

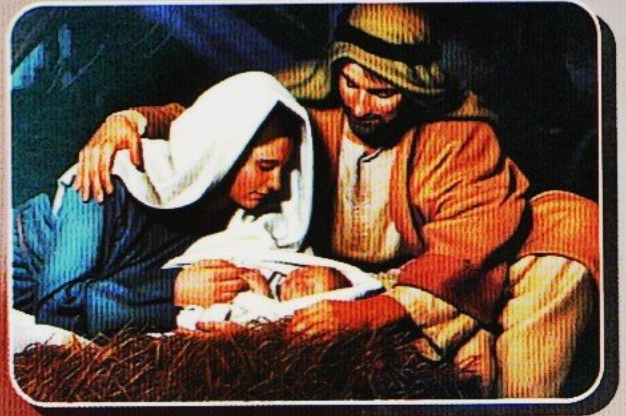
# Kerala in Mumbai

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Merry X'mas and  
Happy New Year



Family of the month

243812

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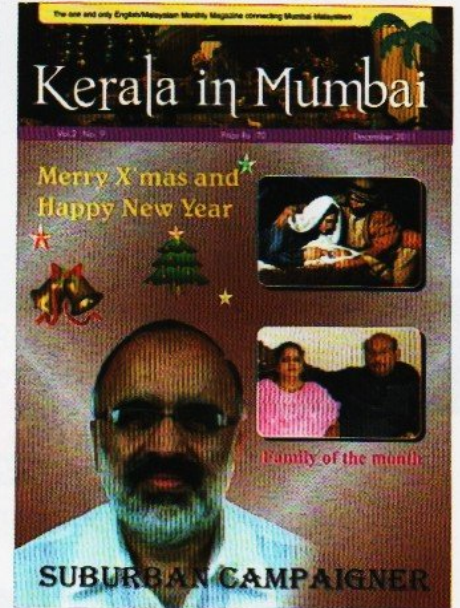
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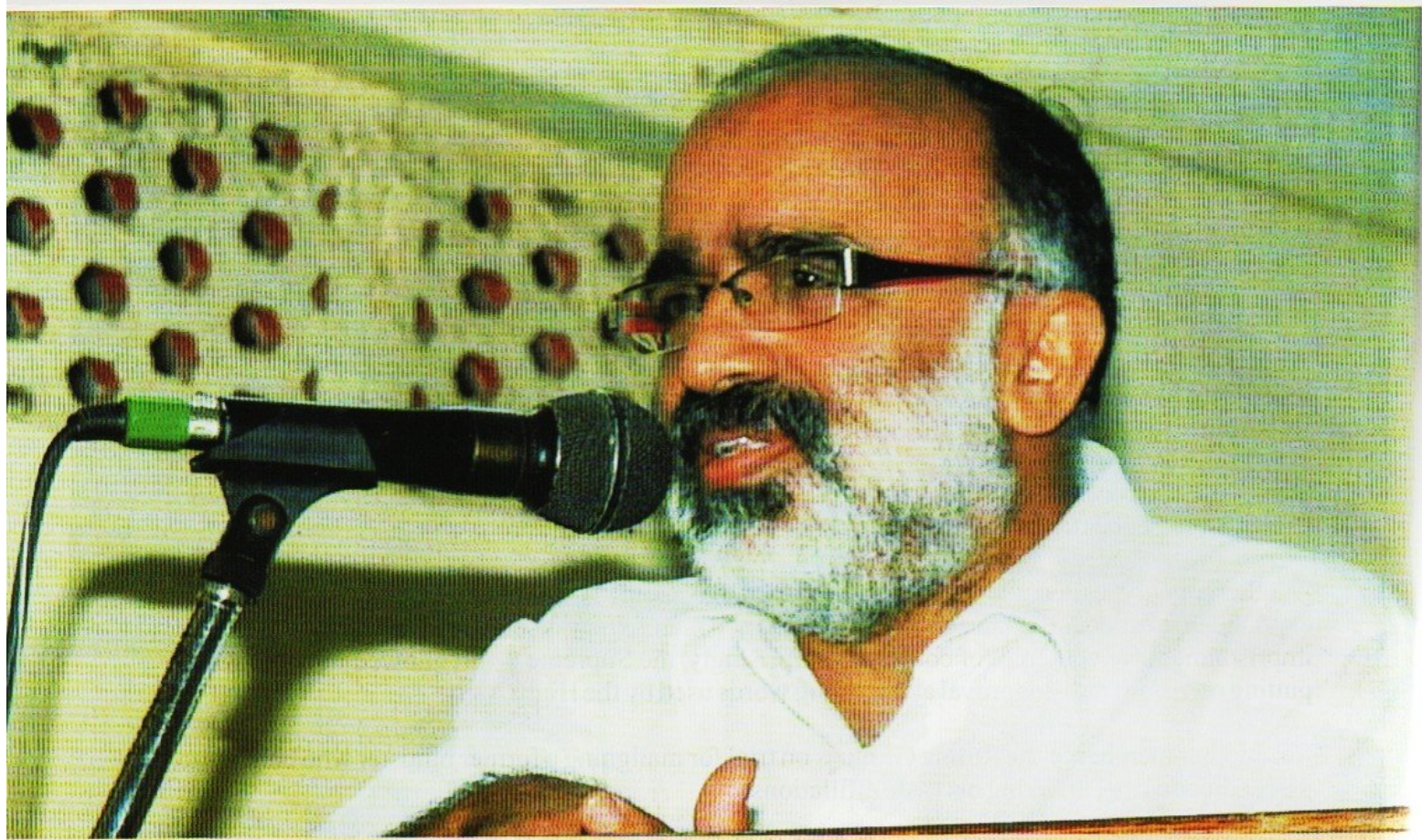
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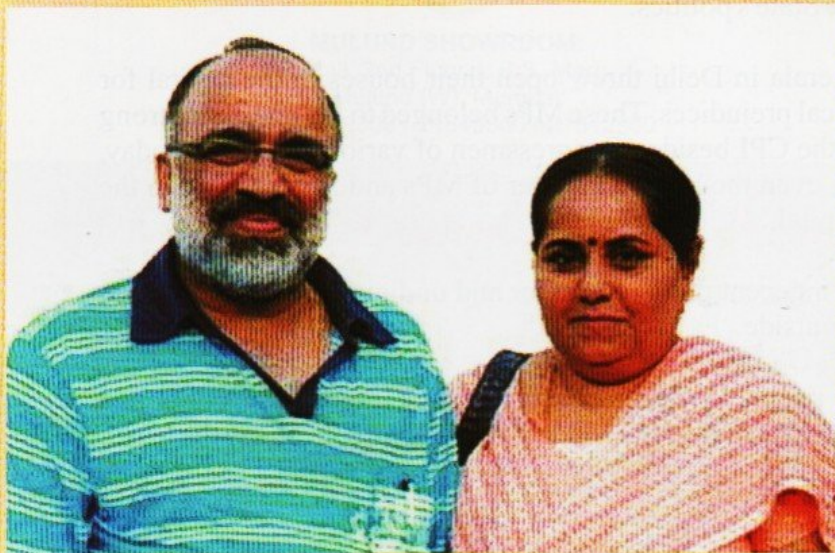


**P V K NAMBIAR**

**-P K Ravindranath**

## **CAMPAIGNER FOR COMMON CAUSES**

Keeping away from the allurements of political parties, PVK Nambiar is an undisputed leader of the 6000 - odd Malayalees in Vasai and has constantly been in the limelight in solving their problems and improving their living conditions.



*PVK Nambiar and his wife Mrs Lalitha Nambiar*

**I**n the thirty years that he has lived in Vasai, there is no struggle for any aspect of welfare of the people in the area from Dahisar to Dahanu in which P V K Nambiar has not participated and to which he has not provided leadership. Right now the campaign he leads from his base in Vasai is to ensure the safety of the citizens of the distant suburbs and for better travel facilities on suburban and passenger trains.

Participation in agitations for public causes comes naturally to Nambiar, since his student days in Taliparambu in North Kerala. As a member of the Students' Congress in the late sixties and early seventies he earned great experience in organizing campaigns for public good. The idealism he has brought into such campaigns was instilled in him by his 94-year-old father, Chindan Nambiar who still manages and runs the Koonan Aided Lower Primary School in his hometown.

Since 1981, P V K Nambiar has emerged as the undisputed leader of the 5,800 Malayalee families in Vasai and a larger number of compatriots in the entire Dahisar to Dahanu belt. It is his ambition to bring all these Malayalees under one umbrella to solve their multifarious problems.



*PVK Nambiar receiving Export Award from TMMA, India.*

The problems they face are now largely of ensuring their security in a fast developing region of the State and travelling to their home towns from Vasai. Three major express trains from distant stations like Dehradun and Amritsar that pass through Vasai to Thiruvananthapuram and they all halt at Vasai station for upto 20 minutes for technical reasons, but passengers are not allowed to board them from that station. No tickets are issued from that station to the passengers who board the trains "illegally". They would be lucky to purchase tickets from the next stop, Panvel, if they are not "caught" by a ticket examiner and penalized.

The railways stipulate that all express trains can have only two halts in any one State.

Nambiar and his colleagues have been trying to get this antiquated regulation amended so far as Vasai is concerned. No railway minister or member of the Railway Board has given them a word of cheer till now. The fight continues.

Nambiar has been President of the Bassein Kerala Samajam for the last six years. The Samajam runs a junior college and high school in Vasai. Nambiar and his colleagues are now engaged in efforts to raise it to the level of a degree college. For this, the Samajam needs more land, and

naturally, funds. When the college comes into being it would be a great boon to the students of Vasai besides the 1600 students of the Junior College itself.

Nambiar came to Mumbai in 1976. After his marriage to Lalitha, an accounts officer with the Central Excise, he set up his home in Vasai and has been there since then.

In 1991, he was elected to the Vasai Gram Panchayat, The Gram Panchayat was converted into the Bassein Municipal Council. Nambiar was elected as a councillor in 2005 and held his office till 2010.

Nambiar has two children a son who is an electronics Engineer with Tata Consultancy Services and a daughter who is an executive with JPMorgan.

Nambiar is also President of the Nair Welfare Association. As a councillor and gram panchayat member, he has been happy that he was able to help solve the water supply problem in Vasai to a very large extent.

As an active member of the Lion's Club he is now involved in the organisation's campaign to clean up the Konkan area to provide a cleaner environment.

Nambiar is general manager of Peass International Engineers Pvt Ltd which is a part of Oerlikon Schlafhorst group of companies. His passion continues to be social service with no strings attached. Altruism at its best.

In an age when petty politicians pose as social workers to create their own vote banks, it is good to find genuine social workers like P V K Nambiar who keeps away from the allurements of political parties.



*PVK Nambiar addressing the BKS audience at the 48th Annual Day celebration.*



# CHRISTMAS

## Birth Of A Saviour

*Christmas is celebrated all over the world as a festival of joy and happiness. It celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the baby who grew up to show people a new way of life and in the end gave up his life for mankind.*



*Infant Jesus*



Lakshmi Venkatachalam

**C**hristmas is the season of joy and happiness. All over the world, believers of the faith celebrate the birth of baby Jesus with joy and cheer, hope and celebrations. From Christmas Eve to New Year, it is festival time, visiting friends and relations, sharing and exchanging gifts, party time and happiness all around. Christmas is the time for partying, having fun, receiving and giving gifts. The message of Christmas is deeper, however. Christ was born, not in a palace but in a lowly manger, to humble and poor parents who had nothing to boast about except a spotless character and faith.

## Infant Jesus

Jesus was born as the poorest of the poor in a manger in the biting cold of winter in Bethlehem. The shepherds who were informed about the birth of Jesus came and worshipped him, the three wise men from the East, came to Bethlehem guided by the star, entered the manger, knelt down and opening their treasure chests offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. After eight days he was circumcised as was the custom and named Jesus, as instructed by Angel Gabriel. He was presented to the Lord to be anointed holy as per the custom of the time.

For a short period Mary and Joseph with the infant Jesus fled to Egypt to avoid King Herod who had ordered the death of all first born males in the kingdom. After Herod's death the family came to Nazareth where he grew up strong and filled with wisdom. Every year he was taken by his parents to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. Once when he was 12, Mary and Joseph were astonished to see him engaged in a discourse with the teachers at the temple. They were astonished at his wisdom. At Nazareth Jesus helped his father in carpentry work and was loved by all the people there.

Jesus worked a transformation in the lives of the people and taught them to lead a purer life, and brought about a spiritual awakening among them. "The meek shall inherit the earth," says the Bible. Spiritual awakening comes to the seeker who is humble and meek. Through the basic tenets of Christianity, namely love, humility, simplicity, renunciation and holiness which Christ practised in his daily life, he showed them a new way of life.

## The Holy Family

The Holy Family, as the name suggests, consists of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. Mary conceived Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of her unique role as the mother of the Son of God, Mary was filled with grace from the moment of her conception in her mother's womb, endowed with special graces and lived a life completely free from sin. She is also called 'Blessed Virgin Mary, full of Grace. The Feast of Immaculate Conception is celebrated on December 8.

Joseph was a descendant of King David, spouse of Virgin Mary and foster father of Jesus. God entrusted Joseph, a just man to bring up His only son and he obeyed it unquestioningly. In purity of



*The Holy Family - Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus*

thought, chastity of life and patience, fortitude and gentleness, Joseph was the model of a true Christian. Joseph was a carpenter and St Joseph is the patron saint of working people and craftsmen.

At every stage of Jesus's childhood the Holy Family faced hardships and problems but they prayed to God and surrendered to His will. Joseph worked hard as a carpenter, his son Jesus was obedient and helped him and Mary endured the hardships of the family with equanimity. Christians are exhorted to emulate the peace and harmony of the Holy Family in their lives. The Feast of Holy Family falls on December 31.

## Christmas Traditions

Like any other metropolis, Mumbai also celebrates Christmas with the shops and houses being lit up by stars and lights, huge stars hanging from Churches and across busy roads. Malls and retailers do discount sales and Mumbaitees buy Christmas Greeting cards and gifts to exchange among themselves. The

Malayalee Christians also celebrate the season like others and enjoy the festive time.

The exact date of the birth of Christ may be a matter of debate, but December 25 is generally believed and celebrated as the birthday of Jesus Christ. Because of lack of Biblical instructions, Christmas rituals take the character of the popular and local culture of the place that celebrates the festival.

## Advent

Traditionally, the sacred season starts with Advent, which begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continues till Christmas (December 25) and New Year (Jan 1) and ends with Epiphany on January 6.

During Advent, Christians make preparations for the commemoration of Jesus' birth on December 25. Each of the four weeks symbolizes a different way in which believers perceive Christ: through the flesh, the Holy Spirit, Death and Christ's Judgement of the dead. Every week, masses are conducted, the



*Advent Candles*

Church expresses its joy in the forthcoming birth of baby Jesus and look forward to the advent of Christ in their lives. The preparations consist of cleansing the mind of hatred, jealousy, ill-thoughts and welcoming Christ with purity of heart and love.

On December 25, masses are held in all churches, celebrating the birth of their Saviour, and also feature music and sometimes enactment of the Nativity scene.

## Nativity Scene

In many churches, houses, town squares, market corners, the crib or the scene of nativity is set up and the birth of Christ in the stable with figurines of Joseph and Mary and the shepherds and the three wise men are displayed. It was St Francis of Assisi who first created the crib scene in the forest near Greccio monastery and recited the Christmas Gospel, thus starting the tradition in



Nativity scene in Kerala

Italy. The rest of Europe and other parts of the world followed suit.

## Christmas Tree

Another significant celebration of Christmas is the decorating of the Christmas tree. It started in the sixteenth century in Germany. The Christmas tree, in its initial days, was decorated first with apples, roses, and coloured paper, later candles and other decorative trinkets were added. Today the Christmas tree is an integral part of Christmas celebrations and along with the crib it gives free rein to the imagination of those who are creating it. Soft cotton balls make up for snow, gilded coloured papers and satin ribbons, with figurines and statuettes, coloured lights and baubles decorate the Christmas trees.

## Christmas Carols

From the first week of December or even earlier, choir groups are formed in all the churches and carol singing is practised.

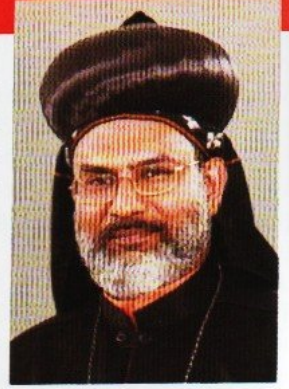
## Christmas message

I wish to offer my prayerful greetings to all the readers of 'Kerala in Mumbai'. I have come to know from families in Mumbai, the great service that the magazine is doing to the Keralites in Mumbai, especially, to the younger generation. I congratulate the editors and all who work behind.

We are in the mood of celebrating Christmas and we are eagerly waiting to welcome a New Year. Christmas is a time of joy. Our forefathers prayed: *Asato ma sat gamaya, tamosa ma jyothir gamaya, Mrtyor ma amrtham gamaya*. Here we celebrate the birth of Jesus who told us that he is the way, truth and life. We are living in a world torn by fundamentalism, sectarianism, inequality, injustice, etc. through the food for hungry programme in Delhi, I have the chance to meet thousand on the street of our capital city each day. Then we can imagine, what could be the situation elsewhere. Human dignity is neglected and people starve on the road and die there. In such a situation we celebrate the birth of Jesus who came to the world and gave his life for the world and thereby taught us that he loves each one of us. Therefore, Christmas is a celebration of all people who are committed to the wellbeing of the society.

Christmas is a time of joy, peace, love, sharing, etc. Jesus should prompt us to commit ourselves to the world. He should challenge us in our commitments. Child Jesus will expose our vulnerabilities, weakness and fragile nature. Jesus will inspire us to be interested in the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters. Christmas will also demand from us a commitment to the society in which we live because injustice, inequality, division, fundamentalism, oppression, etc., and other social evils are alien to the spirit of Christmas. Christmas invites us to be lovers of peace, harmony, sharing, joy, happiness, wellbeing of all, etc. May this Christmas help all readers of 'Kerala in Mumbai' to have a wonderful and meaningful Christmas. May the blessing of God be with all you doing the coming year.

Once again with good wishes and blessings of Christmas and New Year.



Dr. Jacob Mar Barnabas

*+ Jacob Mar Barnabas*

+Jacob Mar Barnabas

**Bishop Dr Jacob Mar Barnabas**

*Apostolic Visitor*

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church  
Extra Territorial Regions In India

## Jesus the Messiah

*The baby that was born in the stable in Bethlehem was the greatest event in human history to Christians because God came into this world in human form at that time. "He is the eternal Word made flesh." Jesus the Messiah came in poverty, not in power. He lived a life serving others and rooted in humility. He showed the path of truth, justice and light. Jesus' ministry was one of love, mercy, healing, humility and forgiveness. Jesus Christ performed many miracles which were signs that the Kingdom of God had already arrived with his coming. But the Jews rejected him for they believed that the messiah would come in power and glory as a successor of King David. The life of Jesus can be summed up in one word- love. "God so loved the world that He sent His only son Jesus to save man".*



The parishioners divide into groups and go from house to house to sing Christmas Carols. They are welcomed and greeted warmly. On Christmas eve, the parishioners go on a procession with lighted candles and sing Christmas Carols.

### Santa Claus

Another well-known Christmas figure is Santa Claus or Father Christmas the jolly fat old man in a red suit who carries a sack full of toys over his shoulders for all the children of the world. Santa Claus is the most popular icon of Christmas the world over. He evolved from a real person Saint Nicholas of Turkey a gentle and pious man who lived in the fourth century AD. He helped the poor and the needy. Legend says that once when he heard about three young girls who could



### Santa Claus

not marry because they had no dowries, he filled their stockings with gold coins, thus starting the tradition of Christmas stockings. The Romans imprisoned him for his generosity to the poor but he was later freed. Legends grew around him and his name later changed to Santa Claus.

## History of Malayalee Churches in Mumbai

In obedience to the divine command, "to make disciples of all nations" by the Lord Jesus Christ, Thomas, one of the apostles, set off to India.

Thomas was a fisherman who left everything and followed Jesus. When the Lord appeared to him after His Resurrection, and showed him His wounds, Apostle Thomas uttered the famous words, "My Lord, my God". After coming to India in AD 52, he established the first Church on the Malabar Coast. The Christians in Kerala are considered an indigenous Christian Community and living in strong traditions of St Thomas.

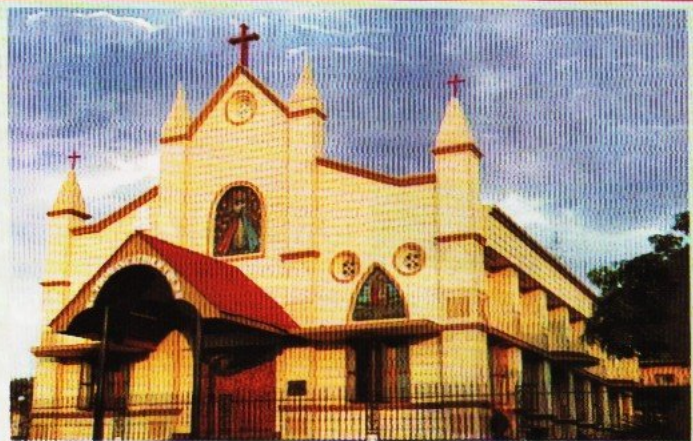
St Thomas travelled far and wide within India and established many churches and Christian communities. During one of his travels, St Thomas came to Kalyan (Bombay) and founded a Church in the first century itself.

It is generally accepted that the churches were established in Mumbai at the outset of the sixth century and till the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Church in Mumbai was under the ecclesiastical rule of the Bishop of Kollam.

The Christians of the Syro Malabar Church who came to Mumbai in the early part of the twentieth century, kept the spiritual, liturgical and ecclesiastical traditions of their Mother Church alive by organizing retreats, prayer meetings, Holy Mass services through various associations. These early Malayalee Christian migrants, gathered at houses, halls, public places like schools and irrespective of church denominations, involved in various activities especially during important Christian Festivals, thus revealing the diaspora community as an ecumenical



**Mar Thomas Elavanal**  
*Bishop of Kalyan Diocese*



**St. Thomas Catholic Church, Borivli**

community. This feeling of oneness enabled them to organize joint programmes for the spiritual upliftment of the community.

In the early 80's the pastoral care of the people of Bombay was entrusted to the priests of the CMI congregation and in May 1987, a team of four priests from the diocese of Trichur headed by Rev Mgr Paul Chittilapilly took up the ministry among the Syro-Malabar Catholics.

In 1940 the St Mary's Orthodox Church (Bombay Parish), Dadar East, the first Malayalee Church, was founded. The Mar Thoma Church also was started at about the same time. In 1945 the first Methodist Church was started and the first Pentecostal Church was started in Chembur in 1955. According to statistics, there are at least about 92 Catholic (Malayalee) Churches, 23 Orthodox Churches, 24 Mar Thoma Churches, 2 Methodist Churches and more than 200 Pentecostal Churches in Mumbai.

The Malayalee Churches have always rendered great service towards the society and the community in the field of education, medical service in times of calamities etc. There are many quality educational institutions, hospitals with excellent service records, orphanages, old age homes, that are run by the Christian Churches and missionaries in Mumbai who do exemplary humanitarian services and contribute to the welfare of the society.



