



# KERALA CALLING



## KERALA SPRINTS INTO A NEW SPORTS ERA

The Government has invested heavily in world-class sports infrastructure and grassroots programmes. Eight years of visionary leadership has transformed the State into a hub for sporting excellence.





# A New Year of Hope and Progress

**T**he beginning of 2025 marks a renewed determination for Kerala to move forward with resilience and purpose. One of the state's most significant undertakings is the rehabilitation of Wayanad's disaster-hit villages of Mundakkai and Chooralmala. The government's comprehensive master plan goes beyond rebuilding homes, aiming to restore livelihoods and create self-sufficient communities. With contributions from across the globe, this initiative showcases the unity and compassion that define Kerala.

In parallel, Kerala is making transformative strides in sports development. The Sports Policy 2023 is a game-changer, ensuring that sports and physical fitness become a right for every citizen. With investments exceeding Rs 3,000 crore, the state is building a robust sports infrastructure, from grassroots playgrounds under the One Panchayat, One Playground initiative to world-class facilities like the Menamkulam High-Performance Centre.

Global collaborations with countries such as the Netherlands and Cuba bring cutting-edge training methods and sports science to Kerala. At the same time, the eagerly awaited visit of Lionel Messi and the Argentine football team promises to inspire a new generation of talent. Programmes like Goal, training 500,000 children in football, and initiatives such as Healthy Kids and One School One Game reflect the state's commitment to inclusivity and excellence.

As we embark on this journey of progress, we take a moment to honour the cultural icons we lost. MT Vasudevan Nair, the literary giant, and Bhava Gayakan P. Jayachandran, a voice that resonated deeply with Keralites, have left an enduring legacy that continues to inspire.

Kerala's journey this year is about honouring its heritage while building a future full of new opportunities. With determination and unity, the state sets an example for others to follow.

**T.V. SUBHASH IAS**  
EDITOR



# KERALA CALLING

JANUARY 01, 2025\_VOL\_45\_No.03

Editor

**T.V. SUBHASH IAS**

Additional Editor

**SALIN MANKUZH**

Deputy Editor

**K.P. SARITHA**

Editor in Charge

**C. RAJESH**

Assistant Editor

**ARATHY K.R.**

Assistant information officer

**AROMAL ANIL**

Circulation Officer

**SREEKANTH M. GIRINATH**

Design & Layout

**ANIL D. PRAKASH**

Illustration

**PRAKASH, SANAL D. PREM**

Printing

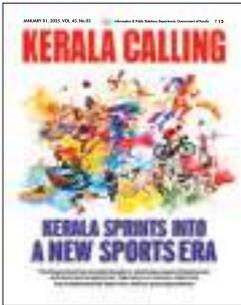
**AKSHARA OFFSET**

Thiruvananthapuram

Photo Credits

**I & PRD PHOTOGRAPHY DIVISION, FACEBOOK,**

**FREEPIK & GOOGLE**



52 Pages including Cover

**Kerala Calling** January 01, 2025\_VOL\_45\_No.03

Views expressed in the articles published in Kerala Calling are not, necessarily, those of the government. Kerala Calling welcomes free expression of divergent views and exchange of ideas through its pages.

## ENQUIRIES

Editorial : 0471 251 8648

Subscription : 0471 251 7036

## TO SUBSCRIBE

Send Rs. 120 as money order to The Director, Information & Public Relations Department, First Floor, Secretariat Annexe, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 001.

The subscription amount will also be received at the State Information Centre, Press Club Building, Thiruvananthapuram. Phone: 0471 251 8471 and at all District Information Offices.

## RESPONSES MAY BE SENT TO MAIL :

keralacalling@gmail.com

facebook.com/KeralaCalling

## EDITORIAL MATERIALS

Articles/features appearing in this magazine are either commissioned or assigned. Nevertheless, other articles are also welcome. A maximum of 750 word is appreciated. Such items should be addressed to The Editor, Kerala Calling, First Floor, Secretariat Annexe, Thiruvananthapuram, Pin 695 001.

# NAVIGATOR

## 06 We Resolve to Rebuild

Pinarayi Vijayan

## 10 Resolving Grievances, Restoring Trust

K. Jyothinath

## 14 Taking a Giant Leap

V. Abdurahiman

## 18 Aiming for World-class Excellence

Staff Reporter

## 20 Harbinger of Hope

Sstaff Reporter

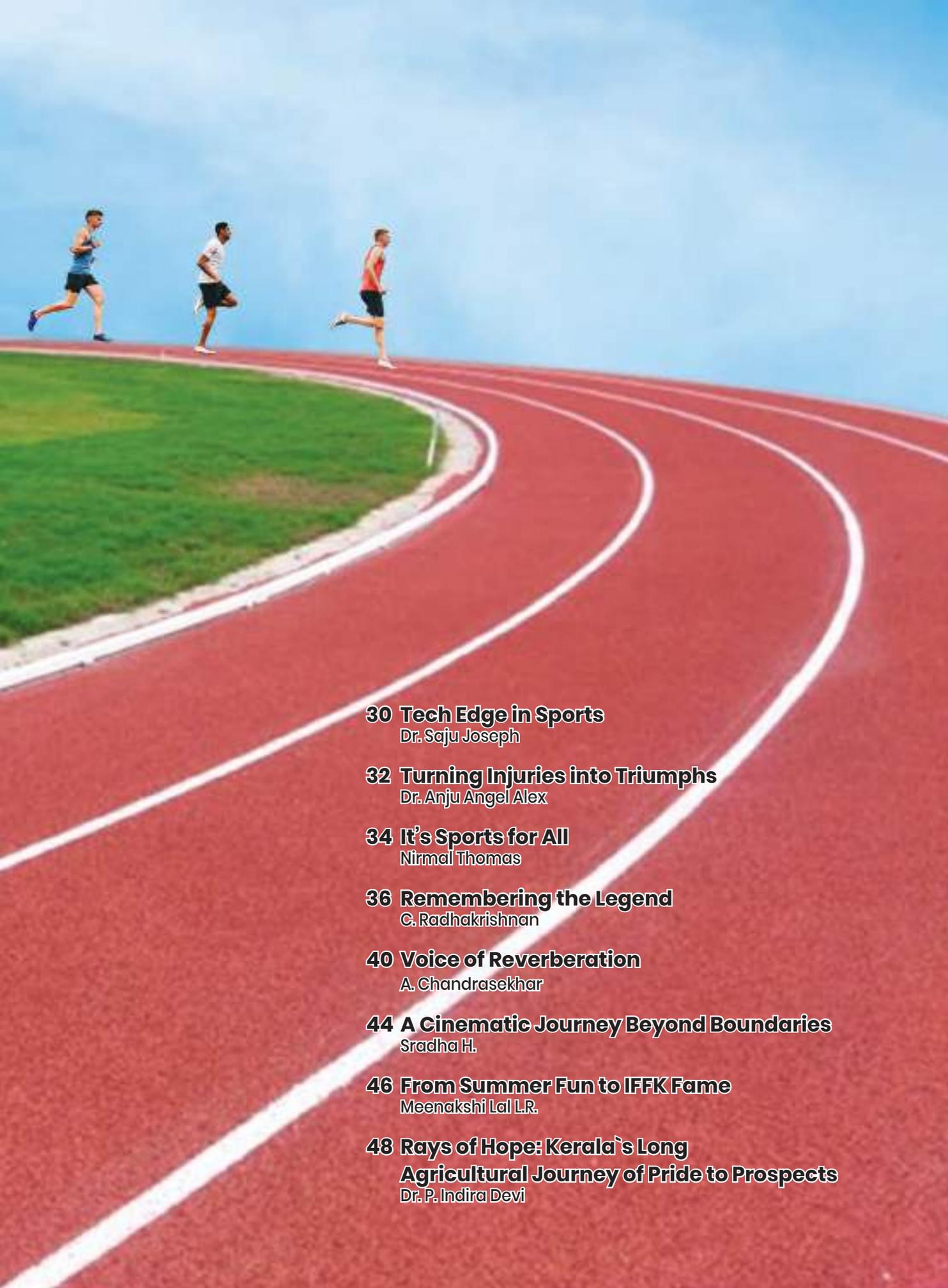
## 26 Kerala's Legacy in a Nutshell

Neeth Mariam

## 28 Tapping Kerala's Sporting Roots

Sanil P. Thomas





**30 Tech Edge in Sports**

Dr. Saju Joseph

**32 Turning Injuries into Triumphs**

Dr. Anju Angel Alex

**34 It's Sports for All**

Nirmal Thomas

**36 Remembering the Legend**

C. Radhakrishnan

**40 Voice of Reverberation**

A. Chandrasekhar

**44 A Cinematic Journey Beyond Boundaries**

Sradha H.

**46 From Summer Fun to IFFK Fame**

Meenakshi Lal L.R.

**48 Rays of Hope: Kerala's Long**

**Agricultural Journey of Pride to Prospects**

Dr. P. Indira Devi

# WE RESOLVE TO REBUILD

**Pinarayi Vijayan**  
Chief Minister



**The Government of Kerala has developed a comprehensive master plan to rehabilitate the disaster-struck villages of Mundakkai and Chooralmala in Wayanad.**

**T**he landslide in Mundakkai and Chooralmala villages in the Meppady Panchayat of Wayanad was unprecedented. The Union Government has categorised it as a disaster of severe nature. The state government initiated rehabilitation efforts immediately after the time-bound completion of rescue and disaster management activities. Keralites worldwide rallied behind this cause, with countless individuals stepping forward to offer their assistance. The government integrated all the contributions received into a comprehensive and transparent mechanism to fund the rehabilitation process.

By rehabilitation, the government envisions not just constructing homes but also providing sustainable livelihoods to help the affected people recover and move forward. The government remains open to cooperating with anyone willing to contribute to this effort. The rehabilitation project will be executed by effectively coordinating all contributions.



*Elstone Estate, Kalpetta, Wayanad*

## **Estates to be Made Townships**

The government has identified 48.96 hectares in the Nedumpala Estate in Kottappadi village and 58.50 hectares in the Elstone Estate in Kalpetta village for the creation of townships. The land is being acquired under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, with the locations identified using drone surveys.

Elstone Estate is situated in Kalpetta Municipality, while Nedumpala Estate falls under the Meppady Panchayat. Considering the difference in land values, 5 cents of land will be allocated to each family in Elstone Estate, and 10 cents in Nedumpala Estate. These townships will include residential buildings, a market, a health centre, a school, an anganwadi, play areas, leisure spaces, and facilities for electricity, drinking water, and sanitation.

## **Livelihood Will Be Ensured**

A micro-plan survey conducted by Kudumbasree identified opportunities for income generation for the affected people. The survey covered 4,658 individuals from 1,084 families in wards 10, 11, and 12 of the Meppady Panchayat. Among these, 79 individuals opted for animal husbandry, 192 chose

agriculture, 1,034 selected small and medium-scale enterprises, and 585 explored other income-generating avenues.

The survey also identified families needing additional support, including 84 families comprising only females, 38 families of widows, 3 families where children are the sole survivors, 4 families consisting only of senior citizens, and 87 families with lone survivors.

The government assures that ownership of the land in the disaster-struck area will remain with its original owners. It will not be taken away. To prevent the natural reforestation of the landslide-affected areas, productive alternatives such as collective farming will be considered in the future.

## **Model Township**

It was announced in the State Assembly that a model township would be constructed to rehabilitate the survivors of the landslide disaster.

In a statement made under Rule 300, it was announced that KIIFB would act as the project management consultancy. Several measures aligned with this statement are already underway.

KIIFB submitted a detailed project report, which was reviewed by the Law and Finance Departments and thoroughly deliberated by the Cabinet. The State Disaster Management Department has been entrusted with governing the township project.

The Cabinet approved the construction of the township under the Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) model.

**The government will employ a three-tier system to implement the rehabilitation project.**

Uralunkal Labour Contract Society has been appointed as the contractor for the township construction.

Before administrative approval is granted, an estimate based on the Delhi Schedule of Rates (DSR) 2018 will be prepared. A detailed estimate will then be created in line with DSR 2018 before technical approval is given. In principle sanction for the project has been granted, under these conditions.

## **Systematic Process for Rehabilitation**

The government will employ a three-tier system to implement the rehabilitation project. The Wayanad Rebuilding Committee, led by the Chief Minister, will spearhead the initiative. The Coordination Committee, chaired by the Chief Secretary, and the Project Implementation Unit, headed by the District Collector, will operate as part of this system.

