicry artistes of Kerala in various roles.



'Christian Brothers' scores high

The Mohan Lal-Joshi movie '*Christian Brothers*' has scored a high with the satellite rights. Asianet has secured its satellite rights for ₹ 3.05 crores.

This film is produced at a cost of over five crores. With the overseas, audio rights already sold, this movie has ensured a profit even before the theatre release. Besides Mohan Lal, other stars are Suresh Gopi, Dileep, Kaniha, Lakshmi Rai, Kavya Madhavan, Lakshmi Gopalaswamy etc. The screen play is by the team of Uday Krishna and C B K Thomas.



When Twenty20, that had all the stars of Malayalam in it, was for sale, Surya TV acquired it for ₹ 2.86 crores and it was a setback for Asianet. With a sense of revenge, they bought the rights of '*Pazhassi Raja*' for ₹ 2.62 crores. Now *Christian Brothers* has the credit of fetching the highest price for satellite distribution.

A sequel to August 1

Aroma Mani is planning to bring out a sequel to *August 1*, a mega hit. The earlier film (1988) was directed by Sibi Malayil but the sequel is directed by Shaji Kailas.

The paper work has started. S N Swamy is writing the story, screen play and dialogues for the crime fiction.

In the earlier movie, Mammooty received accolades for his role of DSP Perumal.

Prithviraj turns Producer

Santosh Sivan and Prithviraj's production company '*August Cinema*', launched their first film *Urumi* a tri-lingual period film in Malayalam, Tamil and English.

Mammooty was the chief guest at the function held at Dream Hotel in Kochi. He lighted the traditional lamp, in the presence of Prithviraj's mother Mallika Sukumaran.

Mammooty was all praise for "his younger brother of *Pokkiri Raja*" and showered praises on him. Director Renjith who discovered Prithviraj, in his speech said: "Prithviraj had an air ticket in his pocket when we started *Nandanam*, as he wanted to go back to Australia to continue his studies. However after the release, this handsome dude straight away walked into the hearts of Malayalee girls!"

Prithviraj, the fastest rising star in Malayalam cinema said: "Through *Urumi* we are trying to uplift Malayalam cinema to the international level." Santosh Sivan said that the film will be shot in Kerala and later in the forest areas of Masher Ghat, Maharashtra, where Santosh and Prithviraj shot the climax of *Raavanan*.

The cream among Malayalam directors Joshi, Renjith, Blessy, Sibi Malayil, Kamal, Lenin Rajendran, Shaji Kailas, Lal, Viji Thampy, Renji Panickar, producers Gokulam Gopalan, Liberty Basheer, actors Manian Pillai Raju, Indrajith, KPAC Lalitha and Kaviyoor Ponnamma were present to wish Prithviraj and Santosh.

Lal Jose, the actor

Malayalam cinema's top director Lal Jose is once again turning actor. Earlier he played himself (director Lal Jose) in Renjith directed *Rock and Roll*.

Now he is enacting his real life role as director Lal Jose in Mammooty's Martin Prakkat directed *Best Actor*, again a movie set against the film industry background.

Meanwhile Lal Jose wrapped up his acting assignment in a day and has moved over to his next directorial venture *Elsamma Enna Aankutty* starring Indrajith, Kunchacko Bobban, and newcomer Ann Augustine.

Lal Jose is also now giving finishing touches to the script of his proposed Mohanlal- Prithviraj starrer *Cousins*, which should start rolling by the end of the year.

Four Friends

Writer Krishna Poojapura and director Saji Surendran after their hit *Happy Husbands* are together again with *Four Friends*.

Two of the earlier team members Jayaram, Jayasurya are being joined by two new friends Bobban Kunchacko and Meera Jasmine in this all new entertainer.

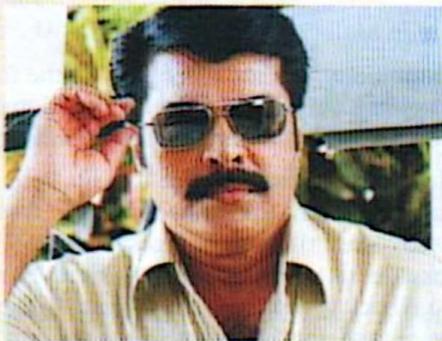
Jayaram plays a Manager in a Multinational, Kunchacko is a final year MBA student, Jayasurya is a local rowdy and Meera Jasmine is a MBBS student who does not mix with others. The interaction among the four is what *Four Friends* are about.

The shooting of the film, produced by Tommychan Mulakupadam, started in Alapuzha on July 16. Later the unit flew to Singapore and Malaysia for further action. Others in the supporting cast are Suraj Venjaramoodu, Salim Kumar, Lalu Alex, Ganesh Kumar and Seema.

The King and Commissioner

Ranji Panicker and Shaji Kailas are joining together after a long time to give Malayalees a new gift, *The King and the Commissioner*.

Joseph Alex IAS of *The King* and Bharath Chandran IPS of *Commissioner* are coming together to give a new thrill. Mammooty is enacting his old role of Joseph Alex while Prithviraj, the new megastar of Malayalam films, is replacing Suresh Gopi from the role of Bharath Chandran.



The film will be shot at Hyderabad, Delhi and Kochi. It will be distributed by Mammooty's Play House.

Vikram is willing to act in low budget Malayalam films

Vikram, the current megastar of Tamil films, is ready to act in low budget

Malayalam films, even if the role is not of hero. But he is not ready to act in low budget Tamil movies.

Even if he takes less money from Tamil films, the producers could sell their movies for ₹ 30-40 crores. "Then why to deprive myself some money?" he asks.

Vikram has acted in more than 10 Malayalam films earlier and in one, "Itha Oru Sneha Gatha" of Capt Raju he was hero. Now he is ready to sacrifice his status in Tamil Cinema for the sake of low budget Malayalam films provided the screenplay and his role are powerful, he clarified.

His recent Tamil films were not much successful. In *Kanthisaami*, he enacted his role very well but the film as a whole was not well conceived, he said. When *Bheema* collected ₹ 30 crores, it lost ₹ 4 crores. In *Majaa*, his role and the characters of Pasupathy and Manivannan were of equal importance and because of this, the people who expected much more from him, could not get what they expected, Vikram explained.

Nayantara being sidelined in other languages

The superheroin of Telugu and Tamil movies Nayantara is not much busy there as earlier and this has given her time to accept roles from

Malayalam films. She now enacts the main female lead in 'Electra'.

She has had enough fame, status and

money from other languages during the last six years. She would settle down in life in a few years and then she needs a few, may be five six good movies to be remembered by people after some time. This factor alone prompts her to accept Malayalam movies, she explained.

Every actor or actress, however talented they are, wants to become a star as it is not in every one's star to be one. No actor can have a control over lakhs of fans, to be loved by them. It is sheer magic, she clarified.



Kavya approaches Court seeking divorce



treatment to her, they might trespass to her current house at Palarivattom and inflict more mental agony. Kavya alleges that her jewellery worth ₹ 65 lakhs and cash, totalling ₹ 95 lakhs lie with Nishal's parents and sought to recover her wealth from them. The Family Court kept the next hearing to September 29. She alleged that their attitude towards her changed drastically after a few days of married life. They were demanding more money and she was convinced that they were after money from her family. She returned to India from Kuwait on March 27, 2009. Her husband Nishal, duty bound to protect her, failed to do so. He acted like a puppet before his parents.

Later Nishal refuted Kavya's charges as baseless and false. Neither he nor his parents ever demanded any money or jewellery nor had they any need for it, he clarified. He said he asked her in writing, to return to him to live together and this action might have compelled her to file the false petitions, he alleged.

He further alleged that 'AMMA's representative K B Ganeshkumar contacted him over phone and asked him to sign the divorce agreement to avoid future problems.

"Now we will reveal everything in the court and produce all evidences," Nishal stated.

However, Ganeshkumar said his intervention was on account of the request of Nishal's family. The discussion was held at Thiruvananthapuram between the lawyers of both parties on the initiative of Nishal's family friend and Kuwait industrialist R C Suresh. During the discussion it was agreed upon to stop forthwith the allegations from both the sides and to agree for a divorce by mutual consent. While Kavya complied with the decision, Nishal was violating it, Ganeshkumar said.



Cine artiste Kavya Madhavan approached Family Court at Kochi, seeking divorce from husband Nishal Chandramohan on July 24.

Kavya and Nishal were married in December 2008 before Registrar of Civil Marriages, Edappally and again on February 5, 2009 at Mookambika Temple.

In her petition, Kavya sought divorce from Nishal alleging physical and mental torture. She filed another petition before Ernakulam First Class Magistrate Court alleging domestic violence inflicted on her by Nishal, his father Chandramohan Nair, his mother Mani Mohan, his brother Dr Deepak. In her petition, Kavya submitted that though she was living separately from her husband, the threats are continuing and that considering their cruel



Namboori Humour

Namboori was traveling in a bus. There were a few empty seats but he was still standing. Then the conductor asked him to have a seat. "There is no time to sit. I am in a great hurry to reach home."

BOOK REVIEW

Reliving Bygone Times

At the Fingertips of a Home Maker

When “ഒരു വീട്ടമ്മയുടെ വിരൽത്തുമ്പിൽ” (At the fingertips of a Home maker) came my way, I experienced the caress of a breeze after wither the torment of a storm. The book under review is not one of poetry, short stories, essays or plays but a combination of all, a very rare permutation. The book does not give any information about the author’s literary background, career etc except a mention that she belongs to a royal family. The only indication comes from the 'Introduction' by M Gangadharan Nair. After going through the book, the reader is impressed with the sincerity of the writer. There are no high sounding words, over the head philosophy or the labour of intense search for words. Hers is neither the modern prosaic verses nor the earlier style of rhymes and meters. She more or less follows the meters of folk songs. See the following lines:

കണ്ടിടുമ്പേ ധർ മിണ്ടിടുന്നതെളുപ്പമല്ല
 മിണ്ടിടുമ്പേ ധർ വേണ്ടവിധം
 കാണുകയില്ല
 മിണ്ടിടാതെ കണ്ടിരിക്കാം എന്തുറക്കാം
 കണ്ണടച്ചു ചിന്ത ചെയ്യാം നമ്മളെല്ലാം.
 When taken apart from the text, the above lines seem a puzzle. She has a clear concept but sometimes betrays lack of expertise and experience. There are a few pieces that border on the styles of memoirs. The mother and grandmother come out without any disguise. She comes out successfully after diving into long lost years. Smt Sulochana comes out as an excellent story teller. She has an exemplary down to earth imagination, a wide canvas and her simple and lucid style enables one to have a smooth reading. There is absolutely no pretension of high headedness. The presentation is straight and direct. Words are spontaneous. Her inherent

sense of humour is also very much evident in some of the stories. The last note given at the end of “നല്ലൊരു ദിവസാവ്സരം” (A good daydream) is an indication in that humour. There are about a half a dozen short plays with majority of characters being female. When women organisations are struggling for short plays to perform on stage, these short plays would be very handy for them. It is pointed out that some of them were successfully staged in Mumbai. This book reveals another fact of life. No one can keep a creative mind, male or female, in chains for a long time. The talent would come out at a very long opportune moment as in this case. [“ഒരു വീട്ടമ്മയുടെ വിരൽത്തുമ്പിൽ” – CNS Chikitsalayam, Mezhathur 679 534 Palakkad District. Price Rs 80]

K V S

Kerala in Mumbai Congratulates

Top Malayali Scorers of HSC, SSC, CBSE & ICSE 2010

We give below the photographs of meritorious Malayali students who secured 80 and above percent of marks in the above exams



Palakunnel Austin Xavier
82.50% (HSC-Science)



Iyer Vishaka Hariharan
88.17% (HSC-Commerce)



Pranav Warriier
88%



Bhavya Bhupeshbabu
88.18%



Syam Murli
92.91%



Varun Dinesh Poduval
89%



Akash Balasubramanian
85.64%



Aniruddh Menon
91.6%



Aswathi Narayanan
91.64%



Paikkat Ashwin Prakashan
87.27%



Anandakrishnan
87%



Nitish Mukundan Menon
85.64%



Vandana Pillai
83.45%



Kumar Nikhil Ashok
84.73%



Anand Chandrasekharan
92%



Ambica Venkatesh
91.09%



Eye exercises

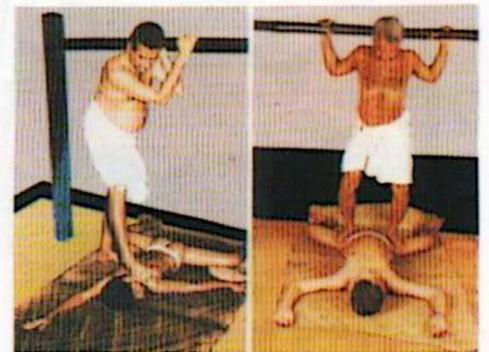
of the week and also certain stars of the lunar cycle are avoided for initiation. Holidays of training are based on the lunar calendar. On the chosen day, after bath, the aspirant reaches *kalari*, and at a propitious chosen hour (*muhurtham*) standing in front of a lighted *nilavilakku* (traditional brass oil lamp), a symbol of Lord's auspicious presence, offer *gurudakshina*.