# Kundoor Narayana Menon

*A poet accepted the call of the Kodungallur school very seriously and wrote many poems in chaste Malayalam, totally devoid of Sanskrit and Tamil, the two languages that held Malayalam captive. He belonged to a middle class family but showed great command over Malayalam with a vast vocabulary. He proved that Malayalam could grow, expand, sustain itself and survive with freedom and independence. It was not that he did not have mastery over Sanskrit. If challenged he could weave quartet after quartet in Sanskrit. He was Kundoor Narayana Menon.*



Kundoor Narayana Menon

After the time of the quartet Cherusseri, Ezhuthachchan, Nambiar and Poonthanam, Malayalam poetry was in a deep slumber. It woke up when Kerala Varma Koyithampuran, Kodungalloor Kunhikuttan Thampuram and the Venmani Namboothiries came on the scene. The royal descent on the Malayalam poetry scene brought a heavy dose of Sanskritised words and any one who did not have a sprinkle in his or her work was considered to be of lower strata. It was Venmani Achchan and Mahan Namboothiri who along with Kodungalloor Kunhikuttan Thampuram advocated using more Malayalam words so that the common man could also comprehend the poems. Though their works were accepted with abandon, they could not free themselves from the shackles of Sanskrit. The language of Devas could not be ignored as the main works in Malayalam were based on their Sanskrit counter parts. Rather, Malayalam poetry thrived by the translations of original Sanskrit works of Kalidasa, Magha, Bhasa, Harsha, etc.

During this period a poet took the call of the Kodungallur school very seriously and wrote many poems in chaste Malayalam, totally devoid of Sanskrit and Tamil, the two languages that held Malayalam captive. He belonged to a middle class family but showed great command over Malayalam with a vast vocabulary. He proved that Malayalam could grow, expand, sustain itself and survive with freedom and independence. It was not that he did not have mastery over Sanskrit. If challenged he could weave quartet after quartet in Sanskrit. He was Kundoor Narayana Menon.

Kundoor never played to the gallery nor did he play second fiddle to the aristocracy. In fact he abhorred snobbery and sarcasm. His intolerance of such attitude from his superiors and aristocracy cost him dear. He had to pay a heavy price for his independence. He did not bother and continued to write poems but seldom published them. Being pure Malayalam, they were loved by the admirers of the language and they retained them in memory. After his demise, his admirers collected and ventured to get some of them published.

## His life

Kundoor was born to Kalyani Amma and Komarath Krishna Menon in Urakam near Thrissur in 1861. He completed his primary education at Cherppu and High School at Thrissur. After obtaining his B A in Malayalam from Madras Presidency College, he joined as a Head Clerk at the Office of the Police Superintendant, at Kochi. He was later promoted as Tahsildar and worked in various Tahsil offices in Kochi state. By sheer hard work, he mastered Sanskrit. He married his cousin Komarath Kuttiparu Amma. He died in 1936, when he was 76. Kundoor was aloof but endeared himself to every one. He displayed no ego or jealousy. He had an innocent nature and was pure at heart. He loved four things in his life: children, poetry, chess and mango fruit. He himself said so on several occasions. The Raja of Kochi bestowed on him the title "Kavi Thilakan." When he was Tahsildar under Diwan Rajagopala Achari, he was accused of dereliction of duty and fined one month's salary. This deeply hurt him and he resigned his secured job. He had most of the attributes of Ulloor but was not successful as a bureaucrat unlike him. For sometime he worked as Manager of Paliathu Kovilakam. In one of his poems, he wrote:

അക്ഷായിനാമനിധിയും യമനുള്ള ശിക്ഷാ-  
രക്ഷാധികാരവുമിതെന്തിനെനിക്കു വേണ്ടാ.

## His works

Kundoor wrote to satisfy his urge to write. He seldom showed any interest in getting them published or earn some money. He is credited with several works which are based on personalities in Kerala and also based on mythology. They are : *Komappan, Kannan, Pakkanar, Kochi Cheriya Saktan Thampuram* (compiled as *Nalu Bhashakavyangal*), *Naarhanathu bhranthan, Akavoor Chatthan, Vatuthala Nayar* (all belonging to *Parhayi Petta Pantheeru Kulam*), *Samban, Oru Marukathu* (A counter-letter), He also translated some works from Sanskrit. There were some

already translated by veteran poets but what distinguished his works was that they were all in pure Malayalam without shades of Sanskrit. The translations are: *Pushpabana Vilasam*, *Naagaanandam*, *Raghuvamsam*, *Malavikagnimitram*, *Kumarasambhavam*, *Meghasandesham*, *Geetanjali* of Tagore in *Manjari* meter, *Ajamilamoksham*, *Oru Rathri*, *Oru Vidya*, *Kiratam 14 vrutham*, *Poothanaamoksham Vanchipattu*, *Sundopasundopakhyanam*. Most of them are not available in print but Ulloor had recorded these works as that of Kundoor.

### Komappan and Kannan

Kundoor was the first poet to write poems on the legends of Palat Koman and Kolat Kannappanuni. They are not biographies of the heroes in poetic form but certain aspects of their life. They extol their valour, confidence, love and respect for elders and ancestors besides the attraction they wielded for women. Since they contain elaborate descriptions of the female body, they could not be reproduced in Malayalam text books. This prevented the young generation from reading his works and Kundoor was allowed to be forgotten. Malayalam text books paved the way for spreading knowledge of the language and its literature. While other poets were generally reproduced in high school text books, there was hardly any reproduction from Kundoor's works except ten to twelve lines.

There were a lot of similarities between Komappan and Kannan. Both were brought up by their mothers secretly as there were conspiracies to eliminate them. Once they completed their martial training, the mothers told them of the bitter past and urged them to annihilate the enemy. They went either alone or with a solitary assistant and during the event invariably met the beautiful sister of the enemy, who fell for them. In Komappan's case, he convinced the enemy about the advantage of being friendly on account of their sister while in Kannan's case, he showed them he could love them if he wanted to. He cut their swords into pieces and told them that he was sparing their lives because of the request of their sister, his beloved.

Kundoor's narration is plain but interesting as it reflected the straightforwardness of the protagonists. When Koman and Unniamma met for the first time, they did not converse except through their glances.

അപ്പൊണ്ണു കോമനുടെ കൺമണി കട്ടുകൊണ്ടാ-  
ണപ്പന്തൽ കേറിയതതാരുമറിഞ്ഞതില്ല

കോമന്റെ കണ്ണുവളെയൊന്നെതിരേൽക്കുവാന-  
ക്കേമത്തിമുന്ദിലൊരു കൺമുനനീട്ടിയച്ചു

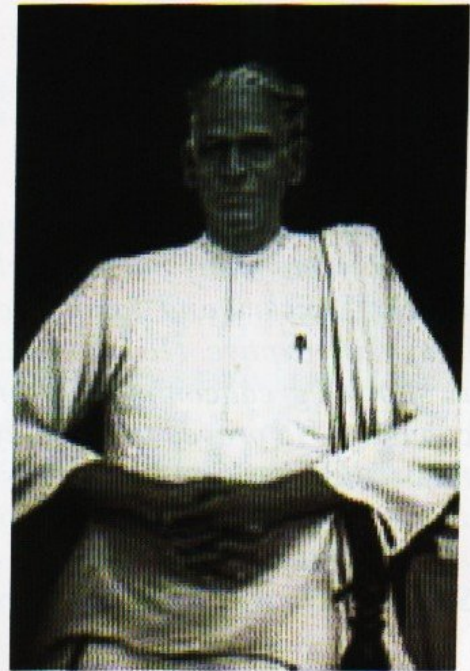
ഏറെപ്പറഞ്ഞീടുവതെന്തിനു താലികെട്ടു-  
ന്നേരം കഴിഞ്ഞു പിരിയേണ്ടവർ വേർപിരിഞ്ഞു  
താരമ്പ നീയിരുവരിൽ കൾ മാറ്റി വെച്ചു  
വേറിട്ടുപോയുടൽ മറഞ്ഞിതു രണ്ടുപേർക്കും.

Instead of saying that they fell in love, Kundoor says that there was a cross transplantation of their hearts! When they met at the pond, Unni cautioned Koman that her brothers would kill him if they found out. Koman assured her that nothing would hurt him except the arrows her eyes shot at him.

പുല്ലാണിനിക്കു പടയാളികൾ, നിൻകടക്കൺ-  
തല്ലാണു തേൻമൊഴി, തടുത്തിടുവാൻ ഞെരുക്കും!  
(കോമപ്പൻ)

Bhaskaran wrote a song for the film "Unniarcha" wherein he borrowed these lines from Kundoor.

പുല്ലാണിനിക്കു നിന്റെ വാൾമുന പക്ഷെ  
കൊല്ലുന്നു നിന്റെ കൊച്ചുകൺമുന  
(പി ഭാസ്കരൻ-ഉണ്ണിയാർച്ച)



Kundoor Narayana Menon

It was mandatory during those days for the poet to describe the physique of the hero and beauty of the heroine as that would highlight his power of imagination. He followed the traditional mode of description. How did Kannan look?

കാളയ്ക്കു കാണുമൊരുതോളു, കരിമ്പ നയ്ക്കു  
കാളും കുറുമ്പുകളയുന്നൂടൽ, മാർപിരിഞ്ഞ്  
നീളത്തിലുക്കുടയ കൈകളുമായ് പടയ്ക്കു  
കേളിപ്പെടുപടി വിളഞ്ഞു വിളങ്ങി കോമൻ. 9

വണ്ടാണിക്കുഴലിമാരൊരു കണ്ണുനോക്കി-  
ക്കണ്ടാൽ മയങ്ങുമഴകുണ്ടവന്നെന്നുമല്ല,  
തിണ്ടാടിനേർക്കുമെതിരാളികളെത്രകൂടി-  
ക്കൊണ്ടാലുമായിടുക്കുന്നു പുല്ലുപോലെ. 10

It is not surprising that all eligible women lusted for him. In *Kannan*, Kundoor was lavish in his description of his heroine Kochu. It comes through the eyes of Kannan, the hero. First he had a glance of her.

പൊന്താലി, നൂലു, വളതൊട്ടു പകിട്ടുവിട്ടു  
ചെന്താർമകന്റെ വിരുതിൻ വിളയാട്ടമായി  
പൊന്താരൊടൊത്തൊരുടലുള്ളവൾ തന്റെ ചന്ത-  
മെന്താണുരപ്പതു? പറഞ്ഞറിയിക്കവയ്യ. 24

Then he started looking from head to toe and what he saw was irresistible.

തോരാതുലഞ്ഞടിയൊടുപടി നീണ്ട കുന്തൽ  
പാരാതെ കൈപിരലുകൊണ്ടവൾ വേർപെടുക്കെ,  
നീരാർന്നു മിന്നലിടചേർന്നു മഴയ്ക്കൊരുങ്ങും-  
കാണാറിതെന്നു കരുതും കൾ തന്നിലാറും. 25

When her beautiful long fingers separate the long tresses of hair, the poet reminds us the lightning that passes across the black clouds during monsoon. Ulloor used the same imagery to describe the agony of the mother attempting to catch her children falling down. He said:

(മിന്നൽപിണർക്കാപ്പണിയും കരങ്ങ-  
ളെങ്ങോട്ടു നീട്ടുന്നു പയോമോലേ?)

While Kalidasa described young Shakuntala, he found her physical beauty growing every moment. Kochu was no different.

നെന്തൊക്കെയങ്ങിനെ നിറഞ്ഞണിവെള്ള റൗക്കി  
 പിഞ്ഞാനടുത്തപടി വിങ്ങിവളർന്നു പൊങ്ങി  
 കുഞ്ഞാന തോറ്റ നടയാളുടെ കൊങ്ക രണ്ടും  
 മഞ്ഞാൽ മറഞ്ഞ മലപോലെ തുലോം വിളങ്ങി. 26

It was Bhasa who described a woman in red clothing and carrying a vessel with a constricted neck moving along the road. The great poet felt that she was plucking the hearts of her onlookers and dropping into the vessel.

[തലയിലൊരു കുടവും ചുമന്നു ചെമ്മേ-  
 ചെന്നിറമാർന്നൊരു പട്ടുടുത്തോൾ  
 സകലരുടെയുമുൾക്കൂരുന്നു നുള്ളി-  
 കൂടമതിലിട്ടു നടക്കയെന്നു തോന്നും. ]

Kundoor followed Bhasa's path but he made his lines musical and imaginative by sticking to rhyming of the second letter in all lines.

ആണായകുട്ടരുടെയൊക്കെയുമുള്ളുലയ്ക്കും-  
 കോണാർന്നുകൊണ്ടു കരിമീനിണപോലെ മിന്നി  
 കാണായൊരാമിഴികൾ പോയവഴിക്കലൊക്കെ-  
 ചേണാർന്നൊരാമ്പൽമലർ ചിന്നിയപോലെ തോന്നും. 27.

ചണ്ടിക്കു നീണ്ട കുഴൽ, തണ്ടലരിൽ കളിക്കും  
 വണ്ടിന്നു നൽക്കുറുനിരക്കളി, താരിരുൾക്കോ  
 ചുണ്ടി,ങ്ങുലച്ച പുരികം തിരകൾ,ക്കിതെല്ലാം  
 കൊണ്ടിക്കരികുഴലിയാച്ചെറുപൊയ്കപോലെ. 28

(കണ്ണൻ)

കാർകൊണ്ടലൊത്ത കുഴൽ മെല്ലെയുലച്ചു തൻകൈ-  
 ത്താർകൊണ്ടു ചിക്കുമഴകു,ള്ളിളകുന്ന നോട്ടം,  
 വാർകൊണ്ട കൊങ്ക, തളിർതന്നുടെ തള്ളലിന്റെ  
 വേർ കണ്ട ചുണ്ടിതുകളാർക്കിതുപോലെ വേറെ? 33

Since the storyline was similar, Kundoor used the same quartet in both the poems:

വാളേ! തെളിഞ്ഞീടുക നിൻപണി തീർന്നതില്ല  
 നാളേയ്ക്കു നീട്ടിടുക നിന്റേയുറക്കമെല്ലാം  
 വാളേ! നിനക്കിനിയുമിന്നൊരു കാഴ്ച കാണാം.

(കോമപ്പൻ)

When you go through the above, you may remember the lines of Asan

കണ്ണേ, മടങ്ങുക, കരിഞ്ഞുമലിഞ്ഞുമാശു  
 മണ്ണാകുമീ മലരും, വിസ്മൃതമാകുമിപ്പോൾ.

The similarity is accidental. While Kundoor's words came from a warrior who was courageous and confident, Asan's were of a resigned nature, with a tone of helplessness.

Rhyming of the letters of all lines of a quartet in the Sanskrit poems or the dual line structure of Dravidian poems was meant



Vidhubala



Sathyan in Palattu Koman

to prove the prowess of the poet on his vocabulary and poets while attempting to prove their genius, struggled against it. About half a century ago, in Kerala, a seminar of literary figures resolved not to be strict with this undeclared rule. Now, it is not even necessary to write poems in verses so that no hard and fast rule is to be followed.

Kundoor not only demonstrated his mastery over Malayalam vocabulary and proved that Malayalam poets needed no assistance from Sanskrit language as it had the necessary vocabulary. He further displayed that even when writing his poems in Sanskrit style, needing to form quartets, and emphasising for the rhyming, he had no problem finding suitable words. In fact all his poems had a natural lucid style and the words fell into a pattern without any strain on the part of the poet. The greatness of Kundoor lies in this factor.

His poems rarely reflect the name of the heroine. She is always referred by her adjectival attributes.

1. വേട്ടില്ലൊരാളിവളെയെങ്കിലെനിയ്ക്കുതന്നെ  
 കിട്ടില്ലയെന്നു വരുമോ കരികുന്തലാളെ?
2. എന്തൊരത്തെണീയ്ക്കെ മുടി ചിക്കൽ കഴിഞ്ഞുപൊന്നിൻ-  
 കുനോടിടഞ്ഞ മുലയാളവൾ നേർക്കു നോക്കി  
 അനോർത്തിടാതരിയ കണ്ണനെയങ്ങു കണ്ടു  
 വന്നൊരു നാണമൊടുടൻ തല താഴ്ത്തി നിന്നു. 37

His similes are of a high standard:

1. തേനീച്ചയും കൊടുകടന്നിലുമുള്ളതോർത്തു  
 തേനിൽപ്പെടും കൊതി വിടുണൊരു വിറപ്പിയുണ്ടോ ?
2. ഒന്നായിവണ്ണമവരാടുകളൊത്തൊരുരുക്കൻ-  
 ചെന്നായയോടെതിരിടുന്നതിനെന്നപോലെ,  
 ചെന്നായവന്നരികിലായതു കണ്ടു വാളും  
 നന്നായുലച്ചവരൊടന്നടലാടി കണ്ണൻ. 83

Like Ulloor, Kundoor described the duals in great detail:

വട്ടംപെടും പരിചയാലവരന്നു വെട്ടും  
 വെട്ടന്നു വാട്ടമണയാതെ തടുത്തടുത്ത്  
 കൂട്ടത്തൊടൊത്തുമവർതൻതല കോയ്തൊരമ്മാ-  
 നാട്ടുതുടങ്ങിയടവിൽ പിഴയാതെ വമ്പൻ. 84

When Kannan wanted to meet Kochu secretly, he sent her message to expect him at night. When he reached her courtyard,

പട്ടുംപുകഴ്ത്തുമുടലാൾ ജനൽ ചേർന്നുകെട്ടി  
 നീട്ടുന്നൊരക്കയർപിടിച്ചവനൊട്ടുകേറി

തട്ടുന്നൊരുൾത്തെളിവുകൂടിയ കൊച്ചു നീട്ടി-  
 ക്കാട്ടുന്ന കൈത്തളിർ പിടിച്ചു കടന്നു മച്ചിൽ. 123

Does the above quartet remind you of the well known balcony scene in 'Romeo and Juliet' of Shakespeare?

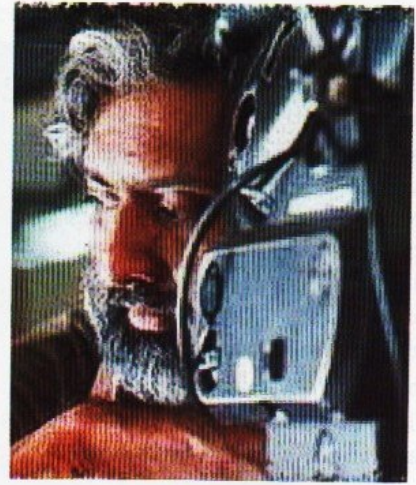
Kundoor's works influenced many writers of Malayalam and glimpses could be seen in several novels and poems. Kundoor's influence was visible in 'Vinodini' of Oduvil Kunhikrishna Menon. There is unmistakable similarity between Komappan and Aniruddhan of Vallathol. Vallathol wrote *Bandhanastanaya Aniruddhan* much after Komappan. In turn, Aniruddhan inspired Kundoor to mould *Samban*. Similarly, when Vallathol wrote 'Oru Kathu alias Rugmini'yute Paschathapam', Kundoor wrote 'Oru Marukathu' (A Counter-letter) as a response of Rugmini.

Kundoor was known as a poet of 'Paccha Malayalam' (raw and pure Malayalam). He did not take it up as an exercise to show off but as a true vehicle to demonstrate that Malayalam poets did not need other languages to express their imagination or inner feelings effectively. Second and third letter rhyming, *anuprasm* (repetition of the same sound several times in the same quartet), *yamakam* (alliteration) were all easily and effectively used in his poems. The examples quoted above would vouch for this observation.

The best way to understand and appreciate his poems is to read (if possible, aloud) so that one may experience its aesthetic beauty and sweetness. One would resist the temptation to quote more from his other poems.

## Contributions to Malayalam Cinema

Two of his great grandchildren have earned fame now. They are Vidhubala, the danseuse and actress of Malayalam films during



Madhu Ambat

the 70s and 80s and her brother Madhu Ambat, the cinematographer, director, actor and winner of several International, National and State awards for his photography. Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi and English movie. They are children of the English Professor and magician, Bhagyanath, the founder of *Fantasia*.

Kundoor's own contribution to Malayalam cinema is also no less. When *Vadakkan pattukal* (Northern folklore) were made in movies, Producer and Director Kunchacko asked his screenplay writers to base the story lines to the Kundoor's poems. The *Unniarcha*, *Aromalunni*, *Palat Koman* and *Kannappanun* were made with dialogues by Sarangapani or N Govindan Kutty. They found the job easier as Kundoor had described the story he had personally witnessed them. Kundoor's poems had even made the job of the director easier as he had outlined the story in great detail.

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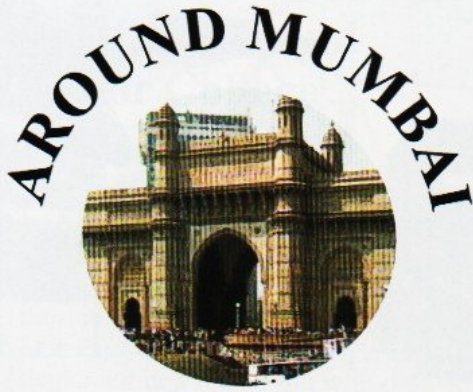
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ആശംസകൾ



## VASAI

### *The Malayalee Touch*

Vasai, in particular has attracted Malayalees because its geographical and climatic conditions are similar to that of Kerala. The greenery and the rural ambience of the place attracted the early migrants to Vasai.



*Vasai Fort - A Heritage spot*

Today Vasai has developed and Malayalees have settled in several nagars and colonies in the suburb. There are many Christians and several Kerala Churches of various denominations in Vasai. Christmas is a grand celebration here.

### **Christmas Celebrations**

In the 60s and 70s Malayalee Christians in Vasai had Christmas carol rounds together and visited the various Malayalee homes. As different Christian denominations formed their own groups, the focus shifted to their members. But a healthy relationship cutting across various Malayalee Christian Denominations still exist in Vasai. They have several Ecumenical Carol programmes among the various Christian denominations from Kerala.

## Mar Thoma Church

In the late 1950s the migration of Marthomite families to the pristine village of Bassein Road, or Vasai, as we know it today, began. The first migrants settled largely at Manikpur and Chulna villages, which, with their greenery, no doubt reminded them of Central Travancore.

The earliest settlers acquired the first property, the plot on which the church now stands, in 1966. However services were conducted much before 1966 in homes and in a local school.

The residents of Vasai were functioning as a prayer group of the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Santacruz. On March 15, 1970 the foundation stone for the chapel was laid by Rev. PK Koshy and the chapel was consecrated by Rt. Rev Joshi, the late Rev. KT Thomas, and Rev. Theodore Williams of the Indian Evangelical Mission. In 1989 the church attained independent parish status. In 1992 the Church was registered as a charitable Trust.

Presently there are about 200 families consisting of about 500 members. The members are actively involved in the socio-economic, education, cultural and sports fields in and around Mumbai

The Mar Thoma Church conducts mass in Malayalam on the first, third, and fourth Sundays and in English on the



*Mar Thoma Church, Vasai*

second Sunday. Some of the Church activities include Prayer Box ministry, (where prayer requests from members and outsiders are collected in a box and prayed for by the Committee members), special Teachings sessions covering topics like family ties, and discussions on topics specially for youth, young married couples, the elders, etc. Malayalam Mission Classes have about 50 children. It offers financial assistance to the poor and refundable loans from the Loan Fund for those who face loss of job or monetary crises. Senior Citizen Sevika Sangam, Edavaka Mission, young couples fellowship, yuvajan sakhya, Sunday school are the other activities of the parish. The vicar and President of the Parish is Rev. Father T C Cherian, while Thomas Mathew is the



*Rev Fr T C Cherian*

Vice-President. Abraham Thomas is the Secretary and Prof Jose George and Joyson K Mathai are Trustees.