An advisory committee, led by the Chief Minister, including the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers, and major sponsors, will also be constituted. Transparency and quality assurance in project implementation will be ensured by a committee chaired by the Chief Secretary. This committee, which includes representatives from the Government and KIIFB, will also include an independent engineer and auditor as third-party members.

A tripartite agreement will be established between the District Disaster Management Authority, contractors, and sponsors. The Project Implementation Unit will oversee the execution of this agreement, ensuring compliance with all terms and the timely completion of construction.

The Finance Department has been tasked with evaluating all documents and agreements related to the project and submitting recommendations to the Chief Secretary and the General Administration Department.

## **Special Considerations**

As per the order dated 23 August 2019, the current fixed rate



*Nedumpala Estate, Wayanad*



for rehabilitation is Rs. 10 lakh per family. For the Mundakkai-Chooralmala disaster, families opting to settle outside the township will receive Rs. 15 lakh. The same amount will be provided to the victims of the Vilangad landslide disaster. This decision applies exclusively to these two disasters.

There are five tribal families in need of rehabilitation. Their preferences will be taken into account before finalising their relocation. A sponsorship framework, approved by the Finance Department, will also be sanctioned.

### **Sponsorship Solicited**

A dedicated bank account will be opened to receive sponsorship funds, which will be utilised for the Wayanad rehabilitation project.

Contributions from CMDRF, SDRF, sponsorships, CSR funds, and central aid based on the PDNA report will support the Wayanad township project.

Although beneficiaries will be selected in two phases, the rehabilitation will be implemented in a single phase.

A meeting with sponsors offering to build over 100 homes has already been held, with 38 sponsors committing their support. A separate meeting was held with sponsors willing to build fewer than 100 homes. All sponsors pledged their maximum support to the government.

A separate web portal will be created for sponsors. Details of current sponsors will be displayed on the portal, along with an option for new sponsors to join. Sponsors will be given unique ID numbers to track the progress of the township's construction. An online payment option will also be provided.

**A special unit will be established, and a dedicated officer will be appointed to manage sponsorships.**

A special unit will be established, and a dedicated officer will be appointed to manage sponsorships.

Regular evaluation meetings will be chaired by the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary.

The effort is to ensure that the survivors of the Chooralmala -Mundakkai landslide are able to return to their normal lives as early as possible, and in the best way possible. I am sure that the entire State of Kerala, Keralites across the world and all those who love Kerala around the globe, will stand united in this effort.

# Resolving Grievances, Restoring Trust

**K. Jyothinath**  
Freelance Writer

**Unresolved grievances tangled in red tape, complaints buried under apathy for years, worries overshadowing communities, compounded by the heartbreak of unforeseen disasters... gainst all these challenges, the Kerala government has championed a transformative solution, which brings governance directly to the people and addresses their concerns without delay.**





The initiative, named *Karuthalum Kaithangum* (Care and Assistance), is indeed redefining governance by organising taluk-level grievance adalats where ministers personally engage with the public. It is not just a process but a mission to rebuild trust, foster transparency and deliver justice.

**Listening to the people**

People came -- some alone, others with families--bearing the weight of their worries in complaints. And the government listened, offering immediate resolutions wherever possible. For more complex issues, collaborative brainstorming paved the way for customised solutions, rekindling faith in a system often criticised for its inefficiencies.

This innovative programme, which has now entered its second phase, has already left an indelible mark on the daily lives of people while also setting a new model of governance to the country. Earlier efforts in this direction, including ministerial adalats, department-specific grievance mechanisms, and the *Nava Kerala Sadass*, too have helped clear a significant backlog of complaints, leaving only a fraction of long-standing issues for this phase of the Adalat.

**A state-wide mission**

The state-level inauguration of this edition of the taluk-level grievance adalats took place in Thiruvananthapuram on December 9, 2024, marking the beginning of a comprehensive state-wide campaign. The first phase spanned districts like Thiruvananthapuram, Pathanamthitta, Kozhikode, Kottayam, and Kannur, concluding on January 13, 2025. Subsequent phases have extended the program to Idukki, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kasaragod, and other districts, ensuring no corner of the state is overlooked.

Since its inception in 2016, the Pinarayi Vijayan-led Left Democratic Front government has placed significant emphasis on grievance redressal. In April-May 2023, to mark the ministry's second anniversary, taluk-level adalats were introduced. Buoyed by their success, the programme has now expanded, with ministers leading the charge.



## Hands-on leadership

The defining feature of these adalats is the direct

**Ministerial adalats, department-specific grievance mechanisms and the Nava Kerala Sadass have helped clear a significant backlog of complaints, leaving only a fraction of long-standing issues for this phase of the Adalat.**

involvement of ministers. In Thiruvananthapuram, Ministers V. Sivankutty and G. R. Anil spearheaded the initiative, while Pathanamthitta witnessed the leadership of Veena George and P. Rajeev. Kozhikode saw the presence of P.A. Muhammad Riyas and A.K. Saseendran, Kottayam welcomed V.N. Vasavan and Roshy Augustine, and Kannur was guided by Kadannappally Ramachandran and P. Prasad.

This hands-on leadership reflects a commitment to empathetic governance. As Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan noted during the inauguration, the adalats aim

to help people “savour the taste of governance.” However, he also acknowledged the persistence of outdated practices

in some government offices. “The hangover of delaying files as if it is a special right still exists in some places. That is not what this land wants. The government will not accept it,” he declared, promising stricter measures against such practices.

## Streamlining governance

To address the issue of delays, the Chief Minister also outlined plans to strengthen online systems. “Over 800 services have already been brought online, and more will follow, especially at the Panchayat and Revenue levels, where most people seek assistance,” he said. These steps aim to eliminate bottlenecks, ensuring smoother service delivery.

## From complaints to solutions

The adalats have seen an overwhelming response. In Kozhikode, 2,002 complaints were registered over four days, with 867 resolved on the spot. In Thiruvananthapuram, 4,589 grievances were filed online, and 3,010 were



## addressed promptly.

But behind these numbers lie stories of lives transformed. In Pathanamthitta, M.K. Ramani, a widow tormented by the threat of towering trees near her home, found relief when Industries Minister P. Rajeev ordered their removal.

In Thiruvananthapuram, a displaced deaf and mute couple, Suresh and Parvathi, were given priority in a housing scheme after presenting their case. Meanwhile, in Cherthala, differently-abled Sanalkumar's plea for a paved road reached Fisheries and Culture Minister Saji Cherian, who ensured its completion, benefiting the entire local community.

## Restoring faith in governance

The grievances addressed were diverse-- requests for ration card reclassifications, building permits, tax payments, encroachment resolutions, and wetland protection. Many were resolved instantly, while others were

expedited for action within weeks.

Faces once etched with worry left the adalats visibly relieved. Their gratitude was a testament to the program's success and the government's unwavering commitment to efficient governance.

**The grievances addressed were diverse-- requests for ration card reclassifications, building permits, tax payments, encroachment resolutions, and wetland protection.**

life touched, a burden lifted, and a promise of better days fulfilled.

Kerala's taluk-level grievance adalats are a shining example of governance rooted in empathy, efficiency, and accountability. By bridging the gap between policymakers and the public, these forums have transformed grievances into stories of hope and trust.

The journey toward a complaint-free Kerala continues, driven by determination, compassion, and a vision for a brighter tomorrow. Every resolved grievance is more than just a case closed --it's a

# Taking a Giant Leap

**V. Abdurahiman**  
Minister for Sports





It has been four years of significant and expectation-driven changes in the field of sports. Along with the effective continuation of the progress achieved during the previous government's tenure, we take pride in our ability to implement innovations that align with the times in the sports sector. Just as in areas like health and education, we aim to establish a 'Kerala Model' in sports as well.

The government is intervening with a clear understanding of its significance. With a thorough grasp of Kerala's unique situation, the government has implemented developmental activities across all sectors of sports. We prioritize sports stars and games and we have also taken strong actions to put an end to the wrong trends in the sports sector.

### **Focus on Infrastructural Development**

The government has undertaken approximately ₹ 3,000 crore worth of construction activities in the sports sector. The 2024-25 budget allocated around ₹ 200 crore for the development of basic infrastructure in sports. We are building stadiums, both indoor and outdoor, football turfs, synthetic tracks, swimming pools, and more in both urban and rural areas. Hundreds of projects, both large and small, are progressing in various stages. We are also accelerating the construction of the Sports Bhavan which marks a great coordination in the administration of sports sector in the state.

Under the "One Panchayat, One Playground" initiative, we are establishing high-quality playgrounds in every panchayat. We have prepared the list for the first phase, which includes 124 panchayats. Four playgrounds have already opened to the public. We are progressing with the construction of approximately ninety playgrounds in various stages. We have set up seven state-of-the-art fitness centres across different districts, and we are constructing five more.

### **Overhaul of Sports Sector**

We have formulated a comprehensive sports policy to thoroughly reform the sports sector. This is the first such extensive sports policy in the country. The fundamental principle of the policy is 'Sports for All'. The policy also promotes the vision of a 'Sports Economy Mission', pushing forward the development of the sports sector. Today, Kerala stands among the few regions that seriously view the sports economy. The policy includes proactive suggestions for implementing sports development activities with private sector involvement.



As the first step in implementing actions in line with the sports policy, we organized the country's first Sports Summit in January 2023. Through the summit, Kerala showcased its sports achievements and potential to the world while also sharing best sports practices. We are actively pursuing plans worth ₹5,050 crore,

**With a view to realize decentralized approach to sports development, we have established sports councils at the local Panchayat level.**

agreed upon during the summit, for implementation. Initiatives such as e-sports, College League, One School One Game, and NBF have now become a reality. We will soon implement activities to develop world-class stadiums for cricket and football.

The policy is based on a decentralized approach to sports development.

With this goal in mind, we have established sports councils at the local Panchayat level. We are taking steps to expand sports activities to grassroots levels with the help of Panchayat, Municipal, and Corporation Regional Sports Councils.

Along with infrastructure development, we are implementing changes across all levels of the sports sector. We are bringing about a contemporary transformation by integrating areas such as school-level sports, sports training, competitions, sports science, sports management, and the sports industry.

### **Instilling Fitness Awareness**

We are providing sports education from the lower primary level in consultation with the Department of General Education. We

have extended the 'Healthy Kids' program, aimed at enhancing the physical and mental abilities of primary school children, to 30 more schools. The government is actively taking steps to provide high-quality sports training to talented children. We are carrying out the 'Goal' project, which aims to train 500,000 children in football. In the first phase, we have trained 100,000 children. We are setting up expert training centres in 140 constituencies.

Strengthening cooperation with foreign countries is also essential for comprehensive sports development. We have expanded the G.V. Raja Football Academy in collaboration with the world-renowned club, AC Milan. A crucial aspect of sports development is organizing more competitions, and we have made efforts to host more international events. We held the Asian Mountain Cycling Championship in Ponmudi and organized an international chess tournament. We have scheduled a friendly match with the World Cup-winning Argentina football team at the end of this year. Argentina's visit will significantly contribute to awakening interest in Indian football. Football fans in Kerala will have the opportunity to meet their idols in person.

### **Eyeing Excellence**

The policy has been designed not only to bring Kerala to the forefront of sports excellence but also to



bring about a comprehensive shift in the approach to sports in both the sports community and the general public. The core aim of the policy is to create a New Kerala that ensures public health and

**Argentina's visit will significantly contribute to awakening interest in Indian football. Football fans in Kerala will have the opportunity to meet their idols in person.**

physical fitness. The fundamental principle of the policy is 'Sports for All, Health for All'. A unique proposal in the policy is to make sports and physical fitness activities a right for every citizen. One of the primary goals of the new sports policy is to develop a sports economy. This is the

first attempt in India to integrate the sports sector into the economy. Developed countries with a strong presence in sports have successfully incorporated sports into their economies. The policy aims to provide substantial support to private entrepreneurs in the sports sector. Furthermore, we will increasingly adopt the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for infrastructure development. We will offer maximum incentives for investment in the sports sector. We will also make effective use of opportunities to collaborate with other sectors.

We will prioritize collaboration with tourism, health, education, industry, and cooperative sectors.

The policy will promote higher education in the fields of sports technology, sports management, and sports science, thereby creating the necessary human resources in these sectors right here in Kerala. We will establish a sports institute in collaboration with Calicut University. The government will implement various activities and projects through the participation of private entrepreneurs, cooperative sectors, public sector enterprises, and government departments. The state aims to become self-sufficient in sports equipment manufacturing and technology. We will give maximum encouragement to start-ups and innovators in the sports sector.