During annual training period which extends from June to August, the disciple gets up at 3 am (*Brahma muhurtham*) and soon reaches *kalari*. The daily schedule begins with *kannu sadhakam*, exercises for the eyes. Pure *ghee* (cow-butter oil) is applied to the eyes and keeping the eye balls open, holding the eye lids wide apart using thumb and index finger, the eyes are subjected to various movements like: *Bhramaram* circular; *valanam*- diagonal; *chalanam*- rapid horizontal; *vivartanam*- movement of the pupil from extreme inner corner to outer corner of eye; *samudvartham*- raising the pupil; rotation of the pupil to describe the symbol of infinity '∞' etc. All eye movements are practiced keeping the eye lids and eye brows stationary, and repeated several times, also in reverse order and at varying paces from very slow to very fast till tears start flowing profusely. Then comes exercises for eye

lids, lips, cheeks and other facial features. *Kannu sadhakam* under full moon night practiced in the past was called *nilavilirikkal*.

Kannu sādhakam is followed by a recess of 15 minutes followed by *meyyarappu*, exercises for the body. *Kaccha* is wrapped around waist and *enna* is applied all over body, hence it is also called *kacchaketti mezhukkittu meyyarappu*. The exercises are derived from Kerala's traditional martial art *kalarippayattu*. *Meyyarappu* begins with a customary 'five salutations' (*anchu kumbital*), a prayer of salutations towards the south-west corner (*kannammoola*) of *kalari* dedicated to the deity of *tāndava* (dance) called *Tandu* or *Nirirti*, where is kept a lighted *nilavilakku*. The five salutations are for: *Hari* (Lord Vishnu), *Hara* (Lord Siva), *Sri* (Goddess *Lakshmi*), *Lord Ganesa* and the *Guru*. *Anchukumbidal* is also a salutation to the deities of *pancha mahabhutas*: the Earth (*bhoomi*), Water (*jalam*), Fire (*agni*), Air (*vāyu*) and Space (*akāsam*). The *kalari* has eight cardinal directions dedicated to different deities. (*Kathakali*- A Practitioner's Perspective by Sadanam Balakrishnam). *Meyyarappu* involves jumps (*chāttam*) of various types with articulated steps, shifting position of legs. Also are

swaying of legs backwards and around, rotating arms in all directions, stooping and stretching body, moving hips laterally, stamping the feet, upturning the body swinging arms (*karanam marachil*), somersaulting etc. These exercises practiced repeatedly build up stamina, develop suppleness, sure footedness, help overcome panting and to evade obesity. *Meyyarappu* is followed by *kalsadhakam*, practicing of basic steps. Standing in set position (*tananila*) it begins, first in low tempo simultaneously reciting syllables (*vaithari*), to keep rhythm (*tālam*). Gradually the tempo is doubled, and increased further till the peak of crescendo is reached, and then concluded with a small *kalāsam* (unit of dance patterns). The rhythm (*tālam*) and tempo (*kālam*) are controlled by *āsān*. The steps are practiced in *Chempata* and *Panchāri* rhythms in four different tempos.



Uzhichil

Uzhichil

By the time *meyyarappu* is over the body sweats profusely all over and is ready for *uzhichil*. Massage in *sneha sweda*, literally meaning 'oil sweat' is a famous treatment in *Ayurveda*. The *sisya* lie in prone position on a palm-leaf mat (*tazhappāya*) spread on the floor, and *guru* gives massage to the body with his feet holding himself to a bamboo stand for support. By changing body positions *uzhichil* is done for about 40 minutes. Face massage is with the hands (in the past with legs). After *uzhichil* is the practice of acrobatic items like somersaulting individually (*karanam marichil*) and in pairs, holding mutually and somersaulting over each other when airborne (*irattakkaranam marichil*), '*soochikkirikkuka*', literally meaning 'needle sitting', where the student sits upright flat on the floor with legs fully stretched apart, etc. (*Kathakali*- Marg Publication)





Chuzhippu

Chuzhippu

It is the practice of synchronized movements of body, hand and face, following *uzhichil*. Harmonization of body movements, hand gestures (*hastas*) and eye movements gives grace to the full expression of emotions (*bhāvābhinaya*).

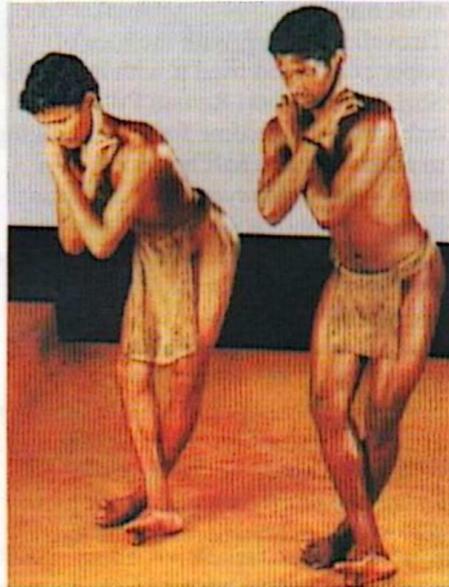
After *chuzhippu* is one hour break (7.30 a.m. to 8.30a.m.) for bath, preferably in pond or river, and breakfast. The oil is rubbed off from body with a paste of *pacha manjal* (*Curcuma longa* green or fresh turmeric) and green mango bark (*Mangifera indica*). Breakfast is a special *kanji* (rice porridge) called *chunda kanji*. *Puthari chunda* (*Solanum indicum*) and *jeerakam* (*Cuminum cyminum*- cumin seed) and *ulli* (*Allium cepa*- onion) are fried in pure *ghee* and added to *kanji*.

After break, is the morning session of practice from 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 noon when *Kathakali* preliminaries like *thodayam* and *purappadu*, are practiced. These two preliminaries are practiced throughout training period along with music students accompanied by percussion trainees, benefitting all. It helps the performing artist-student to develop right sense of rhythm, master *tālam* patterns, intricate steps and body movements. They bring about maturity of physique (*mey pazhuppu*) adding to the grace and fluidity of dance movements and steps. *Kalāsams* and *abhinaya* of some *padams* are also taught.

From 12.30 noon to 2.30 p.m., is break



for lunch and rest. From 2.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m., is the afternoon session called *Cholliyattam* class. *Cholliyattam* is the enactment of *kathakali padams* when they are being sung; acting accompanied by music. For the first half an hour the theory of dance and drama, and *kathakali padams* are taught. This is followed by the performance practice of *padams*,

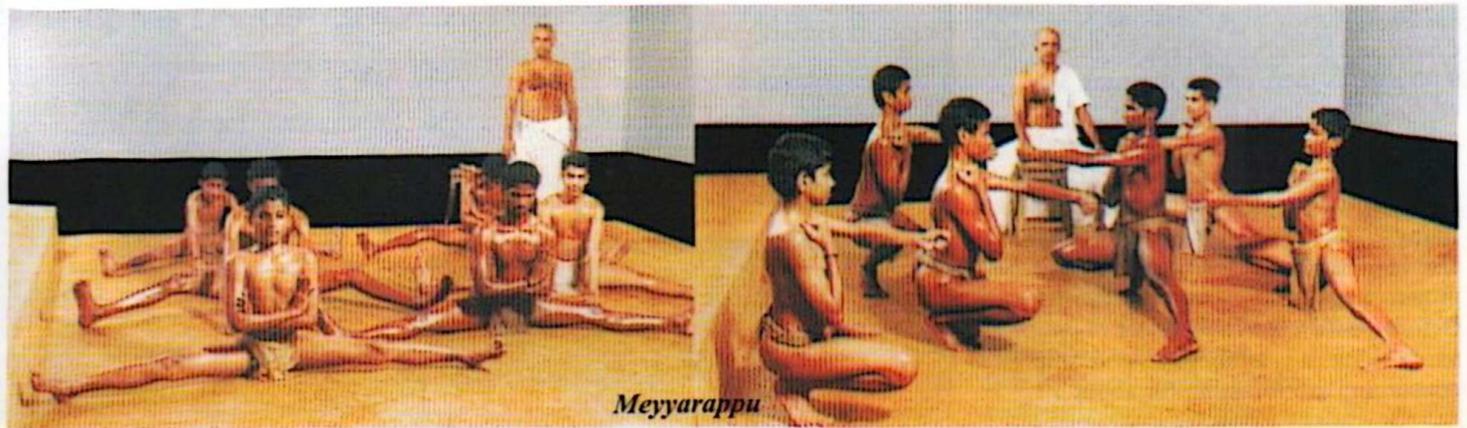


Meyyarappu

complete with musical ensemble. This, in a way is a rehearsal, when the student gets acquainted with various staging techniques, such as entry and exit of characters and enactment of *padams*. This session also involves *Ilakiyattam*, which covers two aspects.

One is the practice of *hastas*, steps and movements. The other implies interpolated enactment without vocal support; imaginative *abhinaya* using *manodharmam* (potential for creative interpretation of lyrics). Traditional curtain appearances (*tiranokku*) of characters like *kathi*, *thadi* and *kari* are also practiced. In a way all convention and stage techniques are taught at *cholliyattam* session. After a rest for half an hour or so the trainees have evening bath, recite prayers or visit nearby temple. From 7.00 to 9.00 p.m., is a session of miscellaneous practices. The students practice, according to the needs and level of training, *hastas*, keeping rhythms with hands, movements of head, aspects of *rasābhinaya* like dilating eyes, moving eyebrows, eye lids, lips, cheeks etc. *Nātya Sāstra*, *Hasta Lakshna Deepika* and *Puranic* stories also are taught along with the history of origin and development of *Kathakali*. At 9.00p.m., after dinner the trainees go to bed to wake up at *Brahma muhurtham* next day to continue the routine.

In the second season of training from September to December, there is no *uzhichil*. The classes begin at 4.30 a.m. From January to March-April is a season of performances. The students accompany the performing troupe of senior artists and take part in the preliminaries like *thodayam*, *purappadu* and also play minor roles depending on their level of attainment. At times in February-March there will be a month of night-long rehearsals, called *rāchcholliyattam*. Each night from 9.00 p.m., onwards one complete story is rehearsed with formal lighting of lamp, using *tiraseela*, wearing a few ornaments such as *kacchamani* (leg bells), *uthareeyam* (cloths suspended in front from shoulder up to waist), *thadi* (beard) and the *nakham* and *damstram* (artificial nails and fangs). How to wield weapons while acting and how to



Meyyarappu



half of 20th century rice-*chutti* went into oblivion. Now, rice paste is used only to provide a base for fixing *chutti* paper. The colours used in makeup are not synthetic but natural pigments like *manayola* (yellow), *chayilyam* (red), *mashi* (black make-up material, smoke collected from the flame of burning sesame oil) and rice powder. Different colors in different shades are made by mixing these ingredients in varying proportions. A mixture of *manayola* paste with blue gives green; white *chuttimavu*, yellow and red gives orange. Trainee artist and the *chutti* trainees learn to make them. *Chutti* students also learn to repair *kathakali* ornaments and stitch costumes.