## St Thomas Orthodox Syrian Church

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in India was founded by St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ in A.D 52.

The origin of the parish can be traced to 1959 with about seven Orthodox Christian families residing in Vasai, who were members of the St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral, Dadar. Under the able leadership of Rev. Fr. K.K. Punnuse (Late Lamented H.G. Stephanos Mar Theodosios), the first prayer meeting of these seven families was held.

In 1964, a small plot of land was bought in Vasai for the gathering of the Orthodox Community settled here. In 1969, the first Holy Qurbana was celebrated in St. Michael's Catholic Church, Manickpur. His Grace Dr Philipose Mar Theophilus Metropolitan visited Vasai in 1979 and declared it as an independent parish in the name of St.



*Fr Thomas K Chacko*

Thomas. The church building was constructed in 1983 and the consecration of the renovated church was performed

by H.G. Geevarghese Mar Coorilos on March 1995.

The parish has about 300 families now in different wards, of which Nallasopara, Virar and Naigaon are at the extreme ends, thus making it difficult for the believers there to attend the service regularly and on time. In 1996 Nallasopara St. Gregorios Congregation was formed and with the help of the mother parish, a plot of land was purchased and a chapel was constructed and consecrated in 2010.

The Vasai parish did not lag behind in its mission work and identified the needs of the society. It gives educational aid, medical aid etc. for the poor. Now it has started Malayalam Mission classes with the help and support of the Kerala government and there are about 150 students learning here. Father Thomas K Chacko is the Vicar of the Church

# Holy Family Convent High School and Junior College

The Holy Family High School and Junior College was established in 1990 and run by the sisters of the Holy family Congregation, Navajyothi Province, at the invitation of the Bishop of Vasai, Mar Paul Chittillapilly. From a humble beginning in a rented flat with only 10 students today it is a full fledged English medium Maharashtra State Board School and Junior College having about 3650 students on its roll. The School strives to impart value-based education and ensure that each student realizes



*Holy Family Convent High School and Junior College*

his/her responsibility towards the family, society, nation and the world. The school also encourages its students

to participate in games, sports and interschool competitions. Sister Lizzie is the Principal of the School.

## Personalities

### Chandrasekhar Nair

Chandrasekhar Nair is an eminent personality of Vasai. Born at Moyan House, Cherukunnu, in Kannur District, his parents were the late P K Kelu Nair and the late Kausalya Amma. Chandrasekhar Nair is a businessman heading Adithi Construction, Civil Engineers and Contractors. He studied till SSLC at Cherukunnu, went to Baroda and completed his Diploma in Civil Engineering from Maharaja Savajirao Gaikwad (MS) University. After working for some years with Calico Chemicals, Baroda and Anick Chembur, Chandrasekhar started his own



*Chandrasekhar Nair*

company Shri Sai Construction in Vasai and recently another Construction Company, Adithi Construction. Chandrasekhar Nair is an active social

worker and has carried out many developmental activities in Vasai. He is the Vice President of both the Bassein Kerala Samajam and Nair Welfare Society Vasai. He was elected with a thumping majority as Councillor at the Navghar Manickpur Nagar Parishad elections in 2005. He continued for two terms as Special Executive Officer from 1996.

He was one of the main persons involved in the construction of the Ganapathi temple at Om Nagar and is one of its Trustees. Chandrasekhar Nair's wife Rema hails from Chirakkal in Kannur District. They have a daughter, Adithi, a student of Vartak College in Thane.

### K S Venugopal

Kaithakkatt Subramanian Venugopal hails from Thrissur. His parents were the late K N Subramanian and Sumedha. After finishing his education, he came to Mumbai in 1978 and did a two year BGL Course from National College Bandra. Venugopal works as Asst Manager Finance and Accounts, MSSIDC Ltd.

Venugopal has been staying in Vasai since 1979 and is actively involved with Bassein Kerala Samajam as a Life member, Patron and member of the Managing Committee at various times. He was the zonal Secretary of the Sree Narayana Mandira Samithi for about 15 years. Venugopal has written songs for dramas staged by the Bassein Kerala Samajam. He has also written poems in Malayalam and English.

Venugopal says that upto the eighties, the Malayalee community concentrated

in Manickpur and Chulna road but now they are scattered all over Vasai. He regrets the fact that now the Malayalee community is split into more than two dozen organisations. "At present the love, affection, interaction self-pride, spirit of unity and upholding of our cultural heritage has been marginalized compared to the seventies and eighties," he laments. "During the seventies there were only four Malayalee organizations in Vasai: Ayyappa Seva Samithi, Bassein Kerala Samithi, Bassein Malayalee Samajam and Friends Music Club. The last two are now non-existent."

In his college days Venugopal was an activist and friend of the then student leaders like Oommen Chandy, V M Sudheeran, Thiruvanchur Radhakrishnan and senior leaders like K Karunakaran and A K Antony. Even today he is active in the Mumbai Kerala social field.

"While remembering the past period of my social activism, I have full satisfaction because never had I sought any position of power or ever had I fought for positions of authority. I accepted all such responsibilities that came to me as a service to society", he says modestly. Venugopal's wife, Sudarsha, hailing from Kodungallur is a teacher at Holy Paradise High School in Vasai. They have two daughters Veena and Vidya, both married and settled.



*K S Venugopal*



*Mrs Venugopal*



**Om Nagar Maha Ganapathy Temple, Vasai**



**Holy Immanuel CSI Church, Vasai**

### **R P Kurup**

R P Kurup or Raghava Parameswara Kurup has been staying in Vasai since 1968. Hailing from Mavelikkara in Alleppey district, Kurup completed his education in Kerala and came to Mumbai in 1963 in search of a job. After working for a few years with a private company, he joined Clarion Advertsing in 1968 and worked there till his retirement. Kurup was one of the founder members of the Ayyappa Seva Samithi and is still actively involved with its activities. He recollects that fifty years ago when he came to live in Vasai, there was only one taxi in the place. The means of transport to the city were the



**R P Kurup**

ST buses and the train that plied every one hour to Churchgate. There was no municipal water supply, electricity supply was erratic, and Vasai was a quiet rural place that reminded him of Kerala. "Today times have changed and

though power cuts and water supply problems exist, we get many essential commodities here itself and Vasai has developed like any other distant suburb of Mumbai. Still Vasai retains an old world village-like charm," he says.

Kurup's father is Raghava Kurup, living in Kerala while his mother is the late Kutty Amma. His wife, Subhadra, also hails from Mavelikkara. They have one daughter Jayasree married to Manoj Nair and they are living in Bilaspur. His daughter is a teacher. They have two children Kurup's son Jayesh is married to Manju and he works for a software company in Mumbai. They have a child

*We continue our focus on Vasai in our January 2012 Issue also*

# **ALPINE VILLAS**



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-Traveller

# Kollam

കൊല്ലം കണ്ടാലൊരുവനവിടെത്തന്നെ പാർക്കാൻ കൊതിച്ചി-  
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കൊല്ലത്തോറും പലപല പരിഷ്ക്കാരമേറ്റപ്പോൾ കേ-  
ട്ടുല്ലംഘിക്കുന്ന ഹഹ, വിവേം കൊണ്ടുതാം രാജധാനീം.

(മയൂരസന്ദേശം)

**K**ollam district, earlier known as Quilon district, is one of fourteen districts of Kerala state. It is representative of all the natural attributes of Kerala and is endowed with a long coastal region, a major sea port along the Arabian Sea inland in Ashtamudi Lake and was called Tarsish. The area had mercantile relationship with Phoenicians and the Romans. About thirty percent of this district is covered by the Ashtamudi Lake thereby making it a gateway to the Kerala Backwaters. Thevalakara and Thekkumbhagam panchayaths together had

made the very ancient Korekini (sea pointed inland) Kollam port of Tarsish even in 1500 BC. The district has 5 taluks consisting of a total of 104 villages. Kollam is the 5th largest city in Kerala, after Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Thrissur and is known for cashew processing and coir manufacturing. It is considered to be the southern gateway to the backwaters of Kerala and is a prominent tourist destination. The Kollam urban area comprises of fast developing suburban towns such as Kottiyam in the south,

Kundara in the east, and Chavara in the north of the city. Other important towns are Paravur, Kannalore and Anchalmoodu. Karunagapally, Chathanoor, and Kottarakkara are major towns within a distance of 25 km from Kollam city centre towards north, south, and east respectively. During the rule of the Chera monarchy in southern Kerala, Kollam emerged as the focal point of trade. Kollam continues to be a major business and commercial centre in the central Travancore region of Kerala.

## History

### Kollam, the capital of Venad

The Malayalam Era began in 825 CE; it is named 'Kolla Varsham' after Kollam, because of the importance of Kollam in the 9th century CE.

A merchant, Soleyman of Siraf of Persia, visited Malabar in the 9th century and found Quilon to be the only port in India used by the huge Chinese ships as their trans-shipment hub for their goods on their way from China to the Persian Gulf. The rulers of Kollam (formerly called 'Desinganadu') had trade relations with China and exchanged embassies. According to the records of the Tang Dynasty (618 AD to 913 AD), Quilon was their chief port of call before 7th century. The Chinese trade decreased about 600 AD and was again revived in the 13th century.

In 1291, John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan monk, became a priest at Quilon. Friar Jordanus Catalini, who arrived in 1321, effected large-scale Latin Catholic conversions and was appointed Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Quilon in 1329. Friar Jordanus built a church, called St. Georges Church, with the patronage of Nestorian spice merchants at Jonakapuram (the seat of Jordanus Catalini) in Kollam and wrote *Mirabilia Descripta*. However, after Giovanni de' Marignolli in 1353, this Latin church was converted to a Nestorian church by the Nestorian Christians, and when Portuguese arrived in 1498, only Nestorian Christianity existed in Kerala in a visible way.

Marco Polo, who visited China's Kublai Khan's court, travelled in 1292 through Kollam on his return journey to Venice, and gave an interesting account of the flourishing port of Kollam (coilum, as he called it) and its trade related inter connectivity with China in the east and Europe to the west. Chinnakada, (China-

kada), the city center, was so named after the Chinese merchants. The increase in commercial activity resulted in establishment of a flourishing Chinese settlement at Kollam

### Kollam during foreign occupation

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to establish a trading centre in Thangasseri, Kollam in 1502, which became the centre of trade in pepper. In the wars with the Moors/Arabs that followed, the ancient church of St Thomas was destroyed. In 1517, the Portuguese built the St. Thomas Fort in Thangasseri, which was destroyed in the subsequent wars with the Dutch. The ruins of the Fort can still be seen in Thangasseri. In 1661, the Dutch took possession of the city. The remnants of the Dutch forts can be found at Thangasseri. In the 18th century, Travancore conquered Kollam, followed by the British in 1795. Thangasseri remains today as an Anglo-Indian settlement, though few Anglo-Indians remain. The Infant Jesus Church in Thangasseri, an old Portuguese-built church, remains as a memento of the Portuguese rule of the area.

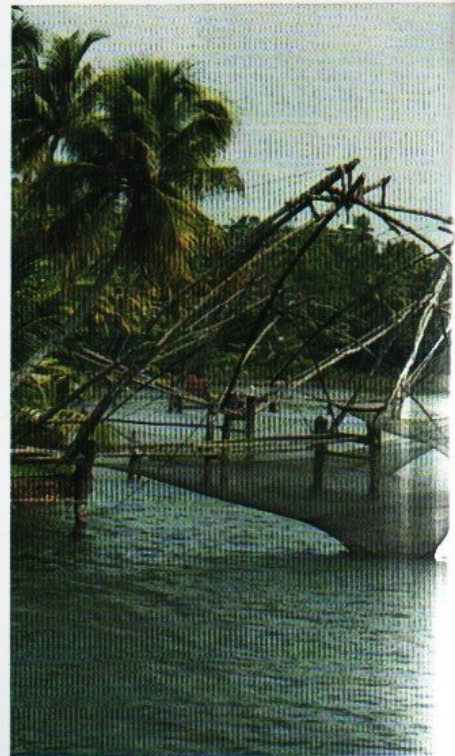
### Kollam as part of Travancore

Velu Thampi Dalawa of Travancore worked to improve Kollam. He helped build new markets and invited merchants and traders from Madras (now Chennai) and Tirunelveli to set up trade in Kollam. Today's thriving business in cashew nuts, coir and spices, this city is obliged to him.

The history of the district as an administrative unit can be traced back to 1835, when the state of Travancore consisted of two revenue divisions with headquarters at Kollam.

### Kollam, revenue district of Kerala

At the time of the integration of Travancore and Cochin districts in 1949, Kollam was one of the three revenue divisions in the state. Later these three revenue divisions were converted into districts. But Shencotta taluk was merged with Madras state consequent to the implementation of the States Reorganisation Act of 1956. Now the district has a single revenue division with its headquarters at Kollam Taluk Kachery.



Chinese fishing net at Kollam

### Lok Sabha constituencies

There are three Lok Sabha constituencies in the district: Kollam made up of Chavara, Kundara, Eravipuram, Kollam, Chathanur, Chadayamangalam and Punalur assembly constituencies and Mavelikkara has Kunthur, Kottarakkara and Pathanapuram while Karunagapally belongs to Alappuzha constituency.

### Geography

Kollam district is located in the southwest coast of India bordering Arabian Sea in the west, Tamil Nadu in the east, Alappuzha district in the north, Pathanamthitta in the North East and Thiruvananthapuram in the south. Latitudinal and longitudinal lines are 8.80°N and 76.6°E respectively and spans 2,492 sq. km. It is the seventh largest district in Kerala and is densely populated. Sasthamkotta Lake, the only fresh water lake in Kerala is located here. This lake is instrumental to provide fresh drinking water to the whole of Kollam city. Two major rivers, Kallada River and Ithikkara River, drain through the district. Ashtamudi Lake and the Paravoor Lake are the two important water bodies in Kollam district. Ashtamudi Lake covers 30% of total area of the district. Kollam town is located on the banks of Ashtamudi Lake. Major fishing port in South Kerala, Neendakara, is located on the banks of this beautiful lake. Edava and Nadayara lakes lie partly in Kollam district.



Kollam in the British era

## Climate

Kollam experiences oppressive summers and cool winters. Temperature is almost steady throughout the year. The average temperature is around 25°C to 32°C. Summer season usually begins in March and lasts till May. The monsoons begin by June and end by September. Kollam receives an annual average rainfall of around 2700 mm. Winter is from November to February and temperature is moderately cool and hovers from 18°C to 25°C.

## Tourism

Palaruvi Falls, Thenmala (forests and reservoir), the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve, Ashtamudi (backwaters) and Kollam beaches (Kollam city beach, Thirumullavaram beach, Thangassery beach) are all beautiful spots in this area. Ashramam Tourist Village is one of the most important tourism destinations in Kollam City and the tourist village is located at the banks of Ashtamudi Lake. Ashramam is the hub of tourism activities in Kollam and the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) office is also located within the tourist



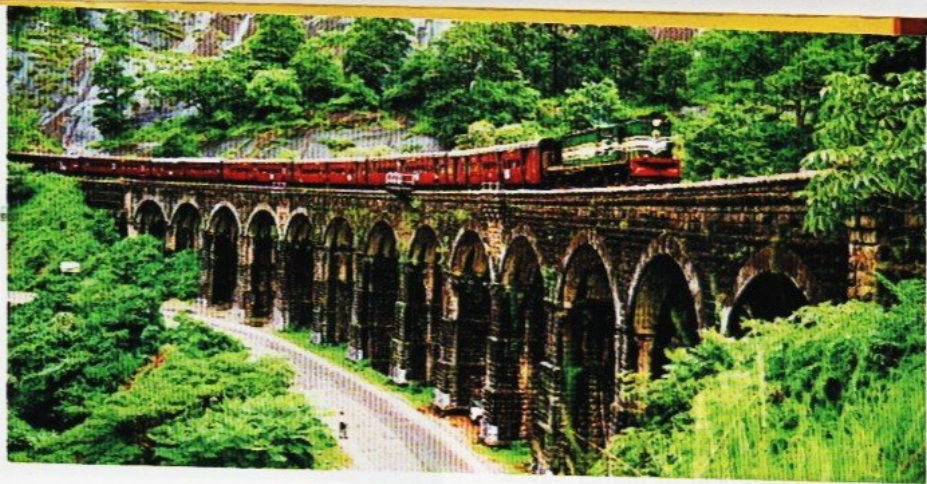
*The Kottarakkara Palace*

village.

The Ashramam Maidan adjacent to the tourist village is the biggest open space ground within a Kerala Municipal Corporation limits and is used for various events, sports, as helipad, for Kollam Pooram and by the driving schools. It spreads over 60 acres of sprawling land in an oval shape.

The first community tourism program in the state will begin on the *Munroethuruth* islands in Kollam district. Backwater Tourism is one of the most attractive Tourism activities in Kollam. Ashtamudi Lake, Munroe Island, Alumkadavu, Paravur are the main backwater destinations. Accommodation in Resorts and Houseboats are a memorable thing.

Thenmala, located 66 km east of Kollam, is the first ecotourism project in India. This project is run by Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society.



*The thirteen ring bridge, Punalur*

Kollam was the seat of the Desinganad kings. Kottarakara is famous as the place where the classical dance form of Kathakali was conceived. It was also the capital of the Elayidath Swaroopam. Kundara is famous for the 1812 proclamation against the British by Velu Thampi Dalawa.

Alappad village is located on the seashore of Kollam District, which was affected by the Tsunami in 2005.

The famous Varkala Beach, also known as Papanasham, is 26 km south of Kollam. The famous Duryodana temple is in Kunnathur Taluk. The Sakthikulangara Dharma Sastha Temple-Sree Ayyappa Swamy Temple is famous for the Utsavam, in the month of Makaram, which is between mid-January and mid-February.

Polachira in Chirakkara Gramapanchayat is a beautiful place for sight seeing. The famous "Anathavalam" is

near here, where one can see domestic elephants, touch it and even travel on it. Don't forget to see "Mannathippara" at Polachira. It is 4 km towards south from Chathanoor town.

Sasthamkotta Lake located about 19 km from Kollam Town is the biggest freshwater lake in Kerala and is also a favoured tourist destination for domestic visitors. Jetayu Para, a giant rock is located in the Chadayamangalam village. Name Jatayupara came from the mythical character, Jatayu (Ramayana). It is believed that Jatayu fell here, after his failed attempt to stop Ravana.

## Literacy and education

According to the 2001 census, Kollam has a literacy rate of 91.18%, where male literacy rate 94.43% and female literacy rate of 88.18%. This number is



*The Thenmala Dam*

consistent with the state average, while it is far greater than the national average. Kollam has several privately owned and state-owned educational institutions. St. Joseph's convent school at Tuet, Kollam is the school without government aid and having maximum students in the world (over 12,000 students). The state-run school is the 'Govt. Model Higher Secondary School for Boys' which is the oldest school in the city. Kollam has a total of 128 educational institutions under the department of higher education. M.V.G.V.H.S.S is one of the oldest schools in Kollam district. Over thousand, students are studying in this school.

S. N. Polytechnic is a Nodal Polytechnic in Kollam district. S.N.P.T.C was founded in 1957, by the Sree Narayana Trusts, Kollam under the initiative of the secretary, the late R Sankar, former chief



*SN Polytechnic College (S.N.P.T.C) Kottiyam in 2008*

Achencoil Range, Kallar Range and Kanayar Range, make up the Achencoil division. Pathanapuram and Anchal Ranges constitute the Punalur division.

The Shenduruny wildlife sanctuary, 66 km from Kollam town, is situated on the southern part of the Western Ghats (8°50' and 8°55'N; 77°5'and 77°15'E) in the Pathanapuram taluk of Kollam district. The name 'Shenduruny' has been formulated from the name of a tree species locally called 'Shenkuruny or Chenku-runy' (*Gluta travancorica*), a tree mainly found in this area. An artificial lake has been formed due to the construction of Perappar dam across the Kulathupuzha

River. Remnants of Stone Age culture from a large cave situated at the north-western part of the Shenduruny River

was excavated from this sanctuary. These remains belong to the Mesolithic period of the Stone Age.

This tropical rain forest has a rich variety of wildlife, and some endangered species are found here. Species found in the sanctuary include: the Bonnet Macaque, the lion-tailed Macaque, the Nilgiri Langur, the Gaur or Indian bison, the sambar deer, the Muntjac or barking deer, the Indian Spotted Chevrotain or mouse deer, wild boar, the Indian elephant, and different species of squirrels such as the Indian giant squirrel and Indian Palm Squirrel.

### **Agriculture**

Kollam District has a total cultivated area of 2,18,267 hectares. Paddy, tapioca, coconut, rubber, pepper, banana, mango and cashew are the prominent crops. Average per family holding of farm land is 0.21 hectare. 70 per cent of the work force of the district is engaged in agriculture or other allied activities.

*(To be continued)*



*TKM Engineering College, Kollam*

minister of Kerala.

Kollam has a number of educational institutions in both government as well as private sector. 128 schools are operated by the Department of Higher Education, Govt. of Kerala. Kollam has one Kendriya Vidyalaya and three other CBSE schools. Schools in Kerala follow both English and Malayalam medium of education. Kollam has ten Professional Engineering colleges and two medical colleges. It again has seventeen arts and science colleges, eleven teacher training colleges and seven nursing colleges.

### **Forests**

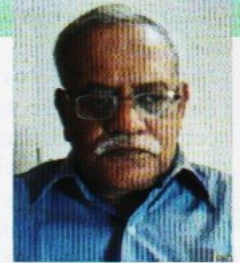
According to the Government of Kerala estimates, 81,438 hectare of land is under forest cover. The majority of this falls in the eastern portion of the district. This includes Thenmala, Punalur and a portion of Achan Kovil forest division. The Thenmala Range, Aryankavu Range and Shendurney Sanctuary makes the Thenmala division while



*A Check dam across Kallada River*

# THE CHRISTIANS OF KERALA

This article is based on many published documents and literature on Christianity and its followers in Kerala.



K. R. NARAYANAN



The Apostle St. Thomas

On the eve of the St. Thomas Day Celebrations in New Delhi on December 18, 1955, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, said: "St. Thomas came to India when many of the countries of Europe had not yet become Christian, and so those Indians who trace their Christianity to him have a longer history and a higher ancestry than that of Christians of many of the European countries." This was three years after the radio message of Pope Pius XII aired on the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century celebrations of the arrival of the Apostle in India (December 31, 1952). The Pontiff had said: "Nineteen hundred years have passed since the Apostle came to India... .. During the centuries that India was cut off from the West and despite many trying vicissitudes, the Christian communities formed by the Apostle conserved intact the legacy he left them... .. This apostolic lineage, beloved sons and daughters, is the proud privilege of the many among you who glory in the name of Thomas Christians and we are happy on this occasion to acknowledge and bear witness to it." History considers Kerala as the "Cradle of Christianity" in the Eastern World.

## The Course of Christianity

Jewish contact with Kerala dates back to 973 BC. Historians believe that the first Jewish settlement in Kerala - under the leadership of Joseph Rabban - was soon after the Babylonian conquest of Judea in 586 BC. Many Syrians and Jews who spoke Aramaic had since settled down near Muzuris of yore (near Kodungalloor = Cranganore) in Central Kerala.