The government is trying to develop the sports sector as a major job provider. We aim to achieve 100% growth in employment opportunities in this field within the next five years. We estimate that approximately 10,000 jobs will be created within one year. The aim is to popularize sports among the youth while simultaneously increasing employment opportunities, with a focus on promoting the e-sports sector.

Such a comprehensive approach will not only transform Kerala into a major sports power but also set an example for other Indian states. Through the effective implementation of the sports policy, we will create a population with health, physical fitness, and social commitment. We will integrate the sports sector into all aspects of public life. As a result, a Kerala Sports Model will emerge, one that is worthy of emulation worldwide.

# Aiming for World-class Excellence



**The remarkable achievements of GV Raja Sports School in the State School Athletic Meet stand as proof of the success of the initiatives undertaken for its development.**

## **Staff Reporter**

**T**he school secured 75 medals across various events. This improvement is remarkable, considering the school once had no medals to its name. Out of the 200 students who participated from GV Raja in the state school meet, 127 managed to contribute to the medal tally. The school secured medals in all the sports it trains for, including athletics, boxing, football, judo, hockey, volleyball, and cricket. Notably, boxing and judo saw the highest number of medals, followed by impressive performances in athletics.

The school, which has been transformed into international

standards, has been selected as a Khelo India Centre of Excellence. This feat was achieved following the establishment of top-notch infrastructure.

## **Renovating from Scratch**

Previously, the school struggled with inadequate sports facilities, leading to a decline in athletic excellence. However, the sports department's decision to take over the school in 2017 marked a turning point, evidenced by the subsequent positive changes.

Comprehensive plans were formulated and executed to ensure the school's holistic progress. The school aims to become the best sports school in the country by 2025 and one of the world's top training centers by 2030. Over ₹30 crore has been invested in the school's development, including infrastructure enhancements, specialized training,



and the introduction of sports science programs.

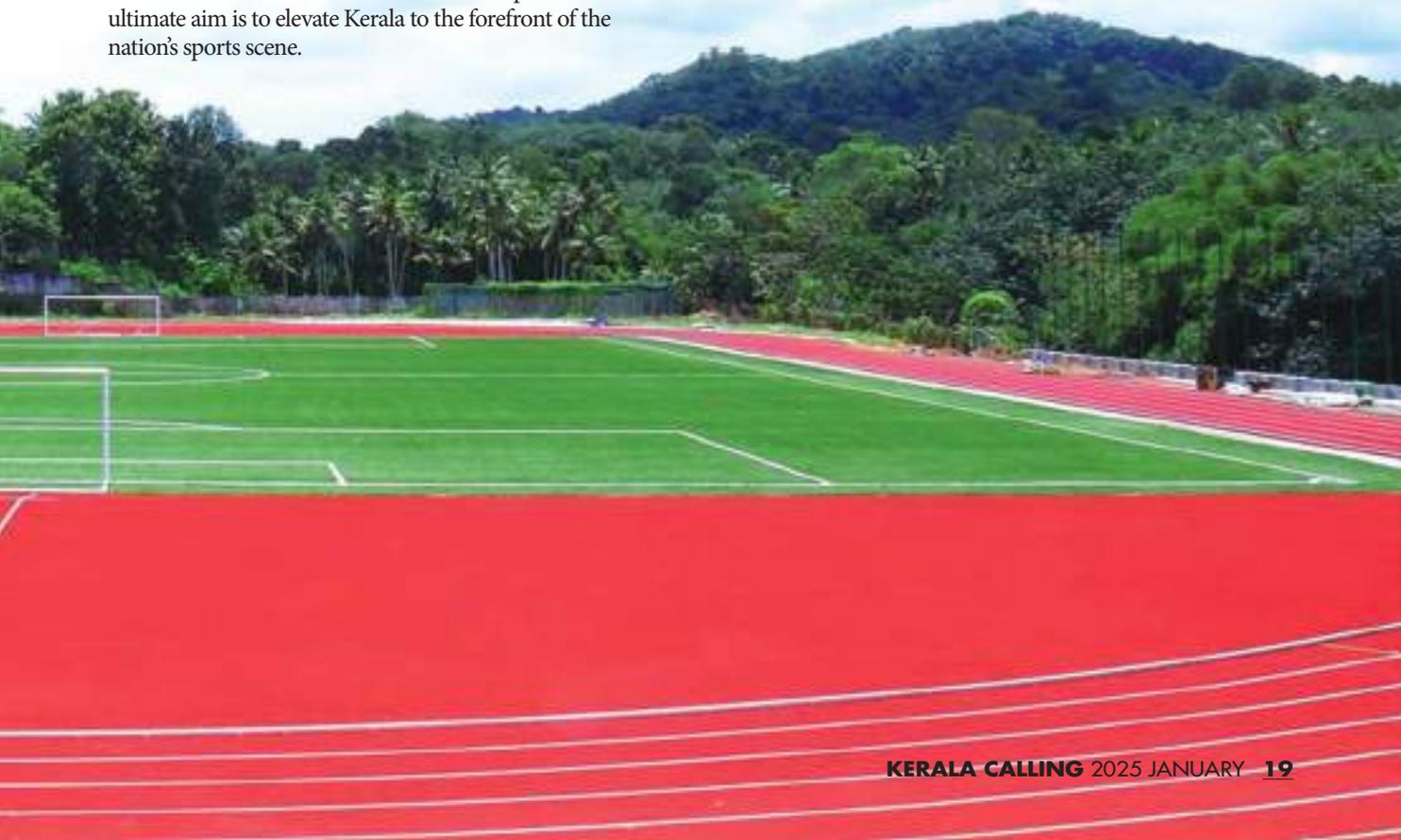
Facilities such as a synthetic track, football turf, basketball and volleyball courts, hockey turf, indoor facilities for judo, wrestling, and boxing, a high jump pit, and a modern fitness center have been established. The hostels have been renovated and modern kitchens and dining halls have been set up. Washing machines have been provided for students' clothing, and hi-tech classrooms and an e-library have been introduced. Sports medicine and physiotherapy services, along with a CCTV network, have been implemented for enhanced security and care.

### **Talent Hunt**

The selection process has been expanded to include more students, with talent hunts conducted in rural schools to identify promising athletes. The school has also partnered with the global football giant AC Milan to launch a football academy, offering high-quality training. Admission has been extended to 6th and 7th graders, enabling the identification of talent at a younger age. More coaches have been appointed based on the student ratio.

GV Raja Sports School plans to implement further development projects to enhance training standards, securing the services of expert trainers. Plans are also underway to accommodate an additional 300 students for residential training. To address space constraints, the school has acquired more land nearby for constructing hostels and other facilities.

The goal is for GV Raja School to win 500 medals out of the 5,000 available in state-level school competitions. The ultimate aim is to elevate Kerala to the forefront of the nation's sports scene.



# Harbinger of Hope

Staff Reporter

**The Pinarayi Vijayan government has ushered in remarkable changes in every facet of sports development in the state.**





## Sports Policy

The Sports Policy 2023 aims to radically reform the sports sector of Kerala. The policy was formulated to achieve the objectives of Sports for all, sports development from school level, giving quality training and moulding quality sportspersons. Kerala has become the first state in the country to formulate a comprehensive sports policy. The sports policy has been prepared with the vision to bring about comprehensive changes in the approach of the general public towards the sports sector. The policy proposes a specific objective of making sports and physical fitness activities the basic right of every citizen. The policy also puts forward a progressive vision called Sports Economy Mission. This new roadmap aims to create a sustainable sports ecosystem that benefits athletes, sports-related industries and society as a whole and to utilize the economic potential of the sports sector. By integrating sports with other sectors, new sources of income can be created. The government also aims to achieve 100 percent growth in job opportunities in this field within the next 5 years.

Steps have been initiated to make physical education mandatory from the lower primary level, with textbooks prepared for young students. A long-standing demand for a specialized syllabus for sports schools is being addressed, with a syllabus being developed for all sports schools in the state.

## Infrastructure

- The government is spending Rs 2500 crore including

KIIFB fund and Sports Department fund for infrastructural development. Of this, Rs 1000 crores is spent by KIIFB and Rs 1500 crore from plan fund and MLA fund.

- Sports Kerala Foundation (SKF) has been formed under the Sports Department for the development of infrastructure in the sports sector and the maintenance of playgrounds and stadiums. The SKF will manage all the playgrounds under the department.
- Developmental works worth Rs 30 crore was done in G.V.Raja Sports School.
- A sports division has been started in Kunnampulam, Thrissur, on the model of the Kannur sports division. The Thrissur sports division was started with 30 children each in classes 7 and 8. A high-quality football court, an 8-lane synthetic track and a training ground have been prepared. Construction worth Rs 10 crore was done in Kannur and Kunnampulam Sports divisions.
- Three football academies have been started under the leadership of the Directorate of Sports and the Sports Council. Two of them are for girls only. The Directorate's academies are in Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur. The

one in Kannur is for girls. The Sports Council's women's football academy is in Ernakulam.

- Sports complexes have been constructed in Chalakkudy, Kodumon, Neeleswaram, Thrithala, Thalassery, Mattannur, Parali, Thirumittakkod, Chittoor, Preethikulangara, Kalpetta, Tanur, Vadakara, Meppayur, Naduvannur and Nedumkandam.
- Sports Bhavan, envisaged as the headquarters for all the institutions under Department of Sports, is being constructed in Thiruvananthapuram.
- With a view to set up quality playgrounds in all the Panchayats in Kerala, the government started One Panchayat, One Playground project. In the first phase, playgrounds are being set up in 124 Panchayats. The first playground was started in Kallikkad in Thiruvananthapuram.
- In collaboration with the Tourism Department, the construction of open gyms has begun in selected centers in 7 districts. Open gyms are in Kozhikode, Kannur, Alappuzha, Thiruvananthapuram, Wayanad and Malappuram districts.

- The first Pinarayi Vijayan government started 8 Sports Life Fitness Centers in various districts. This government started 7 fitness centers in Konni, Pala, Kottappadi, Chittoor, Anthoor, Olavanna, and Mavelikkara. Operations will start soon in Ottappalam, Thalassery, Cheruvathur, Azhikode, and Tanur.
- The construction of playground is underway in schools under the Fisheries Department. It has been completed in Varkala. Work is in the final stages in Azhikkal, Koyilandy, Arthunangal and Tanur.
- For the first time in the state, corporation, municipality and panchayat level sports councils were formed.

## **Institute of Sports**

The new sports policy highlights the establishment of a sports institute in collaboration with Kerala's higher education department. This institute will offer courses in sports science, sports management, and sports technology. The first sports institute will be launched in partnership with Calicut University.

## **Menamkulam High-Performance Center**

Preliminary works, including the design for a high-performance center at Menamkulam, Thiruvananthapuram, have been completed. This state-of-the-art facility will be established on 16 acres at an estimated cost of ₹56 crore. The





center will have residential facilities and training infrastructure suitable for international teams.

## International Sports Summit

Kerala became the first state in the country to organise sports summit. The summit aimed to showcase the excellence and potential of Kerala's sports and emulate the best sports role models in the world. The first summit was held in Thiruvananthapuram from January 23 to 26, 2024. Sportspersons and experts from across the country and 8 different countries took part in the event. An investment of Rs 5050 crore was agreed upon at the summit.

As per the agreement reached at the Sports Summit, a fitness development program has been launched in association with the Qatar-based NBF Academy. The project involves setting up NBF boxes in collaboration with educational institutions, clubs and local self-government bodies. The boxes, which are similar to containers, will contain fitness training equipment and other exercise facilities. Expert trainers will also be appointed.

## Catch them Young

The government has decided to incorporate sports education at the lower primary level. Several initiatives like 'Healthy Kids' have been introduced to make sports a part of life for young children. 'Healthy Kids' is a comprehensive sports and recreation program for primary students. Initially launched in 25 schools during the previous government's tenure, it has

now been reintroduced and expanded to 30 more schools. With the support of social clubs and other organizations, the program will be rolled out to around 200 more schools. The initiative features entertaining games and selected recreational equipment to attract children.

## Inimitable Initiatives

- The 'One School One Game' project was launched in collaboration with sports business giant Decathlon. Under this, selected government, aided schools will be accorded a specific sport and the necessary sports equipment. The first phase of the project was implemented in 80 schools that excelled in the field of sports.
- The Goal project has been launched to provide football training to 5 lakh children in 5 years. In the first phase, 1 lakh people were trained in 1000 centers. One center each has been started in 140 constituencies for expert training. Training is provided for 30 selected children.
- Sprint project has been started in schools for athletics training.
- A project called *Judoko* for judo training and Punch project for boxing training were started

at the school level. Boxing was started in 5 centers and judo in 10 centers. Hoops project for basketball training was started in 6 schools.

