

- ✦ Antop Hill
- ✦ Popular Malayalam Theatre
- ✦ Summer Fresh
- ✦ Malayalam Lessons

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## Easter and Vishu Greetings



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# PLANNED RETIREMENT

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# LIFE AFTER EIGHTY

**K**ERALA IN MUMBAI had taken note of the increasing number of Malayalees in public life who have attained the ripe age of ninety. Among them were K M Philip, Krishnan Parapally, Capt. C P Krishnan Nair and Dr. K K Damodaran.

A U N survey has indicated that by 2070 there would be a wide disparity between the young and the old, with more people who can be termed the aged. There are several factors that have led to this situation. Among them, rapid urbanization, the reluctance of young couples to have a number of children (often only one) and to delay the first child, with a view to consolidate their careers.

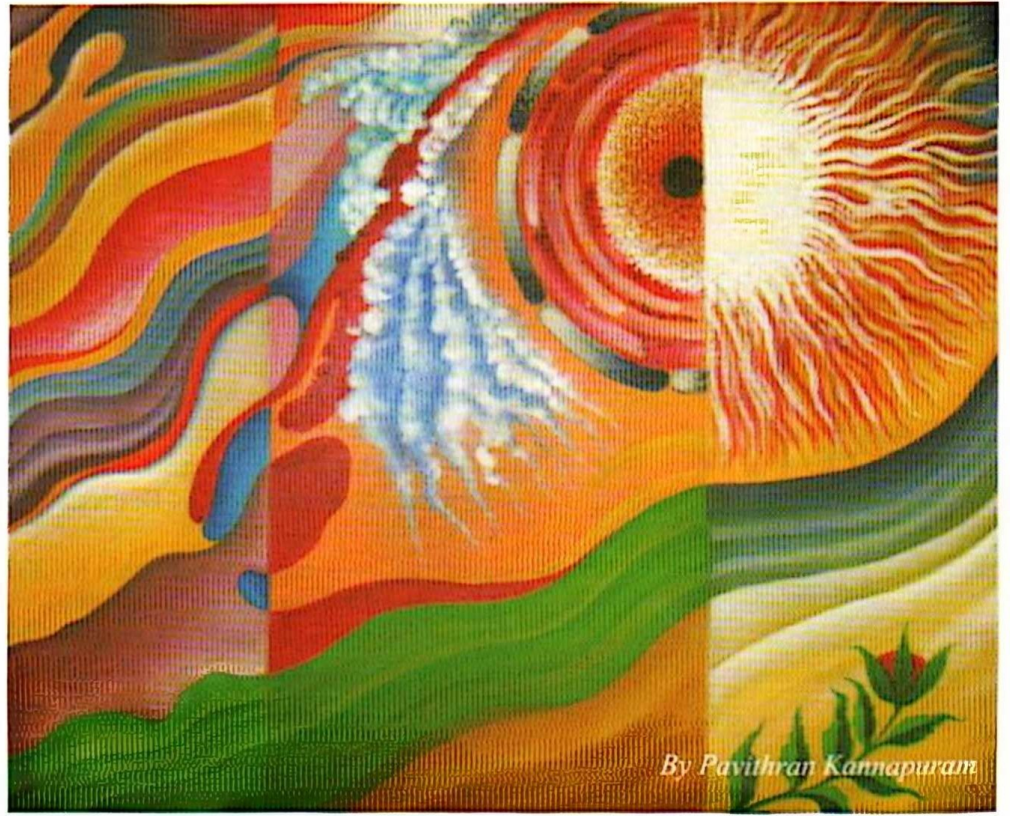
What disturbs one is that the rapid nuclearisation of families, breaking away from old joint families also leads to isolation of the aged parents, who have little emotional support. For them, the financial support their children provide is not enough. They often expect, often unjustifiably, a return of the love and care they lavished on their offspring, often at great sacrifice to themselves. This is when they feel emotionally drained and eager for any emotional crutch. This crutch is often pronounced in widowers or widows who have no children around them on whom they can lavish their love and affection. In most cases the life schedules of their grandchildren also deprives them of the company of the third generation, making their isolation complete.

This is a problem that will become acute as time goes by. The problem of the aged and the question of providing them the kind of emotional support they look for in their old age, has to be tackled right now before the problem becomes so huge that it cannot be tackled by individuals or even NGOs. Children who have gone abroad for the sake of their careers often put their aged parents into old age homes, where they feel the isolation all the more.

The fault for this undesirable situation should be shared by the elderly parents also. They failed to prepare themselves for life, after sixty and beyond. Even when their children fly the nest, they should have prepared themselves for this eventuality. They could have honed their skills, involvement in social activities, developed alternative skills and expertise to make use of the spare time during their retirement. All the nonagenarians we identified continue to do what they had been doing all their lives and keeping their minds occupied enough to notice the age that inevitably creeps on them along with all the age related problems. It is often an idle mind that nurses imaginary ailments and then finds itself incapable of doing anything useful.

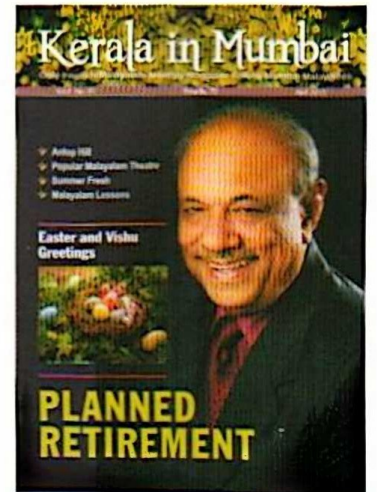
In this issue we carry a story about P J Mathew who is looking forward to retirement to do the kind of things he likes to do best - social service. It should be an object lesson for many.

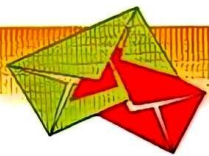
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## Letters to the Editor .....

### Karopanicker

This refers to the article on Vettekkorumakan, in February and March issues. I hail from Thrikkalangoode, near Manjeri and am 75 years old now. My father was Karopanicker and was the last in that lineage. He died 44 years ago. He fell ill immediately after completing his part in *Nilambur pattu festival*, and was bed ridden for almost six months.

I have accompanied my father to Vettekkorumakan temples on several occasions and have witnessed the offering of 12,000 coconuts. This offering is now performed by Namboothiries as the lineage is broken.

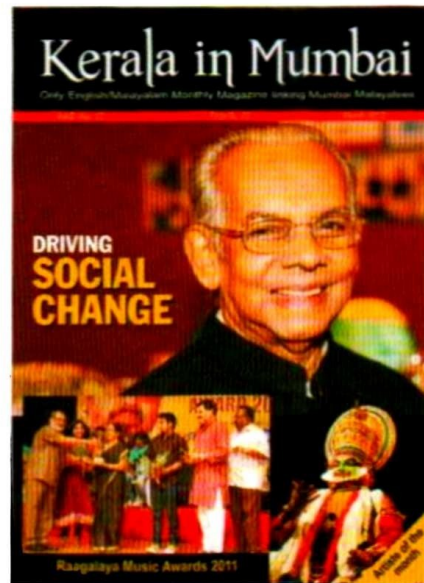
*P M Menon,  
Andheri East*

### Cynicism turned to appreciation

Two years ago when I was going through the earlier Issues of Kerala in Mumbai, I used to wonder how such a type of niche magazine will survive in this cosmopolitan metropolis.

But now my cynicism has turned to appreciation. I must congratulate your team for bringing out such a wonderful magazine in English for the readers of Mumbai especially those Malayalees who find it difficult to read Malayalam yet want to know about their roots. Now in the first week of every month I look forward to KERALA IN MUMBAI on my table.

*Suresh Kumar  
Antop Hill*



### Include More Mumbai News

I am a regular reader of KERALA IN MUMBAI. Because I can not read Malayalam I am unable to read the social and cultural news and activities of Mumbai Malayalees that regularly appear in the Malayalam papers of Mumbai. My request is that you should please include more news about events, personalities and activities of Malayalees of Mumbai. They would make interesting copies. Of course do continue to write on the rich culture and traditions of Kerala as we want to know about our roots also.

*R Krishnan Nair  
Nerul*

**We welcome responses from readers. Please forward your responses and suggestions about various happenings concerning Malayalees residing in this part of India. You may send us your piece in either English or Malayalam. (We shall translate and publish it in English) You may send them via e-mail to [keralainmumbai@gmail.com](mailto:keralainmumbai@gmail.com) or by post to Editor, Kerala In Mumbai, 105-B, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Mumbai 400 059.**

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*Easter - Vishu Greetings*

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A portrait of P J Mathew, a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a red shirt, and a red tie. The background is dark and textured.

P J MATHEW

# SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN, GREATER GANDHIAN

-P K Ravindranath

Starting his career in Mumbai as a partner in an Industrial and Security Detective Agency, P J Mathew soon rose to become the Head of Mathew International, a group of companies that deals with overseas recruitment, manufacturing and real estate besides other business ventures. But his undying passion and love is Gandhism. He wants to devote more time to teaching the ideals of Gandhian philosophy and do more social work for his fellowmen in the years to come.

**I**t is difficult to categorise P J Mathew, in the manner in which he can unerringly pick the right man with the right skills and training to match employers' specifications. Mathew runs the biggest placement agency in the country - Mathew International.

P J Mathew is a multi-faceted personality. An entrepreneur, a philanthropist, an educationalist, a promoter of good causes and above all, a Gandhian to the core.

If Mahatma Gandhi had been born a Christian, Mathew believes, he would have been Canonised a long time ago and deservedly so. His lament is that the sanctity of Khadi, which the Mahatma gave to the country as one measure to ease the strain on Indians has been eroded in recent times and is frank in pointing out that it today is used to cover up all sorts of social and political sins.

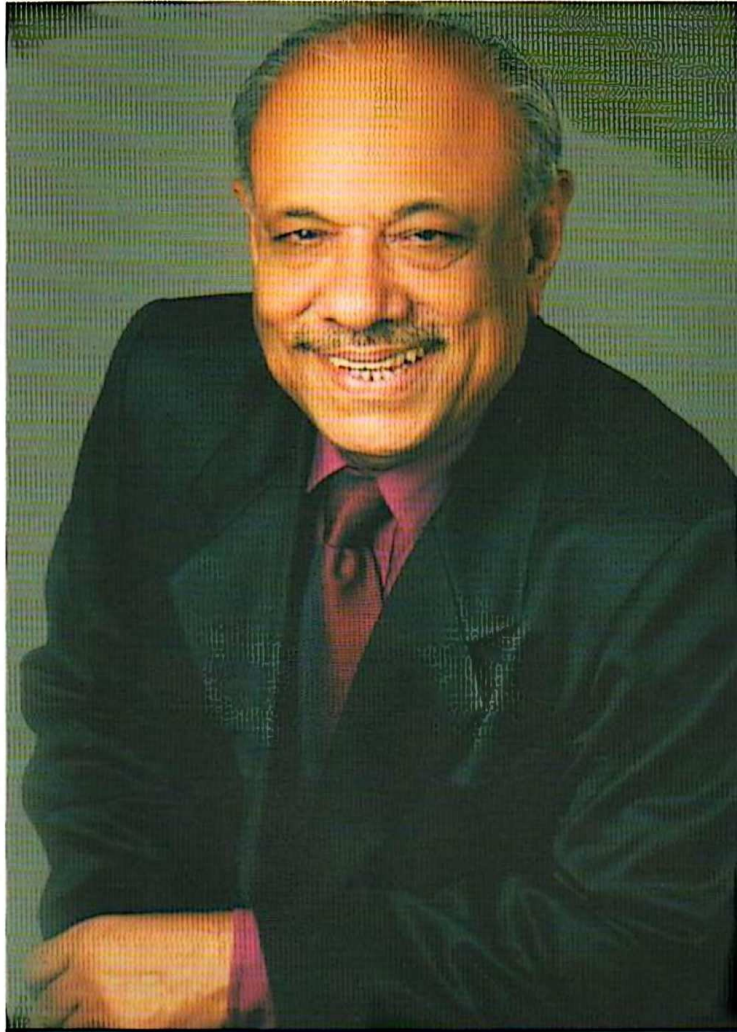
After 38 years of running Mathew International and having the satisfaction that he has helped place over 250,000 persons in jobs abroad, he is planning for retirement. But in his case, retirement does not mean a life of ease and comfort and idling away his time, but literally a change of life where he can devote more time for his studies on Gandhism ("he is perhaps the most written about individual in the modern world"), devote time for social service, help promote goodwill and trust among various communities and cement communal harmony. And, to promote more schools and educational institutions wherever required. He has a huge collection of books on Gandhi.

Mathew lives up to his principles and beliefs. Since it is almost five decades since he left his hometown, Ambalapuzha, he rushes there to participate in some local festivity or celebration, be it the annual temple festival of the local Krishna temple (with its famed palpayasam (milk kheer)), or the local Maria Montessori English School of which he is Patron and Director or the local church. If it is not the frequent trips to Ambalapuzha, he is out of the country in Saudi Arabia,

Dubai or Kuwait or in Europe.

Mathew came to Mumbai at the age of 19 in 1965. In Mumbai he floated the Industrial Security and Detective Agency along with two partners. The agency catered to the needs of industrial houses that were booming at the time which needed protection from sabotage, conspiracies and violent and aggressive trade unionism. Mumbai was the hub of activities of some of the most virulent trade unionists in the country during that period.

In the boom time for the Gulf Oil Companies, Mathew tied up with Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national oil



company, to meet their requirements of trained and experienced personnel for crude oil exploration, production, marketing, shipping and for petrochemicals. His ability to spot the right person for the right job according to the client's specification made Mathew International a known name internationally. Mathew International's endorsement of any candidate is as good as a guarantee of the right man for the right job.

Mathew International's trademark benchmark for handpicking the right

personnel was attained with the fervour with which Mathew kept pace with international developments and the information explosion which opened out channels that were undreamt of decades ago. The company is now into online placements in a big way, with demand for qualified personnel rising steeply. And in keeping with the requirements of the time Mathew International is into real estate and manufacturing besides other business ventures.

Hailing from a family that is known in Ambalapuzha for its level of erudition and learning and genial social manners, Mathew did not forget to replenish his

meager educational achievements. He graduated and then acquired a Masters degree in Gandhism from Kamraj University in Madurai. Even as a schoolboy he had been fascinated by Mahatma Gandhi. His involvement with Gandhian studies continues despite his professional preoccupations.

Mathew was Vice-President of the South Indian Gandhian Association, based in Madurai. He has been President of the Kerala Catholic Association currently in his fourth term. The Association has 42 units and takes in all factions of the Christian faith in Mumbai in its fold. He is also Vice President of the World Malayalee Council. He is a member of the Malayalee Chamber of Commerce and is on the managing committee of an International school under construction at Chembur. The school now runs K G classes and a day care centre. When completed, Mathew hopes, it would be a

model educational institution geared to churning out the next generation model Indians as Gandhi visualised.

Mathew's father Joseph was an agriculturist and mother Mariamma Joseph was a home maker. In 1975, he got married to Celine, a post graduate in Economics from Kerala. His elder son Joseph Mathew born in 1976, is currently pursuing a double Master's (MBA plus Masters in Health Care Administration) at Ohio State University (OSU) in the US. His wife, Maria, is pursuing her fellowship in

Musco-Skeletal Radiology in the US. They have a baby, Marcus. Mathew's second son, Thomas Mathew is fully involved in Mathew International, and is the Vice- President of the company. He graduated with his Masters from New York University (NYU).

Since Thomas is currently managing the day to day affairs at Mathew International, Mathew is devoting more time for the activities he has set his heart on. He recollects that he has been used to working 12 to 18 hours a day. He retains the same enthusiasm and energy for a full day's work which he can now devote to ventures that are in accordance with Gandhi's dreams.

Whatever he does today, he ardently believes is only as a trustee, in the Gandhian concept of trusteeship.



*P J Mathew with his family, Joseph, Maria, Celine, Thomas*

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## ANTOP HILL

# FIRST HALT FOR MALAYALEE FAMILIES

Antop Hill, till the 1980's, had an overwhelming Malayalee presence. Being close to the city offices, it was almost a transit camp for Malayalees who stayed here till they secured a job and then shifted to the suburbs.

**A**ntop Hill is a small hill that runs north-south on the eastern side of the Harbour line between Guru Tegh Bahadur Nagar (Koliwada) and Wadala railway stations. The CGS Colony came up here in late 1950s. Since both GTBN and King's Circle stations are closeby, Antop Hill is accessible by both central and western railway lines.

The New Link Road cuts the place into two parts. The four Walchand Bungalows which are about a century old, are to the north. The old factory of Indian Hume Pipes just below the bungalows and owned by Walchand family, has now been converted into a new elite Housing

area called Dosti Acres. The Patent and Trademarks Office And Salt Research Institute have also come up in this area. To the southern side of the Hill is the Muslim sanatorium with a magnificent entrance. Between the sanatorium and the CGS Colony lies the ancient dargah of Hazrat Bhatkali Shah and Sheikh Mishari Plot. And opposite the Dargah is the Antop Hill Bus depot. Buses ply to all parts of Mumbai from here since Antop Hill does not have a railway station. The mono-rail project under construction from Chembur to Jacob's Circle passes through Antop Hill.



Lakshmi Venkatachalam

## CGS Colony (Central Government Servants Colony)

The CGS Colony came up in the 1950's and comprises residential quarters for Central Government employees from Class I officers to Class IV employees. They include all departments like CBI, IB, Central Excise and Customs, Pay & Accounts, Income Tax, CPWD etc. There are seven sectors in all, 6 in Kane Nagar and Sector 7 on SM Plot. The Antop Hill CGS Quarters is one of the biggest housing complexes for Central Government employees in Mumbai on 83 acres of land with buildings that cover an area of 42,000 sq mts. Some buildings are very old and dilapidated. But renovation and repair work is going on in the older buildings within the colony. The CGS Colony has two dispensaries providing allopathic ayurvedic and homeopathic treatments, polyclinics, Kendriya Vidyalaya, balwadis, post office, police station etc. The colony is maintained by the CPWD (Central Public Works Department). Many Malayalees live in CGS Quarters like a big family. The Ayyappa Mission is a social and religious organisation that binds Malayalees together. Other Malayalee organizations are Muthappan Seva Samithi, SNMS, SNPD Units etc. There is a Malayalee Mother of Jesus Church in Antop Hill.

## Kalpak Estate

Kalpak Estate is a Housing Complex that houses several Malayalee families. Some of them are businessmen while others are in services. They have formed KAFFE (Kalpak estate Association For Family Entertainment.) The Association has family outings, picnics and celebrates festivals together. To attract youngsters, it



CPWD Office that maintains CGS Colony.

regularly conducts quiz competitions and sports activities. This Association is basically a social body to get the younger generation of Malayalees interacting with one another.

## Ayyappa Mission

The Ayyappa Mission was started 40 years ago. Every year it conducts Mandala puja in November-December for three days with active participation of all Malayalee residents of Antop Hill. The functions include *laksharchana*, *sastha preethi*, *para Edappu*, and the customary procession of the deity on the last day with *thalam*, *Udukku Pattu*, *panchavadyam*. *Narayaneeyam Parayanam*, *Akhandanama japam*. Devotional song programmes are also held during this time. The Ayyappa Mission is a unifying force among the Malayalees here.

Devika Nair, Superintendent of Customs Mumbai, living in CGS Quarters

has been singing bhajans during Mandala pooja celebrations since she was nine years old. A native of Trippunithura, she was brought up in Mumbai, her father being in the Defence. Devika is also actively involved in other Malayalee social organisations and helps needy Malayalees in whatever way she can.

The President of Ayyappa Mission is RV Venugopalan and the Vice President is NK Nambiar. Narayana Panicker is the Secretary while Ravi Menon is the Jt Secretary. TR Gopalakrishnan is the Treasurer of Ayyappa Mission. There are 13 Managing Committee members, AK Vijayan Nambiar, G Devadas, CR Padmarajan, Biju Kumar, K Sundareswaran, AK Pradeep Kumar, U Rajakumaran, KV Sethumadhavan, PJ Sasidharan, KC Gopalakrishnan Nair, MV Ravi, VA Sunil Kumar and KN Mony. S Prasannachandran is the internal auditor.



Devotees at the Bhajan and Deeparadhana during Mandala puja celebrations at Ayyappa Mission.

## Mother of Jesus Church

Mother of Jesus Church in Antop Hill, consecrated on October 29, 1974, was the first Malayalee church for Kerala Catholics in Mumbai and the first parish under the Kalyan diocese when the latter was formed in 1988. The parish covers the areas up to BPT colony south and Wadala Station, in the east up to Bhakti Park, to Eastern Express Highway excluding Everard Nagar and Suman Nagar north and in the west in Dr. Ambedkar Road up to Ruia College signal including Five Gardens. There are more than 350 members in this parish. Mass services are held daily at 7.30 pm and on Sundays at 8 am and 7 pm in Malayalam and at 10.30 am in English. Novena services are offered on week days except Tuesdays. The Feast of our Lady of Velankanni is celebrated every year on the first Sunday of December.

Social Activities of the Church include:

1) Marian Nursery managed by the church looking after the needs of the children of all faiths and creeds of the area.

(ii) Karunya Trust under the church provides medical, educational and financial aid to the needy irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

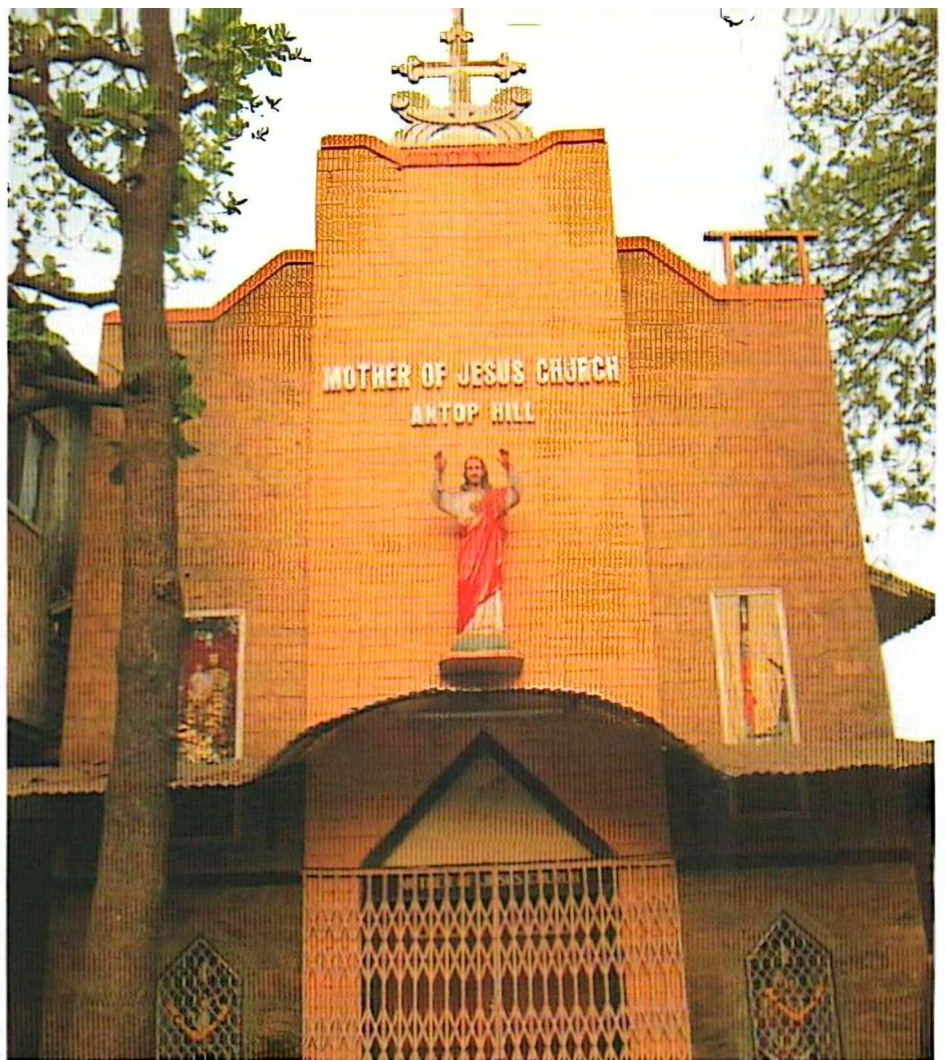
(iii) Associations / Organizations under the church: - Pithruvedi and Mathrusangam as the names suggest, for fathers and mothers and youth undertakes various social activities under the aegis of the diocese.

Fr. Joseph Kusumalayam CMI is the present parish priest. Shibu Joseph and John Joseph, the present trustees help the priest in the administration of the church along with the parish committee consisting of 30 members.

Fr. Joseph Kusumalayam belongs to CMI (Carmelites of Mary Immaculate) Congregation. He has done his Philosophy and Theology in Dharamaram College, Bangalore and was ordained as a priest in 2005. He was Vice-principal at Viswajyothi CMI Public School, Angamaly. Father Joseph has done his Post-graduation in Literature from Mumbai University (2009) and is currently doing doctorate under the guidance of Dr. Marie Fernandez (Principal St. Andrew's College, Bandra). He has been looking after the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malabar Community in



Fr. Joseph



Mother of Jesus Church in Antop Hill

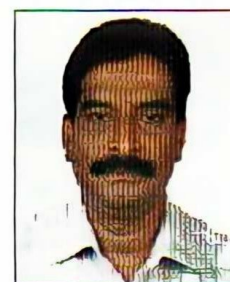
Colaba, Byculla, Varthak Nagar, Thane and currently he is with Mother of Jesus Church at Antop Hill.

## Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam

The SNDP Branch Unit No 3854 was formed in Antop Hill in 1996. P Vijayan was elected as the first President and Prakash Kumar as the first Secretary. Currently MV Ravi is the President and K Anil Kumar is the Secretary of this Unit. Ravi hails from Thrissur and has his own business. His wife is Usha. His daughter Rashmi has completed BDS and is doing her internship. Anil Kumar hails from Kollam and is Manager of Sree Gokulam Chits and Finance Co (P) Ltd at Nerul Branch. His wife, Leena, from Pathanamthitta, works for a private company. They have one son Ayush, now in Std VII.

The SNDP Antop Hill Unit has instituted Guru Chaitanya Award to be bestowed on an individual who has contributed and worked towards spreading Sree Narayana Guru's teachings and messages. Four persons namely, Dr KK Damodaran, Jaya C

Suvarna (Bharat Co-op Bank Chairman and President of Billawar Association), Omkar, (Managing Editor of *Gurudevan* Magazine) and Bhandwadekar (Bhandari Association President) have been conferred this Award. Every year the Unit celebrates its annual day and Guru Jayanti. Educational aid is given to poor students to continue their studies while meritorious students of SSC and HSC board exams are given prizes. The immediate aim of the Unit is to buy an office space of its own. The ladies Wing of SNDP has joined hands with SNMS ladies Wing and together they conduct cultural contests and programmes and group prayers meetings. The SNDP Vanitha Unit won the consolation prize at the *pookala malsaram* contest recently held by Malayala Manorama Group.



M V Ravi



K Anil Kumar

**Rajendran Neduparambil**

Rajendran Neduparambil is the Chief Financial officer of Akbar Travels, Mumbai and stays at Dosti Nagar Antop Hill. Born in Ponnani, Malappuram District in Kerala, his parents are the late Sankaran Neduparambil and the late Kunhimal. After completing his Graduation from MES Ponnani College, M Com from Calicut University, and LLB from Government Law College Kozhikode, Rajendran joined Akbar Travels of India Pvt Ltd, at its Head Office in Mumbai in 1991. According to Rajendran, Dosti Group has given a new face to Antop Hill.

Since the CMD of Akbar Travels, KV Abdul Nazar, actively supports all Malayalee Associations, Rajendran also closely interacts with all Malayalee Associations in Mumbai. Incidentally,



**Rajendran N**

Abdul Nazar also belongs to Ponnani. Rajendran's wife Seema is an MA in Literature from Kerala Varma College Thrissur, belonging to Kootanadu in Palakkad District and presently works as Manager in Akbar Travels. They have a son Sanjay studying in Std X in Don Bosco School in Matunga and a daughter Ameya studying in Std VIII at JB Vacha School in Dadar.

**M Jayaraman**

M Jayaraman heads the Sanjeevani Medical Centre and Nursing Home. What started in 1985 as a diagnostic centre has today developed into a nursing home with admission facilities for medical, maternity and surgical needs. The nursing home has also emergency services of computerized pathology, centralised oxygen supply, xray, ECG etc. Jayaraman is a microbiologist and is also associated with the Malayalee social and cultural activities. He is the Chairman of



**M Jayaraman**

*Chandralekha*, a Bharatanatyam Dance academy in Antop Hill. He and his wife Sujatha have one son Adarsh doing his final year BCom. Jayaraman is also an MA in Philosophy and



**Committee members of SNDP Antop Hill Unit with other Union Office bearers.**

Religion and teaches Malayalam at the Santa Cruz Malayalee Samajam.