According to tradition, St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, landed at Malian Kara (near Kodungalloor) on the Malabar (present Kerala) coast, in 52 AD. He preached the Gospel to the upper class of the then society and many of the local people accepted the faith. He established seven Churches at Kodungalloor, Kottakkavu, Palayur, Kollam, Kokkamangalam, Niranam and Chayil. Later, he moved on to the east coast of India and was martyred in 72 A.D. by a fanatic at a little Mount near the then Madras (Chennai). His body was brought to Mylapore near Madras (Chennai) and was buried there. His tomb is venerated by all even today. This tradition is confirmed by the testimonies of many of the Fathers of the Church. It was not difficult for the Apostle to come to India those days, as

extensive trade relations existed between the then coastal Malabar and the Mediterranean countries during the pre-Christian periods.

An additional fillip to the growth of Christianity took place when a group of about 400 people migrated from Syria in 345 AD and joined the then Kerala Church. The leader of this group was Thomas of Kana (*Kanaya Thoma*). (The descendants of this group even today maintain their separate identity, and are often known as *Kananites*). All these Syrian Christians remained as an independent group, and they got their bishops from Eastern Orthodox Church in Antioch in Syria. These settlers and the early converts (to Christianity by St. Thomas) are referred to as *Syrian Christians*, because of the Syrian Liturgy used in their religious services. They are also called *Nazaranis* (followers of Jesus of Nazarene) or St. Thomas Christians. Syrian Malabar Nazaranis are also called *Nazarani Mappilas*.

Hermann Gundert observes that the term 'Mappila' was a title used to denote Semitic immigrants from West Asia. Hence the term used to denote both the Arab and the Christian-Jewish descendants and their followers in Kerala. The descendants of Arabs are called *Muslim Mappilas* (*Jonakan Mappila in Malayalam*), the descendants of Syrian-Jewish Christians are called *Nazarani Mappilas*, and the descendants of the Cochin Jews who have traditionally followed Halakhic Judaism are known as *Juda Mappilas*.



St. Thomas Cross

## The Syrian - Latin Conflict

Later, the Portuguese, who arrived here by sea (1498), established their power, and were eager to bring all the Christians under the Church of Rome. With their superior organizational skill and with the help of Portuguese political power, their Bishop - Alexis De Menzes - succeeded in establishing the Roman

Catholic Church as the dominant Church of Kerala.

During the Portuguese power (1679-1728), there were four distinctive sections of Christians in Kerala viz. the *Syrian Christians* (whom the Portuguese called the Christians of St. Thomas), the *Syrian Christian Roman Catholics*, the *non-Syrian Roman Catholics converted to Catholicism by the Portuguese* (also known as Inland Christians) and the *Topass Christians (Thuppai)*, who were the descendants of Indian mothers or fathers belonging to the diverse European nations, like the Anglo-Indians. Of these, the first two are considered as the Syrian Malabar Nazaranis.

Between 1500 and 1650, the Portuguese made an effort to convert the local inhabitants to the Roman Catholic faith and also bring the then existing Syrian Christian Church under the Roman Catholic influence and the Papal authority. The climax of this was what is known as "*Synod of Udayamperur*". The Portuguese power declined by the 17th century. That weakened the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Kerala. In 1653, there was a re-affirmation of allegiance to the Syrian Orthodox tradition in front of an improvised cross (*Koonan Kurissu*) at Mattanchery. The subsequent history of the Syrian Christian Church of Kerala includes the evolution of the Syrian non-Catholic groups and the Roman Catholic groups. This revolt thus split the Church into two: one group continued to recognize the prelates appointed by Rome and the other broke away from Rome and joined the West-Syrian Jacobite Church of Antioch. This latter group came to be known as the Jacobites (*Puthankoorukar*) or Syrian Orthodox Church of India. Those who remained with the Romans came to be known as Syrian Roman Catholics (now Syro-Malabar Rite, with liturgical language as Syriac) and others were called Syrian Christians. After the decline of the Portuguese



*The Mar Thoma (Catholic) Church, Kodungalloor*

power, the major influence sprang from the British rule. There was a significant influence in the area of education through the efforts of the Christian missionaries which account for the high literacy rate and high degree of education among Malayalees.

### Christians in India

The total number of Christians in India (according to the 2011 census) numbered 27.83 million (2.78 crores), which forms about 2.3 % of the Indian population. About 70 percent of Indian Christians (1991) were Roman Catholics, including about 300,000 members of the Syro-Malankara Church and about 35 lakh of the Syro-Malabar Church. In January 1993, the Syro-Malabar Church and in February 2005 Syro-Malankara Church were elevated to the status of major archiepiscopal churches by the Pope, John Paul II. The Syro-Malabar Church constitutes the second largest among twenty two Eastern Catholic Churches, who accept the Pope as the "visible head of the whole church."

While Christians in India do not share a common culture, it is for the most part a blend of Indian and European cultures. It differs from one region to another depending on several factors such as the

prevailing rites and tradition and the time Christianity has existed in those regions. The St. Thomas Christians of Kerala (the first region in India to be proselytized by Christian missionaries) have a distinctively different culture when compared to Christians in other parts of the country.

### The Kerala Christians

The present population of Kerala is about 31,841,374, of which Christians (of all denominations) constitute about 19%. The Christians today can be broadly divided into branches like: (1) the *Latin Catholic Christians*, (2) the *Syro-Malabar Catholic Christians*, (3) the *Jacobite Syrian Christians*, (4) the *Christians of the Church of the East* those who accepted the Nestorian Patriarch, (5) the *Christians of the Anglican Church* (which is now part of the Church of South India), (6) the *Marthoma Syrian Christians* (those who accepted the Anglican Church and other Protestant bodies), (7) the *Syro-Malankara Catholic Christians*. In addition, there are also a number of minor Churches and Missions in Kerala. Christianity is a religion, which came to Kerala coast in two periods viz. (1) the first century missionary activity of St. Thomas and (2) the subsequent

### St. Thomas Christian Groups

East Syriac		West Syriac (Antiochian)				
Chaldean Syrian Church	Syro-Malabar Catholic Church	Malabar Independent Syrian Church (Thozhiyoor Church)	Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (Indian Orthodox Church)	Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church (Syriac Orthodox Church)	Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church (Mar Thoma Church)	Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

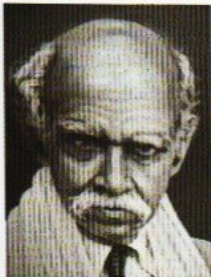
(Source: Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia)



K C George



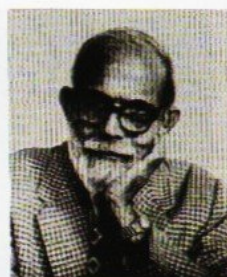
T V Thomas



Dr I C Chacko



K Varghese Mappila



Abraham T Kovoov



P T Chacko

Portuguese dominance, and western missionary activities from 1500 to 1975. By the time India entered the sixteenth century, the Christians in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar had grown to great significance, commanding the respect and esteem of their contemporaries. "They are second only to Brahmins," writes a Portuguese visitor of that period. Vasco- da- Gama (1498) encountered a powerful Christian merchant community with a sizeable army of well-trained soldiers and gunmen. Their joy at meeting other Christians in an unknown corner of the world dissipated when they realized these Christians knew nothing of Roman Catholicism, the Latin language, or the Pope!!

The Kerala Christians have a fabulous history. Unlike many other minority communities in the country, the Christians of Kerala enjoy a better social status. Historical ties with the Syrian - Orthodox Church and assimilation of Indian traditions have contributed to the development of a unique culture among Kerala's Christians. They are, by and large, socially and economically better off than their counterparts elsewhere in the country and do command great respect in society. Many reasons are attributed to this. In the first instance, the ancient Syrian Christians of Kerala (both Catholic and Non-Catholic) are believed to be the descendants of the upper class communities or royal families, who were the first to be baptized by the Apostle St. Thomas. Secondly, they were good traders and generally were liked and favored by the ruling kings. Until two or three

generations ago generally speaking the Christians preferred "Kachavadam" (trading) to education. They had played a vital role in the economy of the then princely states of Cochin and Travancore and the British Malabar. It was the Christians of South and Central Kerala, who converted the jungles of Malabar into economically pliable plantations.

Thanks to the Christian Missionaries and the Church, many educational institutions came up in Kerala and the Christians took advantage of these institutions and sent their children for higher and professional education. They excelled in that too. There is no place in the world, now, where you cannot see a Malayalee Christian. They are very good physicians, surgeons, paramedicals, nursing professionals, engineers, information technologists, management experts, etc. These are all in addition to their basic skill in trade and commerce.

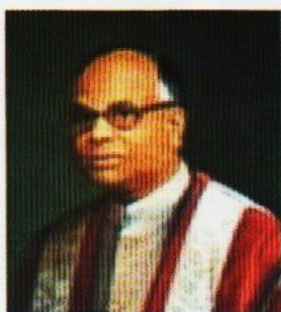
In spite of all the changes that have taken place, the Malayalee Christians have not changed their basic Malayalee/Indian fabric or the local tradition. They are Malayalees first and do well as Malayalees. They have played a big role in changing Christianity to fit into the Indian traditions, severing themselves gradually from the Syrian and/or Roman religious customs, practices and rituals. It is often said that a Malayalee Christian is more at home with another Malayalee irrespective of his caste or religion- rather than a Christian from any other part of the country.

The Kerala Christian groups follow certain common practices derived from

local cultural influences such as wedding customs, and use of Malayalam language in liturgy. The use of traditional lamps (*Nila Vilakku*), ornamental umbrellas (*Pattu Kuda* or *Muthu Kuda*) for religious festivities, "Thali Kettu" or "Minnu Kettu" (the ritual of tying the *Mangalya Sutra* around the bride's neck at the marriage), *Manthra Kodi*, etc. illustrate the indigenous character of Kerala's Christianity. Recent trends indicate that even the rituals and priestly dresses are getting indianized. All said and done, most of the Malayalee Christians, however, believe in the St. Thomas tradition.

### Contributions to Society

Kerala owes its highest literacy rate in the country largely to its Christian Missionaries. During the early princely rule in Kerala, admission to Government Schools and Colleges was denied to the backward and scheduled caste communities. The Christian missionaries who established educational institutions throughout Kerala opened the gates of their schools and colleges for everybody without looking into their caste or creed. Thus the downtrodden section of the Kerala community got an opportunity to educate themselves in these institutions and they were able to secure high positions in society and the Government. The Christian Parishes, the CMS Missionary and the Carmelite Congregation (under the Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara) did yeoman service in founding innumerable educational institutions throughout Kerala.



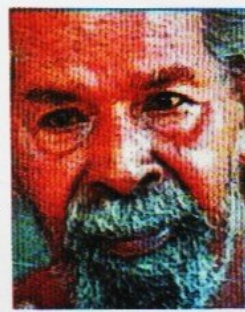
Prof Samuel Mathai



Dr John Mathai



K Mammen Mappila



Ponnunnam Varkey



Dr Varghese Kurien

# Fr Gabriel Chiramel - Teacher, mentor and guide

A teacher of a generation, a brilliant academician and a master builder of institutions for social support, Padmabhushan Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chiramel CMI turns 97 on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December, 2011. Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chiramel CMI, is the only Catholic priest who was honored (2007), with the civilian title of Padmabhushan for his yeoman service in the field of education. Like the legendary *Saint Vasista* of the Ramayana, this humble Catholic priest is considered the "Preceptor" of the entire student community. He imparted knowledge to the small children, the youth, the aspirants to priesthood, the nursing staff, young managers, scientists and many others for about seven decades and even at this age he continues to teach the students of the Nursing School. On a certain occasion, Rev. Fr. Gabriel visualized his 'pedagogic ministry' like this: "*By the Grace of God, I could become a good teacher, sincere and honest, and could grow in the minds of my students and help them to grow up with a clear vision in life.*" There are no better words to describe his commitment to teaching. Fr. Gabriel scrupulously followed the footsteps of the founding father of the Carmelite Congregation- Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Eliyas Chavara. His teaching career commenced as early as 1942 in a school in Mannanam (Alappuzha district). He started teaching at the University in 1949, when he took up the responsibility of the Zoology Department in the Sacred Heart College, Thevara (Kochi). He was elevated as professor in 1952. He taught Zoology to his many students,



*Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chiramel receiving the Padmabhushan Award from the former President of India, Dr.A.P.J. Abdul Kalam*

some of whom later became very respected professors, reputed marine biologists, fishery scientists, physicians, surgeons, etc. in reputed organizations / agencies the world over. He was perhaps one of the very few who have given the maximum technical and scientific human force to the country in the last seven decades.

Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chiramel not only dedicated his life to the service of the Providence as a missionary, but also for the service of human beings as a scholar, scientist, a very benevolent teacher and an able guide of the youth. "One for whom teaching is a passion cannot but continue to teach, has been the message of Rev. Fr. Gabriel", observes Prof. John Cyriac (2005) in his book on Rev. Fr. Gabriel.

His ability as an organizer and a manager is remarkable. Many of the educational, medical, para-medical, health-care and research institutions in Kerala created by

him stand testimony to his vision, organization and implementation. He retired as Professor of Zoology of Christ College of Irinjalakuda and became the founder- Director of the famous Amala Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (which has a Medical College and a College of Nursing attached to it).

Rev. Fr. Gabriel CMI had been bestowed with various laurels, for his services to society. Some of them are:

*Award for educational and social contribution by Samskarika Sadassu, Thrissur (1991).*

*Honour for meritorious service in the fields of education and health by all Kerala Catholic Congress (1994).*

*Award for educational and social service by the Kerala Citizens' Forum (1995).*

*Share and Care American Malayalee Award for Service (1996.)*

*Award for the Man of the Century by Daily Telegraph (2000).*

*Award instituted by Better Life Movement. Aloor for service for society and recognition by Rotary International for service (2001).*

*Sevan Mitra Award by C.V.M. Irinjalakuda for Human Service (2003).*

*Life Time Achievement Award by Assochem (2005).*

Recognizing his services to society and excellent role in promoting education, the Government of India awarded him the title of Padmabhushan in 2007.



*The author (a student of the first batch of Christ College) draping a "Ponnada" on his Preceptor, Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chiramel*

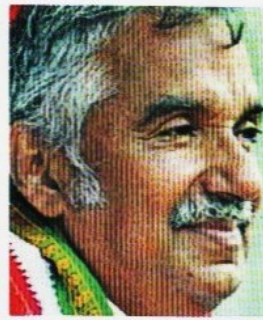
-KRN



Dr K M George



Dr P C Alexander



Oommen Chandy



A K Antony



Justice K T Thomas

The Christian Missionaries also established many hospitals, nursing homes and health care centers for the common man in many parts of Kerala. Christian orphanages and old-age homes were initiated and promoted by the Christian establishments only. (The Amala Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, established by the Carmelite Congregation under the leadership of Padmabhushan Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chiramel CMI, in Thrissur, is considered a recent major milestone in Cancer research and treatment in Kerala).

Also, the contribution of the Christian community in the cultural and literary fields of Kerala cannot be underestimated. The growth and development of the Malayalam language is heavily indebted to the contributions of Christian Missionaries like Herman Gundert and Nidhirickal Mani Kathanar. Nasrani Deepika (which was one of the first daily newspaper in Kerala) was the contribution of Christian missionaries.

Though the Christian population is meager in almost all the Indian states, the very few people in all these states do a lot of service to the weaker sections of the society. Among the Indian states Kerala has the maximum Christian population and the Christian community here sends a good number of priests and nuns to different states in India for missionary work.

These priests and nuns work in the

remotest villages of many Indian states. They start schools, colleges, hospitals and homes for the poor for the upliftment of the downtrodden sections of people in these villages. The nursing services in the medical field have been the monopoly of Kerala Christian women both in India and abroad.

### Some prominent Kerala Christians

There is a very long list of Christians from Kerala, who have made great contributions to the society in the areas of trade and commerce, medical and nursing profession, education, journalism, technology, politics and the like.

The earliest among them, perhaps, was Thoma of Villarvattom (c. 15th century CE), who is considered the first and only Christian King in the history of the Indian sub-continent. Thachil Matthoo Tharakan (1741-1814) was the first non-Hindu minister in the erstwhile Travancore and the first native Christian to become a minister in a princely state in India. T. M. Varghese Thandaneth (1886-1961), was the founder of Travancore State congress and a freedom fighter. Dr. John Mathai (1886-1959) was a great economist, who served as India's first Railway Minister and subsequently as its Finance Minister and headed many Indian Universities as their Vice Chancellor.

Some prominent names that come to

mind are Kandathil Verghese Mappila, C.P. Mathan, Kandathil K. C. Mammen Mappila, (Malayala Manorama Publications and MRF Tyres Limited), George Joseph Kottukapally ( Director of Palai Central Bank), Dr. Jacob Chandy ( Member of the Sree Moolam Praja Legislative Assembly), etc. in the Travancore region, while it is Mathai Master (the Director of Public Instruction in the former Cochin State and the elder brother of Dr. John Mathai), Chevalier Joseph Pettah (A learned Professor, Economist and founder Chairman of the South Indian Bank) and the then Surgeon General Dr. C.L. Joseph from the former Cochin State. Dr. Revi Mathai (the founding Director of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad), and Dr. Verghese Kurien (Amul fame) are respectively the son and the grandnephew of Dr. John Mathai.

Dr. Samuel Mathai was yet another prominent academician from this community and was the Vice Chancellor of the Kerala University. Dr. K. M. Cherian (Indian heart-surgeon) and Dr. Benjamin Pulimood were renowned persons in the medical profession, who were honored by the Indian Government. Dr. John Mathai, K.M. Cherian, Pothen Joseph, K.M. Mathew, D.C. Kizhakkemuri, Dr. K.M. George, Prof. M.V. Pylee, Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chiramel, were the Padma awardees in the field of Education and Literature.

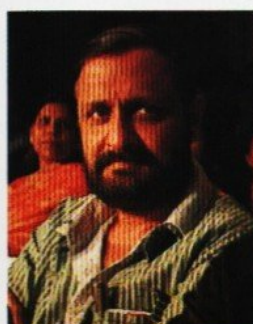
Continue in page 43



Augustine Joseph



P J Antony



Ouseppachan



Sara Joseph



Arundhati Roy

Lata Surendra

## The Quest for Perfection

*A dance performer, teacher and choreographer of repute, Lata Surendra's performances covering over three decades, have been met with wide acclaim in India and abroad. A stickler for perfection, she does not compromise with the art and the intricate tradition it envelops.*

**D**ancer Lata Surendra's "Anjali Bharata Natyam Research Trust" has brought to the forefront several talented youngsters in the field of Bharata Natyam who have been recipients of scholarships, awards, recipients of the Singar Mani and are graded artists of DD Mumbai. Her student list includes several celebrities including Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. Lata has presented over seventy-five productions that have regaled audiences in all the major festivals associated with dance. Her dance ballets encapsulate a vast spectrum of themes dealing with the compositions of the saints of the Bhakti cult and the Vaishnava Sampradaya, the great Indian epics, the works of poets in various languages, contemporary themes dealing with environment, woman of substance, global warming etc. She has presented unique themes like Sleeping Beauty, Birth of Jesus, Dnyaneshwari, Shivaputra Samhaji Raje for DD Mumbai and at Purander Fort Pune, commemorating the 350th



Lata Surendra- the dancer

birth anniversary of the Maratha king Sambaji Raje. Lata has used this medium of dance as a didactic medium to unfold unique themes such as *Ek Shaam gandhi ke naam*, *Manini*-the woman of substance, *Ritu Samhara*, *St Francis & The Canticle of the Creatures*, *Darkness to light*, *Mahavira*, *Hariharam vande*, etc. She has presented over 25 productions for the *Janmashtami* celebrations of ISKCON. She also presents regular programmes for charitable organizations like *Deeds*, *Prerna*, the Rotary and the Lions Club etc. In addition to teaching in the city proper for over 22 years, she is for the past 19 years teaching several under-privileged children in the western suburbs of Mumbai.

### Awards and Accolades

Lata is a recipient of the Sahitya Shiromani Nelluvai Award for Bharata Natyam and the Award for excellence in Bharata Natyam from the Mohini Attam Nritya Kalakshetra. She was felicitated by Nateshwar Natya Kala Mandir (Mumbai) with the title 'Bharata kala Nipuna'. She was also felicitated by the Rotary Club (Thane) and Vasai Prabhodhini Trust, for her contributions to the Art form.

She has specially choreographed *varnams* to suit little children. Her desire is to inculcate into her children, the love

and reverence, she herself holds and cherishes for this rich art form of Bharata Natyam.

Lata is a regular recipient of the Grants accorded by the Ministry of Human Resources, (Dept of Culture, New Delhi). They have entailed her to conduct workshops, Lecture demonstrations, Seminars and unique presentations with the fusion of various classical styles of dance. She is also in the panel of CCRTC (Centre for cultural resources and training-HRD, New Delhi) and a member of the International Dance Council affiliated with UNESCO. Her articles on Dance have been published in various dance magazines and journals and her Book 'in Transit' is today a part of the UNESCO Dance Library.

### Childhood

Lata was born and brought up in Mumbai. She spent her childhood in Shivaji Park, Dadar. Her father is the late K S Parameshwar or Churakulam Chetan as he was fondly known to Malayalees in Mumbai during those days. He was a businessman from Haripad who came to Mumbai in 1930, and bought his tea consignments from Churakulam Tea estate. Lata learnt Malayalam and was initiated into the richness of Malayalam literature, largely because of her father's influence. Her





**Lata Surendra taking the Master Class at Malaga, Spain for the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Congress Dance Council, UNESCO.**

mother, A Thankamma, now 86, hails from Pullangadi, ('the jetty after Champakulam' she says,) lives in Dadar and is a life member of the Mahila Samajam. Lata says that it was her father's love of the language and her mother's involvement with the Samajam that attracted her to the world of arts. Onam and other celebrations at the Mahila Samajam were platforms where she performed and honed her dancing talent.

### **Initiation into Bharata Natyam**

Lata started learning Bharata Natyam under Kalaimamani Guru Shri Mani of Kalasadan. She did her arangettam at the age of seven at Podar College in Matunga. She studied under Guru Krishnankutty and Guru Kuttykrishnan, and later Kalaimamani Guru T S Kadirvelu Pillai. Lata was Kadirvelu's disciple for 22 years

Commemorating 30 years of her career as a dance teacher, she presented

a dance programme *Vandanam* as a tribute to her Guru Kathirvelu in 2005.

Through the well known Malayalam stage veteran Nanappan, Lata became aware of the magic of words, and the technique of stagecraft.

Another great influence on her life has been dancer from Shanti Niketan, Guru Bankim Sinha whose skillfully choreographed energizing folkdances brought the flavours of regions on to the stage and helped her understand the subtle nuances of choreography. "The transition from student to a teacher came in early with folk forms serving as the base for me to back all my solo classical recitals," she says.

Lata studied at the Convent Girls' High School in Dadar run by the Fransiscan Hospitalier sisters. She presented a ballet encapsulating their lives at their centenary year celebrations in Mumbai and the sisters sponsored her to perform the ballet in Portugal and Spain.

She completed her Masters in Literature and Aesthetics and Diploma in

"Dance is a prayer, a prayer of the individual soul, elucidating the quintessence of the joy of reaching out to the Universal soul. It elevates life from the mundane levels of survival to the sublime. In order to be receptive to it, the audience has to be aware of the symmetry embracing the dance idiom, the absorbing syntax and the subtle nuances enfaming and embellishing it, for it is the bond between the Rasikas and the dancers that has kept this tradition alive through the times. Through the assimilating of the pain that comes with perfection, the dancer sieves an order out of all chaotic interjections in life around and weaves a cosmos amidst a chaos, breaking barriers of caste, creed and religion and urging mankind to partake of the pristine stream of life flowing by us, around us and within us."