## College League

The state's sports policy places strong emphasis on college sports. The government plans to establish an extensive league that involves college teams competing across various disciplines. The league will be jointly organized by the departments of Sports and Higher Education, with competitions in football, cricket, volleyball, and kabaddi.

The state will be divided into four zones, and the league will run for a period of three to six months. Inspired by professional leagues, the competition will follow a home-and-away format. District-level committees will select the teams for the league, and the top four teams from each zone will qualify for the state-level competition. A total of 16 teams from each discipline will compete at the state level. Experts and professional players from national leagues will oversee and evaluate the matches.

As part of the league initiative, sports clubs will be established in all colleges.

Students who excel in the league will have opportunities to transition into professional leagues.

## Hustle and Bustle

- Post-COVID, more competitions were organized in the state. The National Senior Women's Football Championship was held in Kerala for the first time.
- The Santhosh Trophy final round matches were held in Malappuram district in 2022 with great fanfare.
- Kerala hosted the Federation Cup National Athletics Championships for the first time.
- Two India Grand Prix Athletics Championships organized by the Athletics Federation of India were held in Thiruvananthapuram.
- The first National Jumps Championships were also held.
- National Shooting Championship was held at Vattiyoorkavu Range.
- College Games were organized under the leadership of Sports Council.
- CM Gold Cup Football Championship was organized with the participation of the best under-17 teams of each district.
- Asian Mountain Biking Championship, which was hosted by India for the first time, was organized at Ponnudi. About twenty countries participated.





## Collaborating with the Best in the World

Kerala is taking strong strides toward enhancing its sports development by embracing international cooperation. The state is actively adopting modern training systems and technical assistance to align with contemporary standards.

### **Collaboration with the Netherlands**

Kerala is collaborating with the Netherlands to boost the development of hockey and football. The Royal Netherlands Football Association is leading the football training initiatives, while the Boveler Foundation is overseeing hockey development. The Royal Netherlands Football Association is one of the most prestigious football associations in the world, and the Boveler Foundation, named after former hockey player Floris Jan Boveler, focuses on promoting hockey across Asian and African countries.

As part of the initial phase, expert training sessions were conducted last year for coaches from sports schools, Kerala State Sports Council, and football and hockey associations. Coaches from the Boveler Foundation and the Royal Netherlands Football Association led these training camps. The second phase will focus on collaboration in sports science and new technologies, while the third phase will introduce a Kerala-Netherlands exchange program for athletes and coaches.

### **Collaboration with Cuba**

Following the Chief Minister's visit to Cuba, steps to foster sports training collaboration with the nation are progressing rapidly. Discussions were held during the visit of the Cuban Ambassador to Kerala. As a part of this collaboration, an international chess festival involving grandmasters from both India and Cuba was organized.

An exchange program for coaches and athletes will be launched, allowing Kerala's athletes and trainers to visit Cuba and vice versa. Cuba has promised to provide coaching expertise in judo, boxing, wrestling, and athletics. A 50-day boxing training camp, facilitated by Cuban coaches, has been planned. Additionally, Cuba will extend technical and academic support to the Sports Institute, which is being established in collaboration with Calicut University.

### **Partnership with Victoria University**

Kerala's sports development initiative is also progressing through collaboration with Victoria University, a reputed institution in Australia. The first phase involved workshops for coaches from sports schools and the State Sports Council. In the next phase, classes led by sports experts from Victoria University will be conducted.

# Kerala's Legacy in a Nutshell

Neeth Mariam



**Sportspersons from Kerala have consistently excelled in athletics, football, volleyball, and less conventional sports like luge and cycle polo, showcasing the state's ability to nurture talent across a wide range of areas.**

**K**erala has consistently made its mark in the Indian and international sports landscape, with athletes excelling individually and as part of teams. From the early days of athletics to contemporary sports events, the state has produced champions who have brought pride and recognition to the country. The story of Kerala's prominence in sports begins with C.K. Lakshmanan, the first Malayalee Olympian, who competed in the 1924 Paris Olympics in the 110m hurdles. Though he did not reach the finals, his participation laid the foundation for Kerala's future athletes. Since then, Keralites have repeatedly showcased their prowess across various sports disciplines.



C.K. Lakshmanan



Manuel Frederick (hockey)

## Athletics:

### The Crown Jewel of Kerala Sports

Athletics remains one of Kerala's strongest areas, producing numerous champions and record holders. P.T. Usha, known as the '*Payyoli Express*' of Indian Athletics, remains an iconic figure. Usha's outstanding achievements include winning four gold medals at the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and narrowly missing a bronze at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics by just one-hundredth of a second in the 400m hurdles. Her performance in the Jakarta Asian Championship (1985), where she secured five golds, cemented her status as one of the finest athletes India has ever produced. Another significant athlete is Anju Bobby George, the first Indian to win a medal at the World Athletics Championship (Paris, 2003), where she clinched bronze in the long jump. Her victory at the 2002 Busan Asian Games and the Athletic Super Grand Prix (2005, Doha) made her a household name. In a moment of justice, she was awarded the gold medal at the 2005

World Athletics Meet (Monte Carlo) after her Russian competitor was disqualified for doping. M.D. Valsamma set an Asian record by winning gold in the 400m hurdles at the 1982 Delhi Asian Games, while K.M. Beenamol became the first Keralite to win the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award in 2002–03. Beenamol also made it to the semi-finals in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and secured gold in the Asian Games.

## Team Sports and World Champions

Kerala's contributions to team sports are equally commendable. Manual Federicks was the first to have won Olympic medal. He was part of the Indian hockey team that secured bronze at the 1972 Munich Olympics. P R Sreejesh won back to back medals, bronze in 2020 and 2024.

Volleyball legend Jimmy George was one of the finest players to represent India internationally, even playing professionally in Italy. India's volleyball teams, captained by Keralites such as T.D. Joseph (Pappan) and Cyril Valloor, secured silver and bronze at the Asian Games (1962 and 1986). Kerala's dominance in football is underscored by athletes like Thiruvalla Pappan, O Chandrashekar and M. Devdas, who represented India in the Olympics. In domestic football, Kerala's triumph in the Santosh Trophy (1973, 1992, 1993, 2001, 2004) remains memorable, with Mony's hat trick in the 1973 finals still celebrated.

## World Champions and Record Holders

Apart from athletics and team sports, Kerala has produced world champions across unique sports. P. S. Prasoon won gold in the 125 kg category at the Sub-junior World Powerlifting Championship (2003, New Delhi), while K.C. Lekha bagged gold at the World Boxing Championship (Delhi, 75 kg category). In cycling, P. Sivakumar, P. Praveen Kumar, and T. Kumar were integral to India's victories in the World Cycle Polo Championships. Kerala also boasts chess prodigies such as Nihal Sarin, who won the World Youth Chess Championship (2014, under-10 category), and G.N. Gopal, the first Grandmaster from Kerala and S L Narayanan who won the Asian Under – 16 title.

Joby Mathew, despite physical challenges, became a world champion in arm wrestling. Kerala's sporting legacy extends to winter sports as well, with Shiva Keshavan representing India in five Winter Olympics in the luge event and captaining the team at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.



*P.S. Prasoon (powerlifting)*



*K.C. Lekha (boxing)*



*G.N. Gopal (chess)*



*Shiva Keshavan (luge)*



*P. Sivakumar (Cycle Polo)*



*T. Kumar (Cycle Polo)*

## Cricket and Badminton Achievements

Kerala has left its mark on cricket, with Narayana Swami being the first Malayalee to have worn Test cap, followed by Tinu Yohannan and Sreesanth. Sanju Samson has played in T20 and one day matches, yet to make his Test debut. In women's cricket, Minnu Mani, Asha Sobhana and Sajana Sajeevan have played for India. We can hope that at least one among them will soon make it to the Test squad.

In badminton, U. Vimal Kumar represented India at the Olympics, and George Thomas secured a silver at the 1998 Commonwealth Games. Kerala's badminton legacy is upheld by players like Jaseel P. Ismail, Aparna Balan, and V. Diju.

In badminton, H S Prannoy, Tresa Jolly, P C Thulasi and Arathi Sara Sunil have brought multiple laurels to the nation. Deepika Pallickal is lauded as the golden girl in Indian Squash.

## Unique Sporting Events:

### Triathlon at National Games

The 35th National Games (2015), hosted by Kerala, introduced exciting events such as the Triathlon, held against the stunning backdrop of Vellayani Lake and Kovalam. The triathlon, consisting of swimming, cycling and running, highlighted Kerala's ability to blend nature with sports, enhancing both the competition and the experience for athletes.

Kerala's success at national events such as the Santosh Trophy and the National Games further underscores the state's dominance in team sports, while individual athletes continue to shine on the international stage. Sportspersons from Kerala have consistently excelled in athletics, football, volleyball, and less conventional sports like luge and cycle polo, showcasing the state's ability to nurture talent across a wide range of arenas. This rich legacy continues to motivate and shape future generations, fostering a culture where sports thrive alongside academic and artistic pursuits.

As Kerala's young athletes step into the spotlight, they carry forward the legacy of their predecessors, driven by a spirit of perseverance and the belief that they can achieve greatness.

The story of Kerala's sporting achievements is far from over. With a strong foundation built on years of dedication and hard work, the state is poised to continue its journey of excellence in Indian sports. The legacy of Kerala's sports stars will undoubtedly inspire generations to come, reinforcing the idea that with passion and determination, the boundaries of success are limitless. ■

# Tapping Kerala's Sporting Roots



**Sanil P. Thomas**  
Sports Journalist



**Kerala's rich tradition and innate talent in sports like archery, rowing, and gymnastics hold immense potential for producing future champions through Special Area Games.**

**T**he dramatic upsurge in India's performance in the last few Olympics is a telling comment on how talent has spread far and wide across the country. Other than Neeraj Chopra in athletics and P. V. Sindhu and Saina Nehwal in badminton, many of our Olympic medal winners have been in wrestling, boxing, shooting, etc. In archery, rowing, and other disciplines, we have come a long way. In archery, we narrowly missed the podium at the Paris Olympics.

The revolution began in the mid-1980s. It was B. V. P. Rao, an Assam cadre IAS officer from Hyderabad, who revolutionised Indian sports. The Special Area Games, which brought about this change, was his brainchild. When Rao was an Officer on Special Duty with SAI, he implemented SAG.

According to Rao, certain areas in India, especially tribal and rural regions, possess a traditional sports culture. Inborn talent is abundant for certain sports, though local people are often unaware of the modern versions of these sports. Grooming such traditional talent to fetch India medals was Rao's concept—and it worked.

The innate skill for archery in Bihar, wrestling in Haryana and Wayanad, water sports in Port Blair and Alappuzha, gymnastics in Thalassery, and fencing in North Kerala needed to be tapped. SAI,



under Rao, started training centres in these places. The rest is history.

## Producing Sports Stars

As mentioned above, Kerala got three or four centres under the scheme. Olympians in fencing and rowing emerged from these Kerala centres. Why did Rao select specific places in Kerala?

Kuttanad, Kainakari, and other areas in Alappuzha have a rich tradition of rowing boats. The people used small wooden boats for travelling and crossing rivers. From childhood onwards, they practised boating. Furthermore, Alappuzha is famous for boat racing. Rowing, canoeing, kayaking, etc., are modern forms of boat racing. Rao believed the inborn talent in these areas could be unlocked. In 1987, SAI started a water sports centre in Alappuzha. It produced many international stars.

**The innate skill for archery in Bihar, wrestling in Haryana and Wayanad, water sports in Port Blair and Alappuzha, gymnastics in Thalassery, and fencing in North Kerala needed to be tapped.**

been introduced. If young people from the Kurichiyar community are well-trained, they will excel in archery. The state government

The same applies to archery, fencing, gymnastics, etc. The Malabar region has a rich history of traditional forms of these sports disciplines. The Kurichiyar, an Adivasi tribe in Malabar, were renowned for their skill with bow and arrow. Thalakkal Chandu and his men were in the archery team of Pazhassi Raja. In Kozhikode, the Thalakkal Chandu Trophy archery competition has

started archery academies in Pulppally and Thodupuzha.

Malabar was also known for Kalaripayattu. It is believed that Parasuraman, who created Kerala, also established 42 Kalaris. Thacholi Othenan and Unniyarcha lived in the 18th century. Proven history shows that Kalaripayattu has been practised in Kerala for over three centuries. C. V. Narayanan Gurukkal started CVN Kalari in Nadakkavu, Kozhikode, in 1945. Thousands now practise Kalaripayattu throughout Kerala. These young talents could also be trained in fencing. Moreover, Kalaripayattu itself has become a recognised event nationally.