**Kuriakose P Joseph**

Kuriakose P Joseph, a class I officer of the Central Government, belongs to Edathua in Alleppey District. Kuriakose's parents are Joseph and Thressiamma. His wife is Ancy and they have a daughter



**Kuriakose P Joseph**

Nimmy doing 2<sup>nd</sup> year BCom as well as CA Inter and a son Noel studying in Std VIII. Kuriakose is very active in the social and charitable activities of the Mother of Jesus Church at Antop Hill.

**Narayana Panicker**

Narayana Panicker works for the Income Tax Apellates Tribunal and hails from Harippad in Alleppey District. His wife



**Narayana Panicker**

Lekha works for a private company and they have a son Ananthanarayanan who is studying in Plus 2. Narayana Panicker is Secretary of Ayyappa Mission.

**TR Goplakrishnan**

TR Gopalakrishnan is employed with DGS&D and is the zonal Secretary of National Federation of DGS&D Regional Offices and General Secretary of the Quality Assurance NonGazetted Staff Association. He has been a representative



**TR Goplakrishnan**

on many office and Department councils for several years. Gopalakrishnan is Treasurer of the Ayyappa Mission and member of Muthappan Seva Samithi. He recently joined Bombay Keraleeya Samajam as life member. TR Goplakrishnan hails from Killimangalam in Thrissur District and has been staying in Sector 6 since 1984. His wife Beena is an authorized Life Advisor with Kotak Life Insurance and takes home tuitions. Their only son TG Gokul is studying in Std IV at SIES School.

**Shibu Joseph**

Shibu Joseph works as AGM-Sales and Marketing of Allcargo Logistics Ltd. He and his wife, Sini have two sons Donnel in Std V and Dominic in Std I. Both are studying at St Joseph's School Antop Hill.



**Shibu Joseph**

Shibu hails from Nedumbasserri in Ernakulam District and is a trustee of the Mother of Jesus Church. His parents are the late PV Joseph and Mariam Kutty.

**P J Paul**

Brother of Shibu Joseph, Paul is General Manager Operations of Allcargo Logistics. He started his 16 years service with Allcargo as Senior Accountant and



soon became Accounts and Administrative Manager. As the company grew, he became Manager Credit Control. Later he was given the responsibility

**P J Paul** of handling the operations of Meridian Trade Place Pvt Ltd. Today Allcargo has extended its activities to all areas of the logistics industry and the company is an integrated service provider and facilitator in logistics, and has a competitive edge in the global arena. Paul won the Best Employee Award, Best Performer Award and the Long Service Award in his company. He is the Vice President of Pitruvedi Kalyan Diocese and parish council member of Mother of Jesus Church. His wife Jessy Paul is secretary of Matru Sangham Antop Hill Church and their daughter Candes Paul is technical officer with IDMA while their son Selvin is studying in Std XI at SIES College.

### CV Sajeevan

CV Sajeevan, a native of Thalasseri, joined Controller and Audit General of India (CAG) as Section Officer at the age of 22. He later became Government of India Audit Officer of Air India, Mumbai. After clearing the UPSC Examinations he worked initially as Asst Registrar of companies, Ministry of Corporate affairs and also as Dy Director-Inspection in the same ministry. For the last two years he has been posted as Registrar, Company Law Board, Mumbai Bench, a quasi-judicial Authority dealing with all sections of company matters. Recently Sajeevan became the member of the Institute of Companies



**CV Sajeeva** Secretaries of India. The youngest of five brothers and three sisters, he and his wife Sajina have daughters, Hima and Sreenidhi, both studying in Kendriya Vidyalaya, Koliwada.

### AK Pradeep Kumar

AK Pradeep Kumar, CEO and MD of AIMS International Travel and Placements hails from Kannur. After graduation in 1981, he worked in Dubai for some years and later came to Mumbai and joined a travel agency. In 1989, he



**AK Pradeep Kumar** started his own Overseas recruitment company AIMS. AIMS has 7 offices in Delhi, Chennai, Kochi, Calicut etc, its headquarters is in Mumbai and their clientele includes overseas companies. Apart from AIMS International, Pradeep heads AIMS Management, Placement and Share Consultant and runs AIMS Dental Craft Laboratory in Borivli that manufactures teeth according to dentist's specifications. As a social activist he is involved with Ayyappa Mission, Muthappan Seva Samithi, life member of SNMS and SNDP. Pradeep Kumar is Director of *Kalagruham* a Cultural Academy in Kannur where about 700 students are learning music and dances of Kerala. His wife Mini hails from Kannur and their two daughters Panchami and Pournami are in Std XI and Std IX respectively.

### P Sukumaran

P Sukumaran, a long time resident of Antop Hill is a private Maths and Science tutor. Many of his students are now in high positions including one in NASA, he says. Teaching Maths is his forte. A native of Mathur in Palakkad district, he came to Mumbai more than 25 years ago and is involved in the social activities of Malayalee organizations like Ayyappa Mission, Bombay Keraleeya Samajam etc.



**P Sukumaran**

### S Prasanna Chandran

S Prasanna Chandran hails from Champakulam in Alleppey and came to Mumbai in 1974. According to him, Antop Hill was a mini Kerala in the 70's and 80's when the Malayalee youth in search of a job or while trying to go to the Gulf and Middle East made it their temporary homes. Working for the Ministry of Shipping, Prasanna has worked in Assam, Andaman and Nicobar islands, West Bengal and finally in Mumbai till he retired. He



**Prasanna Chandran**

has also worked in the Staff Selection Commission. After retirement Prasanna Chandran is now working for a private company. He is closely associated with Ayyappa Mission, Muthappan Seva Samithi and Bombay Keraleeya Samajam. His wife Lalitha sings Bhajans at the Mission. Prasanna has 6 brothers and all of them were in Government service. The couple has two daughters Divya and Deepa working in TCS and Godrej respectively.

### Roy P George

Roy P George, hailing from Thiruvalla, born in Indore, educated in Allahabad, and now in Mumbai, owns Kalpak Studio doing photography, video, outdoor shooting and also runs an offset printing unit named Roma Printers. His wife Santhamma Roy is an MA, BEd and till recently worked as a teacher. Their two daughters Reshma Grace Roy and Rima Grace Roy are studying in Engineering college and in Std VIII respectively. Rima sings well and has learnt Carnatic vocal, violin and keyboard. She has also won prizes at Music competitions held in Mumbai.



**Roy P George**

### Vijayamma Tamarakshan

Vijayamma Tamarakshan has been teaching Malayalam to the children of Antop Hill and neighbouring areas for many years under the aegis of SNMS, SNDP and other Malayalee Samajams. She is currently teaching Malayalam Certificate course under the Malayalam Mission Plan of the Kerala Government. Belonging to Vadakkathukavu in Adoor, Pathanamthitta District, she lives in Sector 3 with her husband Tamarakshan who is in the Defence Services. They have a daughter Vismitha studying her first year B Com. Vijayamma is a Council Member of the Vanitha wing of SNMS.



**Vijayamma**

*More details about the active Malayalee presence in Antop Hill in our next Issue.*



A R Rājarāja Varma

# The architect of modern Malayalam

-Satyanath

Rājarāja Varma's contribution to Malayalam was not confined to writing a few poems. An authoritative grammarian, astrologer, essayist, critic, translator of well known Sanskrit literary works, author of a Mahakavya in Sanskrit and many more; that was Rājarāja Varma. It is surprising that despite his heavy load of official work as an examiner, professor and Principal, he found time not only to do all these but excelled in what he did.

## Contributions to literature

*Vitavibhavari* was written during a month's holiday at Mavelikkara after he obtained his degree but before he went in for post graduation. It also has a second title '*Radha Madhavam*' as the theme revolves around Radha and Krishna. But unlike *Geeta Govindam* of Jayadeva, it is not based on the *Vipralamba Shrungara*. Its story line was new, as *Bhagavatham* or any other work of earlier period did not have any relevance to it. It was purely based on AR's imagination. It recounts Krishna's talk with his friend Sudama about his love for Radha. The metaphors and other figures of speech are unparalleled. Many poets and lyricists of today have borrowed metaphors unabashedly from this book and there is still a big treasure to be tapped.

Rājarāja Varma undertook the work of translating Kalidasa's *Meghadoot* when he was embroiled in the work of *Kerala Panineeyam* and reformation of the syllabus of Sanskrit College. He did this work after seeing the English translation of *Meghadoot*, done by Griffith, a Briton. He continued making amendments to it for each re-print. In his diary, he notes that he continued translating this book even while walking to Haripad from Mavelikkara. He changed the original meter of *Mandakranta* to *Shardoolavikreditam* for the translation unlike others. He, for a change, did not stick to the practice of *dwiteeyakshara prasam*, then prevailing in Malayalam poems, in this work.

*Meghadoot* brought Rājarāja Varma closer to Kalidasa's works and soon he was found translating *Kumarasambhavam*. The original *Kumarasambhavam* is said to have 17 sections (*sargam*) of which only 8 are believed to have been written by the great poet. Sections 9-17 are written by an anonymous poet, experts say. Of the first 8 sections, AR left the fourth and eighth

sections as he felt that they are not quite needed as they contained amorous details.

*Bhasha Kumarasambhavam* is a fine model of translation from Sanskrit. The reader never feels that it is a translation as the words used are very close to their heart. Often the translator uses the same word the original poet used, if that word could be understood by common man and the final product would be a *manipravalam*.

In this case the translation is very lucid and natural. See how he describes various birds and animals conducting their romantic activities:

പെന്താമരപ്പൊൻതളികയ്ക്കകത്തു  
പൂന്തേൻ നുകർന്നാനളി കാന്തയോടെ  
മാൻപേടയെച്ചെന്നു മയക്കുമാറു  
കൊമ്പിന്റെ തുമ്പാൽ കലമാൻ തലോടി  
കൊമ്പ് നൂ നൽപങ്കജഗന്ധി തീർത്ഥം  
തുമ്പിക്കരത്താൽ പിടിയായ നൽകി  
ചവച്ചു ശേഷിച്ച ബിസാങ്കുരത്താൽ  
കോകങ്ങളെക്കോകികൾ സൽക്കരിച്ചു.

One of the finest example of poetry of high order is visible when the beauty and posture of Parvathy meditating is depicted without referring to her.

ക്ഷണമിമകളിൽനിന്നു തല്ലി  
കുളൂർമുലമേലഥ വീണുടൻ തകർന്നു  
വലികളിലിടിച്ചിരേണ നാഭി-  
ച്ചുഴിയിലിറങ്ങി നവീന വർഷബിന്ദു.

How is Siva's posture during meditation?

കാർകൊണ്ടു മിണ്ടാത്തൊരു കൊണ്ടൽപോലെ  
കല്ലോലമില്ലാതെഴുമാഴിപോലെ

കാറ്റിൽപ്പെടാളീപവുമെന്നപോലെ  
നിഷ്പന്ദമായ് പ്രാണനടക്കിവെച്ചും

Rājarāja Varma is probably the only Malayalam poet who wrote a *mahakavyam* in Sanskrit and it was titled *Āngala Sāmrājyam*. In structure, it closely follows Kalidasa's *Raghu Vansam*. It was written when celebrations were held all over India to commemorate the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria's coronation. With the available facts as stated by English historians, he attempted to cover the history of the English in India. Considering the relationship of the royal families with the British empire, it praises the British to certain extent while not being blind to the valour of Indian heroes.

*Āngala Sāmrājyam* starts with a description of London, like the exposition of Ayodhya in *Raghu Vansam*. Though Rājarāja Varma had not been to London during his life time, he described London in great detail. His friend Krishnan Pandala visited London after 10 years of its publication and was surprised to see the city as described by AR.

*Āngala Sāmrājyam* was translated to Malayalam almost the same time it was written, by his friend and poet K C Kesava Pilla. During its writing, AR and KC used to meet and discuss the progress. KC used to take away the written portion with him and translated it. The first quartet as translated by KC is as follows:

പൊളാർന്ന നല്പമതലാന്തികരാശിക്കുള്ളിൽ  
തിളങ്ങിടുമൊരംഗലമായ രാജ്യേ  
തിസ്രാനദീതടമതിൽ ധരണിക്കുതൊട്ട  
പൊട്ടായലണ്ടനപ്പുരം വിലസുന്നു പാരം.

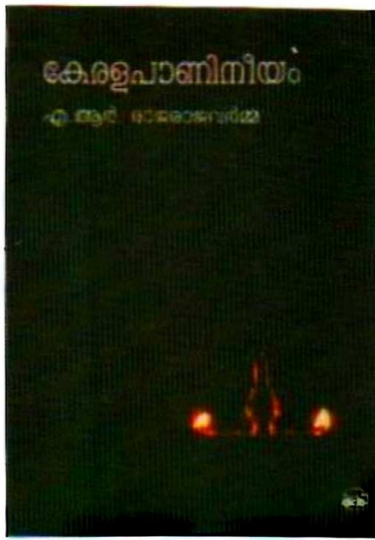
The names Atlantic ocean, River Thames and City of London are underlined here. AR then narrates the rule of Queen Elizabeth during whose reign the East India Company came to India and requested Emperor Jahangir for permission to conduct trade by erecting three godowns, like Vamana requested for land measuring three feet and taking away the entire land under him. After Aurangzeb's rule, the Company steadily expanded its activities and spread all over India and subsequently the British became the ruler of India. Meanwhile, AR covers almost the entire India's history bringing India's ancient history, Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan, Aurangzeb, decline of Mogul empire, aggression of Nadir Shah of Persia, internal conflicts among the kings of South India, tragedy in Calcutta, anarchy in Bengal, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, Shivaji, Hyderali, Tipu Sultan, Karthika Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore, Siraj Doula, Sepoy mutiny, Lord Wellesley, Queen Victoria and many other incidences and characters in this history.

AR describes Hyderali as under:

ഭാരിദ്രുമോടിഹ ജനിച്ചു; മരിച്ചു താതൻ  
ബാല്യത്തിൽ; മാതൃലകൈടുത്തു മദ്രാ വളർത്തി;  
പിന്നെ ക്രമേണ ഭടനായ്, ഭടനാഥനായി-  
ബഹുപാലനായൊടുവിലാർന്നിതു നാകലോകം.

The history of British Empire pertaining to India is covered in 21 *sargams*.

During the writing of *Āngala Sāmrājyam Mahakavyam*, Rājarāja Varma wrote a prosaic version in condensed form, of Shakespeare's *Othello*, *The Moor of Venice* in Sanskrit: *Uddala Charitam*. To suit the formative text of Sanskrit, the main characters are given Sanskrit names such as Uddalan (*Othello*), Vrujabandhu (*Brabantio*), Doshadamana (*Desdemona*) Ayagan (*Iago*), Kashikan (*Cassio*) etc.



Soon after accepting the job of Inspector, Rājarāja Varma wrote a one-act play, *Gairvani Vijayam*, in which two sisters Sanskrit and English are engaged in a fight following a misunderstanding and ends the fight with the understanding that they should accept the good points of each other.

A short poem '*Pitrupralāpam*' is about his sorrow and disappointment on the untimely demise of his second daughter.

He actively led the reformist group in the Prāsavāda-which revitalised the craft and soul of Malayalam poetry. His *Malayavilāsam* is an absolute example of his talent as a poet. By

writing several introductions to renowned poetical works, he proved himself as the pioneer of the modern critical approach in Malayalam literature. His work *Malayavilāsam* can be considered as the forerunner of *Bhāvageetam* (romantic poem) in Malayalam. Another one, *Prasādamāla*, was his last work.

Though Kerala Varma Valiya Kōyi Thampuran's Malayalam translation of *Abhijnāna Shākuntalam* is highly acclaimed, there were some criticisms about it, though not very prominent. When AR completed translations of *Kumarasambhavam* and *Meghasandesham*, some of his friends persuaded him to translate *Abhijnāna Shākuntalam* also so that admirers of Kalidasa's work can have some more interpretations. AR reluctantly accepted the suggestion, as his uncle had already done so. However his translation was found more adept as he used simpler words. A taste of his translation:

മനമേ, ഇനിയൊഴുപ്പുണ്ടുകൊള്ളാം  
വെറുതേ സംശയമെന്നു തീർച്ചവന്നു  
കനലെന്നു നിനച്ചതിക്കരത്തിൽ  
പെരുമാറാൻ കഴിവുള്ള രത്നമന്ത്രേ.

Readers may go through the various translations of the said work and may decide themselves the simplicity and accuracy of the work. His other translations are *Mālavikāgnimitram*, and *Chārudattam*.

Among his close friends, Rājarāja Varma counted K C Kesava Pilla the closest. Their friendship started when KC wrote to him, expressing his appreciation of *Vitavibhavarī*. Afterwards whenever Rājarāja Varma travelled between Trivandrum and Mavelikkara, KC used to wait for him at Paravur and invited him to his house. They also used to read out their respective works to each other and incorporate the changes suggested by the other. Whenever one is critically attacked for his work, the other used to defend him through periodicals.

### Debate on rhyming of the second sound

The lovers of poetry may remember the intense debate about *Prāsavādam* that engulfed the literary field of Malayalam even today. Poets with a vast vocabulary always found *dwideeyakshara prasam* a way to exhibit their expertise in the language. Though Rājarāja Varma was not keen on literary debates, he was drawn into this debate.

The rhyming sounds at fixed intervals were considered an important factor for composition of poetry. Among all types of rhyming, *dwideeyakshara prasam* was considered of utmost importance. Other rhyming forms are *Ādi Prāsam*, *Antya*

*Prāsam, Ashta Prāsam, Dwādasha Prāsam, Shodasha Prāsam, Lātanu Prāsam* etc. Another one is *yamakam* in which same word is used with differing meanings.

It all started with an article by an anonymous writer who argued that the *dwideeyakshara prasam* would put unnecessary pressure on poets and would affect the future of Malayalam poetry. Malayala Manorama took up the issue and commended that the established poets should take a stand on this subject. This resulted in the participation of Kerala Varma Valiya Kōyi Thampuran, Kodungallur Kunhikuttan Thampuran, Naduvathachchan Namboothiri, Chathukutty Mannadiar, Punnasserri Namboothiri and many others in this debate. When Valiya Kōyi Thampuran strongly defended the *dwideeyakshara prasam*, AR argued that the insistence of *dwideeyakshara prasam* at the cost of meaning and usage of unnecessary words, sounds etc could be avoided. Mannadiar argued that *dwideeyakshara prasam* can not be abandoned but it should not be resorted to at the cost of the meaning of the words used. The argument continued for some time and soon *Malayala Manorama* stopped publishing the arguments.

AR pointed out that even Valiya Kōyi Thampuran wrote poems without *dwideeyakshara prasam* and without sacrificing the meaning. However, this debate resulted in a resentment on the part of uncle against nephew and ultimately affected their relationship.

His difference of opinion with his uncle Kerala Varma Valiya Kōyi Thampuran was not confined to the continued use of the second syllable rhyme. Behind the controversy lay the basis of a new poetics. The influence of the study of British Romantic poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, coupled with a renewed interest in the real classics of Sanskrit literature can be seen in his poetic efforts. The critic and scholar in him might have stifled the poet, but in works like *Malayavilasam* he may be seen as looking forward to an expected romantic revival. His translations of Kalidasa and Bhasa and the preface he wrote for Kumaran Asan's *Nalini* points to this trend. Like Kerala Varma, Rājarāja Varma also contributed significantly to the growth of prose through his essays. His essays are fine examples of excellent prose.

K C Kesava Pilla took a position that AR opposed the rhyming not because of his inability but for the sake of meaningful poetry. To prove his point, he composed a *samasya*, one any poet would find tough to crack, and requested AR to fill it. AR, on his part did not disappoint him. The *samasya* was:

എഡാർഡ് മഹീപതി ജവാൽ സുഖമാർന്നിടട്ടെ

AR's filling is given below:

ഷഡാർഗ്ഗമാമരിയൊരന്തരഘോരരൂപ-  
 ധിഡാർഗ്ഗമാട്ടിയകലത്തുകളഞ്ഞുവീരൻ  
 ഉഡാർക്കസോമസമരത്നകിരീടമേല്പാ-  
 നെഡാർഡ് മഹീപതി ജവാൽ സുഖമാർന്നിടട്ടെ!

Slowly Valiya Kōyi Thampuran changed his stance. He wrote '*Anyāpadasha shatakam*' without this rhyming. However time helped him to patch up with his nephew.

It is to be noted that the above debate even separated close friends Ulloor Parameswara Iyer and K C Kesava Pilla. They fought ferociously through the pages of periodicals.

### Excerpts from his works

Many poets have written descriptive quatrains on Hindu gods but none could surpass him in imagination. See how he describes Lord Shiva:

മെയിൽ പാർവ്വതി പാതി, പാതി  
 ഹരിയും പങ്കിട്ടെടുത്തീടവേ  
 പോയല്ലോ ഹരനെന്ന് ഗംഗയുടെ  
 ചെന്നങ്ങു ചേർന്നാഴിയിൽ  
 വാനത്തമ്പിളിമേഖല, പാമ്പുകുഴിയിൽ,  
 സർവ്വജ്ഞതാധീശതാ-  
 സ്ഥാനം രണ്ടുവോർക്കലൈങ്കലുമഹോ!  
 ഭിക്ഷാടനം ഭൂപതേ!

A taunting conversation between Lakshmi and Parvati about their spouses follows like this:

പിച്ഛക്കാർൻ ഗമിച്ചാണെവിടെ? ബലിമുഖം  
 തന്നിൽ, എങ്ങാണു നൃത്തം?  
 മെച്ചത്തോടച്ചിമാർവീടതിൽ, എവിടെ മൃഗം?  
 പന്നി പാഞ്ഞെങ്ങുപോയോ?  
 എന്തേ കണ്ടില്ല മുരിക്കിഴടിനെ? ഇടയൻ  
 ചൊല്ലുമക്കാര്യമെല്ലാം  
 സൗന്ദര്യത്തർക്കമേവം രമയുമുമയു-  
 മായുള്ളതേക്കട്ടെ മോദം.

That whether you followed the meaning is irrelevant but the ensuing quatrain gives pleasure while reading it aloud.

മുട്ടാതെയെന്നുമൊരു പട്ടാടതന്നെ തവ  
 കിട്ടാത്തതോ പശുപതേ!  
 കേട്ടാലുമെന്തു ബത! കാട്ടാനതന്റെ തുകിൽ  
 കെട്ടാനരയ്ക്കു കുതുകം  
 പിട്ടായൊരിക്കലൊരു കാട്ടാളവേഷമതു  
 കെട്ടാൻ തുനിഞ്ഞതുവശാൽ  
 മട്ടായതെന്നുമയി! കാട്ടാനിതെന്തു കൊതി  
 ഫട്ടാങ്ങതാരുമറിയാ.

(example of Dwadasha prasam.)

In this, each line is divided into three parts and the second sound of each is the same. In this, the sound of 'ട്ട' is repeated.

In the following quatrain depicting the ten incarnations of Vishnu, eight ragas are included by Rājarāja Varma for his friend and well known musician Raghupati Bhāgavathar.

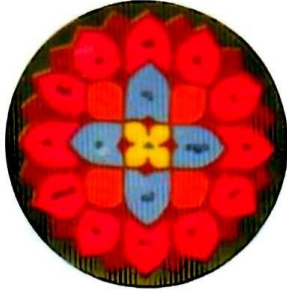
കിം ഭൂപാലശതേന വോവതു ധൃത-  
 ശ്രീരാഗവാസുധരൻ  
 ബിഭ്രാണഃ കഥാണകാക്ഷതിമിളാ-  
 മാദിത്യ്യരുട്ടികയൻ  
 കുർവന്നാരഭീം ഹിരണ്യകശിപോ-  
 രശ്രേ വടുർമോഹനോ  
 രാമഃ കസമുഖാരിജാലനിധനാ-  
 ശ്രീതോ ഹരിർണ്ണേഹാ.

He also wrote another quartet in which the word 'Hari' was used with the different 14 meanings as given in the dictionary. Since it is in Sanskrit, it is not reproduced here.

### Chitra vrutham

This is a special way of using characters to give a quatrain with a clear meaning but not written in a customary way. This is used to test the expertise of the poet in using his words in an extra ordinary manner so as to give the feeling of a picture. *Padmabandham* (in a flower form), *chakrabandham* (like a wheel), *nāgabandham* (like a pair of snakes), *rathabandham*, *goodha chaturthapādam*, *sarvatobhadram*, *anulomapratilomasamam* etc are some of them. These are used as a game when poets meet for pastime. In the absence of any examples from other poets, AR wrote the samples himself. Some of them are reproduced here.

**Padmabandham (പത്മബന്ധം)**



കുരുതീട്ടു ചലല്ലോക കല്ലോലകുലമാലിക കലിമായങ്ങൾ കളക കളകണ്ഠിപ്പു തീരുക

**Rathabandham (രഥബന്ധം)**

		ഭ	ങ്ങൾ				
		പാ	യ്ക്കു	വി	തൊ		
	മ	ചെ	പ	കൽ	ധി	ഴു	
രാ	ജ	രാ	ജൻ	ര	ചി	ച്ച	തു
	പു	ന്നും	ഭോ	മി	ല്ലി	പോൽ	
		എ	ത്താം	ക്ക	ന		
			ചി	നീ			

രാമപാദങ്ങൾ തൊഴുതു  
പുജ ചെയ്തു വിധിച്ചു പോൽ  
എന്നും രാവകൽ ചില്ലിന  
ചിത്താംഭോജൻ രമിക്ക നീ.

**Goodha chaturthapadam (ഗുഡചതുർത്ഥപാദം)**

സേ	മാ	ഴി	ല്ലി	ച്ചു	ര	ക്ഷേ	ഹാൻ
തു	ണ	യ്ക്കു	ക	സ	ഭാ	മ	മ
രോ	പ	മു	ള്ളിൽ	ത്വ	രം	ഞ്ചെ	യ്ത



സേതുരോപണമാഴിയ്ക്കു-  
മുള്ളിൽ കല്ലിച്ചു സത്വരം

**It happened with-2**

**V T Bhattathiripad**

Vellithiruthi Thazhathu Raman of Mezhatol village was initiated to the world of letters when he was five. For lack of funds he was not sent to school. When he turned nine, following the then existing tradition, he was taken to Pathaikkara Mana for learning Vedas and mantras. Since Raman could not memorise all *suktas*, he was compelled to continue recitation before Namboothiripad. Then Swamy, caretaker of *Kalavarha* (stores) brought some silver coins and placed them before Namboothiripad. He collected the coins (rupees), bundled it in his *thorthu* (towel), allowed Raman to leave as soon as he completed the recitation. Relived Raman too left the place after some time. Next day, Raman found the atmosphere totally changed. People were murmuring and looked at him with suspicion. Soon he came to know the reason. When Namboothiripad counted the coins, he found that one rupee was short. Since there was no one around when coins were handed over, except Raman,



V T Bhattathiripad

ഭാരക്ഷേമമഞ്ചെയ്ത മഹാൻ  
തുണയ്ക്കുക സഭാ മമ.

When you read from top left following a sine wave pattern and the middle line, you get the quatrain.

**Sarvatobhadram (സർവതോഭദ്രം):**

ര	മാ	ഭാ	സ	സ	ഭാ	മാ	ര
മാ	വ	സാ	ര	ര	സാ	വ	മാ
ഭാ	സാ	വ	സാ	സാ	വ	സാ	ഭാ
സ	ര	സാ	ന	ന	സാ	ര	സ
സ	ര	സാ	ന	ന	സാ	ര	സ
ഭാ	സാ	വ	സാ	സാ	വ	സാ	ഭാ
മാ	വ	സാ	ര	ര	സാ	വ	മാ
ര	മാ	ഭാ	സ	സ	ഭാ	മാ	ര

When one can read this quatrain either left to right or reverse or top to bottom or reverse, one would be reading the same. The meaning is: Oh servant of goddess of Lakshmi! The bright one like Cupid! The one with a handsome face! Protect me always!

**Anulomaprtilomasamam (അനുലോമപ്രതിലോമസമം):**

ഭാസതേനവമാതീവ  
രസാഭാസ പിനാകിനാ  
നാകിനാപി സഭാസാര  
വതീ മാവന തേ സഭാ.

When you read this quartet from the right end to left from the last line upward, you will have the same quartet. Its meaning is: Oh King the one who is famous because of his empire and its wealth! Your court is committed and just.