Arangettam

Unlike in other classical dances, the debut in *kathakali* is soon after learning preliminaries and a few minor roles. The purpose is to make the budding artists get used to the makeup, heavy costumes and headgear, which can be claustrophobic. Also it gives them more opportunities to perform with masters and develop stage confidence at a young age.

Specialization of the veshakkaran

After about 4 years of training, depending on the physique and talent of the *sishya*, *guru* will direct them to concentrate on selected *veshas*, like *street vesham* (female roles), *thadi* (bearded characters), *kathi*, *edatharam* (medium type of characters) or *adyavasānam* (major roles). Those of the last category eventually become star performers and *gurus* to nurture the next generation.

make sounds such as roaring and shrieking of *kathi*, *kari* and *thadi veshams* are practiced. At times full dress rehearsals are undertaken. For accompanying musicians and percussionists, the training starts at 4.00 a.m. For them there is no *uzhichil*, *meyyarappu* exercises and practices associated with *abhinaya*. The *pattukaran* (vocalist) starts with practice of *saptaswara sa re ga ma pa dha ni* in various combinations and speed, followed by musical compositions like *geetham* and *varnam*. After the basics of music the repertoires of *kathakali padams* are taken up. The vocalist must be thorough with lyrics and the way of singing of each *padam* with appropriate *bhava* to breathe life into the performance. The main singer called *ponnani* is in fact the conductor on the stage. He plays *chengila* to provide rhythm. The second singer, *singiti*, plays *elathalam*, supplementing *chengila*. The percussionists practice various *talam* (rhythmic patterns) and *kalam*s (tempo)s. Both vocalists and percussionists accompany dance students during practice of *thodayam* and *purappadu*. In the afternoon, they accompany dancers in rehearsals and learn how to follow them while they are performing on stage. The percussionists learn playing instruments for various *kalāsams* during night sessions, *Chutti* and costume trainees begin day at 9.00 a.m. as there are no morning classes. They learn to mix rice (*chuttiyari*) and lime in 3: 1 ratio and make it into a smooth creamy paste for making *chutti* (*chutti māvu*). *Chutti* fixing is practiced on mud pots. They also learn to cut stiff white paper into proper shape and size and fix *chutti*. Before 1940s *chutti* was made of *chutti mavu* alone. It is a laborious and time consuming affair lasting for about 3

hours. Further, due to stress caused by the movements of cheek muscles during *abhinaya* and also during vigorous movements as in fight scenes *chutti* used to crumble and fall. In 1940s, a drawing teacher cum *chutti* artist Shri Ramakrishna Panicker of Tiruvalla came up with the idea of paper *chutti*, and tried it with an artist, Shri. Kannancheri Raman Pillai. It not only reduced the time for *chutti* making to about one and half hours but also made *mukhābhinaya* easier as it was light. The innovation was a great success and soon became popular in the southern parts of Kerala. Pattikamtodi Ramunni Menon, first experienced himself the difference between conventional *chutti* and paper *chutti* in 1940s. Highly impressed, with the help of *chutti* master Shri Vazhengada Govinda Warriar, he introduced it at Kalamandalam. As paper *chutti* gained acceptance everywhere, by the latter

.....To be continue



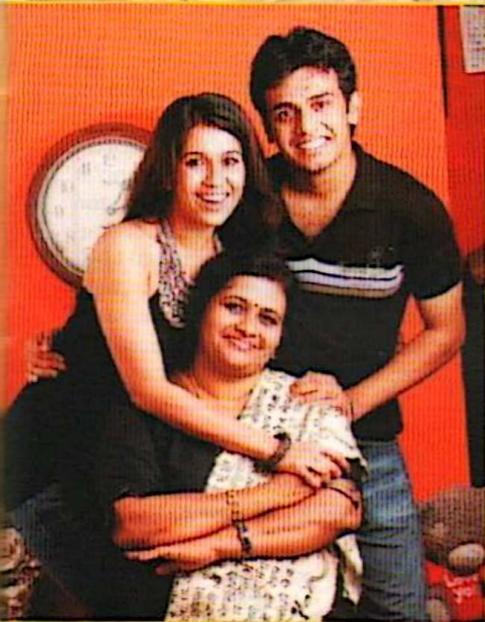
Arangettam

Ranjini Haridas: Face of Reality Shows

-Raghu

Ranjini Haridas is the current face of television reality shows. With the highly popular Idea Star Singer, Season 4, she has anchored all the four editions and will anchor the next one also. Having lost her father at a very young age, she stays with her mother Sujatha and grand parents at Ernakulam.

A graduate from Kerala, MBA from London and Miss Kerala in 2000, she entered the electronic media as an Hostess and never had to turn back. She answered the ten questions asked to her by Kerala In Mumbai.



←Ranjini with mother Sujatha and brother Sreepriyan

You are the face of reality shows of Malayalam channels. Currently you are the unchallenged Show Hostess. Though we know some facts about how you reached this high position, many of our readers are very keen to know about your family background, your education and the crown you earned in a beauty contest et al. Will you please narrate those circumstances?

Well, I come from a pretty regular Malayalee family. I've got my mom Sujatha (runs a little boutique/tailoring shop in Cochin called Diya), brother Sreepriyan (age 20 - doing his 3rd year B Sc Nautical Science in Chennai) and my grand parents K G Menon and Ratnamma (mom's parents). My dad passed away 20 years ago. We live in Ernakulam with our grandparents. As for my education I completed my schooling in Choice, Thripunithra, my B A in Communicative English from St. Teresas College after which I took a short break and went on to work for 24/7, a call center in Bangalore. I followed that up with an MBA in England

from the University of Northwest. I won the Miss Kerala competition in 2000 while I was just out of my high school...was definitely a defining moment in my life that helped me a lot especially in gaining self confidence.

Except a few highly blessed with luck, none climbs the steps to the zenith of success without hard work, intelligent moves and a bit of luck by being at the right place at the right time. In your case, which factor helped you most to reach the position you are now in? Please explain. All of the above. I'm guessing.. I don't think any one factor can be pin pointed in anyone's case so I'm sticking with your quote.

Malayalees in Kerala are exposed to the programmes in Tamil and Hindi besides Malayalam. This is reflected in today's reality shows too. But we do not see such a phenomenon in Tamil and Hindi reality shows. How do you evaluate this situation? Is it healthy for the growth of our mother

tongue, especially when the state government and non-resident Malayalees cry hoarse?

We must understand that the Hindi and Tamil market are much larger than ours. Hindi is our national language so naturally all of India would be exposed to those programs. And also the marketing strategies undertaken by both the Tamil and Hindi media to promote themselves is huge...so naturally this is bound to happen.. I personally don't see anything wrong in it... I think it's good...and another very important thing we must notice and appreciate is that only a Malayalee can effortlessly switch between any language of their choice - comfortable in Hindi, Tulu, Tamil, Kannada or anything else for that matter which is indicative of our larger acceptance and appreciation of art/music anywhere ..now that can't be bad, right..? I don't think it stops a Malayalee from being one any less. As for our mother tongue .. I personally think it is quite safe in the hands

of Malayalees globally...languages, whatever it might be, is bound to undergo changes depending on the requirements of the time and age.. it has gone through several changes till now and that phenomenon will continue to occur.. I don't think we need to worry about that factor so long as effective communication takes place.. because language is primarily a mode of communication,, let's not forget that.

When you come as a hostess before the camera, we hear more English words than Malayalam words. Is it natural to you or are you compelled to do that way?

Oh c'mon...what do you think...??I'll leave it to your readers to judge.

We Malayalees outside Kerala are more nostalgic about our past in Kerala and it is that nostalgia that drives us to remain Malayalees. We are also very keen to hear Malayalam whenever someone from Kerala visit us. Will you do programmes entirely in Malayalam to drive us mad about you?

No. I won't compromise on who I am or how I speak for anyone. I would rather be loved and accepted for the way I speak and the person that I am. Entirely speaking in Malayalam is not me...that would be me faking it and mugging up stuff and spitting it out...that would totally kill my individuality...I don't think I could do that. Honestly speaking .. I think I speak pretty good Malayalam...I've learnt a few more words in the past three years and will continue to do so in the coming ones.. so I'm happy and content with my progress!!!!

We hear more 'Shuddha' Malayalam in channels founded by non-Malayalees than channels promoted by Malayalees. Why this paradox?

Give me names and I'll give you an answer!! Most of the television channels are filled with programmes based on movies, politics and some abnormal social situations. Some of the programmes repel us by their non-content and non-entertainment value. Can't we think of some different formats that would educate, entertain or evolve around

us? If possible, what are your suggestions?

As long as people watch these programs that you call repelling they will get made...so maybe that should change first.

Only demand can create supply.. We must also understand that individual taste differs.. and hence an enormous variety of programs are provided by the various channels.. I still think there is something there for everyone.. Just choose to watch the shows you like and ignore the others.. The remote is a very powerful tool.. The choice ultimately is in your hands.

Mumbai Malayalees are educated in English medium instituti

Malayalam is only a language to speak to their not-very-educated parents. They are not exposed to Malayalam movies except those that come on TV channels, literature (as they do not know how to read Malayalam) or to traditional art forms. When our children participate in reality shows, are they not at a disadvantage especially they are asked to perform in Tamil etc, which are totally strange to them? How can they come out of it?

The same way a Shreya Goshal or a Shankar Mahadevan can sing in Malayalam...through complaining less and working hard....if there is a will there is a way. I don't think not knowing a language is a disadvantage in any way or form for anyone and of all things in music.. Language is no barrier.. We have more than enough examples to prove that.

Over the years, some young talents from Mumbai participated in Reality Shows in



Ranjini with mother Sujatha, brother Sreepriyan and grand parents K G Menon and Ratnamma

Malayalam channels but they did not succeed much. How do you evaluate their performance?

I have no idea who you are talking about so....names please!

You are very much known to Mumbai Malayalees though the reverse may not be true. What is your Onam message to them? Onam is very special to all Malayalees globally... It is completely rooted in our culture and tradition...from clothes to food to art to families and relations...It's one of the very few occasions where we get to come together with fellow Malayalees, family or otherwise and celebrate the togetherness and share the happiness, especially for non-resident Keralites. I would naturally like to wish all Mumbai Malayalees a very happy and prosperous Onam...May this one be as fun and colourful as all the ones that passed by and are yet to come..



From Ranjini's photo album



LONE VOICE OF SANITY IN MAD MEDIA WORLD



For half-a-century, K M Mathew was the face of sanity, objectivity and moderation in the Indian newspaper industry coping with an acute identity crisis. Sections in the profession were shedding their earlier role of missionaries for the independence of India, adhering to the best principles of Gandhism. The rest were probing new avenues in the country's fast growing industrial front.

As Managing Director of *The Malayala Manorama* group of newspapers, Mathew had decided early in his career to make his daily newspaper the best and biggest in Kerala. In his own lifetime he made it into one of the highest selling newspapers in the country. For a total population of three crores Malayalees it was an achievement that put into shade the highest selling Hindi newspapers catering to a population of 49 crores.

Mathew had the vision, persistence, patience and above all, the strength of character to make his dreams come true.

By the time of the Emergency (1975-77) *The Manorama* had overtaken its nearest rival, *The Mathrubhumi*, in circulation and reach, by a small but significant expedient. To overcome the strain of strict Censorship, Mathew built up a network of local and rural coverage. Then he launched editions of the paper from district headquarters and major cities.