Advertising and Public Relations. She was working with the Canara Bank for 16 years, all the while pursuing and honing her dancing talents and choreographing and presenting dance shows.

Lata married Suri Menon, an Aircraft Leasing and Charter Consultant, a native of Thrissur and a resident of Khar who worked as CEO of LSM Air Charter in Australia. He returned to India on account of his father's illness and they met and married. They have a son Madhusudan S Menon who is pursuing his second year architecture in Mumbai. Madhusudan is a grade Eight Musician (Electronic Key-Board) of the TRINITY College, London. He has won the National level prize for painting organized by Camlin. He has also been featured by DD Mumbai in presenting Christmas Carols for Christmas and also renders instrumental support for some of Lata's ballets.



**Lata presenting a paper at the 28th World Congress UNESCO Argentina on Environmental Awareness through Bharatanatyam**

# Rāgaratnamālika

## BILAHARI

It is a *Janya Rāga* derived from 29<sup>th</sup> *melākarta Dhira Shankarābharaṇam*. *Bilahari* and *Balahari* are the old names of the raga. *Ārōhaṇa*- s r g p d s. *Avarōhaṇa* s n d p m g r s. Besides *shadjam* and *panchama*, this *rāga* takes the *chathursruti Rishabha*, *Antra gandhara*, *śuddha Madhyama*, *Chathursruti Dhaivatha*, *kaishiki nishāda* and *kākadi nishāda*. It is an *Audava sampūrṇa rāga*, *varja rāgam* and *ni* are *varja* in the *ārōhaṇa*. In *Eka anya swara bhashanga ragas* the foreign notes *kaishiki nishādha* comes in the phrases 1) *p d n d p* 2) *p d n p* and 3) *p d n p ri*, *dha* and *ni* are the *rāga ehaya swarās*, *p* and *ni* are *nyāsa swarās*, *ma* and *ni* are not *kampita swarās*. *Janta swarās* combinations like *ss rr gg pp* and *daatu swara* combinations like A) *d g r s n d p* B) *p r s n d p* and C) *r g d p* are common *s n p* is *vishesha sanchāra*.

### Gamaka varika rakti rāga

This *rāga* inspires joy, courage, enthusiasm and heroism and easily cures people suffering from melancholy and depression. *Vira rāga* can be depicted by this *rāga*. It is also used in operas and dances. It is a Morning *rāga*. Well distributed. Compositions in this *rāga* commence in the notes: *sa*, *ga* and *pa*. It is a *sthirasthayi rāga*.

A closely called allied *rāga* is *Desākshi*. The individuality of *Desākshi* is established by characteristic phase *gggggr srgsr* in the rare *Tārasthāyi*. Besides, this *rāga* uses the *kaishiki nishādha* in the phrase *s n d p*. The *ārōhana* and *avarōhana* of *Bilahari* sung in *vilōma krama* (inverse order) results in *garudadhvani*.

*S r g m p d n s*, *s d p g r s*- *Janya* of the 29<sup>th</sup> *melākarta*.

**Transliteration:** Ā, ā = ആ, ഓ; Ē, ē = ഏ, ഐ; ī = ീ; ű = ഴ; Ō, ō = ഓ, ഔ; ū = ു, ũ = ൃ; Í = ഇ; ř = റ; tt = റ; ř = റ; Ś, ś = ശ; T, t = ത; th = മ

### Some prominent compositions-

- 1) Jayaṭiswaram S r G P Ādi
- 2) Intachauka varṇam- Vinakuppayyar
- 3) Najevadhara- Ādi - Tyāgarāja
- 4) Dourgnaita Ādi Tyāgarāja
- 5) Intakannanda - Rupakam- Tyāgarāja
- 6) Narasimha- Chāpu- Tyāgarāja
- 7) Śri Bāla Subrahmanya Chāpu- Muṭṭuswāmi Dikshitar
- 8) Sarasadala- Rupakam Thiruvottiyur Tyagayyar
- 9) Tārangam- Purayamama- Narāyana Tīrṭṭha
- 10) Jawāli- Paripōvalēra- Rupakam Pattābhiramayya

### Film Songs

- 1) Janani Jagajanani- Kāvyaṁēla- Yeśudas
- 2) Priyathamā, Priyathamā - Śankunṭala P Suśīla
- 3) Raravenu Gopapala- Mr. Butler Chitra and Kalyāni Mēnon
- 4) Kalyāna Kaccēri- Mātambi
- 5) Uṇaruṇarū Uṇṇikkaṇṇā Neelakuyil Sāntha P. Nair



Smt. Mallika Bharathan



# MUMBAI NEWS DIGEST

KIM News Bureau

## SAGA OF SERVICE: CM COMMENDS DR DAMODARAN'S LIFE AND WORK

The Chief Minister of Kerala, Oommen Chandy, commended in Mumbai the signal contribution of Dr. K K Damodaran of training hundreds of nuclear scientists, who have helped put the country on the nuclear track.

The former Minister of the Government of Kerala, N K Premachandran placed on record his appreciation of Dr. Damodaran's contribution to social upliftment in the true traditions of Sree Narayana Guru.

Both of them participated in the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations of Dr. Damodaran, organised by the Sree Narayana Mandira Samithi at Chembur.

Oommen Chandy also paid tribute to the

vision and farsightedness of the R Sankar, a former Chief Minister of Kerala in having recognised the talent in the young K K Damodaran and arranged to send him to the UK for training in nuclear physics.

The Atomic Energy Commission Chairman, Dr. Srikumar Bannerjee, on behalf of over 3,750 students of Dr Damodaran paid homage to his Guru, reverentially bowing down and touching his feet and eulogising his services.

A crowd of over 3,000 heard several others pay tributes to Dr. Damodaran in building up a string of institution under Sree Narayana Mandira Samithi for educational, social and physical upliftment of downtrodden. Among them were: the Upalokayukta Johny Joseph, Swami Krishnananda Saraswati, Saigan Swami, Swami Rithambharananda and Kumaran Nair, the Chairman of the Navathi Celebrations Committee. The Convener of the Celebration Committee and President of SNMS, N Sasidharan, Joint Convener M I Damodaran and General Secretary N S Salim Kumar also paid tributes to Dr Damodaran and his wife, Saraswati Damodaran.

Mementoes were presented to Dr Damodaran by Oommen Chandy on behalf of the Celebration Committee and the SNMS.



*Celebration Committee felicitating Dr. K. K. Damodaran. Seated: Chief Minister of Kerala Oommen Chandy, Dr Damodaran and Mrs Saraswati Damodaran. Standing: Dr. Asha Pradeep, N. Sasidharan, Kumaran Nair, N. K. Premachandran, Johny Joseph, Dr. Srikumar Banerjee and M. I. Damodaran.*



*Swami Krishnananda Saraswathy of Sree Ramadasa Mission, Badlapur, Swami Saigon of Sree Narayana Dharmashram, Kalady, Swami Ritambarananda of Dharmasangham Trust, Sivagiri, N K Premachandran, Smt. Saraswati Damodaran, Dr. K K Damodaran, Oommen Chandy, Johny Joseph And Dr. Srikumar Banerjee.*

## SOPANAM's Anniversary Celebrations.

Sopanam of Bhandup will celebrate its 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary with a three day kathakali festival from January 6 to January 8, 2012. The Programme includes *Kacha Devayani* and *Arjuna Vishada Vritham* at Bright High School and College on the 6th and 7th in Bhandup while PSV Natyasangham, Kottakkal will present kathakali (*Duryodana Vadham*) on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Anushaktinagar hosted by Trombay Township Fine Arts Club.

Sopanam is a non-profitable cultural organisation devoted to promoting classical art forms of Kerala especially *Kathakali*. It has also presented artistes from *Mohiniattam*, *Ottamthullal*, *Chakyarkoothu* and other performing arts on the Mumbai stage in the previous years.

The Calicut Chapter of Sopanam will be celebrating its 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Calicut on 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2012. with koodiyattam (1 day) and kathakali (2 days).

# SPECTACULAR PEEP INTO KERALA'S ART AND CULTURE

Excellent organisational acumen, dedicated team work, and commitment to a cause, were on display throughout the three days that Mumbai Pooram was staged in Dombivili from 11 November to 13 November.

Over 600,000 people witnessed the best of Malayalee festivities, dance forms and variety of artistic skills displayed during temple festivals. The highlight of the festival was the five caparisoned elephants executing traditional hallowed rituals like Kudamattam (exchange of umbrellas) against the backdrop of the famous Paramekav temple at Thrissur, where the annual Pooram festival is celebrated during April.

The Thrissur Pooram had been on for over a century and a half, in which the entire city participates. Much of the infrastructure for the spectacular Pooram is provided by artisans and artistes from the local Christian and Muslim communities as much as from Hindus.

The three days were marked by Pancha Maha Thayampaka, Kaikottikali, Theyyam, Panchavadyam, Pandi Melam, Sinkarimelam, Kudamattam, and a drama festival. The concluding item was perhaps one of the best a stage presentation of abhangs offered by 135 young artistes, all from Dombivili and surrounding areas.

The Panchamaha Thayambaka, presenting the virtuosity of a set of drummers, was being performed for the first time in Mumbai by some of the finest players in the field.

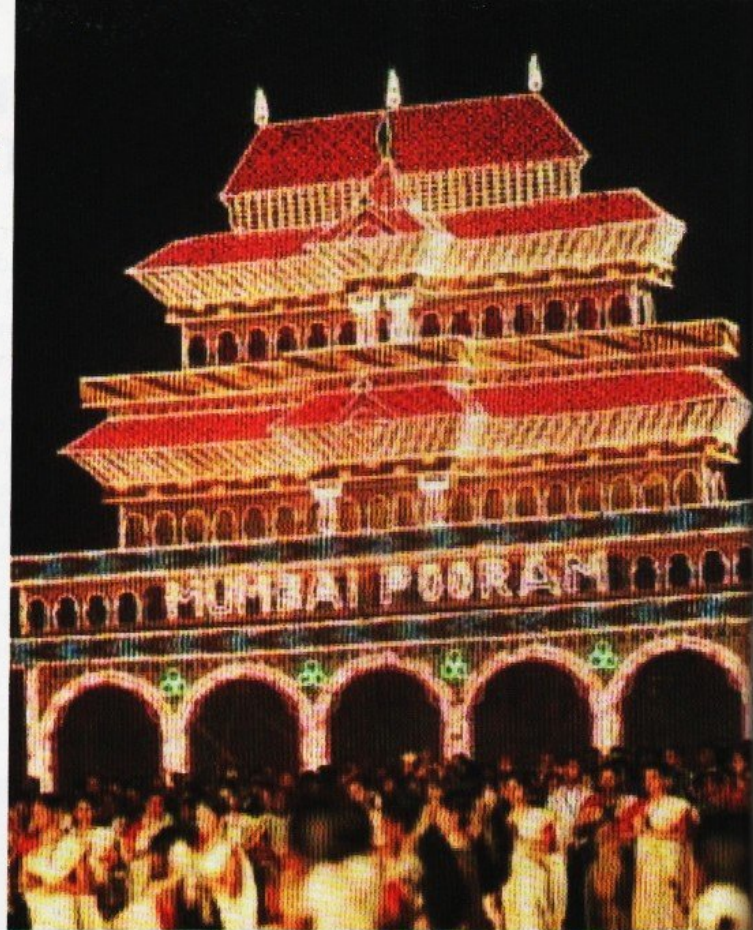
Sinkarimelam is another exposition on the drums by performers who tap steps rhythmically to the drumbeats.

The Kudamattom is the exchange of colourful umbrellas by artistes perched on elephants backs.

Besides these traditional items there was also Anayoottu-feeding of the elephants by spectators.

Attached to the Pooram festival was an exposition of paintings by about a dozen artists of Mumbai including Bose Krishnamachari, Riyas Komu, S K Nalin, T V Santosh, Justin Ponmani, T K Muralidharan, Rahul Krishnan, Sindhu Nair, Kripa Radhakrishnan, Pavitran Kannapuram, James Manalodi, Premlal and others.

The Governor of Maharashtra, K Sankaranarayanan, speaking at the concluding session of Mumbai Pooram, commended the efforts of the Mumbai Pooram Foundation, the organising committee and the members of Ragasudha, for the authenticity of the show and said such efforts help strengthen bonds



*Mumbai Pooram - A festival of Kerala*

between Malayalees and the local populations in the State.

Picking up from a remark made earlier by the guest of honour, Shibu Baby John, Kerala's Labour Minister, Mr. Sankaranarayanan said he had the privilege of working with Shibu's father, Baby John, in the Kerala Ministry and that he had no hesitation in going to his seniors for guidance in the discharge of his duties as a junior minister. This expedited work in the cabinet and helped speedy disposal of files, he said.

Shibu Baby John said Mr. Sankaranarayanan had been the best Finance Minister of Kerala, who had helped turn the finances of the State from near bankruptcy to a healthy stage during his tenure. He never got sufficient recognition for it in Kerala, but he was happy to find that the Malayalees in Mumbai admired, respected, revered and loved him.

The Mumbai Pooram was organised by a Celebration Committee with N K Bhupesh Babu as Chairman, Shamsuddin, Convener, David Oomen, Dr. Ramprakash Nair, Ramesh Iyer, Rajan Panicker, R V Gopalakrishnan, Kondath Venugopal, E P Vasu, Dr Anil Raghavan and others.

Among the prominent sponsors of the festival were Enkay Garden, Union Bank of India, Mahindra Finance, In and out Advertising, Akbar Travels, Goodwin Security systems and others.

The Pooram Foundation announced a series of welfare and medical measures it planned and also the dates of the next Pooram Festival on 9, 10 and 11 November 2012.



*Pooram - Ezhunallippu*

Mr. Sankaranarayanan as Finance Minister of Kerala had helped turn the deplorable state of finances of the State to robust health. But he never got the recognition he deserved for it. I am glad to find that Mumbai Malayalees have taken him to heart and shower all their love, respect, and admiration on him.

-Shibu Baby John,  
Minister for Labour, Kerala

## Baala Samskara Shibiram 2011

Bombay Keraleeya Samajam conducted its fourth Childrens' Camp *Baala samskara shibiram* at Matunga from October 28 to 30. There were about 60 boys and girls who participated in the Camp. There were several activities and teaching sessions for the children on the next two days by experts in the various fields. It included yoga and meditation, Games and Team work by Resource Persons, Quiz, session on Personality Development, screening of Children's film *Innaleye Thedi* etc. Gifts were awarded to the deserving contestants and a Certificate of Participation was distributed to all the participating children.



One of the speakers addressing the children at the Camp.

## Devi Navaha Satram

The concluding session of the Devi Bhagavada Navaha Satram was initiated by Swami Krishnanandaji Saraswathi of Sri Ramadasa Ashramam of Belapur. The President of the Navaha Satram samithi, Mumbai Unit, Vishnu Kunnam, welcomed the audience while Modappillapilly Parameswaran Namboodirippad who is the All India President of the Satram Samithi, Gopidas Vanneri and Rajan Nair Thane spoke on the occasion. The All India Satra Nirvahana Samithi Chairman, Dr Anil Kumar, who presided over the function, congratulated the organizers of the satram while the Secretary of the

Mumbai Unit, Prasad Kongad, proposed the Vote of Thanks. It was announced that the next Navaha satram will be held at a Devi Temple in Kannur in December next year. The Devi idol that had been brought from *Modappillapilly mana* was taken back to Kerala with traditional rituals and rites.

The Devi Navaha Satram was held from October 20 to 30 at the MIDC Grounds in Dombivli. Several learned thanthris and scholars performed homas and pujas and gave spiritual discourses. This was followed by variety entertainment programmes of music and dance in the evenings on all the days.

## Andheri Malayali Samajam Anniversary

Andheri Malayalee Samajam celebrated its anniversary. President M Ramachandran (MRC) presided over the function while Maharashtra Minister Suresh Shetty, Ashok Jadhav MLA, Daniel Fernandes and Venkateswaran were Guests of Honour. The Meet was followed by variety entertainment programme.

## Thiruvadiralakali

Tru Indian Information and Guidance Society's Ladies' wing is organizing a *thiruvadiralakali* celebration on January 1 2012 at 5.30 pm at Sarvesh Hall Tilak Road Dombivli ( East). The chief co-ordinator of the Celebration Committee is Ambika Varasiar, and the Chairman is Uma S Nair. Baby R Nair is the Vice Chairman. There are several other committee members from the various suburbs of Mumbai.

## Mandala Pooja At Mira Gaathan

As in the previous years, the Sree Ayyappa Bhakta Seva Samiti, Mira Gaathan, Mira Road has organised a 41-day Mandala Pooja during this Madala masam from Nov. 17 to December 27

The daily programme includes bhajans followed by Annadaanam sponsored by devotees. Thousands of Malayalees and non-Malayalees come to the temple site on the hill top at Kashi Mira in Mira Road. Former Mayor of Mira-Bhayander and an ardent Ayyappa devotee Narendra Mehta also visited the temple with his wife.



Bhajan session at Ayyappa Temple, Mira Gaathan

**KPES**

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ദിനോത്സവം

സമാഹരണ സമ്മേളനം

തീയതി: ഏകദേശം നവംബർ 19, 2011



ഉദ്ഘാടനം

പ്രസിഡൻ്റ്: കെ.സി. ജോസഫ്

## Marriage Meet in Navi Mumbai

Kharghar Nair Service Society will conduct a Marriage Meet on December 20. For further details, contact 9323451791,9967518410.

## Mar Thoma Church Vasai

This year's Christmas Programme in Mar Thoma Church will include Door to Door Carol rounds from 20th to 22nd December. Christmas Carol Service on 24 December 2011 at 7.30 pm. Christmas Worship Service on 25 December at 6.00 am.

## St Thomas Orthodox Syrian Church Vasai

The parish is celebrating its feast, Feast of St.Thomas, from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> December. H. G. Kuriakose Mar Clemis, Metroplitan of the Diocese of Thumpamon will be the chief celebrant of the feast.

## Support to Mullapperiyar Issue

Bombay Keraleeya Samithi Malad organized a meeting on November 26 to express their concern about the Mullaperiyar issue and has decided to communicate their whole hearted support to the people of Kerala fighting for the issue. The committee wished that the issue is to be peacefully settled between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The president Mrs. Padma Divakaran stated that all the Malayalee associations in Mumbai should support the people of Kerala who are fighting for the construction of a new dam at Mullapperiyar.

Swetha performing her Pulluvathy- Kerala folk dance at Adarsh Vidyalaya, Chembur, on the occasion of KPES golden jubilee celebration held on 19 th November. This is her 100 th performance and she won 5 national level awards for this dance. Former Chief Minister of Kerala V.S.Achuthanandan inaugurated the Function.

## Pravasi Malayalee International Conference

Non- Resident Malayalees Welfare and Rehabilitation is one of the main aims of the Kerala Government, according to the Minister for Pravasi Affairs, KC Joseph. The Government is planning various schemes to make this a reality in the near future, he said. He was inaugurating the Pravasi Malayalee International Conference and presentation of the Pravasi Malayalees Global Excellency Award organised by the Indo Arab Confederation Council at Kerala House, Vashi. The meeting was presided by N A Nellikkunnu MLA. T A Khalid received the Pravasi Malayalees Global Excellency Award from the minister KC Joseph for services rendered by him for pravasi social and cultural activities. Attakoya Pallikandi, chairman of the Indo Arab Confederation Council gave the inaugural speech. Overseas Malayalee Integration Council Chairman M P Shafi Haji, Qatar, UAE, KMCC Vice-President Yahya Talankara, T E Abdullah, Kasargode Municipality Chairman, L A Mehmood, Kasargode Municipal Councillor, T A Shafi, Sub-editor of *Uttara Desam*, Dr Sharif, MMK Urumi, MA Khalid, KMA Rahman, also spoke on the occasion. T E Khalid expressed his thanks on receiving the Award.

## International Day for persons with disability

The Goregaon Sports Club in association with the International Association of Lions Clubs District plans to organise an International Day for Persons with Disabilities on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, OPK Joshua convener of the Event and Treasurer of the Punarvas Education Society for the Challenged, has announced. The event will be held at the Goregaon Sports Club Club in Malad.



T A Khalid receiving the Pravasi Malayalees Global Excellency Award organised by the Indo Arab Confederation Council from Minister KC Joseph.

# GRAMOLSAVAM A FAIR OF TASTE AND TRADITION

The city of Mira Road witnessed a unique fair last month. It was 'Gramolsavam', the annual folk fair of Kerala Samskarika Vedi. On 20<sup>th</sup> of November, the grounds of St. Xavier's High School at Shanti Park the venue of the fair turned into a themed Kerala village with the tantalizing aroma of rustic food recipes wafting in the air, the cacophony of a rural bazaar sprawled with clothes and farm products of Malayalees' favorite greeting the guests and the evergreen glamour of ethnic folklore stealing the viewer's heart. Stalls offering a vast array of Malabar, Valluvanadan and Travancore delicacies saw an unrelenting flow of buyers right from the opening. A fortunate few who were early to the fair walked away with the fish and mussels of backwaters and duck meat shipped from Kerala by Kottayam team and freshly cooked at the venue. The tea stall typical of a Kerala village set up by Thrissur team under a thatched shed with snacks displayed in wooden show case and the lungi clad waiter-cum-proprietor pouring hot tea from a height more than that of himself precisely into a mug below with high acrobatic skills kindled the nostalgia of an average Malayalee. According to the organizers, those who



*Gramolsavam Opening Ceremony*

set up the stalls were not professional caterers, but who learned the recipes from their elders. For them it was not business, but a mission. After sunset, the venue transformed itself into an open air theatre. Jananayana, the named folklore theatre of Thrissur made the crowd dance to

their pulsating rhythms and melodious folk songs. Their young artists held the audience spellbound to a range of tribal dances.

After an entertaining and spicy evening, the Thrissur team walked away with the best stall trophy and the crowd dispersed with a heart-full of nostalgia.

## *Wedding Wishes*



*Kerala in Mumbai wishes Dr Bijoy Kutty of Platinum Hospitals, Mulund and Mrs Suprieya a long and happy married life. The marriage was solemnised at Guruvayur temple on October 27 and the Reception was hosted at the Leela Hotel in Mumbai on November 5. Suprieya is the daughter of Mrs Alka and Mr Naren Sadarangani.*



Jacob Koshy

# Taxation of Charities

Taxation of Charities has undergone a sea change during the last few years. After the Direct Tax Code which in all likelihood will be implemented by April 2012, these provisions will undergo further change.

The changes proposed by the Finance Act, 2008 came in to effect from A.Y.2009-'10 in the Income Tax Act.

Section 2(15) of the Income Tax Act defines "charitable purpose" as relief to poor, education, medical relief, preservation of environment (including watershed, forests and wildlife) and preservation of monuments or places or objects of artistic or historic interest (*the last two limbs have been added subsequently*) and the advancement of any other objects of general public utility.

Advancement of any other objects shall not be a charitable purpose, if it involves the carrying on of an activity in the nature of trade, commerce or business or any activity of rendering any service in relation to any trade, commerce or business, for a cess or fee or any other consideration, irrespective of the nature of the use or application or retention of the income from such activity and such value of receipts from the activities exceed Rs 10 lakh in a previous year.

The then Finance Minister Shri P Chidambaram while proposing the Budget, had mentioned that some entities carrying on regular trade, commerce or business or providing services in relation to any trade, commerce or business and earning income have sought to claim that their purpose would also fall under "charitable purpose", which obviously was not the intention of Parliament and hence to amend the law to exclude the above cases.