**Next issue: Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran**

it was assumed that he stole the coin. But no one questioned him about the missing coin. He wanted to declare loudly that he was innocent, but could not, as no one asked him. He was perplexed, grieved and totally helpless in that big house. Once branded as a thief, the consequences were huge. The good name of his parents would be stained beyond repair, he would be kept away from all gatherings and peers would move away. Raman was weeping inconsolably; he lay down, totally drained. In the evening, he heard the loud voice of Namboothiripad, "Call that Raman." The boy shivered. He was certain that he would be compelled to plead guilty by caning him in public. With shaking legs and tears rolling down the eyes, he slowly approached the latter. "It was *Irikkana Amma*\* who did it," said Namboothiripad. "When she came to close the door, she took away the coin. Raman is innocent," he announced. Raman was relieved beyond words. This was the most agonizing moment of his life. Raman was later known as V T (Raman) Bhattathiripad, one of the greatest social reformers of the Namboothiri community, a short man who dwarfed most of his contemporaries by his revolutionary ideas and brought irreversible changes by his literary pursuits.

\*Maid who stays in the house for all round help and to escort the ladies of the house.

Next issue: P Kesav Dev

# POPULAR MALAYALAM THEATRE

- Revathy

N N Pillai started a drama troupe called *Viswa Kerala Kala Samithi* in 1952 and staged his own plays. Pillai acted in all his plays. The plays were staged throughout Kerala, all over India and even abroad. *Viswa Kerala Kala Samithi* staged his plays till 2005 even after his death in 1995 by his son Vijayaraghavan and son-in-law Rajendra Babu.

Some of his popular plays are *Kapalika*, *Prethalokam*, *Gorilla*, *Folydol*, *Kanakku Chembakarāman*, *Easwaran Arastil* and *Cross Belt*. Pillai has also written two studies on state plays, *Nātaka Darppanam* and *Curtain*.

The plays by N Krishna Pillai mark the evolution of realism, shedding farcical humour to undertake a serious study of character. C N Sreekantan Nair wrote *Kānchana Sita*, *Lanka Lakshmi* and *Saketham*, all based on the Ramayana. His other plays were *Manyathayute Marha*, *Aa Kani Thinnaruthe*, *Aettile Pasu*, *Nashta Kachavatam*, *Madhu Vidhu* and *Kali* besides *Sneham*, and *Bhakti* which were one act plays.

During the evolution of the theatre in Kerala, the organisers had a lot of obstacles to handle like giving female roles to men, as women were hesitant to appear on the stage. This issue was affecting Tamil stage also. Like they had a 'Shanmugham', Kerala had an Ochira Velukutty who excelled in female roles. Compared to Travancore-Cochin, Malabar took a longer time to attract female artistes to the theatre. When they decided to participate, Christians were followed by Hindus. Most of them belonged to poor families or were dancers while some of them were relatives of male artistes. The first Muslim actress to agree to appear on the stage was Nilambur Ayisha in the 1950s and she created quite a storm. Many of her stages were stoned by the conservationists or their supporters and often police protection was sought for the artistes on the stage. However her initiative encouraged many women to take to stage in the Malabar region. Vilasini was forced to change her Christian name to Hindu-like name to hide from the religious fanatics.

From the fifties to the nineties, Malayalam theatre has contributed various dramatists, actors, lyricists, music composers and singers who made to the cinema and earned name, fame and wealth. The names that come to the mind are those of K T Mohammed, M S Baburaj, Kozhikode Abdulkhader, Santha Devi, Kunhandi, Balan K Nair, Nellikode Bhaskaran, Premji, Kuthiravattam Pappu, Mamu Koya, S L Puram Sadanandan, N N Pillai, Vayalar Rama Varma, O N V Kurup, Thoppil Bhasi, Veera Raghavan Nair, V T Aravindaksha Menon, Kainikkara Kumara Pillai and Padmanabha Pillai (brothers), Ponkunnam Varkey, Bharat Gopi, Omcheri, G Sankara Pillai, P J Antony, Artist Cherian, Sebastian Kunjukunju Bhagavathar, Augustine Joseph, Sathyan, G Devarajan, Vilasini, Nilambur Ayisha, K P Ummer and others. K T Mohammed won a world short story contest for his *Kannukal* (Eyes). Theatre was his passion and he contributed significantly as a writer, director and producer. His major plays are *Ithu*



C V Raman Pillai

Kattumatam

*Bhoomiyānu*, *Manushyan Kārāgruhathil*, *Chuvanna Ghatikāram*, *Velicham Vilakkanveshikkunnu*, *Rātrivantikal*, *Karhavatta Pashu*, *Katal pālam*, *Srushti*, *Sthiti and Samhāram*. He wrote screenplay and dialogue for several Malayalam films.

S L Puram Sadanandan was a trailblazer of the theatre movement in Kerala. He was founder of *Kalpana Theatres* and *Suryasoma Theatres* at S.L. Puram. He has written more than 60 plays. *Agniputri*, *Oral kooti Kallanāyi*, *Vila kuranja Manushyar*, *Yāgasala*, *Kākkapponnu*,



College lecturers of Farook College enacted "Pratima" of N Krishna Pillai. Standing second with a hammer in hand, from the right is late T V Madhavan Nambiar, elder brother of film director T V Chandran and the one sitting with a brief case is late Babu Paul, son of late Prof M P Paul.



G Sankara Pillai Thikkurissi

N N Pillai

K T Mohammed Thoppil Bhasi

S L Puram

Ponkunnam

*Kallu kondoru Pennu and Kättukuthira.*

P J Antony was a sailor in the Royal Navy and after retirement found solace in theatre. He founded *Pratibha Theatres* and wrote plays like *Chakravālam*, *Pothushatrukkal* etc. Later he moved to Cinema and acted, directed and wrote for a few films. He won the *Bharat* award for *Nirmalyam* in 1974.

VT Aravindaksha Menon was the leading actor of *Kalanilayam* and he acted in plays like *Ilayitathu Rāni*, *Pazhassi Rāja*, *Kāyamkulam Kochunni*, *Devadāsi* and *Katamattathu Kathanār*. Theatre lovers loved him for his memorable acting.

Ponkunnam Varkey was a rebel in the theatre which he used to fight orthodoxy. His well known plays are *Althāra*, *Viyarppinte Vila*, *Orālkooti Kallanāyi*, *Njānoru adhika pattānu* and *Jethākkal*.

Kāvālam Narayana Panicker is the founder-director of the noted theatre group *Sopānam*. He has written 26 Malayalam plays and many of them were adapted from the classical Sanskrit and Shakespearean plays.

Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair started his multi faceted career as a playwright. He wrote *Sthree*, *Maya*, *Sanchari*, *Mareechika*, *Jeevitha yatra* and *Sariyo thetto*. He launched his film career with *Sthree* of which he wrote the story, screenplay, dialogue besides handling the main protagonist. He did the same with *Sariyo thetto* also. His plays *Mareechika* and *Kalakaran* were hugely successful. He replaced the melodramatic romantic musicals, which ruled the roost till then, with dialogue centred prose plays having themes of realism and social importance. There are plays written for children too. Two prominent authors are Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri and A P P

Namboothiri and their plays were staged in many schools during the second part of last century. A P P has also authored two books on theatre literature, *Natakadarsanam* and *Natakathilekkoru Natappatha*. Kattumatam Narayanan wrote three books on Malayalam theatre, *Natakaroopa Charcha*, *Malayala Nataka Prasthanam* and *Malayala Natakangalilute*.

### Lessons for Malayalam Theatre

Though initially playwrights such as N Krishna Pillai, G Kumara Pillai, N Sreekantan Nair, C J Thomas, T N Gopinathan Nair, S L Puram Sadanandan and their ilk borrowed from Greek and other European theatre for

for Marathi and Gujarati theatres too. But we refused to see the writings on the wall for a long time. Our theatres churned out the same stale stuff and failed to capture attention and blamed the disinterest of the audience instead of own failure. Their storylines were staid, non-contemporary and soaked in romanticism with over-acting, lousy makeup, tableaux-like stage movements, poor stage setups and lack of professionalism. Yet we cried, "Theatre is dead".

Many directors and actors claimed that in order to reach out to the back rows, actors have to be loud and indulge in a bit of over acting. In the absence of loud speakers, sound system and bright electric lights, they might be right. But there is no difference in acting on the stage or for the cinema in this modern age. CCTVs, video footages, surround sound system etc now take the actor to each member of the audience. Therefore overacting and loud delivery of dialogue are out now, though they were characteristics of yesteryears' plays.

To create powerful storylines and characters, let us recreate the old classics like Mahabharat, Ramayana and even the Greek tragedies like Oedipus in new moulds, befitting today's scenario. Let us capture the time tested weaknesses of the audience and give them what they want instead of giving them what we have. The old Shakespeare classics such as Othello, King Lear, Macbeth etc are still successfully staged on the English stage, either in the original or modern forms. *Abhijnāna Shākuntalam* is still played on the stages of Kolkata and the audience-turnout is reportedly good. Why can't we replicate this on Malayalam stage too?

*Next issue: Story of Short Story*



Ayisha



Santha Devi

their inspiration, the professional writers whose sole objective was to propagate their idealism, were blind to the changes taking place in the world theatre. World Classics were always strong with well defined characters, themes and powerful but natural presentations. In spite of their storylines being well known to the audience in advance, people always thronged the theatres for the sheer thrill of watching the great characters. The western countries had their televisions much before us and yet good theatre thrived there. The same is valid



Kottarakkara



Balan K Nair



Bharat Gopi



K P Ummer



Premji



P J Antony

# THE MALAYALAM THEATRE IN MUMBAI

-P K RAVINDRANATH

Mumbai's Malayalam theatre had been vibrant, innovative and audacious from 1940 till 1990. Compulsions of daily lives, the emergence of new media of entertainment and the strains of attaining desirable standards of professionalism led to its gradual decline. A recapitulation by one of the earliest participant and critic,

**T**he Golden era of Malayalam theatre in Mumbai was 1950-1975. That era is gone and Mumbai is not likely to see its revival, for the ideal conditions for it to thrive are no longer available. Television has seduced audience and living conditions have changed for migrants in the city. Commuting and meeting at one central place for daily rehearsals is no longer a pleasure even for the diehard enthusiast. Besides, some of the committed promoters of the theatre are no longer with us. M N Kurup, PN Nanappan, Ezhikara Ambujakshan, P N Chandran, M Chandran Nair, Azhakeshan and T M P Nedungadi. P V Kuriakose, who wrote plays and directed them are also gone. So is P M N Menon, who organised shows of prominent theatre groups from Kerala, including Kalanilayam.

Most other enthusiastic organisers of stage shows are now inactive, mainly because of lukewarm Audience response. Even the numerous Malayalee samajams which staged plays during their Onam celebrations, now tend to make do with other entertainment items, particularly dances and ballets, thanks to the numerous dance schools that still flourish in the city. The one man who sought to interact with the local Marathi and Hindi theatre groups was T M P Nedungadi, who used his *Purappad* troupe for this purpose. It was a short-lived effort.

## EARLY DAYS

The first known performance of a full-length play in Malayalam was *Marthanda Varma*, staged by the Bombay Kerala Samaj in 1940. It was directed by Ullatil Sankaran Kutty and Dr Rama Varma. The main roles were enacted by M K Menon, P Bhaskara Menon, Shankaran Nair, Karunakara Menon, Ramu, Unni and Aniyam. M N Kurup was the art



*Ousepachan in one of his plays*

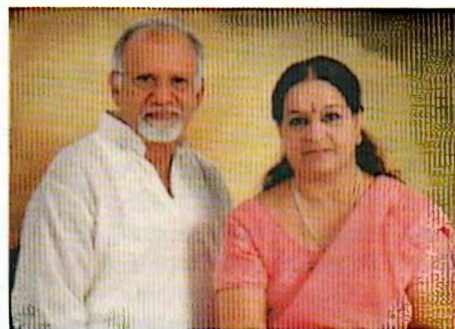
director. Breaking away from the Kerala Samaj, M N Kurup set up his own *Kerala Kalalayam* and directed and presented a number of plays. He staged some relevant social themes for other organisations also, including the Beedi Worker's Welfare Association of Parel. Among such plays were *B A Mayavi* and "*Raktapanam*."

Adding an innovative touch to the Malayalam theatre was a 150-minute *Kathakali* ballet, "*Magdalana Mariam*" based on Mahakavi Vallathol's classic

poem. Directed by T M Bhaskaran Nedungadi and Guru Raghavan Nair, it was a bold experiment far ahead of its time. This writer played Jesus Christ and Nagaratna Atma Ram enacted the role of Mary in the ballet. It was promoted by a group of *Kathakali* enthusiasts in the city, including C Balakrishnan, then Income Tax Officer and later member of the C B D T in Delhi, and others. The ballet was staged at the Podar College Hall and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Auditorium. This was in 1952, long before the Shanmukhananda Hall came up.

The fifties was a period of social and political ferment in Kerala and Maharashtra. Land reforms, educational reforms and formation of unilingual states were acute issues under debate in both states. The KPAC was active and many of their plays were sponsored and staged in Mumbai, among them "Ningal Enne Communist Aaki."

P N Nanappan wrote and staged a full-



*Mukundan Menon and Vidhubala*



**Balaji**

length play “Kshetram” for his Experimental Theatre. Nanappan staged the play several times, the last of which was on the occasion of its fiftieth year. It remained relevant for the entire half-a-century. Nanappan wrote several short skits and one-act plays for the all-women theatrical group of Kerala Mahila Samaj, for several years. Later, Durga Prabhakar took over scripting relevant plays for the Samaj. Nanappan also staged several shadow plays and pantomimes with great dexterity.

The Aikya Kerala Convention and Aikya Malayali Convention, organised by the Aikya Kerala Committee headed by M Madhavan and held at the Napoo Garden at Matunga and the Parsi Gymkhana saw the staging of “Njangal Thirike Varum” written by Pappanamkott Prabhakaran. The next few years saw a spate of professional plays staged by KPAC, Geetha Arts Club, Kalidasa Kalakendram and other troupes from Kerala. Most of them were staged in open grounds in and around Matunga and Dadar and were all patronized.

Funds were collected by staging such plays for the establishment of the Adarsha Vidyalaya, an educational institution at Chembur. In 1960 was set up the Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana, which now runs the Adarsha Vidyalaya.

## BANNED PLAYS

Mumbai has had a tradition of sponsoring and providing a platform for controversial Malayalam plays, some of which were banned in Kerala. Thus in 1952 Mumbai hosted a show of KPAC's “Ningal Enne Communist Aaki.” When the requisite permission from the Scrutiny Board was not forthcoming till

the day of the show, the play opened with a deceptively unassuming title “Thakarna Tharavadi” (The Dilapidated Joint Family). The same title held good when KPAC staged the play in Ahmedabad. “Bhagavan Kalu Marunnu” was another play the authorities in Kerala frowned upon, which was staged in Mumbai to very appreciative audiences.

The most controversial of the lot was P N Antony's “Christuvinde Aaram Thirumurivu” presented by the Peoples' Arts Centre despite vehement protests by various local Christian organisations. After the scrutiny Board had cleared the play, the Mumbai Police were approached to stop the play on apprehensions of a law and order problem. The police refused to interfere when the sponsors invoked the right to freedom of expression. They were also assured that the play contained nothing blasphemous or derogatory and that it was an adaptation of Nicolas Kazantsaki's highly acclaimed novel. The play had three shows in the city and suburbs.

## THE ZENITH

Malayalam theatre had its high point during the 1960s and 1970s, a period that witnessed the influx of a number of educated young professionals. There were also a large number of Malayalees who passed through Mumbai on their way to the Gulf ports to take up jobs there. Thanks to the availability of an enlightened audience, several theatre groups were quick to put on board plays one after another.

Among them were Pratibha Theaters, Adam Theatres, Odessa and several others. Local organisations like the Bombay Kerala Samaj, the Kerala Catholic Association, the Kerala Christian Council and several others also staged with local talent plays that had become hits in Kerala. Nanappan, Anthappan, Venu (SP Nair), Pamman (R P Menon) and others offered their best during this period.

Active on the stage were a host of talented actors and actresses who were much in demand. Among them were V V Achuthan, Vasanta, Mary Paul, Pothuval, T N Baburajan, Balan Thripunithura, Soloman Joseph, Soman Alappuzha, Azhakesan, Brahmakulam, Ravunni, Vishwanathan



**Augustine**

Palloor, K K Rajan, Ousepachan, Augustine, K D Chandran, John Thomas, K K G Nair, Mukundan Menon, Sribala and Raghavan (Raghu).

An ambitious project undertaken during this heyday of the Malayalam theatre in Mumbai was the 15-day festival of Kalanilayam plays held at the spacious Cosmopolitan Grounds at Wadala. It called for huge investment as Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair's plays were always spectacular calling for accoutrements, props and sets.

As a humble contribution, this writer (then the Drama Critic of “The Times of India”) undertook to have each play reviewed in the columns of that paper, which were to appear the next morning. Since deadlines had to be met, he had to rush to the office from King's Circle during the interval, submit the review in time and catch up with the second half of the play, at a repeat show. P M N Menon, N Sadasivan and others who had sponsored the event at tremendous risk, found at the end of the festival that it was rewarding. Like Nanappan's “Kshetram”, the Kerala Mahila Samaj had one play they were proud to repeat, after a gap of 25 years during their Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. It was *Durga*. Prabhakar's “Streenamcha Chitham” directed initially by Nanappan and subsequently for the repeat show by Mukundan Menon.

The period also witnessed serious discussions on the State of Malayalam theatre, with several symposia, workshops and seminars being held by various organisations. All this gave rise to experimentation on a big scale under the guidance of TMP Nedungadi, who had



**PN Nanappan**



**K D Chandran**

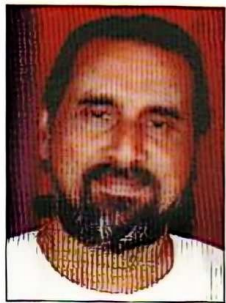
marshalled the involvement of a number of local literary enthusiasts, including Dharamvir Bharati, Satyadev Dubey, Jaydev Hattangadi, Vijay Tendulkar, Jabbar Patel and others. The Shastra Sahitya Parishad, on its tenth annual celebrations



**Thilakan**

presented Bharati's "Andha Yug" in Hindi by an all-Malayali cast. They also presented C J Thomas "1128-il Crime 27" under the banner of Koothumatom.

Koothumatom had enlisted the help of several enthusiasts including P A Divakaran, Venugopal, Manasi, Praveen Kumar, Baburajan, Hariharan Poonjar, K G Nair, Vishwanathan, Dr. Harikumar, V T Vasudevan and M Thomas. The stage of experimentation had set in. Several groups sprouted up to implement the new ideas. Among them were Arangu, Decora,



**Vishwanathann Palloor**

Natakavedi, Purappad, Young Stars, Kairali and others. Natakavedi organised a One-Act Play Competition in 1977 at the Shanmukhananda Hall. The six plays entered for the competition were of a high order. Dr. Harikumar emerged out of this competition as a noteworthy addition to the ranks of Malayalam theatre enthusiasts. P A Divakaran, during a short period, wrote plays like "Morgue", "Luggage", "Moonu Chuvrukallulla Muri", "Mukkuvanum Bhoothavum" and "Mritunjayam".

The North Kerala temple festival of Theyyam formed the central theme of "Moothevi Theyyam" directed by Sagar. Two groups, Arangu and Fine Arts Club based in Anushaktinagar,

the residential quarters of employees and scientists of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, produced a score of plays which were highly appreciated. Prominent among them were



**V V Achuthan**

"Perunthachan," "Thevarude Aana," "Pandu Pandoru Kattil," "Chaverpada," "Ee Aalkootathil Nhan" and



**Mari Paul & PC Cherrian**

"Nyayamani."

The Central Government Staff Quarters at Antop Hill was another breeding ground for theatre enthusiasts like K G Rajan, Sasidharan, Janardanan, Mohan Kumar and Saseendran. They presented plays like "Pooja," "Amalanmar," "Jwalanam," and "Shantamakatha Kadal." One of the old-time residents of this colony was Azhakesan, who presented "Kayvoor Gatha." Along with Azhakesan another driving force behind Decora was Uzhavoor Sasi, who along with Surendra Babu, Thilakan, K S Menon, Dhananjayan, Gangadharan, Bhaskaran helped stage plays like "Yugasankramanam," "Amma," "Spartacus," "Chile-73" and "Sooryavetta Aranyageetham". They were bold, experimental and hard-hitting plays, well presented. As tastes and conveniences changed in the fast-developing Mumbai city, some enterprising directors tried out classical theatre, folk and classical music and re-enacting classical theatre forms of Kerala Thayambaka, Panchavadyam, Theyyam, Swati Thirunal Kritis and Mohiniyattam. Among them were Keli which sought to popularize Kerala's classical traditions in Mumbai.



**Vasantha Achuthan**

## BACK STAGE SUPPORT

A number of music directors emerged during the last thirty years, composing tunes and background scores for plays. Among the noteworthy ones are Kuruvilla, Premkumar, Vasudevan, Vijayan Ramachandran, Jaya Pillai, Ramanujam, Purushottaman and Gopalakrishnan. Stage lighting and décor

has been more or less the monopoly of Merco Gopi, who provided his services for samajams and theatre groups on demand. His organisation, Merco, continues to serve theatrical stages throughout the city.

## AWARD WINNERS

Four playwrights from Mumbai have won awards for their plays. P V Kuriakose, Nanappan and Azhakesan have won Kerala Sahitya Akademy awards, while Ezhikara Ambujakshan won the National Award for the best play on national integration.

## THE FUTURE

While most of the old-time groups are dormant, the Workshop Productions run by Vinod Ranganathan and his wife Thamara, have sought to adapt Marathi and Hindi plays on the Malayalam stage. Their guiding star was T M P Nedungadi, Thamara's father. For the rest, it shares the same bleak future as does its counterparts in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati, which were equally vibrant at one time.

*AUTHOR'S NOTE: My entire dossier on Malayalam theatre in Mumbai including reviews, interviews and notes were lost in the floods of 26 July 2005, depriving me of references. In case I have missed out on any names, events or performances, I seek anticipatory bail: memory lapse. I have no malafide intentions.*



**Andappan**

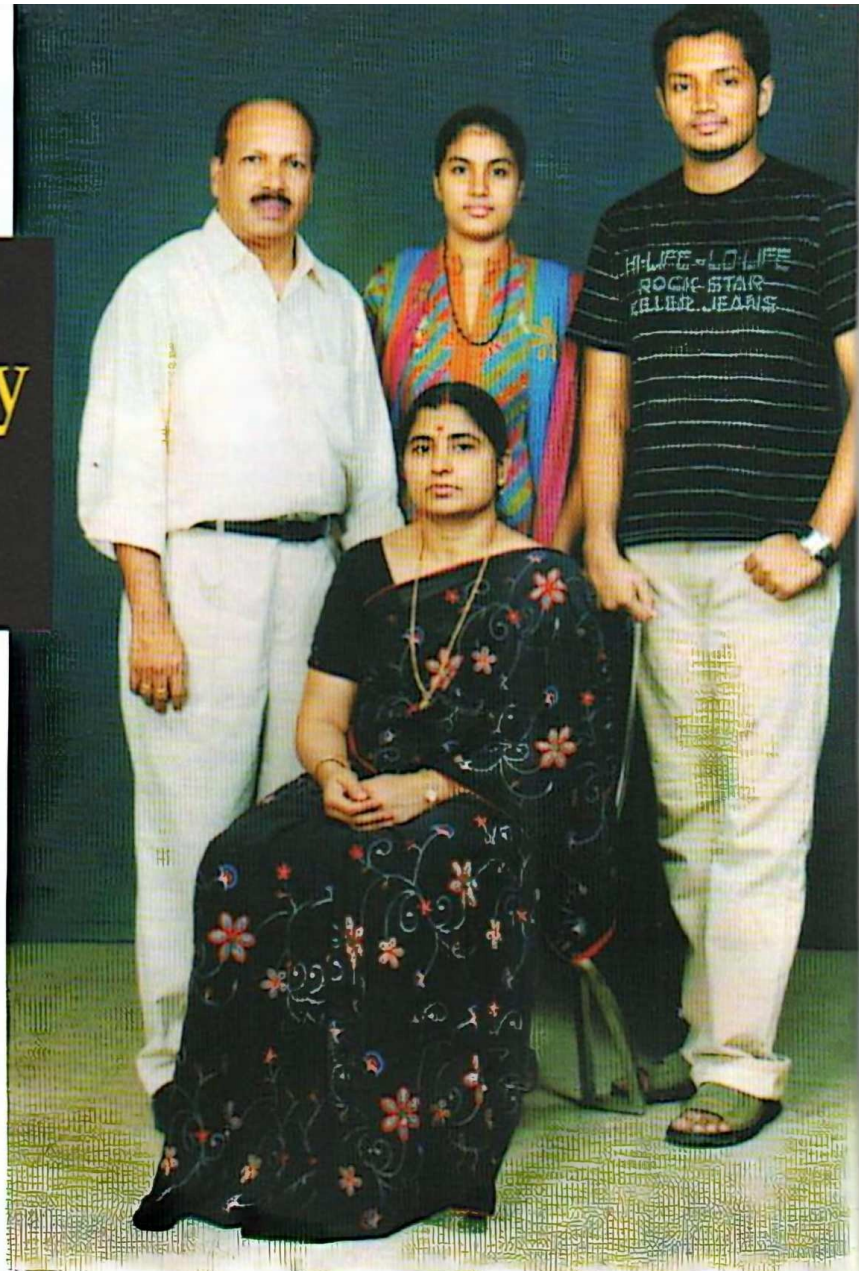
Family of the Month

## R V VENUGOPALAN

### Nurse Your Malayalee Identity and Love Our Mumbai

- Elvee

*There is a sense of warmth in the Venugopalan household. An active member of Malayalee organizations of Antop Hill, he has a steady stream of Malayalee visitors and the couple are perfect hosts*



R V Venugopalan with wife Vasantha, daughter Aswathy and son Vyshakh

**R**V Venugopalan comes from Azhikode in Kannur District, "the same place where Sukumar Azheekode the great scholar and writer who recently passed away was born," he says. After completing his education in Kannur, he came to Mumbai in 1984.

Venugopalan first worked in a private recruitment company. In 1994 he started along with a couple of his friends, Meridian Management Overseas Manpower Consultants and is one of its partners. This company recruits people for overseas countries especially the Gulf region.

### Social life

Venugopalan is the President of Ayyappa Mission and Antop Hill Muthappan Seva Samithi. He is also the President of Nair Samskarika Sabha Matunga and Managing Committee Member of Bombay Keraleeya

Samajam. He is Member-in-charge of the Keraleeya Samajam magazine *Visala Keralam*.

### Family Bonds

Venugopalan's parents are the late Madhavan Nambiar and late Narayani Amma. His father was a small-scale businessman. Venugopal has 3 brothers and one sister. One of his brothers is settled in Cochin while the other brothers and sister are in Kannur.

Venugopalan's wife Vasantha belongs to Mattanur in Kannur. She completed her graduation in Kerala and came to Mumbai after her marriage in 1989. The marriage took place in Kannur. Vasantha soon made friends with Malayalees at Antop Hill. Active in participating in bhajan groups and religious and spiritual activities of Ayyappa Mission, she likes to hear discourses and attend *Bhagavada*

*sapthahams* that take place at Asthika Samaj Matunga.

The couple has a son Vyshakh who studied in SIWS and is currently doing his final year Engineering in Computer Science at the Amrita School of Engineering in Coimbatore. He knows skating, swimming, had learnt western dance and plays the *mridangam*.

Their daughter Aswathy also studied at SIWS and is now studying first year Engineering in Electronics at SIES Engineering College in Nerul. Aswathy has learnt Bharatanatyam, violin, swimming and skating and likes to watch English movies. Her favourite subject is Maths and she wants to do higher studies in Mathematics.

The family has gone abroad on tours and holidays. They go every year to Kerala to visit their relations. Vyshakh and Aswathy like these Kerala visits because they get to meet their relatives staying there.



*Young couple Venugopalan and Vasanthra*

or influenced by such narrow attitudes of allegiance on the basis of group identity based on regional, sub-regional, caste and religious inclinations. Basically all of us belong to Kerala, and we all should nurse and nurture just one identity - that of a Malayalee. We should indeed love and dedicate ourselves to the yeomen service we are bound to render to the place and region which has adopted us as their own residents, Mumbai City and its suburbs. At the same time we should not forget the great heritage and cultural endowments of our

dear State Kerala where we belong spiritually.

