

"Young filmmakers should read, read, and read"

- Prasanna Vithanage

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Japanese Film 'Evil Does Not Exist' Triumphs as Golden Crow Pheasant Winner at IFFK 2023

SILPA MANOJ
Karyavattom

As the curtains closed on the 28th International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK), film enthusiasts celebrated the culmination of an 8-day cinematic extravaganza that showcased a diverse array of films from around the world. The much-anticipated moment arrived as the Japanese film *"Evil Does Not Exist,"* directed by **Ryusuke Hamaguchi**, emerged as the shining star, clinching the prestigious Golden Crow Pheasant (Suvarna



Chakoram) for the Best Film.

In a world grappling with rapid ecological transformations, Hamaguchi's film masterfully weaved a poetic narrative that not only resonated

ed with the audience but also highlighted pressing environmental concerns. The film's ability to capture the essence of a changing world, coupled with its artistic brilliance, secured its place as the standout film of the festival.

The Golden Crow Pheasant, an emblem of excellence in the realm of international cinema, was awarded to the film's cinematographer, Yoshio Kitagawa.

The accolade comes with a substantial cash prize of ₹20 lakh, a memento, and a certificate. The film festival, which

spanned eight days, provided a platform for filmmakers, actors, and cinephiles to come together, fostering cultural exchange and celebrating the art of cinema.

As the IFFK continues to be a melting pot of cinematic brilliance, *"Evil Does Not Exist"* joins the illustrious list of films that have left an indelible mark on the festival's legacy. With the echoes of applause still resonating from the festival's closing ceremony, leaving an impact on the hearts and minds of those who love films eternally.

Kerala University Researchers Patent

HARSHITH
Karyavattom

Researchers and faculty at Kerala University achieved a significant milestone as their innovative cyan-emitting LED device secured a patent from the Indian government. The team led by Dr. Subodh G and Dr. Sibi KS, with Research Scholars Nithin J S, Amrithakrishnan B, and Dr. K G Gopchandran, has spent three years refining experiments, leading to this outstanding technological advancement.

The patented cyan LED has been devel-

oped using a Tellurite-based double perovskite (A₂BTeO₆) material without activator ions, marking a momentous accomplishment in LED production.

This breakthrough, emitting light in the visible region (350 – 750 nm) at 484 nm cyan colour without costly activator ions, has the potential to significantly reduce production costs. The researchers plan to collaborate with industrial entities for large-scale production, aiming to disrupt the market with economically viable cyan LED devices.

A Splendid start in Trivandrum

Global ayurveda Festival was Inaugurated by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar

LAYA RAJAN
Trivandrum

"India stands as global leader in Ayurveda, with rich legacy and knowledge spans millennia" said Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar at Trivandrum on December 1. Dhankar said so in his inaugural address delivered at Green Field Stadium on the occasion of inauguration of 5th Global Ayurveda Festival organising by Department of Ayush and the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India along with the Centre for innovation in Science and Social Action.

The message from the Prime Minister for the event has delivered by V. Muraleedharan, Union Minister and the chairman of GAF, on behalf of the PM. Antony Raju, Minister of Road Transport, Motor Vehicle and Water Transport, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, MP, and Dr. G.G.Gangadharan, Working chairman of GAF were present on the dais.

The Brihatrayee Ratna Award of the Arya Vaidya Pharmacy Coimbatore Ltd.



Vice President at the 5th Global ayurvedic Fest

has handed over to Vaidya Sadanand Prabhakar Sardeshmukh by Vice President. 5th GAF conducted on the theme Emerging Challenges in Healthcare and a Resurgent Ayurveda. Five-day long National Arogya Expo included International Ayurveda Seminar on the focal theme Emerging Chal-

lenges in Health Care and a Resurgent Ayurveda, concise plenary sessions, panel discussion and paper presentation from selected delegates. Public exhibitions over 500 stalls concentrated on Ayurveda Education and Wellness expo, familiarising Ayurveda products and procedures, documentary shows and Ayurveda food court.