The Mathrubhumi was slow to catch up and dragged behind *the Manorama*. That was the time I stepped in as a representative of *the Mathrubhumi* in Mumbai.

For the next nine years I held the fort, fighting every inch of the ground, against organized and aggressive marketing strategies and with a bigger staff than I had.

By 1986, most of the bigger newspaper groups had resolved their identity crisis. They had all become organized as part of the industrial empires that took shape outside.

In 1986, an advertising guru declared at an evening party that *The Mathrubhumi* remained one of the few people's papers in the country, with its large base of Rs. 5 shareholders. There were about sixty people in the room, all aligned to one or another aspect of the newspaper world. I corrected him saying the paper I represented now was owned by a group of estate owners and lorry operators. Within a week, I got the marching orders. What surprised me was that the next morning I got a call from Mathew which in substance said "Remember that the doors of *the Manorama* are always open for you."

I thanked him profusely for the offer and said I could not think of working in

his organization.

Almost a year later I ran into him in a restaurant in New Delhi. He came straight to my table and offered to join me. I welcomed him. Having settled down, I asked me: "Now tell me why you do want to join *the Manorama*."

I said for more than a decade I had gone around telling everyone who would listen that *the Mathrubhumi* was a better paper than *the Manorama* and therefore more advertising business should come to my paper. "What will I tell them now? They have sold myself for a few more pieces of silver?" Mathew merely said: "I never looked at it that way. You can come in as a journalist."

All through the late fifties and sixties I had the occasion to run into Mathew, who was either President of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society, or the India Language Newspaper Association, Chairman of the Press Trust of India – all in professional capacities. I was Chairman of the Bombay Union of Journalists and Treasurer of the India Federation of Working Journalists – again on the opposite side of the fence, as K M Mathew.

Freed from any emotional attachment to a newspaper my parents had grown up with I could now sit and watch how *the Manorama* grew outpacing its rival in margins that could never be bridged. K M Mathew kept in touch. Then came a time when I would be called to act as a guru at the annual Vidyarambham day celebrations when tiny tots would be initiated into the world of learning. They were followed promptly by a personal note from K M Mathew. "I know this is the first time you are functioning as a guru at our Vijayadashami celebrations. I am sure you will continue to respond to our invitation."

In 2008 he sent me an autographed copy of his autobiography "*Ettam Mothiram*" (Eighth Ring). I read the book and wrote to him: "There should be a sequel to the book, tracing your roles in the IEN, ILNA, PTI and the Audit Bureau of Circulations."

He called up to say: "When you are next in Kerala make it a point to come to Kottayam. We'll discuss the sequel." I did not make it. A piece of unrecorded history of the Indian Press has been lost.

Your Home



Krishna Kumar R Nair
Consulting Interior Designer

WARDROBES



In these modern days interior wardrobes are no more a luxury but a bare necessity. It becomes an essential piece of furniture for storing not only apparels and accessories, but also belongings such as extra bedding linens, suitcases, even shoes etc. Therefore, architects and interior designers are paying more attention on the right style and kind of wardrobe to suit the style and needs of clients. Modern day wardrobes are not regarded as just a furniture but these furniture units have increasingly become modern reflections of a family's personality, choice and lifestyle. With increasing demand of stylish yet spacious modern wardrobes, you will find a huge range of contemporary designs.

These are definitely made in rhythm and style of furniture which we adopt for designing your entire bed room. For example if you like your bed room to be in classic style, there would be carvings and mouldings involved in the design but modern days or a contemporary interior doesn't approve carvings and mouldings since they require lots of maintenance and cleaning every now and then to keep them spic and span.

Traditional wardrobes in our ancient Kerala homes are free standing (which is not fitted to a wall), have a typical design that has a long and large space to hang your clothes, a small drawer to keep your valuable things, a shelf at the top to keep clothes which you might not use regularly and a shelf at the bottom to store unwanted accessories. The beauty of these almirahs were in their mobility. You can shift the wardrobe from the south facing wall to north facing wall with your children's help and re-orient the whole bedroom furniture in a few minutes, and your room will look different and fresh. In olden days one joint family with more than fifteen

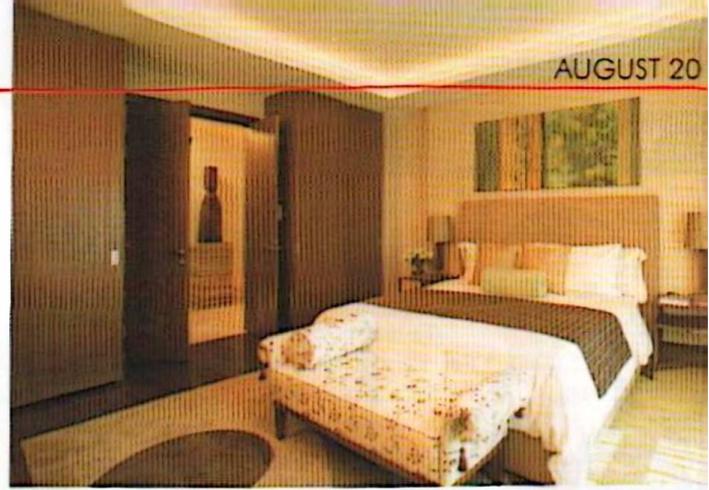
members may have maximum one or two wardrobes for the entire family. In modern days we can't even think of that scenario.

Just like any other contemporary piece of furniture, modern wardrobes add charm and elegance to your room. Designer wardrobes create a very appealing effect in your room. You will find the trendiest and latest wardrobe designs you would have ever seen. Modern wardrobes are often preferred by most of the people today as they give your home a sophisticated look. You will find modern wardrobes that are distinctly designed and manufactured from best quality wood. You can also customize modern wardrobes according to your specifications and styling requirements.

The wardrobe is available in various sizes, colours, designs, finishes and at affordable prices. Modern wardrobes are



indeed a choice of millions. You will find a great range of modern wardrobes displayed in furniture showrooms or online furniture stores. You can choose the design, colour, size and pattern elegantly designed. Modern wooden wardrobe with fine finish is perfect to fit with other contemporary furniture in your home. Although my experience says the above mentioned furniture are very elegant to look at in a show room but fail to sustain the wear and tear, pattern of usage, the climate and humidity of Indian conditions, Wardrobes can be made of plywood, wood, marble etc, and the finishing material is the one that makes the difference. The finishing materials can be laminates (commonly known as sunmica), veneer made out of different woods, solid wood, or aluminium profile with back painted glass etc. Laminates are the cheapest and commonly used option. It's available in different thickness, colours, and patterns, which can be successfully used for a toddler's to an elderly couple's room. Laminates are the ideal finish for Indian condition. It is versatile, stain proof, and can sustain the wear and tear of day



nor painted after the application and easy to clean. Veneers are made of thin wooden peels stuck to ply wood or medium density fibre. This is mainly used for high end interiors. Once it is cut and stuck to the desired surface it has to be either polished in melamine or coated with polyurethane. Veneers need polishing after a span of five to seven years and it needs more care than laminates. You can definitely select the colours and patterns as per your budget and style.

Wardrobe made out of solid wood may be a distant dream, since the prices of solid wood is not affordable for the common man, but its beauty and strength is unmatched by any other alternative material. Wardrobes made of teak wood and polished in melamine is the best option. One can polish the wardrobe to any desired colour by mixing stainer in polish. And it is much stronger and steady, and can sustain for a longer time.

Recently we have developed a process of making wardrobes in Indian marble. The body made of marble and the shutter in wood, ply or in any other material as per the interiors. This is absolutely weather proof, and does not need polishing from inside. It can survive all types of weather conditions. This is dustproof, termite proof and it is much more economical than wood or plywood. While constructing this particular unit, one should take an expert's help, to do the detailing efficiently otherwise it could be disastrous. If the hinges don't hold the shutters properly, the wardrobe becomes a curse, and it is impossible to rectify later. As per my experience, wardrobe made out of marble is the best option one can have.



to day use. The availability of different colours and patterns, for every kind of interiors are in abundance, a couple of colours in dark and light format in good proportions and combinations can work wonders in any interiors. The beauty of it is that they are ready to use. It has to be neither polished

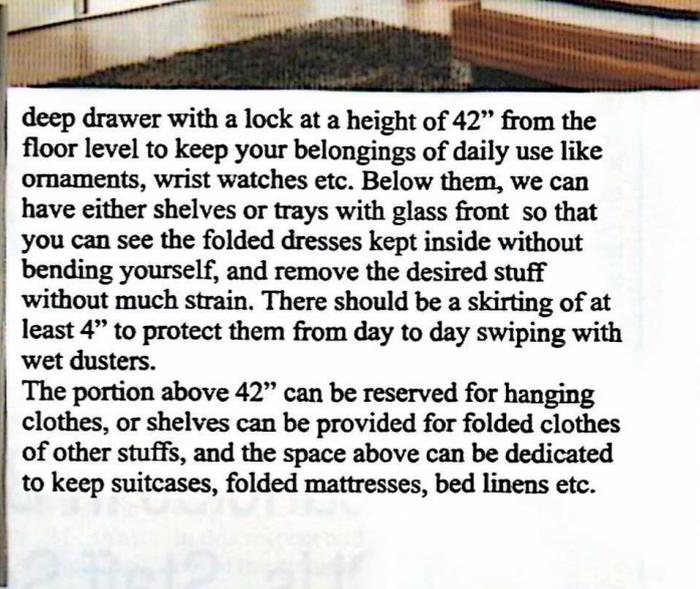


The latest addition for the shutter is back-painted glass fixed to aluminium or brushed steel profiles. This gives an awesome modern and trendy look, and can go with any retro interiors. The only negativity I can see in this kind of wardrobe is the lack of safety. This can be burgled easily since the hinges used for these are box hinges and it can give up very easily, and the locks are not as efficient as the one that can be used on wooden or other wardrobes.

The ideal inside arrangement for a wardrobe is to have a 5"

deep drawer with a lock at a height of 42" from the floor level to keep your belongings of daily use like ornaments, wrist watches etc. Below them, we can have either shelves or trays with glass front so that you can see the folded dresses kept inside without bending yourself, and remove the desired stuff without much strain. There should be a skirting of at least 4" to protect them from day to day swiping with wet dusters.

The portion above 42" can be reserved for hanging clothes, or shelves can be provided for folded clothes of other stuffs, and the space above can be dedicated to keep suitcases, folded mattresses, bed linens etc.



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Mumbaikars don't forget to welcome Mahabali



Sriprakash Me

When one is away from one's home state, one becomes more nostalgic about the roots, culture and festivals. This is true with Malayalees as well. Some of the well known Keralites speak on how they celebrate Onam in Mumbai. Though celebrating Onam may not be as traditional as is in Kerala yet every Malayalee tries to recapture the essence of this festival in this metropolis. Filmmaker Sangeeth Sivan says "Onam in Kerala would be mostly centered around family. New dresses, festivities that



Sangeeth Sivan with family

include *sadhya* are part of Onam celebrations. In Kerala most friends would also be celebrating the festival, so it is a kind of family bonding. Here in Mumbai, Onam would mean inviting friends over for the feast (*sadhya*). We try to be as traditional as possible and so the food would be laid out on plantain leaves. The kids have a good time trying to explain to elders and other children the significance of the festival and how all curries have a definite place on the plantain leaf", he explains. Sivan says "invariably after the *sadhya*, the friends want to rush home to sleep and some even take a short nap in my house itself. Day starts with a visit to the temple in Bangur Nagar followed by a visit to Guruvayurappan temple at Veera Desai Road. Guess when one is away from the home state, we tend to be more Malayalee than when we are in Kerala".