Circus in Kerala also has a century-old history. In 1901, Circus Kalari came into being. Malabar Circus was established in 1904. Keeleri Kunjikkannan, a gymnastics teacher at Basel Mission School, Thalassery, initiated exercises associated with the circus. Later, Gemini Shankaran, a skilled gymnast, formed a circus company. Thalassery's tradition in gymnastics could be explored further. In 2010, the Department of Sports, Government of Kerala, started a circus academy, but it failed to take off.

Some areas in Kerala also have a tradition of swimming and volleyball. It is high time Kerala explored the potential of its traditional games. Like SAG by SAI, the Kerala Sports Council could formulate a plan for Special Area Games in line with our traditions. ■

# Tech Edge in Sports



**Dr. Saju Joseph**

Former High-Performance Director, Sports Authority of India & General Secretary, Indian National Strength & Conditioning Association



## Cutting-edge technology is revolutionising sports by enhancing performance, preventing injuries, and transforming athlete training and recovery

In the past 25 years, many international sports performance records have been broken at the Olympics and World Championships. This is largely due to the strides taken by the sporting industry in innovation and cutting-edge technologies that have enabled athletes to enhance their performance, prevent injuries, and develop recovery measures that allow them to compete repeatedly in back-to-back events.

On the other hand, the rapid increase in sports technology has captured the sports market, where high-performance athletes' demand for smart wearables, sensors, machine learning, augmented reality, and other technologies has led to marginal gains in performance from various contributing factors. The sports industry has not only targeted athletes but has also grown significantly by engaging spectators, visualising performances, and providing

recaps of sporting events. It has also improved the overall experience in professional sports, whether from a stadium perspective or home viewing on television.

To a great extent, national federations, the Sports Authority of India, associations, coaches, performance analysts, and sports scientists have undergone massive changes in preparing athletes for training and competitions. Some of the technological areas are mentioned below:

### Wearable Sensors and Performance Analysis

Various wearable sensors are now used alongside artificial intelligence to analyse and monitor athletes' performance. Such systems enable coaches and athletes to plan their load dynamics through a data-driven approach, optimising training and enhancing overall performance. In high-performance sports, sports scientists and support teams use these tools to predict training load dynamics, physiological changes, and biochemical changes before, during, and after training or competition. They also monitor biomechanics, performance, injury risks, recovery markers, and game performance using various technologies that aim for marginal gains. Gadgets such as GPS, inertial sensors, EMG, pressure sensors, VO<sub>2</sub>, and muscle oxygen sensors quantify workload in terms of intensity and volume,

which are crucial for performance and injury prevention.

## **Injury Tracking and Prevention through Digital Athlete Software**

Numerous technologies have emerged to implement injury prevention and tracking through data analysis, wearable suits, and sensors. This technology integrates load dynamics, biomechanical, physiological, and general physical data, tracking athlete performance during training and competition. Any deviation from the norms of the sport places the athlete at risk of injury.

For an athlete, rehabilitation after an injury is a Herculean task, as it may take months or even years to return to the sport. For professional athletes or teams, having a team of physiotherapists and sports scientists is common. However, for lower-level athletes, this luxury is often out of reach. Applications that use artificial intelligence-based physiotherapy, employing human pose estimation and computer vision to track specific sports motions, provide effective feedback. Rehabilitation applications assist individuals in proper injury treatment and recovery, either by demonstrating a set of exercises with correct technique or by controlling execution through biomechanical corrections.

## **Technology for Artificial Intelligence in Coaching & Training**

One of the latest transformations in coaching and training is the use of artificial intelligence to track human motion, providing real-time analysis and feedback. These computer vision models perceive movement patterns in three-dimensional plots, reducing the need for additional wearables. Instead, multiple cameras in stadiums can track player movements.

This technology assists coaches in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of players and teams, performing technical and tactical analysis, and enhancing performance while predicting and preventing injury. Objective data from these applications helps eliminate subjectivity in player selection or return-to-sport decisions. For coaches or trainers, the data offers an accurate picture of athletes' performance during and after training sessions or competitions. It also aids in strategising for matches or competition preparations.

Some technologies use optical sensors to identify the play area or court dimensions and automatically recognise actions. For example, swimmers can quantify the volume and intensity of a session, receiving details such as stroke count, stroke length, stroke velocity, lap time, turn time, and bifurcation time over a distance in the pool.

## **Exploring Talent Identification through a Data-Driven Approach**

Manual talent identification can be biased, and subject to favouritism, regionalism, or manipulation. Selecting talent through technology significantly reduces errors. The sports industry requires in-depth analysis to select talent based on multiple variables obtained during contests. Talent identification software like Birdieins India offers comprehensive sports assessments powered by video and AI

movement analysis, processing data within minutes. Such technologies pave the way for efficient and accurate selections without bias.

Sports associations and coaches often face criticism when selecting players for state or national teams.

In India, coaches and selectors may not have detailed player data, whereas in Europe, performance analysts and coaches possess extensive player data. AI and data-driven approaches track information such as player positions, number of matches, gameplay duration, success rates, goals scored, assists, and attempts. This enables merit-based selection.

Using computer vision to process player performance, generate heat maps, track ball velocity, or create run wheels in cricket contributes to clearer visualisations for coaches, sports scientists, athletes, and spectators. These technologies pave the way for objective, merit-based talent scouting.

## **Video Umpires and Technology**

Video umpires have been in use for some time, enabling fair play through unbiased and critical decisions using video referrals. In cricket, video referral systems like ball tracking for LBW, Snickometer, run-outs, catches, and boundaries have made the game more interesting and fairer, as the system's decisions determine the match's outcome. Similarly, video referrals in hockey, kabaddi, and other sports offer fair advantages to athletes and spectators.

AI-assisted systems will help make the right decisions in matches while allowing participants and spectators to visualise incidents clearly, potentially preventing disputed decisions.

## **Virtual Reality and Match Simulations**

Virtual reality has gained popularity in sports training, helping players and teams set strategies and prepare for opponents by simulating realistic situations. These simulations enable players to identify and counter strengths and weaknesses effectively.

The current trend in sports technology revolves around artificial intelligence and augmented reality. The dominance of data processing and machine learning technology has advanced sports performance analysis. International and national sports organisations increasingly rely on technological integration for marketing, management, and decision-making. Coaches and sports scientists use these technologies extensively, as the data acquired helps interpret, predict, and maximise athlete performance.

**Technology assists coaches in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of players and teams**

# Turning Injuries into Triumphs



**Dr. Anju Angel Alex**  
Medical Officer,  
PHC, Kalamassery



**The branch of Sports Medicine has gained greater significance in recent times. It has helped many athletes resurrect their careers and passionate sports aficionados continue playing.**



**S**uneetha Kumari (name changed to protect privacy), a wrestler at the National level, was all set to bring laurels to her country when she sustained an injury to her knee. Her Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injury played spoilsport and she was at a loss. That's when she reached out to Dr Praveen Kumar K S, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon with Kinder group of Hospitals and also for Kerala's pride – Kerala Blasters team. After a successful surgery and rehabilitation, she was back on her feet, fighting it out for her country.

## **Intervention at the Right Time**

“A sports medicine physician has a clear insight about how an athlete's body can respond to injuries; how to identify changes in the body that need to be addressed to help him or her recover quickly from the injury,” says Dr Vinay Jaison Chacko, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Ernakulam Medical Centre. Being an avid sports enthusiast and a footballer himself, he says he adds fervour to his work when he deals with such injuries. He shared the instance of 41-year-old Sanjeev (name changed), a software professional for whom his weekly football sessions were a panacea for the stress at work. When he suffered an injury, he initially took over-the-counter medications and resumed playing football. But he started getting



episodes of ‘instability’, which he conveniently ignored and kept playing until six months later he ended up violently pivoting his knee during a tackle. Dr Vinay diagnosed that Sanjeev had had a tear in his ACL as his first injury which, left untreated, eventually led to the second, more complex injury. What could have been rectified simply, had it been identified in time, turned into a complex knee injury (meniscal tear) requiring more complex surgery and lengthier rehabilitation.

**Sprains, strains and muscle pulls are the commonest. Ankle and knee injuries are common when it comes to the lower limb.**

causes of injuries in adolescents that can cause loss of school days and have far-reaching deleterious effects on their health.

### **Prevent Better with Prehabilitation**

“Sprains, strains and muscle pull are the commonest. Skin injuries vary from minor abrasions to serious cut wounds. There also can be bone injuries. Ankle and knee injuries are common when it comes to the lower limb. Apart from injury to the cruciate ligament, menisci – the structures inside the knee joint that are shock absorbers – can also get injured,” the list given by Dr Praveen Kumar is elaborate and makes one wonder if surgery is always inevitable. Here, he

introduces us to a new term called Prehabilitation. “It is a relatively new concept in sports medicine and therapy. Prehabilitation can avoid Rehabilitation. It is a personalised exercise programme, individually designed for each athlete to help them prevent injuries in their given sport.” Definitely worth pondering. He nevertheless tells us about certain general tips that can be inculcated by all viz. taking time off, using the right gear, drinking plenty of fluids, building muscle strength, increasing flexibility and using the right techniques apart from playing safe. But the don’ts are perhaps more pertinent than the do’s going by what he says – “Massage of the injured part can do more harm than good!”

Dr Vinay has a point when he says, “A sports medicine consultant’s role is pivotal to ensure enhanced athletic performance.” Since we now know that these injuries need a different kind of redressal, we would be all ears to hear what Dr Praveen Kumar has to say regarding the management of these injuries – “Emergency treatment or first aid begins in the field and primarily involves immobilisation of the injured muscle, joint or bone, elevating the affected part or limb and ice pack application.” This is a relevant take-home message for all those sports aficionados out there; be it recreational or professional.

**Kerala is one of the first states to have its own government-run institute for such injuries – Rajiv Gandhi Sports Medicine Centre, set up way back in 1992**

### **Kerala Anticipated the Growth**

Times are changing with sports medicine steadily getting its due place of prominence and making itself indispensable. Kerala is one of the first states to have its own government-run institute for such injuries – Rajiv Gandhi Sports Medicine Centre, set up way back in 1992, highlighting how ahead the State has always been as against the rest of the nation.

Talking of the relevance of sports medicine, nothing sums it up better than an anecdote shared by Dr Praveen Kumar about a footballer who struggled with an ankle injury. The good doctor chipped in when the footballer thought that all was lost. A surgery later, the young man was back on the field playing the Santosh Trophy last year, making Kerala proud. This reinforces the fact that when sports training institutes mushroom everywhere, sports medicine needs to be a mandatory part of every such venture and every sporting team.

# It's Sports for All

**Nirmal Thomas**  
Freelance Writer



**T**here are times when technique is less important than courage. When para athletes or differently abled athletes win medals, for sure, it must be considered as triumph over adversity. Indian para athletes performed exceedingly well in the last two Paralympics. In Paris summer Olympics 2024, India won one silver and five bronze whereas in Paris Paralympics India won seven gold, nine silver and 13 bronze. When 117 athletes took part in Summer Olympics only 84 were there in Paralympics. It's heartening that the para athletes get adequate support from the sports ministry and SAI.

In Deaflympics also India had come a long way

winning gold medals consecutively. In the recently held Asia Pacific Deaf Games considered at par with Asian Games for speech and hearing impaired, India won 55 medals including eight golds. India took part in seven events and SAI spent Rs 3 crore for their training and participation. Remarkable leap as we got only three gold in 2015. Now let's hope Indian team will perform well in the Deaflympics slated to be held in Japan this year.

When the nation promotes these athletes, Kerala too had opened up. May be the first time in India, Kerala gave space for differently abled athletes in the State School Games held in November, 2024 at Ernakulam. 562 athletes competed in the inclusive category. Among para athletes, only a few were born with defects. For most of them, it happened later, either by accident or because of the after effects of certain



treatments they underwent. Instead of blaming fate they fought it out. Even on wheel chair they competed at the highest level and brought many laurels.

Till date, considering Paralympics and Deaflympics Kerala has not been able to contribute much. Most of the medal winners are from Haryana, Delhi, Tamilnadu etc. Kerala should promote our para athletes to that level. Not only financial support, but moral support as well is the need of the hour.