He had, however, promised that genuine charitable organizations will not be in any way affected.

The words not involving the carrying on of any activity for profit have been omitted from the definition of charitable purpose with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1984. However, the amendment of Finance Act, 2008 by change in definition restores partially the old definition existing prior to 1984.

The Courts had occasion to examine the tax impact on generation of surplus by carrying on certain activities which incidentally make surplus and will not alter the charitable character of the Trust. A Trust cannot lose exemption merely on the ground that it has made a surplus as long as it is not meant for the private profit of the settler or any other person.

The words "general public utility" as appearing in the definition of charitable purpose, need to be examined.

In a recent High Court decision it was held that "general public utility" cannot be a mere mask to hide the true purpose of rendering of any service in relation thereto, and where such services are rendered as purely incidental to or as subservient to main objects of general public utility, the carrying on of *bonafide* activities in furtherance of such objects is not hit by the new proviso to sec 2(15).

A recent Circular of the Central Board of Direct Taxes also takes a similar view and accordingly any Trust which has dominant objects of relief of the poor, education or medical relief will not be hit by the amendment to sec 2(15), even if it incidentally involves the carrying of commercial activities. The institution whose sole purpose is any other objects of "general public utility" would be hit by this amendment and accordingly not entitled to exemption u/s 11 of the Income Tax Act.

In case of an Institution with mixed objects such as relief to poor, medical relief and education along with any other objects of

general public utility may be hit as the character of charitable purpose no more apply to the entity and may lose the exemption under Section 11 of the Act. This view is also supported by a ruling of the apex Court.

Where the institution which has been carrying on its activities prior to the commencement of the Act i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> April 1962, both charitable and non-charitable, it may have to separate or bifurcate its activities into two and claim the benefits u/s 11(1)(b) in respect of charitable activities only.

Entities which carry on business and falls under sec 11(4A) of the Act which is incidental to the attainment of the objectives of the entity, such cases fall under Sec 11(4) and will not be hit by the rigors of the amendment and continue to benefit from exemption. A further view is also possible in view of the fact that no amendment to the beneficial section 11(4) has been done and accordingly the claim of exemption continue to be allowed for such entities whose business is incidental to the attainment of its objectives.

If an Association is dealing with its own members, a well settled tax concept of the principle of mutuality can be applied to such entity and exemption can still be availed.

The law of taxation of trusts will continue to be an area for litigation due to the amendment till judicial pronouncements on taxability is settled.

[jkoshy2007@gmail.com](mailto:jkoshy2007@gmail.com)

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# Uttara Ramayanam

The story of Rama has been written by over 300 authors in India itself, besides the versions from China, Cambodia, Laos, Java, Malaya, Khotan, Japan, Thailand, Tibet and Chamba. While the Indian versions more or less maintain the same story line, the foreign versions are as varied as to state that Rama and Lakshman were sons of Sahasrabahu who was son of Dasaratha. (Khotani Ramayana). In one Indonesian version, Sita is sister of Rama (there are many versions of Ramayana in Indonesia itself though that country is the biggest Islamic nation).

One therefore cannot complain when someone deviates from the Valmiki's version of Rama's story. The book under review is based on Uttara Ramayana, which itself is believed to be a concocted version, not written by Valmiki or by his predecessors.

രാമായണങ്ങൾ പലവും കവിവര-  
രാമോദമോടു പറഞ്ഞുകേൾപ്പാണ്ടു ഞാൻ,  
ജാനകിയോടു കൂടാതെ രാലുവരൻ  
കാനനവാസത്തിനെന്നു പോയിട്ടുള്ളൂ?

The above lines from *Adhyatma Ramayanam Kilippattu* by Thunchathu Ezhuthacchan till a few decades ago, were considered to be an aberration by the author (many very learned professors held the view) and it took some young writer to point out that it was there in Valmiki's version too. So there were Ramayanas even before Valmiki.

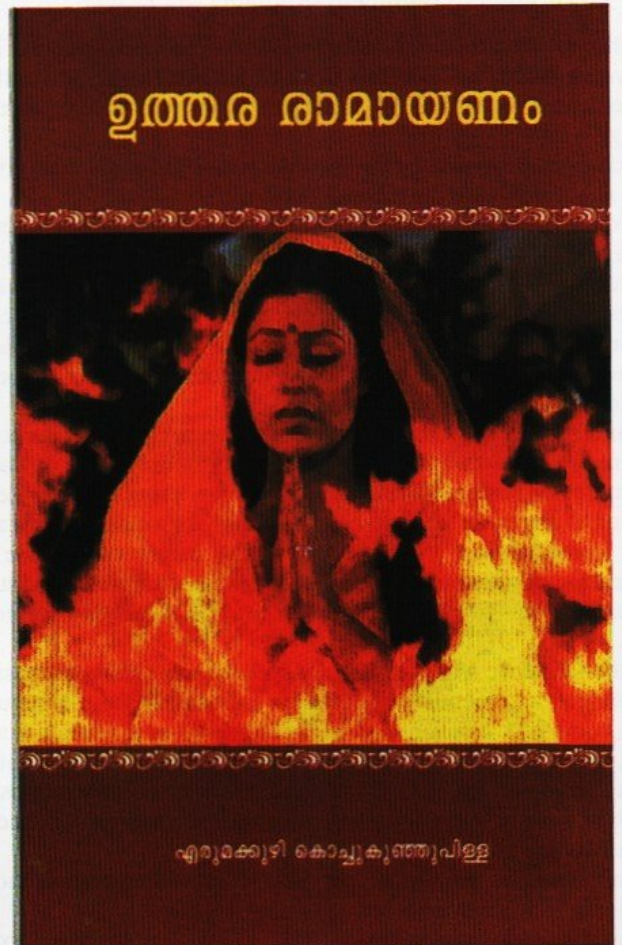
The Hindus are reputed to have unlimited amount of tolerance but recently a few misguided apostles of Hinduism used their muscle power and compelled JNU authorities to withdraw a book on the various types of Ramayana, prescribed in the syllabus of the University since the last three years.

The liberty shown by Erumakuzhy Kochukunju Pillai in his version of *Uttara Ramayanam* is therefore pardonable. If the authors did not have their own interpretation, there would not have been many versions; only one Ramayana was sufficient.

Pillai seems to have depended not much on Ezhuthacchan's version but on Kamban's version. In Kamba Ramayana, Sita returned from Valmiki's hermitage and lived as Rama's queen until Kaikeyi again played tricks on her (Poor Kaikeyi!) and thus was shown to have disappeared under the earth. Pillai says that Sita was brought from Valmiki's hermitage, on the demand of the people, by Rama and was to be made queen but soon the same people demanded that she should again be subjected to a trial by fire. This demand was unacceptable to Sita and she decides to return to the forests. Pillai has every liberty to add or subtract from the epic Ramayana, the oldest and the only tale that was retold by hundreds of authors and still continue to be.

As the Introduction by Prof K R C Pillai points out, the narration is spontaneous and in tune with the *Kilippattu* style. It is easy to read and comprehend. (However, the professor mis-named Shambooka as Shambraka while the poet avoided naming the saint). While the normal text show a courageous Shambooka, Pillai's Shambooka looked a coward who pleaded for mercy. His pleadings are long and could have been trimmed to be effective.

As in recent books, some words are split while at some other places, space is not given when needed. (ആവുനവണ്ണമഹിംസ (ആവുനവണ്ണമഹിംസ), വേണ്ടായിരുന്നു വെനോർത്തവൻ (വേണ്ടായിരുന്നുവെനോർത്തവൻ),



പരാക്രമ മുള്ളൊരു (പരാക്രമമുള്ളൊരു), ഈരണമിന്നു (ഈരണമിന്നു)). This leads the readers to misunderstand the connotation.

There are many dramatic dialogues that one might miss in well accepted versions, like

അഗ്നിസാക്ഷിക്കു വിലയില്ലയോദ്ധ്യയിൽ  
വേദോകുന്നു വെളുത്തേടവീൺമൊഴി  
അല്ലെങ്കിലമ്മയായ്തീരേണ്ട പത്നിയെ  
തെല്ലും കനിയാതെറിയുമോ കാനനേ?

Though the author claims to have followed the *Kilippattu* meter, (Ezhuthacchan used several meters in his work like *Kakali, Kalakanchi, Manjari* etc and the word *Kilippattu* was only meant to convey that it was not the author but the bird that narrated the story), at many places there are aberrations in the meters used. An ordinary reader may not bother with such intricacies while a discerning one might. To suit the meter, the word ഇക്ഷവാകു (പേ 35) is changed into ഇക്ഷവാകു (പേ 32). Similarly, phrases like സീതയെവേട്ട സീതാപതി could have been avoided.

Better proof reading will certainly help the class of the work when a second edition is brought out. Eg.: പ്രൗഢി (പ്രൗഢി ജനൽ (ജനൽ), ഘനം (കനം), കോസലമാനസ്സം (മാനസം). [Published by Zen Publishers, Kayamkulam- 690 50. pages 100; price Rs. 70]

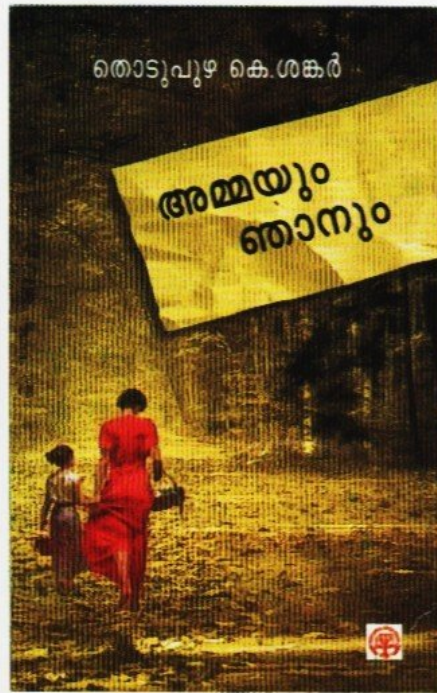
# A poetic tribute to Mother

Every human being is inseparably attached to his own mother. Despite temporary fluctuations, all of them at one time or the other, feel a bondage to her. In the modern world, the old bondage to mother might be invisible but at a time of extreme hardship, one would helplessly seek her. In 'Ammayum njanum' (Mother and I), Thodupuzha K Shankar has 21 soulful poems as a tribute to his mother.

One comes across similar sentiments on several occasions. Well known lyricists Vayalar Rama Varma, P Bhaskaran, Sreekumaran Thampy and many others have written in a similar strain.

Though nothing new has been said in these poems, the poems of Shankar cannot be overlooked. His lines are sincere and inspiring though often repetitive.

This is not the first offering of Shankar. Though a post graduate in Commerce



with a life time experience in banking, he has displayed an uncanny inclination to literature especially poetry. He has published about 500 poems and about 300 devotional songs besides 200 poems in English. It is very rare that a busy bureaucrat could produce such a record. Most of our poets, barring probably Ulloor and Vyloppilli Sreedhara Menon, are full time poets and made a living out of it. Shankar also writes in various formats in contemporary periodicals.

One wishes that some errors could have been avoided. There are typographical as well as avoidable excessive words that do not contribute to the poems, besides some violations of rules of meters used.

[Published by Pambungal Publications, B-201, Akruiti Orchid Park, Andheri Kurla Road, Sakinaka, Mumbai-72, pages 47, price Rs.50]

## Prominent Christians

(Continued from page 31)

On the other hand, Justice K.T.Thomas was awarded Padmabhushan for Public affairs in 2007.

Some prominent Christians in the political field are: T.V. Thomas (a cabinet member in the first Communist Ministry of Kerala and a reputed trade unionist), A. K. Antony (Central Defence Minister), Oommen Chandy (present Chief Minister), Chalakuzhy Paulose Mathen (C.P. Mathen), Sebastian Edathy, C. M. Stephen, K. M. Chandy, P. C. Alexander, Dr. M. M. Thomas, George Thomas, T. M. Jacob, P. J. Kurien, K. A. Mammen, K. M. Mani, Mathai Manjooran, E.P.Eapen, etc. M.O. Mathai, (1909-1981) was another prominent Christian from Kerala, who functioned as the Private secretary to India's First Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for quite a long time.

Justice Anna Chandy (the first woman judge of an Indian High Court), K.K. Mathew (Judge of the Supreme Court of India), Padmabhushan Justice K.T.Thomas, (Former Supreme Court judge), Rachel Paulose (youngest US woman attorney) are some prominent Christians in the judiciary field.

There are many renowned Kerala Christians in the field of literature and literary criticism as well. Kattakayam Cherian Mappila is perhaps the oldest Malayalam poet from the Christian community. Other distinguished Christians are: Abraham Kovoor,

Dominic Chacko Kizhakemuri, Joseph Edamaruku, Prof. M.P.Paul, Prof. Joseph Mundassery, C. Mammen Mappila, Rationalist M. C. Joseph, Muttathu Varkey, Paul Zacharia, Ponkunnam Varkey, C.J.Thomas, Kakkanadan Verghese, Rosy Thomas, etc. The Booker Prize Award winner Arundhati Roy is a Kerala Christian. The reputed cartoonists from this community are Abu Abraham, Toms, Yesudasan.

The film world too has its share of Kerala Christians. Kunchacko, the pioneer movie-maker in Malayalam, and the film artists like the late Sathyan (Sathyanesan), P J Antony and Miss Kumari, Sheela, Innocent, Philomina, Kunchako Boban, Asin Thottumkal, Babu Antony, Captain Raju, Meera Jasmine, Kartika, Dhanya, Gopika, Jomol, Nayantara, Vincent, etc. are a few among them. The film directors include Joshy, Joshi Mathew, John Abraham, etc. The famous music director Ouseppachan and the maestro of Carnatic and light music, K.J.Yesudas, too are from the Christian community.

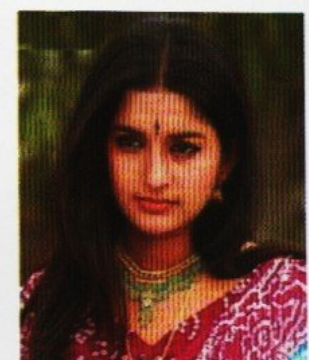
The Christian historians/theologians include Chevalier Prof. George Menachery (the reputed historian on Christianity and the editor of the St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India), K. V. Mathew (Theologian and writer), Rev. Fr.Dr. V.C. Samuel (a world renowned Theologian and Church Historian).



Sheela



Miss Kumari



Meera Jasmine



Rashma Anand



*With these tips you can be assured of a flawless skin even during the cold season.*

The greatest problem that affects our skin is dryness during the cold month of December and January.

We have to use oil based moisturizers to beat this dryness.

Olive oil is best to combat the dryness. Apply it on your face, hands and legs before bathing.

### Care of the Face

A mixture of turmeric, fresh cream and besan is a good natural face wash. Any mild face wash in the market is another good option instead of soap.

Moisturisers that have high oil content is another choice to beat the dryness on the face. After washing the face with a mild face wash, apply an oil-based moisturizer.

Use a face scrub at least once a week to exfoliate the dead skin on your face. Follow this with applying an oil based moisturiser. The skin on the face will get a natural glow.



# Win over Winter Woes

### Lips

Lips are the worst affected. They become dry and start chapping. Apply milk cream or ghee or butter every night on your lips. They will become soft.



### Hair

Hair tends to get dry and rough. An oil massage and hair wash at least once a week is necessary to prevent our hair breaking and becoming rough.+

### Hands and feet

Hands and feet are the worst affected during the cold season. Special care must be taken to avoid our heels becoming cracked. Vaseline applied daily at night on the heels and our feet fights the dryness on our feet. Sesame oil is another good option to prevent cracked heels.

### Healthy Diet

A healthy diet is another important thing to follow in our daily skin care routine. During winter, the metabolism of our body is sluggish. So we should eat nourishing food to maintain the warmth of our body. Ladiesfingers, pumpkin, fenugreek leaves, carrot, cabbage, cauliflower, onion, ginger, beetroot can be consumed without any hesitation. Among non-vegetarian foods, chicken,

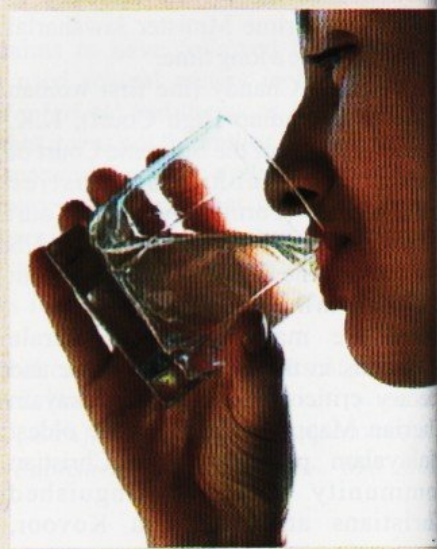


mutton, fish, prawn are good for your health. Almonds, pistachio, walnuts and cashews are also good during the winter months.

### Water, fruit juice and Soups

Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses of water daily. It makes our skin soft and supple. Water also helps in preventing joint pains among old people.

With a little time devoted to pampering ourselves, we can retain a flawless skin and healthy hair and enjoy the cool season that comes as a welcome relief from the summer heat.



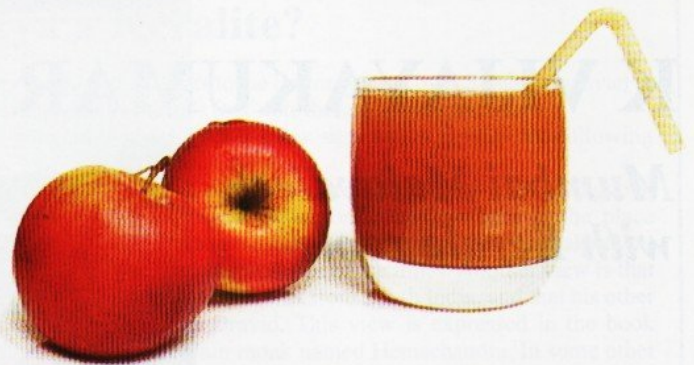
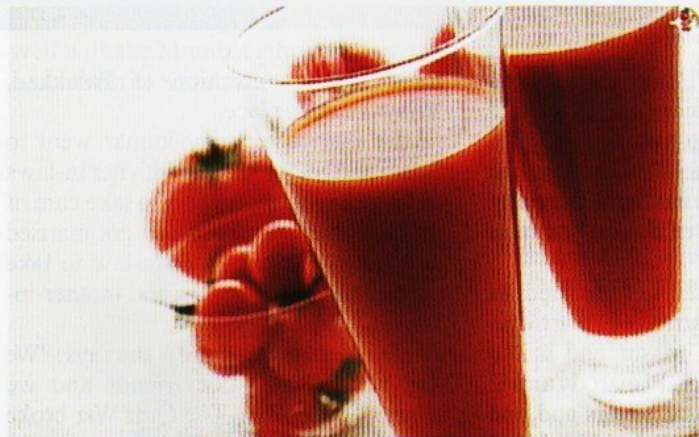
### HEALTHY JUICES

*Here are a few combinations of juices made from easily available fruits and vegetables. They boost our metabolism, cleanse our system and above all help us to improve our health*

Carrot + Ginger + Apple - Boosts and cleanses our system.

Apple + Cucumber + Celery - Prevents cancer, reduces cholesterol, and cures stomach upset and headache.

Tomato + Carrot + Apple - Improves skin complexion and removes bad breath.



Bitter gourd + Apple + Milk - Overcomes bad breath and reduces internal body heat.

Orange + Ginger + Cucumber - Improve Skin texture and moisture and reduces body heat.

Pineapple + Apple + Watermelon - Dispels salts, nourishes the bladder and kidney.

Apple + Cucumber + Kiwi - Improves the complexion of the skin.

Pear & Banana - Regulates the sugar content in the body.

Carrot + Apple + Pear + Mango - Lowers body heat, counteracts toxicity, decreases blood pressure.

Honeydew + Grape + Watermelon + Milk - Rich in Vitamin C + Vitamin B2 - Increases cell activity and body immunity.

Papaya + Pineapple + Milk - Rich in vitamin C, E, Iron - Improves skin complexion and metabolism.

Banana + Pineapple + Milk - Rich in vitamins - Prevents constipation.

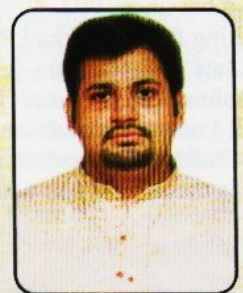
## Recipe for Sevai Upma

### Ingredients:

250 grams of Sevai.  
2 onions chopped in cubes.  
1 large tomato chopped without seeds.  
Small bowl chopped carrot and greenpeas.  
Curry leaves.  
pinch of cumin seeds.  
pinch of mustard seeds.  
Small portion of dal.  
5 green chillies slit and chopped.  
cashewnuts pieces.  
peanuts.  
Grated coconut.  
3 tbsp oil.  
salt to taste.



- 1) Boil sevai in water until sevai is soft (approx 8 to 10 minutes). Drain water and keep boiled sevai aside.
- 2) heat oil in a pan splutter mustard seed, cumin seeds, dal and curry leaves. Now put onion followed by other vegetables. Put salt and cook covered until Veggies are tender.
- 3) add sevai and toss it well. Let it cook for 3-4 minutes.
- 4) Garnish with roasted cashew peanuts and fresh coconut.



**Manoj Nair**

# K VIJAYAKUMAR

*Mumbai Malayalee  
with Kerala roots*

*The door to Vijayakumar's spacious flat in Mumbai confirms his Malayalee identity. It is made of wood carved with images of Lakshmi on a lotus and a flute, aalila and mayilpili, symbolic of Guruvayoorappan, and reiterates his Malayalee roots.*

*"We got it carved from a sculptor in Palakkad and brought it by road to Mumbai" says Mrs Subha Vijayakumar as we marvel at the exquisite woodwork.*

K Vijayakumar Chairman of the Host Group of Companies, has been living in Mumbai since 1992.

Hailing from Palakkad, he is the son of the late N S Harihara Iyer and the late Lakshmi Kutty Amma. His father was a well known advocate and President of the Palakkad Chamber of Commerce. He is the second son with two brothers



and 4 sisters. After finishing his school and college education in Palakkad, Vijayakumar came to Mumbai in 1978. He left for Saudi in 1979 and worked there for 12 years in the Electricity Board, Government of Saudi Arabia at Dammam.

In '85, Vijayakumar got married to Subha. It was an arranged marriage. Subha belongs to Thrissur and is the daughter of the late AK Pisharody and K Thankamma. She has 2 sisters and one brother all of them married and settled. "Ours was an arranged marriage," Subha says. "Our parents first saw the agreement of our horoscopes. Then Vijayakumar came with his friends to my house and we met. Since it was okay with him, his parents came and saw me. That is how we got married."

The marriage took place in Thrissur and

there was a reception at Palakkad Vijayakumar's place.

After marriage, Vijayakumar went to Saudi and Subha stayed with her in-laws in Palakkad for two years to take care of them till her brother-in-law got married and there was her sister-in-law to take care of her father-in-law and mother-in-law.

"Life in Saudi was good," she says. "We had many Malayalee friends and we used to meet often. The Gulf War broke out in 1990 and in 1992, we came to India and settled in Mumbai. I was pregnant, second pregnancy, when we returned," she adds.