Stage, TV and cine actress Suchitra Pillai tells "Onam is usually spent at home at my mom's place where we have a full *sadhya* with all the traditional dishes etc. Since our maid Sharada is from Kerala, the food is authentic and delicious". "We do call guests especially non mallu friends to experience food on banana leaf etc. My husband who is Danish also enjoys the whole process of eating with his



Suchitra Pillai

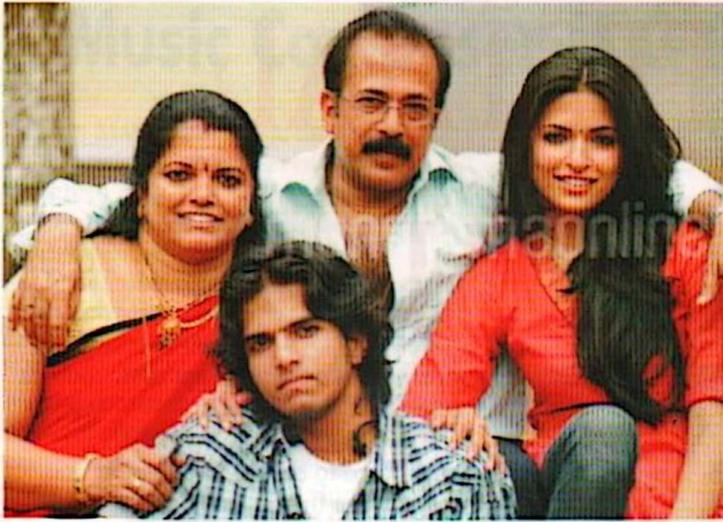
hands from the banana leaf. I wait for the Onam *payasams* that's my favourite", she recounts and adds "someday I would like to go to Kerala during Onam especially I would like to take my daughter so that she gets the exposure of the traditional side of the festivities."

Noted comedian and actor Suresh Menon describes "in these days of riots and religious strife the Mallu in me feels proud to be a part of a culture that celebrates Onam that is celebrated irrespective of caste, creed or religion by the Malayalees". He recalls "well, being a Mumbaikar, Onam was disappointing because we do not get *avadhi* (holiday) for Onam during school days. But after reaching home from school the *sadhya* on the banana *ela* (leaf) was indeed a joyous moment for Menon brothers. The boiled *nenthra pazham* (Kerala banana), rice, *pappadam*, *avial*, *kalan*, *olan*, *sambhar*, *inchipulli*, *sarkara*, *kaya varthathu* and of course two types *payasam* were special delights". "Onam was always celebrated at my parent's house in 7 bungalows. After my mom's demise in 2002, the charm of Onam was taken away from us forever. Dad and we all meet every Onam but only to recollect what lovely moments we had when she was around. After dad's demise in 2008 SMSes were the only way we acknowledged Onam" he laments. "This year my wife Shurobi (a Gujarati) has decided to celebrate Onam by giving me a surprise. Even as I received the news that I have been nominated for the Southern Filmfare awards in the best supporting actor category for *Bhramaram* it seemed that *Mahabali* has truly blessed me in abundance. But we miss our *amma* and *acchan* especially during Onam", he notes.



Suresh Menon

Parvathy Omanakuttan, beauty queen and actress observes "Onam and Vishu bring fond memories to my mind. Though we go to Kerala for every Vishu, Onam is usually celebrated in Mumbai, due to school, college and work. We celebrate Onam with more grandeur in Mumbai than in Kerala." "We have our house, full of relatives and friends. My mother makes everything from *puli-inji* (a combination of fried ginger, dried red chillies and jaggery) to *ada-prathamam* (Kheer made with rice paste baked in banana leaf and cooked with coconut milk, jaggery, and dry fruits). I love the typical



Parvathi Omanakuttan with parents and brother



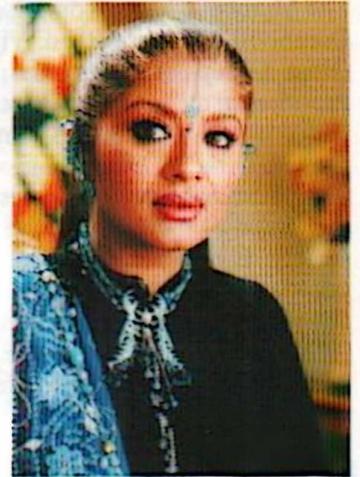
Good Knight Mohan with family

“sadya” that my mother makes. Because of the constraint of place we put a very small “pookalam” (rangoli with flowers). I never miss the magic of Kerala during Onam, because it's celebrated so well at home in Mumbai”, she remarks. Last year, she says “I missed Onam celebrations as my mother and I were in Bangkok for my shoot. This year I am looking forward to celebrate Onam with my dear ones with lots of delicious food and blessings of my elders and loved ones”.

Well known businessman and film maker Goodknight Mohan keeps himself busy with his work though he loves traditional festivities and celebrations. He confesses “Onam is not celebrated very elaborately in our house in Mumbai. We do make a feast with *payasam* and all other delicacies for the occasion and invite friends and well wishers. We also sometimes do a *pookkalam*”.

Sudha Chandran actress and noted dancer agrees “Onam is very very special to me in more than one way, of course it connects to the famous story of Mahabali coming to meet his subjects but for me what interests the most is the elaborate events that precede the festival. I start

decorating with flowers a week before Onam then I make sure that I purchase new clothes for all in the family. No doubt the most awaited event of Onam is the sadya. I remember my mother making those delicious *payasams*, *avial*, *valiya appalam*. My dad, my husband and me really miss her during such days.” “When we pray, it is for the well being of our family”, she emphasizes and recollects “each year I pray that the situation in our country improves. I think, I look most beautiful in my *kasavu saree* with *mogras* on my head and a *chandana kuri* on my forehead and lots of *abharanam* that I wear on Onam. I would also like to wish all the readers of Kerala in Mumbai a very happy Onam”.



Sudha Chandran

Wish You all Happy Onam



from:
G Komalan & Family
CBD-Belapur, Navi Mumbai



SOORYA FESTIVAL IN MUMBAI

“Soorya” Krishnamoorthy launched the family season ticket of the three-day Soorya Festival to be held by its Mumbai Chapter in Mulund in January 2011. Priced at Rs. 500, the Chapter offers members five programmes a year. The ticket is valid for four members of a family, to all the shows.

The Mumbai Chapter comprises Mulund, Dombivili and Mira Road. Vijay Kumar (Host Group of Companies, Mulund), President of the Mumbai Chapter, Prakash Padikkal and other active members were present.

Soorya Stage and Film Society has been acclaimed as the world's biggest cultural society. It has been in existence for 35 years and has helped considerably in the dissemination of Indian culture. Its motto is “Integration through Culture.”

Soorya has Chapters in 22 cities of the world including Singapore, Melbourne,

Perth, London, Zurich, Vienna, Rome, Koln, Dublin, Bahrain, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Muscat, Doha, Riyadh, Jeddah and in Kaula Lumpur,

Penang and Seramban.

Sorry has its chapters in Chennai, Bangalore, Pune, Pondicherry and Dombivili. It has chapters in all 14 districts of Kerala.

Krishnamoorthy who celebrates his 60th birthday in April, 2011, is a trained engineer, who worked with ISRO as a scientist-engineer till 1972, when he



Soorya Krishnamoorthy

took voluntary retirement to devote his time to art and culture.

The 111-day long Soorya Festival is considered to be the greatest cultural event in the Indian calendar.

The Soorya Festival in Mumbai will comprise dances, a film festival and music.

Krishnamoorthy told KERALA IN MUMBAI that his ultimate aim is to reach the rich Indian classical art and dance to the remotest villages in the country. A large part of the funding of Soorya comes from Godrej India and other corporates, through Corporate L. Membership. The Corporate membership fee forms, the main corpus of Soorya, which conducts its activities on the interest on its corpus funds.

Krishnamoorthy's latest is a stageplay “Parinayam” based on a story by M.T Vasudevan Nair.



‘Soorya’ Krishnamoorthy presents membership card to P K Ravindranath. Also seen in the photograph are Vimal Kumar, Prakash Padikkal, Sunil Raj, Madhu Nair, ‘Host’ Vijay Kumar, Soman Nair, Premdas, Vijaykumar and Balachandran

Music Composer M G Radhakrishnan is dead

Veteran Malayalam music director M.G. Radhakrishnan, composer of many evergreen melodies, passed away on July 2 at Cosmopolitan Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram following a prolonged illness. He was 70. He was in a critical condition since last week and was undergoing treatment for liver problems. He is survived by his wife Padmaja and a son Rajakrishnan and daughter Karthika besides sister and Carnatic musician Dr Omanakutty and Playback Singer and Composer M G Sreekumar. Born at Haripad as the eldest son of Musician Malabar Gopalan Nair and Music teacher Kamalakshi Amma on August 8, 1940. Radhakrishnan started his career by singing his first song for the Malayalam movie *Kallichellamma* in 1969. He debuted as a music director in 1978 with *Thampu*, directed by Aravindan. He has scored music for over 30 Malayalam films in his almost three decade long music career. Leading directors such as Priyadarshan, Bharatan, Padmarajan, Venu Nagavally, Fazil, and Shaji Kailas preferred him as the music director of their films. He composed music for his last film *Ananthabhadram* by Santosh Sivan in 2005. Filmmaker Priyadarshan paid his last respect to the



composer saying, "He composed the music for my first film. I am probably not wrong saying that Radhakrishnan has composed the maximum number of music for my films. We all feel that he did not get due recognition." Most of the films, which had music by M.G. Radhakrishnan, became all-time hits of the Malayalam movie industry. This includes films like *Agnidevan*, *Manichithrathazhu* etc. He won Kerala state films award twice in 2001 and 2005 for best music director. He also earned the Asianet film awards for best music director in the same year. Playback singer K.S. Chithra was introduced to the film industry by this

veteran composer in *Attahasam*. M. G. Radhakrishnan was a disciple of Sree Vidyadhiraja Hridayanjali, an Indian ascetic, and composed music for the ascetic's lyrics which was sung by his younger sister Dr. K Omanakutty, a Carnatic vocalist. In 1962, he joined All India Radio as a tambura artiste and went on to become the senior music composer (grade 1). It was he who scored the music for Kamala Suraiya's verses in the album "Suraiyya Padunnu".

His 'Lalitha Sangeetha Padam', light music programme, endeared him to the AIR listeners.

He has also composed tunes for poems of Kamala Das. (also known as Kamala Suraiyya)..

Thampu (1978 G Aravindan), *Thakara*, *Aaravam*, (Bharathan 1980), *Njan Ekananu* (1982, P Chandrasekhar), *Poochakkoru Mukkuthi* (1984), *Parayanum Vayya Parayathirikkanum Vayya* (1985), *Ayalvasi Oru Daridravasi* (1986, *Vellanakalude Naadu* (1988), *Adwaitam* (1991, Priyadarshan), *Geetham* (1986, Saajan), *Sarvakalaashala* (1987) *Agnidevan* (1995) *Rakthasakshikal Zindabad* (1998, Venu Nagavally), *Jaalakam* (1987, Harikumar), *Nombarathi Poovu* (1987, Padmarajan).

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Beauty Care

For that Festive Glow

Onam is a major Malayali festival. It is a season of joy and family re-unions. Everyone wants to look their best. Women dress up in new clothes and take care of their skin for that glorious look. But instead of waiting for any overnight dramatic magic in their appearance, it makes sense to regularly follow a beauty regimen that will make the skin soft and supple and give the festive glow all the 365 days in a year.

Women in Kerala have always turned to natural herbal solutions for many of their beauty problems. Many of them have turned to Ayurveda that gives them powders and *lepams*, oils and *kuzhambus* that will help them to get rid of pimples, acne, and other scars.

According to Dr Sandhya P. Varier, of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala, Mumbai, there are many herbal medicines that really help men and women to overcome problems of the skin and of the hair like baldness, premature graying and so on. "Beauty includes both mental and physical beauty", Dr Sandhya says. "An inner peace brings about mental beauty that is reflected on our face and our gestures. We are not overwhelmed by unnecessary tensions and worries. However, physical beauty depends on the appearance of our skin and hair. Our faces may look dull with pimples and dark spots. We may have premature gray or listless thin hair. With proper nutrition, physical exercises, adequate sleep and natural products that our traditional medicines offer, we can find a solution to any beauty problem."