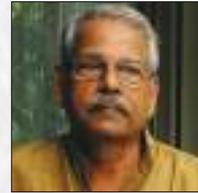
Kerala State School Games is indeed a right step in the right direction. But, it must not be restricted at school level, rather in school sports. Those who perform at the school level needs further support. Kerala should aim at producing stars for Paralympics and Deaflympics. It must be a long term plan. Kerala Sports Council should take up the initiative. International victories for para athletes will definitely boost the morale of other disabled or differently abled in the society.

Kerala has already started moving in this direction. The Government of Kerala has vowed to build a barrier-free state. In order to achieve this, various government departments

have devised different programmes. Under the aegis of Samagra Shiksha Kerala medical camps and home based education is being provided to the differently abled. Physiotherapy and speech therapy sessions are conducted for autistic children. Great attention is given to provide training in music, dance and sports to these kids. A dance and music theatre has been set up in NISH, Thiruvananthapuram. Parks that are differently-abled friendly are being set up in various places, the first being in Thiruvananthapuram.

The Government of Kerala is constructing the first differently-abled friendly stadium of the country in Ottappalam, Palakkad. Also, existing stadiums will be made barrier-free. A special Sports Academy for differently-abled is also under consideration. The sports policy of Kerala also gives great emphasis to the welfare and advancement of differently abled sportspersons.

# Remembering the Legend



**C. Radhakrishnan**  
Writer

**Renowned writer C. Radhakrishnan fondly recalls his encounters with the legendary MT Vasudevan Nair, reflecting on his towering genius, complex personality, and enduring legacy.**



Five years my senior, MT was in college while I was in high school. I was enamoured by the very first story he wrote. More importantly, though we had not met, he had become dear to me because his writing revealed a mind construct that harmoniously orchestrated with mine. We were products of the same age, social background, ethos, aspirations, and worldview.

I had to wait until I reached Calicut as a college student to get an opportunity to see him. A journalist working with Mathrubhumi, my father's classmate, happened to be my local guardian in Calicut. MT, too, was working there. His office was on the first floor, and my local guardian's was on the second. As I went up the stairs, MT's cabin was halfway up, on the first floor.

Of course, I didn't dare to walk in. Instead, I bent down and looked beneath the half door. All I could see were a pair of

chappals and his feet, withdrawn from them, free and resting. This became a ritual. On some days, these telltale presences were not there. I missed him.

I continued to read whatever he wrote, my admiration growing with every addition. But I had to wait five more years to meet him. The opportunity came when I won first prize in the novel-writing competition the Mathrubhumi Weekly had organised for the first—and the last—time. I went there to receive the prize. Dr. N. V. Krishna Warriar, the then editor of the Weekly, introduced me to MT. MT said, "Good!" and was gone. I was disappointed but consoled myself that he was probably a man of very few words, following the dictum,

“Write more, talk less.”

My disappointment was deeper as he was the only person who had congratulated me for winning the prize, though the letter he sent carried only one word: “Congratulations,” with his proverbial signature below it.

A year later, he wrote to me again, asking me to book a tourist cottage at Kodaikanal, a summer resort where I was working with the Astrophysical Observatory. The only other sentence in the letter was: I want to go into hiding for a couple of weeks.

The busy tourist season was just a few weeks ahead, and the pressure on camping sites was high. I booked the cottage and made other necessary arrangements for his stay.

But he didn't come. He didn't even let me know about the change in his plans. He went to Nainital instead. However, I couldn't blame him for this lapse. He had begun living with a girl against the wishes of her mighty family and was in knee-deep trouble. Perhaps he wanted to be as far away from Calicut as possible.

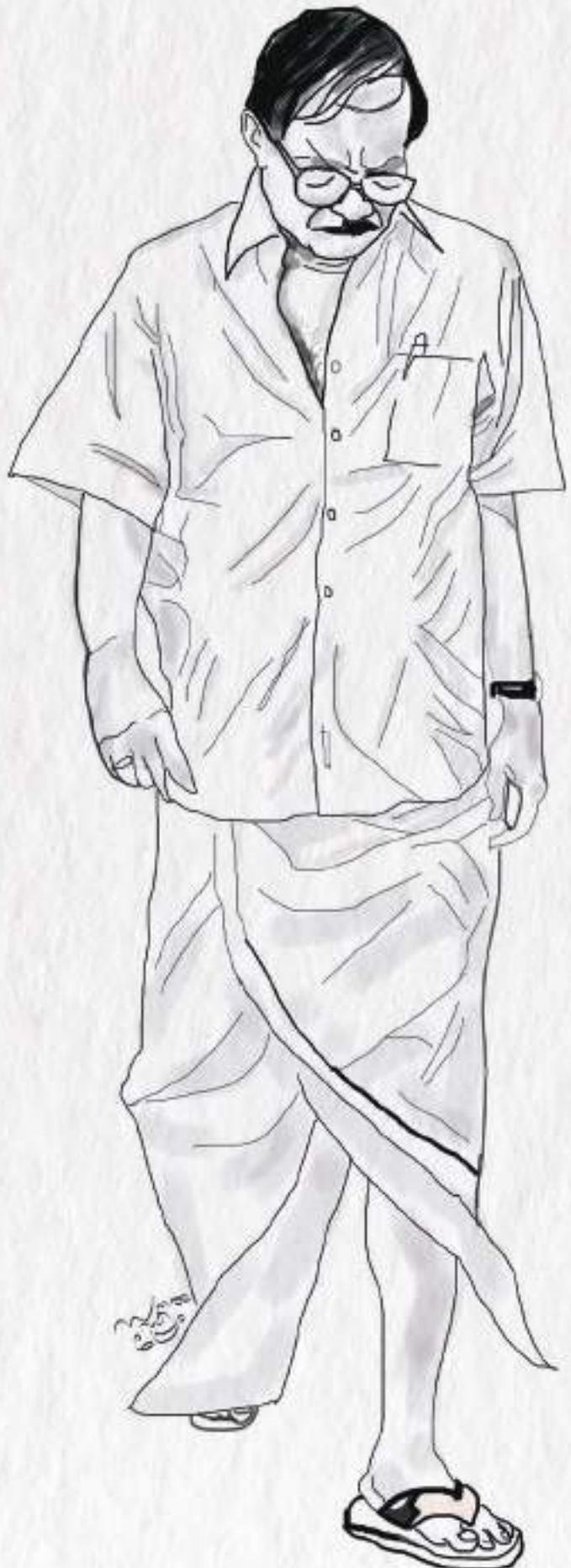
A year later, I got another chance to visit Calicut. This time, I telephoned him to ask for an appointment. Our meeting lasted about forty minutes, but his responses mostly consisted of monosyllables. He talked about world masters of fiction but said nothing about himself. Neither did he ask anything about my background. However, I found his acquaintance with modern international writing simply astounding.

His final message to me that day was: You have a future. Watch out for the jackals. They are out there for our blood. Good luck.

I could understand the first part but not the latter. So I made enquiries from other sources about his background to help complete the impressionistic conclusions I had gathered from his writings.

He felt life had been hard on him. This inspired him to work hard and create something meaningful. With determination, he mastered his craft and made important contributions to literature and cinema. He achieved his dreams and left a lasting impact on culture and creativity.

Of course, his creative ability was phenomenal, his creature sense special, and his cleverness far superior to that of most politicians.





But I doubt he was ever truly happy in his life—free of all inhibitions. Always suspicious and alert, one part of him was on guard to avoid being taken for a ride. He could, therefore, never allow himself to be completely dissolved in the bliss of being.

He didn't relish even sincere approbation, as he couldn't ever believe that any person offering such could be entirely sincere. According to him, such sincerity was humanly impossible, and this incapability was the worst curse upon the human condition.

Despite all this, he continued to take kindly to me. He was my elder brother. I was not fortunate enough to have a natural one. He was his mother's last child and, thus, had no younger sibling either.

MT wrote great works, made exemplary movies, built institutions like the Thunchan Memorial, managed cultural centres like the Sahitya Akademi, and intervened in public life at critical points—always maintaining continuity of perspective and integrity of character.

Now that he is no more, I feel sad that he could not enjoy life well enough despite the tons of commendable work he did. Death is an inevitability, but this was not. Great men suffer, they say. Maybe, but wasn't some of this avoidable?

I can now reveal that we had long discussions on this. I tried to make him recognise the love in his own heart and completely yield to it. But he said, "Nothing doing! I don't want to be a fool! You don't know the world yet!"

Once, all of a sudden, he asked me not to see him ever again, assigning no reason! I felt very, very sad but obeyed. The impasse lasted for more than a decade! Then, on a fine morning, all of a sudden, I found myself invited to the Thunchan Memorial for Malayalam Day celebrations! And there he was—the elder brother of the joint stock family who didn't want to confess he liked and fully approved of anyone for fear of spoiling the person concerned and compromising the steely facade of commanding clout he thought he had to protect!

Bye, Big Brother!

See you there!

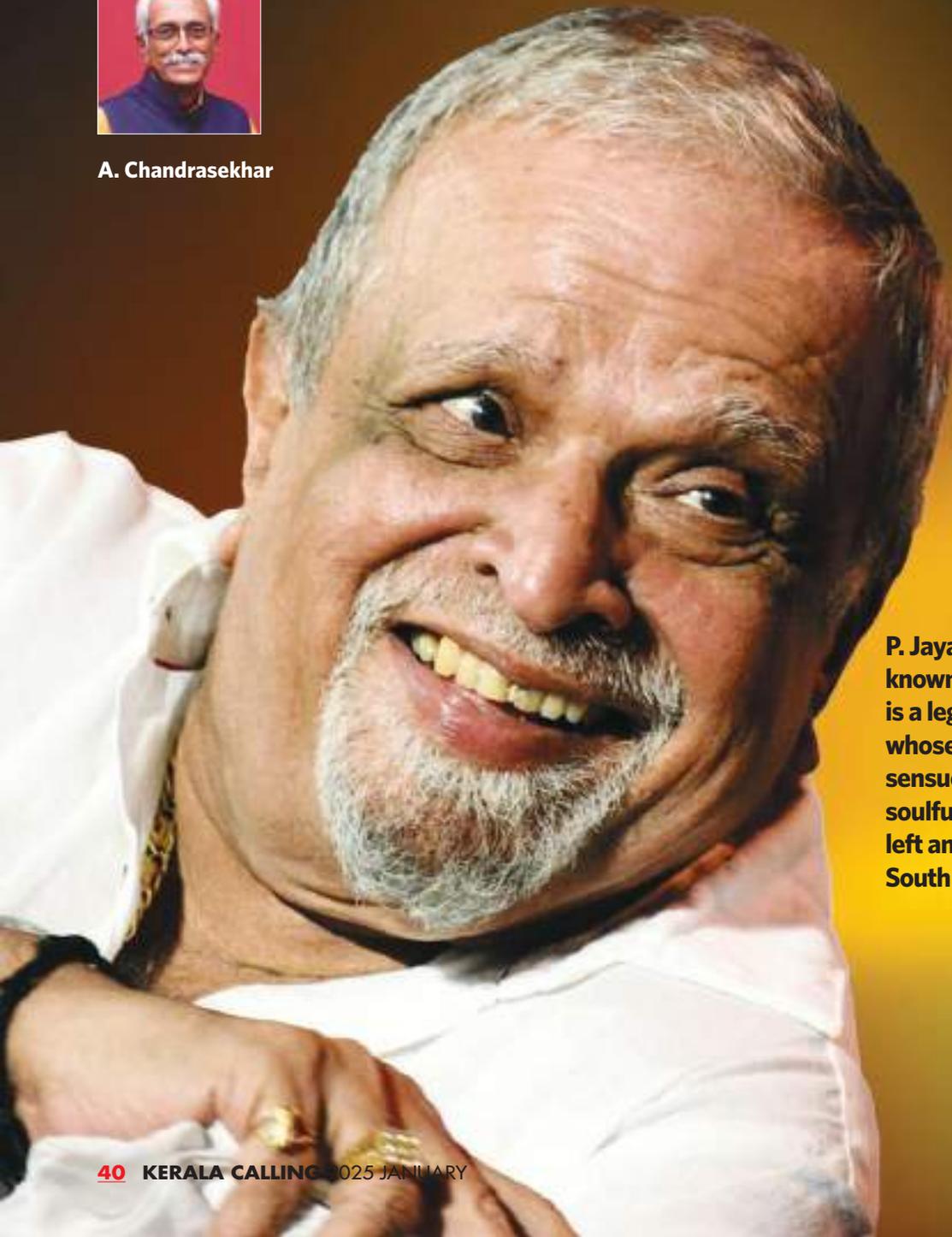
We love you



# Voice of Reverberation



**A. Chandrasekhar**



**P. Jayachandran, fondly known as Bhava Gayakan, is a legendary singer whose unmatched sensuous voice and soulful renditions have left an indelible mark on South Indian music.**



While interviewing the legendary singer P. Jayachandran on his 60th birthday, Induchudan, the late journalist, wrote an introduction in a leading Malayalam daily that read as follows: “If God is a Malayalee, he will sing in Yesudas’s voice, and if his younger brother is to sing, it would be in Jayachandran’s voice!” While evaluating the singer par excellence, P. Jayachandran, I would say this is the best sentence to represent his placement and contribution to Malayalam film music.