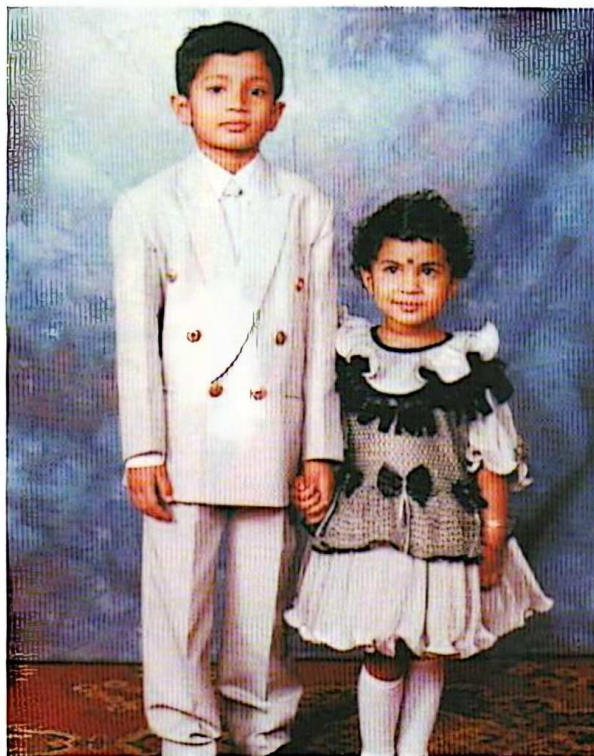
"I would therefore earnestly request the young Malayalees settled in Mumbai and engaged in various jobs and activities to come forward and actively participate in the functioning of the Malayalee organizations in their area and use their professional knowledge to transform these outfits to become truly philanthropic and socio-cultural organisations catering to the needs of every Malayalee in and around the area irrespective of their caste, creed and religion".

## Message to Mumbai Malayalees

Being actively involved in the activities of several Malayalee Associations of Mumbai, Venugopalan has a message for the Malayalee youth of Mumbai:



"There are several Keralite Associations strewn over the length and breadth of Mumbai and its suburbs, spanning Virar to Kalyan and Panvel. This is an appreciable feature of the organizational ability and social commitments of Malayalees in general. All of these are actively involved in various socio-cultural and philanthropic activities.



"However, many of these outfits are perceived to be functioning on the basis of sub-regional, political, caste allegiance. Thus a neutrally- oriented Malayalee is in a confused state as to which one of these outfits would espouse his cause. This thought inhibits many young Malayalees to come forward and participate in the activities of these organisations. We need to come out of this vicious circle. Once we Keralites are out of our mother-state, we should not be guided




*Childhood photo of Aswathy and Vyshakh*

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# EASTER TIDINGS



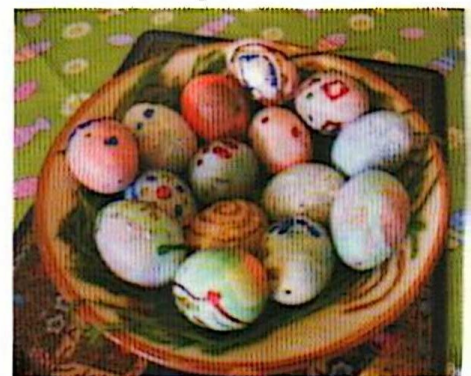
Easter is an important festival for Christians. Easter has significant religious overtones. It is a reminder to the faithful of Jesus Christ giving up his life on the cross to save mankind. Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His infinite mercy and love for mankind and above all gives hope to humanity.



Fr. George Vattamattan

**P**opularly called the Easter Triduum, this festival is the celebration of the saving work God has accomplished in Jesus Christ.

The date of Easter varies from year to year. It occurs on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after 21 March, a date taken, in accordance with an ancient ecclesiastical tradition, to be that of the spring equinox, but which does not always correspond to the astronomical equinox. The Julian calendar is taken as the basis of the calculations by nearly all Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox Churches and is accepted even by Latin Rite Catholics in countries such as Ethiopia and Greece. The Julian calendar's 21 March corresponds at present to 3 April in the Gregorian calendar, the calendar used for civil purposes in most countries. The earliest possible date for Easter is 22 March, and the latest 25 April. These dates in the



Easter Eggs

Julian calendar correspond at present to the Gregorian calendar's 4 April and 8 May.

## Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil

The Easter triduum, marking the days of Jesus' passion and resurrection, is the most important time of the church year. It begins with the evening Mass of Holy Thursday, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes on Easter Sunday evening. Prepared by the days of Lent, Christians celebrate on these holiest of days the saving work God has accomplished in Christ. From the events remembered these days, so sorrowful and so joyful, the church learns the deepest lessons. In rites and words the mysteries of Jesus' final hours are with us again, his passion, his cruel suffering, his rising from the dead. And we discover the answer to age old questions: Does God love us? Is God merciful? Does God care for us? We have only to look and learn from Jesus Christ.

These are days for fixing our eyes on the holy mystery of his cross and filling our ears with the words of his gospel. Nowhere else God's does love appear so vividly. In the love Christ showed for a sinful world we find the beginning of our church, the source of our sacraments, the key to understanding the human story, and our hope for eternal life.

### Holy Thursday

The Easter Triduum begins with Mass on Holy Thursday evening, when Jesus sacramentally anticipated the gift he would make of himself on the cross. His command to serve others is dramatically



**Mar Thomas Elavanal**  
Bishop of Kalyan

BISHOP'S HOUSE,  
I. I. T. P. O.,  
P. B. NO. 8434, POWAI,  
MUMBAI - 400 076, INDIA.  
TEL : 2578 2385 / 2578 5515  
FAX : 0091 - 22 - 2577 6100



Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sub: Easter message for 'Kerala in Mumbai'

### EASTER: The Call to a New Life

Easter is the most important feast for all Christians. On Easter day Christians commemorate the resurrection of Christ. The basic faith of Christianity is one's belief that Jesus after his death on the cross rose again to life on the third day. Even his disciples could not believe that Jesus would rise again. So after resurrection He appeared several times to His disciples to convince them that He really rose again and is still alive.

The Easter event shows that the true life and history of Jesus began after His death. Easter is the victory of Life over death, Love over hatred, Truth over falsehood and Justice over injustice. Easter is the greatest proof that Truth, Love and Goodness cannot be defeated forever. The ultimate victory is for Truth. Love and goodness has no end. Even those who dedicated their life for love, like Mahatma Gandhi or Mother Theresa continue to live in the hearts of the people.

Christ when he appeared to his disciples after Easter greeted them with the words, "Peace be with you." Peace is the fruit of reconciliation. Easter is a reminder and an invitation for all of us to get reconciled with one another in love so that we may enjoy the real peace which is the sublime gift of God.

Easter signifies new life. Easter reminds us that every day we have to rise up to the newness of life. Even if we may have to face sufferings and difficulties in life we should not become desperate but God calls us and helps us to rise up to a new life. Easter is a reminder that we have to renew our life constantly and try to live a new life of love and peace.

*Thomaselavanal*

Mar Thomas Elavanal,  
Bishop of Kalyan



Altar of Mother of Jesus Church, Antop Hill

recalled this night in the ceremony of the washing of the feet, which he performed in the supper room for his disciples. Like the Paschal lamb, killed and eaten by the people, according to the Old Testament account read from Exodus this evening, he is a sign of God's salvation.

### Good Friday

The Good Friday rites center on the reading of the Passion of Jesus. With simple dignity that story is retold, followed by prayers for the entire world, for this powerful mystery brings blessings to the world. According to ancient tradition, an image or relic of the cross is venerated this day, and the sacrament of Christ's love for his church is received. It is a day of fasting and quiet mourning.

## The Easter Vigil

The Easter Vigil is the high point of the Easter triduum celebrating the passion and resurrection of Jesus. With a rich display of symbols, rites and readings, the church in worship expresses her faith in the mystery that brings her into being. The vigil opens with a service of light. Like the Jewish Passover, our Easter celebration coincides with the beginning of spring, when the sun offers new warmth and earth is ready to flower again. Our words "lent" (from the Middle-English word for spring, "lengthening days") and "Easter" (possibly Germanic or Anglo-Saxon in origin, signifying "the east", "the rising sun") point to the long tradition of seeing this holy mystery through signs of the natural world. The lighting of the fire and the Easter candle go back to rites that long preceded Christianity. The candle carried with loving reverence and



**Easter Vigil**

lyrically praised in word and song, is a sign of Christ, "the light of the world," and celebrates the victory of light over darkness that humanity has ever longed for.

## Conclusion

A series of readings recalls the great interventions of God in history, from creation to the redemption of Israel from Egypt, and ends with the story of Jesus'

resurrection. The great "alleluia" proclaims with quiet joy the triumph of God's Son. Those preparing for Baptism then receive the sacraments of initiation. The blessed water sprinkled over others signifies the blessing of new life.

Rejoice! This night says as it brings before us the deepest symbols of our hopes and fears. The darkness, sign of evil and death, has been overcome by light. A lamp, a candle has been lit; a fire is enkindled in our hearts; a nourishing water flows through our lives; a baptism destroys what is unclean and brings to life again.

Rejoice! This night says to all creation. The Word, who made all things, as a new Adam, freshly proclaims God's promise of life. All creation celebrates God's love.

*Fr George Vattamattam is parish priest St Thomas Catholic Church in Kalina*

## Recipe for

# CHAKKA PRADHAMAN



**K S Narayanswamy**

As jack-fruit becomes abundant during March-April, Chakka Pradhaman with its distinct flavor is one of the most popular, traditional, delicious payasam that is usually made during the festive season of Vishu. It is made with 'Chakka Varatti', jackfruit jam. During this time, when jackfruit is plenty, jackfruit jam is made by cooking ripe jackfruit with ghee, jaggery and stored throughout the year for future use.

### Ingredients

- |                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Ripe jackfruit                    | 15 nos. |
| 2. Coconut                           | 2 nos.  |
| 3. Coconut chunks few                |         |
| 4. Chukkupodi<br>(Dry Ginger powder) | ½ tbsp. |
| 5. Ghee                              | 2 tbsp. |
| 6. Cardamom                          | 5 gms.  |
| 7. Moongdal                          | 50 gms. |
| 8. Jaggery                           | 1 kgs.  |

### Preparation

1. Cut jack fruit in convenient size and remove the seeds. Pressure cook these jack-fruit fleshy pieces; allow it to cool and grind it to a fine paste. Pressure cook these jack-fruit and add equal portion of jaggery in the ratio 1:1.
2. Roast moongdal to light golden colour on low flame, wash, cook the same and set aside. The addition of the moongdal enhances the aroma of payasam
3. Grate the coconut and extract the milk 3 times. The procedure though looks a bit tedious tastes better than the readymade coconut milk available in the market.
- Milk No. 1. Grate/blend the coconut in a blender. Squeeze and strain the milk. Keep aside this 1st milk.
- Milk No. 2. Put the coconut residue back in the blender, add half a cup of warm water and blend. Squeeze and strain the milk. Keep aside this 2nd milk.
- Milk No. 3. Put once again the coconut residue back in the blender; add 2 cups of warm water and blend thoroughly well. Squeeze and strain the milk. Keep this 3rd milk aside.
4. Cut coconut chunks into small teeth shaped pieces
5. Remove the shell of cardamom and crush to a fine powder.



Courtesy: Mani's Lunch Home

Melt the jaggery with a little water and strain to remove impurities. Boil the jaggery syrup in a wide heavy bottomed non-stick pan. Add cooked jackfruit pulp and mix it thoroughly. Pour 3<sup>rd</sup> extract of coconut milk, add cooked moongdal and allow boiling on low flame until well blended. Boil until the mixture is thick. Add the 2nd coconut milk and boil again to reduce the water content stirring well. Now the aroma of the jackfruit, jaggery and coconut emanates from the mixture pronouncing that the payasam is getting ready. Remove from fire. Add the first milk and stir constantly. After adding the first milk, the pradhaman should not be boiled. Add chukkupodi (dry ginger powder) and cardamom powder. Fry coconut pieces on ghee to golden brown colour and pour it on the top of the payasam. Chakka Pradhaman is ready to be served.

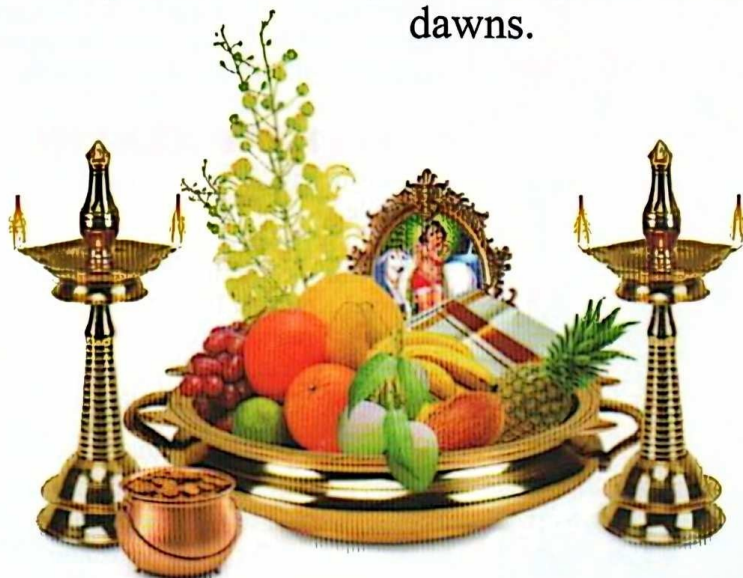


# VISHU AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

Man has always sought to start afresh and celebrate new beginnings. Many communities celebrate the new year to bury the past and look forward to good tidings at the beginning of a new year. The Kerala festival of Vishu is one such festival. Perhaps this is one of the few festivals of the world where there are no specific religious connotations but hope and expectations for good tidings as the new year dawns.



G H Ananthanarayanan



**V**ishu is the spring festival of Kerala, which falls in Mesham (the solar month spanning mid April to mid May). Known as *Vaishnavam* in astrology, it is the day when the sun reaches a transit path directly above the terrestrial equator in *Utharayana* (apparent northward movement of the sun). The literal meaning of *Vishu* is one with equal state i.e, the day when the duration of both day and night is equal, i.e of 30 *nazhikas* (12 hours) each.

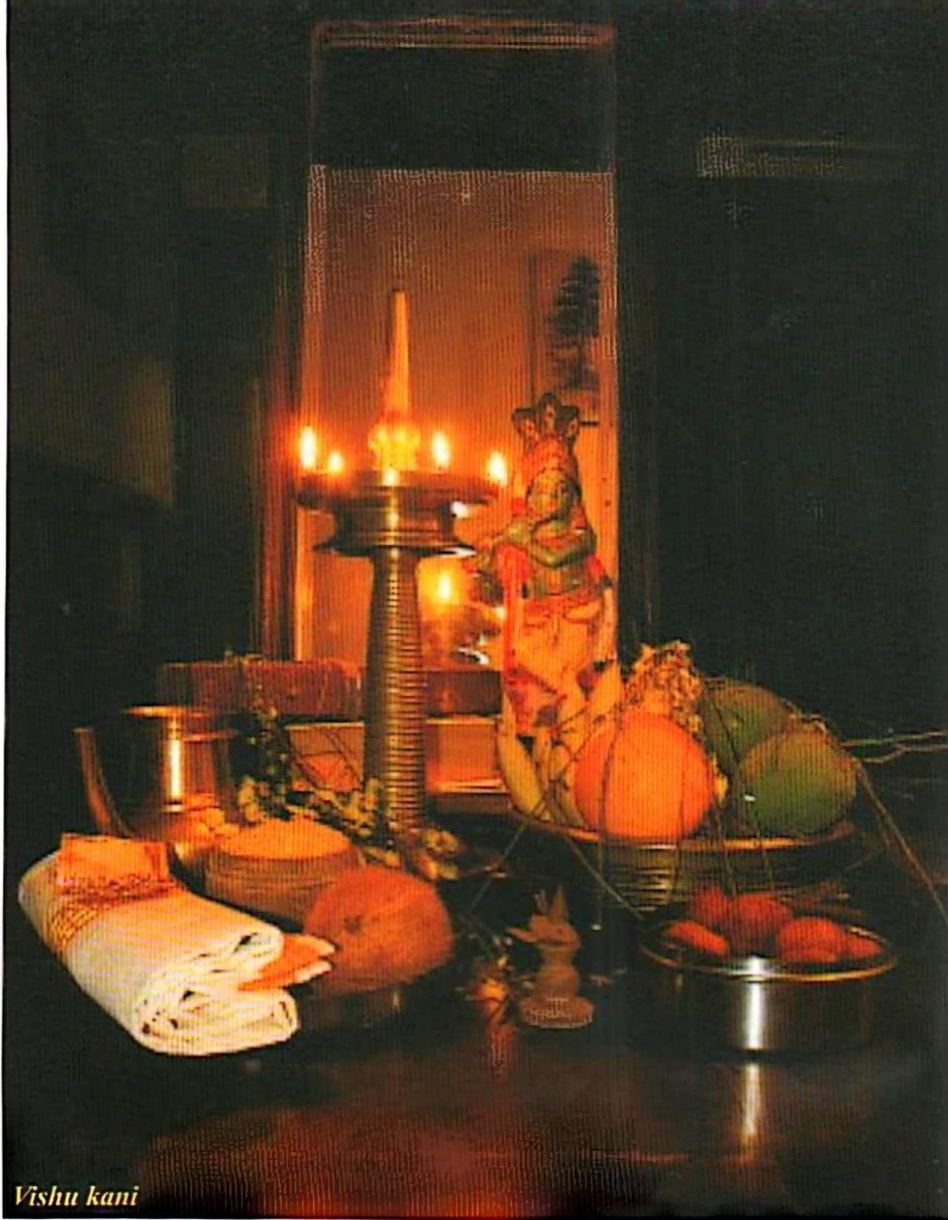
The transit of the Sun from one *Rasi* (Zodiac sign) to another is called as *Samkramam*. When the Sun transits from *Meenam* (Pisces) to *Mesham* (Aries), it is called *Vishnu Samkramam*. It is the belief that this transit of the Sun has a bearing on

the good and bad happenings in nature and human existence during the period (of one year) extending from one *Vishu* to the next.

Geographically speaking, there are two *Vishus* in a year *Thula Vishu*, and *Mesha Vishu*. It is the *Mesha Vishu* that is generally being celebrated. Astrologers, who firmly believe that the position /transits of stars and planets will contribute to changes in human life, customarily determine the good and bad happenings, not only in human life but also in the general condition (in Nature) in the ensuing year, on a study of the planetary position at the time of such transit. This is called *Vishu Phalam*.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF VISHU KANI

Viewing the *Kani* is an important part of the celebration of *Vishu*. On the eve of *Vishu Samkrama*, *Kani* is set at night. Generally, an idol of Lord Krishna, wearing a yellow garment is kept for *Kani*-viewing. In front of it is kept a lighted *Nila Vilakku* (a traditional Kerala oil lamp). Near it is kept an *Uruli* (a round shaped, shallow, bell-metal vessel) in which is kept ripe cucumber (yellowish in colour), a mirror, a new sari, a small receptacle for *kumkum* (crimson powder made of turmeric and other ingredients), gold jewellery, a *grantha* (inscription on palm leaf), ariecanut (whole), coconut, fruits and a bunch of seasonal flowers. The pride of place is given to *konna poovu* (Laburnum) which grows in wild profusion during spring. It is associated with Lord Siva, and has many medicinal uses such as for treatment of ring worms and other infections, to destroy intestinal worms as also to cure leprosy. It also has



*Vishu kani*

digestive, anti-inflammatory, anti-puretic and bloodpurifying properties. The *Nila Vilakku* has special significance in the arrangement, for light is symbolic of knowledge. If one has to understand the mysteries of nature, acquisition of knowledge of self is essential. One

should not therefore view darkness first on this day; hence, the viewing of light, which removes darkness. The purpose of the mirror at the back of the *Kani* is for reflection. The belief being that to catch a reflection of the signs of prosperity symbolized in the *Kani* will bring prosperity to the viewer.

In short, viewing *Vishu Kani* is symbolic of human expectation of happy tidings, of a belief that all good things are in store and of the beginning of new life.

## KINI'S HEAD AS KANI

A historical event marks *Kani* in erstwhile Kochi State, now part of Kerala. It is referred to as *Kani Kinyude thala* (Kini's head as the Vishu Omen)

Several Konkana Brahmins or Gowda Saraswat Brahmins (GSB) had settled down in Kochi, unable to bear the persecution of the Portuguese in Goa. The Maharaja of Kochi gave them asylum and a rent-free site in Mattanchery to build the now-famous Thirumala Devaswam temple, with the presiding deity as Lord Venkateswara.

*Easter, Vishu Greetings to all Mumbai Malayalees*

**From:**  
*Azhakesan and Family*  
*Wadala*

**V**ishu stresses the positive note that we should adopt in our life

And the rituals of Vishu are symbolic of man's desire for good things to happen when the new year starts.

Gold coins and golden ornaments, yellow flowers, yellow coloured fruits and vegetables, bronze *uruli* and bronze mirror (*val kannadi*) - there is a profusion of the colour

yellow in the *kanikanal*. The yellow flame from the *nilavilalakku* and the halved coconuts reflect still further the golden hue and our minds are raised to a positive level by the sight of these auspicious things on the first day of the new year.

*Vishu kaineetam*, the



distribution of coins, is another aspect of the festival. The elders in the family give the *vishu kaineetam* to the younger folks. In fact in rich families *kaineetam* is given to the neighbours and wellwishers. The joy of viewing the auspicious things

at *kanikanal* and giving of *kaineetam*

must continue throughout the year. We have to

spread this love

and happiness to the rest of society and remember with gratitude God's grace.

This is followed by a sumptuous *vishu sadya* prepared with the seasonal vegetables namely *mambazha pachadi*, *chakka pradhaman*, *vellirikka pachadi* etc.

Devarasa Kini, rejected the King's request to supply a certain quantity of jaggery for a religious purpose. That was in 1791.

Sakthan got many of them arrested. He ordered them to pay customs duty from which the Dutch had exempted them. Three of the Trustees of the Thirumala Devaswam temple were executed as they would not part with any of the Devaswam property. The shops of Saraswat traders were looted. The Dutch sent their army, but Shaktan drove them away.

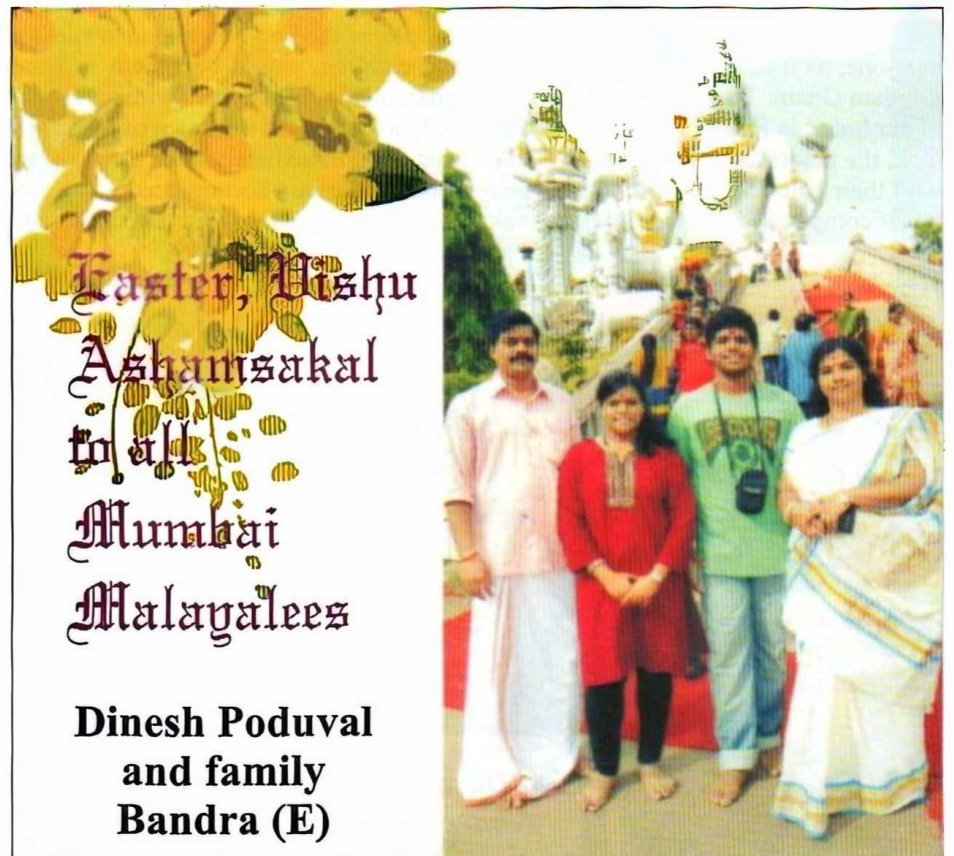
Sambrathi (an official) Menon was sent to the shop of Kini saying that the king would settle the dues to him on account of pepper by physical delivery of goods. On the pretext of having something very confidential to tell Kini, Menon led him to an inside room. As they were having a discussion, two or three country crafts pulled up before Kini's godown. A number of soldiers jumped out of the country crafts with drawn swords. Their chief entered the room in which Kini and Menon were closeted. All on a sudden, Menon pinned down Kini to the ground and two soldiers chopped off his head. The other soldiers killed or maimed whosoever was around.

Kini's head was presented as *Kani* to Shaktan Thamburan the following morning. Thus came about "*Kani Kiniyude Thala*"

Later they were also given the right to trade with foreign countries, to build houses, and certain civil and criminal powers within the Thirumala Devaswam Sanketam in Mattanchery. These Saraswats came to be called Konkanis, since Goa was a part of the Konkana Desa.

Endowed as they are with good business acumen, the Dutch and Portuguese found them to be useful allies in their competition with the Muslim Mopla and Nawayat traders on the west coast. The Dutch relied on them for supplying goods like pepper, rice, forest produce etc. In return, the Dutch secured for them the privilege of extra-territoriality. The privilege permitted them to be tried in the Courts of the Company rather than by the Cochin Government.

This rankled in the minds of the King of Kochi and of the people there, but they were unable to do anything about it until Shaktan Thamburan came on the scene, first as Regent and later on as King. He seized the first opportunity to show where authority lay. And he got this when the Konkanis under the leadership of





V Rajan Nair

# Vishu A nostalgia that cannot incarnate

- Rajan Nair becomes nostalgic about the Vishu of his childhood days and wonders whether those days will ever come again.

**W**hen our annual festivities like Onam, Vishu etc come at their appropriate times, I become rejuvenated by happy memories of the same and the good times I had during my childhood. Soon I feel sad at the reality of their non- return to my life.

After every Vishu, I start looking for the next one, as it used to bring much more joy than Onam. The entire surroundings of our house in Kerala would wear a new look, the plants are green and they smile with their colourful flowers. The *Konna* in our compound will have a special look

like that of a decorated bride with gold all over and flowers at the top like a crown and I never felt such joy on any other day.

Much before the arrival of Vishu, it would be announced in the entire village by the boisterous sounds of crackers, exploding from the houses of the rich people in the neighbourhood while we, the children, would buy them in small quantities and keep them with good care, only to be used at the dawn of Vishu. On that day, immediately after the *kani*, we would take our accumulated stock and run to the courtyard with uncontrollable

laughter and rapturous enthusiasm we would light our sparklers and crackers. Intense pleasure came only when we ourselves lighted and burst them.

Those days people never used to buy new clothes frequently and special occasions are needed to call for new purchases. Vishu was one such occasion. After wearing the new clothes on that day, we washed and carefully kept them to wear to school on the re-opening day in June. The next acquisition of new clothes will be for Onam. Now the frequent purchases of new clothes have taken away that happiness from all of us. Elders of our generation used to say that any need should not be fulfilled soon and it should linger for some time unfulfilled and finally when it materialises, the happiness turns to be ecstasy.