Even during ancient years, women were beauty conscious. They applied turmeric and sandalwood powder before they had their bath, the former for the golden glow, anti-septic and exfoliating properties, and the latter for coolness. They massaged their hair with coconut oil and washed it with *moong* or *chana* powder. They made *kajal* from *til* oil and applied it on their eyes. For reddening their lips, they chewed betel leaves with *chuna* and betel nuts. These beauty routines were good for their health also. Coconut oil massage improved their blood circulation, the calcium in *chuna* while chewing betel nuts, replenished its deficiencies in their bodies. The juice of

the betel leaves aided in proper digestion.

Home remedies

Borrowing from our past, here are some simple beauty treatments that can be done at home with products from our kitchen shelves.

To prevent dryness on our face, we can apply a mixture of coconut oil, cream of milk, and butter for 20 minutes. Then wash the face with milk and then plain water. For oily skin we can apply turmeric powder, *chandan*



(sandalwood) powder and *kasturi manjal* in rosewater and leave it on our face for 20 minutes to be washed with *moong* or *chana* powder. It is important to massage the face daily for five to ten minutes to remove wrinkles and improve circulation. For pimples, a paste of *rakthachandanam* (red sandalwood), turmeric and milk, is effective. A paste of *moong* powder, *kasturimanjal* (musk turmeric) powder and milk cream, if applied over a period of time, clears the face of scars. Rosewater is a good coolant and skin toner. Some drops of rose water on cotton pads, placed over our eyes, relax them.

Dr Sandhya assures that there are readymade powders and *churnams*, combination of herbs and oils, available at Kottakkal Aryavaidyasala that can control pimples and scars and make the complexion lighter and softer. They



Lakshmi V

have no side effects.

There is nothing to beat the good old warm coconut oil massage on the scalp at least three times a week. Some jasmine flowers, *tulasi* (basil) leaves, peppercorns, coconut milk from fresh coconut and some ayurvedic herbs can be added to the coconut oil and heated in a thick-bottomed pan. When the peppercorns splutter, we should remove the pan from the fire and allow the oil cool. It can be strained and kept in airtight containers. We can warm this oil just before applying on the head. After some time the hair can be washed with *moong* or *chana* powder. The leaves of hibiscus put in boiling water, cooled and then crushed, or a paste of ground *met*, and curds can be applied on the hair. These are natural hair conditioners. It is not good to pour very hot water on the head. Lukewarm water alone should be used.

We should be careful about what we e

Continued on page 64



Your Health

Living Well With Diabetes



Neetu Sajan

Diabetes A World Wide Epidemic...

Diabetes is a condition which affects all kinds of people all over the world. India has more than 30 million people living with Diabetes. According to the International Diabetes Federation, India is expected to have 69.9 million diabetic patients by 2025. From this statistics it's clear that the number of Diabetic patients climb steeply day by day... Are you a diabetic patient? Or recently diagnosed with Diabetes? Does your family have a history of diabetes? If the answer for any of these questions is YES don't worry, because this is not the end of your life. You can lead a healthier and



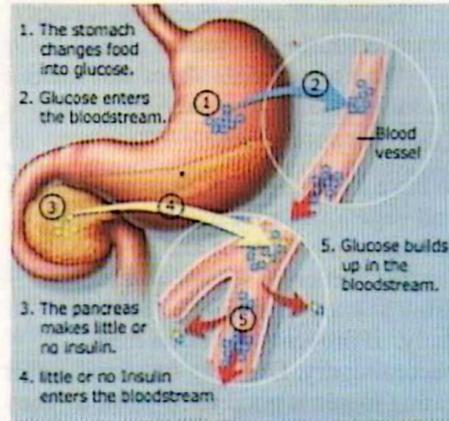
fuller life as normal people, even though you are detected as a Diabetic.

Having Diabetes doesn't mean that you have to eat special foods. Eating the right food in right amount at the right time is the key step to controlling and preventing Diabetes.

Lose a Few Kilos

This should be the number one priority. Losing weight will almost certainly help in getting your blood glucose level to normal. Losing even 3-5 kilos can make a difference. You should loose your weight through a good diet, healthy eating pattern and by doing exercise. Fasting or skipping meals won't help you in losing your weight, and you can end up losing control over your blood sugar level. Here are some weight loss tips.

Watch your weight regularly.
Eat your meals on time. Missing meals or starving will end up in overeating at night.
Make sure that you have enough



vegetables and fruits.

Have plenty of water. This helps in re-hydrating and detoxing the body. Everything in your plate provides calories. So eat wisely.

Do exercise on a regular basis.

Choosing Healthy Carbs

Carbohydrates are the nutrients which are broken down into glucose, which is the fuel for our cells. According to American Diabetes Association, 45-65% of a diabetic diet should be Carbohydrates. Both the quality and the quantity of dietary carbohydrates influence the blood glucose level. Since carbohydrates have the strongest effect on blood glucose level than any of the other nutrients, the selection of carbohydrates plays an important role in Diabetic diet.

Limit the use of all types of sugars since it increases your blood glucose levels.

Avoid cakes, pastries, aerated

drinks, processed fruit juices, and concentrated sweets.

Let fruits be your snack. Three servings of fruits in a day is desirable.

Have a salad before every meal. Avoid junk foods like pizza, burger, Frankies etc.

Fiber Matters

Natural fiber present in food has proven its benefits for everyone. This benefit goes double with diabetes. Fiber also known as roughage, helps keep you full and your bowels regular. Since the body doesn't absorb fiber, it's not counted as consumed calories. So if you are aiming for a low calorie diet, go for high fiber diet. Around 35-40 gm of fiber has to be in the diet. Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, whole grain cereals, pulses, nuts and seeds.

Have brown rice / brown bread instead of white rice/white bread, since it has more fiber in it.

Make multigrain flour by yourself for making chapatti. In which you can add wheat bran, soy flour, jowar, barley, Bengal gram flour along with your wheat flour to get extra benefits.

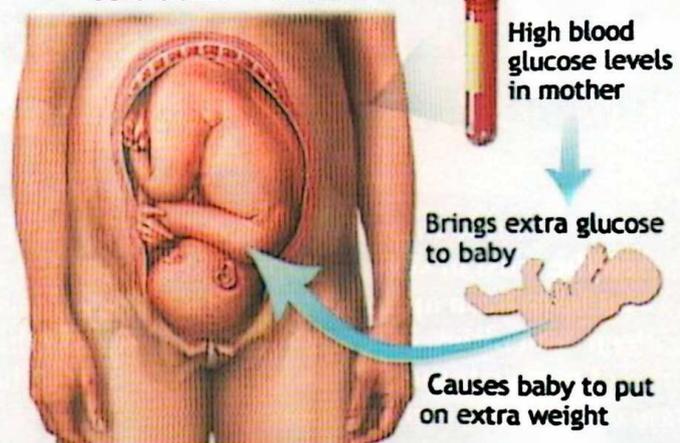
Go for an oats muffin over a cream pastry.

Avoid all products which are made of white flour (maida).

Cut Your Fats

Since people with Diabetes are at a higher risk of developing heart diseases,

Gestational Diabetes



it's crucial to cut fat. Some fats are healthy and some fats are unhealthy. But all fats are high in calories so try to keep an eye on the amount and type of fat used in your diet.

Always use unsaturated fats, which come from plant source (olive oil, canola oil etc) for cooking. Avoid saturated and Trans fat, which are mainly found in bakery products, processed foods, red meat etc.

Instead of going for fried foods as snacks, go for a handful of nuts like cashews, almonds, walnuts etc. 3-4 serving of fish like tuna, salmon in a week will be a healthier option than red meat.

Stay away from deep fried foods, and go for baked or grilled foods.

Exercise Make time for it

If you have diabetes and still lead a sedentary lifestyle, regular exercise can do a lot for you. Exercise reduces blood sugar, helps you lose weight and can even prevent heart disease. Start an exercise routine that you will enjoy and continue. Walking is the simple aerobic activity. Make it a point to walk for 30

45 minutes a day.

Check blood sugar levels before and after exercise.

Select the types of exercise according to your age, body type, lifestyle etc. A fitness expert will help you in this.

Always carry candies or sweets. Have it, if you are feeling very tired during exercise.

Wear appropriate shoes and socks while doing exercise.

Continued from page 64

to have a healthy skin. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are excellent since they are nature's gifts to us and so healthy for that particular season. We should drink at least eight glasses of water daily. It prevents our skins from becoming dry. Drinking buttermilk after eating meals is good for digestion. The spices like jeera, ajwain, hing etc that we use in cooking aid in digestion. Drinking warm water is good for health. We must eat a lot of wholesome, fibrous food. This prevents constipation. Physical exercise is as important as the food we eat. Walking, jogging, swimming, and any other physical

Have a good motivating exercise partner.

In short, you can treat and control diabetes by,

Working towards obtaining ideal body weight.

Following Diabetes Diet.

Regular Exercise.

Diabetic Medication if needed.

So go ahead, eat right to save your life and live a healthier life....

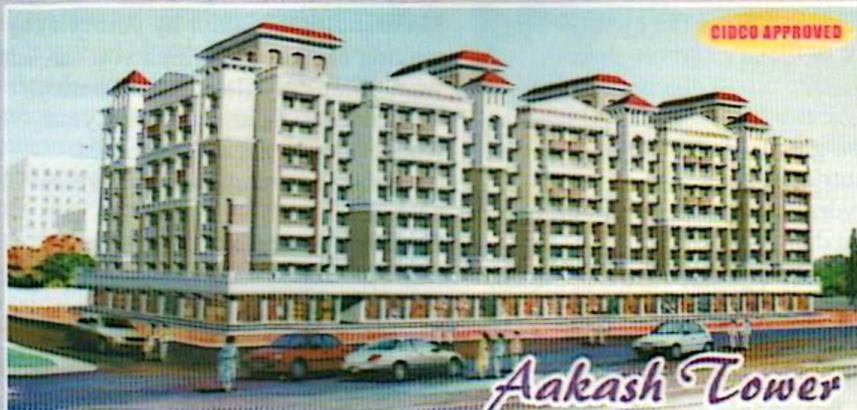
activity rids the body of waste matter the form of sweat. It improves blood circulation also. This gives a glow to our skin.

Another important thing is adequate sleep of six to seven hours. During summer, we should have a siesta to beat the heat.

With some small changes in our lifestyle and with items from our kitchen shelf, we can take care of our skin and get the glamorous glow all the year round.

Mr. Ramachandran
Managing Director

Wish You All
Happy Onam



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GURUKRIPA: WHERE YOGA BLENDS WITH AYURVEDA

Ayurveda - The great Indian system of medicine literally means the science of life. Rather than being just a system to heal the ailments, Ayurveda teaches mankind how to live life in a proper and healthy way. In the present century, where the other systems of medicines fail to counter their own infinite side effects. Ayurveda stands proud being a system that gives only benefits to the body with out any side effects. Its non-violent, non-surgical methods purify the mind as well as the body by cleansing and flushing the toxins out of the body. Ayurveda rejuvenates the body and helps it to prevent the prevalence of every possible metabolic and degenerative ailment.

Although Ayurveda has actually been in practice through out India, the southern state Kerala became popular worldwide for its effectiveness and authenticity in the application of the safest mode of Ayurveda. The main reason is Kerala's pleasant climatic conditions, wide availability of raw drugs and fresh herbs, the well experienced doctors and professional therapists, safer use of the medicines etc. Unlike the north Indian practitioners, most of the Kerala practitioners don't use the comparatively harmful medicines of metallic and mineral origin which is also a part of Ayurvedic pharmacology.

