

Kerala in Mumbai

Only English/Malayalam Monthly Magazine linking Mumbai Malayalees

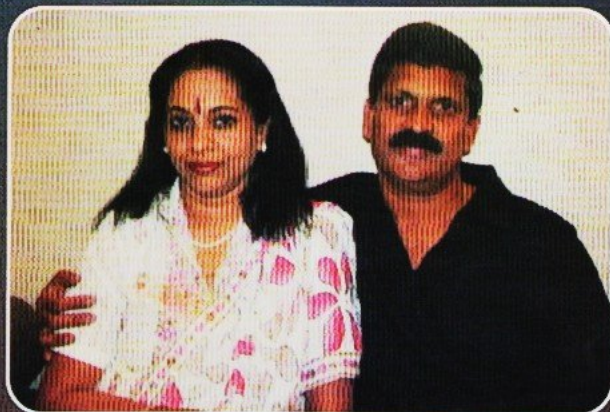
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JOB HUNTERS' GODFATHER



Family of the month



Mumbai boy's debut

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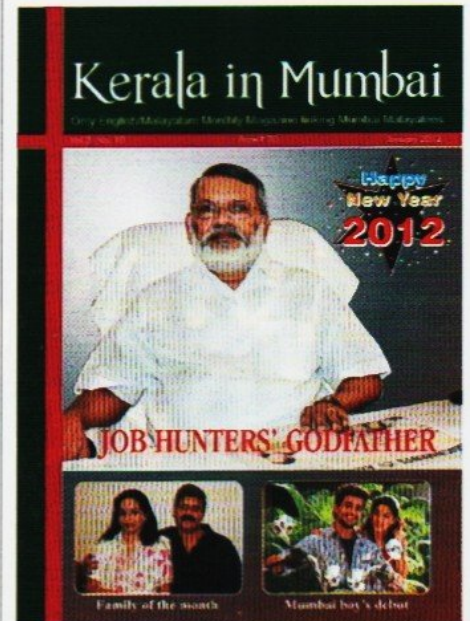
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CONTENTS

- 03 Editorial **New year bonanza**
05 Man of the month
N R K Pillai -P K Ravindranath
08 **Makara Sankranti**
-G H Ananthanarayanan
11 Family of the month
Harikumar S Menon
-Lakshmi Venkatachalam
13 Great Poets of Malayalam
Venmani -Satyanath
16 **Mannath Padmanabhan**
-V N Gopalakrishnan
18 Around Mumbai **Vasai**
-KIM Bureau
23 Kerala beckons **Kollam**
-Traveller
28 Communities of Kerala
Gauda Saraswats of Kerala I
-K R Narayanan
34 Aritiste of the month **Basant**
-Lakshmi V
36 Mumbai Digest
-KIM Bureau
41 **Mullaperiyar Dam Issue** -PKR
43 **Dr P P Ashok** -Sreeprakash Menon
44 **Beautycare**
New year resolutions
-Rashma Anand
46 **Health and hygiene**
For a cleaner world -Elvee
48 Kerala News Letter **Learning**
English from the English
-Chitra S Nair



- 50 Old is gold **Oru Kutakkeezhil**
-Rohini
51 Malayalam Movie World
-KIM Bureau
54 Music Corner **Ragam Kambhoji**
-Mallika Bharathan
58 Book Review **Mumbai Kathakal**
-Ashwati
59 Bollywood Malayalam
Connection **Anant Mahadevan**
-S P Menon



NEW YEAR BONANZA

KERALA IN MUMBAI wishes all its readers a very happy New Year, with the conviction that the next twelve months would bring joyous tidings to them apart from natural calamities and some man-made disasters.

The recession, the high rate of inflation, the steadily declining value of the rupee are all man-made hardships inflicted on an unsuspecting people. With the increasing maturity and awareness of conditions that affect their every-day lives, even these disasters attributed to human stupidity or greed, will come to an end soon. Including the curse of corruption that has enveloped every facet of national activity.

With these inflictions cast away, there are many good things that should cheer all intelligent, concerned citizens in the New Year. Science and technology have taken such huge strides in the recent past that their cumulative impact could be that they would produce a synergistic impact in the near future.

Take for example, the Aakash Tablet, which at Rs. 2999 is the cheapest computing device capable of providing Internet services that will bridge the digital divide in the country.

Then there is the success rate of transplant of liver, one of the most complicated medical breakthroughs, which has been reported. Artificial cornea to replace human donors, which entailed indeterminate waiting, advances registered in the fight against cancer, the use of stem cells to fight heart problems, the invention of the Total Artificial Heart, all hold promise of unanticipated relief for millions of sufferers world-wide.

The advances made in psychiatry, neuro sciences, psychology all have tremendous potential for taking Mankind one step up the ladder to a far better life than it had till now. Mood change medicines, now on the anvil, could help millions of people shed their pessimism and acquire a taste for all that one can be optimistic about in life.

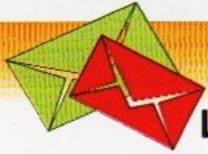
Agriculture and horticulture too hold our promises of increased and improved crops, plentiful in supply.

Similar astounding innovations, inventions and progress in various walks of human life are anticipated in the foreseeable future.

Much of these discoveries and inventions are the result of the march of science. Many of these have a reach far beyond their immediate application. The first and most decisive impact of this would be on the younger generations, who will grow into an entirely new world, devoid of the narrow, selfish, greedy outlook of an earlier generation that grew up on notions of accumulating wealth and wielding power.

The New India that is emerging could take this country and its polity to the zenith of its glory, shorn of all chicanery, hypocrisy and pettiness.

Happy New Year



Review of my poems

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of your esteemed magazine Kerala in Mumbai for December 2011 which carries a brief review on my anthology of poems "AMMAYUM JNANUM". The cynical rather, synoptic review of the book looks apparently positive, but, it looks more positively negative as one chisels deep inside. Though, of course, some finer throbs of the poems have been identified about the sentimental values, it will appear like pinching the baby and then rocking the cradle. The review looks hollow, biased and de-motivating as no effort seems to have been taken by the reviewer to tell the readers about the good qualities of those poems by quoting some lines from some of the poems which, of course, demands, some aesthetic quality on the part of the reviewer also. I, therefore, wish to clarify certain things which may help the readers to remove their misconceptions following the review.

First of all, the rules regarding the various meters have been very scrupulously and meticulously followed as usual as I am very particular about all these things right from the day I started writing poetry. I have studied and not just learned all meters in detail and all principles are observed every time. But it expects some knowledge on the part of the reviewer also to have grasp of these things and show justice to his assignment more judiciously. Similarly, when a particular person or a thing is the pivotal subject, repetition of the same words and their adjectives become unavoidable as their synonyms cannot express the desired effect or importance.

Meanwhile, I regret the typographical mistakes occurred as the printing, D T P etc. were done in Kerala due to which it was difficult for me to coordinate from Mumbai. However, I will ensure to get rid of this anomaly in future. In fact, I had sent the corrected copies together with my photographs for the purpose of review. So it was not necessary to add this also to the list of anomalies. Well, the photograph was not included.

In fact, the poems in the captioned book have been widely acclaimed as the greatness of mother. The prefaces of my books will speak the truth. I regularly contribute articles and poems in Malayalam as well as English to nearly 13 magazines and other periodicals and my poems especially have been rated as containing moral and spiritual values with due respect to all poetic principles.

However, I feel that the reviewing task has to be strictly handled

by an appropriate person who has got adequate grasp in the respective field and the review should not contain any carping and de-motivating remark but, contain only positive vibrations. Though, with such a longstanding poetic background and amazing creations, say 5 popular anthologies of poems and 5 soulful music albums, I have been expecting an inspiring review, this has really disappointed me. Then, when I revisited some of the other reviews, I noticed that many of the phraseologies are habitually common. May be, this is the style of the critics to keep a common yard stick which they apply indiscreetly for all.

Thodupuzha K.Shankar
Mumbai-400077

Trade in human pain

It was on a rainy evening in June. I was jostling through the crowded Vashi station when I noticed something that will remain in my mind for ever.

The platforms was wet with people walking around in wet shoes. At one corner of the platform was a woman begging for money. A year-old boy was lying next to her, completely naked, his eyes closed. He was lying on a thin muslin cloth, which could have hardly served any purpose. The baby had an "injury" on his head, with a bandage covering his thin forehead, with some red color sprayed on it to suggest it was "blood".

For those living in metros, this is a common sight. But the inhumanity of this whole act couldn't just go off my mind. I had an urge to save that kid by alerting some organization. But I really didn't know how it would help since I had heard that such people do reappear even if they are driven away. I was also not aware who exactly should be informed in such cases. Even today as I write this, my heart melts at that pitiable site. The city has dehumanized us. To earn a few bucks the woman was willing to let a small, frail kid, who was probably drugged, lie naked on a rainy day on a dirty platform. We, bystanders, just give a passing look at the whole thing and move on. A small baby's ill fate is no concern for us.

Guess it's time that we are given some means to at least rescue those babies, whose only fault is that fate led them to these monsters.

Archana Nambiar

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 or by post to Editor, Kerala In Mumbai, 105-B, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Mumbai 400 059.

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N R K Pillai

TAPPING JOB OPPORTUNITIES OVERSEAS

He has helped legions of ambitious young men and women find a job and settle down in life through his publications. A profile of NRK Pillai who straddles a niche market and is a happy and contented man.

-P K Ravindranath

A bright idea, at the right time and the will to implement it at any cost, is all that takes to chart one's life and career defying all odds. The result could be spectacular success, besides becoming a guiding star for millions of Indian job hunters.

That sums up the career of 57-year old N R K Pillai, Editor, Printer and Publisher of the bi-weekly ASSIGNMENTS ABROAD TIMES, the pole star for qualified, skilled and experienced professionals seeking Assignments abroad, mainly in West Asian Countries. Now in its 19th Year, the publication is the most-sought after journal that lists advertisements of

ASSIGNMENTS ABROAD TIMES

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Media jobs up in UAE, salaries competitive



A quick search on job website www.careerjet.ae shows 708 openings in the country under the media category, of which the maximum positions are for Dubai. However, according to some experts, it is difficult to determine the number of media job openings in the market.

Our UAE Correspondent
The demand for media professionals in the UAE has increased over the past year, but salaries remain competitive in the sector, according to experts. The growth has also seen an increase in community managers, digital content managers, online advertising sales professionals, social networking officers, etc., and Latha Pillai, Chief Marketing Officer, "AbroadTimes", as quoted by *Franchise 247*, "There has also been an increase in maximum positions are for Dubai. While media salaries remain very competitive, marketing budgets in most industries have not yet completely recovered to the previous spending levels that were witnessed in the UAE. This compensation is mainly reflected in the marketing-related

AAT News Service

The Indian rupee plunged nearly 10-15% this year, the worst by any currency in the world. Competing with it are only two other currencies: the Turkish Lira, which is down 17%, and the Kenyan Shilling that has lost 15%. The global uncertainty has meant a lot of volatility in currency markets, but the rupee's fall has been dramatic. Markets are abuzz with speculation that the RBI has probably asked public sector banks to release order to arrest the fall in rupee, so it remains to be seen what will happen in the coming days.

So how does a weak rupee impact you and me?

For individuals, foreign travel gets expensive to the extent of the rupee fall. Overseas education, electronic items, goods and services imported are at expense

How does Rupee's fall affect us?

The Indian rupee is going through one of its worst times in its history as it hit its historic low of 52.18 this week. What does that mean to ordinary people, businessmen and government? Here is an analysis of the impact of the rupee fall.



GURU TALK

For individuals who source things from overseas will now have to shell out quite a bit more, as the value of the Indian rupee has come down drastically. It also continues to rise, then all companies are forced to hike their prices again to compensate their losses. In case of companies, borrowing costs will surge if there

hundreds of employers looking for the right personnel. Over the last two decades the journal, published on Wednesdays and Saturdays, has found the right jobs for thousands of unemployed or under-employed persons.

The eight-page broadsheet generally carries two to three pages of display advertisements offering placements for a wide variety of jobs in almost all the

Gulf Countries. Many of them are from Indian placement agencies, who have been in this business for decades.

One such Mumbai-based recruitment agency stated that the journal has almost the same pull as some of the more established daily newspapers, which charge three to four times the advertising rates of "Assignments Abroad Times." Acknowledgedly, N R K Pillai runs an affluent publication,

which in the course of the last few years has acquired its own ultra-modern UV printing technology and installed it in their press at Mahape, Navi Mumbai.

The UV Printing technology is the first of its kind in India. Aishwarya Publications, the owners of "Assignments Abroad Times" is now in a position to offer its spare capacity to print periodicals, books, calendars and daily newspapers which don't intrude on the printing dates of "Assignments Abroad Times."

Pillai learnt all about advertising and marketing during the 13 years he worked for the Response Department of Bennett Coleman and Co., proprietors of "The Times of India" group of publications.

In 1986, at the age of 32, Pillai, father of two school-going children, decided to call it a day with Bori Bunder. He set up his own advertising agency, Aishwarya Advertising and Marketing and tapped into all the goodwill and contacts he had made while working for "The Times of India." In 1991 he launched Aishwarya Publications. Then, in 1993 came "Assignments Abroad Times" as a weekly.

It was evident soon enough that the



N R K Pillai and Family

publication had filled a gaping void in the employment market and Pillai made it a bi-weekly. From then on, it has climbed newer heights each year, earning the blessings of thousands of job seekers who for five rupees would get all the advertisements of jobs they could apply for within the covers of one journal.

Now, when the publication is well established and about to celebrate its "successful 20th Year" Pillai is about to induct his son, Suraj, who has just completed his MBA into Aishwarya Publications to take "Assignments Abroad Times" to newer heights. "The potential is great," avers Pillai who would like to share his burden and possibly spawn more niche publications.

The news content in "Assignments Abroad Times" is all job oriented, with the focus on the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. The lead story in one issue is headlined: "Media jobs up in UAE, salaries competitive." Other stories were: "High Growth forecast for Gulf Nations," "Saudi Approves JV to Increases Production," "UAE Gets Tough on Visit Visa Rule Violators." These are stories one does not find in mainline dailies or even the financial dailies.

"Assignments Abroad Times" has a circulation spread over the country, the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia. It has representative offices in Dubai and Muscat and New Delhi and representatives in all the metropolises of the country. The network is wide.

Pillai's family hailed from Mavelikara, but had shifted to Trivandrum where he was born and had his education. Armed with a degree he landed in Mumbai, staying with relations in Chembur till he was able to afford his own apartment in Dombivili, when he got married to Jyoti. The couple have a son, Suraj and daughter Lakshmi, who is married and stays in Dubai with her husband and son.

Pillai, now straddling a niche market no one had thought of, is a happy and contented man. He looks back often to the years of struggle, stiff opposition



N R K Pillai with wife Jyoti

and all the setbacks he had to overcome. He muses about the tough competition among daily newspapers that has set in, in recent times and is happy that he is not in this ratrace any longer. Remembering all the kind-hearted colleagues and friends who helped him in his climb to the top, Pillai

is a generous donor for all good causes.

An optimist to the core, N R K Pillai looks back with pride on the legion of ambitious young men and women whom he had helped find Assignments abroad.

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Makara Sankranti Celebrations Country-wide

-G H Ananthanarayana

Sankranti is a Sanskrit word denoting the transition of the Sun from one sign (Rasi) to another. There are twelve sankrantis in a year or a Sankranti every month. Among the Sankrantis, Makara Sankranti is considered to be the most important. It marks transit of the Sun from the Zodiac sign Sagittarius (Dhanu Rasi) to Capricorn (Makara Rasi). The Sun begins to move northward, and this movement begins between the 20th and 23rd December, and the Winter Solstice begins. It is considered to be auspicious half of the year. This is when light begins to increase. While the traditional Indian calendar is based on lunar positions, Sankranti is a solar event. So while the dates of all Indian festivals keep changing as per the Gregorian calendar, the date of Makara Sankranti remains constant over a long period, and is now on the 14th January. This will change 5000 years later and again still later traditionally, Makara Sankranti has been one of the many harvest days in India.

Makara Sankranti is called by different names in different parts of the country. While it is Uttarayan in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, it is Maghi in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. It is called Pongal in Tamil Nadu, while in Kerala, there is no change in the name Makara Sankranti. Similarly, there are different names by which it is known in other parts of the country. The day is also celebrated in countries like Nepal, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. It is celebrated in myriad cultural forms.



Til gub and Til laddus of Maharashtra

There are different versions about the mythological origin of Makara Sankranti.

i. Hindus consider Makara Sankranti as a female deity (Devi), who killed the demon Sankrasaur.

ii. According to the Puranas, the Sun (Surya) visits the house of his son Shani (Saturn), who is the Lord of Makara Rasi (Zodiac Capricorn). Though not much love is lost between the father and son, Surya makes it a point to meet his son on this day, and stay for a month, symbolizing the bond between father and son.

iii. It was on this day that Lord Vishnu put an end to the ever increasing terror of the Asuras by finishing them off and burying their heads under the Mundara Parvathi.

iv. It was also on this day that Maharaja Bhagirath performed penance to bring Ganga down to the earth for the redemption of the 60,000 sons of Maharaj Sagar, who was burnt to ashes in the Kapila Muni Ashrama. It was on this day that Bhagirath finally did Tarpan with the Ganga water for his unfortunate ancestors and thereby liberated them from the curse. After visiting the Patala (one of the nether regions) for the redemption of the curse of Bhagirath's ancestors, the Ganga finally merged in the sea. Even today a big mela is organized at the confluence of Ganga and the Bay of Bengal, when thousands of Hindus take a holy dip and perform tarpan for their ancestors.

The great grandmire Bhishma of Mahabharatha fame is said to have decided to leave his mortal coil on this day. It is believed that a person, who dies during the period of Uttarayana, becomes free from reincarnation.

On Makara Sankranti millions of people gather at holy places for a holy dip. Many melas are held. The most important *Kumbh Mela* takes place once every twelve years. It is held in four holy locations, viz., Haridwar, Prayag (Allahabad), Ujjain and Nashik.

In Maharashtra, people exchange multi-coloured *til guls* made from *til* (Sesame seeds) and the laddu made from *til* and jaggery. They are a token of goodwill. When people meet each other, they say, "til gul gya, ghod ghod bola", meaning accept these *til gul* and speak sweet words. It is an occasion to forget hard feelings of the past and start a fresh life with goodwill and understanding. It is also a special day for women, who are invited for a get-together called "Haldi-Kunkum" and given token gifts as a token of friendship and good feeling.

In Gujarat, this is a major festival, celebrated over two days, viz., 14th and 15th January. Oblations are offered to the Sun in the form of colourful kites. The act stands as a metaphor for reaching to their beloved God. *Undhiyu* (mixed winter vegetables) and *chikkies* (made from *til*, peanuts and jaggery) are the special festival recipes of the occasion. Scholarship is offered for higher studies in astrology.

In Andhra Pradesh, the celebration is elaborate. It is spread over four days. Day 1 is Bhogi; day 2 is Sankranti; day 3 is Kanuma and day 4 Mukkanuma. On Bhogi day, people give away old and derelict things, symbolizing giving up bad habits and a determination to start a good life. Brothers give gifts to married sisters as affirmation of their love. Landlords give gifts to their workers. The second day is celebrated as Makara Sankranti, when people offer special prayers to God and offer food to their ancestors. The animal kingdom is remembered, particularly cows. The last two days do not have much significance and hence are not celebrated on a lavish scale.



Ayyappan devotees at the Sabarimala shrine to have a glimpse of the Makara Jyothi

In Karnataka, the celebrations take the form of a special Sankranti offering in the form of *Ellu* (White sesame seeds) mixed with fried groundnuts, finely cut coconut pieces and jaggery. The plate will also contain sugar candy moulds of various shapes and sizes with a piece of sugarcane. The mixture is called "Yellu Bella thindu olle mathaadi" which means eat the mixture of sesame seeds and jaggery and speak only good. This corresponds to the practice in Maharashtra. Sugarcane appears to have been given an important place because both states are large producers of the crop.

In Tamil Nadu, the celebrations are as elaborate as in Andhra Pradesh. They are spread over four days: Day 1 Bhogi Pandigai (Bhogi); day 2 Thai Pongal;

day 3 Mattu Pongal and day 4 Kaanum Pongal. Day 1 is observed in the same manner as in Andhra Pradesh by discarding the old and bringing in new and good ones. Day 2 is the main day of the festival. The most important event of the day is the boiling of rice with fresh milk and jaggery in new pots early in the morning and allowing it to boil over the vessel. To shouts of "Pongallo Pongal" and blowing the conch.

Cattle play a very important part in the life of people everywhere. The third day is therefore devoted to them. They are decorated with paint, flowers and bells, fed sumptuously and allowed to roam about.

The game *Jallikkettu* is an important part of the Sankranti festival in some parts of Tamil Nadu. It is a bull-taming sport. The term *Jalli* comes from the term *salli kassu* (coins) and *Kettu* means a package tied to the horns of a bull as prize-money. Later, this term got corrupted as *jallikkettu*. In this sport, no weapons are used and the bull is not killed.

In ancient times, the game was by women to choose their husbands.

Jallikkettu bulls belong to specific breeds of cattle that are descended from the Kangeyam breed of cattle, pugnacious by nature.

There are three variants of the game played mostly in the districts of Madurai, Pudukkottai, Theni, Thanjavur and Salem. In one variety, the bull comes from an enclosure with an opening. As the bull comes out, one person clings to the hump, but the bull will shake him off. Some bulls will hook him with their horns and throw him out. The person has



Taking a holy dip at a holy river during Makara Sankranti



Jallikettu a Sankranti festival in rural Tamil Nadu

to hold on for a pre-determined distance to win the prize. In the second variety, the bull is released in an open ground. Once released, it runs away in any direction, but some do not run, but stand there on the ground and attack anyone who goes near them. In the third variety, the bull is tied to a tree and allowed to move within a certain space.

No training is given to the bulls, but once released, their instincts takes over. Bulls often have chilli powder rubbed into their eyes, force-fed alcohol and testicles pinched in an effort to get them crazed.

Often *Jallikettu* becomes sport, killing or mauling the contestants.

In view of the cruel nature of the sport the Supreme Court had at one time prohibited it, but on representations from the Tamil Nadu Government, it has allowed it subject to certain safeguards.

In Kerala as in most other parts of the country, it is celebrated as a harvest festival in most parts of the State. But the focus has shifted to the Makara Vilakku festival in Sabarimala. On Makara Sankranti evening, at the hill shrine of Sabarimala, lakhs of pilgrims witness a star like celestial light of incredible splendor appearing on the horizon known as *Makara Jyothi*. This miracle occurs at the time of evening *Deeparadhana*. Pilgrims consider it a great moment of fulfillment. The occasion sees the coming of people of various castes, creeds and religions. A sprit of equality and camaraderie prevails among all, which is the essence of the Ayyappa cult.

In the State of West Bengal, Sankranti is known as Poush Sankranti. The freshly harvested paddy along with the date palm syrup in the form of *khejurer* is

used in the preparation of a variety of traditional sweets. The celebrations begin a day before and ends a day after. The Goddess worshipped is Lakshmi. In the Himalayan region of Darjeeling, the festival is known as Magey Sakrati. Lord Siva is the deity worshipped on the occasion.

The tribals of Orissa celebrate the day by lighting bonfires, dancing and sitting together and partaking of the special dishes made.

In Punjab, huge bonfires are lit on the day previous to Sankranti. Sweets, sugarcane and rice are thrown in the bonfire. Sankrant day is celebrated as Maghi. Bathing in any river early in the morning is important. Hindus light lamps with sesame oil, as this is believed to give prosperity and wipe away sins. The celebration can never be complete

without the vigorous *bhangra* dance.