But what makes his singing style different from Yesudas? That is the question. The answer lies in Jayachandran’s voice, the most sensuous among early Malayalam playback singers. It is this sensuousness that crowned him the emotional king among singers and gave him the identity of *Bhava Gayakan*.

An untrained singer from the famous Paliath ancestry, Jayachandran emerged and established himself as one of the unparalleled musicians in South India solely with his unmatched soulful voice

and dedication. In 1958, he participated in the State School Youth Festival, where he won the *Mridangam* competition, while Yesudas won the prize for classical singing (male). The former even accompanied the latter in his concert. Their relationship remained unchanged to the end, marked by mutual respect and high esteem.

After completing his Zoology degree at Christ College, Irinjalakuda, Jayachandran started his career as a chemist in a private firm in Madras. However, his fate took a remarkable turn when filmmakers Shobhana Parameswaran Nair and A. Vincent discovered his singing talent at an event in Chennai and invited him to sing in Malayalam cinema. A fan of the legendary Mohammed Rafi and P. Susheela, Jayachandran had been performing in music



programmes before this breakthrough.

In 1965, he recorded his debut song, *Oru Mullappoomalayumaayi*, for the film *Kunjalarikkal*, composed by Chidambaram.

**Jayachandran's ability to resonate with generations of listeners stems from his rare mindset of updating his sensibilities along with trends.**

Despite the film's delayed release, maestro G. Devarajan, impressed by the song, offered him *Manjalayil Mungi Thorthi* in the film *Kalithozhan*. This turned out to be a timeless hit. From then on, he never looked back and soon left his job to pursue his musical career.

Jayachandran has to his credit hundreds of evergreen classics like *Neelagiriyude Sakhikale*, *Thiruvabharanam Charthi Vidarnnu*,

*Ramzanile Chandrikayo*, *Karimukil Kaattile*, *Upasana Upasana*, *Harshabashpam Choodi*, *Anuraganam Pole*, and *Ninmaniyarayile Nirmala Sayyayile*. His romantic melancholies, such as *Kevala Marthya Bhasha*, are noted for their pitch-perfect rendition and picture-perfect pronunciation. He developed a unique technique of reverberating his nasal and throat voice, making his songs inimitable.

While Yesudas became the heartthrob of Malayalee households through his divine voice and rich melodies, Jayachandran earned the same affection with his playful rendering and sensuous sound. Remarkably, he achieved this without being identified with any mainstream hero or having a godfather or production house to support him. Yet, he has sung over 16,000 songs across Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi, most of them hits, with his signature style.

In addition to his golden melodies, Jayachandran has also proved himself as a flexible actor through his significant roles in films like *Krishnaparunthu*, *Nakkhathangal*, and *Trivandrum Lodge*. Evaluating his acting talent reveals an essential aspect of his artistry: it is his inherent acting ability that has seamlessly transformed into the sensuousness and romance present in his innumerable songs.

Jayachandran also created ripples in non-film music with Doordarshan hits like *Onnini Shruthi Thazhthi Paduka Poonkuyile* and *Smrithi Than Chirakil*, as well as devotional hits like *Vighneshwara Janma Nalikeram*, *Vadakkumnathanu Suprabatham Padum*, *Neelamegham Oru Peelikkannu*, and



*Guruvayoorambalam Sreevaikuntam.*

Jayachandran's music career can be compared

**In addition to his golden melodies, Jayachandran proved himself as a flexible actor through significant roles in films like Krishnaparunthu, Nakhakshathangal, and Trivandrum Lodge**

only to that of S. P. Balasubrahmanyam, who was also untrained in classical music and played with his voice with apparent ease. Though Jayachandran had a brief hiatus in the 1980s, he made a successful comeback with the song *Prayam Nammil Moham Nalki* from the film *Niram*, which was a

big hit. Following this success, he sang hundreds of romantic hits like *Enthe Innum Vanneela*, *Araraarum Kanaathe*, and *Shishira Kala Megha Mridula*, among others.

While he had hits like *Rasathi Onnu* in Tamil, his song *Oru Daivam Thantha...* composed by

A. R. Rahman for the Mani Ratnam film *Kannathil Muthamittal* became phenomenal.

Jayachandran's ability to resonate with generations of listeners stems from his rare mindset of updating his sensibilities along with trends. His youthful spirit allowed him to connect with the youngest audiences, making him a favourite among Gen X music lovers as well. Anthemic songs like *Keranirakaladum* and *Poorangalude Pooram* and retro numbers like *Sharadambaram Charu Chandrika*, *Kallayikadavathe*, and *Olanjali Kuruvi* stand as testament to this.

Throughout his five-decade career, Jayachandran won numerous awards, including the National Award for Best Male Playback Singer in 1985 for *Sree Narayana Guru*. He also earned Kerala State Film Awards for *Suprabhatham (Pani Theeratha Veedu, 1972)*, *Ragam Sreeragam (Bandhanam, 1978)*, *Prayam Nammil (Niram, 1999)*, *Neeyoru Puzhayaay (Thilakkam, 2004)*, and in 2015 for the songs *Njaan Oru Malayali*, *Malarvaka Kombathu*, and *Sharadambaram* from the films *Jilebi*, *Ennum Eppozhum*, and *Ennu Ninte Moideen* respectively. In 2020, he was awarded the coveted J. C. Daniel Award for his outstanding contributions to Malayalam cinema.

There is no doubt that the name P. Jayachandran will be inscribed in golden letters even after centuries through his reverberating songs and unforgettable voice.

# A Cinematic Journey Beyond Boundaries



Sratha H.



**Once again, Thiruvananthapuram became the focus of the global film fraternity from December 13-20, 2024, as the 29th International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) transformed Kerala's cultural landscape into a brilliant canvas of global artistry. Presenting 177 films from 68 nations across 15 venues, the festival became a powerful celebration of cinema's ability to unite differences and foster connections. This remarkable event transcended the boundaries of traditional narratives, blending diverse viewpoints into a visual extravaganza that left an indelible mark on audiences.**

**A** defining element of IFFK 2024 was its focus on intersectionality, exploring the interconnected layers of identity, culture, and social realities. By addressing overlapping issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality, the festival curated a space where marginalized voices were amplified, encouraging audiences to reflect on complex human experiences. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan underscored the significance of this shift, highlighting that 52 of the 177 films were directed by women, an achievement that reflected the evolving role of women in the film industry. Notably, eight out of the fourteen jury members were women, showcasing the growing presence of female voices in decision-making roles.

This year's festival also introduced a curated category titled The Female Gaze, offering films that explored storytelling through the perspectives of women directors. These films challenged traditional narratives and delved deeply into themes of empowerment, identity, and resilience. A special event, Marakkilorikkalum, celebrated veteran Malayalam actresses, adding to the festival's tribute to female contributions to cinema. The festival's commitment to acknowledging historical

milestones was further reflected in its homage to PK Rosy, the first heroine of Malayalam cinema.

Award-winning films captured the spirit of innovation and resistance. Pedro Freire's Brazilian drama *"Malu"* claimed the prestigious Golden Crow Pheasant award, while Farshad Hashemi's *"Me, Maryam, the Children and 26 others"* earned the Silver Crow Pheasant for Best Director. The Spirit of Cinema award, one of the most anticipated moments, was presented to Payal Kapadia for her fearless approach to filmmaking and her unwavering commitment to social change, highlighting the transformative power of cinema as a tool for protest and representation.

The international competition section echoed the theme of resilience, hope, and personal struggle, with films such as *"Baghdad Messi"* portraying communities overcoming war-torn adversities. *"Crossing"* and *"Black Dog"* explored migration and identity, drawing attention to stories that transcended borders and reflected the shared human experience. Additionally, the Country Focus: Armenia segment provided insight into Armenian cinema's rich storytelling traditions, strengthening the festival's role as a bridge between cultures.

Beyond the screenings, IFFK 2024 became a hub for intellectual discourse. Seminars such as Reality and Cinema delved into how films can address pressing societal issues, while Meet the Directors sessions and panel discussions allowed filmmakers and audiences to engage in meaningful conversations. These sessions, often led by women filmmakers, underscored the increasing influence of women in shaping cinematic narratives.

Malayalam cinema stood at the forefront of the festival's recognition, with films like *"Feminichi Fathima"* receiving accolades and emerging voices such as Anagha Ravi gaining special mention. The Malayalam section was a reflection of the region's growing cinematic landscape, often blending themes of political resistance, gender identity, and social reform.

The festival opened with vibrant performances of traditional art forms such as Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, and Kalaripayattu, celebrating Kerala's cultural roots while embracing the modernity of global cinema. This fusion of tradition and contemporary art highlighted the essence of IFFK where the past and present



converge to create new possibilities.

IFFK 2024 extended its reach to audiences beyond cinephiles and industry professionals. Students, young creatives, and local residents found inspiration in the diverse selection of films and cultural programs, reinforcing the festival's role as a space for connection, learning, and exchange. The festival's atmosphere transformed into a dynamic celebration of creative expression, bridging generational and cultural gaps.

As the festival came to a close, it was clear that IFFK 2024 was more than a cinematic event it was a reflection of the world's evolving narratives and the power of storytelling to challenge, inspire, and unite. The lingering impact of the festival continued to resonate in conversations and creative projects, serving as a testament to the transformative potential of cinema.

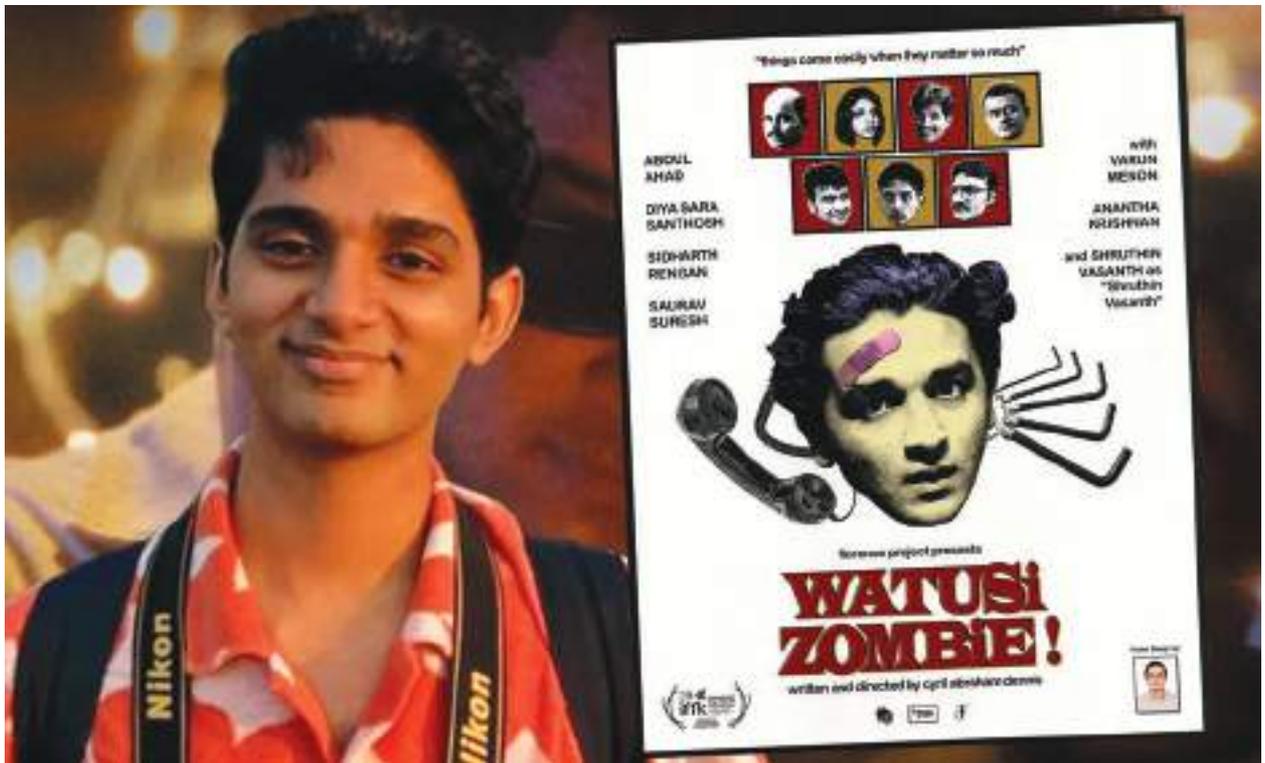
With excitement already building for IFFK 2025, the promise of new stories, diverse voices, and groundbreaking narratives ensures that the next edition will continue to redefine the cultural landscape of Kerala. Until then, the echoes of this year's festival will persist, inspiring future filmmakers and audiences alike.