But as in any other sectors, there are people who really exploit this advantage of Kerala for their commercial benefits alone. There are innumerable Ayurvedic centers and massage parlors through out Kerala and in other metros showing the Kerala special massage sign boards. Many foreign citizens are being cheated and forged by their misguidance and commercialized wrong application of Ayurvedic therapies and medicaments. There stands a Gurukripa heritage Ayurvedic treatment proud and different in its authenticity and remarkable sincerity towards the science, founded and inspired by the great scholar and Guru, the late Brahmasri Poomulli Neelakandan Namboothirippad (Aram thampuran). Gurukripa is a place where

the unique techniques of Kalari (Kerala Martial Arts), Ayurveda and Yoga, merged and combined in a special way.

Although there are many Kalari practitioners in Kerala, most of them do not have a deep knowledge in the principles of Ayurveda. There are lot of Ayurvedic physicians as well who don't utilize the effective and most promising benefits of the application of Kalari into their manipulative section.

In Gurukripa you can find these two great sciences are managed together with Yoga for the most effective results.

Gurukripa executes all the Pancha Karmas (eliminative therapies) and its associated treatment procedures sticking to the text and the Gurus. No compromises are made on the duration and observation of each treatment procedure as per the texts. Unlike any other corporate Ayurvedic centers, Gurukripa has well experienced professional therapists who are in this field of healing for more than 15-20 yrs.

Apart from the Pancha Karma and the classical Ayurvedic treatment methods, Gurukripa holds the peculiarity of the safe and effective application of Foot Massage (specialized kalari manipulative massage done with foot that lasts for 1 hour), which is found to be very effective in sports injuries, trauma and accident cases, inter vertebral disc prolapse etc.

The main ailments treated are life style disorders such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, Liver disorders, skin problems, Psoriasis, all kinds of arthritis, traumatic pains, sports injuries, post stroke rehabilitation, paralysis, metabolic disorders, psychiatric disorders etc.

Location:

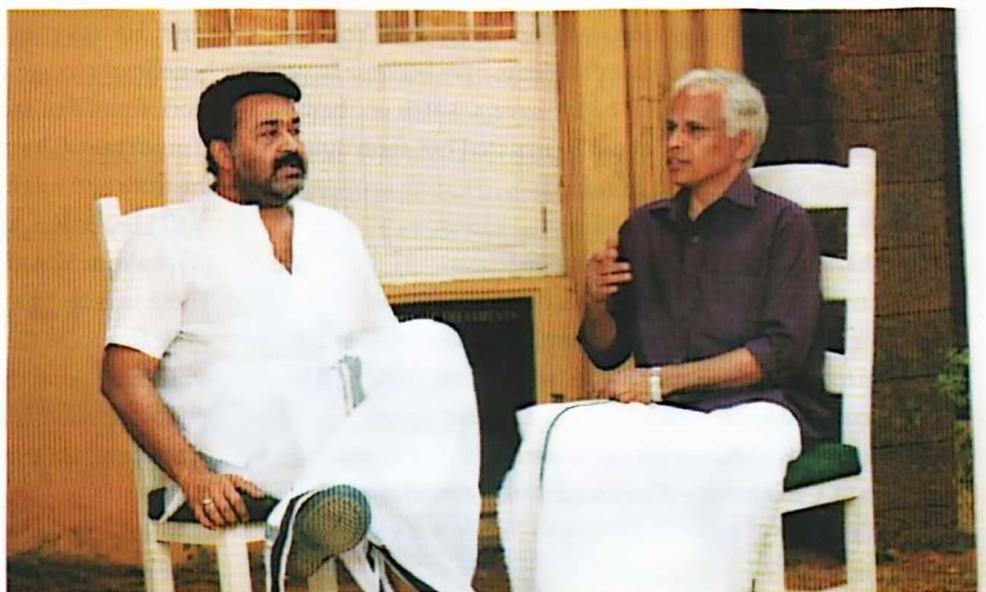
Gurukripa is situated in a small village called Peringode in Palakkad district gifted with dense green flora and fauna. It is just a 100Kms drive away from the Cochin International Airport. The view from the hospital rooms are splendid and spectacular. The nearest railway station is at Pattambi which is in just 10Kms distance.

Gurukripa is popular with visitors and patients from all fields.

Many cine stars from South India including Rajanikant, Mohan Lal, Rajkumar, Jayaram, many cinematographers, photographers, directors, script writers and politicians have been treated here and most of them are regular visitors with their family.

(Dr. Unnikrishnan can be contacted on
Tel.: 0466 2371515
Mob.: 09447534756
E-mail: ghatayu@gmail.com)

[The Author is Managing Director of In & Out Advertising, Mumbai]



Dr. Unnikrishnan with Mohanlal

Historian Sreedhara Menon is dead

Noted historian Prof Alappat Sreedhara Menon died on July 23 at his residence in Kowdiar Manor in Jawahar Nagar, Thiruvananthapuram. He was 84. His body was cremated at Santhi Kavatham on July 25 morning.

Sreedhara Menon was conferred Padmabhushan in 2009 for his contributions to the History of Kerala. His most known work is 'Survey of Kerala History' was published by three publishers at various times and was run into 30 editions. In all he has written more than 25 books in Malayalam and English.

His other works are History of Freedom Struggle, Indian History (2 parts), History of Kerala, Culture of Kerala, Kerala and Freedom Struggle, History of Kerala University, Modern Kerala, Historical Architects of Kerala (all in Malayalam) and *Triumph and Tragedy* (English). Besides he has written biographies of various scientists such as Louis Pasteur, Isaac Newton etc. Many of his books were made supplementary text books for students of high school and colleges in Kerala.

Sreedhara Menon was born at Ravipuram in Kochi in 1925. After his Intermediate



Sreedhara Menon receives Padmabhushan Award at his residence from Chief Secretary of Kerala. wife Sarojini on his right

from Madras University, he joined Maharaja's College, Ernakulam with a scholarship from Raja of Kochi for his graduation, Madras University for post graduation in History and Harvard University for another post graduate degree in Political Science. He started

his career as a Lecturer in History at St Thomas College, Thrissur. He is survived by his wife Sarojini, children Poomnima (USA), Satish (Vice President, ACV), son in law Arun Kumar (USA) and daughter in law Soudamini.

- KIM News Bureau

Kottakkal Sivaraman No More

Kottakkal Sivaraman (74), the famous Kathakali artist known for his female characters, died after a long illness on July 19 around 10.20 p m. He was paralytic for some time. His physical remains were consigned to fire next day afternoon at Karalmanna, Palakkad district.

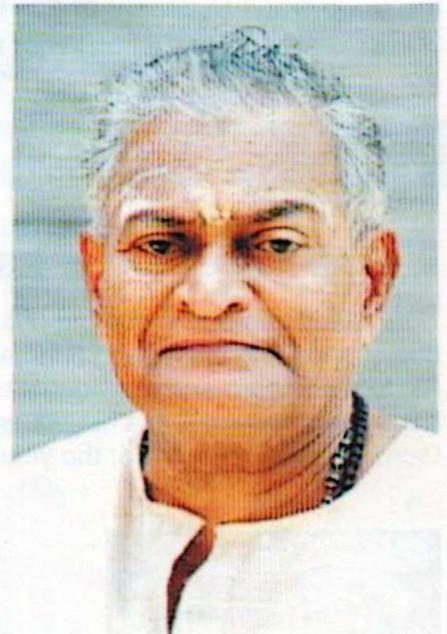
For more than a half century, he presented female characters at *Kathakali Arangu* and had received many awards and accolades for his interpretation of his characters. *Damayanti* of *Nalacharitham* was his masterpiece though he presented Sita from *Lavanasura Vadham*, Sairandhri from *Keechaka Vadham*, Lalita, Mohini from *Rugmangada Charitham*, Kunti from *Karnashapadham*, Urvashi from *Kalakeya Vadham*, *Devayani* from *Kachadevayani Charitham* etc with equal fineness.

He was born in 1936 to Pulamanthol Njaloor Kunhi Krishnan and Karthyayani Amma.

He gave more importance to *bhavabhinaya* and physical movements than *mudras*. His *Damayanti* from *Nalacharitham* first and fourth days along with Kalamandalam Gopi's *Nala* was a rare combination that Kathakali lovers looked forward to. *Sivaraman* trained under his uncle Guru Vazhenkata Kunchu Nair at Kottakkal PSV Natya Sangham for more than 11 years and subsequently came to be known as *Kottakkal Sivaraman*.

He worked as a Kathakali Instructor at Kathakali 'Kalari' of Kollengode Raja's High School and during this period, *Mahakali P Kunhiraman* Nair nicknamed him '*Damayanti Sivaraman*'. He also served for sometime as an instructor at

Unnayi Varier Kalanilayam. His debut was at Kottakkal Viswambhara Temple in 1949 as Lava in *Lavanasura Vadham*. He was chosen as the first *Kalaratnam* of Kalamandalam. In 2009 he was awarded by the State Government for his contributions to Kathakali. He received awards from Union and State governments and Kerala Kalamandalam. He was a recipient of senior fellowships from Union Human Resources Development Department and Tripunithura J T Park Foundation of which actor Mohanlal is the Chairman. His other awards are from Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, Venmani Haridas Memorial Trust, Kalahamasam and Kerala state's 'Arangile Streeratnam'. He is married to Madhavathodiyil Bhawani and has two daughters Sijatha, Ambili and a son Girish.





MUMBAI NEWS DIGEST

KIM News Bureau

Marol Education Academy opens Junior College

Marol Education Academy that runs the premier English medium high school of Marol, Andheri East has received permission to start XI standard with immediate effect. Owing to the tremendous pressure from the parents to secure admission to XI standards, the state government this year has granted more than 50 existing schools to open Junior College. The school will have only Commerce and Science streams to start with and would admit 120 students in each stream. When this report goes to the press, the admission has already commenced.

MEA can boast of all infrastructure needed to open JC and an unblemished record of 100% pass every year. With a six storied building and having expansive laboratories and libraries besides an experienced staff, the management expect to fill all seats in the first year itself. For details contact 2925 9570.

World Malayali Council opens Qatar Chapter

World Malayali Council has opened its Qatar Chapter on July 29. The Council had its meet at Grand Hotel of Doha and it was attended by ministers Vayalar Ravi, Elamaram Karim, K P Rajendran, M A Baby and N K Premachandran. Film actor and Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Chairman Mukesh inaugurated the entertainment programme.

Mumbai is represented by K K Nambiar, G R Ratnakumar, M K Nawas, Gokuldas Madhavan, V J Mathew, K Ramachandran Nair, Kurien Sakkaria, Anil Raghavan, Baby John, Paul Parappilli, Babu Lonappan and Girish Kumar.

New office bearers of Mulund Kerala Samajam

Members of the new Managing Committee for the year 2010-'13 were elected. K Gopalan Nair, C K Lakshminarayanan and Suresh Babu are the new President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Other office bearers are Sujata Nair (Vice President), C K K Poduval and E Ramachandran (Secretaries), A Radhakrishnan, G Mohan Kumar, P Unnikuttan Nair, Vijayashankar, Oommen Michael, T K Rajendra Babu, Girish Kumar, Santha Vasudevan and Shanthi Lakshminarayanan (members). K M Nair and P P Sethumadhavan are the internal auditors.

Golden Jubilee of KKS

As a part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana, the conglomeration of Western India Associations of Malayalees started on July 3 at Sahyog Hall, Nerul. Dr A Venugopal presented a paper on "Malayalee Svatvam: A historic pursuit of cultural heritage of Kerala". He noted that in the seventies, Malayalees were very much involved in the activities of Samajams but there was a change in their attitude afterwards.

Moderator Thilakan remarked that each Samajam should strive to rediscover its 'svatvam' and reclaim their rights.