The celebrations in Kumaon (Uttarakhand) take a very interesting form. As the Sun starts moving to the North, the migratory birds starts returning to the hills. People give *kichdi* in charity, take ceremonial dips in holy waters and celebrate the festival of *Kale Kauva*. During the festival of *Kale Kauva*, people make special sweetmeats, shape them like drums, pomegranates, knives, swords, etc. They are strung together as necklace. Children wear these necklaces early in the morning and sing "Kale Kauva" to attract birds and offer portions of these necklaces as a token of welcome to all migratory birds, which are now coming after their winter sojourn in the plains.

Rajasthan has its own way of celebrating the festival. There the festival is known as Sakrat and is celebrated with sweets like Ghevar, Til-patti and Gajak. Kite-flying is also an important part of the festivities.

In Uttar Pradesh, the celebration takes the form of bathing in the holy river at Allahabad, Varanasi and Haridwar.

In Assam, the festival is celebrated as bhogali bhigu. Sakrat the name by which the festival is known in Bundelkhand and Madhya Pradesh. In coastal regions, the festival is dedicated to Lord Indra. Goa celebrates it in the same way as Maharashtra. It is the women who celebrate the festival by lighting bonfires, dancing and eating, sitting together. The Bhuya tribals of Orissa have their Maghyatra in which small home-made articles are put for sale.

In Kashmir Valley, it is known as Shishur Sankraat.



Flocking to buy Kites during Makara Sankranti

Harikumar S Menon



Harikumar and Madhavi Harikumar with son Varun and daughter Vani

A Model Malayalee Family



Lakshmi Venkatachalam

Harikumar S Menon's paternal family belongs to the Poonjar Palace, Royal Family of Travancore. His father, the late Sreedhara Menon a descendant of Godavarma Raja retired as Revenue Inspector, Kerala Government Service. His mother was the late Saraswathi Amma. Harikumar was born and brought up in Neendoor near

Ettumanoor in Kottayam District, the youngest of seven children, 4 boys and three girls. He completed his schooling and graduation in Kottayam and MSc in Applied Chemistry with petroleum Engineering as optional subject from the University of Cochin. Coming to Mumbai in '83, where his eldest sister lived, Harikumar joined ONGC as

petroleum chemist. In '85 he got a job in Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), the largest public Sector company in Oman and went to Muscat. He worked there till '94 when he returned to Mumbai.

In 1988 Harikumar got married to Madhavi, daughter of the late PMC Menon and Shanta Menon. Her father hailed from Thrissur, while her mother hails from Malappuram. However, they were residents of Mumbai. Her father was a partner in a company. Madhavi did her schooling at St Theresa's Convent, Santa Cruz and graduation in Zoology from Mithibai College. Her father was a very active member of the Lions Club of Powai though they were staying for a long time in Juhu. Her mother was active in the Bombay Keraleeya Samajam. Now she is staying in Aluva. Madhavi has one younger sister married and settled in Mumbai.

Harikumar's eldest sister knew Madhavi's mother and the alliance came through a common friend.

After marriage, Madhavi went with her husband to Muscat. Life was good for

Malayalees there. They were a sociable lot, meeting often and celebrating festivals like Onam, Vishu, etc.

Today Harikumar runs three companies. He is the MD of the RD Ashar Pvt Ltd, that manufactures wide steel wire conveyor belts for material handling equipments. He is also MD of Nibha Engineering and Electronics Pvt Ltd that manufactures conveyor systems and special equipments. His Mesh Tech Engineering Pvt Ltd manufactures vibratory screens, (wire mesh and cloth) that are used mainly in mines and quarries. Recently this company has started total screening solutions for material handling equipments and the first consignment of polyurathane screens was imported from China. Harikumar's corporate office is situated in Wagle Estate while his factories are in Mahape, Navi Mumbai and MIDC, Ambernath.

Harikumar has received the Thane Manufacturer's prestigious Best Manager Award. He was also bestowed the Noble Son of India Award in Delhi by the Integrated Council for Socio-economic Progress in recognition of outstanding achievement, experience and excellence in chosen field of activity.

Harikumar and Madhavi have one son Varun who has just completed BMS from Mumbai University and is right now attending his father's office to get some experience in handling business. Their daughter, Vani is doing her Std XI ISC Commerce at Hiranandani Foundation School. While Varun plans to do MBA at a foreign University after getting some work experience, Vani has yet to decide what she wants to do in future.

Madhavi has learnt Bharatanatyam before marriage and did her arangettam. She was earlier teaching Bharatanatyam to children in Powai. Now she is learning Carnatic Music and Bhajans. Harikumar's hobbies include reading, gathering knowledge, visiting new places and meeting people.

Both Harikumar and



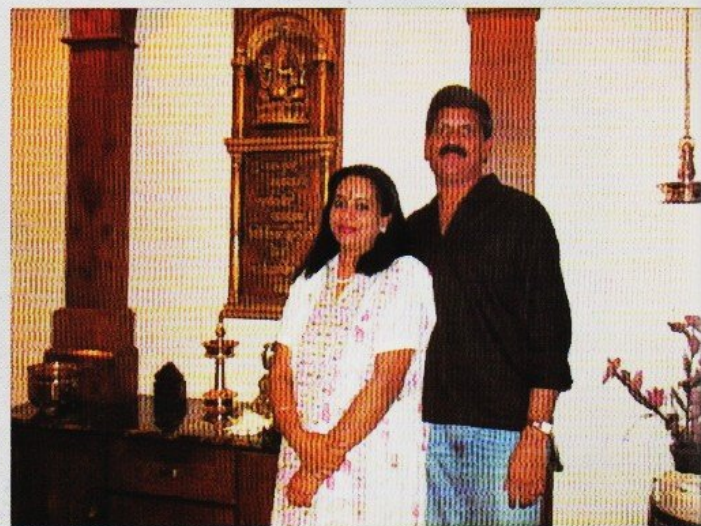
Harikumar and Madhavi at wedding reception

his wife are members of the NSS Powai Unit, Hiranandani Keralite Association and engage themselves in charitable and social work through them. Harikumar is a member of the Governing body of Nair Business Forum, and Powai Youth Forum. The couple is very keen to foster among the second and third generation Malayalees, an interest for Kerala culture and traditions so that they remember their roots.

Every year the family goes to Kerala and they also have family holidays



Madhavi performing Bharatanatyam



Harikumar and Madhavi

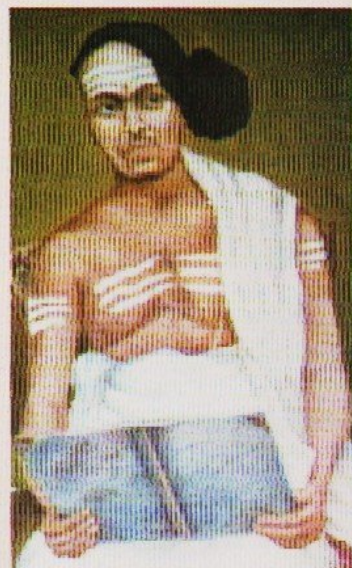


VENMANI

The name Venmani cannot be confined to a single individual. It brings several images to the reader such as the name of a village, a Namboothiri house, a father-son duo of poets and also a school of poetry.

The third quarter of the nineteenth century bore witness to the rise of a new school of poets devoted to (1) the observation of life around them, and (2) the use of pure Malayalam. They aimed at a certain simplicity and directness, preferring words of Dravidian origin and Sanskrit words that would not sound strange or harsh. They thus achieved a balanced middle path with a slight bias towards the Dravidian elements. Euphony was their watchword. An easy flowing diction that creates no problem for loud and relaxed recitation, a smooth and even rhythmic cadence, maximum clarity of meaning and a pervasive sense of humour and light-heartedness: these qualities were inherited from the "Chambus" via the writers of the *Muktakas* (single independent quatrains making up complete poetic crystals) like Chelapparampu Namboothiri of a generation earlier.

The slight realism they resorted to was meant only to highlight the down to earth appeal of their erotic exuberance. They were incapable of moral earnestness or intellectual high seriousness. There is nothing in their writings that remind us of the central tradition of Malayalam poetry, beginning in folk poetry and later *Ramacharitam* and gradually evolving through the *Niranam* poets, Cherusseri, Poonthanam, Ezhuthachan and Kunchan Nambiar. It is necessary to point out that Nambiar's humour has a basis in social criticism. The humour of the Venmani poets is an end in itself; it is an indulgence in the ludicrous and ridiculous situation for



Kodungalloor Kunhikuttan Thampuran

its own sake. This explains why they could write *Ambopadesams* over and over again, in which a grandmother gives instructions to the granddaughter on the art of courtesan ship.

Till Venmani Achchan (Parameswaran) Namboothiripad came on the scene, almost the entire Malayalam poetry was dominated by Sanskrit. Malayalam poets liberally borrowed, without hesitation, Sanskrit words but common people could not understand them. When Poonthottam and Godavarman Thirumulpad paved the way for the pure Malayalam poetry, it captured the attention of Venmani and he freely indulged in it, thus providing a new elixir to Malayalam poems. It had all the positive points of Sanskrit but enabled ordinary Malayalees to understand the fine nuances of Malayalam. His sons Venmani Mahan (Kadamban) Namboothiripad, Kodungalloor Kunhikuttan Thampuran and Kochunni Thampuran provided perfection and character to this school of poetry.

Venmani's attempts were not a natural one but a studied one. Kunhikuttan Thampuran had mentioned that his father always insisted that a poem that a commoner could not understand had short life. It was their combined effort that brought out what we call *manipravalam*.

The Venmani School or movement of poetry had started with Poonthottam Achchan (Damodaran) Namboothiri (1821-1865) but the upbringing was under the care of Venmani Achchan Namboothiripad. It grew far and wide with the help of Kodungalloor Vidwan Ilaya Thampuran.

Though Poonthottam had written many poems, only two '*muktakam*'s are traced to him. One of them,

പൂമെത്തൈലഴുന്നേറ്റിരുന്നു, 'ദയിതേ
പോകുന്നുഞാനെന്നുകേ-
ട്ടോമൽക്കണ്ണിനെ നീരണിഞ്ഞ വനേ-
പ്പൂവോടു ഗാഢം തദാ
പൂമേനിത്തളിരൊന്നു ചേർത്തഹമിനി-
ക്കുന്നതെ"നക-
പ്പൂമാലോടണിവേണി ചൊന്ന
മധുരച്ചൊല്ലിന്നു കൊല്ലുന്നുമാം.

The above meaningful, experience oriented and appreciative quatrain reflects the ambience of love and thus compels us to remember it even after one and a half century of its birth. He had also drawn a black and white portrait of a village maiden in pure Malayalam.

മുടില്ലാത്തൊരു മുണ്ടുകൊണ്ടു മുടിയും
മുടിട്ടു വൻകറ്റയും
ചുടിക്കൊണ്ടരിവാൾ പുറത്തു തിരുകി,
പ്രാഞ്ചിക്കിത്തച്ചങ്ങനെ,
നാടൻകച്ചയുടുത്തു മേനിമുഴുവൻ ള്ള
ചേറും പുരണ്ടിപ്പൊഴി
പാടത്തു നൂവരുന്ന നിൻവരവുക
ഏണ്ടൊക്കൊതിക്കുന്നു ഞാൻ.

Any world renowned painter could draw that damsel but he would be at loss to show that breathless posture.

Venmani Achchan Namboothiripad

Venmani Achchan Namboothiripad was born in January 1817 at Venmani Illam of Vellarappilli near Aluva. He was well versed

in grammar and logic. In 1838, he married Sreedevi Antharjanam, daughter of Polpaya Bhattathiri of Kudamaloor. Venmani Mahan (Kadamban) was their only child. Subsequently he had a marital relationship with Kunhipilla Thampuratti, niece of Kodungalloor Ilaya Thampuran. Kunhikuttan Thampuran and Kochunni Thampuran were born out of this relationship. He was the Guru of all in Kodungalloor *Kalari* (School). He died in 1890 at the age of 74.

Very few of his writings, about 106 quatrains, are now available. '*Gajendra Moksham - Parayan Thullal*' is one of his acclaimed works and it tells the story of Indradhymnan of the Pandyas. Two of his major works are *Rameswara Yathra* and *Sivayogi Charitham Thullal*. The former one is in the form of letter to his wife, explaining the places he visited and people he met. A quatrain from *Rameswara Yathra* is given below.

ദയയൊരു ലവലേശം പോലുമില്ലാത്ത ദേശം
പരമിഹ പരദേശം പാർക്കിലത്യന്ത മോശം,
പറകിൽ നഹികലാശം, പാരിലിങ്ങേകദേശം
സുമുഖി! നരകദേശം തന്നെയാണപ്രദേശം.

This is the first travelogue written in Malayalam in the poetic form.

Conversation in poetic form was a past time those days. Once Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Thampuran asked Venmani how he came and the latter replied that he traveled by train. How was their conversation?

ഹേ വിപ്രവര്യോ! വേദാഗമനം വിശേഷാ-
ലാവിപ്രയോഗശകം വഴിയായിരിക്കാം?
തീവണ്ടി കേറിയൊന്നൊക്കുമെത്തി, പിന്നെ-
ക്കേവഞ്ചിയാണവിടെനിന്നിവിടംവരേക്കും.

Venmani Mahan Namboothiripad

Mahan, real name Kadamban, is the most misunderstood poet in Malayalam. Most of the critics termed him only interested in '*sambhogashrungaram.*' They failed to notice his lucid style, devoid of any Sanskrit words, rhyme and incessant flow of words and absence of labour. He had no formal education and yet his command over vocabulary was something to be complimented and appreciated. According to Ulloor, Mahan Namboothiripad was the one and only emperor in the literary world, during his time.

Mahan's quatrains would come around 10,000 but he never bothered to write them down and he blamed himself for this trait.

സ്വതന്ത്രനേ ശുദ്ധം കൃഷിമടിയ,നന്നല്ലറികസ-
ന്മതേ! ഭീനക്കാരൻ, പുനരിവനമാന്തക്കൊടിമരം.

Let us see how Kunhikuttan Thampuran described his half brother (*bhrāta*):

ഉന്മേഷത്തൊടു, താൻ മുറുകടി, യരിക-
ത്തലും മുറുകാനുമായ്
ചുമ്മാതേ മണിപത്തടിപ്പതുവരെ
മൂടിപ്പുതച്ചങ്ങനെ,
ബ്രഹ്മസംഗം മാമായതിന്റെ പടിയിൽ,
പ്പൂർണ്ണാനുമോദം പര-
ബ്രഹ്മം കണ്ടമരുന്ന വെണ്ണണിമഹൻ
നമ്പൂരിയെക്കണ്ടു ഞാൻ.

His lethargy in writing down his thoughts cost Malayalam poetry a wealth of classicism.

Mahan's memory was astonishing and could reproduce all his quatrains at any given time without any effort and this made him lazy to put down his poems in writing. There is hardly any



Kerala Varma
Valiya Koyi Thampuran



K C Kesava Pilla

writing on him except one written by Thottekatt Kunhikrishna Menon, his contemporary.

About this laziness, Kunezhathu Parameswaran Menon had written as under:

Due to continued persuasion, once Mahan agreed to bring all his writings scattered at various places to him and to sort them out leisurely over a couple of months. During his next visit, Mahan had a servant carrying a head load of material and handed them over to Kunezham. It was agreed that both of them together would sort them out and whatever he could remember, Kunezham could take down. During the treatment of his piles, Mahan dictated whatever he had written earlier but before they could put their hands on the bundles, he died. After a few months, Kunezham opened the bundles but he could find only bunches of dried tobacco that would last more than a year.

Mahan was born in May, 1844. He was fond of travel and it was difficult to know where he would be at any given time. His whereabouts were known only from his poems. The amazing part is that he used to write his travelogues from imagination also. The so-called '*Pooraprabhandham*' was written without being at Thrissur or attending the *pooram*.

He married Kalidevi of Thekkiniyedathu Mana. He had two daughters from this marriage. The elder daughter died quite early and the second had only one daughter. Though she had a son who lived very long, Venmani Mahan's lineage ended with himself.

The absence of a son, to propagate his lineage was always a thorn of pain in his mind and he had expressed this directly as well as through the characters of his poems.

കൊള്ളാമെന്നൊരു കുഞ്ഞുവേണ്ടയിസവേ,
ശേഷക്രിയയ്ക്കെങ്കിലും-
കൊള്ളാമെന്ന കുമാരനൊന്നിഹ വിറ-
ക്കാത്താൽ മനക്കമ്പ ഹോ!
കള്ളം ചൊല്ലുകയല്ല, കത്തിയതി-
ദ്ദുഃഖജലൽജാലയിൽ-
പ്പൊള്ളുന്നു മന,മെന്തു ചെയ്വു
വിധിയാമീവണ്ണമീ വനതും.

Besides the above, he suffered from piles and indigestion quite early and had mentioned about it in his '*Kavi Pushpamala*'(1885). Nevertheless, he ate everything the physicians attending to him proscribed. However, the cause of his death was smallpox. He died on January 15, 1893.

Kodungalloor Kochunni Thampuran who was treating Venmani for smallpox, wrote to K C Kesava Pilla about Venmani's death:

രണ്ടോ നാലോ വയസ്സാക്കിയ ശിശുജനവും
 വെണ്ണണിശ്ശോകമൊന്നോ
 'രണ്ടോ നാവിൽ ഗ്രഹിക്കും' കലിതരസരം
 കേൾക്കുവോരാദരിക്കും.

The *Kalidinam* on which Mahan Namboothirpad died is denoted in this quatrain (1824012). There are about 30 poems attributed to him.

Well known poems

The most talked about work of Venmani is *Pooraprabandham*, a description of the famous Thrissur Pooram. It is written as a description of what was going on during the pooram festival he attended. This was supposed to be a collection of 1000 quatrains but what we now know is only 384 quatrains whereas C P Achutha Menon claimed to have seen 700 quatrains. The *pooram* mentioned in this work pertained to that of 1047 ME as mentioned by the poet himself. In a letter to Thrippunithura Ikkavamma Thampuran, he writes,

കോടക്കാണിവേണി! കൊല്ലമഴകോ-
 ടോരായിരത്തിൽപ്പരം
 കൂടിപ്പേർന്നൊരു നാല്പതും ബതി-
 ണേതഴാമതേണേക്ഷണേ!
 ക്രമാടിക്കൊത്തൊരു മേടമാസമിരു-
 പത്തഞ്ചാം ദിനം തീർത്തയച്ചീടുനേൻ...

In fact he did not attend that year's *pooram* at all and the whole poem was based on his imagination. Nevertheless, once you start reading this poem, you would not allow it to go off until you finished it. The description is so touching and picturesque and gives the feeling of the reader himself being in the midst of *pooram*.

His other published books are *Bhootibhoosha Charitam*, *Kavi Pushpamāla*, *Ambopadesham*, *Ajāmila Moksham*, *Mathurā-puricharitam*, *Sangamesa Yāthra*, *Sangamesa Ashtakam* and *Kuchela Gopālam* as well as numerous songs and devotional verses.

Among his plays, *Atimoham*, *Pracchannapantavam*, *Purandararunam*, *Peeyoosha Veeryodayam* and *Kāmatilakam* are noteworthy.

On his salacious quatrains

For many, Venmani is synonymous with salacious quatrains but when we go through his entire lot of poems, there are hardly ninety quatrains that belong to that category and it wouldn't even amount to one percent of his writings. After the initial uproar, now most of the critics have come around to the view that it was mere sarcasm in the disguise of salaciousness.

Just see the following quatrain:

കുന്ദർപ്പായോധനത്തിനധികൊതിവെരുകീ-
 ടുങ്ങു ചെല്ലുന്ന നേരം
 കന്നൽ കാർവേണിതാനും കണവനുമൊരുമി-
 ചുങ്ങു വാഴുന്ന കാണാം.
 'എന്നേ വൈഷമ്യമെന്നിങ്ങനെ ബത കരുതീ-
 ടിങ്ങുപോന്നിട്ടുപിന്നെ-
 ചെന്നാലും കാണുമച്ചിക്കൊതിയനെ, നിധി
 കാക്കുന്ന ഭൃതം കണക്കെ.

Here the frustration of the man who wants to sleep with a married woman, is depicted in this poem. When he goes to the woman's house, he finds her with her husband and calls him a man lustful of his wife and watchful of her like a ghost who

looks after a treasure. It is to be noted that the man who initiates the immoral act is pretending to be innocent. Will you term it salacious?

A man meets his childhood female friend and what goes in his mind is described by Venmani:

ഓലപ്പാളിയുടുത്തൊരോമനയതായോടി-
 കളിക്കുന്ന നിൻ-
 ചാലപ്രായമതിനലത്തെയതുപോ-
 ലിന്നൊന്നു തോന്നുന്നുമേ
 നീലാംഭോജഭാഷി! നിൻ പ്രസവമ-
 ഞെട്ടായഹോ! കഷ്ടമേ!
 കാലംപോയൊരു പോക്കു പാർക്കി-
 ഉളവില്ലാലോല നീലാളുകേ!

A mischievous lover of a married woman sends a letter to his love that he would visit her before her husband returns to her.

തരക്കൊണ്ടി,ത്താവാട്ടുഭാര-
 ത്തിരക്കുകൊണ്ടൊന്നു തിരിഞ്ഞുനോക്കാൻ
 തരം വരുന്നില്ല, വരുന്ന പക്ഷം
 വരൻ വരുംമുമ്പെ വരാം വരാംഗി!

Very pleasant to hear, right?

Mischievous Venmani Mahan

The well known poetess Thottakkat Ikkavamma translated '*Subhadraharanam*' and sent copies of the book to all friendly laureates seeking their opinion. Venmani also received a copy. (Those days there was a rumour that Ikkavamma and Chathukutty Mannadiar were in a 'excessive' friendship.) Venmani published his opinion as given below:

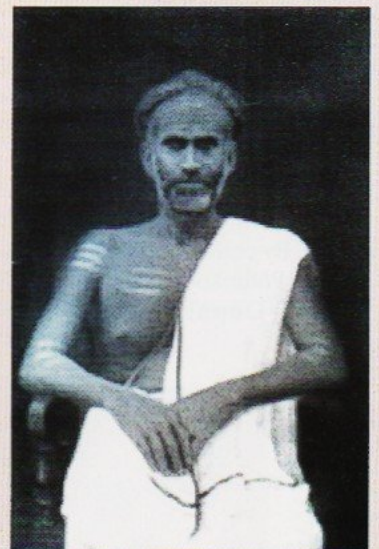
ഒന്നാമതായ് സ്സുമുഖി! ബുക്കു പകുത്തൊട്ടു
 നന്നായി നോക്കി 'നടു'തൊട്ടൊടു'വോളവും ഞാൻ
 എന്നാലതിന്റെ പുതുരീതി നിനച്ചനേരം
 'മന്നാടിയൊരുടെയിതെന്നൊരു ശങ്ക തോന്നി.

After going through the book and its style, he tested for the styles of Naduva-thachchan and Oduvil Kunhikrishna Menon but could not trace it. His mind then swung hither and thither thinking about it. (After seeing the new style, he thought it to be that of Mannadiar.

Mannadiar was also a famous poet and hence his influence was implied.)

Ikkavamma, needless to say, read through the hidden meaning and reacted aggressively but Venmani responded in his inimitable style. Ikkavamma responded again. Their poetic notes are not reproduced here for fear of obscenity.

When Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Thampuran translated Kalidasa's '*Shakuntalam*', many of his contemporaries had adverse comments but they resisted from raising them in public. However, Venmani could not withhold the temptation and he expressed explicitly. It came out as a lament of Shakuntala:



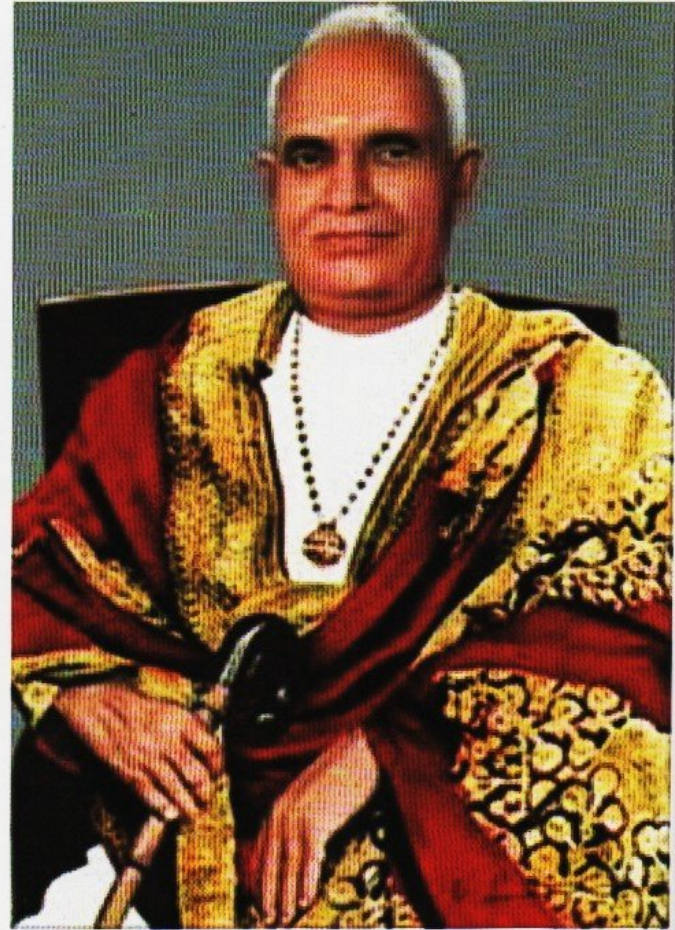
Kodungalloor
 Kochunni Thampuran

Continued on page 17

MANNATH PADMANABHAN

Social Reformer, Leader of Nair Community

Kendriya Nair Samskarika Sangh, Maharashtra (KNSS), the Mumbai-based apex body of Nair welfare societies in Maharashtra will be celebrating the 134th birth anniversary of Mannath Padmanabhan and the Nair Maha Sangamam at Mira-Bhayander Road, Mira Road East, Thane dist. on January 22, 2012. The article recollects the life of Mannam, the founder of Nair Service Society.



Mannath Padmanabhan, popularly known as Mannam brought the Nair community under the banner of the Nair Service Society. He was a great social reformer, a freedom fighter, an effective organiser, besides a great visionary. Mannam's unflinching determination, unwavering-mindedness and great ability in man management made him an unquestioned leader. He discarded the surname 'Pillai' in order to overcome caste prejudice. He was conferred the title 'Bharat Kesari' after the historic liberation struggle in 1959 which led to the dismissal of the Communist ministry in Kerala. Government of India recognised his service by conferring on him the civilian award Padmabhushan in 1966. The Postal Department released a



V N Gopalakrishnan

Commemorative stamp on him on January 2, 1989.

Mannam was born on January 2, 1878 at Perunna, Changanacherry in Kerala to Neelavana Easwaran Namboodiri and Mannathu Parvathy Amma. Abject poverty, misery and deprivation marked the early years of his life. His family conditions and domestic responsibilities compelled him to take up the job of a teacher and later a *Vakil* (Pleader). The Nair Community at that period witnessed "decadence and disintegration, precipitated by extravaganza, superstitious veneration for antiquated and anachronistic customs and tradition". He relinquished the profession of *Vakil* to fight for the Nair community. He and other stalwarts of the time established the Nair Service Society (NSS) on October 31, 1914.

In his own words, "NSS is my god, goddess and everything that there can be." He marshalled his oratorical skill and organizational ability to motivate, inspire and mobilize the community that was lost in a long and deep slumber. The Nair Service Society which he conceived, nursed and nurtured, epitomized the hopes and aspirations of the community which had been waiting for a saviour. Mannathu Padmanabhan travelled

extensively throughout the state, met people, organized them and won their love and regard with his disarming simplicity, single-minded devotion, will and determination. He inspired the Nair community and gave a dream of liberation from poverty, misery and ignorance. Thousands of units of the NSS have been created in his own unique way, with persistence, vision and farsightedness. The NSS opened an array of educational institutions, hospitals and other socially beneficial institutions all over the state. Though initially started to reorganize, strengthen and empower the Nair community, the NSS has extended the benefits of its service beyond communal and religious boundaries and has been playing significant roles in the social, economic, educational and political transformation of the state.

The NSS is a three-tier organisation with *Karayogams* at the base level, Taluq Unions at the intermediate level and the Headquarters at the apex level without mutual rights, claims to assets and liabilities. With an amazing network of units, the NSS has evolved into a well-knit and coherent organization. At the beginning, schools were established followed by colleges. Subsequently, agriculture, industry, housing and

healthcare activities were taken up. Acquisition of landed properties, establishment of agricultural farms, hospitals etc. were taken up in due course. The NSS with its Head Office in Changanacherry, Kerala runs over hundred schools, 15 Arts and Science colleges, 3 Training colleges, one Engineering college, one Homeo Medical College, several Nursing Colleges, Polytechnic institutes, Teacher Training colleges and Working womens' hostels throughout Kerala. The NSS has extended the benefits of its service beyond communal and religious boundaries and has been playing significant roles in the social, economic, educational and political transformation of the state.

Kendriya Nair Samskarika Sangh, Maharashtra (KNSS) was registered in Mumbai on December 28, 2000 and 30 units in and around Mumbai are affiliated to it. Calcutta Nair Service Society was formed on August 15, 1977. Nair Service Society Delhi was established in 1984. On November 17, 2000 Emirates Service Society was formed and later on rechristened as NSS Dubai on May 1, 2004. Similar apex bodies were established in Kolkatta, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad and other places. In overseas countries, there are NSS units in Houston and Dallas in USA, Canada, Kuwait and Bahrain. The Global Nair Service Society (GNSS) was launched in New Delhi in 2009 as a Joint initiative of

all like-minded Nair organizations outside Kerala to unite under one umbrella. The Central Secretariat of the Global Nair Service Society is New Delhi. GNSS is aimed at creating an organisational structure and promoting cross-geographical interaction for mutual benefits among Nair community.

Captivated by Mahatma Gandhi and his principles of Satyagraha, Mannam led a Satyagraha march called 'Savarna Jatha' for the sake of the untouchables. It ultimately led to the "Temple Entry Proclamation". He played a pivotal role in the 'Vaikom Satyagraha' and in the Indian freedom struggle.

Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the erstwhile Diwan of Travancore had stated about Mannam as follows: "The Nairs are extra intelligent, like the Frenchmen. Hence they are not in the habit of following a leader. To become the undisputed leader of such a community and to be respected and adored by them is an extraordinary achievement." Prof. K.M. Chandy, Congress leader and professor of St. Thomas College, Palai has stated: "Gandhiji in India, Washington in America, De Gaulle in France and Churchill in England were great men who translated the ideology of the people into national achievements. Mannam is the only one who can match up to their level". Mannam was known for his wit and wisdom which he effectively used to intimidate and subdue his adversaries. He was a versatile stage artiste as well. His

performance as Sundarayyan in the play "Marthanda Varma" was memorable. He was also an accomplished writer and *The Complete Works of Mannam* was published in Malayalam. He was the author of *Reminiscences of My Life*, *FMS Journey*, *Panchakalyani Nirupanam*, *Biography of Changanacherry Parameshwaran Pillai* and *The Diary of Mannam*.

Nair-Ezhava unity was his dream and in the pursuit of this objective, Mannam along with K. Kelappan, and M. P. Manmadhan, a former General Secretary shed their caste names. Several members of the Nair community followed their leaders and removed caste names of their children while admitting them in educational institutions. His mission was also to unite all Hindus, by eradicating unnecessary rituals and superstitions. The simple and austere Nair marriage today is to a certain extent the outcome of Mannam's ceaseless efforts.

Shri. Mannathu Padmanabhan firmly believed that serving the people of his community and serving the country are not different. The NSS has always looked upon harmony among religions and communities as a fundamental factor for their own development as well as for the development of the nation at large. Mannam taught the philosophy of action, value of unity and above all the need to change. He passed away at the ripe age of 93 leaving behind a rich legacy for the community to inspire and emulate.

VENMANI (Continued from page 15)

നായാട്ടേറീടുമെന്നുളളൊരു മതിയതി-
നാലായവൻ തന്നടുകൽ
പോയിട്ടും കൂടിയില്ലില്ലൊരു കുറുവതു-
മെന്നിട്ടു മെന്നിട്ടിവണ്ണം
യായുഭാഷയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടിപ്പരമിഹ പഴുതേ
ബുദ്ധിവെച്ചൊരു വീരൻ
കോയിപ്പണ്ടാല നമ്മെ കരിനമിഹ പിടി-
ച്ചെത്തിനായ് മാന്തിടുകുന്ദു?

Venmani Humour

Venmani had the temerity to write serious poetry with a tinge of humour. See two of his *muktakams*:

കണ്ഠോ നല്ല കറുപ്പുമുണ്ടൊരു മുറി-
പ്പോമൻ ജടാന്തസ്ഥലേ,
പണ്ടേയുളളൊരു വെള്ളമുണ്ടു തലയിൽ
കണ്ടാലതും പിസ്തയം
ഉണ്ടെന്നിങ്കലൊരൊട്ടു നല്ലകരമു-
ണ്ടെന്നല്ല, രുദ്രാവലീ
ശ്രീകണ്ഠേശ്വര! പിന്നെയും വെറുതെ നീ,
തോൽമുണ്ടുകുത്തിടൊലാ.

This is a prayer to Lord Shiva. Shiva has several types of *mundu*, still he wears a *mundu* made of leather. Please do not do this, he tells the lord. The types of *mundu* are: a black one around neck, a piece of Soman around his cluster of hair, on

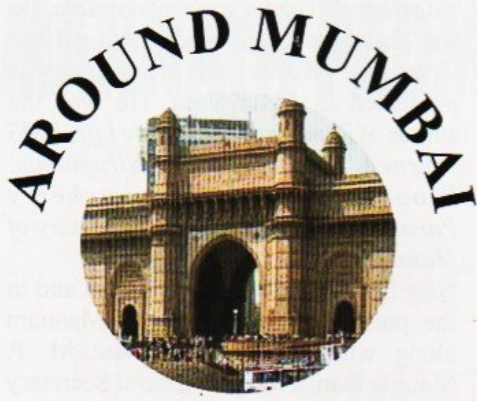
the head a white one and eight *mundus* with border. Then he should not wear one made of leather. This is the plain meaning of the poem.

Shiva's neck has solidified poison and has turned black, a partial moon (Soman) covering his cluster of hair, water (Ganga) on his head and eight shivaite hands (*karam*) to make his appearance complete. He is also covered by his servants (*rudravali*) and that is the inherent meaning.

The second *muktakam* is an argument between Lakshmi and Parvati. Siva being a resident of Kailas, is in the forest, not much different from Vishnu who sleeps in ocean. Shiva wears a snake (Vasuki) around his neck while Vishnu sleeps on another (Anantha). Siva's transport is ox while Vishnu during his Krishna avatar tended oxen. Having defeated, Lakshmi returns. The winner is therefore worshipped.

കാടല്ലേ നിന്റെ ഭർത്താവിനു വേന, മതേ,
നിന്റേയോ? നിന്റേണാളൻ
ചൂടിലേ പന്നഗത്തെ? ശരി, തവ കണവൻ
പാമ്പിലല്ലേ കിടപ്പ്
മാടല്ലേ വാഹനം നിൻ ദയിത, നതിനെയും
നിൻ പ്രിയൻ മേപ്പതില്ലേ?
കൂടിലേ തർക്കമിന്നെ, ന്നുമ രമയെ മട-
ക്കും മൊഴിക്കായ് കൈ തൊഴുന്നേൻ.

(Next issue: *Pandalam Kerala Varma*)



VASAI



More on Vasai Malayalees



St Thomas Syro Malabar Church, Vasai

Vasai East has as much Malayalee population as the West. Evershine City, Vasant Nagari, have many Malayalee residents. The list is not complete. There are many more Malayalees here who have made a mark and carved a niche in Mumbai.

Kerala Samajam Vasai East is located in an unpretentious flat in Vasant Nagari. Facing it is the Ayyappa Seva Samithi. Both are very active cultural centres conducting Malayalam classes, dance and music lessons to the younger generation of Mumbai Malayalee boys and girls. They also have keyboard classes.

Vidya Vikasini is a school run by the Franciscan Brotherhood, among whom the majority are Malayalees. Holy Family School and Junior College is in Vasai East, Evershine city.

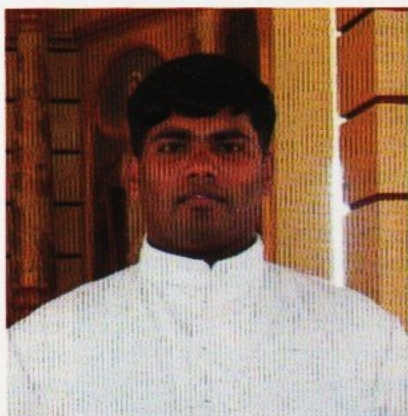
Sree Narayana Mandira Samithi Guru Centre

The Vasai Guru Centre was established in 1992 and comes under zone IV. Zone IV ranges between Goregaon and Tarapur, with 6 Guru centres under the charge of a Zonal Secretary. The Vasai Unit of the Samiti has its Women's wing, Youth wing and Cultural wing. The Vasai Guru Centre is a place to worship Guru, to know our inner self and to provide valuable service to humanity. S Surendran, Senior Manager, Telecom-MTNL is in charge of Vasai Guru Centre as its Unit Secretary, the jurisdiction of the unit being from Naigaon to Vasai. S Surendran and six General Council members M D Suresh, P Sadanandan, Vijayaprakash, Ms Usha Rajendran and Ms. Raji Nediyaath - along with the local committee manage the activities of the Guru Centre. The Guru Centre provides medical aid facility to the needy. It also organizes Carnatic music classes, Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam classes, Instrumental music classes, drawing, and tailoring classes, all at nominal fees.

Resicomm is a Kerala restaurant serving vegetarian and non-vegetarian Malayalee fare. Tomy Devasia, the owner of the hotel, also has a real estate office. **Divine Kerala Store** sells all Kerala items in Vasai. It is only one among the numerous shops that sell pappadam, tapioca and several other typically Kerala products.

St Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church

St Thomas Syro Malabar Church was inaugurated in November this year. It is near Holy Family High School in Evershine City. The newly constructed Church is an impressive three-storeyed structure with a high tower on which there is a statue of Lord Jesus. The



Fr Shijo Parayil, Vicar



Divine Kerala Stores and its owner T V Xavier

Church, constructed on the first floor is spacious, has an elaborate altar, and has statues of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and angels and is adorned with a high ceiling. An auditorium is being constructed on the ground floor. The consecration and blessing of this church was performed by Father Mar Thomas Elavanal, the Bishop of Kalyan Diocese. According to James Kannampuzha, a parishioner and public relations officer, the land for the St Thomas Catholic church was procured in 2001 when the community had just 40 families. There are about 220 Syro Malabar families in Vasai and till now they held their prayers within the Holy Family School. The community had procured land in the name of Santhome Charitable Trust of Kalyan from Herman Vincent.

Abhinayaa Institute of Research and Fine Arts

Abhinayaa Institute of Research and Fine Arts was founded by classical dancer Chitra Viswanathan to preserve and propagate the rich heritage of Indian Classical Dance and Music.

The rigorous training regimen at the Institute is designed to hone the student's skills and mould the young minds while enhancing their physical fitness. Its students have won various awards and accolades and have also

succeeded in creating successful artistes holding solo performances. The Arpana Ballet Troupe is a natural offshoot of Abhinayaa Institute. It aims to not just entertain but also to educate the viewers with every performance.

Chitra Viswanathan, began learning Bharatanatyam from the age of four under the guidance of Guru Geeta Mahadevan (one of the Coimbatore Sisters). She also learnt Mohiniattam, kuchupuidi, and traditional folk dances, a course on Dance and Body Movement and Carnatic music. She has choreographed and presented several dance recitals on Ganesha, Devi, Raas Leela, Life of Mahatma Gandhi, consequences of Terrorism, etc all over India and in Thailand. She is now working on *Brahma Samhita*, a project on Bharatiya Arts and Culture organized by ISKCON.

Recently the Bharat Vikas Parishad honoured her with the title of Dance Guru. She also conducts free dance classes for poor Adivasi children living



Viswanathan and Chitra

in remote villages in the Vasai Virar region. Chitra, hailing from Guruvayur, is the daughter of the late E V Krishnan and Saroja. She was born and brought up in Calcutta where her father was working.

P E Viswanathan, husband of Chitra, is the Regional Manager Accounts with a leading English Daily. He is the son of the late Puthukode Easwaran and Meenambal. He was born and brought up in Kannur and studied there. The couple got married in '91 and came to Mumbai in '95. From the age of 12 he has participated in various cultural competitions for his school and college and won several prizes in the category of film songs, light music and instrumental music. He has done more than 2000 stage shows as a singer and can sing in all South Indian languages and also in Hindi and Marathi. He also sings for the Bharatanatyam Arangetrams of his wife Chitra's Dance Institute in Vasai.



Resicomm Restaurant (inset) Tomy Devasia

Vasai Resident nabs thief at Vile Parle Station recovers partial cash

Satish D Nair, from Vasai overpowered two persons of a group of robbers who were committing dacoity, the first of its kind in Mumbai suburban railways. He risked his life while saving the life of a railway colleague, and succeeded in recovering partial railway cash.

On the night of May 2, 2004, ESM (Electrical safety Maintenance) Satish Nair was on night duty at Vile Parle relay room. He was assigned the maintenance of power panel at LC gate no 21. The power block was from 1.50 to 2.50 am. After finishing his work he walked to the SS office room along with SI Girish Kumar at about 2.40 am. They saw three persons leaving the room with one man carrying a bag over his shoulders. They thought they were some railway employees. Satish saw in the dim light, (the robbers had switched off the electric lights within the room) one person holding a pistol over SS Malhotra's head while the platform porter, Vikas Bansode and GRP constable Chaugale were tied, with their mouths taped. With tremendous presence of mind, Satish caught hold the neck of the man holding the pistol over Malhotra's head and with the other hand he caught his wrist thus trying to make him lose his

hold over the pistol. At the same time he saw the man with the bag stuffed with cash trying to flee the room. With his leg he tripped the fleeing robber who fell down. Together with the help of Malhotra, Girish Kumar, Constable Chaugale, porter Bansode, they tied the robber who had the bag. But the other man escaped. The nabbed thief was handed over to the police.

There was a cash collection of Rs 6,29,590 out of which Rs 2,79,790 and a cheque of Rs 36,580 was recovered from the nabbed robber. The Joint Enquiry Committee Report stated that this was a clear case of railway dacoity and acknowledged, "Satish Nair has shown exemplary courage and utmost devotion to duty in protecting Railway property and cash at the risk of his life. Such acts should be properly rewarded to encourage other staff." The All India Railway Employees Federation, Western Railway had also repeatedly written to the higher authorities in the Western Railways to acknowledge this brave act of Satish, and bestow on him a Bravery Award for his presence of mind in preventing a theft. While the SS and GRP have been awarded with certificates and cash awards, Satish is yet to receive any recognition.

Incidentally, in another instance in 2000,



Satish D Nair

Satish had apprehended three men who were tampering and trying to steal brass nuts and bolts from Junction box Point 153 in the Harbour railway line at Bandra.

Satish belongs to Thiruvananthapuram, the son of the late Divakaran Nair and Maheswari Amma. His wife Sushma is also from Thiruvananthapuram. They have a son Sudhi Nair, doing his first year graduation and a daughter Sowmya studying in Std VIII. Currently Satish is ESM Grade I posted at Mira Road.

As a result of this railway theft, now security steps have tightened while storing cash collections at various suburban stations of Mumbai.

Jayaraman Nair

Jayaraman Nair, chairman of Virtual Info Systems Pvt Ltd, was born and brought up in Mumbai. Virtual Info Tech runs three publications, Clean India Journal, Buildo Tech, Traffic infra Tech and co-ordinates Clean India Shows Pulire.

Jayaraman's company deals with socially relevant subjects and use of latest technology and green products awareness of cleanliness and hygiene, building technology and sustainability, and traffic management and infrastructure through its publications and exhibitions that it organizes all over India.

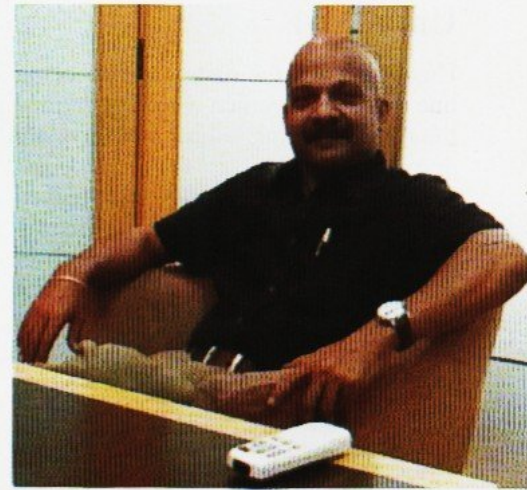
Jayaraman feels that it is very important to pay special attention to hygiene and cleanliness in our homes, offices, hospitals, and surroundings and at the same time improve the traffic congestions and bad roads that are the causes of tragic accidents, especially of

the youth of our country. If the roads are well maintained, accidents can be prevented, he feels. By proper disposal of wastes, many diseases and illnesses can be eradicated. Our buildings must be eco- friendly, and replenish our natural resources and not cause damage to the earth. These are his primary concerns which he emphasizes through his publications and exhibitions.

He has won several awards and recognitions for his eco- friendly activities.

Jayaraman is a member of the Lions Club through which he helps the less privileged members of society. He also contributes his mite for welfare activities in Vasai.

Jayaraman's father, the late M P Krishnan, who retired from Western Railways, is a native of Thalassery, while his mother Padmavathy belongs to Badagara in Kozhikode District. Jayaraman studied at SIES School in King's Circle and Wilson College. He did his PGDMA from UK - University



Jayaraman Nair

of Liverpool. His wife Usha hails from Kottayam though her parents NKP Pillai and Sarojam have been staying in Mumbai for a long time.

They have a son Aditya who is studying Marine Engineering in the UK and a daughter Nikita who is doing her first year BMS in Viva College in Vasai.

Utham Kumar

Utham Kumar has been staying in Vasai for more than 25 years and is a very active social worker. During the 2005 July floods, Utham Kumar helped in reaching medical assistance to flood affected areas. When Tsunami struck in Kerala he helped the damaged areas by arranging to send essential items to the affected people in lorries.

He is the President of Prateeksha Trust, a social and cultural association founded by him. It conducts quality programmes in Vasai for the welfare of Malayalees. The Trust also provides a platform for upcoming artistes from Mumbai and felicitates personalities from Mumbai and Kerala from various fields for their outstanding contributions to society. It has felicitated ministers from Kerala, singers, film stars and others from several fields. Utham Kumar is also the BJP Pravasi Cell State Convenor.



Utham Kumar

Abraham and Mini Thomas

Abraham Thomas hails from Thiruvalla in Pathanamthitta district. He is physical education master in St Andrews School in Bandra but has been staying in Vasai since childhood.

Abraham Thomas is a national level volleyball referee and runs the Bassein Black Cats sports club for training boys and girls for basketball and volleyball competitions. He coaches teaching volleyball and basketball teams for competitions in several schools of Mumbai. He is the basketball coach for the students of Carmelite Convent school. He is also an Executive Committee Member of the Thane District Hockey and Volleyball Associations.

Sports has always been Abraham's passion. During his school and college days he represented his school and college in inter-school /college hockey and volleyball competitions. He represented Central Railway Mumbai division Hockey team in the Mumbai Hockey League in 1996. He has won the best goal-keeper award among private hockey clubs in Mumbai. In the '90s, Abraham started Vasai Eskimoes

Hockey Club in Vasai but now it is no longer existent.