# From Summer Fun to IFFK Fame

Cyril Abraham Dennis's journey of Directing 'Watusi Zombie' at 20



Meenakshi Lal L.R.



Cyril Abraham Dennis, a 20 year old, has created history by getting his debut movie featured at the 29th edition of International Film Festival of Kerala. Touted as one of the youngest film makers to be featured in IFFK, Cyril is a second year student of Communication Design.

His debut feature film 'Watusi Zombie' is a 74 minute comedy. The movie revolves around the character of Grindset Gabriel, a youngster who has taken a break from his stand-up comedy career and is looking for a comeback. This film, created by team Gen Z, is set in Kochi. The movie brings a novel narrative to the Malayalam cinema wherein the characters speak mostly in English. The movie name is inspired from the eponymous popular song by Jan Davis.

In this interview, Cyril opens up about his journey into the world of cinema and his first movie.

**At just 20 years old you are directing films showcased at IFFK. What inspired you to pursue filmmaking at such a young age?**

I started making films with friends at the age of 13 during summer vacations, just for fun. Though I was passionate about cinema, it felt like a distant dream. During the pandemic, I watched more movies and discovered independent cinema. Seeing directors with fewer resources make great films inspired me. I realized that we live in a world where everything is accessible. This encouraged me to start making movies.

**Who are your biggest influences in cinema, and how have they shaped your directorial style?**

I was deeply influenced by Watusi Zombie and New Wave American cinema of the 1970s. I tried to incorporate those techniques into my movie. Directors like Robert Altman, John Cassavetes, Jonathan Demme, and Alfred Hitchcock inspired me. However, Paul Thomas Anderson had the most significant impact. I studied his techniques and preferences. Growing up in Ernakulam also influenced me, as Malayalam cinema is deeply

rooted in Kochi. My family also played a major role in shaping my interest in films.

**How do you think your age impacts your perspective as a filmmaker compared to more seasoned directors?**

Being young, I still have a lot to learn and experience. Compared to older directors, I have access to progressive ideas and topics like mental health and marginalized communities. Books, articles, social media, and films provide me with diverse perspectives. This helps me analyze and understand different characters. However, experience is invaluable, and I respect filmmakers who have dedicated years to their craft.

**Can you share some challenges you faced during directing 'Watusi Zombie' and how did you overcome them?**

We struggled with time and budget. The movie was shot in six days. Five days in one stretch, and the sixth day a year later due to constraints. This was not ideal but unavoidable. We overcame these challenges through teamwork and understanding. My friends, who formed the crew, were supportive, and our bond outside cinema made the process smoother.

**Do you think youth brings a fresh perspective to storytelling? Can you give an example from your film?**

Yes, youth brings innovation and fresh ideas. For example, films like *Classmates* and *Bangalore Days* were exciting because they showcased younger actors and fresh narratives. Similarly, *Watusi Zombie* has a universal story that appeals to the new generation. It reflects their aspirations and struggles, offering something they can relate to and be inspired by.

**In your opinion how does IFFK support independent filmmakers and new talents in the film industry?**

IFFK is one of India's premier film festivals. The event is grand, with the entire city participating. Even small tea shops buzz with conversations about movies and IFFK. The festival is careful in curating the selection of independent filmmakers. For example, *Kishkindha Kaandam* was the only mainstream film at IFFK 2024; the rest were independent projects, many by debut filmmakers. This platform allows them to socialize and showcase their work.

**According to you how does IFFK contribute to the global recognition of Indian cinema?**

The 29th IFFK screened 177 films from 68 countries, attracting over 16,000 movie enthusiasts. It promotes Indian cinema globally by hosting world premieres and attracting international attention. Foreigners I spoke to appreciated IFFK's values and impact, noting its growth over the past five years. This engagement promotes Indian cinema on a global stage.



**What role does IFFK play in fostering discussions on social and cultural issues through cinema?**

IFFK highlights marginalized communities and groups, with significant representation of female directors. The festival features films from diverse cultures. People now take movies seriously, discussing important social and cultural issues through the medium.

Cyril Abraham Dennis, with his debut film "*Watusi Zombie*", stands as a brilliant example of the creativity and innovation that the younger generation brings to the world of cinema. His desire to experiment with unique narrative techniques and address current concerns at the young age of 20 underscores how Indian cinema is developing. In addition to establishing an imprint on the Malayalam film industry, Cyril is also adding to the larger discussion about the role of young people in narrative with his own fusion of elements from both local and international cinema. His participation at the 29th IFFK gives yet additional proof of the value of events like the festival in encouraging independent filmmaking and providing upcoming filmmakers with a worldwide platform to display their talents. As Cyril develops as a filmmaker, his path serves as a reminder that the future of cinema rests with people who aren't afraid to question norms and experiment with new concepts, and use modern means to create universally relatable stories. Indian cinema appears to have a more promising and varied future because of programs like IFFK and the enthusiasm of upcoming directors like Cyril.

# Rays of Hope: Kerala's Long Agricultural Journey of Pride to Prospects



**Dr. P. Indira Devi**  
ICAR Emeritus Professor  
Kerala Agricultural  
University



In the early 1950s, being a farmer in Kerala was a badge of pride. Parents would proudly introduce themselves as “*krishikkarans*” or farmers, while admitting their children to school. The straw stack in a family’s yard, which was a proof of their paddy fields, was frequently used to determine their status. The word ‘*krishi*’ (farming) started to lose its appeal in the 1970s. Jobs changed to ‘business’ or ‘Gulf jobs’, indicating a significant shift in society. This change is a reflection of Kerala’s changing relationship to its agricultural heritage.

Kerala’s agricultural history stretches over 3,000 years, interwoven with its cultural identity. Later, the state was ruled by three distinct kingdoms Malabar, Kochi and Travancore, each with its unique socio-economic and governance systems. However, the most significant agricultural transition in Kerala occurred during the colonial era, particularly since 1800. Foreign nations were drawn to the Malabar Coast by spices, particularly black pepper, and eventually came under colonial control. British policies reshaped the agricultural landscape, favouring cash crops like coffee and rubber while sidelining traditional rice cultivation. By the early 1900s, the area under rice cultivation in Malabar drastically decreased,

while coffee estates expanded from 4,500 acres in 1840 to 40,500 acres by 1905. Rubber, experimentally introduced in the 1890s, grew into a key crop.

Kerala’s agriculture after independence showed both potential and difficulties. Agriculture covered 53 percent of the state’s Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) in 1956, but even then, its revenue share was lower than that of other states. Kerala’s per capita agricultural revenue was greater than the national average because of plantation crops like spices, but by 2021–2022, agriculture’s share of the state’s GDP had fallen to just 11.28%.

## Challenges of Small-Scale Farming

Today, over 97% of Kerala’s farming holdings span less than one hectare, with an average size of just 0.18 hectares. Due to financial difficulties, small scale farmers frequently turn to unofficial lease agreements. Kerala’s agricultural households earned more than the national average in 2018–19, with an average yearly income of ₹17,915 despite these obstacles. However, the financial burden on farmers is evident due to growing agricultural and non-farm expenses as well as high debt levels (₹2.42 lakh per household). Many people

have given up conventional farming due to the unfavourable terms of trade. For example, rice cultivation fell sharply from 767,000 hectares to barely 195,734 hectares between 1956 and 2021. As a result of favourable market pricing, crops like coconut and rubber flourished, indicating a move away from food crops and toward income crops.

## Reviving Food Security through Diversification

Historical data shows that Kerala's agricultural potential is still strong. Thalappilly Taluk's paddy fields produced an incredible 4,080 kg/ha in 1916, which is significantly more than the average of 2,872 kg/ha presently. These outcomes were influenced by conventional methods such as sustainable crop cycles and organic manuring. But over time, output has been reduced by excessive chemical use and disregard for soil health.

Rice need not be a primary food source for the state. It can be groundbreaking to diversify into nutrient-rich crops like millets and pulses. Neglected potential can be found in Kerala's biodiversity; jackfruit, moringa, papayas, and bananas are all nutritious essentials. Utilizing these crops in conjunction with living and urban farming can help eliminate nutritional shortages and lessen reliance on imported grains.

## Integrating Tradition with Innovation

Kerala's sustainable agriculture necessitates a combination of modern technology and traditional knowledge. Varieties of short duration paddy that can resist unpredictable weather conditions can increase yields. At the same time, modern consumers may find traditional crops appealing if innovative processing technologies are introduced. For instance, Kerala might reconsider its food systems to maximize efficiency and nutrition by using all parts of moringa and bananas.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) 'One Health' strategy emphasizes how environmental, animal, and human health are all interrelated. Kerala may promote this broad idea and show how food security and sustainability are intertwined.

Kerala's agricultural history is evidence of its adaptability and persistence. The state has endured major changes, from the predominance of cash crops during the colonial era to the present difficulties of small-scale farming. Kerala can set the path for a sustainable agricultural future by embracing its rich biodiversity and combining it with innovative techniques, guaranteeing future generations' access to food and nourishment.

Table 1: Cropping Pattern changes in Kerala (56-57 to 2021-22)

Dynamics of Cropping pattern in Kerala (hectares)		
Area	1956-57	2021-22
Total Area	2211000	2523014
Rice	767000	195734
Cereals and pulses	28000	1919
Sugarcane	9000	915.41

Pepper	91000	76351
Areca	50000	93968.00
Cashew	44000	32369
Cardamom	28000	39143.00
Ginger	9000	2924.00
Banana	42000(nendran and others)	49020 (nendran)
Plantain		51901
Tapioca	214000	55664
Coconut	463000	765435
Tea	40000	35872
Coffee	17000	85880
Rubber	100000	551030

Table 2: The labour cost of cultivation and yield (per acre of paddy) in Thalappilly Taluk, Malabar area (1916)

Farm operation	Wage rate	Days required	Total wages
<b>A. Costs</b>			Rupee Ana
1. Preparation of field	3 Ana	25	4 12
2. Uprooting seedlings	5 Ana	8	2 8
3. Transplanting	5 Ana	4	1 4
4. Weeding	4 Ana	4	2 2
5. Irrigation	4 Ana	15-20	1 13
6. Supervising the mature rice field	2 Ana	15-20	2 -
7. Harvesting and cleaning	I para for every 6 para paddy	15	17 7
8. Total			31 35
<b>B. Yield</b>			
1. Yield	20 times the seed rate (1632 kg per acre)		106 25

\*Work for only half a day

\*\*Wages in cash or kind 1 ana or 1 edangazhi paddy (1 rupee=16 ana;1 ana =4 paise ;1 paise= 3 pies ) : 1 edangazhi paddy =1 ana

## References

- Deepak Johnson, 2018 Cropping Pattern Changes in Kerala, 1956-57 to 2016-17 Review of Agrarian Studies 8,(1):65-99
- Prakash B A, 1987 Agricultural Development of Kerala From 1800 AD to 1980 AD: A Survey of Studies Reprint of the Working Paper No.220 of Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum p.54
- Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Government of Kerala 2016 An Analytical Study on Agriculture in Kerala p. 328
- Gilbert Slater, 1918 Economic Studies Vol 1 Some South Indian Villages . University of Madras . Humphrey Milford . Oxford University Press 265p.





The 63rd edition of Kerala School Youth Festival concluded in Thiruvananthapuram with Thrissur district emerging as winners. The 5-day long fete of youthful artistry, creativity and imagination won the hearts of art connoisseurs and the general public alike. The festival, termed as the celebration of the resilience of Kerala, kicked off on a spirited note, with the performance of the students of Vellarmala government school, Wayanad. The event also made history by including five indigenous art forms in the competition section. Dubbed as Asia's largest youth festival, the state school youth festival is geared up to scale greater heights.



# A change of Air

Set yourself free on the sandy shores.  
Meander along a sea of cascading palms.  
Drift away into the blue on a country boat.  
It's time to step out and get away from the new normal.  
It's time to step out into Kerala.