Vijayakumar had already started HOST International in 1989, an Overseas Recruitment Centre, especially to the Middle East, in Mumbai, and so they settled in Mumbai. His business developed and in 1994 he started manufacturing and exporting of electrical items especially switch gear accessories and lightning protection accessories. The factory is situated in Silavassa and he has two offices in Mulund. The company also undertakes engineering and contracting work. HOST exports its products to the Middle East, Europe, the Far East, and America. Vijayakumar owns a three star hotel in Palakkad and is a partner of the West End Supermarket in Thrissur. He is a partner of a fibre glass manufacturing factory in Dubai and has a showroom and trading unit of electrical accessories in Saudi



*Vijayakumar with his wife Subha, daughter Poornima and son Vimal*

and Dubai.

Vijaykumar and Subha have a son named Vimal Kumar (Vicky) and a daughter called Poornima. Vicky has done his MBA from London and has recently joined his father's business. He is presently learning the tricks of the trade. Poornima is doing her third year BA in Psychology at SIES College in Sion. She has not yet decided what she wants to do in future.

Mrs and Mr Vijayakumar are active in the Malayalee social and cultural activities of the Mulund Nair Welfare Society. Vijayakumar is a member of the Managing Committee and Mrs Vijayakumar helps in its marriage bureau. The family is also a member of the Mulund Kerala Samajam. Both Vicky and Poornima know Malayalam and speak their mother tongue at home. They enjoy their visits to Kerala and love spending time with their cousins there.

The family makes it a point to go together on a holiday at least once a year. The Vijayakumar family is an example of a Keralite family which has blended well with the Mumbai ethos and is yet in touch with its Kerala roots.



Newly wedded couple-  
Vijayakumar and Subha

## Readers response

### Is Chanakya a Keralite?

This refers to the query raised in the Letters to the Editor column by K S Subrahmanyam in the September 2011 issue, with the Editor's foot-note thereto inviting views.

Struck by curiosity I googled to chance upon a few sites which provide the following information:

"Chanakya: He was known by several other names too, like Kautilya, Vishnugupta, Dramila, and Amgula. The name Chanakya means one who was born in the place Chanaka, some experts conclude, while some others are of the view that Chanakya was the son of Chanaka, the exponent of the jurisprudence of the times. Another view is that this brilliant political planner and administrator was from South India, and that his other name 'Dramila' denotes both Tamil and Dravid. This view is expressed in the book 'Abhidhana Chintamani', authored by a Jain monk named Hemachandra. In some other Jain texts too, Kerala is noted as the birthplace of Chanakya. In Arthashastra itself, there is mention of Chaurneyam, which is a precious stone available from the river Periyar, near Kodungalloor, the famous port-town of ancient Kerala. But in several Buddhist texts, Chanakya's birthplace is given as Taxila (Takshashila of old). According to these sources, Chanakya had his education in astronomy, ayurveda and legal systems of the times from Taxila. And then he learned Persian and Greek. He adopted the Persian religion Zoroastrianism, at a later stage of life, according to certain other sources." (<http://www.indiavideo.org/text/chaanakya-1074.php>)

Wikipedia says: "Chanakya (c.350 - c.275 BC), also known as Anshul or Anshu or Kautilya or Vishnugupta was born in a family of Brahmin as the son of Acharya Chanak in Pataliputra, Magadh (modern day Patna). A South Indian group of Brahmins, Chozhiyas, claim that Chanakya was one of them. Though this may sound improbable considering the vast distance between present day Tamil Nadu in the south and Magadha in Bihar, it finds curious echos in Parishista-parvan, where Hemachandra claims that Chanakya was a Dramila (Dramila, being a very common variant of Dravida). Chanakya enjoyed the best education of the time, in 'Takshashila'. The school had by that time existed for at least five centuries and attracted students from all over the ancient world of Southeast Asia. The Kingdom of Magadha maintained contact with Takshashila."

Other versions cited are: "The classical Sanskrit play by Vishakhadatta, Mudrarakshasa, is one popular source of Chanakya lore. (The play has been dated between 4th and 9th century CE). According one tradition, Chanakya was a native of Dravida. One of Chanakya's various names was Dramila, the Sanskrit form of "Tamilian". ("Dramila" is believed to be the root of the word "Dravida" by some scholars). Chozhiars, a sub-sect of Iyers, hold that Chanakya was one of them."

"There is also a claim that Chanakya belonged to the Brahmin group from the present day Kerala and was believed to be a resident of present day Ernakulam. In true Hindu tradition he is said to have persuaded King Chandragupta Maurya to forsake his throne and to join him in moving to the last phase of one's life viz. Vanaprastha. Accordingly, he took the King along with him to South India where both of them undertook prolonged meditation and finally achieved Moksha."

(Groups.yahoo.com/group/JatHistory/message/5093) comes up with another story: "All three that is Jaina, Budhist as well as Brahminical texts are one at describing Chanakya as a Brahmin. But, according to jaina texts, his father was a Jain shravak). About his birth place, the jaina texts differ. In Hemchandraacharya's view he was born in the janapada of Golla (after the name of this Golla janapada the 2 Jaina castes derive their names viz Gollapurva and Gollallare). In the janapada of Golla, a lot of jain munis had their viharas and the parents of Chanakya were great followers of Jain munis."

Another site ([sites.google.com/site/madrasgiridhar/chanakya](http://sites.google.com/site/madrasgiridhar/chanakya)) mentions: Chanakya lived during the period 350-275 BC. Details of his birth and life are hazy, and we have to rely on tradition. His works have been faithfully preserved through word of mouth for well over 2000 years. His place of birth has to be ascertained from other sources, namely the Buddhist and Jain scriptures. The mahavamsa tika (buddhist) mentions his birth place as Taxila, while Jain scriptures like *Abhidhana Chintamani* mention his birth place as South India, around present day Kerala. Probably the latter is appropriate when we consider the frequent mention of the tuft of hair, which is a mark of present day Nambuthiris. However, Chanakya's birth place will continue to remain a controversy."

With his tuft of hair, dark complexion, dwarfish figure and the plucked congenital tooth (as described in various texts), Chanakya would remain enigmatic as ever. Readers may chip in with interesting information.



K. Rajan

## A remission in punishment and consequences

A cabinet decision to grant remission to the prisoners of Keala jail on Kerala Foundation Day, created a storm in the political circles. Opposition leaders said the act was aimed at releasing former minister R Balakrishna Pillai who was imprisoned for one year by the Supreme Court for causing financial loss of Rs 2.39 crore to the state exchequer. The Chief Minister reacted by stating that they had no moral authority to blame the government as they during their reign, themselves had set an undertrial free from prison, who murdered another prisoner who was serving a sentence for murder. He said the remission was applicable to all prisoners falling under the conditions stipulated in the order and that it was incidental that Balakrishna Pillai was one of them. Oommen Chandy pointed out that Pillai was not punished for corruption but for ineptitude.

All the news papers reported that earlier there were three remissions in which one was by UDF and two were by LDF. However there was one more earlier case that took place immediately after the first Communist Government took over. At that time there was only one prisoner facing gallows, on a murder



R Balakrishna Pillai

charge, in Kerala and his mercy petition was rejected by the President. Soon after taking over, the first government of Kerala released a large number of convicts including thieves, pick pockets, rapists and one who was waiting for the black warrant. He was Kodakulangara Vasu Pillai, a CPI leader. A very successful play and a film were made later: *Mudiyanyaya Puthran*. The defence of the government then was that it was within their powers to remit the punishment and to convert the death sentence into life imprisonment on the occasion of the birth of the first Kerala Government. Oommen Chandy government remitted the punishment on the



V S Achuthanandan

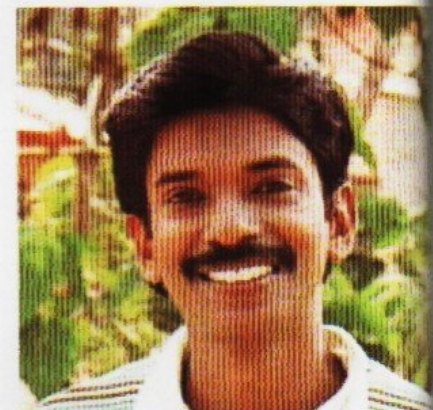
occasion of the 55th birth anniversary of the state.

Prior to Independence two Malayalees got remission from the gallows: K P Gopalan and C I Balan, at the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi. They were convicted on charges of attacking the British government. They were released from prison after completing the term, KPR, as he was called, became an MLA of CPI in the first legislative assembly while C I Balan became a writer and character actor in Malayalam movies. His reminiscences can be read in his book "*Thoorkumarathin Nizhalil*" or "Under the shadow of the gallows" in English.

## A new world record in cinema

Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair, Sree-kumaran Thampy and Balachandra Menon were so far the super film functionaries who handled maximum number of facets of film making. A new young man has come to the fore to establish a new record not only in Malayalam film world but in world cinema itself. The man concerned has claimed that he holds more than 10

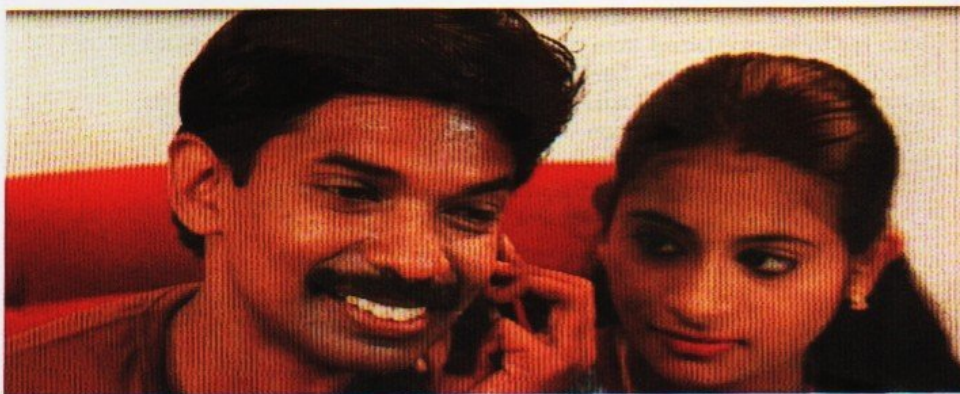
qualifications, could be a new record, including a degree in English, a Masters in Hindi, a degree in law, graduation in civil engineering and a few diplomas in languages, DTP, stenography, computer software and hardware, multi media etc. He is Santhosh Pandit from Kozhikode. His maiden movie 'Krishnanum Radhayum', released in November in only three theatres in Kerala, in



Santhosh Pandit

Ernakulam, Thrissur and Shoranur. The film, according to reports, is amateurish but is doing excellent business.

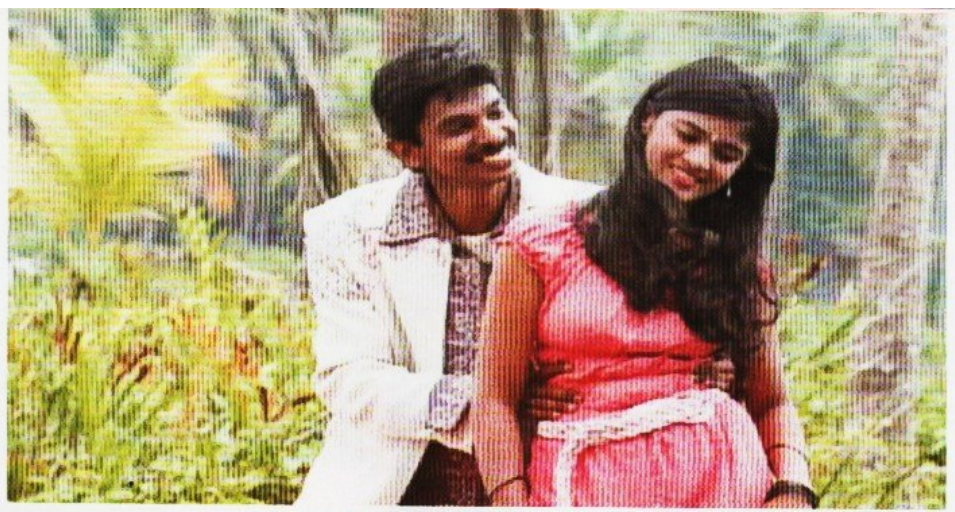
Santhosh has been producer and director besides handling story, screenplay, dialogue, lyrics, music, singing, direction, editing, costume design, fights, titling, re-recording, special effects and production controlling. He would have handled the camera also



Scene from the movie 'Krishnanum Radhayum'

he was not acting as hero of the movie. He also distributed the film. There are about 100 actors, all of them new to the film either in front of the camera or behind it. Everyone in the present Malayalam film world, including Mamu Koya, a native of Kozhikode, came forward to criticize Santhosh as a 'nobody' and that his film would harm the industry.

Santhosh said the critics were jealous of him. Youthful audience thronged the three theatres and cheered every scene. Santhosh is planning to release the movie in eight more theatres and also to dub the movie into Tamil and Hindi. Several TV channels interviewed him and telecast those shows. Santhosh displayed tremendous confidence and claimed that he has already recovered the cost and earned a good profit from the sale of the music through internet.



Scene from the movie 'Krishnanum Radhayum'

There are eight songs in the movie, sung by Santhosh Pandit, M G Sreekumar, Praseetha, Bhavya, Nimmi, Vidhu Pratap and Navajyoth.

The dialogue from the movie has become a rage in Kerala, such as "A bitch cannot cover its modesty by its

tail," "A hen may be black but its eggs are white," "A donkey carrying a bundle of sandalwood will know only its weight, not its fragrance."

Santhosh has already declared his next movie, *Jithu Bhai Enna Chocklate Bhai*.

## Student oriented IIM-Kozhikode

At a time when the prices of every commodity (petrol, food etc.) is spiralling up, the **Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIM-K)** has taken a step in the opposite direction and has decided to reduce its tuition fees by Rs. 30,000 for its flagship Post Graduate Programme to protect students from the inflationary pressures in the economy.

Prof. Debashis Chatterjee, Director of the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIM-K) said, "We have observed that during the last two years the student loan rates have increased between 2 to 4% per annum putting additional burden on the students. As a socially conscientious institute, IIM-K believes that its students be protected from steep increase in fees as most of our students avail of student loans for their studies. Ten percent of our students come from families that have an annual income of Rs. 1 lakh or less. Hence, I have convinced my Board that we will implement a marginal reduction of Rs 30,000 (i.e. 3% of the fee) from the year 2012-13 onwards as a small proactive step to support higher education. This reduction of Rs 30,000 will result in a loss of revenue to the tune of Rs 1.2 Crore to IIM-K. We will also be increasing our PGP intake to 400 students from the Academic Year 2012-13, in spite of serious constraints in our infrastructure and acute water scarcity.

This will offset the reduction in our income."

Prof. Chatterjee also plans to establish scholarships for high achievers:

- *Full fee waiver* to 1% of students having proven record of excellence in academics, sports, extracurricular or social activities through awards or recognitions at national or international level.

- *Full fee waiver* to children of martyrs belonging to military, para-military or police force who had sacrificed their lives during action while protecting the pride and honour of the nation. *Half fee waiver* will be granted to children of defence or allied services who were injured during action and lost their earning capacity.

- *Partial fee waiver* for all students who gets admitted under the Persons with Disability category.

These 3 scholarships are in sync with the IIM-K's mission of nurturing social responsibility and environmentally sensitive practitioners, leaders and educators. The total outflow for these scholarships works would be around Rs 1.6 Crores.

**IIM Kozhikode** has in the past, also pioneered many other reforms in the IIM system including a dramatic shift in the intake of female students across all IIMs.

Last year it had 35% female students in its batch of 320 students which is the highest ever percentage of female students in the history of the IIMs. This geographically challenged Institute was the first to start a two-year globally accredited executive Post Graduate Programme through the digital media. This was the first on-site program of its kind in the world to be accredited by the prestigious Association of MBAs in London.

Now, IIM Kozhikode is planning to initiate an orientation program for SC/ST underprivileged students with its revolutionary "Center for Research and Social Transformation" (CREST).

According to Prof. Chatterjee, "We measure the success of our management program based on exceptional value we create at minimum cost to the country. We create value for money as well as value for many by enhancing the nation's social capital. IIM Kozhikode has decisively shifted its orientation from exclusive elitism to inclusive excellence."

IIM-K was the first IIM to implement affirmative action for the underprivileged even before the Government made it mandatory. Its standing as a school of excellence has not diminished but has only enhanced as a result of its social orientation. Now IIM-K plans to expand and set up programmes in Cochin as well by 2012-13.

# Savidham (1992) സവിധം

**Lyrics:** Kaithapram **Composer:** Johnson  
**Singer:** K S Chitra **Ragam:** Kappi

മൗനസരോവരമാകെയുണർന്നു  
സ്നേഹമനോരഥവേഗമുയർന്നു  
കനകാംഗുലിയാൽ താബുരു മീട്ടും  
സുരസുന്ദരിയാം യാമിനിപോലും  
പാടുകയായ് മധുഗാനം.. ..

കാതരമാം മൃദുപല്ലവിയെങ്ങോ  
സാന്ത്വനഭാവം ചൊരിയുമ്പേ ധർ  
ദ്രാപരമധൂര സ്മൃതികളിലാരോ  
മുരളികയ്യുതുമ്പേ ധർ  
അകതാരിൽ അമൃതലയമലിയുമ്പേ ധർ  
ആത്മാലാപം നുകരാൻ അണയുമോ  
സുകൃതയാം ജനനീ..

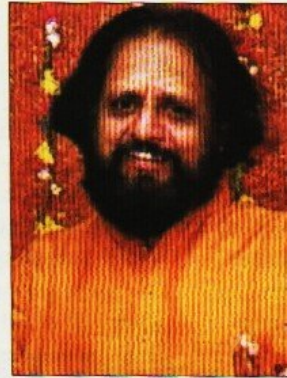
മാനസമാം മണിവീണയിലാരോ  
താരകമന്ത്രം തിരയുകയായ്  
മംഗളഹൃദയേധാനിയായ് ദൂരെ  
ശാരിക പാടുകയായ്  
പൂമൊഴിയിൽ പ്രണവമധു തൂവുകയായ്  
മണ്ണിൻ മാറിൽ കേൾപ്പൂർ  
സഫലമാം കവിതതൻ താളം..

**Transliteration:** Ā, ā = ആ, റ; Ē, ē = ഏ, ഏ; Ī, ī = ഇ, ീ;  
Ō, ō = ഓ, റോ; Ū, ū = ഉ, ു, ũ = ൃ; C, c = ച, ch = ചെ,  
D, d = ട, Dh, dh = ട, Ḍ, ḍ = ഡ, Ḑh, ḑh = ഡ, jh = ജ,  
Ĺ, ĳ = ള; Ñ, ñ = ഞ, ṅ = ഞ, ṇ = ഞ; ṙ = റ, ṛ = റ; ṣ = ഷ;  
Ś, ś = ശ; Ṣ, ṣ = ഷ, T, t = ട, Th, th = റ, Ṭ, ṭ = റ; ṭh = റ

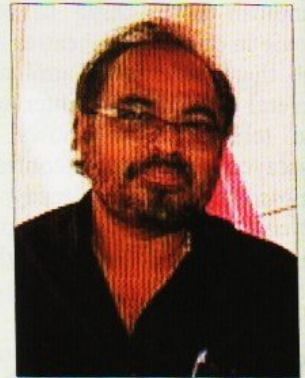
Mounasarōvaramākeyuṅarnnu  
snēhamanōraṭhavēgamuyarnnu  
kanakāṅguliyaīl ṭamburu mīttum  
surasundariyaṁ yāmini pōlum  
pātukayāy madhu gānam

kaṭaramām mṛdu pallaviyengō  
sānṭwana bhāvam coriyumpōl  
dwāpara madhura smṛṭikalīlārō  
muralīkayūṭumpōl  
akaṭārīl amṛṭalayamaliyumpōl  
āṭmāīpam nukarān aṅayumō  
sukṛṭayāṁ janānī..

mānasamām maṅiveṅṅayilārō  
ṭāraka manṭram ṭirayukayāy  
mangala hṛdayadwaniyāy dūre  
śārika pātukayāy  
pūmozhiyil praṅavamadhu thūvukayāy  
maṅṅin māṛīl kēlpū saphalamām  
kaviṭaṭan ṭālam..



Kaithapram



Johnson



K S Chitra

Produced by Babu Thiruvalla and directed by George Kithu Savidham had a star cast of Suresh Gopi, Nedumudi Venu, Asokan, Shanu Krishna, Mathu, Sunitha, Mammukoyil, Kaithapram D Nampoothiri, Aranmula Ponnamma. The story, screenplay and dialogue were written by John Paul and cinematography by veteran Ramachandran Babu. There were four songs, all of which became smash hits and the movie is most known for its songs composed by Johnson. Other songs are Brahmakamalam (KJY Poonthennale and Thoovanam sung by M Sree Kumar and Sujata.

## Fahd Fazil as Shakthan Thampuran

One of the most impressive come-back of the year in Malayalam cinema was that of the young star Fahd Fazil. This son of ace director Fazil, who was rejected by the masses when he appeared as a Chocolate hero in '*Kaiyethum Doorathu*' came back with more meaty roles with films like '*Cocktail*' and '*Chappa Kurissu*' which earned much accolades for him. Now Fahd will be cast in the role of Shakthan Thampuran in the new historical that is under production.

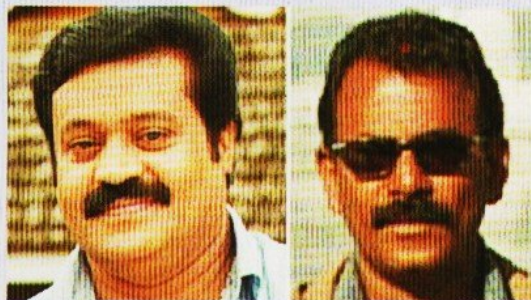


Based on the novel '*Sakthan Thampuran*' by Dr Kalpatta Balakrishnan, the movie will shed light on the life of one of the strongest rulers of the state. The movie, tentatively titled as '*Prathipurushan*', will start shooting by the first week of March at Thrissur. '*Prathipurushan*' is produced by Aparna under the banner of Thrissivaperur Films. Sri Prathap will direct this historical. Ravichandran is in charge of camera while Engandiyoor Chandrasekharan and Samson Kolady will pen the lyrics for the songs.



## Suresh Gopi in Major Ravi's Film

Suresh Gopi is known for his action films and mouthful dialogues. But of late, his fans are a little passive. Director Major Ravi who faced a major disaster with '*Khandahar*', has now invited Suresh Gopi to join him to make '*Raksha*', an action film. Probably two negatives could make a positive!



The movie will be produced by Santhosh Damodar under the banner of Damodar films. This is the first time army films specialist Major Ravi is joining hands with Suresh Gopi.

Plans are to start shooting by the mid of December, '*Raksha*' will be shot at Delhi, Thiruvananthapuram and Thenkasi. The new film will be an action thriller.



## Padmakumar and Jayaram in new project

'*Thiruvambadi Thampuran*' is the title of a new Padmakumar film in which the director joins hands with Jayaram. Padmakumar has directed films like '*Vargam*', '*Vasthavam*', and '*Shikar*'. '*Thiruvambadi Thampuran*' would be scripted by S Suresh Babu. Sneha would be the heroine. Telugu actor Kishore would play the anti-hero in the film. Kalabhavan Mani, Jagathy and Nedumudi Venu would be seen in supporting roles.

## Dileep with 'Hema Malini'

'*Hema Malini*', is the title of the Jose Thomas's next film in which the director joins hands with *Janapriyanayakan* Dileep. After a long gap of six years Jose Thomas is back in direction with '*Hema Malini*'. His last movie was '*Youth Festival*' and he gave a superhit to Dileep through '*Udayapuram Sulthan*' (1999).