Abraham Thomas is the Secretary of the Marthoma Church and is actively involved in its social and charitable activities. He is also a member of the Bassein Kerala Samajam.

His father KT Thomas is a retired guard from Western Railway and his mother is Deenamma. They are also staying in Vasai.

Abraham's wife Mini hails from Kayamkulam in Alleppey District. She has done her postgraduation in Physics and works as a lecturer in Holy Family Junior College. Her parents are A J Pappachan and Annamma Pappachan. The Thomas couple has a daughter, Reshma studying in Std VIII and a son, Kevin studying in Junior KG. Both study at Holy Family High School in Vasai.



Abraham and Mini Thomas

Uma Devi

Uma Devi has the distinction of being one of the two women who first donned the role of leading ladies in Malayalam dramas in Mumbai.

In those days, ladies' roles were played by young boys. Uma Devi, hails from Mullamangalathu Mana at Vanneri in old Ponnani district. She married the late PC Sankaranarayanan, popularly known as PC or Namboodirippad in 1952. PC who passed away a few years ago, hailed from Pallissery Mana at Killimangalam in Thrissur District. Uma Devi came to Mumbai after marriage. Right from the beginning PC was a strong believer in communism and used to actively participate in the party affairs in and around Mumbai.

During the Aikya Kerala Convention, Uma and PC were approached by the

Late V K Krishna Menon, the Late A P Narayanan, the late K T Chandy, and the Late Kumaran Master, with a request for Uma to act in a Malayalam drama. PC encouraged Uma Devi to act in the drama.

Ever since, she has played challenging roles in at least 25 Malayalam dramas staged between Malad, Andheri, and Vasai. Uma's husband, PC, was one of the founding members of Bassein Kerala Samajam and BKS English School.

Uma is presently staying in Vasai with her elder son Narayanan (Ponnan). He is self-employed in printing business and his wife is Fehmida, (a Muslim), They have a son, Raunak who is doing second year Graduation in Mass Media (BMM). Uma Devi's younger son, Anujan, a senior executive with Glencore group, is also settled in Vasai, along with his wife,



Uma Devi

Hema and daughter Sneha, who is studying first year BCom and is also undergoing training in Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam

K P Mohanan

K P Mohanan hails from Kunjiman-galam in Kannur district. He is the fifth of six children of his parents Kelu and Lakshmi. Mohanan came to Mumbai in 1992. His father was in jewellery business and Mohanan got his first job with Bhanu Jewellery in Marol. Later he joined BCK Jewellers, (owned by Krishnankutty, well-known jeweller of Matunga) for ten years.

It was at this time that he started his orchestra troupe Naadam and the first programme of Naadam Orchestra was devotional light music at the Antop Hill Ayyappa temple in '96. Mohanan sings Malayalam, Tamil Hindi film and devotional songs through his Naadam

orchestra.

Naadam had several shows in Mumbai. It also co-ordinates and organizes musical and comedy shows of singers and other artists from Kerala at various samajams and associations in Mumbai, Gujarat, Nasik etc.

Mohanan also takes Carnatic and semi classical Carnatic Music classes in Vasai and other suburbs of Mumbai. His students have also won prizes at the Raagalaya music competition. Mohanan also runs a jewellery works in Vasai called Rishabham Jewellery Works and makes Kerala type traditional jewellery on order.

His wife Rajitha hails from Taliparambu in Kannur district. They



K P Mohanan

have two daughters, Rugma and Reshma. While Rugma is married to Mankandan, Reshma is working.



Wilson Thomas

Joel Wilson

Wilson Thomas, brother of Abraham who is also staying in Vasai is a former national level volleyball player, representing Maharashtra. He was also captain of the Mumbai volleyball team. Wilson's son, Joel Wilson, also represented Maharashtra in the under 13 national level volleyball tournaments. Now Joel is studying first year engineering at Sardar Patel Engineering College.

In our Write up on K S Venugopal that appeared in the VASAI FEATURE of December Issue of **Kerala in Mumbai**, we have wrongly written that 'K S Venugopal's second daughter Vidya is married.' **Vidya is not married. She has completed her studies and has recently joined HDFC ERGO Insurance as an executive.** We regret the error.



Two friends met on the street: "So you have moved to a new house?"

"No".

"Why not? You advertised to sell your old house, Didn't you?"

"Yes, But when I read the ad, I realised it was just the same home I was looking for!"

Salesman at a second- hand car shop: "What kind of a car are you looking for, Sir?"

"Preferably something that my children wouldn't be seen dead in!"

"I understand the bank is looking for a cashier.""

I thought they hired one a month ago."

"He's the one they are looking for".



Kerala Beckons



-Traveller

Kollam



Kallada River

By modern standards, Kollam may look underdeveloped, but in comparison to other districts of Kerala, it is an industrial district by all standards. Its tourist attraction overshadows many other cities and towns of the state. Political leaders hailing from this district, always worked for its development, irrespective of their political affiliations.

Two major rivers, Kallada River and Ithikkara River, flow through Kollam. Kallada Irrigation Project is conceived to utilize the water of Kallada River for irrigation purpose. This project consists of a dam at Thenmala, from where water is diverted for irrigation.

Fisheries

Western portion of Kollam is bordered by Arabian Sea. Kollam has a coastline of length 37.3 km i.e. 6.30 percentage of total coastline of the state. Neendakara



and Sakthikulangara are important fishing villages. There are an estimated 26 villages whose livelihood depends entirely on fishing. Cheriazhekkal, Alappad, Pandarathuruthu, Puthenthura, Neendakara, Thangasseri, Eravipuram and Paravoor are among the prominent fishing villages. One third of the total fish production, including 60% of prawn catch of Kerala is contributed by Kollam. Average fish production of Kollam is estimated to be 5,275 tonnes. Nearly 3000 mechanized boats are operating from this fishing harbour.

Animal husbandry

Kollam district has one of the largest populations of livestock in the state. Animals are reared chiefly for dairy farming. According to 2000 animal census, Kollam has an estimated population of 182,434 cows, 6162 buffaloes, 131,714 goats and 1,034 pigs. In poultry, the district stands third in Kerala.

Transport

Rail

Kollam Railway Station is the third largest railway station in Kerala in terms of area after Shoranur Junction and Palakkad Junction with a total of 8 platforms. The metre gauge track from Kollam to Punalur was converted to broad gauge under project Unigauge and was inaugurated by the Minister of State for Railways, E. Ahmed, on 12 May

2010. The Thiruvananthapuram Ernakulam (via Kottayam and Alappuzha) line passes through Kollam. It has completely electrified railway tracks. Two railway lines passing through Kottarakkara (Chengannur - Kottarakkara Thiruvananthapuram) and Punalur (Erumeli Punalur Thiruvananthapuram) have been proposed and are awaiting survey.

Mainline Electrical Multiple Unit (MEMU) services are expected to start from Kollam to Ernakulam in late 2010 or early 2011. A MEMU maintenance shed boasts the longest railway platform in Kerala: more than 1 KM long.

Kollam - Quilon, with its numerous cashew plantations, takes the credit for being the hub of the country's cashew trading and processing industry. Offering an impeccable blend of scenic surroundings, tradition and hospitality, Kollam is often referred to as the dreamland of Kerala. Kollam - Quilon in the bygone days was famous for its palaces and the place was sometimes called as the City of Palaces.

Considered as one of the oldest ports of the Malabar Coast, the town once served as a leading spice market frequented by Phoenician, Persian, Roman, Arab and Chinese traders from Europe and other continents. Kollam - Quilon is blessed with unique representative features of the state - sea, lakes, plains, mountains, rivers, streams, backwaters, forests, vast green fields and tropical crop of every variety, both food crop and cash crop. The eight hour boat trip between Kollam and Alappuzha is the longest and most enchanting experience on the backwaters of Kerala.

Once the capital of a powerful kingdom called Venad, the region is said to have existed as far back as 9th cent AD. Historians cite that the Malayalam era termed 'kolla varsham' was coined by the then ruler of Venad. The district also has some interesting historic remnants and a number of temples built in the traditional ornate architectural style. Among the towns in Kerala, Kollam is one town that is famous for its antiquity. Today Kollam is one of the major industrial and commercial centres of Kerala and the prime hub of Kerala's cashew industry.

The serene Ashtamudi Lake with scenic landscape; the secluded Thirumullavaram beach; Palaruvi woods and waterfalls; Kottarakkara Kathakali museum; the five thousand year old Thenmala rocks and Deer Park; Thenmala dam & eco-tourism site; the unique pilgrim centre at Ochira; the vast freshwater lake at Sasthamkotta; the historic seaside village of Thangasseri with its lighthouse; the mineral-rich Chavara industrialized zone; Picnic Village with recreational facilities like a boat club and an adventure park for children; the architectural Kottukal rock-cut cave temple, and the world-famous Mata Amritanandamayi Ashram of India's female guru are some of the tourist attractions in and around Kollam district.

Chavara

The quite and peaceful village of Chavara is situated 14 km north of Kollam on Kollam-Alappuzha road. It is an industrial village having four major industrial establishments; i.e. the Indian Rare Earths, The Kerala Premopipe Factory, Kerala Minerals and Metals and Titanium Complex. Thousands of tonnes of mineral sand, mainly titanium are exported from Chavara to various countries. The notable Malayalam poet O N V Kurup belongs to Chavara.

Kovilhottam beach and light house, sinking islands in Ashtamudi Lake, St. Andrews Church, Kottamkulangara temple are some of the tourist places in Chavara. Kovilhottam, a good tourist spot and pilgrim center, is a strip of land located in between Chavara TS canal and the Arabian Sea, having only a width of 100 meters. Thalappoli Mahotsavam-offerings of lighted lamps in decorated small pans - in the Kottamkulangara temple here, which falls in March - April is very famous. The interesting feature of the festival is that men dress themselves as women and carry lamps. This is a time-honoured custom. The 66ft tall lighthouse tower, painted with black and white horizontal bands, has been provided to serve the port of Neendakara situated at the entrance to Ashtamudi Back waters.

Mata Amritanandamayi Math

Mata Amritanandamayi Math is situated at Amritapuri in Vallickavu, a small fishing village at a distance of about 30 km from Kollam town. The ashram which houses more than 2,500 disciples and householders as full-time residents is located at the site of the birth place and childhood home of Mata Amrithanandamayi or Amma or Ammachi as she is popularly known. Thousands of people around the world come to experience her unique 'darshan', in which she holds each devotee in her arms like a mother embracing a child. There are frequent buses from Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram to Kayamkulam from where there are local buses to Vallikavu.

Picnic Village

Picnic Village, the main center of leisure activities is located at Ashramam, two kilometers away from Kollam town, on the backwater front in 48 acres of land. The main attraction of the village is a 200-year-old Government Guest House noted for its elegance and architectural beauty. Besides the guest house, the vast tourist complex houses an adventure park, a tourist boat club, a children's traffic park and a Yatri Nivas. The Children's traffic park which is supposed to be the largest traffic park in Kerala and the adventure park on the shores of Ashtamudi backwaters provide a refreshing experience. Both the parks are designed by NATPAC. Different types of boats, including luxury cruise boats, power boats and motor boats are



Kovilhottam

available on hire from the boat jetty near the adventure Park. The District Tourism Promotion Council conducts regular backwater cruises in motor boats and house boats from the boat club.

Jatayupara

The huge, rocky hillock Jatayupara is located at Chadayamangalam, 30 kms from Kollam, on Thiruvananthapuram - Kottayam Main Central road. Legend has it that the name is derived from the mythical bird Jatayu in the epic Ramayana who is believed to have collapsed on the rock after failing in his attempts to prevent Ravana kidnapping Sita. There is a small temple atop of the hill that can be reached only by climbing steep steps. An annual crafts mela is held each winter and local villagers gather at the temple on festive occasions. Jatayupara is an ideal place for those who love adventure as the path leading to the top of the hill is partially motorable and strenuous. It is also a

good place for trekking.

Mayyanad

Situated at a distance of 10 km south of Kollam town, Mayyanad is a beautiful village on the banks of Paravur Lake. 'Mayyam' means middle and the place got its name because of its location in the middle of the erstwhile Venadu. Another description says that the land was named after 'Mayyanad Ellam' who were the rulers of this place during the eighteenth century. The place is famous for its shrines, temples, churches and mosques. Subrahmanya Temple at Umayanallor which is said to have been consecrated by the great Hindu philosopher Sree Sankaracharya and Valiyavila Madan Nada temple are the most important among the nine temples of this area. This village is the birth place of well known personalities like C V Kunjuraman, C Kesavan and K Sukumaran. Mayyanad is also the hometown of one of the leading Malayalam daily, *Kerala Kaumudi*



Jatayupara



Panayil Junction, Mayyanad

which started its publication from the year 1911. One could reach Mayyanad by Kollam Thiruvananthapuram local train and also by frequent buses as the National Highway and railways pass through this village.

Punalur

One of the important industrial centers of Kerala, Punalur is situated 45km from Kollam on the western edge of Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve. Tourist attractions here are the suspension bridge, Punalur Paper Mill, the ancient temples of Punalur Bharanikavu and Pattazhi Devi Temple at Pattazhi and Matherumannu. The Paper mill, built in 1888, is a notable landmark of Punalur. The 400ft long suspension bridge, now only of archaeological interest, was built across the Kallada River during the year 1877. A concrete bridge has been constructed near the suspension bridge. Commodities such as hill produce, pineapple, pepper products, plywood, timber etc. are exported from Punalur.

Kollam Clock Tower

Standing high in the heart of the town, the Clock tower is a landmark of Kollam city. Located at Chinnakada, close to the Kollam Junction Railway Station, this quadrangular tower was constructed in the year 1944 by the natives as a tribute to the former chairman of Kollam municipality, Unichakam Veedu K G Parameshwaran Pillai. Being the first clock tower of the erstwhile Travancore state, it has now become a sort of non-official emblem of Kollam District. Though the four big clocks that are placed on the sides of the tower were

brought from Kolkata, its origin can be traced to Britain.

Thangasseri

Thangasseri, situated 5kms from Kollam town was once a favourite settlement of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English. Literally meaning 'gold village', this seaside village sprawling over an area of 99 acres, has the ruins of an old Portuguese fort and churches belonging to the 18th century. The Portuguese fort is believed to be built in 1517 and only one wall of this fort remains now. The major attraction of Thangasseri is the lighthouse, built in the year 1902. The 144 ft. lighthouse stands as a sentinel, warning seamen of the treacherous reefs of Thangassery. Tourists are permitted to visit the lighthouse between 3.30pm and 5.30pm and one could have a picturesque view of the sea from there. February to November is the best time to visit Thangasseri. Kollam railway station is the nearest station to Thangasseri village and it is well connected to town by road also.

Thangasseri Beach

Three kilometer long Thangasseri beach, famed for its lighthouse, is located 5 km away from Kollam. The lighthouse is open on all days from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Another attraction here is the ruins of the Thangasseri fort and churches built in the 18th century.

Munroe Island

The beautiful, sleepy island of Munroe also known as Munrothuruthu, surrounded by the Kallada River on the western side and Ashtamudi Lake, is

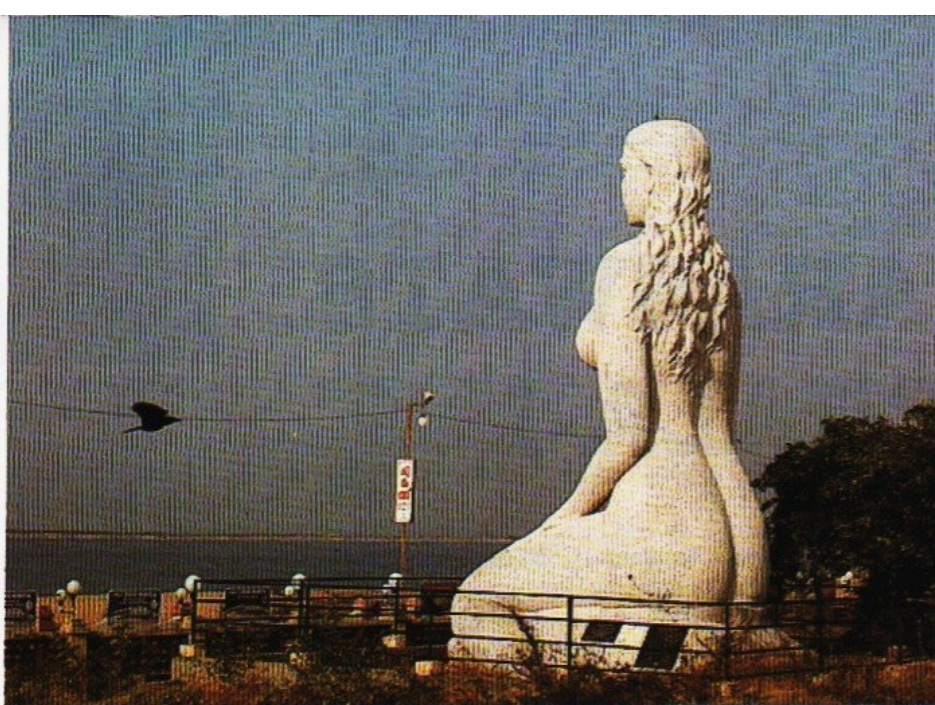
located 25kms away from Kollam. Blessed with a lot of zigzagging water channels, this island is named after Colonel Munroe, the British Resident of the erstwhile Travancore state. This place is host to many migratory birds. The idyllic, village of Munroe Island is a unique one which is connected with other two islands namely Pattomthuruthu and Pezhumthuruthu. District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) operates cruises to the island twice a day; i.e at 9.00 AM in the morning and 2.00PM in the afternoon. The fare is Rs.300 per head and special fare is available for group booking with a maximum of 15 persons.

Thenmala

Situated 67 km east of Kollam, Thenmala is a small village at the foothills of Western Ghats covered by dense forest, rubber and tea plantations. In local jargon Thenmala means 'honey hills' and the honey collected from this region is famous for its medicinal value and quality. The major attractions here are the reservoir, dam and meter gauge.

Thenmala is the first eco tourism destination in India and the eco-tourist center provides all the needful assistance and facilities and enables the tourist to enjoy the nature at the very best. To explore every tourist destination, the region has been divided into culture, leisure and adventure zones. Musical dancing fountain along with amphitheatre, shop court and restaurants are the main attractions of the culture zone. In the leisure zone, sculpture garden, sway bridge, broad walk etc offers amazing view to the tourists. Besides the sculptures of father and child, some of the characters of Indian myths such as Ekalavya, Vikramadithya and Vethalam are there in the sculpture garden. Adventure zone comprises of Elevated Walkway, Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing, River Crossing, Nature Trails, Resting Spots, Lotus Pond etc.

One of the important resources of Thenmala Ecotourism is Shenduruney, declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1984, with a large variety of flora and fauna. Sprawling over an area of 100.32 Sq. km., this deciduous man made rain forest consists of around 1500 flowering plants, 43 species of mammals and 475 species of birds. The construction of the Parapparam Dam across the confluence of the Shenduruney, Kazhuthurutti and Kulathupuzha rivers has resulted in the creation of an artificial lake of about 26



Mahatma Gandhi Beach

Sq. Km. which spreads along the middle of the sanctuary. Boating through this lake is the major attraction of the sanctuary.

Palaruvi waterfall that is 16 km from Thenmala towards Shenkottah is mind blowing.

Ashtamudi Lake

Ashtamudi Lake, renowned for its panoramic views is the second largest lake in Kerala, stretching a length of 16 kms. The lake is the gateway to the backwaters of Kerala and is named so because of its eight channels that cover the largest portion of Kollam district. The numerous coconut groves and palm trees that dot the lakeside add to its scenic beauty. The Chinese fishing nets and the large-sailed dugouts carrying the local coir, copra and cashew can also be seen in the lake. The Kollam Boat Club provides houseboats for back water cruise. Tourists can also enjoy a variety of water sports, offered by the resorts situated along the banks of the lake.

Sasthamkotta

The little town of Sasthamkotta is situated about 29 km north east of Kollam on the banks of the Kallada River. It is a beauty spot, a health resort and a centre of pilgrimage. The ancient Sree Dharmasastha Temple which lends its name to the town, is an important pilgrim centre. The temple is home to a tribe of peaceful monkeys while the nearby market is populated by a mischievous tribe. Known as 'Queen of lakes' Sasthamkotta

is the largest fresh water lake of Kerala, surrounded by hills on three sides. The beautiful lake has a capacity of holding 22390 million litres of water and serves as the source of drinking water for the people of Kollam as it does not contain common salt or other minerals and metals. The large part of the lake is domesticated for agricultural purposes. It is home to 27 species of freshwater fish including pearl spot and cat fish and two genera of prawns. A country boat cruise through the lake is a rich experience. Accommodation is available at the PWD Rest House in the town. There are frequent buses from Kollam (Quilon) which takes about one hour to reach.

Mahatma Gandhi Beach

Located 2 km away from Kollam at Kochupilamoodu, Mahatma Gandhi beach sometimes referred as Kochupilamoodu beach is an ideal place for walks. The park located beside the sea, is the major attraction.

Palaruvi Waterfalls

Palaruvi, literally meaning stream of milk, is one of the well-known waterfalls in South India, falling from a height of 300 feet. Located close to the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border, this beautiful picnic spot lies about 75 km from Kollam and 35km east of Punalur on Kollam - Shencottah road. The scenic beauty of the place with the hills, valleys and cascades, covered with dense tropical forests, is breath taking. The best season to visit the place is from June to January.

Thirumullavaram Beach

The secluded Thirumullavaram beach, situated 6 km north of Kollam town, is a shady paradise filled with coconut palms. This picturesque picnic spot is a favourite haunt of locals and tourists alike. Regarded as one of the most charming beaches in South India, it is an ideal place for morning walk, swimming or bathing in the sun. Thirumullavaram beach is very well connected by road and offers good facilities for the tourists.

Chamayavilakku

Chamayavilakku is a unique festival celebrated in Kottamkulangara Sri Devi Temple at Chavara (13 kms from Kollam) held annually in the month of March/ April. It is celebrated at night and the most remarkable feature of the festival is that hundreds of sturdy men dress themselves as women as part of the offerings made to the deity. These well dressed damsels come to the temple as a procession holding lighted lamps in their hands to propitiate the presiding deity.

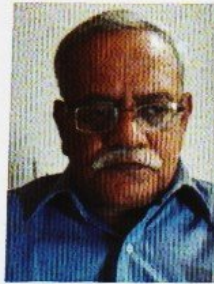
Craft Festival

The annual craft festival, organised by the Kollam District Tourism Promotion Council in association with the State and Central Governments, is held during the month of December-January. This festival features the work of craftsmen from all over the country. Apart from the display and sale of variety of arts and crafts items, there were folk and tribal art performances which enthralled visitors.

Most of the young MPs are being perceived as clean and fresh. They carry with them global exposure through education in renowned educational institutions like Wharton, Harvard and Stanford. Many of them are also products of reputed institutions like IIT, IIM and other universities.

- S Ganesan

GAUDA SARASWATS OF KERALA-I



K. R. NARAYANA

The Gauda Saraswat Brahmins of India have struggled for existence with a chain of migrations—perhaps the longest and the widest for any ethnic group in India. The Konkani speaking Brahmins of Kerala are perhaps the only southern-most link to these ancient and historically important Aryan Brahmins. Their migration from the Panjab to Kashmir, North and Eastern India and ultimately India's central and south-west Coast is one of the greatest exoduses in Indian History. They played a major role in the history, economy and societal changes of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin and Malabar. The author is grateful to many of his friends engaged in the studies and research on Indian History, for sharing some of their observations and inferences.



The Gauda Saraswat Brahmins (GSB) of Kerala are the Konkani speaking Brahmin community. They are a branch of the GSB community of India and form their southernmost sub-sect in the west coast. GSBs of north Kerala are similar to those of Southern Karnataka in their customs and language, whereas GSBs of Kerala have developed their own dialects and customs, which distinguish them from the rest of the GSB community. Geographically, large segments of GSBs live south of Trissur district.