Our family was comparatively well off with the household having enough grains and vegetables of its own. But money was always in short supply. Even if it was there, children were never indulged with money. As children, we had to wait till Vishu to have some money which we could call as our own. The *kaineettam* we received was not very large, seldom it exceeded one rupee. So we had to keep our wishes also small. I often wonder if the present day children ever have any such wishes and that kind of happiness when we hand over them *kaineettam*



*Vishu, Easter Ashamsakal to all Mumbai Malayalees*

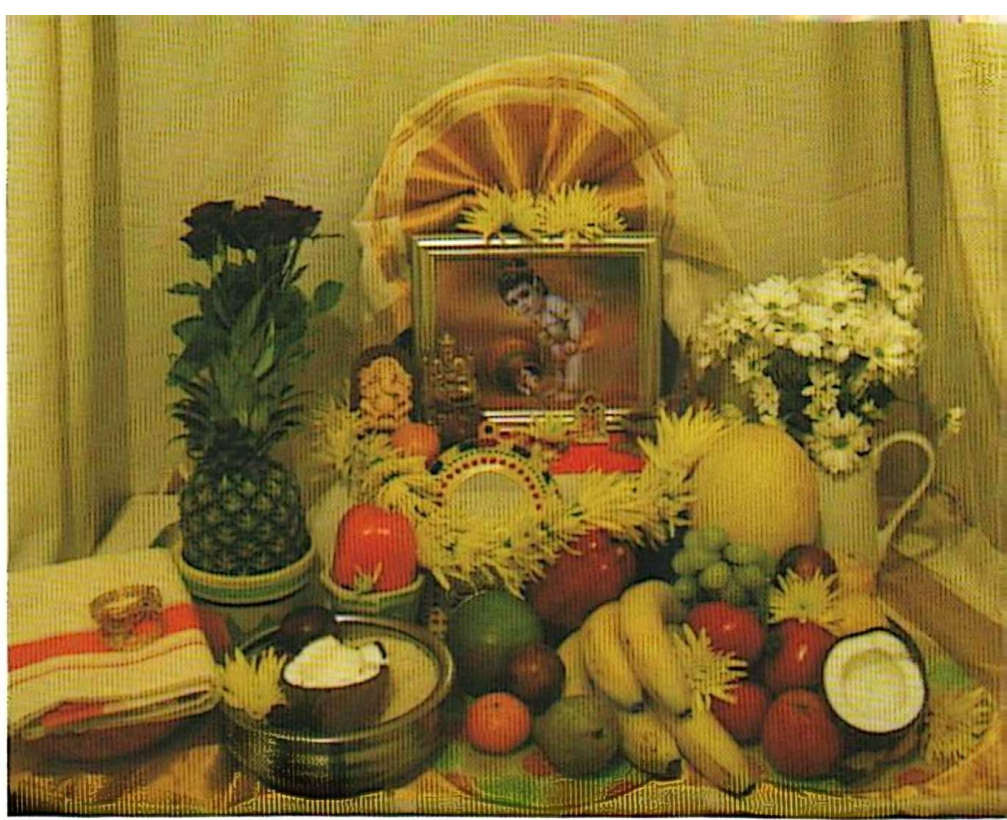
**Davadas G Nair and Family,  
Gharodia Nagar, Ghatkopar (E)**

often in the range of five hundred to one thousand rupees. The present trend of giving pocket money to children very often have deprived them that ecstasy and the happiness of receiving *Vishukkodi*.

The *kani* we see early in the morning was another speciality. We were woken up by mother or elder sisters and closing our eyes with their palms they guided us from our bed and to the *kani*. Now that sanctity is almost lost. When electric lights are always available at one flicker, the thrill of moving around in total darkness is wholly missing.

In the Malabar region Vishu is considered as the new year day, ushering a new agricultural season. The cattle is also given an opportunity to have the *kani* and there would be a symbolic ploughing in the fields. It is surprising to note that Onam denotes the end of the agricultural season.

I often wonder the purpose of having these festivities and their messages. The clear message of Vishu is that we should appreciate the nature and its gifts. Nature seduces us and thus urges us to protect it. Are we doing it? Do we have a monetary discipline to stretch our wishes to the



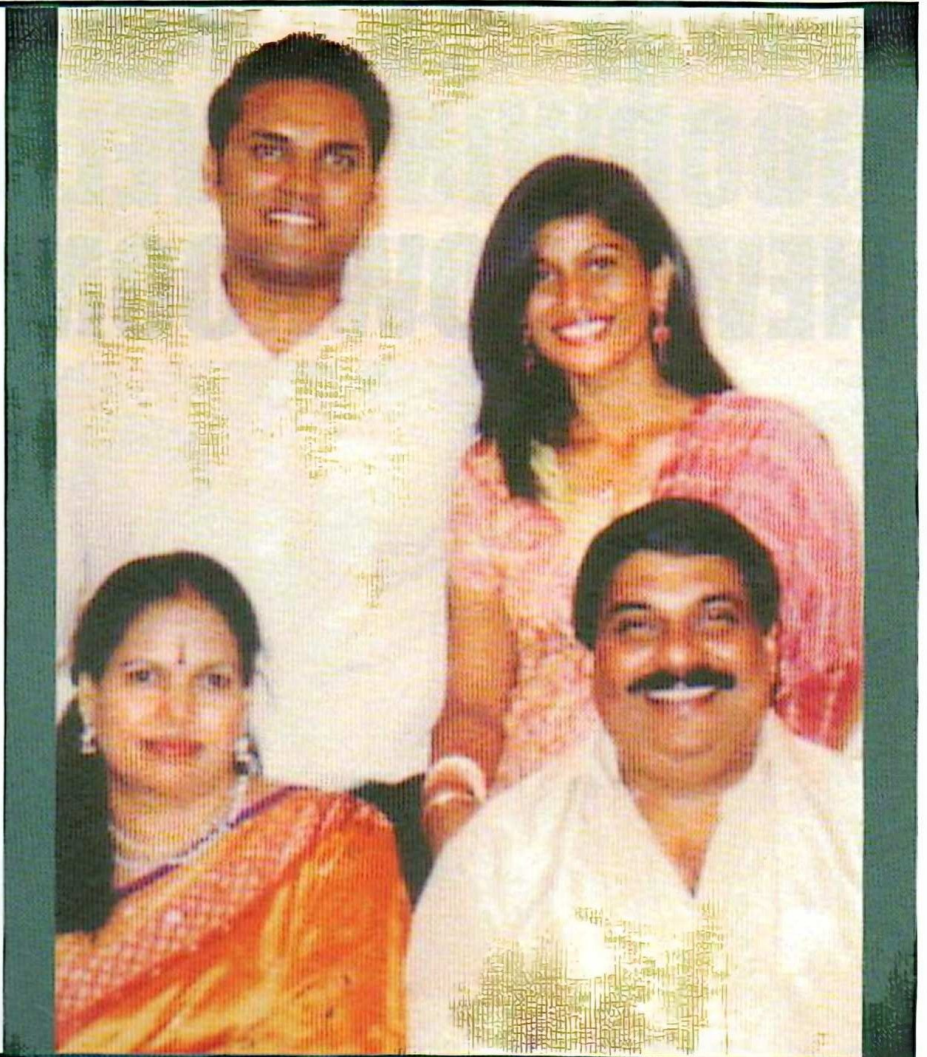
maximum and spend only when it is essential? Recently I read that India survived the recent world financial inflation only because of the saving nature of its citizens.

In today's atmosphere, we would have had many a Vishu considering our affluence but how would we have that *konna* flowers bloom?



*Easter, Vishu Greetings  
to all  
Kerala in Mumbai  
readers*

**From:  
M R Francis and Family  
Chembur**





*Suresh Gopi and Padmapriya inaugurating the Pune Showroom*

**Mumbai Dazzle Sparkles To Pune**

# GOODWIN JEWELLERY OPENS NEW SHOWROOM IN PUNE



*Directors Sudhees Kumar, Sunil Kumar, and Murali*

**T**he inauguration of the showroom Goodwin Jewellers at Pimpri in Pune on February 26, 2012 was a grand studded affair. Superstars Bharath Suresh Gopi and Padmapriya, inaugurated this branch while Nishant Sagar, Kalabhava Prajod, Muktha, Archana, Souparnika, Thesni Khan, Reji Rama, Mangalya and other stars graced the occasion. Suresh Gopi, in his speech, complimented on the large presence of Malayalees at a place outside Kerala for a 'golden' occasion and emphasized that it was a good sign. He wished the Goodwin Group all success in their new venture. The inaugural ceremony was organised by the Directors of the Goodwin Group Sunil Kumar, Sudhees Kumar and Murali. There was a mega studded entertainment programme in the evening which was well appreciated by the audience that had gathered in large numbers. Several eminent personalities from the political, social, cultural and



*Lighting of the lamp by Mrs and Mr A G Mohanan*



*Goodwin family along with artistes and guests*

business field were honoured. In their address to the audience, the Goodwin Group Management stated that they had several plans and projects for the future including working towards social causes and they emphasized that all these could be possible only with the support and encouragement of their customers and well-wishers.

Goodwin started its first jewellery manufacturing shop in Thrissur in 1992. Later it started importing and wholesale business of chains in the name of Goodwin Bombay in Kerala. It entered the Mumbai market in 2004 with a brand recognition in jewellery business. Today it has showrooms in Dombivli and Mira Road.

Known for its high quality and purity, Goodwin showrooms have a wide variety of designs among its traditional, modern, lightweight and chunky ornaments that a buyer can choose from. Goodwin deals with diamonds as well.

The company was founded by AG Mohanan who is the Managing Director and his sons, Sunil Kumar, Sudheesh Kumar and son-in-law Murali have joined as Directors, looking after the running of the Group. The Company is also backed by a strong management team and skilled craftsmen.



*A view of the gathering at the inauguration*

# Kochu Guruvayur Temple In Matunga

Lord Krishna affectionately called Guruvayurappan is a favourite household deity of Malayalees. It was only natural that the early Malayalees who came to Mumbai wanted Guruvayurappan in this city where they had come to earn their living. They fulfilled this wish when they installed Guruvayurappan at one of the oldest samajams of South Indians, the Asthika Samaj in Matunga and named it Kochu Guruvayur.



**Kochu Guruvayur Temple**

The idol of Guruvayurappan is a magnet that draws anyone visting the Temple complex. The Lord here is Unnikannan, with benevolent eyes that give solace to his worshippers, adorned with sandalwood paste on his body, tulusi mala as well as garlands of other flowers around his neck. A smile plays on his lips. *Pal payasam* that is Kannan's favourite, is the most popular neividyam as well as *unni appam*, *avil*, *malar* etc like in Guruvayur.

## Installation

On May 30, 1974, a team of learned Nambudiri priests led by the head priest

of Guruvayur Temple Brahmasri Chennas Parameswaran Nambudirippad conducted the installation ceremony as per the customary rites. All the pujas and offerings performed in the temple at Guruvayur are done here. The current Thantri of the temple is CP Dinesan Namboodirippad of Guruvayur. Daily pujas are performed by Praneesh Kumar Puthumana .

The sanctum sanctorum in the shrine is constructed according to *shilpa sastra* based on the plan prepared by the vedic scholar Sankaran Narayanan Nambudirippad.

Many Malayalee marriages take place in front of the shrine of Guruvayurappan.

Apart from marriages, *thulabharam*, *annaprashnam* and other offerings are made by devotees as it is done in Guruvayur.

Special Narayaneeyam discourses, *Bhagavatha Saptaham* when learned pundits from Kerala come and perform the same, *Kalabhabhisekham*, *navakar Guruvayur ekadashi*, *janmashtami* celebrations are all celebrated here with active participation by devotees. *Udayasthamana puja* is also performed like in Guruvayur.

Tanthri Chennas Divakaran Nampooririppad, Anjam Madhavan Namboodirippad who conducted *bhagavatha saptahams*, Sengalipuram Anantharama Dishitar who has conducted many upanyasams (vedic discourses), Shankaracharyas who have performed pujas in the complex - all these seers have sanctified the place with their presence in previous years. Beneath the banyan tree at the temple



**Malliyoor Parameswaran Namboothiri giving discourse at the Bhagavatha Saptaham within the temple complex.**



**Praneesh Kumar Puthumana, the current priest**

**Late VK Murthy, Founder Secretary**

precincts lived the sage Mathangarishi, who according to legend did penance on the banks of the river Pampa, travelled to this place and made it his abode. Matunga is named after this Maharishi. The banyan tree still stands there and devotees circumambulate it to get their wishes fulfilled.

According to the temple authorities Shree Krishnananda Theertha Swami of Sakatapuram brought his idol of Balagopalan and the effulgence of that deity is also reflected in the idol of Guruvayurappan here.

Besides Guruvayurappan, the Asthika Samaj houses the main idols of Lord Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman, shrines for Ganesha, Ayyappan, Murugan, Hanuman, the Navagrahas, Nagaraja and Shiva. Ayyappan was installed by Chennas Divakaran Nambudirippad of Guruvayur.

## Asthika Samaj

The Asthika Samaj was set up in 1923 as a place of worship by a group of Malayalees and Tamilians to cater to their religious and spiritual needs. They first installed a portrait of Lord Rama with his consort Sita (Ramar Pattabhisekham) and worshipped this picture. Eventually in 1953 with the blessings of the Sankaracharya of Kanchipuram, the idols of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman were installed and consecrated.

The Samaj conducts cultural programmes of music and dance, spiritual discourses and parayanams during times of festivals. Rama Navami is celebrated on a grand scale with spiritual discourses in the morning and cultural programmes of music and dance by renowned artistes for 10 days. JN Srinivasan is the President, AGV Raman is the Vice-President, while PV Ramaswamy and V Subramanian are Secretaries. PP Govindankutty is the Treasurer and AN Ramaswamy, B Venkataraman, K Ramakrishnan, S Padmanabhan, S Rajagopal, RV Sarma are members of the Managing Committee. All the current MC



**Kannan, Manager of Asthika Samaj**

members remember VK Murthy, who passed away in November 2010, as being instrumental to a great extent in the spiritual, cultural and religious growth of the



**JN Srinivasan (President), PN Govindan Kutty (Treasurer), PV Ramaswamy (Secretary), K Ramakrishnan, and S Padmanabhan (Trustees) of Asthika Samaj.**

Samaj. He was the Secretary of the Samaj since 1953 till his death in 2010. In 2012, from January 29 to February 1, to commemorate 90 years of selfless service of Asthika Samaj to the residents of Mumbai and 60 years of the installation of the idols of Rama and Sita, *kanakabhisekham* for Lord Rama and His consort Sita, *Sahasrakalashabhisekham* for Guruvayurappan and *Dravyabhisekham* for Lord Ayyappan. *Kumbabhisekham* for Rajagopuram was also performed during that time. Every Year *Vishukkani* is kept on the first day of the Malayalam new year and Malayalees flock here to have a darshan of the *vishukkani*. During the Guruvayur *utsavam* in February March at Guruvayur, *Bhagavatha Saptaham* is

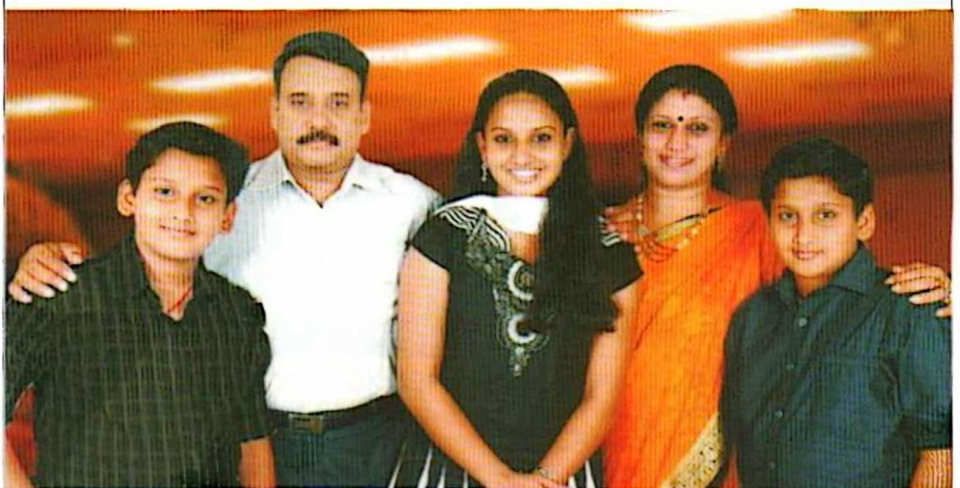
conducted for a week by learned tanthris from Kerala.

Two marriage halls have been constructed over the temple where marriages and other social and religious functions can be held.

The Samajam is in the process of renovating the temple premises and improving facilities for devotees. It has two endowment schemes: Donation of Rs 10,000 against which pujas to all worshipping deities both in the morning and night will be performed every year on any day specified by the devotee and *prasadam*s sent to him/her.

Donation of Rs 5000 against which pujas will be performed to all deities in the morning on a particular day every year specified by the devotee and *prasadam*s offered to him/her.

## Easter Vishu Greetings to all Mumbai Malayalees



**Praveen Kumar Nair and Family, Mira Road**

# AMBALAVASIS OF KERALA



K R NARAYAN

Continued from our last Issue, a detailed description of the different sub- sects Ambalavasis are categorised into.

### Pothuval

There are two classes in the Pothuval community: Akappothuval and Purappothuval. Akappothuval works inside the Chuttampalam and Purappothuval works outside the Chuttambalam. Pothuvals are considered to be a part of the Nair community in Travancore, descendant from Nambuthiri fathers and Nair mothers. In the north Kerala region, however, Pothuvals are considered as Ardha brahmins much like the Nambisans. A Pothuval household is known as *Pothuvattu*.

### Varyar (Variar or Warriar)

Varyars are considered as a sub caste of Brahmins. Originally, the Varyers were the temple administrators. The word "Variyar" originated from Tamil and refers to a person who maintains the accounts (*Variyam*). During the Brahmin feudalistic era of yore, the agricultural property of every village belonged to a village temple. There was an elected committee to

administer the temple and the properties. The manager or the accountant of this committee was called Variyar, and he was accountable to the Committee. Managing the temple and providing materials required for the offering to the deity (*Nivedyam*), cleaning the vessels used for the preparation of "nivedyam" and "puja", day-to-day maintenance of the temple premises, etc., were considered the responsibilities of the Variyar and his family.

### Marar

Marars were considered the lowest among the Ambalavasis. However, they were subsequently elevated and considered Ambalavasis in Malabar, Cochin and North Travancore. In Central and South Travancore, however, the higher classes, known as *Asupanis* are still included among the remaining Maarars and hence considered Nairs. The customs and ceremonies of the Marars are the same as the Nairs, though their lifestyle is typically Ambalavasi.

### Pisharody

The Pisharodys are said to have originated from a brahmin who was on the verge of becoming a Sanyasin as per customs. But he is said to have run away at the last moment. (That is the reason why Pisharodys are not cremated, but buried in a sitting posture). Another story about the origin of Pisharodies is that they are the Hindus converted from Buddhism. The origin of the name is traced from the name *Bhikswar adiakal*.

### Way of Life

Generally all Amabalavais abstain from animal food and liquor. Some adopt the Brahmin mode of dress while the others

generally adopt the Nair dress. All except the Pisharodys cremate their dead. The priests are either Nambudiris or the more orthodox among themselves. They offer Deeksha for a year. Pollution generally observed only for twelve days, may extend to thirteen or fourteen, but never sixteen as in the case of the Sudras.

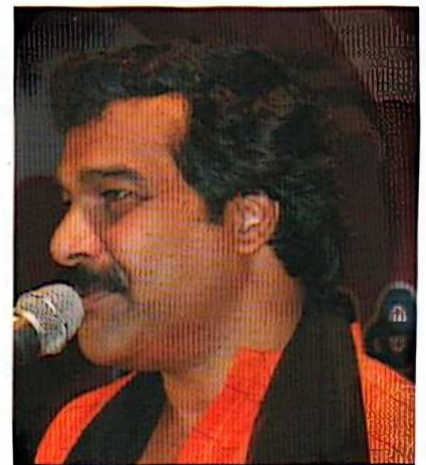
### Prominent Ambalavasis

The contributions of Ambalavasis Kerala to the cultural heritage of India in the fields of temple-art are substantial. Ambalavasis have through the centuries developed several art forms of a religious or quasi-religious nature. The major art forms developed by Ambalavasis are Koodiyattam, Koothu, Thullal, Thiyyaattu, Sopana Sangeetam, Brahmanippattu, Panchavadyam and the like. Ambalavasis are traditional players of musical instruments such as *Chenda Udukku, Idakka, Mizhavu, Kombu Kuzhal* and the like.

There are many great and well known Ambalavasis from Kerala. They have contributed greatly to different facets of cultural and economic development



P K Warriar



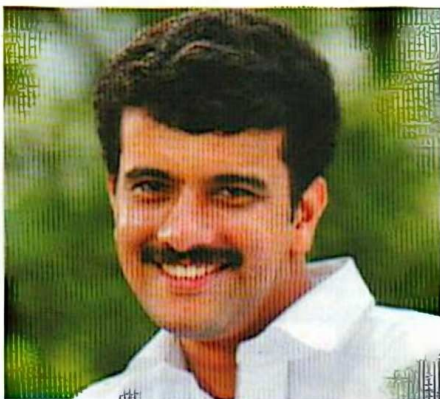
Jayaraj Warriar



**Manju Warriar**

this state - especially in the performing arts, literature and traditional Ayurvedic medicine.

Kottarathil Sankunni (the Malayalam writer and the author of the *Aithiyamala*), Unnayi Warriar (the author of *Nalacharitham Atta Katha*), Shadkala Govinda Marar (Carnatic musician and a referee and contemporary of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal) and Kunchan Nambiar (who invented the performing art called Ottam Thullal), Padmabhushan Ammannur Madhava Chakyar, (who was responsible for bringing the art form Koodiyattam out of temples and reviving it). Mani Madhava Chakyar, etc. are only a few among them. In the area of traditional medicines the *Ashtavaidyas* or the eight physician-families of yore excelled. These *Ashtavaidyas* followed and practiced the eight parts of Vagbhata's *Ashtanga Hridaya*. They were: Aalathiyoor Nambi, Elayidath Thaikkatt Mooss, Pazhanellippurath Thaikkatt Mooss, Kuttancherry Mooss, Vayaskara Mooss, Chirattamon Mooss, Velluttu Mooss, and Pulamanthol Mooss.



**Ramesh Pisharody**

Late E. Ikkanda Warriar (Prime Minister of the erstwhile Cochin State), late K.Karunakaran (former Chief Minister of Kerala) were the Ambalavasi stalwarts in the political field.

Dr. K. N. Pishrody (Famous physician and the first Director of the Calicut Medical College), and Pisharoth Rama Pisharoty (Physicist and Meteorologist), Vaidyaratnam P.S.Warrier (Founder of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala), Padmabhushan Dr P K Warriar- (Chief Physician of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala), Dr P K R Warriar- (Eminent Cardio Thorasic Surgeon), commanded respect in the field of medical and physical sciences.

Ramapurathu Warriar, (Poet, author of *Kuchelavruttham vanchippattu*), N. V. Krishna Warriar, ( Author, Critique and



**Divya Unni**



poet), Attoor Krishna Pisharody (writer), Kalamandalam Sankara Warriar (Kathakali Maddalam Artist), K Achutha Warriar (Communist leader and co-operative movement leader), etc. are from this community. Late M. N. Namiyar, (film actor of yore), Manju Warriar, Divya Unni, Jyothirmayi and Remya Nambeesan (the Malayalam film actresses), Jayaraj Warriar, Ramesh Pisharody, P. Unni Krishnan- (Playback singer), etc. are some prominent Ambalavasis in films, music and such other fields.



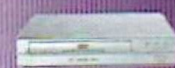


**P Unni Krishnan**

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# Thasmai Novel Hallucination

**A** novel by definition is fiction in prose of a certain extend of about 50,000 words, according to E M Forster. It is rooted in the desire to depict and interpret human character. The reader is both entertained and helped to gain a deeper perception of life's problems. It deals with a human character in a social situation. It is based on one or more characters, action, speech and thoughts of the characters. It places more emphasis on character, especially one well-rounded character, than on plot.

Another major characteristic of the novel is realism--a full and authentic report of human life. The traditional novel has a unified and plausible plot structure and sharply individualized and believable characters and gives a pervasive illusion of reality.

An experimental novel is one that breaks the conventions of its time; what is experimental at one juncture may be considered mainstream at another. Many techniques that were once radical (stream of consciousness, multiple narrative lines, stories within stories, or an unreliable narrator) are now part of the accepted techniques of writing. In today's literature, many experimental novels are classed as *metafiction*, a category of narrative that has defied tradition by breaking the illusion of fiction. For example, the characters in the story may be aware that they are fictional. Likewise, the author may break into the story line with speculations about how the story should continue. Graphic novels and digital novels with hypertext links to outside content have emerged lately.

If you belong to the group who loves experimental novels, then *Thasmai* is for you. It contravenes all rules of a traditional novel. It has only one main character and another miniscule character. The main character has no name or individuality as we cannot judge him except through his words. The side character also has no name but he has a job to do: he is a broad (tele)caster. The whole novel moves (sorry, rests) on an interview.

Is it a live interview? No, it is a recorded one, supposed to be completed in 179 days but the novel concludes in two interviews.

Is there any action? Absolutely none. The story commences



with a live commentary of a person who is dying and we are told, the whole world is holding its breath. Next, we are told the UN is in session and passes a resolution that the dying person cannot belong to India alone but to the whole world and that the body should be taken to the 179 countries of the world before cremation. A medical team will embalm the body and will have a check up every week and at the end, it will be cremated at Kanyakumari, the foot of the country.

The broadcaster tells us that he has an understanding with the dying man that the interview would be telecast during the period between his death and cremation. The reader is spared of the task of listening to the broadcast (it is

supposed to be a telecast) as the entire interview is over in two sections.

Now comes the climax: When the plane lands in India at the end of the journey, there is nobody inside the casket when his face was clearly visible a few minutes earlier.

The entire interview gives us the character of the personnel. The main character is a mystic man who talks of metaphysics and welfare of the world and the other character listens like a blockhead and asks questions like our present day VJs, full of sounds signifying nothing.

The novelist succeeded in exposing the shallow live telecasts and the hollow commentaries, full of incomplete sentences, oft-repeated words and fractured ideas.

If you liked films like *Yaadein* (a film with a single character) and Adoor's *Swayamvaram* with about four characters and a lot of pregnant pauses ending in tragedy (it won a national gold medal for the best movie), this novel is for you, for, you may find a new meaning to life.

[*Thasmai* novel by Sreeretan Nanu published by Unma Publications, Nooranad, Alappuzha Dist., 690 504. Pages 96. Price: Rs.75]

-KVS

## NOVELIST BY CHANCE

Sreeretan Nanu is a technocrat by training. He has produced his first novel thanks to his loquacious nature, often propounding unusual gems of wisdom. He has his own theories about the changes we need in society, our political and administrative system, our monetary policies and a number of other commonplace issues.



Sreeretan Nanu

He conceived the idea of writing his first novel, "Tasmai" prodded by his publisher. The publisher heard him talk about his pet subjects while on a visit to his hometown. The publisher had earlier brought out five books containing the poems of his father, a schoolteacher. Thus was born "Tasmai." If his father had literary proclivities, his

father-in-law, K Bhuvanendran, had in his time been a member of the Library Council in Kerala and was Secretary of the District Library Council. It was but natural that Sreeretan acquired the taste for extensive reading, even while he was earning a living in Mumbai.

For a living, Sreerentan runs an electronics showroom at Seawood, Nerul, DIGIworld. His wife, Lijai, is a school teacher. Their son, Arjun is a pre-college student.

"Tasmai" hardly meets the required format and structure of a novel. It certainly is not fiction. It offers new perspectives that call for some thought and reflection. But, Sreeretan insists, it has a beginning, middle and end. And that is what led him to call it a novel. So be it.

-PKR

Artiste of the Month

# PAVITHRAN KANNAPURAM

## Multi-faceted Artiste

-Lakshmi V

A master of creative arts; a painter, theatre activist, lyricist, poet, and journalist. Pavithran Kannapuram is a name to reckon with in the Mumbai Malayalee cultural scene.

**P**avithran Kannapuram remembers his drawing master in Cherukunnu High School PV Abdullah Master, who taught him drawing at school and instilled in him a love for it. After coming to Mumbai he finished his Intermediate Drawing Grade Examination of the Government of Maharashtra with B grade. Pavithran has done several oils on canvas and water colours and held exhibitions of his paintings under Kairali School of Arts, Dombivli Artists' Society, Group Painting under the aegis of Raagasudha at the recent Mumbai Pooram festival at Savitribai Phule Art Gallery in Dombivli.

### Theatre Activist

Pavithran has written over 100 songs for plays staged by renowned theatre groups like Adam Theatres, Ragam Theatres, Kerala Kala Vedi, Sangam Theatres, Sarathi Theatres, Pratibha Theatre, Decora and many other Malayalee Organisations. The first Malayalam drama that he directed, wrote the lyrics for and acted in was *Nakshatra vilakku* written by CL Jose and staged at *Yuvajana Kalalayam* in Kannapuram when Pavithran was in SSLC. Kanjangad Ramachandran sang his first drama song for this play. *Manalkadu*, *Sthithisa-*

*mathwam*, *Triveni*, *Agnivalayar Sangamam*, *Mannu*, *Altharam Padmavyuham*, *Agniputra Bharatakshetram* are some plays in which Pavithran wrote lyrics.