'*Hema Malini*' will be scripted by Siby K Thomas and Udaykrishna. It will be a comic caper The shooting will start on December 9th.

## Dulquer Salmaan's 'Second Show'

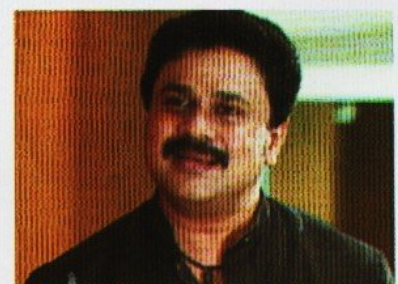
Malayalam actor Mammootty's son, Dulquer Salmaan is debuting as a hero in '*Second Show*'. The film saw a teaser launch on November 10 at Le Meridien in Cochin in a grand scale, and the teaser and website launch were premiered LIVE on IG to film patrons worldwide!



AOPL, the makers of '*Second Show*' have already planned an official launch function of the movie and also Dulquer Salmaan.

Salmaan plays the role of a village youth named Lalu, and '*Second Show*' showcases how life has a second chance in store for every one. Aviyal and Nikhil have tuned music for this movie, which will be in theatres only by the end of January 2012.

The film is directed by Dulquer's friend, debutant, Sreenath Rajendran while screenplay is by Vinu Vishwalal. Pappu handled the camera for this film. The film also has Baburaj and Salim Kumar in pivotal roles.



## Unni Mukundan-A star rises

Of all the heroes who came into movies this year in Malayalam Cinema, Unni Mukundan seems to be one who has very easily become the pet of all new filmmakers. Though his first two films 'Bangkok Summer' and 'Bombay March 12' didn't yield expected results in the Box office, the actor was commented for his meticulous performances.

He had a negative role in 'Bangkok summer' which showcased the range of the young star. And suddenly he is all busy with many new projects. The actor has completed his roles in the new film 'Ezham Suryan' directed by Jnaanasheelan. The director, already a renowned artiste in television, will have in his debut, feature Saikumar, Jagathy, Suraj and Sreejith Ravi.

Unni Mukundan is also the hero of the new T K Rajeevkumar movie 'Thalsamayam Oru Penkutty'. The movie with Nithya Menon in the title role has him as a video cameraman while Nithya is cast as a girl whose daily life become the content of a reality show. Unni is also cast as the hero of the new remake of



'Chattakari' which is yet to finalise its heroine. Unni Mukundan is also looked upon as a possible replacement of a big star in a new project, which will be on sets in a few months.

### Priyamani replaces Andrea

Finally director B Unnikrishnan has zeroed in on a heroine for his UTV Motion Pictures' *Grandmaster*.

National award winning actress Priyamani has been chosen to play the crucial role of the advocate in the film.

It will be her first film with Mohanlal, though there will not be any romantic scenes with the actor. Priyamani has now been confirmed after the director had approached Andrea, Sonia Agarwal and Reema Sen for the same role.

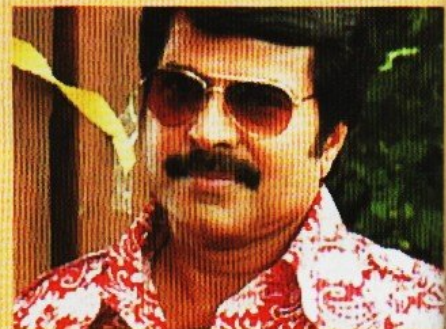
G Dhananjayan of UTV confirmed that Priyamani will play the pivotal role in *Grandmaster*.



## Mammootty to give scholarships

Megastar Mammootty is one actor who is ever busy organising charity activities for the people who really want support. His 'Care and Share Foundation' has in the past organised many such initiatives, helping a lot of people in distress. Recently, the actor was seen at Karunyashramam at Thoppe near Kakkannad, offering a scholarship to the nursing student Mamtha, who lives in the poor home. There was the state wide inauguration of Care and Share's 'Vidhyamritham' project aiming to help the students from poor backgrounds with merit scholarships so that they can achieve heights in academics.

'Vidhyamritham' project is devised to help students who pass Plus Two with



high marks enabling themselves to join professional courses in merit seats. Every student who has already applied for the scholarship has been considered for the year's economic support. The scholarship amount for others will be delivered in their houses soon.

## DOLLS by MJS Media Dubai

The U.A.E. based MJS Media is venturing into the field of Malayalam Film Production. 'Dolls', their first attempt, is written and directed by Shalil Kallur who himself is a newcomer. The cast includes Thilakan, Ashokan, Bijukkuttan, Indrans, Jayan, Babu Namboodiri, John, Kalashaala Babu, Kalabhavan Haneef, Shruti Nair (Miss Kerala First Runner Up), Mary John (Miss Kerala Second Runner Up), Lakshmi Priya, Subi, Mini Arun, and Ambika Mohan and the shooting is scheduled to begin from the first of February.

The movie is being produced as well by Shalil Kallur and the screenplay is written by Sanal Kumar. Photography is

by Anil Vadakkekara; lyrics by Sajee Naavakom; music composed by Murali Guruvayoor. The songs are by K. Yesudas, Rimi Tomy, Murali Guruvayoor, Anupam and Vijay. Art by Ratheesh Pattambi, Clothes design by Kukoo Parameswaran, Make-up by Binash, Background music by Ouseppachan, Production controller Sanal Vellayani, Production design Vinu Abraham, Executive Producer K.B. Madhusudan (Vasthavam fame), Sabu T.K., Supporting producer Noushad, Nishad, Line Producer Mustas Kariyadan.

Pooja for this commercial thriller by Shalil Kallur will be conducted on 12 January.

## Kallante Katha

Jayasuriya plays a role of a thief in his new film 'Kallante Katha'. Scripted and directed by Babu Janardhanan, the movie will stage the real life story of a thief as depicted in the book 'Thaskaran Manian pillayude Aatmakatha'.

An entertainer with all the masala ingredients, Jayasuriya will play the main character of Manianpillai, a well known thief in the circuits as he himself fought and won the cases that were filed against him by the police. Jayasuriya is said to have given priority dates to Babu Janardhanan after hearing the story. The movie will enter production stages by the mid 2012.



## A fresh face for Prithvi

Prithviraj will have a totally different look for the new movie 'Louis Araman'. The actor will present himself as a seminary student with a clean shaven face and white dress, all set to become a priest in the movie written and directed by debutantes Reckon Antony and Rejis Estony. Madhu Neelakantan is the cinematographer.

Meanwhile, Prithvi will start acting in his first Hindi movie 'Ayya' soon. Basically a cross-cultural love story with the right mix of comedy and romance, the movie will have Prithvi as a Tamil boy, who falls in love with a Maharashtrian girl played by Rani Mukherjee. The movie is produced by Anurag Kashyap.

Rani Mukherjee has a high opinion for the actor in Prithvi. "At first glance I found him extremely good-looking and charismatic, which explained why he is such a huge star down South. Though he's a Malayalam superstar, Prithviraj was just like one of us and very friendly" says Rani.

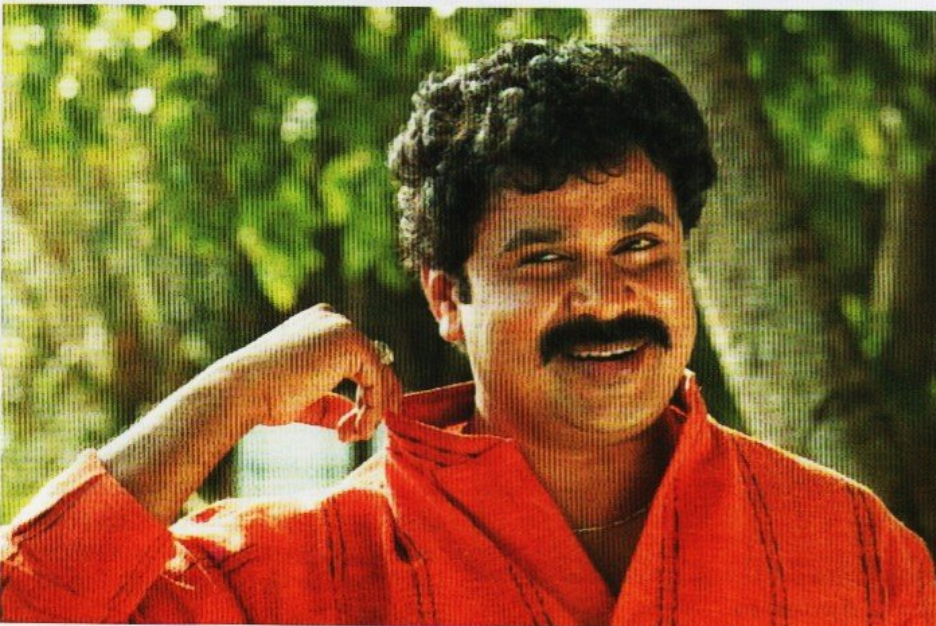


## Dileep gets Ananya and Anjali as heroines

Dileep has a year back signed up to do Viji Thampi's *Nadodi Mannan*. In the film Dileep plays a young man who due to certain political manipulations becomes the Mayor of a city where corruption and crime rate are high. Dileep has decided to give it priority over his other immediate projects.

The star has managed to pull off a coup by getting the two stars of the Tamil super hit *Engayeyum Eppothum Ananya and Anjali* as his heroines.

*Nadodi Mannan* is being produced by V S Subhash under the banner of Chithram Films with script by Krishnan Poojapura and music by Vidyasagar.



## Producer N P Abu is Dead

Malayalam film producer of the late 60's N P Abu (73) died on November 8. Following some heart related diseases, at Ernakulam.

Abu came to the forefront of Malayalam movies by producing C Radhakrishnan's well known novel 'Thevitissi' with the title 'Priya' that actor Madhu directed. With Baburaj's music and Yousafali Kecheri's lyrics, the movie turned out to be a hit. Abu also made *Visa*, *Aniyatha Valakal* and *Dweep*. He runs *Priya Films* and *Priya Travels* and also founded *C H Samskarika Vedi*, *Chavakkad*.

He is survived by his wife *Suhra* and children *Rafique*, *Faisal* and *Shabana*. Hearing about his demise, his brother *Khader* (71) fainted and died.

# Omkar P Ravindran

*Nine year old Omkar Ravindran has completed 88 dance performances on the Mumbai stage, a rare achievement at such a young age.*

One is astonished to see the transformation that overcomes this young lad as he dances-his expressiveness and fluidity of his steps as he flits across the stage shows promise of a great future for him in this art.

Omkar started learning Bharatanatyam from the age of four. At two, he used to perform western dances on stage. In October this year, he performed Bharatanatyam at Kottakal Sivaraman Memorial Pravasi Puraskar programme presented by Stage India Academy and was felicitated as "Wonder Boy". He has won several awards at competitions in both western and Bharatanatyam classical dances. He recently performed at the Mumbai Pooram at Dombivli.

Young Omkar is the only son of M Ravindran and Anita Ravindran. Ravindran works as HR co-ordinator in Medha HR Consultants while Anita is an export executive at Marico Ltd. He hails from Madampath House, Odannur in Palakkad district and Anita is from Pothiyath House Thiruvilvamala in Thrissur district.



*Omkar with his parents Anita and Ravindran*

Ravindran came to Mumbai in 1980 and Anita in 1991. They got married in 1996. The couple considers Omkar as Manu Amritanandamayi's gift, (they are both her devotees).

Omkar studied Bharatanatyam in Kerala under Kalamandalam Gururaj Smitha and did his arangettam at Guruvayur temple in May 2011. He has been dancing with Abhilash Gangadharan ( Goldie) of Mumbai in western dance performances. He is also learning Carnatic music from Jaya, Carnatic music teacher.

Apart from dancing, Omkar's hobbies include reading, skating swimming and all kinds of sports activities. He is also consistent topper in his class, studying Std IV at the Universal High School Dahisar.

# History in a Chart

Dr C N N Nair has prepared a chart literally, tracing the history of Malayalam literature. He call it *Malayala bhasha tharangangal*, from the eighth century to the modern times.

Dr Nair has since condensed the history of India of over 11,000 years on a graph, laminated and framed for easy comprehension of students of history. Dr Nair has arranged the events in an orderly manner, to make even the disinterested ones to understand history. There are six segments in the chart designed by Dr Nair. The first segment is a general one, making one find his bearings around the world especially in relation with Europe. The second segment deals with 700 BC to the birth of Jesus Christ, the beginning of modern era, the third from Christ to cover the first millennium, the fourth from first half of second millennium, the fifth the next 300 years and the last segment covers the period between 1800 and 2010 AD.

It is an accepted fact that unless one is interested in a particular event, he would not remember its time of occurrence. Without a mention of the time, history is of no relevance and hence the disinterest of people in that subject. Dr Nair's latest attempt would remove their disinterest and make them keen students of history. He selected a small piece of time out of eternity - from 9,000 B.C.E. to 2010 C.E. - to start his journey through Indian history for depiction and analysis. The first block gives some of the major turning points in world history. As regards India, 9,000 to 7000 B.C.E. was the period of 'Rock Shelters'. It was followed by 'Mehergarh Culture' till 3,000. The Indus Valley (Harappan) civilization covers 3300 BCE to 1700 BCE to merge with the Vedic Age (up to 500 BCE). India's greatest contribution to the world, the Upanishads and the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata appeared around this time frame, he argues. All over the world there was a great intellectual awakening from about 600 BCE onwards. There were the great Greek Dramatists and Philosophers; Indian religious figures, Vardhamana Mahavir and Gautama Buddha; Zoroaster in Iran and Lao Tse and Confucius in China. Then came Jesus Christ, at the cross of BCE and CE.



Dr C N N Nair

After 600 years, Islam appeared on the global horizon. The youngest religion, Sikhism came in the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE.

## Approach

Dr C N N Nair has recorded the salient points and anecdotes of each era. Many empires and kingdoms that arose, flourished, sustained and declined in different parts of India, such as Chola, Chera and Pandya are marked from BCE onwards. When one empire flourished, another declined.

In the first block he deals with the times of Mahavir and Budhdha. We notice Bimbisara and Ajatasatru of the Magadha dynasty followed by the Maurya dynasty, established by Chandragupta Maurya, with the help of Chanakya (Kautilya) and his descendants like Ashoka the Great.

The second block deals with the first millennium after Christ. Kanishka's empire, Gupta Empire [320 -416 C.E], foreign visitor, Fahian from China etc appears in this segment. Mohammed and Islam, Huan Tsang, emperor HarshaVardhan, Pulakeshin II, important Pallava kings Mahendra-varman and Narasimhavarman etc can be seen in this segment. Many kingdoms rose Pala, Pallava, Rashtrakuta, Chalukya, Gurjarapratihara, Yadav etc. 'Adi Sankara' and his 'digvijaya' indicate

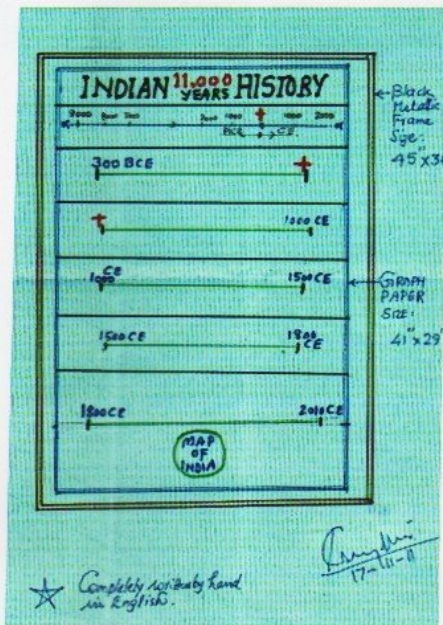
renaissance of Hinduism.

Third slice deals with five hundred years from 1000 CE. Attack of Mohammed Ghor, Prithwiraj-Samyukta story, Qutb Minar of Qutbuddin Eibek, first Muslim woman ruler Razia Begum, Slave Dynasty followed by Khilji Dynasty, Rani Padmini, Marco Polo, Tughlak Dynasty; Mohd. Bin Tughlaq, Vijayanagara Empire in South, several sultanates in central India; Guru Nanak, Vasco De Gama's landing at Calicut are the major personalities and incidents during this time.

The salient features of the fifth segment (1500 to 1800 CE) are the growth of Sikh religion, establishment of Mogul empire in India, periods of emperors Babur, Humayun, Akbar the Great, Jehangir, Shah Jehan. Aurangzeb and the establishment of British East India Company (1600 CE). Kings like Krishnadevaraya, Maharana Pratap Singh, and Shah Jehan etc lived during this period. The decline of the Mogul Empire and the Maratha ascendancy under Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj call for special mention. There was the brief span of power rule by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan in the South. Persecution of Sikhs, martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (1675) and the establishment of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh (1699) are the other features of this period.

The final segment covering a time span of 310 years...1800 to 2010 obviously is rich in content as there is a voluminous bank of data available accurately.

Above the Time line, you have the Mogul ruler Bahadur Shah 'Zafar', British Monarchs; their Indian Governors/GGs; major American presidents and the First war of Indian Independence (1857). From 1947 onwards, we see the Russian, Chinese rulers. 1947 is the year of INDIAN INDEPENDENCE. Pak rulers are marked above time line. Below we have periods of Indian Presidents and Prime Ministers both in the chronological order and also as a table with the exact dates in office. Some major turning points in history like October Revolution, World War I & II, Indo-Pakistan wars etc are indicated. Mahatma Gandhi's life span is indicated in the centre.



**A schematic diagram of 11,000 years of Indian History**

A Map of India, not to scale, with outlines of the different States and Union Territories is at the middle bottom. To its left, is given a table with the above information plus their capitals, dates of joining Indian union etc. As time progresses, some UTs are getting upgraded to states.

A vast amount of data is incorporated in different parts of this segment based on space availability. Some of them are: Brief write-ups on - The Great Indian Mutiny-1857, British East India Co. growth; Milestones to Indian freedom etc. There are brief info about items like the spiritual gurus of ancient India; prominent sons of India, whose names are worthy of remembrance; Indian Constitution, Indian Parliament, the National Anthem, National Song, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Five Year Plans, Bharat Ratna Awardees, Population, Demographic details, Languages etc. to mention some.

Dr Nair's trip to USA in the winter of 2010 which left him practically confined to home for some 2-3 months, gave him ample opportunity to translate his dream to reality. He took the graph sheets and voluminous notes with him this self-imposed task. Within the six months that he was there, nearly 90 percent of it was completed. Besides his notes, inputs from Internet helped a lot in finalizing the dates. After his return, he completed the chart. By end of September 2011, the graph took shape. It took Dr Nair some 5 years, from conception to completion. It has turned out to be a Historical Atlas of India.

**LIST of Ayyappa Temples**

Narayaneeya Parayana Satsangam Shree Krishna Temple, Veer Desai Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai-59.

Trombay Sastha Mandal (Regd), Ayyappa Temple, Nr. Shiv Temple, Anushakti Nagar, Mumbai 94,

Shree Ayyappa Seva Sangham, B/8/1,Usha nagar, Village Road, Bhandup (W), Mumbai

Shree Ayyappa Bhakta Sangam, 207, Tulsi Mahal, Talao Road, Navghar Road, Saibaba Nagar, Bhayander(E), Dist. Thane. 401105.

Ayyappa Seva Samithi, Ground Floor, Jay Gurudev Bhavan, Near Vallabh nagar Co-op. Stores, Borivli (W) Mumbai 103, Ph : 28950553

Shree Ayyappa Seva Sangham Ayyappa Temple complex, Sector 8B, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai 400 614

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# Amazon River and the Kerala Connection



**Dr. Valiya Mannathal Hamza**

Dr. Valiya Mannathal Hamza, now 70, is a Malayalee scientist credited with co-discovering, together with Elizabeth Taveres Pimentel, the "Rio Hamza" or Hamza River which runs underneath the much better known Amazon.

Hamza and his research scholar Elizabeth detailed their findings at the International Congress of the Brazilian Society of Geophysics in Rio de Janeiro. Dr Hamza is listed as a Permanent professor in the Geophysics specialization at the Brazilian National Observatory (*Observatório Nacional*). He has to his credit over 100 publications in national and international journals.

## Early Life

Hamza graduated from St Joseph's College, Devagiri, Kozhikode and did his postgraduation in Applied Physics from Government Victoria College,

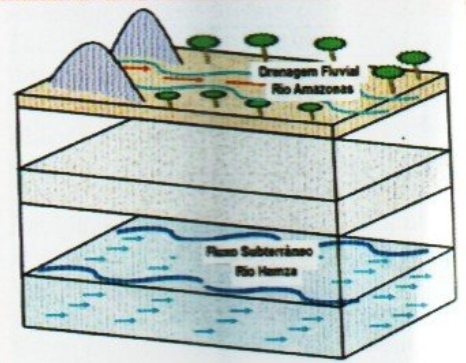
Palakkad. Soon after his post graduation, he joined Farook College in 1964. He was always oriented towards scientific research and joined as a Senior Scientific Assistant at the National Geophysical Research Institute in Hyderabad in 1966. He moved to University of Western Ontario, Canada for his PhD in 1968 and subsequently went to Brazil in 1974.

## The Discovery

Scientists detected this river after they analyzed data from 241 wells that Brazilian oil company Petrobras drilled in the Amazon region in the 1970s and 1980s. The river was unofficially named the Hamza by scientists at Brazil's National Observatory in honor of their colleague, geophysicist Hamza in a tribute to his four-decade work in the region.

Thermal signatures of groundwater suggest that the Hamza flows west to east just like the Amazon, except at a depth of about 13,000 feet (4,000 meters) below the Earth's surface. Computer simulations suggest that at a higher depth of about 2,000 feet (600 meters), the river actually flows vertically.

Much less water flows down the Hamza than the Amazon about 1 million gallons (3,900 cubic meters) per second as opposed to about 35 million gallons (133,000 cubic meters) per second for the Amazon. Water also crawls more slowly down the Hamza, with speeds of about 33 to 330 feet (10 to 100 meters) per year, as opposed to the Amazon's swift water speeds of about 20 to 390



*This schematic shows the flow of the underground river to the Amazon River above. Credit: Valiya Hamza.*

feet (6 to 120 meters) in just one hour. Still, the Hamza is nearly as long at about 3,700 miles (6,000 kilometers) compared to the Amazon's length of about 3,800 miles (6,100 km). The Hamza is also much broader at about 125 to 250 miles (200 to 400 km) wide, compared to the Amazon's width of about 0.6 to 60 miles (1 to 100 km). Hamza is thrilled that his research has attracted such attention.

"It is possible that underground river systems of a similar kind exist in other parts of the Earth," Hamza said. Probably he had in mind the river Saraswati at the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna at Prayaga, near Allahabad when he said this.

Altogether, these findings reveal "there are three kinds of 'river systems' in the Amazon region," Hamza said. In addition to the well-known Amazon River and its tributaries, there are "atmospheric rivers" where large amounts of water vapor flow through the local air and now this underground river system. Knowing about these three flows helps scientists understand better the total amount of water available in the Amazon region, which is a critical factor for investigating life there.

'It is possible,' said Hamza when asked whether he would like to return to India to work on some project.

The Amazon River delta (mouth) in Brazil as captured by Nasa's Landsat GeoCover Program. The river is believed to be 11 million years old [The author was college mate at Government Palghat and colleague of Dr V M Hamza at Farook College, Kozhikode]



*The great Amazon: Now scientists say another river is flowing 13,000ft beneath it.*



# Kerala in Mumbai

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