The GSBs are said to have migrated from the Konkani coast of the Arabian Sea (Central West Coast), consisting of southern Maharashtra, Goa and coastal Karnataka. Unlike the other Brahmins of Kerala (the Iyers, Nampoothiris, Potties and the Embranthiris), the GSBs speak Konkani or Konkini.

As Konkani is only a dialect and has no script, the GSBs write Konkani in the alphabet of the State they live in. Most of the Gauda Saraswats in Kerala write Konkani in Malayalam script, while those living in Karnataka use Kannada script and the Roman script in Goa. Those living in Southern Maharashtra, use the Devanagiri script. Their mother tongue generally gets influenced by the local lingua. Unlike the other Brahmins, the Saraswats are, by and large, fish eaters, due primarily to coastal influences.

The most prominent among the GSBs are businessmen, traders and merchants dealing in various commodities, including hardware, textiles, coconut-oil, coir-ropes, pappads, groceries, etc. Many of them have also excelled in banking, publishing and construction businesses as well. The professional class consists mainly of Chartered Accountants, engineers, and physicians and lawyers. Most of the salaried class includes bank and Government employees and teachers. The IT boom has also helped them to improve their social and financial status. The GSBs can now be found almost all over the world, as many have migrated to the US, UK, Europe, and Australia as well as to large metropolitan towns of India.

It is estimated that the Konkani speaking population of the country never exceeded two million spread out as follows in 1971, 1981 and 1991.

The Surnames

The GSBs generally carry surnames like Mallar, Pai, Prabhu, Shenoy, Kini, Kamath, Bhandari, Shanbaug, Baliga, Bhaktha, Bhat, Sharma, Nayak, Mallya, Padiyar, Kilikar, etc. In central Kerala region, however, they are often respectfully referred to as Muthalalis. Some Bhat families of this community have adopted the surname Vadhyar as well. In some cases Mallan is the term for Mallyas. Sharma and Rao are also the surnames adopted by some GSBs. Generally, the Kerala GSBs do not add the name of their village to their names unlike Karnataka GSBs. Instead, some add the name of their Tharavadu or joint family, as per the Malayalee tradition. Also a large number of GSBs add the father's first name to their given names and even drop the surnames.

It is believed that the surnames of the GSBs have originated from the name of their original village or are connected to the trades they were engaged in. Some of them are detailed below:

1. The surnames like *Salkar, Asgaonkar, Bandivadekar, Madkaikar, Borkar, Sakhalkar, Sawerdekar, Haldwanekar, Chimbalkar, Navelkar, Marathe, Lotlikar, Salwankar, Karlekar, Burake, Bhagav, Bhatkar, Tendulkar, Patkar, Juvale, Dhonde, Shinkar, Shendre, Shetye, Bokade, Takur, Gawade, Potkar, Askekar, Shenai, Gavalkar, Shembekar, Lanjolkar* etc. are the names of the villages of Gomantak. The word 'Kar' means "From" or citizen of. Thus Kakodkar means person from village Kakod.
2. Some surnames indicate the profession as in the case of *Purohit, Nayak, Vadhyar*, etc.
3. *Shenoy*s are originally the *Shenvis* of Goa. Since most of them took up Administrative jobs they were called *Shanbhags/Shanbaugs* (clerks).

4. *Pai* in Konkani language means foot or leg, and refers to an ordinary person or a common man or those who had not amassed wealth or power. Their job was to maintain ledgers and do odd jobs.

5. *Kamaths* are those engaged in agriculture. (*Mathi* means soil and *Kama* is work and hence *Kamathi* is the one working in soil. Later this became *Kamath*.)

6. *Keni* or *Kini* were those who cultivated herbs and were originally called *Kinvis*.

7. *Vaidyas* were those who prepared the concoctions and dispensed it.

8. The animals required for tilling, transportation and other works were under *Haya - Gade* (actually Horse tenderer) which in due course changed to *Hegde*.

9. Those who worked as Army commanders were called *Nayaks* (*Naiks*). Some *Nayaks* who were honored by the King with titles like Ravubahadur adopted *Rao* as their surname.

10. The *Baligas* were the suppliers of the daily requirements for every family and they were formerly known as *Ballo*. There is another theory that the infantry soldiers (with a spear in hand) were also called *Ballo*. The commanders of the soldiers - *Ballo* or *Baliga* were called the *Nayaks* or *Naiks*.

11. *Prabhus* were Feudal lords, who lived in a palatial home called Mahal, and the caretakers were known as *Mahalyar*. This in due course changed to the present days' *Mallya*.

12. The poojas in the big temple and its rituals were under *Acharya*, and in small temples conducted by *Bhat*. Every family had an exclusive priest to perform the rites, and he was the family Purohit and was called *Vadhyar*.

13. *Mahajans* were the temple administrators.

14. *Bhandarkars* were stores and godown keepers and later called *Bhandaris*.

15. A person maintaining statistics was called *Karni* and a person maintaining land (called *Nadu*) records was known as *Nadkarni*. On the other hand, the *Kulkarnis* maintained the census, social registers and the like.

16. *Bhaktas* were the people doing odd jobs and poojas in temples.

However, during the present days, surnames/titles have not much relevance to their profession or trade. Nevertheless, many GSBs have still retained their surnames down the generations.

The Gauda Konkani Link

Generally speaking, initially, the Brahmins in India were divided into two major groups based on their geographical origin. The Brahmins of the regions north of the Vindhyas were referred to as the Gouda Brahmins, while those from the south of the Vindhyas were referred to as the Dravida Brahmins. Each group was further divided into five sections according to the regions of their settlement.

The five (Pancha) Gowda Brahmin groups were:

- Saraswats, those who lived to the west of the Saraswati River (Saraswat Desha),
- Kanyakubjas from Kanauj,
- Gaudas from the banks of the South Ganga or Bengal,
- Utkals from Orissa
- Maithilas from Mithila in Bihar.

Similarly, the five (Pancha) Dravida groups, on the other hand, too were divided into different groups, such as:

- Andhras,
- Maharashtrians,
- Dravidas from Tamil Nadu
- Karnata from Karnataka
- Gujaras from Gujarat.

As the Dravida Brahmins had already established themselves in

the South much earlier than the Saraswats, the latter were differentiated by the term Gowda Brahmins in general (because they belonged to the Panch Gowda group). The prefix Gowda was added to these Saraswats. They mingled with the local people, but maintained their identity till date.

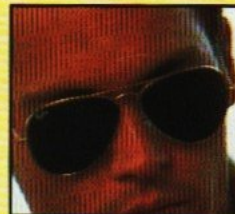
The Konkani speaking GSBs (particularly the high class Brahmins) of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala, migrated from Goa, after the Portuguese occupied Goa, in the first half of the sixteenth century. This included of the taluks of Bardes and Tiswadi to the north of the river Zuari and the taluks of Saxtti and Marmugao to the south. The Portuguese called this area *Velhas Conquistas* (old conquests). The rest of Goa was conquered in the latter half of the eighteenth century and were called *Novas Conquistas* (new conquests). The migrations of the Konkans must have taken place in several waves and this could perhaps be the reason for the dialectal variations in the Konkani language spoken in different regions of Kerala, Karnataka, and Konkani region of Maharashtra.

There are references - in the *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* of the 17th century - about the settling down of Konkani Brahmins in Cochin (Malabar), at about the same time as some others moved to South and North Kanara and Ratnagiri districts. The Portuguese called the language of the natives mainly as *Lingua Canarim*, but sometimes also as *Lingua Konkana*, *Lingua Konkani*, *Lingua de Goa* etc.

In any case, Konkani neither had a single standard name nor could it be seen as a single language. Konkani never was a language of a single homogeneous community, but of a heterogeneous group, including Brahmins and non-Brahmins of various castes. Differences, however, always remain in the speech of Brahmins and non-Brahmins among both the major religious groups viz. Hindus and Christians.

(To be continued)

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Raagalaya to bestow the Lifetime Achievement Award on Johnson posthumously



Johnson

Late Johnson, one of the most prolific music directors of Malayalam Cinema is chosen by Raagalaya academy of Music and Arts for its Lifetime Achievement Award for 2011 posthumously. The award will be

also be a dance programme by well known actress Ms Shobana and her troupe, followed by a grand musical evening by popular playback singers Madhu Balakrishnan, Shweta Mohan, Preeta Kannan, Kallara Gopan etc.

There will also be a mimicry programme by well known caricature artist Jayaraj Warriar.

Raagalaya Academy so far

The realization that music is universally accepted as a medium to raise the human spirit to the levels of beatitude and sometimes even the animals and birds enjoy it, makes men and women to take up music as an entertaining as well as therapeutic medium. The people associated with Raagalaya never had any doubt about the merit of this medium and it was the same reason that made them to establish this Academy to cultivate, encourage and promote music among fellow human beings and also show their gratitude to those who contributed to this noble cause.

The Academy was duly registered with the relevant authorities including the Charity Commissioner and Income Tax



presented to his wife on February 2012 in a magnificent event to be held at Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium, Sion, Mumbai on 4th February 2012 at 6.00 pm.

According to P V Vijaykumar, Managing Trustee of the Academy, Johnson Master was not considered old enough for the award but his sudden demise early this year made it inevitable for the Academy to chose him considering his valuable contribution to the film music and popularity he enjoyed among the music lovers. Leading playback singers including Madhu Balakrishnan and others will render some of the favourite songs of late Johnson on the occasion to commemorate the event. There will





Department in 2004. It was inaugurated by noted singer P Jayachandran on February 29, 2004 in a packed house at Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium and he also enthralled the audience with his melodious rendering of songs.

Balakrishnan, Kallara Gopan, Biju Narayanan, Vidhu Pratap, Vijay Yesudas, Ms Swetha Mohan, Jyotsna and Radhika Tilak also sang on various occasions under the aegis of the Academy.

Well known danceuse Smt Shobhana

performed in various programmes of Raagalaya Academy. Shri Suresh Kumar of Asianet 'Pattupetti' fame was a permanent fixture of such music programme.

Music contests

From the very inception of the Academy, it is holding music contests for the amateur singers of Mumbai, their area of operation, for both men and women under the various age groups. The winners were presented their prestigious prizes by the leading playback singers, composers and lyricists present on the occasion. The contests have thus directly helped the budding singers to hone their skills and thus exhibit their caliber in other national music festivals. Raagalaya Music contest 2011 will be held at Marol Education Academy, Marol, Mumbai on 29th January 2012 from 9.00 am onwards. Anyone from the age of 5 can participate. The music lovers of Mumbai can well look forward to a sumptuous feast of music, dance and other forms of entertainment on February 4, 2012. More details of Raagalaya activities can be obtained from Raagalaya website- www.raagalayamusic.com or on 29209959/5641. Tele fax- 2920 2094.



Till date, Raagalaya Academy has honoured the veterans of the field, both living and the dead. They include Shri V Dakshinamoorthy, Shri M K Arjunan, Late Raveendran, Late Shri M G Radhakrishnan (Composers), Prof. O N V Kurup, Shri Sreekumaran Thampy (Lyricists), Smt. P Leela, Smt S Janaki, Dr. K.J. Yesudas, Shri P Jayachandran, Shri K P Udayabhanu and Dr. S P Balasubrahmanyam (Singers). In the case of the diseased, their wives came to Mumbai and received the awards, thus raising the prestige of the award. The Academy also conducted special music programmes in memory of late G Devarajan and late M S Baburaj.

The Academy also conducted a music gala of M G Sreekumar, the topnotch singer of present Malayalam music world. Besides him, Smt S Janaki, Smt Leela, Smt K S Chitra, Unni Menon, Smt Sujatha Mohan, Madhu

and Smt Lakshmi Gopalswamy and their troupe also performed for the Mumbai art lovers.

Shri. Kottayam Nazir, Kalabhavan Nawas and Jayaraj Warriar also

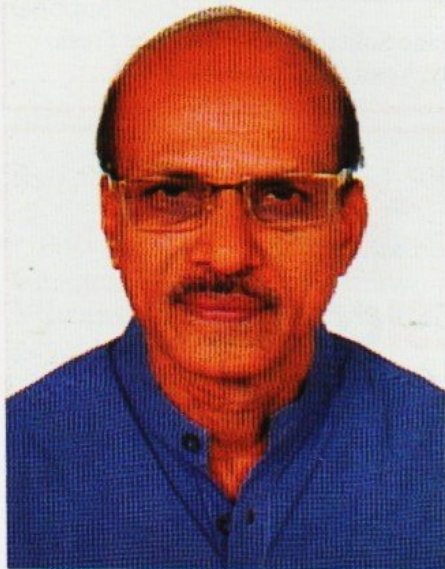


Basant

Yesterday's Composer, Today's Music Master

-Lakshmi V

“ A person who loves music will not let his passion die. And music knows no age barriers. Basant Master is one such music lover. Named Gopalan by his parents, he renamed himself Basant after the melodious Hindusthani raga, and he is known by this name all over Mumbai among Mumbai's Malayalam music lovers and Malayalam drama lovers. ”



Basant



A song composer for Malayalam Drama in the 70's, 80's and 90's when the Malayalam stage flourished in Mumbai, every weekend witnessed a Malayalam play where the music director was Basant. That was his popularity in those days.

Later when Malayalam drama declined and people were moving away from this form of entertainment, Basant started co-ordinating music shows and ganamelas where he sang and played the keyboard. But even in his heyday of drama music, Basant performed music shows.

Today, in his early seventies, this veteran singer is a teacher of music. He imparts lessons in Hindustani and Carnatic vocal and instrumental, western music, piano lessons through the keyboard, guitar and violin in Vasai where he stays and at other places in Mumbai. He has groomed many singers and artistes who have made inroads in music troupes and film music.

Basant Master, (real name is Koroth Gopalan), hails from Keecheri near Kalyasseri in Kannur District. The fourth

child in a family of seven, his father, the late Krishnan worked in the Prohibition department. His mother was Kalyani. Like many other families, Basant's was also an agrarian household with fields, coconut trees and cattle. But his father passed away when Basant was eight and family circumstances forced him to discontinue studies but he continued to read his father's books. His elder brother who was in the army had returned with a trunk full of books and he read all of them eagerly. He studied English, Hindi and Sanskrit through private tuition. All this instilled in him a love for the arts. He also learned harmonium and Hindusthani vocal, the latter from Ustad Abdullah.

Basant's first assignment as a drama artiste was in 1956 in the Malayalam drama Sarada where he played the leading lady's role. Those were the days when Communist ideals were reverberating in the villages and towns of Kerala. Young Basant was almost always chosen to sing the communist revolutionary songs before the meetings commenced. This was his initiation into the field of music.

The Communist leader Ibrahim Kutty was a great influence in his life. Basant played the main role and composed music for the drama Patharatha manushyan for which Ibrahim Kutty wrote the lyrics. This drama was staged by Udaya Arts Club of Keecheri and the play was written by Asarikuttyappa.

Other dramas in which he acted in Kerala were Anakattu, (main role), Manushyan Karagrahathilanu, (main role and music composer), Aikya Kerala Kalanilayam's oru Kootam nalla manushyar, (where he composed music and played the lead role). Basant also scored music for Karavatta pasu, staged by Cherukunnu High School for a competition.

Ibrahim Kutty encouraged him to learn and appear for the Malayalam Vidwan examination in 1963, after which he set out for Mumbai. Getting a job was easy, since he knew Hindi and English. He joined Eagle Flask Company.

Basant learnt Carnatic music, and Western Classical as well as guitar and piano from several masters in Mumbai and fine-tuned his musical skill. He also learnt Rabindra Sangeet and veena. He first composed music for the Malayalam drama Snehathinte Kuzhimadam in 1967 written by Kalyasseri Chorani (Chorani Raman). It was staged at King George School Hall in Dadar Hindu Colony. The lyrics were composed by Kovinar and Balan and the singers included Bhanumathi, Balan and Gangadharan. The drama was a hit.

For the next three decades, Basant composed music for several dramas staged by different Malayalam associations of Mumbai.



Basant with his wife Chandrika

Basant regrets that the Mumbai Malayalam Drama did not develop as much as it could have.

There were several talented directors and writers who worked hard to stage good plays. These days people do not have the time or patience to devote themselves to this art form. Moreover, TV serials, films have more appeal to the Malayalees than Malayalam dramas.

One of Basant's last plays, Poya dinangale, vannittu pokuga, written by S L Puram Sadananad and directed by Unni Variath, had lyrics written by Unni Variath and music composed by Basant. He has composed music for about 70 Malayalam plays.

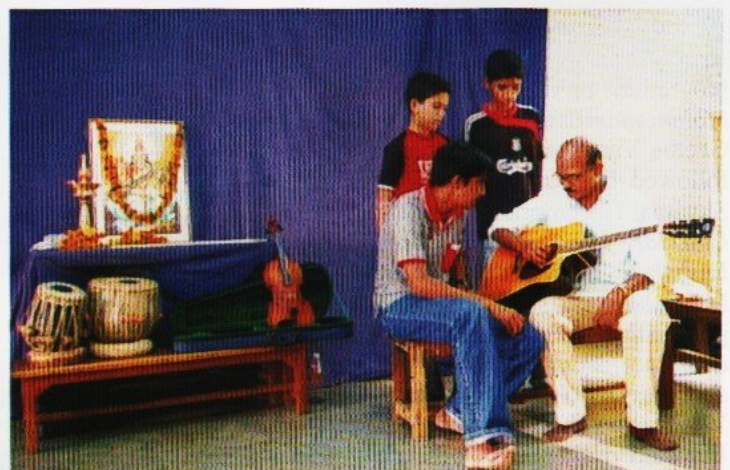
One of the significant points of his music was the use of not only the

traditional music instruments like harmonium, tabla, violin, flute, but also santoor, piano, and guitar. In dramas and in his music shows also he used different musical instruments.

Basant's wife, Chandrika, hails from Pappinsseri in Kannur District and came to Mumbai to stay with her parents after Std VII. It was a love marriage. The couple has three daughters and one son: Sohini, Sindhu, Chitrlekha and Baiju. Baiju is a Civil Engineer married to Indira. He plays the tabla, guitar and piano. He has passed the sixth grade from London Trinity School of Music. Sohini used to help her father in his music shows. Chitrlekha is working as a fashion merchandiser. In fact all his children have the flair for music.



Basant playing the harmonium for a drama song



Basant teaching his students



MUMBAI NEWS DIGEST

KIM News Bureau

Borivli Malayalee Samajam Golden Jubilee Celebrations

As part of the on-going Golden Jubilee Celebrations, the Borivli Malayalee Samajam organised an inter-school dance competition at Prabodhan Thackeray Hall, Borivli(W). They had also conducted an inter-school elocution competition at V K Krishna Menon School (new MHB colony, Gorai, managed by the Borivli Malayalee Samajam). A cancer awareness camp will be held on January 8 in association with the Tata Memorial hospital.



Committee Members of Borivli Malayalee Samajam

Mandala Pooja at Marol

Shree Ayyappa Bhakta Sangham celebrated the 37th Mandala pooja on 16, 17 and 18 December 2011 at Blossom society ground, Marol. The cultural programme on the 1st day comprised of *Mohiniattam* dance recital by Guru Smt. Geetha Vijayshankar and her disciples followed by Carnatic music by Smt. Shyama. The programme on 2nd day was *Chakyar Koothu* by Kalamandalam Eashwaran Unny and party, Kerala Kala Mandalam. On the 3rd day there was a procession accompanied by *Thalapoli* and *Panchavadyam* (Madhavan Kutty and party) from Shri Ganesh Temple Vijaynagar passing through Panchavati, Bhawani Nagar and Hill View and culminating at Blossom society followed by Maha Deeparadhana.



A still from the classical dance *Devi Ragamalika* based on the lyrics by late Dr. S K Nair. Music by Sangeetha Vidwan Trichur P Ramankutty, Choreographed by Guru Smt. Geetha Vijayshankar. Standing- Nidhi Pradeep, Kirtana Menon, Neha Nambiar, Karthika Pillai, Geetha Vijayshankar, Indu Nair, Pratyusha Prabhakaran, Janki Pillai, Devika Shetty. Sitting- Sangeetha Rajeev, Lian Paul, Harsha Menon.

Jwala Awards 2011

The 14th Jwala Awards in memory of Papanamcode Prabhakaran were distributed to several personalities at Kerala House in Vashi. The function was presided over by Jwala Chief Editor UN Gopi Nair and noted writer and Kerala State Book Mark Secretary, Babu Kuzhimattom, was the chief guest. Bhupesh Babu bestowed on Dr G S Pradeep (of *Aswamedham* fame) the Man of the Year 2011 Award. Others who were conferred the Award included Peruman Gopalakrishnan - *Mumbai Madhyama pratibha*, M G Aravindaksha Menon- *Partnership Vijaya Thilakam*, K Vijayakumar- *Pravasi Gajaraja Thilakam*, M R Francis- *Jeevakarunya Mahatpratibha*, AKG Nair- *Mumbai Karma Shreshtha Pratibha*, Tara Varma- *Mumbai Mahila Navarasa Ratnam*, C Chandran- *Delhi Karma Moorthy Thilakam*, Sukumaran Nallayi- *Football Kayika Thilakam*, and Shabu S Dharan- Winner of Literary Contest.



M R Francis receiving the Award from Dr G S Pradeep and Jwala Chief Editor U N Gopi Nair

An anthology of short stories written by Mumbai Malayalee writers, 'Mumbai kathakal' and published by FOMA (Federation of Media Associates) in association with Kerala State Book Mark was released by Babu Kuzhimattom during the event.

Speaking on the occasion, he assured that Book Mark would extend support if any organisation that wanted to start franchisee in Mumbai. Wilson Dombivli spoke on the occasion. Advocate Rajkumar anchored the function while E Harindranath gave the vote of thanks.

Arangettam of Shruti Unny

Shruti Unny performed her Bharatanatyam Arangettam at ISKON Auditorium, Juhu. Shruti is the daughter of K V C Unny and Lakshmi Unny. She is a disciple of Bharatanatyam teacher Prasanna Nambiar and her daughters Ajitha and Amrutha for more than a decade. She has completed her BDS from Dr D Y Patil Dental College and Hospital, Nerul. She is also an ardent sports enthusiast having participated in school/sports activities.



Shruti Unny



K Vijayakumar addressing the audience during the event

Samaj Sevak Awards

The names of nominees of the proposed awards instituted by Tru Indian Information and Guidance Society, for the social activists among Malayalees residing outside Kerala have been announced. They are: P K Anandan (Shahad), V K Mohammed (Bhilai), M V Parameswaran (Pune),

Rajan V Nair (Thane) and Rugmini Sagar (Navi Mumbai) and the late C V Saseendran. (to be bestowed posthumously) The awards will be presented on January 1, 2012 at 6 p m in a ceremony to be held at Sarvesh Hall, Dombivli East.

Dance Ballet

Noted dancer Lata Surendra and her students performed *Sarva Kaarana Kaaranyam*, at the Annual Celebrations of Anjali Bharata Natyam Research Trust at the Yashwant Chavan Natya Sankul, Dadar. She also performed the same ballet at The Ayyappa Temple Complex in Vasai (west). Nattuvangam and choreography was by Guru Smt Lata Surendra and supportive *nattuvangam* by Guru S P Srinivasan. Vocal support was provided by Shivaprasad, Chandran on mridangam, Bala-subramaniam on violin, Raghavendra Ballika on flute and Nambisan on edakky.

Lata Surendra performed *Ritu Vilasam* at the prestigious Swami Haridas *Sammelan* for their 55th Year celebrations. *Ritu Vilasam* is a



Lata Surendra (centre) and her students performing the dance ballet *Sarva Kaarana Kaaranyam*

symphony of seasons through dance and is choreographed by Lata herself. Nattuvangam support by SP Srinivasan,

vocal by Saraswati Subramania Chandran on Mridangam, Sharma violin and Nambisan on Edakya.