Some Malayalam plays which Pavithran has directed are *Manalkadu*, *Nenmanikal*, *Anushtanan Bharatakshetram*, *Nakshatravilakku* etc. He has also acted in Malayalam plays like *Oru rathri kure nimishangal*, *Oru kudumbam pirakkunnu*, *Sthithi Samathwam*, *kiratheeyam*, *Ayesh Mambazham* etc. He has also worked as Art Director for *Niram* presented by National Vision for Doordarshan Malayalam Channel.

### Poetic Streaks

Pavithran is also a poet who has published collection of poems in Malayalam namely, *Krishnameghangal*, *Nagarakavithakal*, *Nagarathudippukal*, *Nagaranjali* and *kathorkunna Gramam*.

Pavithran says his inspiration to write poems even in his school, was his science teacher, Paravur Gopalakrishnan, who himself is a poet and has recently translated P Kunhiraman Nair's work into English which is scheduled to be released by Kerala Sahitya Akademi. Pavithran's works deal with poverty, social inequalities, national integration and freedom of the individual.

He has won first prize for the poem *Nagarathudippukal* from Tromba Township Fine Arts Club at the Bombay Level competition. And second prize for *Aathmanadam* from Kerala Kendriya Sanghata (All Mumbai Level). He received the first prize for the poem *Kathorkunna gramam* at the All



*Jaws and beaks - Oil on canvas by Pavithran*

India poetry competition on the 50th annual Day celebrations of Adarsh Vidyalaya Chembur-Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana in 1992.

Through his creative works poetry, painting, and plays - he tries to convey a message for the betterment of humanity and to make the world a better place to live in.

## Laurels and Rewards

He has won several awards and recognitions. At the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana Bombay in 2011, he won the Maha Keraleeyam Award. In 2010 he won the Pitruvedi Award for contribution in the field of Drama from the Diocese of



*Pavithran Kannapuram with Dr K J Yesudas and his wife Prabha at his painting exhibition at Leela Kempinski*



*Receiving White Line Award 2010 from Vijaya Kumari and actor Mukesh*

Kalyan. He received the Whiteline Marunadan Vartha Awards for art and literary contribution in 2010. He won the Bombay Keraleeya Samajam Platinum Jubilee Award in 2007.

## Journalistic forays

As a journalsit Pavithran is Special Correspondent for *Whiteline Vartha*, *Pravasi Sabdam*, and editorial board member for *Visala keralam*, the Bombay Keraleeya Samajam Magazine. He has been running a series of articles on theatre personalities on the Mumbai Malayalam stage.

## Social and Cultural activities

Pavithran is a founder member and patron member of Malayala Samskarika Vedi, Dombivli, founder member and first general secretary of Ragam Theatres, in Mumbai, a well-known theatre group since 1976, Founder

member and President of Ajantha School of Arts, Founder member and first General Secretary of Powai Malayalee

Samajam, Central Committee member of Deshabhimani Study Centre etc.

## Beginnings

Pavithran Kannapuram was born in Kannapuram in Kannur District. His father, Narayanan Ravi Varman lives in Kerala and the late PV Cheriya was his mother. After his matriculation in Kerala he did his ITI - 2 year training course in Kannur and later Diploma in ITEI (Mechanical Draughtmanship) with First class from Mumbai. In 1970 he came to Mumbai. For 26 years he worked with Tata Oil Mills as Mechanical Draughtsman. Pavithran's wife, Latha, is a housewife hailing from Azhikode in Kannur District. Her parents are Krishnan and Janaki (late). Their two sons Prasad and Prashanth work as a graphic designer and in Accenture respectively.

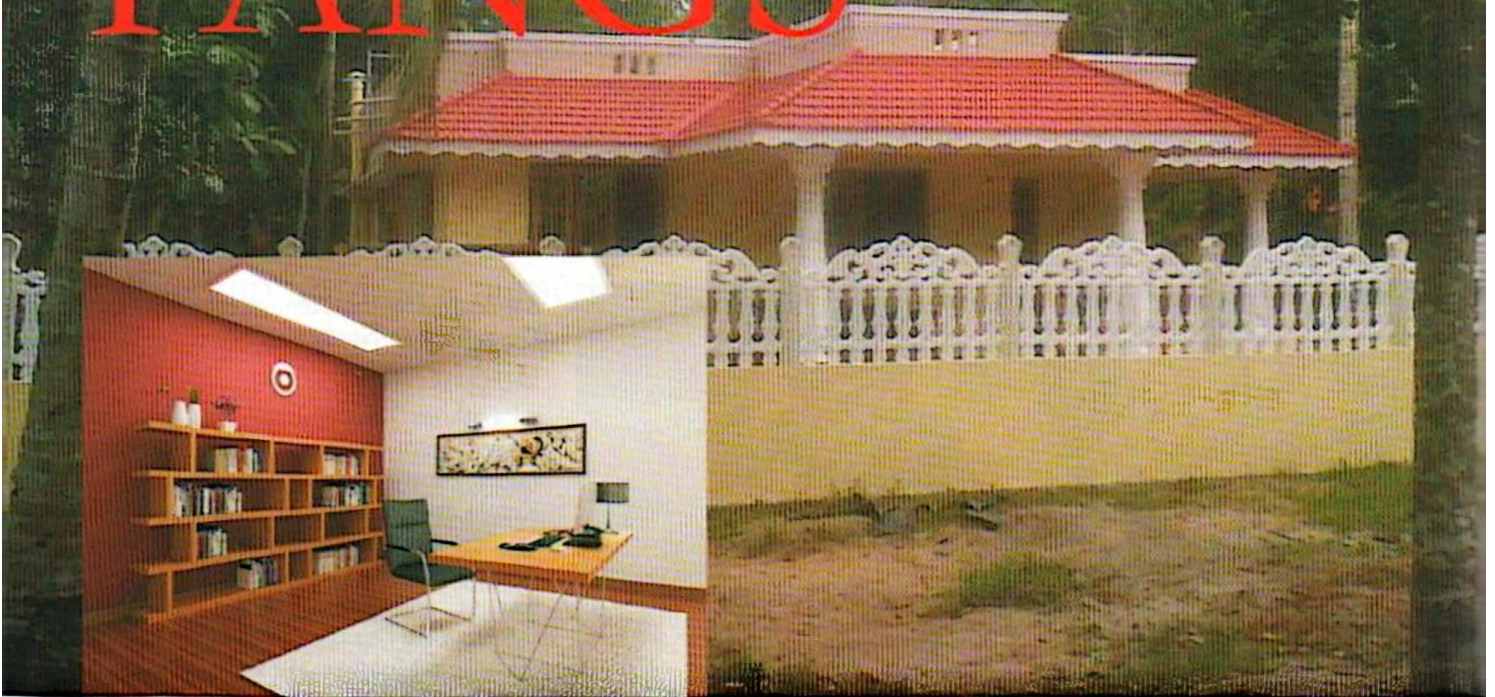


*Pavithran Kannapuram with wife Latha, sons Prasad and Prasanth*

# PAINTER PANGS



Krishnakumar



Paints give a sense of depth and add to the appeal of a room. A guide on how to make the best out of painting your home

**P**aints are one of the most versatile medium to work with. Not only does an architect use it to illustrate his ideas and thoughts, it also spruces up our space and has a dramatic effect on our mind and body. Also renovating a space will more often than not involve paint. So it would serve you well to get the basics straight.

Paint is a mixture of solid pigments suspended in a liquid medium (water or mineral spirits) which dries to form a protective and decorative coating. Pigments are encapsulated by resins or binders which help attach them to the surface being painted and create a film of coating. You would have heard of or seen the term latex oil and alkyd on

paint cans but what do they really mean?

Paints fall under two categories that define their types, the first is water based paint and the other is oil based which comprises of alkyd resin based products thinned with mineral spirits.

Commonly seen is the water based ones, which are available in interior or exterior grade. Latex provides an excellent finish and is an easier paint to use. It can be cleaned with detergent and water, dries up faster, has milder odor, non-inflammable, and easy to do touch ups. These environment friendly paints allow moisture to evaporate through the film, thus reducing blistering, cracking and peeling etc. Inexpensive latex paints use softer vinyl resins more water in the formulation. The more durable of the latex paints use 100 percent acrylic resins and less water. The term enamel is normally associated with paints that have a glossy finish. Enamels are formulated with higher concentrations of resins as they are used in areas subject to heavy wear and tear.

Choosing paints for interiors first of all depends on the area to be painted. Every space has its own painting





requirements.

Interior paints can be grouped in two categories distempers and emulsions.

## Distempers

These are the traditional economy paints with good workmanship, they can produce a perfectly satisfactory finish at a reasonable cost. Their life circle is short, dry distempers (which are available in powder form) and oil bound and synthetic distempers which are known as o.b.d are washable. Acrylic distempers being partly based on acrylic resins, produce greater smoothness and are washable.

## Emulsions

Also known as plastic paints, these are based on a fine dispersion of resin in a solvent which on drying create a remarkably tough adherent and durable coating. Special additives in emulsion give them an incomparably smooth and fine finish, in various shades that last for years. These are resistant to water,



chemical, fungus and algae. They come in three categories, silk emulsions, regular emulsions and economy emulsions.

## Exterior Paints

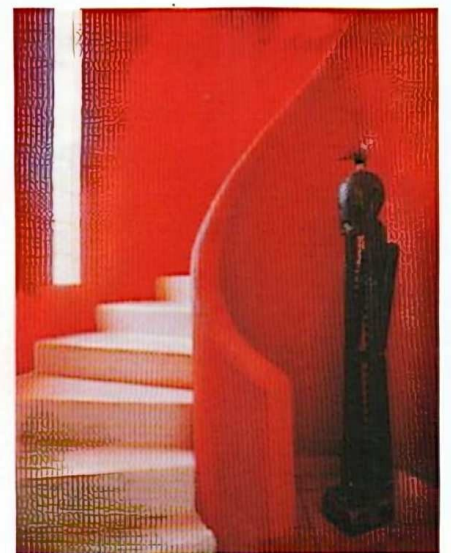
Emulsions are heroes where exterior paints are concerned as they contain acrylic contents which give them long life span. Special additives also make them exceptionally resistant to algae fungus and atmospheric erosions. Other popular choices are cement paints and textured plasters. Cement paints come with a weather resistant coating that is considerably effective. The coating contains special additives that are equipped to deal with rigorous external environments. Textured plasters are also

emulsions based and provide even stronger protection than silk emulsions besides unique visual appeal, their thick surface can be designer, patterned by sponging, stippling etc with the help of patterned rollers. They are also washable.

## Levels of gloss

Remember the higher the gloss level, the shinier the appearance and more scrubbable the finish. The sheen or gloss of paints refers to the amount of light reflected by its surface.

Glossy paints are harder, durable and more stain resistant paint finish. its easy to clean than all the other paint finishes. Gloss finishes generally makes the surface imperfections more noticeable. They are the best choices for the heavy traffic areas like kitchens, bath rooms ,furniture's , cabinets, floors, stairs, hand rails and doors etc.



Dr K K PANICKER

# The Natural Path Overrides Surgery

Dr KK Panicker is Consultant Obstetrics and Gynaecologist, at the newly opened superspeciality Seven Hills Hospital at Marol. He is one of the few doctors of Mumbai who advises and convinces his patients to go for normal deliveries when many high-end nursing hospitals and mothers themselves opt for caesarian sections to avoid the pain of giving birth naturally.



“Delivering a baby is a woman's birthright. I tell my patients. Follow nature, your body will recover fast.” He takes to the knife only in an emergency. Dr Panicker recalls an incident of a woman who came to him with fibroids in her uterus. A prestigious nursing home had advised surgery, but Dr Panicker advised her to take medicines for a year or so. After the treatment was over, the size of the fibroids had reduced and a surgery was avoided. The doctor's reasoning was that his patient was about 50 years and within a year and with the assistance of

pill, fibroids will disappear as a woman enters menopause.

“I do not look only for commercial gains. Treating the disease is my first priority,” he says modestly.

Dr KK Panicker's father was in the army. His first two years as an infant was at Shoranur in Kerala, later Dr Panicker had his schooling in several places in North India where his father was posted. He did his MBBS and MD at AFMC (Armed Forces Medical College) in Pune. After his MD, he worked as a professor at

AFMC, and later posted at different military hospitals in many parts of North and northeast India including Guwahati, the Indo-Nepal, Indo-China and other border areas.

Though there has been no major war in recent years in India, working at different military hospitals in border areas, is a challenge, because facilities are poor and the health specialists will have to do the work with basic resources. Their work at these hospitals is a 24 hour schedule.

After 27 years in the army hospital, Dr Panicker took voluntary retirement and joined Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences at Loni as a professor. In 2000 when the Seven Hills hospital was commissioned, he joined it in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department.

Dr Panicker feels women's health should be given greater priority and emphasis in all health plans and schemes. In the interiors of rural India especially in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and several other states, the status of the girl child and the woman is given the least importance. “They are brought to us at the last moment when they are in a very bad state of health. Women in the hinterlands are extremely fragile, and uneducated, they eat the left-overs after feeding the sons and husbands, and they work till the last straw.

He mentions the abysmally poor health conditions of women in Pithoragarh in



Delivering a lecture Rural Medical College in Loni where Dr Panicker was Professor.

## Dr Panicker's Health Tips for women

Young girls and women in their child-bearing years need sufficient quantities of iron. This will prevent risks during pregnancy. As a teenager she must be aware of contraceptions and sexually transmitted diseases.

Yearly medical check-ups after the age of 35 is essential.

Women are more prone to cancer of cervix and breast. Cervical cancer is caused by HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) and vaccine is available which is effective in most cases. Regarding breast cancer, women after they touch 30 years must do self- breast examination regularly.

During menopause calcium is essential to prevent osteoporosis. After menopause, women stand a greater risk of heart attack since estrogen levels are not produced in their bodies.

HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) may be done but strictly under the doctor's supervision or it may lead to other complications.

Yoga, regular walks, any form of physical exercise as well as a positive attitude, a balanced diet and doing mental exercises contribute a lot in maintaining a woman's health.



*Dr KK Panicker addressing the students of Tolani College on Womens' Health Issues.*

Indo-Nepal border where he was posted. "As a doctor, wherever I worked, I tried my best to educate them on the importance of looking after theirs and their daughters' health. At military hospitals, in extreme cases, as doctors we reported to the Unit Commanding officers about the medical state of the soldiers' wives/mothers and urged the men about the necessity of taking care of their womens' health. In very bad situations, we admitted them and treated them in our hospitals, gave them lessons on health education and taught them some income-generating skills. A country's progress depends on the status of the women there. Unless women become empowered, the future of the country is blank for they carry the progeny forward."

With this aim in mind, Dr Panicker has always delivered several lectures at all places he was posted on the importance of women taking care of their health and interacted with them in whatever way he can to make them conscious of a healthy life that is rightfully theirs. At Seven Hills also, he continues this work.

His team conducts several health camps

and seminars within the hospital, and in corporate companies where he gives lectures on womens' health issues like cancer awareness, prevention and treatment, osteoporosis, and calcium deficiency, menopause etc.

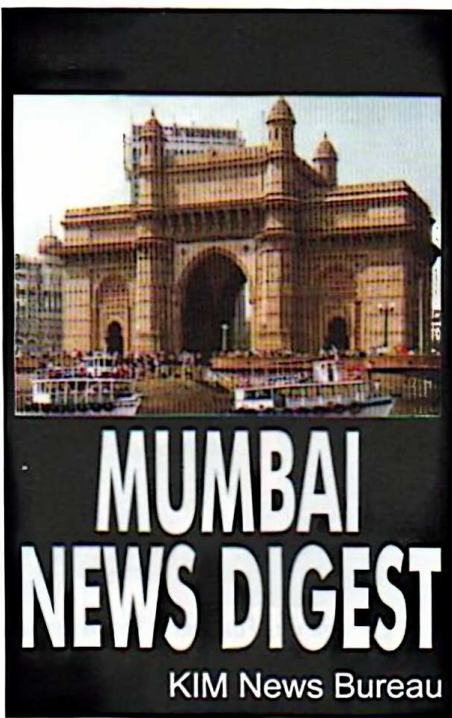
Dr Panicker originally belongs to Malappuram but his family had settled in Shoranur. His father, the late Achuthan Nair was in the army. So he has had his education all over the country especially in North India. But he has always been in touch with his native state. His mother A Rajeswari Amma is 82 and lives with him. His mother belongs to Kalari Panicker family. They have their *kalari vattam* with family shrine etc where a member of his extended family does pujas. He has one brother who was in the navy and now is in the Merchant Navy. His wife Sudha is a gynaecologist and they have a son Anant, in the Merchant Navy, having done his BSc in Nautical Sciences from the Maritime Training Institute at Powai and a daughter, Anuja who is doing first year Engineering in IT at the SIES College in Nerul.



*Easter, Vishu Ashamsakal to all  
Mumbai Malayalees*



*K.V. Divakaran and Mrs Padma Divakar*



## Bombay Keraleeya Samithi Anniversary

Bombay Keraleeya Samithi (Malad) celebrated its 62<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary at MMC Hall, Malad (W). The Chief Guest was Smt. Visini Velappan, Principal and President award winner. Guests of Honour were Principal Charlette Gabriel and Rajendran Padiyur (drama/cine actor /director). Mrs. K G Menon of Jehangir Art Gallery lit the lamp along with the guests and Adv. Padma Divakar, President and V S M Nair Secretary of the Samithi.

Senior Samajam member K.G.Pillai was felicitated and awards were given to students who excelled in their SSC/HSC exams.

The Office Bearers of KKS and other

samajams of Charkop, Borivli, Vasai and Charkop Aayappa Seva Sangam, Borivli Nair Samajam and other prominent Malayalees attended the function.

The cultural programmes included the dance ballet *Dashavataram* by Tapasya Academy of Performing Arts and performance by Sudheesh Dance Academy and Kaikottikali performed by Borivli Nair Samajam team.

Nambiar (Vice-President), Padma Divakar (President), Rakhee Sunil (Treasurer), E Chandran were felicitated for their outstanding work. All the performers were given awards for the performances. The programme was followed by dinner.

## AIMA Chamber of Industries and Commerce

AIMA Malayalee Chamber of Industries and Commerce will hold a national meeting on April 15 at the Leela Hotel for Malayalee businessmen. Already there are more than 70 patrons and 18 life members in this newly formed Association.



*Bombay Keraleeya Samithi members and their awardees at the Annual Function.*



## Bhakthi Gitanjali

*Bhakthi-Gitanjali*, a web portal founded by Dr. G. Ramakrishnan and dedicated for devotional songs presented a Carnatic classical cum devotional music programme on March 25 at Saraswati Nilaya Auditorium in Chinmaya Ashram with a view to promote and encourage young talent. The singer was Keerthana Vaidyanathan, disciple of noted singer Bombay Jayasree. Dr Ramakrishnan took voluntary retirement in 2010 from Thermo Fisher Scientific where he was Managing Director to pursue his passion- music. He is Founder President of Powai Fine Arts and President of Chromatographic Society of India. [www.bhakthi-gitanjali.com](http://www.bhakthi-gitanjali.com) is his personal website through which he hosts his songs and also hopes to host songs and bhajans of other artistes who do not have their own websites and albums.

*Sree Narayana Mandira Samithi celebrated its 47<sup>th</sup> Annual day at Chembur. N Sasidharan President of SNMS handing bouquet and honouring Chief guest TKA Nair, Advisor to the Prime Minister of India during the event. RG Rajan CMD, RCF seen at Nair's right, was also felicitated.*

# Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Achievement Awards

People's Arts Centre held its Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Achievement Award Ceremony on 10th March at Andheri (E).

D R Kaarthikeyan, IPS, former CBI, Director was the chief guest and S Balakrishnan, senior journalist was the guest of honour.

Asianet T V fame Ms Shruthy Menon, VODAFONE Comedy star, compered the event. After the felicitation address by the Guest of Honour and Chief Guest, Rasul Pukutty, one of the awardees, delivered a reply speech on behalf of all the awardees. Gopakumar K Pillai, Secretary, delivered a vote of thanks. Except Ananth Mahadevan all the awardees graced the occasion.



*From Left to Right: K Pradeep (Trading), Mohan B Nair (Industry), Oommen David (Academics), Dr M G Pillai (cardiologist), Guest of honour S Balakrishnan, Rasul Pookutty (sound design), Chief guest D R Kaarthikeyan IPS and Leelamma Alphoso (athlete), Bose Krishnamachari (visual art), M K Nair (business), Param Kannampilly (hospitality), K K Krishnan (real estate developer)*



*Oommen David, Director of Holy Angels' School and Junior College receiving the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Achievement Award from former CBI Director Karthikeyan IPS.*



*Bassein Kerala Samajam celebrated its 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary. World Malayalee Council Mumbai Chapter Chairman KK Nambiar lights the lamp.*

## Chinmaya Naada Bindu to host Kalaateet Festival 2012

Chinmaya Naada Bindu (Gurukul for Indian Performing Arts) under the aegis of Chinmaya Mission will be hosting a Music Festival of young talented musicians named Kalaateet Festival 2012 on April 7 and 8 at Tapovan Open-Air Auditorium, Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai between 4.00 pm and 9.00 p.m on both the days. The Festival will be organized with the blessings of Swami Tejomayanandaji, Global Head of Chinmaya Mission.

Artists for the festival have been selected from different parts of the country. There will be Ananda Mela on both the days and participants can indulge in a treat of delicacies and, traditional games. Chinmaya Naada Bindu based at Kolwan, near Pune is hosting the event for the first time and will be organized every year. For details, visit: [www.chinmayanaadabindu.org](http://www.chinmayanaadabindu.org) or mail: [cnb@chinmayamission.com](mailto:cnb@chinmayamission.com) or call: 9689889153.

## Dance Ballet

Noted Dancseuse Lata Surendra and her team will be performing *Ritu vilasam*, a dance programme through seven different classical styles of dancing at 7 pm on April 22 at ISKON Auditorium in Juhu.

# Samooha Vivaham

In 2013 the Diocese of Kalyan celebrates its Silver Jubilee. As part of the celebration the Diocese is planning to organize a "SAMOOHA VIVAHAM" in association with Rahel George Charitable Trust, and with support of Karunya Trust, Pithruvedi, Mathru Sangam, Youth and other organizations and people of good will. They have planned a Mass Social Group Wedding of at least 100 couple to the exclusive benefit of the deserving, from all religion, caste, creed and language from Mumbai, Thane and nearby Districts, tentatively fixed to be on 03rd February 2013. This was announced at the Press Meet held in Powai Bishop's House. The Diocese invites all the people of good will to extend their generous hands towards this noble cause.



**Bishop Mar Thomas Elavanal making the announcement. Seated from left: M C Stephen, M G Philip (Directors Pravin Electricals and founders of Rahel George Charitable Trust), Fr Jacob Porathur and Fr Francis Eluvathingal**



**Pongala at Vishnu Maheshwara Ayappa Temple Kalwa**

## Navagraha Kumbabhishekham at Marol Murugan temple

Planetary position influence the path of our lives, some believe. At the Sahnkar Durga Murugan temple at Marol there was kumbabhishekham for the navagrahas installed there 12 years back, to reinforce its beneficial energies according to prescribed rituals and pujas culminating in abhishekams.



**Swarsadhnotsav 2012, bestows First Prize for Bharatanatyam to Kum. Swetha Warriar (Junior-II to 16 year), at its 47th national level competition. Jitendra R. Zaveri, President of Swar Sadhna Samiti, Mumbai hands over the award to Kumari Swetha.**



**Swami Satya Vedanandaji and Swami Salguna Sheelan lighting the lamp at the 15th Anniversary of Sree Subhananda Ashram, Powai. Corporator Savitha Pawar and Ex corporator Sarath Pawar also seen**

## Vishu Ashamsakal

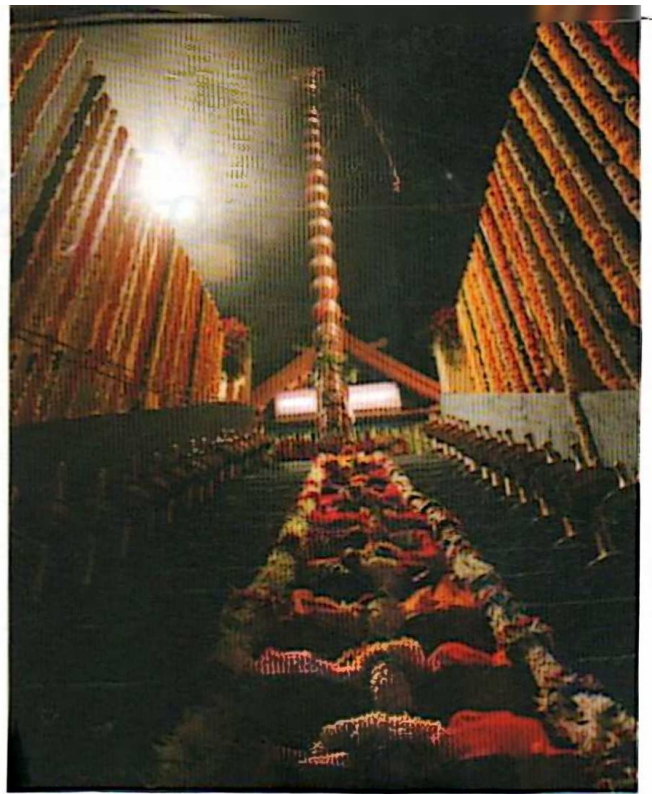


**Sunil Thankappan, Rakhee Sunil and Nikhita Sunil**

# Flag mast at Ayyappa Temple

The Ayyappa Temple at Mira Road is the culmination of the intense dream of the thousands of residents of that locality. The required land was acquired out of the funds donated by the devotees. An *Ashtamangalya prasnam* was held under the guidance of Sabarimala Tantri Brahmasri Maheswaru Kandararu and the temple was constructed according to the architectural traditions of Kerala.

The sanctum sanctorum or Sree Kovil is built in the centre of the temple complex with a roof shaped like a pyramid. *Maha Ganapathi* and *Malikapurhathamma* are the sub-deities or *upadevatas*. Like at the temple at Sabarimala, all rituals and traditions are maintained without fail. Since the last two years, consecration day is celebrated with gay and gaiety. This year a flag mast was erected and a grand *arattu* (annual festival) was held with pomp and show. A religious procession with accompaniment of *thalappoli*, *panchavadyam*, *keli*, *kombupattu*, *kuzhalpattu* and *sopana sangeetham*, was taken out on that occasion. The most salient feature was *pallivetta* (Hunting of the Lord).



The newly erected flag mast (Kodimaram)

# Bharatanatyam Arangetram



*Shruti B Nair and Tharika Santhosh, disciples of Guru Mohandas performed their Bharatanatyam Arangetram on 24th March 2012 at Mira Road. The Chief Guest for this programme was cine artist Mrs Urmila Unni and Prashant Palande, Corporator, MBMC was the guest of honour.*

*Malayalam Mission Plan organised a one day Training Session for Malayalam teachers under the aegis of Progressive Arts Club at Saki Naka. The event was co-ordinated by Balakrishnan of Malayalam Mission Plan and several Malayalam teachers participated in the session.*

# Sapthaswara to organize Musical Show

Sapthaswara, a Powai-based music group will be organizing a musical show named Yousufali Kecheri Nite at Olympia Quadrangle Lawns, Hiranandani Gardens on Saturday, the 14th April 2012 at 7 pm. Selected songs of Malayalam film lyricist Yousufali Kecheri, will be rendered by musicians of Mumbai and Kerala during the music show.