Among the persons who spoke on the occasions were: Upendranatha Menon, P P Sadasivan, A K G Nair, K P S Nair, Gopi Nair, Vijay Kumar, Padma Divakaran, R K Nair, Ramachandran, Sajesh Nambiar, C S Gopalakrishnan, E P Vasudevan, Belraj, Murukan Pappanamkode, K A Kurup, K V Prabhakaran, M C Velayudhan, Radha Unnithan and S K Velayudhan.



Mumbai representatives attending World Malayali Council Meet at Doha

The second day's deliberations held on July 3 at the same venue, included two papers presented by Dr P Harikumar on "Fortune of Pravasis in the changing circumstances and joint responsibilities in various fields" and "Contemporary problems of Pravasi Malayalees" by K S Menon. In his presentation, Dr Harikumar pointed out that Malayali organisations should bring in timely changes and involvement of Malayali youth who are well versed in management techniques and financial dealings to ensure the survival of the organisations.

K S Menon demanded that the travel problems of Keralites be solved and the educational facilities of Malayali students be improved. Kerala should have an upper legislature as in Maharashtra, he remarked. Non resident Malayalees should also strive to gain representations in Rajya Sabha, he appealed.

During the discussions that followed, K T Nair demanded that the Norka office be soon opened in Kerala House at Vashi. If the demand is not met immediately, agitative approaches would be considered, he warned. Corporator Sabu Daniel asked for changes in the working patterns of Kerala House to benefit the common people. Kerala House should provide residential accommodation to the people coming to Mumbai for medical treatments instead of being a guest house to the political leaders.

Adv. Balan, K P S Nair, Adv Harris, Sreekumar, T S Vijay Kumar, Upendra Menon, Leela Unnithan and Rajan Panicker also participated in the discussion.

Wilson Dombivli new Secretary of FOMA

Forum of Media Associates (FOMA) condoled the death of noted music director M G Radhakrishnan in a meeting held on July 3 at Matunga. The meeting held under the chairmanship of Adv P R Rajkumar praised the contribution of Radhakrishnan to Malayalam music. FOMA Chairman Bhupesh Babu hoped that the organisation would move forward to ensure the safety, protection, tranquility, equality and secularism of the Malayali journalists working in visual and print media. Journalist U N Gopi Nair, G Subrahmanyam of Hindustan Times, former correspondent of Economist Times A K V Namboodiri, columnist Manannur Ravindran, poet Harilal, writer and journalist Rajan Thekkummala among others elected Columnist Wilson Dombivli as new Secretary of FOMA.



Onam celebrations of Powai Kerala Samajam

Powai Kerala Samajam will celebrate Onam on August 29. This will be followed by Onam feast. Those interested in taking part in the cultural programmes should register their names before August 20 with the Samajam office. For details contact 9833605537 / 9322504277.

Parvati Menon made member of Children's Films Society

Parvati Menon, noted film maker and media educationist is appointed member of the Advisory Committee of Children's Film Society under the Department of Culture, Government of Kerala. Other members of the Committee are Madhu (Producer, Director and Actor), Director Santosh Sivan, Sibi Pallipuram and Poetess Prof Sugathakumari.

Onam celebrations

Wagle Estate Malayali Association (WEMA) is celebrating Onam on September 19 at St. Lawrence School. The programme consists of Pookkalam, Ona Sadya and variety entertainment etc. For details, contact WEMA office bearers.

Debate for students

True Indian Information and Guidance Society (Tru Indian) is organising a debate in

English language for students on the subject "Capital Punishment-Pros and Cons in the Society?" at Dombivli Keraleeya Samajam Model High School premises on August 15 at 4 p m. Students between 13 and 22 years of age may register their name for the debate.

Registration can be done online through e-mail truindian@yahoo.com or on 97699 24675.

Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi

Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi has decided to grant recognition to Malayali Cultural Organisations outside the state too, according to a note circulated by the President of 'Tru Indian', C G Chandrasekharan. This step was taken after the earnest efforts taken by 'Tru Indian' after they submitted a memorandum to Shri Mukesh, well known actor, producer and Chairman of the Akademi.

Currently recognition is granted to organisations in Kerala alone. The organisation seeking recognition should have completed at least one year. The power of recommending recognition is vested with already recognised organisations, office bearers of the Akademi, earlier award winners of the State or Akademi or gazetted officers. Recognition will be granted for one year or for five years at a time.

For further details, log on to

www.keralasangeethanatakaakademi.info.

Surya Festival in January

'Surya' Mumbai Chapter held its meeting of 2010-'11 at the 'Host' office and decided to host its festival celebrations during January 14, 15 and 16, in the presence of 'Surya' Krishnamoorthy. The programme will be held at Dombivli, Mulund and Mira Road respectively.

P K Ravindranath, Madhu Nair, Premdas, Prakash Patickal, Veeramani, Sunilraj, Soman Nair, Vimal Kumar, Balachandran and 'Host' Vijay Kumar attended the meeting. The formal inauguration of the 'Surya' membership was done by 'Surya' Krishnamoorthy by handing over the membership card to Ravindranath.

Office bearers of Malayalee organisations may send their reports on their letter heads, signed by authorised persons, along with related photographs to:

keraliinmumbai@gmail.com or its office at B-105 Twin Arcade, Military Road, Marol, Andheri East, Mumbai 400 059, so as to reach us by 25th of the month.

Tel: 29205641 / 29209959

THE MORAL OF ONAM

-G.K. Ananthanarayanan

Onam is the day when the deposed King Mahabali visits every family to ascertain whether the people are as happy under the new rulers as they had been under him. In the midst of the festivities of Onam, the moral of Mahabali's story is often forgotten.

In the Ksheerabdi Madhanam (churning of the milky ocean), the Asuras were cheated of their share of nectar by the Devas. The Asuras led by Bali, therefore, launched a war on the Devas. Indra challenged Bali with his powerful thunderbolt and told him that he would cut off his head. Bali's reply as given in Srimad Bhagavatam was "People engage themselves in war under the prompting of their collective Karma, brought together by the power of Time, and to everyone so engaged, fame, success, defeat and death can occur by turns according to that karma. Therefore, neither victory nor defeat is permanent with anyone. Wise men face the regulating influence of Time in all these matters. They, therefore, are not elated or depressed in success or failure. You seem to be ignorant of this. You who think yourself to be the master of your destiny without taking the factor of Time into consideration will be the object of pity for wise men".

In the fight that ensued, Bali was killed. Sage Narada intervened and stopped the fight. Sukracharya, the Guru of Asuras revived Bali and brought him back to life. Though vanquished, Bali did not feel sorry for his actions, for as he told Indra he felt that victory or defeat was a matter of destiny.

Bali bided his time and one day he decided to attack Devaloka and conquer it. Indra fled incognito on the advice of his Guru, Brihaspati. Bali ascended the throne and subdued the earth as well as the other regions. He held sway over the three worlds for many years.

Aditi, the mother of Indra, was quite unhappy at the discomfiture of her son. She expressed a desire to her husband, Kashyapa to beget a son capable of recapturing Devaloka. She performed a penance. Pleased with it, the Lord appeared before her and promised to be born as her son, who would get back for Indra his throne. The Lord then took birth as the son of Aditi in the form of Vamana (Divine Dwarf).

Bali, though an Asura was a just and merciful Emperor. He was performing a huge Yajna on the bank of the river Narmada for the welfare of his subjects in all the three worlds. Vamana went there accompanied by prominent sages. Overwhelmed by the splendour and effulgence of the guest Vamana, what he would like to have in return for the honour done to him Vamana replied: Only three steps of earth as measured by his foot. Bali felt slighted by the meagreness of the request for a person of his standing who commanded all the three worlds. Vamana told Bali of the virtue of humility and contentment and that he

would be satisfied with what he had sought. Bali then directed VindhyaVali, his wife who was standing nearby, to pour oblations of water on the feet of the guest as a mark of reverence.

Sukracharya intervened and warned Bali not to oblige the guest who was none but Lord Vishnu himself, who had come to divest him of the throne of Devaloka and restore it to Indra. But Bali stood firm in his resolve, as he felt that it would be improper to take back an offer once given and confirmed it by pouring water on the feet of the visitor with the help of his wife.

Vamana suddenly grew into such a gigantic proportions that with one foot he measured the whole earth, with another the rest of the universe. He then asked Bali where he would put his next step. Without flinching, Bali told Vamana to put it on his head and bowed in reverence.

There is a misconception that this act of dispossessing Mahabali of all his riches is an act of deception practiced on him by the Lord. Actually, what the Lord did was to bestow grace on him. This is what Srimad Bhagavatam says:

Even though dispossessed, Bali remained unmoved in the resolution to stick to truth. He told Vamana that a punishment inflicted by a most venerable person like him is to be welcomed more than shunned, as it leads to the supreme welfare of the individual concerned in the long run. He is a fortunate that Providence has brought him close to the Lord after depriving him of his prosperous state.

When Bali was tied with Varuna's cords, Brahma said,

"O Supreme being who dwells in everything! All the possessions of Bali have been taken away. He has offered to you the whole of this earth attained through Karma, all his wealth and power and his own body—all these he has offered to Thee without regret. How then does he deserve this suffering and humiliation to be banished from the earth?"

The Lord replied, "O Brahma! Whomsoever I really wish to bless, I first take off his wealth. For wealth makes a man proud and arrogant, as a result of which he is led to insult the world and Myself. Subject as the Jiva is to his own Karma, he transmigrates by the compulsion of Karma from species to species and from body to body until at some distant date he gets a human body (by My grace). However, a person who is devoted to Me never gets infatuated even when favoured by high birth, property etc. The spiritual progress of such a person is not blocked. Bali has remained totally unconcerned even in the face of total downfall. Firm in his vow of truth, he did not break his promise. I am therefore giving him a boon which is difficult even for a celestial

to get. He will become Indra in the age of Manu Savarni. Till then let him live in the realm called Satala*, in which there are many handiworks of the heavenly architect, Viswakarma. Those who live there shall be free from every kind of difficulty and I shall be protecting all the people residing in Satala"

Seeing Bali, his grandson, and the preserver of the continuity of his line, free from bondage and favoured by the Lord, Prahlada said, "A blessing of this kind has never been the privilege of Brahma, nor of Sri, nor of Siva, nor of any others. Thy mercy is indeed unconditional and limitless." The Lord said, "Prahlada dear! May you be happy and prosperous. You too go to Satala. There you can be happy with this grandson of yours, and benefit all your relatives. There you will see me every day, with mace in my hand, guarding the place."

It may seem strange that the annual festival of Trikkakara has become the National Onam festival. Though Trikkakara (perhaps the only temple having Vamana Pratishta) was one of the two temples praised by the Azhvars*, the Onam of Kerala had nothing to do with the Onam celebrated all over South India in the Sangam Age, and even now celebrated at Thirupathi. The Idapalli Namboothiris were and are still the hereditary priests of Trikkakara temple, which was founded or renovated in A.D. 604. Beginning as priests, they became its owners. As their prestige and influence increased, they came to be ranked among the chiefs of Kerala. Their connubial associations with the Thampurattis of the Cochin royal house before the 15th century and their political alliance with the Zamorins since then attracted large endowments from princes and people as far as Tiruvalla in the South and Badagara in the North, to which their authority has extended. By the 18th century, the temple had come to own properties scattered all over Kerala. The princes and people attended the festival at Trikkakara, the former as a mark of respect for the priest and devotion to the Lord, the latter in duty bound as tenants. Even to-day, Trikkakara is a major pilgrimage destination during Onam. Those who are not able to proceed to Trikkakara celebrate the festival by worshipping the Lord at home. This takes the form of a clay image of Trikkakara Appan (pyramidal in shape), decorated with flowers and worshipped during the festival period at the end of which it is reverentially kept near the family temple in the compound or in any clean corner of it or immersed in water.

*Satala is one of the nether regions which are in the order Atala, Satala, Vitala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala.

*To the Azhvars, Lord Krishna was the Supreme deity. Azhvars are therefore called Vaishnavites.



Kerala in Mumbai

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