Childrens' Camp in Mulund

Mulund Kerala Samajam in association with St Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church conducted a Childrens' Camp on December 26 and 27. The Camp was inaugurated by the Samajam President K Gopalan Nair. Father Geevarghese Johnson gave his blessings in his speech. Gopi Kuttikkol who co-ordinated the Camp spoke about the activities that would take place while Gen Secretary CKK Poduval welcomed the children and Secretary E Ramachandran proposed the vote of thanks.

This is the first time that a Childrens' Camp has been organized in Mulund. About 50 children participated in the camp and at the concluding function they were given gifts. Many eminent



Childrens' camp inauguration by K.Gopalan Nair, on stage Fr. Geevarghese Johnson, Gopi Kuttikkol, E Ramachandran and CKK Poduval,

personalities like Lakshmi Narayanan, Oommen Micheal, Girish Kumar, Santha Vasudevan, Vatsala Gopalan Nair, Mallika Lakshmi, Somy

Paul, Mathews, Shiji Renji, Susan Philipposse, Shiba Oommen, Sima Abraham, Sangeetha Sibi, took an active interest in making the Camp a success.

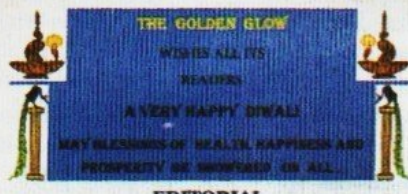
Golden Glow For Elders

The Golden Glow

ENRICHING THE LIVES OF THE WISE AND THE MATURE
SEPTEMBER 2011 VOLUME - 1 NO. - 8

What is The Golden Glow ?

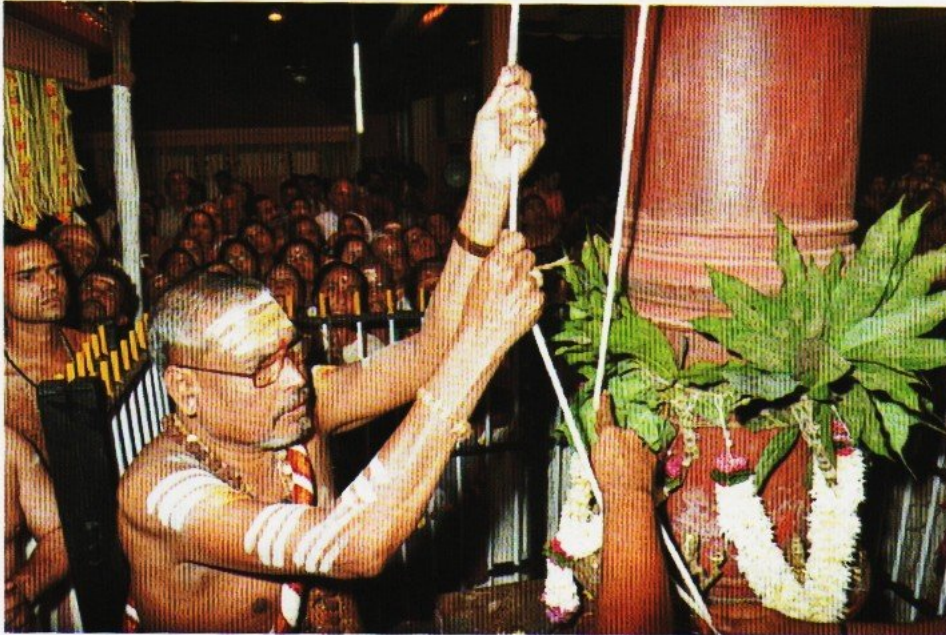
- The Golden Glow is a magazine
- That addresses issues of relevance and interest to senior citizens in India.
 - That tackles issues of health, finance, law, meaningful utilisation of time, hobbies, etc. by eminent



A monthly newspaper specifically for the elders has been recently launched.

Named 'Golden Glow', the paper addresses issues that are of relevance and interest to senior citizens in India. The subjects range from health, hobbies, money matters, insurance, investments, pension problems and spirituality as also brain teasers and light reading. The fonts are big in size for easy reading by seniors and that is a significant aspect of this paper.

The paper aims to provide a platform for networking among like-minded people. The Golden Glow Movement wants to provide free medicines to senior citizens who are not able to afford them and also help the seniors share their expertise and skills with society as well. The Editor is Kishor K G Warriar, PK Ravindranath is the Editorial Consultant while the Assistant Editor is VKS Menon. The paper is priced at Rs 500 per annum.



Thane Vartak Nagar Ayyappa Temple Utsavam Kodyettam by Tantri Brahmashree Azhakathu Sastrasarman Namboodiripad.

Nair Mahotsavam 2012

Nair Welfare Society (NWS), Powai will be celebrating 'Nair Mahotsavam 2012' at the Open auditorium in front of Norita Building (Near Hiranandani Foundation School), Powai from 5.00 p.m.-10.p.m. on January 8, 2012. It will be inaugurated by Surendra Hiranandani, M.D. Hiranandani Group. There will be a cultural programme which will be inaugurated by K K Nambiar, Chairman, World Malayalee Council, Mumbai Province.

According to Vijaykumar Pilli, General Secretary of KNSS, Navaratna Excellence Awards will be presented to

nine people for their exemplary service to the society. The Navaratna Excellence Awardees are: S R Pillai (Socio-cultural Service), S G Nair (Entrepreneurship), V N Gopala krishnan (Journalism), Prem Kumar (Performing Arts), Shanthan Panicker (Sports), Susheela Venugopal (Education), DR Nair (Professional), K R Pillai (Active elderly member) and Smt. Bhavani Amma (Active elderly lady member). KGK Kurup, President, Kendriya Nair Samskarika Sangh, Maharashtra will deliver the introductory address. The cultural programme includes a drama titled 'Avarohanam' and other by the members followed by Food Festival.

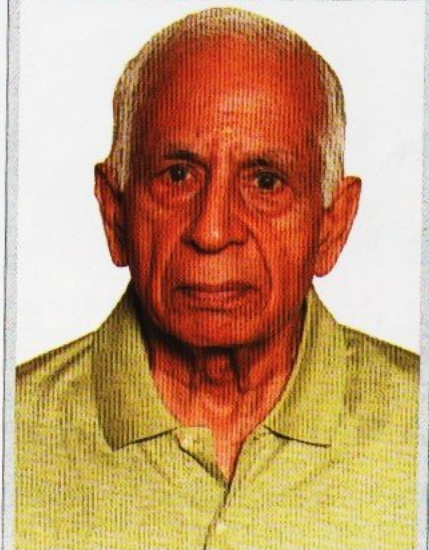


Advocate Padma Divakaran, current President Bombay Keraleeya Samajam Malad was honoured by its former President N N Surendran and members on having been felicitated at the Pampungal Publications 17th Anniversary I function for her outstanding contribution towards helping terminally ill cancer patients, organizing medical camps etc. In her speech Padma Divakaran expressed thanks to all the members for their support. Seen in the photo from left to right: Adv. Padma Divakar, V S M Nair, N N Surendran, Sayed Mohammed, P.Nambiar, Rakhee Sunil, Valsala, Balakrishnan, Aniyam

Discourses on Karma Yoga and Sadhana Panchakam

Chinmaya Mission, will be organizing a discourse in Hindi on *Karma Yoga* based on *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapter III) from January 5-11, 2012 from 7.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. at Olympia Quadrangle in Powai. Swami Subodhanada Saraswati, Regional Head, North India and Acharya, Sandeepany at Sidhabari, Himachal Pradesh will conduct the discourse. There will be morning discourse in Hindi titled *Safal Jeevan ke Paanch Sutra* based on *Sadhana Panchakam* of Adi Shankaracharya from January 6-11, 2012 from 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. at the same venue. Swami Advaitananda, Resident Acharya of Chinmaya Vibhuti, Kolwan will conduct the discourse.

Sad Demise



KV Ramakrishnan

KV Ramakrishnan, aged 88 years, a resident of Chembur for over 50 years, passed away peacefully on 27th December, 2011. Popularly known as Rasu to his friends and family, he was born at Kalpathy (Palakkad) and came to Mumbai in 1947. After 25 years of service, he started his own small scale entrepreneurship, Rapid Manufacturing Co. A self made man, Sri Ramakrishnan, was also featured as one of the leading personalities of Chembur in 'Kerala in Mumbai' (November 2010 issue). He is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters, and their children.

TV CHANNELS BLANKED OUT

Malayalam channels like Kairali, Amrita and a host of others owe anxious viewers an explanation why they have been blanked out by service providers in Mumbai and other metropolitan centres during the last two months. The service providers include Tatasky and the cable operators, none of whom are willing to provide a cogent explanation. None of them have been gracious enough to reduce their charges for withdrawing services they once provided. Nor has any kind of explanation been offered by the channels in Kerala. Surprisingly, Kairali has been making



a lot of noise in suburban Mumbai with stage shows and other gimmickry, which tended to provide the assurance that they were about to start their broadcasts from this city. In fact, Kairali made much of

their introduction of a weekly programme "Amchi Mumbai" covering the city. Amchi Mumbai sadly is not able to witness it now, since no service provider does not make it available to viewers.

The Malayala Manorama launched its entertainment channel, Mazhavil (Rainbow), from November which again cannot be viewed in Mumbai. This is an incongruity at a time when every regional language media seeks to reach out to readers and viewers wherever they form a sizeable chunk of the population. Witness the number of Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali and Hindi newspapers that have their editions from this city. Why does the electronic media lag behind?

Mumbai Malayalee Presides over New Giants Group



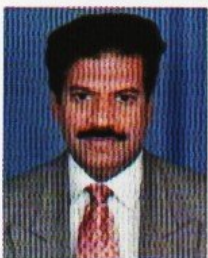
Upendra K Menon Special Committee Member Giants International, Mumbai, was the Guest of honour presiding over the inauguration of Giants Group International at New Friends Colony, New Delhi. Sitting from left: Mukesh Pareek, in-coming President of New Delhi, Wernor, Special Guest from Germany. Rajesh Joshi, Guest of honour, Upendra K Menon Guest of honour, Chief Guest Mr. Jiji Thomson IAS, Director, General Common Wealth Games 2010, and JP Menon, in-coming DA of Giants Group of New Delhi.

AMMA for Mumbai Malayalees

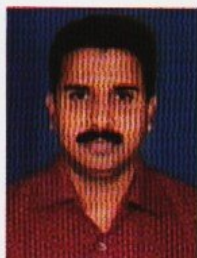
A new association named 'All Mumbai Malayalee Association (AMMA)' has been formed in Mumbai, Thane, New Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra with a view to provide a common platform for the welfare of the Malayalees irrespective of cast, creed, color and religion. Jojo Thomas (President) Adv. Joseph Thattil (Secretary) MV Majid (Vice President) Unnikrishnan Nair (Treasurer) KT

George; TC James; VT Chacko. Shaji Hameed, Sunil, Executive committee Jojo Thomas was a well known student activist and an active face in the welfare and public issues of Mumbai Keralites and Adv Joseph Thattil is a social activist. "AMMA" will address various problems faced in Mumbai and other parts. Mr. Thomas said that though there is numerous welfare organizations for

Keralites in Mumbai, most of them are not actively involving in the common problems faced by Mumbai Malayalees, who are neglected in many fronts. Most of the organizations end up celebrating Onam festival, programs and Annual festivals but desist from public issues related to Keralites. The Prime motive of the organization is to bring all Mumbai Keralites under one umbrella to address and redress their issues. For more details contact on 9969637573.



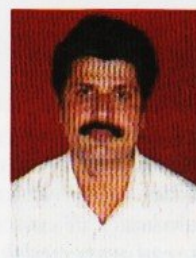
Jojo Thomas
(President)



MV Majid
(Vice President)



Adv. Joseph Thattil
(Secretary)



Unnikrishnan Nair
(Treasurer)

The President of India should reswear in Kapil Sibal, P Chidambaram and Salman Khurshid, with an addition to the oaths of office and secrecy. The additional clause: "I will speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in the discharge of my duties."

- S Harishchandra



MULLAPERIYAR DAM ISSUE WHIPPED OUT OF SHAPE

A serious matter that concerns the lives of over four million people that should have been settled across the table by sagacious engineers, scientists, experts on water conflicts has been whipped into an emotive issue by ill-advised subnationalistic political leadership.

Hysterical mob-driven petty politicians have converted the Mullaperiyar Dam problem into an issue to be settled on the streets of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It has become such an emotional issue today that only the Supreme Court can pronounce a judgement on it, to be enforced by a strong Union Government machinery. The voice of politicians across the country must be stilled till the issue is resolved rationally, scientifically and devoid of political posturing.

A look at cold facts is revealing. The dam, built in 1895, 116 years ago, has outlived the normal span of life of dams, which is 50 years. It is located in Kerala's Idduki district on 3,500 hectares leased to Tamil Nadu for 999 years. The dam is operated and managed by Tamil Nadu, to irrigate perpetually drought-prone districts of Madurai, Sivaganga, Tenji, Dindigul and Ramanathapuram. Tamil Nadu draws 606.83 million cubic meters of water to irrigate about 70,000 hectares. It also produces 140 MW of power from the water.

Mullaperiyar Dam, 365.7 long and 53.6 meters high, is one of the oldest dams in the world. With then existing technology, the dam was built by Chief Engineer John Pennyuck, with hydraulic lime and surkhi (a mixture of crushed bricks, sand and sugar). This is the only dam of

its kind in the world. An assessment of the strength of the structure and its vulnerability is thus impossible.

The Centre for Soil and Materials Research Station, New Delhi, early in 2011 found evidence of the deterioration of the structure: potholes, crevices, openings on the surface. The masonry cover had been damaged between a depth of 32 meters and 29 meters throughout the length of the dam. Cracks, seepages and leaks have further damaged it.

Idukki district is highly quake-prone. The Geological Survey of India places the area in Zone III, where quakes of the magnitude of 6.5 on the Richter scale can happen. The Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee warned the Kerala Government in 2009 that the dam cannot withstand a quake of magnitude of 6 and above. The Roorkee researchers found 22 active faults in the area around the dam. Idukki receives high rainfall particularly during the second monsoon (mid-November to mid-December). That was the period of the maximum scare over a dam burst. The genuine fears of the people were drowned in the hysterical posturing of the politicians including the Union Home Minister who could not rise above the level of his voters in Tamil Nadu. He had to eat his own words the next day.

With no clue about a dam burst analysis or potential loss mapping, the Kerala Government set up a dam safety authority and Mullaperiyar Special Cell in 2006. The IIT, Roorkee report is expected early in 2012.

If the dam bursts, Idukki reservoir will be hit in 45 minutes, washing away about 70, 000 people, their homes and



Opposition leader V S Achuthanadan addressing the public

belongings, between Mullaperiyar Dam and Idukki reservoir. With the steep topography of the region (on the slopes of the Western Ghats) and the height of the dam, the velocity of flash floods could be devastating. The cascading floods would destroy nine dams downstream, across the Periyar river, right upto Kochi city, before the water flows out into the Arabian Sea.

The Kerala State Assembly adopted a resolution in 2009 demanding the construction of a new dam and decommissioning the existing structures. The resolution assured "safety for Kerala and water for Tamil Nadu."

Tamil Nadu's fear is that with new dam coming up the control would pass on to Kerala government and that it would have to pay higher price for water from the dam. The State will no longer own the dam since it is located on 4000

hectares of Kerala land.

A section of people in Tamil Nadu has laid claim to Idukki district. Some of the major problems could have been sorted out in 1956, when the States were reorganized. A new agreement was signed between the two States in 1970, whereby the lease rent was raised from Rs. 5 to Rs. 30 per acre, fishing rights for Kerala in the dam and Tamil Nadu to generate electricity using the diverted waters. Tamil Nadu now pays Rs. 9 lakhs a year as lease rent and royalty for the electricity. Kerala's water needs have increased and it is incurring heavy losses by diverting Mullaperiyar water to Tamil Nadu. By saving this water, Kerala could produce power worth Rs. 1000 crores, instead of the Rs. 50 crores worth power it generates from the Idukki hydel project.

A sane solution of the problem could be the immediate lowering of the storage level in Mullaperiyar dam to 120 feet (36.5 meters) from 136 (41.45 meters). Secondly, the management of the dam could be entrusted to a Board like the Tungbhadra Control Board (with representatives from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and the Union Government). The Board will operate, monitor and manage the dam and its water flow.

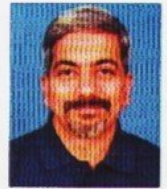
The Supreme Court verdict on the issue is expected early in 2012. If it decides that a new dam is necessary, it is upto the enforcers of the law to prevail upon both parties to implement the verdict, keeping out loud-mouthed politicians who can't think on national lines. It is time they concede the ground to rational, sane, scientific thinkers to solve grave issues of national importance discarding political blinkers.

-PKR



A scene of the agitation

Eminent Neurologist P P Ashok's Recipe to hold Aging Brain



Sriprakash Menon

Unassuming, smiling yet very busy, he wades through other people's stress and trauma. Beneath the simple, composed and pleasing face is a leading neurologist Peringkulam Parameshwaran Ashok, popularly known as Dr P P Ashok. After a half day hectic schedule, Ashok who is head of Neurology at the Hinduja National Hospital spends his day at his clinic at Andheri (West). The waiting room of the clinic is full, the appointment diary for the day has no space yet people hope to meet the doctor for various consultancy related to neurology.



Dr. Ashok hails from Alathur in Palakkad and is keenly interested in farming. With his brother Ajith based in Palakkad he also tends his agro interests. "My grandfather was a well known teacher Prof. Anantha Narayana Iyer who was teaching in Rangoon, Burma. He settled down in Alathur. My father Parameshwaran was a business consultant dealing with stocks/bonds etc. We have a huge bungalow at Alathur made in a traditional style where even now all family members get together annually", he recounted. My mother Santha Parameshwaran stays with my brother and me in Mumbai alternatively. My two sisters, Asha Ramakrishnan stays in Singapore and Gayathri Gopalakrishnan stays in Bangalore. Both are married and well settled", he recounted.

Ashok, after doing his MBBS from Stanley Medical College in Madras, did his MD in medicine from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), then he did his DM in Neurology from AIIMS, New Delhi in 1981/83. "Between my MD and DM, I worked at the Chitra Thirunal Medical Centre and at Kasturba Medical College, Manipal. My marriage to Sudha was an arranged one after I completed my PG. She is daughter of a noted physician Krishnadas from Thiruvananthapuram. She has done MSc in genetics and when

our two girls Nita and Smita grew up, she completed her B.Ed and is a teacher for last 20 years. My daughters are married and settled in the US and Singapore. After my DM, I was invited by Garyounis University in Libya for teaching for two years", he pointed out. When he returned to India, Dr. Ashok joined Hinduja National Hospital as a consultant for Neurology in 1985. Within a year, he was promoted as head of the Neurology department, a position he is in for the last 25 years. The hospital a few years ago was recognised as a training centre for Diploma in National Board (DNB). Dr. Ashok has to his credit medical papers on the subject including a book "Prevent Diabetic Complications in India." He is on the advisory board in Preventing Diabetic (complications/strokes) in India.

"My routine is hectic, I get up at 4.30 am. I go to the Gym at my club near Juhu and regularly exercise for 45 minutes. On my way to my hospital I go to Arogyanidhi Hospital where I visit patients six days a week. Likewise I go to Hinduja. I also do private practice for five days a week up to 6 pm. I love travelling especially to Palakkad. I love Alathur and its paddy fields, temple and the mountains in the distance. I love watching Malayalam movies and music. When I am not in

Lokhandwala (Andheri) where I stay or not globe-trotting, I find peace and relaxation in Alathur. Destinations all over the world is fascinating, so is Alathur for me", he gets nostalgic.

Dr Ashok said, "There is no tonic for the brain. It needs activity, like we do physical exercise for the body. Ageing itself leads to blockages and brain tissue deaths so we need to live and fight other variables as well by having a good routine, healthy food and physical cum mental exercise. One should avoid over cooked and fried food. As one gets old the brain starts shrinking and we cannot do much about it. Hence the memory loss etc. Watching TV is not too good, instead solve puzzles, memorise telephone numbers and simple things or indulge in brain related games that can prevent elderly people from getting memory related diseases. People get entertained for hours in front of TV which is not an exercise for the brain. One should do things which calms one's mind, either meditation, music, visiting temples, reading or travelling".

He has a few suggestions for Malayalees "We should consume less of rice and coconut. We should eschew alcohol. Drinks and smoking are two terrible problems facing Kerala."



Rashma Anand

New Year Resolutions for a

Beautiful and Healthy

You

It is that time of the year again. There is something about the start of the year that appeals to all of us deep down. There is feeling that the slate has been wiped clean and we have an opportunity to start anew. This is the reason, why people make New Year resolutions.

Would it not be a good idea to make some resolutions for a beautiful and healthy you in 2012? After all, health and beauty go hand in hand.

We are not talking about drop dead gorgeous beauty that comes from expensive products and exclusive spa treatments. And we are not talking about size zero figures or six (or eight now)

pack abs that come from exclusive gym memberships and elaborate diet plans.

We are talking about a basic beauty and healthcare regimen that people like you and me can follow. The idea is to keep it simple. In fact the simpler your resolution, the easier it is stick to it. And you will reap rich benefits.

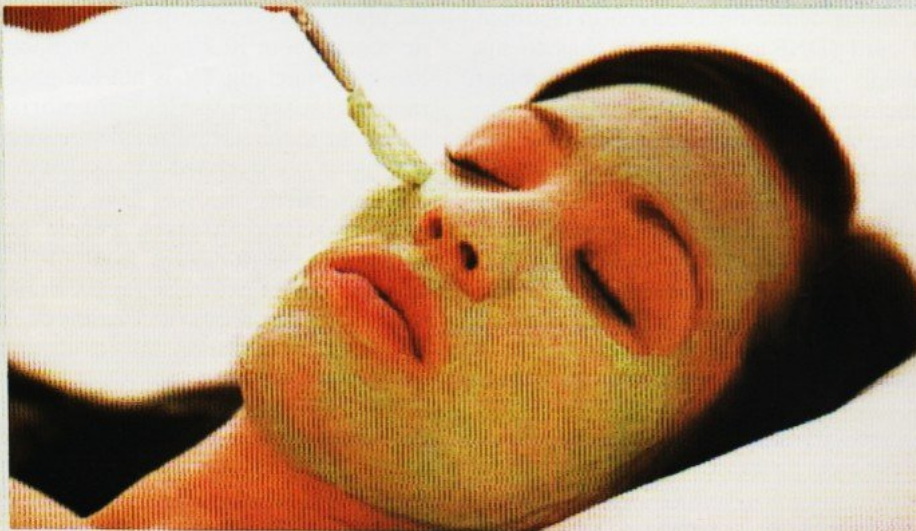
For Your Skin

1. Keep your skin hydrated at all times. Drink enough water.
2. Use appropriate sun screen creams when you venture out in the sun.
3. Make sure you use moisturizer and toner as regular part of your skin care routine.
4. However tired you are, remove your make up and scrub your face clean, before you sleep at night. This opens up the pores on the face and allows the skin to breathe and oxygenate itself.
5. Winters especially dry out the skin considerably. Make sure you use appropriate moisturizing lotions and creams to keep your skin soft and moist.

For Your Hair

Your hair is the perfect accessory that complements your beauty. Take care of your hair so that it takes care of you.

1. Oil your hair regularly. You don't have to go for elaborate massages if you do not have the time. Regular coconut oil massaged into the scalp, prior to bathing at least 2-3 times a week should do the trick. Massaging stimulates the blood



A cooling face mask

circulation in the scalp and promotes healthy hair growth. For even better results, use slightly warm oil for the massage.

2. Wash hair regularly with suitable shampoo, depending on your hair type, whether it is oily or dry. Shampoo is a cleansing agent and removes the dirt from the hair.

3. Do not forget to condition the hair post the use of shampoo. Shampoo tends to dry out the hair and conditioner restores moisture back to the hair.