# Mumbai Malayalees on Dharna against Railways

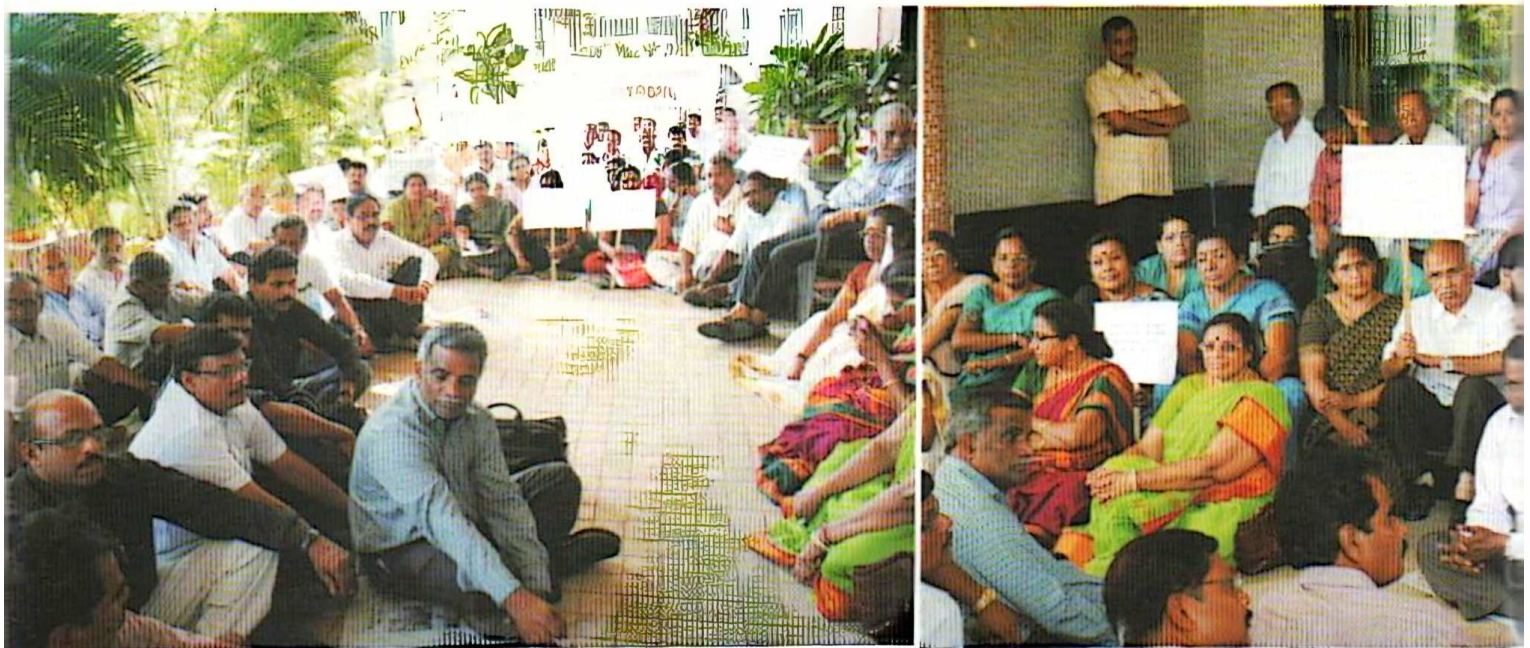
To protest against the indifference of the Indian Railways, several of Malayalees sat in dharna at Kerala House, Vashi. In spite of their earlier demands before the Union government and the MPs from Kerala, they were mostly ignored by the Railways. There was no difference between the ruling and opposition MPs in this regard, one of the participants remarked. According to Sabu Daniel, Navi Mumbai Corporator, Maharashtra MPs are much more accommodative than Kerala MPs. In the past, Malayalees of Mumbai had sat in dharna at Azad Maidan on Onam and Vishu days despite the sanctity of those days. But the Keralites are, like earlier days ignored, said K S Menon. According to Bhupesh Babu, the number of Keralites coming to Mumbai in search of employment has decreased but the rush in Kerala bound trains has not reduced. The rush is mainly due to tourism and business and now more non-Malayalees travel to Kerala. Therefore the demand for more trains on the Konkan route cannot be ignored. As the passengers from Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Tamilnadu have increased, due to



*Thane MP Sanjeev Naik addressing the gathering. Bhupesh Babu, Sabu Daniel, Sreekant Nair, Upendra Menon and others in the picture*

travel on business, religious and tourism purposes, the demand for more trains cannot be ignored. The high rate of air tickets to Kerala is another reason for the demand for more trains. Since the Konkan rail facilitated the linkage among Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu, it would be better if we get the associations

representing all these states and demand more trains and facilities together rather fight alone. Where the train originates or ends is not our concern as long as it serves our purpose. The Co-ordinating Committee for trains should serve the cause better if it adopts this line instead of harping on prestige, one of the onlookers remarked.



*The protestors in front of Kerala House*

# Gorai Malayalee Welfare Association

**G**orai Malayalee Welfare Association (GMWA) inaugurated its own office space at Gorai in Borivli (W) on March 4, 2012. K.S Menon, KKS president was the chief guest. Among the guests of honour were Adv. Padma Divakaran (IRS), Gopal Shetty (MLA), Shivanand Shetty (Corporator), Mohan Mithbakar (Dy Mayor), Chintamani Mali (RPI Leader), Rajan Kadannapally (President, All India Malayalee Association (AIMA). The guests were greeted and ushered in with the traditional *Thaalapoli*. Clothes were distributed to poor children and the event concluded with *Annadanam*.

The Gorai Malayalee Welfare Association, which is located in Borivli (W) has a strength of 600 people. The Trust was formed in 2001 and within a span of 11 years, it has undertaken various social activities in Gorai. The Association worked initially under the guidelines of its former Chairman the late Karthikeyan.

The Association conducts Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music classes under trained teachers. It came first in the Mahakeralaleeyam competitions (western zone), conducted by KKS in April 2011, bagging 18 prizes.

The members of GMWA visited Assangaon (80 Kms from Mumbai) tribal area and provided medicines, food and clothes for the children there. GMWA regularly conducts free medical and eye camps with specialized doctors and gives medicines to the poor people of the area. In March 2012, GMWA conducted a free



*Inauguration of the new office. From left : Sreeraj Nair (BMS President), Adv. Padma Divakar, Mohan Mithubaoukhar (Dy. Mayor MCGB), K.S. Menon (KKS, President) Balakrishnan Nair (Secretary GMWA), Sasikumar Nair (Chairman GMWA)*

dental check up. In addition, it gives educational and financial assistance to poor and deserving students to continue their studies. Even people in Gorai are approaching it for financial assistance towards educational and medical expenses. Moreover, it also holds cultural summits.

The association runs a library for school children and elders at its office and has a newspaper reading room for elders as part of its social interaction. It runs the 'Chinmaya Study Group', consisting of

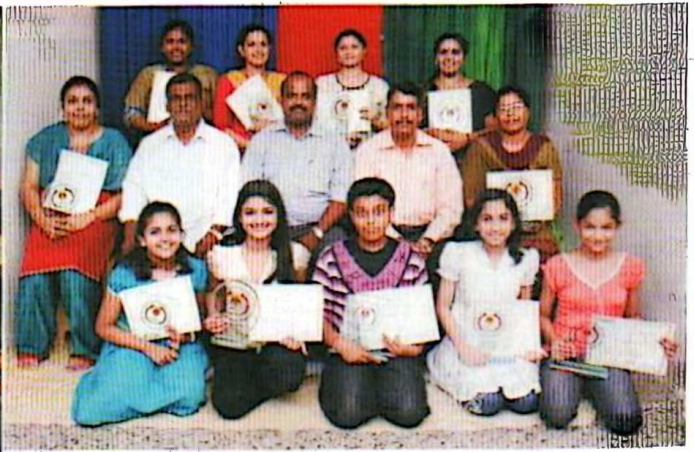
Bhagavad Geeta classes and plans to initiate a Balvihar group for children.

One of its immediate plans is to provide free computer training education to the residents of the area. It also plans to start Marathi classes for its members and commence an ambulance service.

Sasikumar S Nair is the Chairman and Velappan Pillai is the Vice-Chairman. The Secretary is Balakrishnan Nair while Jose Thomas, George Varghese, Sasidharan and Anu Sasikumar are Joint Secretaries. Sankaranarayanan is the Treasurer.



*Rajan Kadannapally (AIMA Maharashtra State Committee President) distributes clothes to poor kids during the event.*



*2011 Keralaleeya Kendra Sanghatana' s final winners of gmwa members and children with Association Chairman, Secretary and Vice chairman.*

# Keltron should inspire people to create 'economic institutions'



Sriprakash Menon

**C**ome April it is "Vishu" time in Kerala and for Malayalees across the world. Vishu irrespective of caste, creed and religion symbolises 'prosperity and good times' for the people. This Vishu should be special as Malayalees were made aware that Kerala has the richest worship place in the world - Lord Padmanabha Temple in Thiruvananthapuram. It is people who have made the state poor whereas "God is super rich in His own country".

Vishu - the annual festival to mark prosperity and well being of the people brings lots of hope. However in the present times the hope and aspirations of Keralites take birth after every five years with the elections and life goes on. Whether it is left or right, no government has seriously tackled basic issues like unemployment and economic development of the state. A few IT parks, huge saree and gold shops and two dozen trading establishments have only encouraged consumerism but how to create (except media, TV and film makers) revenue or wealth is still a mystery in Kerala.

Even today the state has to import almost all consumer goods including vegetables from other states. Rice which is the staple food - production in Kerala is low, coconut yield is falling, milk production is average, spices, tea and marine food is just satisfactory, while rubber production is the saving grace. What makes an agriculturally advanced Kerala so lethargic that its food production barely meets demand?

Highly industrialised states like Maharashtra has a better track record of agricultural output (despite farmers' death in Vidarbha region) be it jowar, bajra, vegetables, fruits, sugarcane, flowers, turmeric, milk and the list will go on. Kerala's environmental consciousness has no doubt helped the state to save its natural resources at several places despite economic backwardness.

What makes Kerala unique is not its literacy and culture but its consumerism and dependence on remittances. This money order economy has only changed in terms of electronic remittances otherwise the state does not generate enough funds from its economic

activities. Moreover issues like corruption has become a lifestyle in Kerala. It remains a subject only for print media and movies. No hartal was ever called for opposing corruption as a public issue though a few of them were targeted against political opponents.

Rulers in Kerala are happy as the alcoholic life style of its people nets enough money to the exchequer through the State run Beverages Corporation. Tourism is the only sun shine industry in the state which is professionally adding value to the economy besides crores of rupees collected from Hindu temples via Dewaswom Boards and yes receipts from taxes and revenue from service industry. The entire state budget is equal to that of Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

All models of cars can be seen zipping past the narrow winding roads yet not a cycle manufacturing unit can be traced to Kerala. The state can be termed as "golden state of India" with its designer showrooms and wedding malls. Gold crazy people of Kerala are adorn tons of yellow metal during their weddings, later the jewellery may gleam or loose its sheen in the darkness of the lockers at home or any gold loan provider.

Leisure is still a work in Kerala. That's why everyone loves a bandh, hartal or strike. People avoid work with flimsiest of issues. Keralites believe in high living

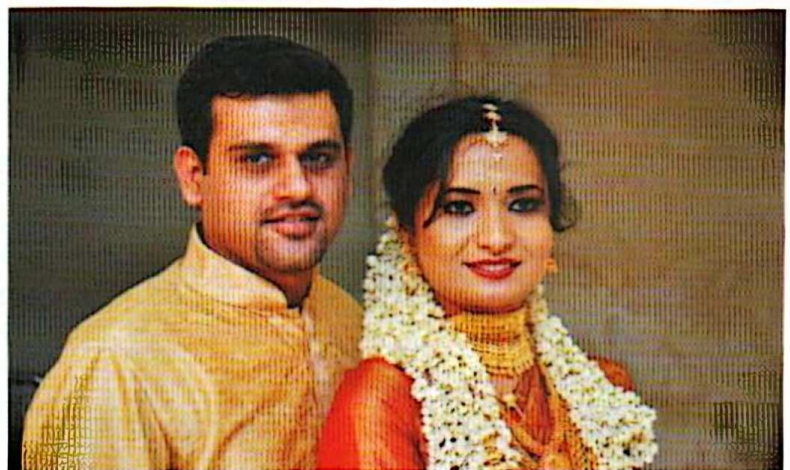
and simple thinking unlike non reside Malayalees who have to strive, struggle to make a living. In God's Own Count there is no poverty hence you get ro kapada aur makan (food, clothing and shelter) even if you don't work.

Kerala still hopes to become a rich state. The story of Keltron is amazing. This company was the pioneer in electronics in India and even today several roads in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur are guided by its electronic signalling system. When all state electronics companies wound up Keltron still survives to establish as a brand despite the Congress minister's anxiety to close it down. Fortunately Keltron like the Ayurveda brand of Kerala has crossed the state borders and reach out to the global market.

Hope this Vishu will herald a conducive work culture stimulating economic activities, trade, business and industry which are equally important like agriculture for the development of Kerala and Malayalees. Only being a socially developed state does not say much when its citizens have to board a Duranto to find jobs. People in Kerala need to change their attitude to make the state prosperous and dynamic.

*The writer is a documentary film maker and cultural observer. Opinions expressed are the author's own.*

## Wedding Wishes



**Girish Nair, son of P P Govindan Kutty of Shri Balaji Roadlines and Transport Lines married Anuja on 10th February.**

## Navati celebrations of Utradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma

**T**he Navati celebrations of Utradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma, the scion of royal family of Travancore attracted universal attention. The celebrations started on March 17 and would last one year.

Till recently Marthanda Varma did not invoke much interest outside the Thiruvananthapuram city but the recent revelations about the treasure of the world, more than one lakh crore rupees, drew attention on the head of the royal family, who supervised this treasure nonchalantly. Greetings are pouring from

all over the world. But for His Highness, it was an ordinary day except that he went to Nishagandhi Auditorium to attend a function held in his honour.

On March 16, a real estate business man Purushothama Reddy gifted him a Rolls Royce Phantom. HH graciously declined the gift of Reddy when he expressed his wish that HH should use the car for the rest of his life. But not to disappoint him, HH agreed to take a detour of 10 kms on the eve of his birthday and also agreed to go to Padmanabhaswamy Temple the next day in the car.

## Procurement of crop derailed

**T**he notorious labour force Kerala is having a field day now as every one is at their mercy. Though the harvesting of paddy is over, the paddy is still remaining in the fields as loaders are not available and as such the private mill owners authorized by Supplyco, the agency of the state government to procure the paddy, could not lift the crop.

The crop lying in the field is slowly getting damaged as it gathers mist in the night and also the mill owners demand 10 kg extra against one quintal paddy to compensate the moisture. To collect the crop from about 2000 acres, the mill employed only one truck. Further, owing

to the new realization of the evil of chemical fertilizers, farmers are restricting the use of chemical fertilizers leading to a higher expenditure on production.

In the absence of licensed labourers, unlicensed labours demand higher wages. Instead of Rs.60 per quintal, labourers are demanding Rs.110, the farmers say. However, the farmers sought aid from the police to overcome the problem.

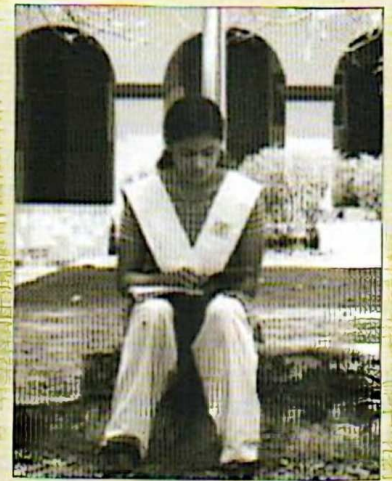
The problem is rampant in Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam and Idukki districts.



## Students with chickenpox allowed to write SSLC exam

**A** student with chicken pox was not allowed to write the SSLC examination on March 13 but after intervention from higher authorities she was given permission to write the SAY system.

C Anaswara, a 10<sup>th</sup> standard student of Kannur Government Vocational Higher Secondary School, was not allowed to write the second language paper due to chicken pox. To protest against this, SFI activists blocked the chief superintendent at the school. Later DEO K Rajan reached the



school and held talks with the examination secretary and permitted her to write the examination. She will be given permission to write two examinations in SAY system which she missed due to the disease.

Kannur education deputy director said that facilities would be given to students affected with communicable diseases. Sasi Prakash, the father brought his daughter Anaswara who was staying in sports division hostel, to write the examination. She is a basketball player.

However, the school principal said that Anaswara was not allowed to sit for the exam as per the direction of Pareeksha Bhavan Secretary. He said she could only write the examination with other students as rules did not permit separate seating. Usually SAY (Save An Year) examination would be allowed in two subjects but for students affected with such diseases, would be allowed to write all papers since the authorities elsewhere allowed students to write such examinations in the past.

# Farmers in Debt Trap

The procurement of paddy from the farmers has become a headache to state government as well as farmers. The government is duty-bound to procure the crop at a fixed rate but has no funds to pay for it.

Under the last government, LDF doubled the rate of paddy from Rs.7 to Rs.14 while the market rate was Rs.9. The farmers are thus motivated to sell their entire crop to the government because of the higher rate. The government has pressurized banks to lend money to the farmers without interest on the

understanding that the entire loan will be repaid soon after harvest. The new UDF government promised to pay Rs.15 per kg of the paddy and the entire agricultural community is waiting for the government procurement.

Paddy is cultivated in about 40,000 hectares in Thrissur district alone. To procure about 60,000 metric tons of paddy, against 54,000 mt of last year, government needs Rs.90 crore besides Rs.20 crore to be paid against arrears to the farmers of this district.

However, the government is yet to pay

the farmers for the crop procured even after three months and the banks have started proceedings against the farmer to recover the principal along with higher rate of interest, under the loan agreement. If the farmers do not repay in time, the interest paid by the state against that loan to the bank would not be credited to the bank and hence the action by the bank.

The state owes to the farmers of the entire state about Rs.200 crore since the last season.

## Avoid Wastage of Paper, Save Human Life

A little thinking on the part of a teacher in a girls' school at Palakkad Town resulted in saving the lives of thousands of trees and also providing financial assistance to the poor students. A teacher of the school Philomina was suffering from an allergy to sunlight which produced itching of the body. A Science teacher she realised that the lack of ozone in the atmosphere caused this allergy. To have more ozone, there should be more plants in the planet. After considerable thought she realised that if trees could be saved, the ozone layer would be safe.

She taught her students to shun wasteful use of paper so that less trees would be needed to make paper and this would result in longer life to plants. If the 200 people in an office choose to write on both sides of paper, 400 trees would have



an extended life, she taught the students. Besides, she encouraged waste paper

thrown around to be picked up and the paper thus collected would be sold. The money will be used to pay fees, buy books, pen, pencil and other school materials for the poor children.

Moyan Girls High School has 400 students and through them more than 8000 trees are enjoying an extended life somewhere in the world. Very soon children started bringing waste paper used note books, plastic bags etc from their homes and this resulted in more children having school bags and fountain pens. Till now 82 cloth bags were distributed to needy students. There is a plan to convert discarded pants and shopping bags for the Onam season.

Philomina Teacher has written a song urging people to reduce waste and thus increase the health of the inhabitants of the world.

### Know Kerala Better

The data on population is based on 2011 census.

Total population : 3,33,87,677  
Total women : 1,73,66,387  
Children upto 6 : 33,22,247  
Girls upto 6 : 16,26,312

#### Population in districts:

Pathanamthitta : 11,95,537 (-3.12%)  
Idukki : 11,28,065 (-1.93%)  
Malappuram : 41,10,956 (+13.39%)

In literacy, Pathanamthitta is leading with 96.93% while lowest is Palakkad. In Kannur district the sex proportion is 1:1.133 for male and female respectively. It is lowest at Idukki with 1:1.006. Population density is the highest at Thiruvananthapuram with 1509 per sq km while in Idukki it is only 254.

### Holy temple, Unholy Guards

Following the discovery of a huge treasure evaluated at more than one lakh crore, the security arrangements demanded high priority of the state government. A 'Quick Response Team' was appointed there for security in which 34 police guards are highly trained. But the 7 Sub Inspectors to supervise them are not properly trained for the task. They have been allowed to keep most modern guns but they are not trained to use them effectively with the result that it has been reduced to a show piece.

One of the inspectors was a gun man to the minister during the LDF regime and he was then subjected to disciplinary action for sexual crimes against a temporary female employee. Another one was sent back from the security squad of another minister for misconduct. A third one was earlier caught red handed for corruption while serving Airport Immigration and the fourth was involved in a drunken melee in a liquor bar.



Rashma Anand

# LOOK COOL FEEL FRESH THIS SUMMER

Summer is around the corner and it is not uncommon to hear phrases like “I am feeling so hot” or “The humidity is killing”. Yes, summer can be exhausting in more ways than one. As you go about your regular activities at home and at work, you tend to feel more drained because of the heat and sweating. Summer time also means vacation for children and coping with their demands while simultaneously coping with the weather can sometimes prove extremely daunting.



**H**ere are a few tips that can help you feel good during this summer. Follow them and note the difference.

## Personal Hygiene is a Priority

Sweating is the body's automatic response to cool down when the external temperature is high. The perspiration that is secreted also contains certain waste material. This attracts bacteria from the atmosphere to produce body odor. Naturally your freshness quotient reduces and you will feel wet and sticky. Bathing is the best way to counter this problem as it washes away all waste matter and dirt and leaves you fresh.

## Use of Deodorants

Despite having a long bath in the morning, as the day progresses and the heat increases, sweat and perspiration begin to form. The best way to tackle is by the use of deodorants. These are products that block the body odor help you remain fresh. Choose natural based deodorants over chemical products as the former are gentler on the skin and do not produce any side effects.

## Use of Anti-Perspirants

Some people have a tendency to sweat more. Or if your job requires you to be out during the entire day, you may need a stronger product than a deodorant to tackle sweat and perspiration. The ideal product for you would be an anti-perspirant. A deodorant has no effect on formation of sweat and only blocks the odor. An anti-perspirant reduces perspiration and is thus more effective. However, remember to use anti-perspirants sparingly. Perspiration is a natural body function and blocking very strongly may produce certain untoward effects in the body. And as far as possible, avoid chemical anti-perspirants.



## Smell Fresh to Feel Fresh

Our olfactory senses have an incredible impact on how we feel. This is the reason our mouth waters at the cooking aroma that emanates from the kitchen. It is a fact that if you smell fresh, you will feel fresh. Choosing the right fragrance is critical. Fruity, light fragrances are best for summer. Heavier fragrances tend to be

too strong when combined with the humidity and can in fact even trigger headaches in some. Best summer fragrances are rose, sandalwood, lemon or any other citrus and floral fragrance. Grab your favorite bottle and get set for a 'scentsational' summer.



## Pay Attention to What You Wear

Summer is the time for cool cottons and light colors. Cotton fabric is breathable and does not stick to your body. Synthetic material, on the other hand is clingy and can make you all the more uncomfortable. Dark colors absorb heat, so you will feel hotter than ever. Floral prints and bright colors are good summer choices.

When it comes to accessories, again simplicity is the key. Having on chunky necklaces and bangles are uncomfortable. Choose loose beads or one string elegant pearls for the neck. Light weight silver jewelry keeps you comfortable and also lends an elegant look to your overall ensemble.

## 1. Watch What You Eat and Drink

While it is good to eat healthy at all times, in summer particularly, it is necessary to cut down heavy and fried food. Such food takes time to digest, making you feel excessively lethargic during summer. Avoid very spicy food because it has a tendency to generate heat in the body. Increase your intake of fresh fruits and vegetables. Cook the



vegetables lightly or stir fry them for best results.

Summer time causes significant water loss from the body due to sweating. Make sure you are replacing lost fluids by drinking adequate amount of water. Vegetables like cucumber and green leafy vegetables have high water content. Fruits like melons, watermelons also help replenish the body fluids. While it is necessary to drink fluids, avoid aerated drinks. They contain large quantities of sugar and have no nutritive value. Even if you add sugar to freshly squeezed lime



juice, it is a much healthier choice than a packaged lime soda.

## 2. Develop the Right Attitude

It is often said that most battles are won and lost in the mind. Have a positive attitude. If you are constantly complaining and cribbing about the heat, you will continue to be affected by it, irrespective of whatever you do. On the contrary, take advantage of the unique opportunities that summer provides. Take your children out for an ice-cream extravaganza. Ice-creams are best enjoyed in summer only. You will be tempted to skip your daily walk in this weather. But remember when you sweat more, you will lose more weight. Take advantage of this fact and stick to your regular exercise routine.

Remember, summer will last just for a couple of months before the season changes again. Follow these tips to look cool and feel cool this summer and enjoy the season.

*Easter, Vishu Ashamsakal to all  
Mumbai Malayalees*



*Balakrishnan Nair & Family, Chembur.*



Points to Ponder

# Finance Bill 2012



Jacob Koshy

**T**he relief in Direct taxes offered in this year's Budget is negated by the increase in service tax and excise duty. The expected increase in burden will be more than ten times the relief in personal taxation. Government expects to balance its budget by restricting the fiscal deficit at 5.1% of the GDP which may not be practical in the given situation. We will limit our discussion to the proposed direct tax amendments.

The Finance Bill 2012 proposes to raise the threshold limit for all individual tax payers from Rs 1.80 lacs to Rs 2.00 lacs. However, the limit for the senior citizens will continue to be Rs 2.50 lacs. Women will have to forego the preferential treatment of a higher limit which they have been enjoying for some time.

The tax rates of 10 % applicable to individual tax payers have been raised to the income upto Rs 5 lacs and 20% upto Rs 10 lacs and 30% over Rs 10 lacs. Thus the tax relief may work out to be marginal in case of lower income tax payers and for those whose income exceeds Rs 10 lacs the effective gain will be Rs 22,660 per annum. No changes in corporate rate of taxes have been proposed in the Bill.

The Finance Minister has proposed certain new deductions for individual tax payers by exempting saving bank interest upto Rs 10000 per annum by introducing a new Sec 80 TTA. This means a welcome change more so in line with last year's amendment in doing away with filing of tax returns for those individual tax payers whose income from salary does not exceed Rs 5 lac in a year and the interest from Bank a/c also does not exceed such amount.

Another welcome proposal applicable only for senior citizens with respect to exemption from payment of advance tax is that if such person does not have any income from business or profession in a financial year and he or she can pay such taxes before the due date of filing the return. The interest provisions will not be triggered at the same time one can escape from the rigors of payment of tax installments.

The proposed tax deduction of certain transaction at source becomes a bane for

real estate dealings in the times to come. By the introduction of a 1% tax on transfer of immoveable property where such consideration exceeds Rs 50 lacs in an urban area and Rs 20 lacs in other area, the transferor will have to deduct the tax and pay to the Government. However, they will be exempted from procedural matters of obtaining Tax Deduction A/c Number and filing of Return of TDS etc. The registering authorities will henceforth insist on such proof of deduction and payment thereon before registration of any documents of such nature.

Alternate Minimum Tax (AMT) has been on the statute book for a number of years for company assesseees which now expands its scope to all assesseees including individuals and partnership firms. Such persons will have to pay a minimum tax @18.5% of their adjusted total income as if such income being the taxable income by introduction of a new Sec 115JC.

Finance Bill 2012 introduces a new exemption u/s 54 GB from capital gains arising out of sale of a residential property including land if such assessee utilizes the net consideration for subscription in the equity shares of an eligible company before the due date of filing of return of income. The prescribed conditions seem to be very rigorous for such companies for utilization in the laid down manner within a specified period etc.

The tax audit threshold limits have been revised to Rs 1 Cr from the current limit of Rs 60 Lacs for Business and to Rs 25 lacs from the current limit of Rs 15 lacs for Profession.

Substantive and major changes have been proposed in the Finance Bill affecting more than eight sections in the Act with retrospective effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1962 as a consequence of the decision in the VODAFONE case pronounced by Supreme Court in January 2012. These changes have far reaching consequences hitherto not made clear in the Act.

The Income deemed to accrue or arise in India have been explained by way of new explanations 4 & 5 to Sec 9(1)(i) to

clarify that income will be taxable in India if the value realized relates to or is based on assets situated in India.

The transfer pricing provisions will now be applicable to domestic transactions covered by Sec 40 A(2) in line with international transactions.

Closely held companies issuing equity capital at a premium will be liable to pay tax on the excess premium if the Fair Market Value of such equity shares is lower than the aggregate consideration as per the new clause Sec 56 (vii b).

A new deduction has been proposed in respect of expenditure incurred for preventive medical check-up upto Rs 5000 per annum over and above the existing limit of Rs 15,000. u/s 80 D of the Act.

FM has mentioned in his budget speech about the introduction of the Rajiv Gandhi Equity Savings Scheme bringing in 50% deduction in respect of investment by a new retail investor in the equity of a listed company of Rs 50000 subject to conditions such as holding period of minimum three years, annual income of less than Rs 10 lacs etc. However, no such specific provision has been made in the Bill.

General Anti Avoidance Rules (GAAR) has been introduced in this Bill to bring under the tax net all impermissible transactions with a view to garner more revenue. The GAAR provisions proposed in this Bill by and large fall in line with proposals in the Direct Tax Code Bill.

An amendment by way of a validation clause 113 of the Finance Bill says it will operate "notwithstanding anything in any judgment, decree or order of any court or tribunal or any authority" and there shall be no liability or obligation to make any refund whatsoever. This amendment has been introduced innocuously empowering the Tax Department with powers to retain the taxes collected on a cross border transaction similar to that of VODAFONE.

*jkoshy@vsnl.com*



# Sargam സർഗ്ഗം (1992)

**Lyrics:** Yusufali Kecheri **Composer:** Bombay Ravi  
**Ragam:** Natabhairavi **Singer:** K J Yesudas

സംഗീതമേ അമരസല്ലാപമേ  
മണ്ണിനു വിണ്ണിന്റെ വരദാനമേ  
വേദനയെപ്പോലും വേദാന്തമാക്കുന്ന  
നാദാനുസന്ധാന കൈവലയുമേ (സംഗീതമേ....)

ആദിമചൈതന്യ നാഭിയിൽ വിരിയും  
ആയിരമിതളുള്ള താമരയിൽ  
രചനാചതുരൻ പതൂർമുഖനൂണർന്നു  
സർഗ്ഗം തുടർന്നു കലയിലൊരു സ്വർഗ്ഗം വിടർന്നു  
മധുരമധു രൂപിരസുമ നളിനമേ കദനഹര-  
മുഖ്യലതര ഹൃദയസദന ലതികയണിഞ്ഞു (സംഗീതമേ....)

ഓംകാരനാദത്തിൻ നിർവൃതി പുല്കിയ  
മാനവമാനസ മഞ്ജരിയിൽ  
മുരളീലോലൻ മുരഹരനൂണർന്നു  
സർഗ്ഗം തുടർന്നു കലയിലൊരു സ്വർഗ്ഗം വിടർന്നു  
മധുരമധു രൂപിരസുമ നളിനമേ കദനഹര-  
മുഖ്യലതര ഹൃദയസദന ലതികയണിഞ്ഞു (സംഗീതമേ....)

**Transliteration:** Ā, ā = ആ, ാ; Ē, ē = ഏ, ഐ; I, ī = ഇ, ി;  
Ō, ō = ഓ, ോ; Ū, ū = ഉ, ു, ũ = ൃ; C, c = ച, ch = ചര,  
D, d = ട, Dh, dh = ട, Ḍ, ḍ = ഡ, Ḍh, ḍh = ഡ, jh = ജ,  
L, l = ല; Ṇ, ṇ = ണ, ṅ = ണ; rh = റ, ṛ = റ;  
Ś, ś = ശ; Ṣ, ṣ = ഷ, T, t = ട, Th, th = റ, Ṭ, ṭ = ത; ṭh = ഡ

*Saṅgītamē amarasallāpamē  
Maṅṅinu viṅṅinte varadānamē  
Vēdanayepōlum vēdanāmākkunna  
Nādānusandhana kaivayamē (Saṅgītamē...)*

*Ādimacaiṭanya nābhiyil viriyum  
Āyiramiṭalulla ṭamarayil  
Racanācaṭuran caṭurmukhanuṅarṇnu  
Sarggam ṭutarṇnu kalayiloru swarggam vitarṇnu  
Madhuramadhu rucirasuma nalinadāla kadanahara-  
Mṛdulaṭara hṛdayasadana laṭikayaṅiṇṇu (Saṅgītamē...)*

*Ōmkāranādaṭṭin nirvṛṭi pulkiya  
Mānavamānasa manjariyil  
Muralīlōlan muraharanuṅarṇnu  
Sarggam ṭutarṇnu kalayiloru swarggam vitarṇnu  
Madhuramadhu rucirasuma nalinadāla kadanahara-  
Mṛdulaṭara hṛdayasadana laṭikayaṅiṇṇu (Saṅgītamē...)*



Yusufali Kecheri



Bombay Ravi



Yesudas



Hariharan

Sargam was the first Malayalam movie in which Yusufali Kecheri and Bombay Ravi worked together for the first time. It was surprising that Yusufali wrote the lyrics first and the composer who did not know Malayalam set the tune later, unlike their predecessors. For his own banner Gayathri Enterprises, Hariharan wrote the story and screenplay besides directing the film. The movie revolved around a girl who was paralysed and recovered by the power of music and so the emphasis was on music. K J Yesudas and K S Chitra were the singers. The film when released was a big hit. The film had Vineeth, Manoj K Jayan, Nedumudi Venu, Thilakan, Oduvil Unnikrishnan, VK Sreeraman, Ravi Vallathol, B Harikumar, Jagannatha Varma, Rambha and Urmila Unni as artistes. While Chowalloor Krishnan Kutty wrote the dialogues, Shaji N Karun wielded the camera and noted painter M V Devan handled art direction.



Malayalam  
Movie World

## Samvruta Sunil's wedding



**A**ctress Samvruta Sunil got married to Akhil, an engineer in California, at a function at Arya Samaj, Kozhikode. Their marriage was tentatively fixed for November 1 this year but was rushed through to facilitate Visa formalities. Since Samvruta is keen to accompany the bridegroom to US, leaving her career in films.

## 'Thaappana' with Mammooty

**T**he title 'Thaappana' (Tamer Elephant) has been announced several times before, and it was initially supposed to be a Mohanlal film that would be directed by scenarist Ranjan Pramod. The project never took off. Later Akku Akbar planned to make it with Mammooty in the lead, but that project never materialised.

Now it is director Johny Antony who will be directing Mammooty in a film titled 'Thaappaana', to be scripted by Sindhuraj. The film would be produced by Milan Jaleel under the banner of Galaxy films. Shooting has commenced at Kochi.

Murali Gopi and Sasikumar would also be seen along with Mammooty. Samudrakani, Namo Naarayanan, Suraj Venjaramude, Jagathi, Salim Kumar and Biju Pappan are in the cast. Charmi is the heroine.

## Ravi: Haryanvi whom Kerala embraced

**B**ombay Ravi who gave a large number of melodious songs to Malayalam Cinema is no more. *Manjal prasadvum nettiyal charthi* of *Nakhakshatungal* of the Hariharan-MT Vasudevan Nair team was one of the early Malayalam movies for which Ravi composed music. He composed music for several Hindi and other language films. Ravi Shankar Sharma hailed from Haryana. He was 86 when he died on March 7 at Bombay Hospital. Ravi came to Bombay to become a playback singer like Mohammed Rafi, leaving his secure job as an electrician at Delhi but failed to get an entry. Later he joined as a member of a chorus group, then became assistant to music directors and in 1954, he became a

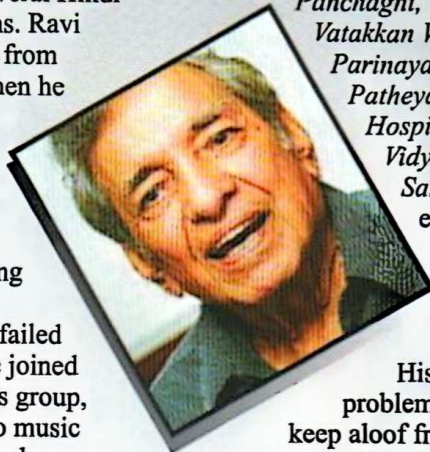
music director for *Vachan*. He became a name to reckon with, with Guru Dutt's *Chaudvin Ka Chand* with its title song sung by his favourite singer Mohammed Rafi becoming a super hit.

He was one of the most sought after composers in Mumbai. Later he started accepting offers from the south.

*Panchagni, Vaishali, Oru Vatakkann Veera Gatha, Parinayam, Gazal, Patheyam, Five Star Hospital, Vidyarambham, Sargam, Mayoorkham* etc are some of the

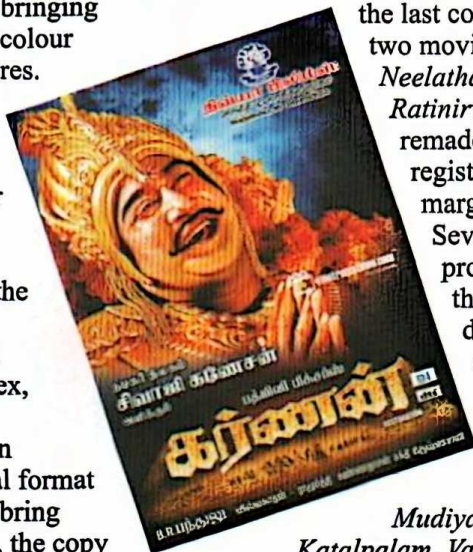
Malayalam movies for which he composed music.

His illness and family problems caused him to keep aloof from the public and movies during his last years.



## Re-release of Karnan (1964) marks a new trend

**T**he success of Karnan on its re-release in digital format has caused a rethinking among the holders of the copyright. This movie starring Sivaji Ganesan, Muthuraman, Asokan, N T Rama Rao, Savithri and Devika was a big hit in 1964 and celebrated a Silver Jubilee Week (not days) in scores of theatres in the south then. Its VCDs and DVDs still fetch good profits for the copyright holders. The realization that a re-release after almost half a century, could rake in profits has set many heads turning and prodded them to think of bringing similar re-releases of old colour classics again to the theatres. The fact that today's generation had not seen these films on the big screens is an added factor for this rethinking. Karnan was released in DTS screens throughout the state including leading multiplexes like Sathyam Cinemas, Shanthi Complex, Abirami Complex, AVM Rajeshwari and Bharath in Chennai alone. The digital format and the Dolby sound can bring people to the multiplexes, the copy right holders feel.



Films like *Veera Pandiya Kattabomman*, *Thiruvilayadal*, *Engai Veettu Pillai*, *Padagotti*, *Konchum Sillangai* etc are some of the films that hold promise in this genre. Now Hollywood is also on the same trail of re-releasing old hits.. The second biggest money spinner and winner of 11 Oscars, *Titanic* is making its second appearance worldwide on April 10, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the marine disaster. The new incarnation will be in 3 D.

In Malayalam cinema, during the last couple of years, two movies

*Neelathamara* and *Ratinirvedam* were remade and they could register only a marginal interest.

Several old classics produced some three or four decades ago could be transformed.

Even films like *Chilamboli*, *Rosi*,

*Mudiyanyaya Puthran*, *Katalpalam*, *Vazhve Mayam* etc could be digitally coloured and

## Indian Rupee bags trophy at 59th National Awards

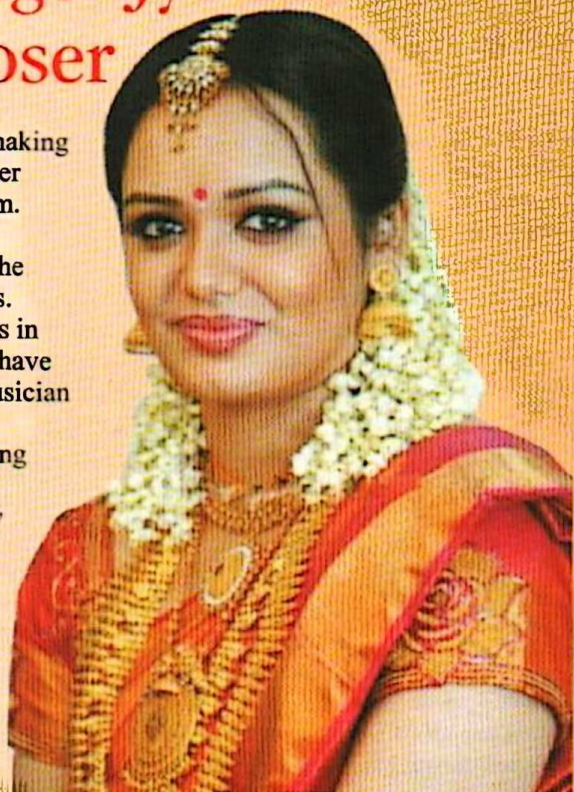
At the 59th National Awards, *Indian Rupee*, starring Prithviraj bagged the trophy for the best Malayalam film. The movie, directed by Ranjith was one of the best Malayalam films to hit the screens last year.

*Indian Rupee*, unlike most of Prithviraj's film is without any action sequences or mushy romance. *Indian Rupee* has Prithviraj essay a very mature and the boy next door sort of role, in contrast to his previous films.



## Playback singer Jyotsna turns composer

**P**layback singer Jyotsna is making her debut as composer in her upcoming meditation album. The album comprises Slokas in Sanskrit and aims to encourage the young to learn the ancient Slokas. Jyotsna has composed four tracks in the album. The rest of the songs have been tuned by Chennai based musician Surya Narayanan. Jyotsna has meanwhile sung in three upcoming movies *Maya Mohini*, *Mulla Mottum Munthiricharam* and *My Boss*. Jyotsna is extremely happy with her married life. The singer got married to her software engineer cousin Srikanth on December 26, last year at Guruvayoor temple.



## 'Cobra' in full swing

Mammootty's new action-comedy movie 'Cobra' will release on April 12th, as a Vishu offering. The shooting of this movie, directed by Lal, is in full swing at Eranakulam. *Cobra* is a comedy of siblings, who are very close to each other.

The title of the film is a short form, in Malayalam, for Kuala Lumpur Brothers and that was where they were born. Now, they want to relate with everything that begins with 'Ko', be it Coimbatore, Kozhikode or Kottayam. Lal has also scripted the film and is directing Mammootty for the first time. Padmapriya and Kaniha are the heroines



Also in the cast are Lalu Alex, Babu Anthony, Jagathi, Salim Kumar, Maniyan Pillai Raju and Kaniha. The movie produced by Naushad and Anto Joseph under the banner of Playhouse will be brought to theatres by Lal release.

## Jayaram in film by Gautham Menon

**G**autham Menon plans work on his first Malayalam film soon with Jayaram in the film. The script of the film is currently under progress. It will have music by A R Rahman. It is several years since Rahman composed the musical score for a Malayalam film, 'Yodha' was years ago. Gautham is currently busy with his Tamil film 'Nee Thaane En Ponyasantham'.

## Naughty Professor

**B**aburaj and Lakshmi Gopalaswami play the lead role in *Naughty Professor*, directed by Hari Narayanan. Lakshmi plays the role of an actress turned housewife, who decides to discontinue her acting career to settle down with her professor husband. Her husband, however feels overshadowed by his wife's fame and name. The twist and turns in their marriage form the crux of the plot. Lakshmi Gopalaswami is handling a comic role for the first time. She will play a glamorous role. This is the first time she is acting with villain-turned-comedian Baburaj. However, she has appeared in cameos in Baburaj's directorial venture *Black Dahlia*.

Tini Tom, Innocent, Janardhanan, Lena and Malavika form the rest of the cast. Baburaj has penned the screen play, dialogue and story. Kaathal Sandhya also plays an important role in the movie. Jazzy Gift has scored the music for the lyrics penned by Rafeeq Ahmed. Arun Jose and Sreekanth Pillai produce the movie.

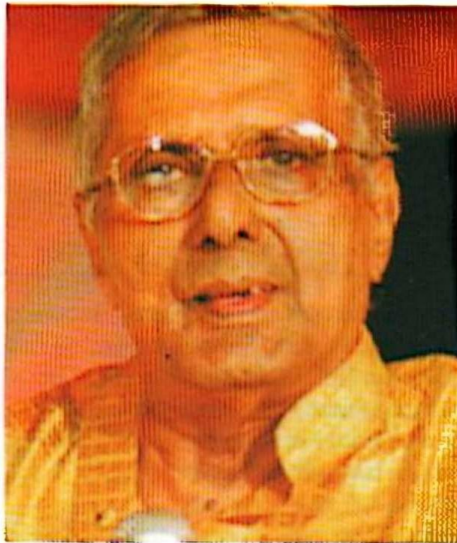


# Actor Jose Prakash bids farewell

Veteran Malayalam film actor Joseprakash breathed his last at Sunrise Hospital of Kakkanad near Ernakulam on March 24. He was 76. He was declared winner of the most reputed State award for an actor, J C Daniel Award, carrying a purse of Rs.100000, a Roll of Honour and statute, only on the previous day. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and Minister for Cultural Affairs K B Ganesh Kumar were expected to call on him on March 25 at the hospital where he was undergoing treatment to present the award.

Kottayam Kunnel Joseph alias Joseprakash was the eldest child among eight children of Joseph and Aeliyamma. In 1942, he joined Indian Army Service Corps. Immediately after independence, he was deputed to be one of the seven guards to protect Mahatma Gandhi when he undertook a fast unto death to bring the communal violence erupted Delhi. Around 1970, he was recognised by the public while praying inside Sri Guruvayurappan Temple and was chased out.

After retiring from army, Joseph started appearing on stage plays as actor cum singer. He earned accolades for his role in *Atmabali* of N N Pillai. Soon he established



his own drama troupe. His made his maiden appearance on screen with a new name Joseprakash in 1951 through *Sariyo thetto* of Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair. While acting in *Visappinte Vili*, *Premalekha*, *Manassakshi*, *Alphonsamma*, *Devasundari* etc, he also rendered his own screen songs. In *Snepaka Yohannan*, he was the hero, St John the Baptist.

He made a turn over to villainous roles with

*Rantitangazhi* and continued to be so for the rest of his film career. His handsome appearance and well built body were always a challenge to the actor donning the role of heroes. In most of his films, Prem Nazir was the hero. He was appreciated in *Olavum theeravum* of P N Menon and *Peruvazhiyambalam* of Padmarajan. By the time he appeared in *Traffic* last year, had already made his presence in more than 380 movies.

During this period, he had founded a film producing company by name Prakash Movietone under which he produced several films. *Kootevite*, *Puthri* etc are some of the films produced by it.

He lost wife in 1993. His right leg was amputated following a fall in a dubbing theatre and despite this handicap, he continued his acting career. He appeared in a few films and television serials. Among his tele-serials *Mikhaelinte Santhathikal* and *Aakashadoot* are worth mentioning. He received the state award for the best actor for the former serial.

Joseprakash is survived by his six children. Serial actor Premprakash is his younger brother. The screenplay writer and film director Denis Joseph is his nephew.

# Script writer T Damodaran passes away

Renowned script writer T Damodaran (77) succumbed to a sudden unexpected heart attack at his Kozhikode home on March 28. His body was cremated in Meenchanda crematorium.

He is billed to have created the current superstars of Malayalam cinema - Mammooty, Mohanlal and Suresh Gopi. The trio, to a large extent, owes their current status to Damodaran's scripts.

Damodaran started his career as a physical education teacher at a school before starting his career as a scriptwriter for numerous Malayalam dramas and then moving into the film industry.

Damodaran has scripted some of the biggest blockbusters in Malayalam cinema. Popularly known as Damodaran Master, T Damodaran began his career in cinema as script writer in early 70s. Damodaran became active in theater by late sixties.

During his theatre years he became closely associated with several theater and cinema artists of the era including Thikkodiyam, Kuthiravattom Pappu, Hariharan and Kunjandi. His dramas were mainly packed with social issues and this was noticed by Hariharan, who persuaded Damodaran to enter into the world of cinema.

Damodaran had appeared in several Malayalam films in important roles. His vagabond youth in MT's *Olavum Theeravum*



was much acclaimed. Damodaran also played roles in hit films *Kilichundan Mampazham*, *Paleri Manikyam* etc.

He made his debut in 1973. Damodaran became active in cinema by late 70s, after joining with I V Sasi with whom, he later made around fifty films. It was the huge success of *Angaadi* in 1980, that formed a turning point in the career of Damodaran. Directed by I V Sasi, *Angaadi* has Jayan and Seema in leading roles and broke several collection records. This was followed by *Meen*, *Kanthavalayam*, *Karimbana* etc which were all super hits.

His scripts were mainly socio-dramas, which often criticized the establishments and were packed with heavy punch dialogues. Mostly directed by Sasi, these films were well

received by general public. *Thadakam*, *Thushaaram*, *Ee Nadu*, *Innalenkil Naale*, *Iniyenkilum*, *Vartha*, *Angadikappurathu*, *Avanazhi*, *Balram vs. Taradas* etc were huge box office hits. Apart for I V Sasi, T Damodaran, also wrote scripts for directors like Priyadarshan, Anil and Bharathan. Mani Ratnam's first and only film in Malayalam *Unaru* (1984) was based on the script by Damodaran in 1985.

In the year 1988, Sasi directed a periodic drama based on the script by T Damodaran, *1921*, which was then the most expensive film in Malayalam. T Damodaran has called this film as his dream project. With Mammooty in the leading role, *1921* revolved around the Mappila mutiny in Malabar in 1921 against the British. This film was a huge hit at box office. Though, in 90s, Damodaran reduced the number of films, several hits were born from his pen. *Inspector Balaram*, *Abhimanyu*, *Advaitam*, *Kalapani*, *Kaattathe Kilikudu*, *Ethiri Poove Chovana Poove*, *Aanavaal Mothiram*, *Megham*, *Kattile thadi thevarudu Aana* are the other hits films of T. Damodaran.

Script writer T Damodaran's wife Pushpa Damodaran, 65, passed away in March 2011. He is survived by his daughter Script writer Deedi Damodaran and advocate Reshmi. *Chithrabhumi* assistant editor Premchand is his son in law.



*The mother-daughter duo - Shweta Mohan and Sujatha - look alike and their style of singing is similar but not identical. This holds promise of Shweta carving a future and a name for herself as a singer distinctively different from her mother Sujatha Mohan.*

## SHWETA MOHAN

# Of Scintillating Melodious Music



*Shweta and Sujatha Mohan*

**T**he chorus of childrens' voices in the song *kuchi kuchi rakkamma* from 'Bombay' had created ripples. Baby Shweta, daughter of the well known film playback singer, Sujatha was part of this chorus. Today Swetha Mohan is a versatile playback singer of South Indian films in her own right.

She also performs musical stage shows. Recently she was in Mumbai where she was part of the Musical show held in memory of the late Johnson Master at the Raagalaya Music Award Nite in February 2012. In an informal chat with KIM she shared some moments of her music and life. Shweta she was born in a 'musically inclined family'. Her paternal grandmother

was a disciple of Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. Her mother is the noted playback singer, Sujatha who has sung more than 4000 songs in Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and Hindi films. Her paediatrician father, Dr V Krishna Mohan belongs to Palakkad, was a Mohammed Rafi fan and used to sing old Rafi hits. Growing in a family where music was a commonly discussed subject, Shweta started learning Carnatic music at 9 under Ramamoorthy Rao. She used to participate in cultural programmes and music competitions from an early age. Today she is learning advanced Carnatic music from Ms Binni Krishnakumar (noted Carnatic and playback singer) and western classical under Augustine Paul.

Apart from the song in *Bombay*, Shweta was part of the chorus for the song 'acham illai, acham illai' in the film *Indira*. Her first solo Malayalam song was for *Lion* in 2007, music composed by Deepak Dev. In the last 15 years, she has sung for Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada films. She has also sung two Hindi songs, one for *Guru* and the other for *Raavan*. She has sung about 200 film songs. Her current projects include a song with Vijay Yesudas for *Three* that also includes the superhit number *kolaveri di*, songs for films like *Vettai*, *Ivan Megharoopan*, *Arike* and several others.



**Raagalaya President PV Vijaykumar receiving Shweta at the Raagalaya Music Award 2011 event.**



**Performing on stage**

She practises about two hours of singing every day. Shweta has worked with several leading composers like AR Rahman, Ousepachan, Vidyasagar, late Johnson Mater, Ilayaraja, Deepak Dev, M Jayachandran, Sharath and many other music composers. Shweta is known for her melodious and scintillating voice with an effervescent style of singing.

Apart from film songs, Shweta has a number of music albums and CDs. Her first devotional music album *Vrindavanam*, had music composed by Kudamaloor Janardanan. Other albums include *Divyam* (devotional), *chiriyil nin* (pop), *raavil parannu varu* (pop), etc.

#### Awards and Recognitions

Shweta won the Kerala State Critics' Award for the song *kolakkuzhalvili keto Radhe* from the film *Nivedyam* (Malayalam) composed by M Jayachandran. She received the Filmfare

Award for the song *Yamuna Veruthe* from *ore kadal* composed by Ousepachan. She also won the Asianet Film Award for best Female playback singer for the song *kuyile poonkuyile* from *Novel*. In 2010 Shweta won the Radio Mirchi Music South Award for Best Singer for a Telugu song 'amma thalle' from *Komaram puli*, music composed by AR Rahman. She received the Vanitha Award for Best Playback singer *Mandara Poo Mooli* in *Vinodha yatra*, (Ilayaraja composer).

Shweta was brought up in Chennai though she belongs to Palakkad. "Music is my passion," she says. "I could have taken any career of my choice, but I chose music because I love it. My mother is my



inspiration," she confides.

She genuinely feels that Malayalees outside Kerala enjoy Malayalam film songs more than those living within the state. "Maybe it is a matter of nostalgia but they make good audiences also," she adds.

#### Marriage and Music

Shweta got married in January 2011 to Ashwin Shashi. Till recently he was in US. Now he has shifted to Chennai and is President and COO of KGM Group of companies dealing with real estate and construction. Ashwin himself has learnt music, his sister and mother are amateur singers and Ashwin encourages Shweta to sing.

Shweta's music has been inspired by bhajans and old Tamil songs of her mother, her dad's repertoire of old Hindi songs, her husband's blues and pop and rock from her friends. "I have miles to go, my dream is to sing in different genres and languages," she says.

# Let's learn Malayalam

From this month Kerala In Mumbai publishes a series of tutorials so that the second and third generation Malayalees, not proficient in their mother tongue, can aspire to gain from their heritage, till now unclaimed. The alphabet, words and grammar will be taught in a phased manner.

- Guruji

**M**alayalam is my mother tongue. I am proud of this language because it is the most modern and scientifically devised Indian language, having more characters than in any other Indian language, more vowels, more consonants, diphthongs and a new set of characters called 'chillu.' It has 53 characters in the alphabet.

Unlike in other Indian alphabets, consonants in Malayalam are always pronounced with the first vowel of the alphabet. Till the early sixties of the last century, Malayalam had almost 900 characters including diphthongs and *chillu* and it would have cost a 'bomb' to start a printing business. Following several attempts to streamline the scripts, several steps were taken by the state government with the concurrence of the Central department of Royal Asiatic Society Script and Department of Education, Government of India.

All Indian languages can be written down in Malayalam script but the opposite is not true. This is made possible because of the large number of characters, 53 in number now. Many foreign languages also can be written in our language barring, for example Chinese, Japanese etc. All characters of English language and its words can be written in Malayalam except two sounds F and Z. It would not be difficult to overcome this hurdle by having two more characters.

Since the English alphabet has only 26 characters, words in Malayalam cannot be transliterated in it accurately. In order to overcome this problem, the Royal Asiatic Society Script has come out with a method of writing Malayalam characters and we shall be using their this script in our articles.

Though the Malayalam alphabet is only about 700 years old, Malayalam had its literary works, written in *Vattezhuthu* or *Aryezhuthu* earlier. Though Thunchathu Ezhutthacchan is credited with the development of the Malayalam alphabet,

many others also have contributed to the growth of its literature.

Ezhutthacchan worked hard to develop our alphabet. He achieved this feat at a time when literacy in Kerala was abysmally low and traveling to other parts of the country was tough. His knowledge of T amil, Telugu and Sanskrit helped him to achieve this task. There were only 51 characters as he mentioned in his poem as '*anpathonnaksharali...*' (Group of 51 characters). Though *Devanagari* script had *ksha*, *thra* and *jna* as independent characters, he took only *ksha* into Malayalam as an independent character when the other two were included as diphthongs. Proof of this can be seen in his first Malayalam work '*Harinama-keertanam*' in which he composed 51 quatrains starting with first character of the vowel and 'ksha' as the last consonant of the alphabet. At present many teachers argue that 'ksha' is a diphthong but that is not so. Had it been true, there would not have been a quatrain starting with the consonant 'ksha.'

Acharya had borrowed ideas also from Tamil in a big way, in its style, method and design. This aspect was explained in great details in our earlier issues.

After the initial development, three

characters were added as consonants and three vowels were abandoned during the last century as two of them were not used in any word and one was used in one word only.

Though great importance is given to the right diction and pronunciation, a vast majority does not give much credence to the right pronunciation and this has given rise to many abuses. Similarly the wide variation in phraseology makes the content difficult to comprehend for people hailing from distant places. From region to region, people suppress certain sounds in words when in other region they add unnecessary additional sounds in words. This results in people being dissuaded from learning Malayalam. This negligence has crept even while transliterating those words, especially the names of persons and places in English and then to Hindi.

Another aspect a fan of the language notices among the migrant Malayalees is that they attempt to read other languages as in Malayalam and carry the errors in such a way that rectification would later be difficult. Unless Malayalees take a special interest in rectifying such errors, they would proliferate and grow beyond redemption.

*To be continued*



*Installation ceremony of Jaya Prakash as president of Giants Group of Rambaug, Powai. (seated from left): A S Madhavan, Jaya Prakash, Lalitha Vasan, Upendra Menon, Bhosle Senior Inspector of Powai and Appukuttan.*



# Kerala in Mumbai

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