4. Do not treat hair problems lightly. Pay attention to any hair problems you may have and focus on addressing them at the earliest, so that it does not become worse over a period of time. For instance, if you suffer from dandruff or hair fall, make sure you take appropriate treatment for the same. If home remedies and regular solutions are not working, consult a doctor who will provide a medical solution to tackle the problem effectively.

Health is Wealth

Indeed health is wealth. If you are hale and hearty, you face any issue head on.

1. Pay attention to what you eat. Avoid sweets and fried stuff. Everyone knows this. But it is not enough knowing. You



have to actually implement it so that it is beneficial. You can give in to your cravings once in a while, but make sure that it is indeed once in a while and not a regular occurrence.

2. Eat small frequent meals, ideally every two hours. This improves metabolism and prevents weight gain.

3. As far as possible, keep your meal times regular. And try to keep at least two hours gap between your last meal and the time you go to sleep.

4. Avoid processed and canned food. I

know it is time-saving and convenient, but keep reliance on them to a minimum. Opt for whole fruits instead of fruit juices. The nutritional value is higher and they are less expensive.

5. Eat fresh cooked home meals. Healthy food need not be bland and tasteless. Check online for delicious healthy recipes.

6. You don't have to avoid eating out altogether. That is neither possible nor recommended. But eat in moderation, when you eat out. Of course, if you have over indulged at a party the previous night, you always have the option running two extra rounds while jogging next day. Just make sure you exercise that option to restore the balance.

Be active

1. No excuses. You have to make time for some form of physical activity to keep fit and healthy.

2. Walking, Yoga, running or going to the gym. The options are endless and choose one you are most comfortable with.

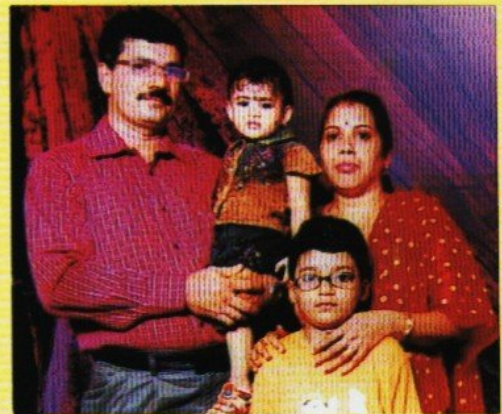
3. Make sure you do not miss your exercise for any reason. It is very easy to cite excuses for not exercising, but the endorphin release post exercise makes it worth the effort.

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Wish you a Happy New Year



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FOR A CLEANER WORLD

-Elvee

Cleanliness conscious people are looking for solutions for keeping their surroundings clean. The Clean India show organized by Virtual Infosystems Pvt Ltd fulfills such a need.

Clean India Show Pulire -2011 was an International cleaning Trade Show, supported by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, displaying the latest cleaning machines in the market, creating an awareness about hygiene and health, and providing a platform for the domestic market to network with international exhibitors and initiate

trade transactions. According to Jayaraman Nair, Chairman of Virtual Infosystems Pvt Ltd, "Waste and cleanliness issues are universal problems present in every industry and department. To solve these issues conferences, lectures, and training programmes will definitely help. It is with these aims that the eighth edition of this Show, was organized in Mumbai

last month".

There were more than 100 stalls showcasing cleaning equipment supplying machines, about 200 brands of professional cleaning tools, chemicals and machines. Participants included companies from Australia, Dubai, Malaysia, Austria, Hong Kong, China, Turkey, Ireland, Switzerland and India. About 4500 quality visitors attended various seminars and conferences conducted by the organizers and visited the stalls.

During the Show there were exclusive Round Table Conferences addressing healthcare sector, hospitality industry and municipal corporations.

Hygiene in Healthcare focussed on parameters of hygiene level that are set up by hospitals to meet hygiene standards. Kitchen Hygiene conference was well represented by senior professionals from the hospitality industry. The discussions focused on the challenges faced in implementing best practices to achieve Kitchen Hygiene.

Regarding waste management, for the first time, the representatives of various corporations sat across to discuss what could possibly be the best model for effective waste management. The panel members included B P Patil, Chief Engineer SWM (Solid Waste Management), Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai; Suresh Jagtap-Deputy Commissioner- SWM of Pune Municipal Corporation, Ramya Kumar Bhatt, Asst. Municipal Commissioner-SWM of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Vinod Dalvi-Sanitary Inspector of Kolhapur Municipal Corporation, Dr Amiya Kumar Sahu-President of NSWAI, PS Awate-Executive Engineer of MCGM and Anand Jagtap- OSD(Officer on Special Duty),Slum Sanitation Programme of MCGM.

The CIP show was inaugurated by Dr Vijay Kumar Gavit, Maharashtra Minister for Health Education and Horticulture who emphasized the need for effective disposal of wastes-industrial, municipal, biological and non-biological.

While various cleaning measures are being taken especially in the operation theatres, Dr Gavit agreed to implement advanced techniques of cleanliness and hygiene. The Minister also urged NGOs and other industries to come forward and join hands with Governments' efforts to achieve cleanliness.

While the mechanical machines on display will do away with cleaning with hands, they will also help in building the



From L to R: Toni D'Andrea, MD of Afidamp Servizi; Mangala Chandran, Editor, Clean India Journal; Jayaraman Nair, Chairman, Virtual Info Systems Pvt Ltd; Dr Vijay Kumar Gavit, Minister for Medical Education and Horticulture, Maharashtra; JP Nair, Managing Director of Virtual Info Systems Pvt Ltd; Roberta Rabuti, Commercial Attache, Consulate General of Italy and Subhash Patil, Member JTF-Government of India, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.



The conference on Municipal Waste Management

dignity of labour.

One significant aspect of the expo was the interest shown by visitors from rural India who showed interest in the new mechanised cleaning machines especially for road sweeping and sewer cleaning. It predicts a new market for the cleaning industry.

For the first time, along with the Clean India Pulire show, Integrated Facility Management Seminar and Expo also

took place. The theme of the two day high level seminar was 'Vision 2015: FM as a Corporate Function'. Supported by BuildoTech, a publication of Virtual Info tech, RAI (Retailers' Association of India), and FSAI (Fire and Security Association of India), the Expo provided an opportunity for end-users to directly interact with the service providers and understand various aspects of facility management services including food

hygiene, pest control, indoor air quality, façade maintenance, safety and security, among others.

J P Nair, Managing Director of Virtual Info Systems, mentioned that the Clean India show which was started in 2005 with 20 companies had in its current show about 100 companies participating which shows the cleaning industry has arrived in India. The next exhibition is slated to be held in Bangalore.

भारतीय जनता पार्टी



*Wish all Mumbai Malayalees
a very Happy New Year*



NAMBIAR K. P. NARAYANAN

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Learning English from the English

Manavedan High School (now Government Manavedan Vocational Higher Secondary School) at Nilambur is one of the oldest schools of Malabar region of Kerala. When teaching standards touched a low ebb and students moved to English medium schools, Manavedan High School suffered. However this old institution was a succor for the poor who could not afford the fee the private schools demanded. The school probably has the largest land, more than 25 acres at its disposal and several buildings spread all over (no multilevel structure) and accommodates more than 2,000 students.

However bright the students may be, their speaking of English with a Malayalam accent is worrisome to all schools in Kerala as the English teachers are all Malayalees with no special training in the right diction. Invariably all of them have this peculiar Malayalam accent.

To get rid of this accent and to inculcate a love for the language, this year under the initiative of Aryadan Shoukat, Chairman of Nilambur Municipality, and 'Sadgamaya' a government initiated project, four English teachers are now invited to the School to undertake this task. Carla Flack, Imelda Devlin, Andrew Allport and his wife Beverley Allport are all very enthusiastic to be a part of the project.

When *Kerala in Mumbai* met these teachers, they were unanimous in their



Government Manavedan Vocational Higher Secondary School, Nilambur

view: "We are very much enjoying our time at Manavedan School; the children are so enthusiastic! The teachers are extremely appreciative of our efforts and our fresh approach to teaching, but they also offer us advice on teaching techniques and we are glad to be benefitting from their expertise. Altogether it is a very satisfying collaborative venture, we are all so happy that we decided to apply for our posts in the project."

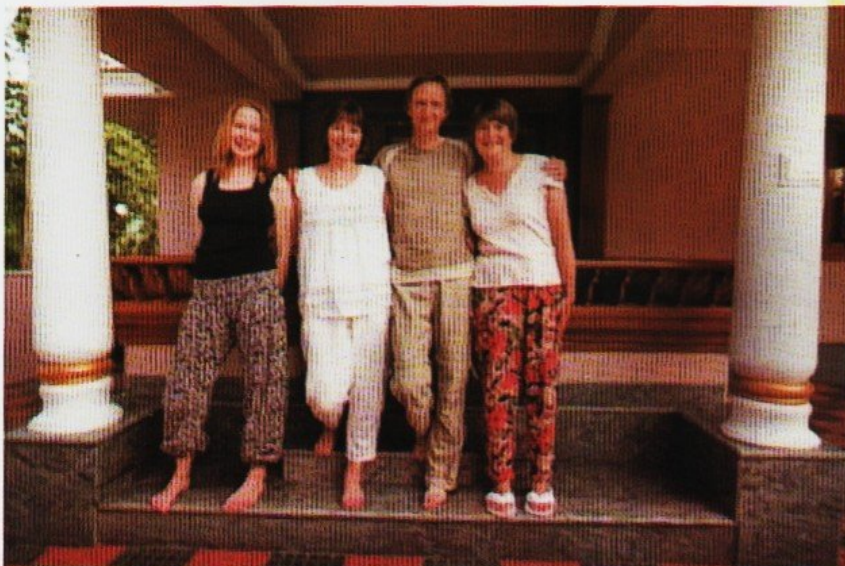
Inside the old fashioned class room, the teacher moves around and encourages the student to pronounce the words with special attention to the movement of various parts of the mouth to bring out the right pronunciation and encourage

them to speak to them in English. Since the teacher does not know Malayalam, the students have no option but speak in English.

Malapuram district of which Nilambur is a part, realized early in the 1990s, that it has to bring a turn around for the better through education and started working earnestly in that direction. The 2011 census put the literary figures for the district at 93.55% and registered a pass percentage for X Std at 88.55. To push the figures further, it has now recruited native Britons to teach the students the right diction and already recruited four teachers. Two more are to join soon. These teachers are in the profession for quite some time and looking for converting their winter holidays into something creative while exploring the beauty of the State. In fact, the municipality is providing them only accommodation and transport.

One of the teachers, Imelda Devlin, is an education advisor at University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, says there are many retired professionals in the UK interested in teaching English in India. Many of them retired due to economic factors without exhausting the desire to teach, she says. She is recently retired from teaching but still has the urge to continue. Carla Flack, a graduate in Psychology, has undergone a course in teaching.

With the interest from both sides, officials are now planning to introduce this project in nearly 70 schools more in the next academic year.



Left to right - Carla Flack, Imelda Devlin, Andrew Allport, Beverley Allport.

This too a school

When we move to the hilly forest area of Agali in Palakkad district, we find a government Upper Primary School where 65 students belonging to scheduled tribe are seeking knowledge. Their plight is quite different. Though they have a traditional school building, they do not have any teachers to impart knowledge.

This 45 year old school at Aanavai is the only hope for the poor children of about 10 villages around the school. They all are trekking several kilometers through the forests, always expecting an attack from wild animals such as elephants, tigers, leopard etc. There is no road to reach the school. The path is full of leeches and none can escape their attack. When the children reach school, there is no teacher in the school to welcome them. There is provision for four permanent teachers including Head



Aanavai Upper Primary School

Teacher but none is willing to join duty in this unenviable institution.

There is a hostel attached to the school but hardly anyone stays there as the facilities of toilet, bathroom etc are unavailable. Till recently they had one lady teacher but she had gone on maternity leave. Another teacher was appointed on daily wages basis but often

he does not turn up. Even for the salary of the staff and other needs, the teacher in charge has to go to AEO office at Mannarghat.

All pleas of the Village Head to the Chief Minister have not produced any response. Hope someone from the Europe would come to give solace to the students of this school.

Impact of a News Paper Report

Malayalees are often accused of indifference when a common man faces misfortune or mishap. Our news papers are quite capable of stirring their basic human nature and make them quite humane.

When Jessy Joseph, a teen aged girl from Potthukal near Nilambur won gold medals in the State School Athletic Meet for 1500 and 800 metres race in the junior section, many including our political leaders showered praise over her but no one enquired about her family background nor did she volunteer information. Now it is known that her family consisting of her mother Suja and sisters Daisy and Jincy, has to sell off their incomplete house to repay the loan taken by her father Puthen Purackal Joseph. A few years ago he had taken a loan of ₹12000 from Potthukal Service Co-op Bank and when he died, the repayment ceased. Now the loan and the accrued interest touched nearly ₹30000 and the family had no source to repay it. Mother Suja is earning their bread by working in neighbourly houses and she cannot undertake heavy job as she had undergone a surgery on her right hand. The bank has secured a court order to confiscate their land and house and

served on them a final notice to vacate.

The family's plea to the CM for relief resulted in a response from the bank that only the interest part could be waived.

Malayalam Manorama reported the sad plight of the family last month and the report brought miracle for the family.

The very next morning a good Samaritan Col P N Chandran of Mayyanthani, Nilambur reached Jessy's house and informed Suja that they have repaid their loan of ₹20,850 (excluding interest) before reaching their house. Col Chandran was accompanied by his wife Rugmini. Suja thanked them with tears.

Soon aids started flowing. Dr V Mohandas and wife Prema deposited ₹50000 into Suja's SB account at SBT, Edakkara. When Joint Registrar of Co-operative Societies reached the Service Bank to instruct the bank to write off the loan, he was informed by the bank officials that the loan was already repaid.

Malapuram District Co-op Bank took over the responsibility of Jessy's educational expenses. They also promised to meet the expenditure of completing their house. President of Youth Congress (Wayanad Parliament Constituency) K E Vinayan also came forward to do the same. A Malayalee

Abe J Mathew, resident of Australia volunteered to meet all her training expenses. Former Agriculture Development Officer Sreekumar and his wife and News Presenter Maya Sreekumar contributed ₹10000. More than 20 individuals and organisations of India and abroad have informed their willingness to financially aid the family. While writing this, more offers are on the pipeline. Suja's SBT A/c No is 67145234255.

Govt Victoria College Old Students Meet

Old students of Government Victoria College, Palakkad are scheduled to meet on Sunday, January 22, 2012 at the College Auditorium from 3 p m to 6 p m. Many students who left the college more than four decades ago are coming together to make it a grand occasion. It is always the retired old students who are keen to meet their class mates and recognizing each other itself is enjoyable and funny. Individual old student has to register himself /herself by January 15 by paying ₹100 for self, ₹150 if accompanied by spouse. Children above 12 years have to pay ₹50 per head.

Those interested from Mumbai, may contact 9833677962.

Oru kutakeezhil (ഒരു കുടക്കീഴിൽ)

അനുരാഗിണീ ഇതാ എൻ
കരളിൽ വിരിഞ്ഞ പൂക്കൾ (2)
ഒരു രാഗമാലയായി ഇത് നിന്റെ ജീവനിൽ
അണിയൂ... അണിയൂ
അഭിലാഷ പൂർണിമേ... (അനുരാഗിണീ)

കായലിൻ പ്രഭാതഗീതങ്ങൾ
കേൾക്കുമി തുഷാരമോലങ്ങൾ (2)
നിറമേകും ഒരു വേദിയിൽ
പ്രിയേ... മമ മോഹം നീയറിഞ്ഞു (2)
(അനുരാഗിണീ)

മൈനകൾ പദങ്ങൾ പാടുന്നു
കൈതകൾ വിലാസമാടുന്നു (2)
കനവെല്ലാം കതിരാകുവാൻ
എന്നുമെന്റെ തുണയാകുവാൻ
വരദേ... അനുവാദം നീ തരില്ലേ (2)
(അനുരാഗിണീ)

Transliteration: Ā, ā = ആ, റ; Ê, ê = ഏ, ങ; Ī, ī = ഇ, ീ;
Ō, ō = ഓ, േ-റ; Ū, ū = ഉ, ു, ũ = ൃ; C, c = ച, ch = ചെ,
D, d = ട, Dh, dh = ട, Ḍ, ḍ = റ, Ḍh, ḍh = റ, jh =
ജ, Ĺ, ĳ = ജ; Ñ, ñ = ഞ, ṅ = ഞ, ṇ = ഞ; rh = റ, ṭṭ = റ;
ṣ = റ; Ś, ś = ശ; Ṣ, ṣ = ഷ, T, t = ട, Th, th = റ, Ṭ, ṭ = റ;
ṭh = റ

Anurāgiṇī iṭā en karalil virinṇa pūkkal (2)
Oru rāgamālayayi iṭu ninte jīvanil
Aṇiyū aṇiyū abhilā ṣapūrṇimē
(Anurāgiṇī)

Kāyalin prabhāṭa gīṭaṇṇāl kēlkkumī
Ṭuṣāra mēghaṇṇāl (2)
Nirhamēkum oru vēdiyil priyadē....
Mama mōham nīyarhinṇu (2)
(Anurāgiṇī)

Mainakāl padaṇṇāl pātunnu
Kaiṭakāl vilāsamātunnu (2)
Kanavellām kaṭirākuvān
Ennum ente ṭuṇayākuvān
Varadē.... anuvādam nī ṭarillē (2)

Lyricist: Poovachal Khader **Music:** Johnson
Singer: K J Yesudas **Ragam:** Kalyani



Poovachal Khader



Johnson



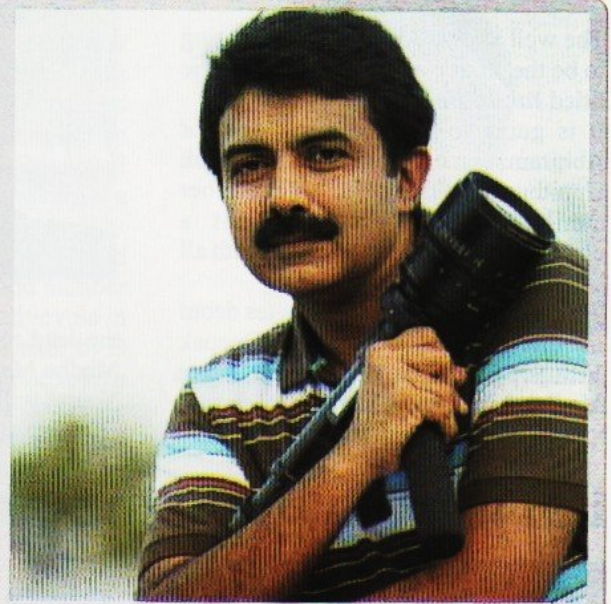
K J Yesudas

This movie produced by Sajan of Saj Movies was directed by Joshy. For A R Mukesh's story Kaloor Dennis wrote the screenplay and dialogue. The artistes were Venu Nagavally, Shankar, Nedumudi Venu, Baby Shalini, Madhavi, Rohini, Thilakan, Mala Aravindan, Sukumari, Thodupuzha Vasanthi, Paravoor Bharathan, Lalu Alex, Prathapachandran and KPAC Sunny.

Rajeev Menon to direct a Hindi movie

Remember Rajeev Menon, the ace *cinematographer* who directed two hit Tamil films, *Kandukondein Kandukondein* and *Minsara Kanavu*? Now he is set his eyes on Hindi movies. Earlier he held camera for Mani Ratnam's 'Guru' and won accolades but now he wants to direct one. He is currently busy with hunting suitable artistes. "Once the

artistes are chosen, the shooting will commence," he said. The film is going to be a treat for youngsters. It is going to be an entertainer. Rajeev and his mother singer Kalyani Menon are close to Aiswarya Rai Bachchan and were among the few who were invited to attend her wedding with Abhishek.



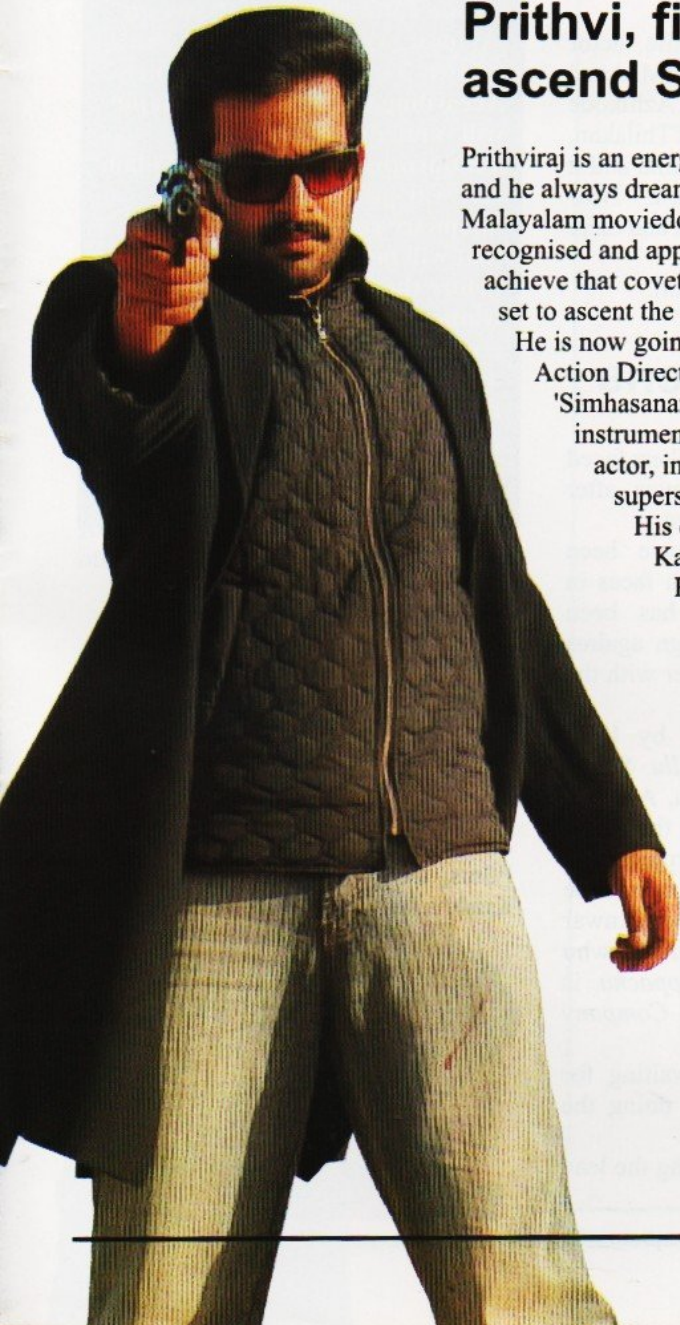
Prithvi, finally to ascend Simhasanam

Prithviraj is an energetic and talented actor and he always dreamt of reining the Malayalam moviedom. Though well recognised and appreciated, he is yet to achieve that coveted position. Now he is set to ascend the throne.

He is now going to be the hero of Action Director Shaji Kailas' 'Simhasanam'. Shaji was instrumental in elevating many an actor, including Suresh Gopi, to superstardom.

His earlier film with Shaji Kailas, 'Raghupathy Raghava Rajaram' was shelved due to financial problems.

The movie that will have Sai Kumar and Jagathy Sreekumar in important roles will start shooting in February.



Urvashi turns director



Senior leading actress of Malayalam movies, Urvashi is to direct her debut movie by the next year. She is going to tie up with Tamil writer Crazy Mohan for her first film. It is going to be a Tamil film. The artistes are yet to be finalized. She plans to start shooting by second half of 2012.

The actress is currently in the sets of 'Lakshmi Vilasam Renuka Makan Raghuraman', whose shooting is going on. She had earlier written the story of 'Utsavamelam' and has turned a producer a decade ago with the movie 'Pidakkozhi Koovunna Noottandu'. Despite her age and competition from younger actresses, Urvashi is currently enjoying her star status all her movies she was the title role.

'Yakshi- Faithfully Yours'

The well known Aithiyamala is going to be the source of a Malayalam movie titled *Yakshi-Faithfully Yours*.

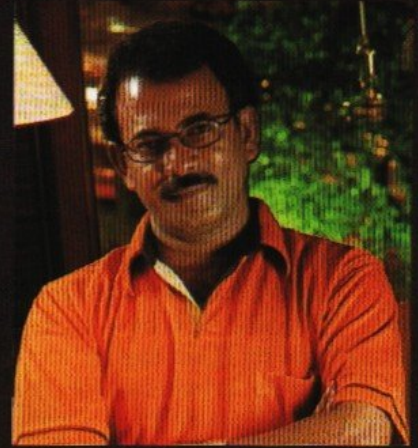
It is going to be the launch pad for Abhiram, son of noted director Suresh Unnithan. In this movie, unlike other similar movies, Yakshi is not a character to be afraid of but one with all human traits.

Many of Abhiram's college mates debut in this movie. Debutantes Deepak Venugopal, Avanthika Mohan, Manoj Madhusudhan and Akhil Devan are in



the lead roles in the film, produced by Madhu Mavelikkara. 'Yakshi, Faithfully Yours', will be on sets soon.

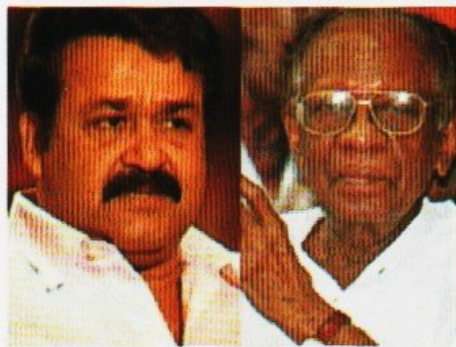
Major Ravi to set an example for rescue act



Producer director and actor Major Ravi is very much concerned about the consequences in the event of a breach in Mullaperiyar dam. He feels that the people who are likely to be affected should be well trained to escape a watery death. To set an example, Major Ravi, a veteran soldier, is going to act as rescuer. According to the plan, the Major will jump down for the Venduruthy Bridge at Ernakulam and will swim for almost a kilometre rescuing the dummies that will be thrown to the river before the jump. He feels if trained, people can not only escape but also save others from drowning.

He will announce the dates of his jump shortly and also bring in much of film fraternity to make this a big event.

Lal makes up with Azhikkode



The tug of war between two stalwarts of two different fields for about two years is now coming to an end. Now

Mohanlal has called Dr Sukumar Azhikkode, who is admitted to a hospital for his ailment to say "Sorry" and the controversy between them is being amicably resolved.

It all started when versatile actor Thilakan had fought with 'AMMA' and subsequently expelled and Azhikkode took up the cause in defence of Thilakan. He ascribed motives to Mohanlal and it ended in a defamation case. Now Thilakan is back with AMMA and there is no more point to fight for.

Everything is well that ends well.

New faces to rule Malayalam screens

2011 will be remembered in Malayalam as an important year when several path breaking films got accepted at the box office.

Films like *Traffic*, *Salt N' Pepper*, *Chappa Kurishu* and *Beautiful* were noted, though they did not have big saleable names in the lead. This is even more relevant considering the fact that

some of the celebrated filmmakers faced setbacks with their films, even after having some big stars in the cast.

Now several new films have been launched with relatively fresh faces in the lead. Prithviraj, who has been affected by the hate campaign against him, had some reason to cheer with the success of *Indian Rupee*.

But he has been replaced by Unni Mukundan in Vysakh's *Mallu Singh*. Young heroes like Jayasurya, Asif Ali and Kunchacko Boban have their date diaries full with high profile projects.

Mammooty's son Dulqar Salman is the hero in *Second Show* and also in Anwar Rasheed's *Ustad Hotel*. Mamas, who made the hit film *Paappi Appacha*, is currently shooting *Cinema Company* with nine new faces.

Orkut oru Ormakkoott is waiting for release with four teenagers doing the main roles.

Siddharth Bharathan is playing the lead in *Nidra*.



Viji Thampi and Nadodimannan'

Director Viji Thampi is back with a bang. His next movie 'Nadodimannan' is a big setup with Dileep in the lead. Ananya, Mythili and Archana Kavi are the heroines of this project that will have music by Vidyasagar. Produced by Subhash under the banner of Chithram Films, the movie will have script by Krishna Poojappura.



Salim Kumar for Tamil cinema



Now his name is nationally known after his '*Adaminte Makan Abu*' grabbed the national award. Salim Kumar does not mind doing a few films in Tamil. He will have his Tamil debut with Bharat Bala, who was a member of the national jury that selected Salim Kumar as the best actor.

Salim Kumar may also star in the new Tamil movie directed by S M Vasanth, that would be in the sets soon.

Yami Goutham to be Prithviraj's heroine

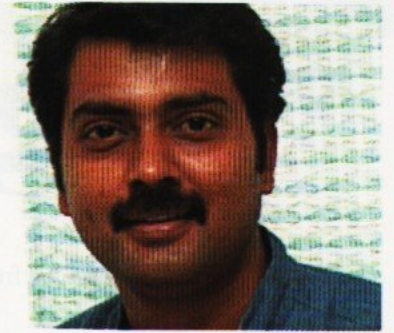
Renowned actress and model Yami Goutham will be Prithviraj's heroine in the film '*Hero*'. Deepan who earlier directed '*Puthiya Mukham*' would direct this film. Srekanth, Bala, Thalaivasal Vijay, Nedumudi Venu, Anil Murali, Tini Tom, Arun, Sadiq, Guinness Pakru, Kochupreman and KPAC Lalitha are the other artistes.



Narain in Shaji film

Narain, who is always very particular about choosing the right film, has recently announced that he has changed his preferences. "I always believed in working in one film at a time. But now, I am open to doing more than one film at a time".

This change of policy reaped good results, it seems. He has a good number of varied roles. He has a negative role in the Mohanlal starrer '*Grand Master*' by B Unnikrishnan. He also has a good role in the Shaji Kailas film, in which he has the role of a cop. Vandana will play the female lead in this movie which will be



scripted by Rajesh Jayaraman. The film, to be produced in the banner of Shoot at sight, will be on sets by the end of January.

Wedding



Suma, d/o of Usha and Suresh Nair married Anoop, s/o Sarasa and Vijaykumar G Nair on 18th December 2011 at Kochu Guruvayoor Temple, Matunga.

Ragam Kamboji

This is a *janya raga*; derived from the 28th *Melakarta Harikamboji*.

Arohana:- s r g m p d s

Avarohana:- s n d p m g r s

Besides *Shadja* and *Panchama*, the notes taken are *Chathursruthi Rishabha*, *Anthara Gandhara*, *Sudha Madhyama*, *Chathursruthi Dhaivata*, *Kaisiki Nishada* and *Kakali Nishada*.

This is a *murchanakaraka janya raga*. It is *dha* when taken as *shadja*, results in the raga *Desyatodi* (s g m p d n s- s n d p m g r s-8)

Shadava Sampurna raga-varjyaraga- ni is *varjya* in the *arohana-Eka anyaswara*, *Bhashanga raga*. The foreign note *kakali nishada* occurs in the phrases- s n p d s (2) r m g s and (3) d g r s are common. Phrases like (a) m g s (b) p d m (C) m g p d s (d) s r g s are *ranjana prayogas*. p d m g is a *visesha prayoga* and a *rakti prayoga*. The notes *ma dha* and *ni* (both the varieties) are *raga chaya swaras*. *ga ma pa* and *dha* are *nyasa swaras*. *ga*, *pa* and *dha* are the notes on which one can rest and develop *alapana*.

Sarva swara gamaka rakti raga. It may be sung at all times. One of the major ragas and affords scope for elaborate *alapana*. Slokas, *padyas* and *viruthams* can be sung in this raga. It is an auspicious raga, useful at commencement of concerts. Also used in operas and dance dramas. A raga where-in composition can begin with *vishesha sanchara-* m g s and s n p in this case. The names *Kambodi* and *Kamboji* are also found in some works. In *Kathakali* music this raga is known by the name *Kamodar*.

Some prominent Compositions include

- 1) Mandaradharare (Githam) Adi- Paidala Gurumurthi Sastri
- 2) Intha Chalamu (Varnam) Ata- Pallavi Gopalayyar
- 3) Sarasijanabha (Ata- Vadineelu)
- 4) Pankajakshi Pai (Adi- Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer)

Krithis

1. Marimari Ninne-Adi Thyagaraja
2. O Rangasayi- Adi Thyagaraja
3. Evari Mata- Adi Thyagaraja
4. Majanaki Adi- Thyagaraja
5. Devi ni pada- Adi-Syama Sastri
6. 6th Ashtapati-Nibrutha- Triputa- Jayadeva
7. Emi mayamu Javali-Rupakam- Pattabhiramayya

Popular Film songs

1. Sakthi mayam Siva sakthi mayam- Devi kanyakumari Yesudas
2. Vallabhan prana vallabhan -Karinizhal Madhuri
3. Samaja Sancharini- Parinayam Chitra
4. Pranathan enikkunalkiya Enippatikal-P.Leela
5. Kattile pazhumulam-Vilakkuvangiya Veena Yesudas.



Smt. Mallika Bharathan

The sky is far above- 'Mumbai Kathakal'

The Sanskrit adage that 'Natakantham kavitwam' seems to be true for Malayalam language too. Our first creative literature was poem, even before the birth of a proper alphabet, and soon grew to segments like 'prabandham' (prose), 'Akhyayika' (novel) and then to 'natakam' (drama). Like in English literature, the short story segment in Malayalam came much later, being the toughest job in literature. A good novelist need not be a good short story writer.

Malayalam literary critic late Prof M P Paul in his 'Cherukatha prastanam' underlines this factor. Many of us may be tempted to disagree by saying that he is not in tune with modern trends. Prof Paul made his observation after closely watching the literary scene of not only Malayalam language but around the world as a whole. When he made his statement, there was hardly anything worth reading in Malayalam.

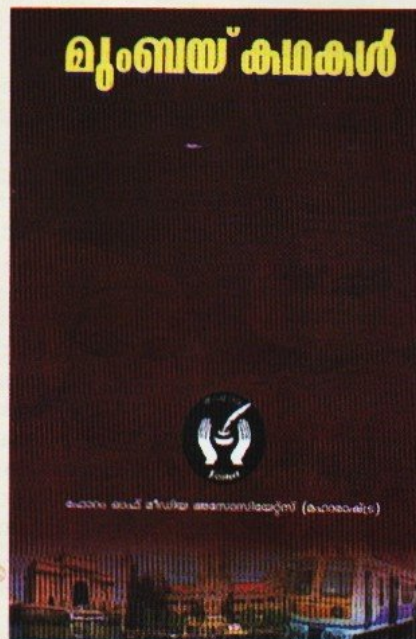
A novel gives its author many liberties. The narration could be descriptive, occasionally elaborative, even a few wrong usage of the language also could be tolerated as it takes a longer time to complete the story, allowing the author time to make amends. A short story writer does not enjoy any such freedom. His opening has to be brisk, catchy, words used should be extra ordinarily crisp and clear, no word used would have an option of any replacement, characterization should be complete in a few strokes and the end should as dramatic as possible. In world literature, a reader can easily identify a number of books of an author as his favourites but to choose his favourite short stories would be tough.

Uroob (*Nananja sayahnam*), Ponkunnam Varkey (*Sabdikkunna kalappa*), Basher (*Neelavelicham*) et al were captivating story tellers of Malayalam. There are endless writers like Karoor, Malayattoor, KT, MT, Padmanabhan, Parappuram, Nandanar, VKN, Lalithambika, Madhavi Kutty and many others who could have been listed. There are some like Kovilan who could have written many but restricted themselves to a few. Basheer also belonged to this category. Yet they stood like Colossus, dwarfing many of their contemporaries.

When *Mumbai Kathakal* came for review, all these stalwarts came to my mind, throbbing in anticipation, anxiety

and curiosity. As pages turned, I realized that it was a compilation of stories by different authors, published by a Mumbai organisation and marketed by Kerala Book Mark, owned by Kerala state. The forward is by Babu Kuzhimattom and he warns discretely the readers not to expect much. He made it clear that what he wrote was under pressure of 'Meghanadan' (not 'Meghanathan' as he put it).

Babu reminds us that it is a challenge to offer different stories and different experiences and remarks that those



incapable of meeting this challenge should not lift their pens. He adds that if mere possession of a good vocabulary and grammar would ensure good writers, all our language teachers would have turned into Ponkunnam Varkey and Basheer. He cites the example of 'Khazakkinte Ithihasam' and squints at KVS Nelluvai. Since Babu indicates that he is not very serious, the reader does not give up hope.

There are 12 stories in this book and the authors are familiar to Malayalees of Mumbai, as their names appear in various Malayalam periodicals. Nevertheless, the authors cannot claim that they have developed a stature that would attract people who take literature seriously.

Having stayed away for more than four decades from Kerala and facing a heavy work schedule, even this writer cannot claim a good rapport with modern Malayalam literature, except going through some 'Onam specials' (assuming

they represent the best of Malayalam literature) and some writers who forward their books to keep in touch. Very frequent trips to Kerala however help to catch up with leading writers and critics and they too have little worth reading and re-reading.

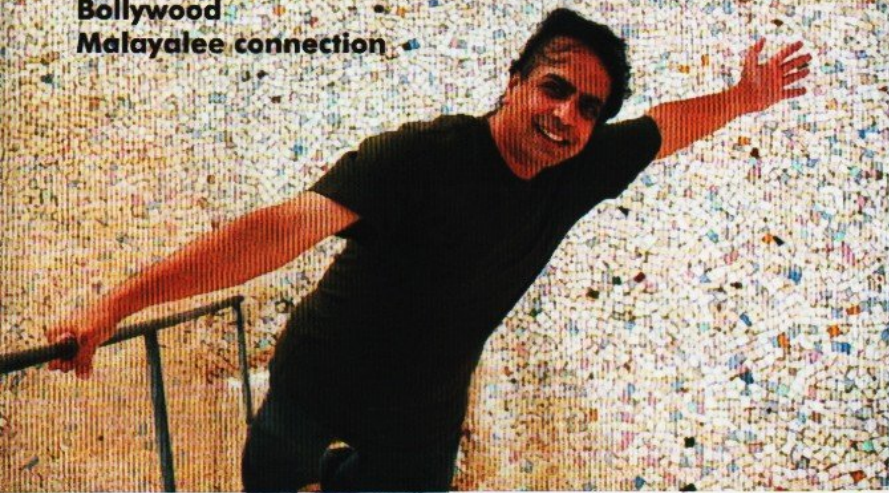
All stories in this book have a touch of cynicism. Two stories have an uncanny resemblance in their content though one is an essay on fundamentals of nuclear science, seen through the eyes of a first year student of Physics, in the disguise of a story (*Pravachakan, Maricha bhoomiyile avadhootan*). Since the forward writer has commented that the story (*Ente flat no.207*) is an example of how to spoil a good story line by incorporating unnecessary details, no comment is offered. He further comments that some editing is needed in '*Mayammayute dinararangal*' of Jayan Thanima who is a professional editor of a Mumbai periodical.

Raju K Puram Surat's 'Thanalmarangalkku thazhe' offers easy reading but the story line is very familiar. Innumerable writers have used this line since 1960s. Swami Samvidanand has no doubt the necessary skills but often moves away from the main track. There are at least six paragraphs that could have been avoided to make the story a little more compact. It appears that he has been misled by some stories, pretending to be modern, and has a tendency to go astray. Balraj Kollara's story also suffers from the same defect. Many such defects could have been avoided if the author attempted a second reading as some of the defects suffer from wrong usages. Adv P R Rajkumar and Rajan Thekkumala show glimpses of promise and tread somewhat different paths.

It is surprising that none of the writers of this book could find anything positive in life and they are obsessed with skepticism. Optimism is an important trait of life and they could follow the path of VKN, Basheer, Malayattoor and Uroob who were undying optimists.

Good proof reading and some editing would have elevated this book. Any good book would compel the reader to have another go at it. This one would not do so. Mumbai was once a shelter of many Malayalee writers such as Basheer, Madhavi Kutty, Anand and others. A revisit of their stories could definitely benefit the contributors to 'Mumbai Kathakal'.

(*Mumbai Kathakal* published by Forum of Media Associates, pages 104, price Rs.100)



Anant Mahadevan Making it big on Stage and Screen

-S P Menon

Anant Narayan Mahadevan creator of the highly acclaimed Mee *Sindhutai Sapkal* has scaled admirable heights.

With roots in Thrissur, Anant started his career as a film PR man, then evolved into a film critic, actor and finally director of theatre, maker of TV series, documentary and feature films. Anant was busy tying up post production work of his latest Jackie Shroff starrer film *Life's Good* and his documentary *State of the Art*. He is currently writing a book and is keen to direct a Malayalam film.

With his maiden venture in Marathi Mee *Sindhutai Sapkal* which bagged several national and international awards he is a trendsetter by recreating "a life story of a living legend" in Pune by the same name on screen. This Marathi film is regarded as a critical work in the regional cinema in recent times. *Sindhutai.....* was the opening film at the international film festival of India at Goa last year.

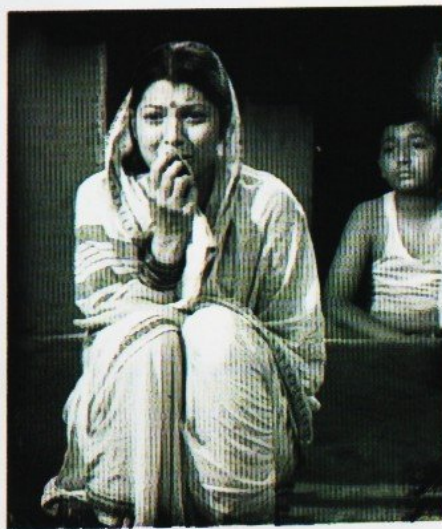
Son of late G A Mahadevan (from Palakkad) and T S Rajalakshmi (Thrissur), he stayed in Chembur before moving to Wadala. He recalled "in those days my parents brought a flat opposite SIW School for Rs12,000. I did my schooling from Don Bosco, Matunga and stayed in Wadala/Matunga area till the early 90's. We moved to Juhu where my mother stays. My father passed away when I was just 13. Presently, I stay at Versova due to my film work and other related activities like meetings, script discussions etc. My brother Ravi - an industrial photographer is younger to me and stays at Thrissur."

After completing his BSc Anant worked as a medical representative then joined the Bombay Publicity Service under the veteran late V P Sathe. "I worked with him for about 10 years and was on the side working as a freelance journalist, mainly a film critic. I liked plays and since 1984 I

was doing theatre and did memorable roles in Vijay Tendulkar's *Khamosh Adalat.....*, *Hamlet*, *Inspector General*, Sorcar's *Pagla Ghoda* among the 30 plays with 3000 performances. I was lucky that I could work under all leading playwrights of those times", he stated.

As television was getting popular like many "I also switched on to the small screen with Sai Paranjpye's *Ados Pados*. I did the title role in *Ghar Jamai* where I played a normal intelligent South Indian boy, this role was not the typical caricature of Madrasis. People loved my role. Now when I completed 30 years as an actor I think I was lucky enough to see the best of theatre and TV production", he asserted saying "I did 70 TV programmes and directed *Chamatkar* and *Ghar Jamai*. I am writing a book based on my experiences in the TV industry 'Being There'".

"My acting career on celluloid was interesting as well, I was launched in to films with Peter O' Toole's 'Kim'. I play a lama. Then I did *Chandni*, *Vijay*, *Khiladi*, *Baazigar*, *Badshah*, *Gardish*, *Mod*, *Ishq*. I also worked in Malayalam film *Isabella*.



Tamil movie *Rhythm* (in a guest appearance)", he recounted.

Anant directed films *Dil Vil Pyaar Vyaar* (a tribute to R D Burman), a telefilm *Mrigtrishna* for DD with Sharmila Tagore and then *Dil Maange More* (a romcom) - Soha Ali's first film. "Then I did *Aksar*, *Agar*, *Anamika* and *Victoria 203*. I felt I should work on contemporary subjects and *Red Alert* touched on the Naxal issue".

"But my defining moment in life came after I did Marathi film *Sindhutai Sapkal*. I consider it as a landmark work with 17 global including national awards to my credit. It also got 40 nominations in all", he emphasised. Anant was particularly upset when his film was not selected for the Kerala International Film Festival last year. Of course the film went on to prove across the globe besides getting national honours. Recently, the film featured in the Thrissur International Film Festival.

According to Anant, "it is a challenge to make films on topical issues and films based on interesting people living. *Gaur Hari Das* is another major film on a freedom fighter standing against the system seeking his well deserved recognition with Vinay Pathak in the lead role. My next release *Staying Alive* is based on Sujit Sen's personal diary about two heart patients and their change of attitude towards life while in the hospital. *Life is Good*, a film with Jackie Shroff is about simple relationship between a child and a man who was almost on the verge of death. I just completed shooting for this film".

State of the Art, a 23 minute documentary shot in Madrid (Spain) in two days is a reflection of Spain's cultural paradox. Anant has no time for marriage yet he feels, "marriage just happens, so let's wait and see. I am presently married to cinema. I am really excited about Bengali and Malayalam cinema, no doubt Tamil cinema of late is experimenting and is coming up with some good work. My dream is to direct a good Malayalam movie".

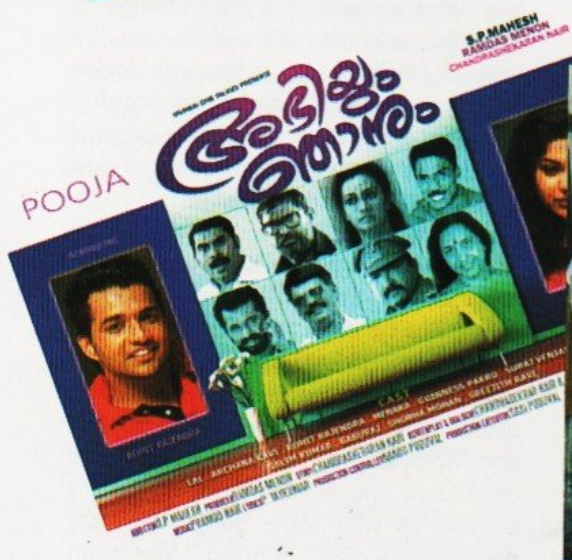
A Love Story on the anvil

Abhiyum Njanum is a film that is being produced by a film production company formed by a few Mumbai Malayalees. Puja was held at Airlinks Hotel Santa Cruz with camera switch on formality being done by V G Nair, (businessman and producer of *theekanal* (Madhu - Srividya starrer) and the clapping by Bhupesh Babu, businessman and real estate developer of Enkay Homes etc. Shooting has commenced in Mumbai for the film. While some parts of the film will be shot in Mumbai, other scenes will be shot in Kerala. The film is slated to be released in April during Vishu.

New comer Rohit Rajendra, a Mumbai Malayalee, born and brought up in this city is the hero. Archana Kavi (of *Neela Thamara* fame) plays the leading lady.

Other casts include Lal, Menaka, Guinness Pakru, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Salim Kumar, Baburaj, Shoba Mohan, Sreejith Ravi etc.

'Abhiyum Njanum' is directed by SP Mahesh (Changadi Poocha, My Big Father fame). The Story of the film is by Chandrasekharan Nair and Screenplay and Dialogue by Chandrasekharan Nair and SP Mahesh. Cinematography by Sudhi, Music by Pramod Nair, Lyrics by P Jayakumar, Production Controller Nandu Poduval, Production Executive Sasi Poduval and design Gabriel George are the other persons who contribute to the making of this film.



Pooja of 'Abhiyum Njanum' held at Hotel Airlinks, Santacruz



Kerala in Mumbai

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