Medical Tourism meet and Single Drug Research Conclave focusing on research, development and promotion of Ayurveda single drugs served as the highlights of the entire event meet. Participation of nearly 7500 delegates around the world has reported by the authority. 5th Global Ayurveda Fest has concluded on December 5.

India's emphasis on yoga and AYUSH medical systems is proving a game changer in promoting health and well-being. India stands as global leader in Ayurveda with, rich legacy and knowledge spans millennia. Ayurveda has a fundamental cutting edge and can contribute significantly for mental and physical health.

-Jagdeep Dhankar

Colorful Climax to 28th IFFK

GOKUL G L
Trivandrum

With the bagging of four awards for Malayalam cinema, the 28th International Film Festival of Kerala conducted by Kerala State Chalachitra Academy has concluded on 15 December. The festival was inaugurated by Nana Patekar, actor and screenwriter on 8th December in the presence of honourable dignitaries. The Spirit of Cinema Award was given to Kenyan filmmaker Wanuri Kahiu at the inaugural ceremony.

The closing ceremony on December 15 was inaugurated by actor Prakash Raj. Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Zanussi won the Lifetime Achievement Award. *'Evil Does Not Exist'* by Ryusuke Hamaguchi won the Golden Pheasant title at the international competition. Malayalam film *Thadavu* (The Sentence) was selected as the popular film of the festival.

166 films, of which 67 were made by women filmmakers, screened in the eight day long festival.

Society should embrace queer community too: Jeo Baby

ALAGU ANBU ARASAN
Trivandrum

Director Jeo Baby felt the social perspective towards the queer community needs to be changed and cinema has the power to play a major role in it. He was speaking at 'Meet the Director' session held at the Tagore Theater as part of IFFK on Monday.

Jeo Baby added that his film *Kaathal-The Core* has received overwhelming expectations in IFFK, despite the availability of it on other platforms. He also addressed the controversies raised in connection with the movie. 'Achilles' producer Ilhan Shah discussed the advantages of working with European directors. He added that by working with people from different countries, he was able to highlight the cultural heritage of his country-Iran-across borders. He added that previous generations in Iran grew up watching Indian cinema. Diego del Rio, the director of *All the Silence* was all praise for the beauty of the cinema society in India. Edgardo Dieleke, director of *Southern*



Jeo Baby

Storm pointed out the cultural differences in the audience and appreciated the commitment of Indian audience in watching movies. He acknowledged cinema as a fertile soil for innovation and creativity. He also talked about the restrictions faced by commercial cinema due to economic crises in their country and specially appreciated the government's support for his movie.

Fazil Rasak, director of *'Thadavu'*, shared his research experiences related to filming in the background of a prison. Rinooshun K, who directed *First Five* dates shared his story about planning to visit IFFK as a delegate this year and never expecting his movie to be nominated. He was thrilled to be a guest at the festival. A. Meera Sahib moderated the discussion.

No agency to support independent filmmaking in Sri Lanka says Prasanna Vithanage

AMAL P S
Trivandrum

Known for his sharp films taking on the social and political issues in native Sri Lanka, Prasanna Vithanage is one of the island nation's well-known directors. His involvement in the world of theatre began at a young age when he immersed himself into the various aspects of the craft. Conflicts with local censorship and regulatory authorities are nothing new to him. In light of his new film 'Paradise', Vithanage is here at the 28th edition of IFFK in Kerala.

Q. Sri Lanka has recently introduced free visa to receive more foreign investment. Will this money benefit the independent film making in the country

At the moment, Sri Lankan economy is depending on tourism alone because there is no other investment. But it doesn't have anything to do with the independent filmmaking, as there is zero agency to support



independent filmmaking like you have KSFDC. But it will help Sri Lankan people to have foreign currency to sustain the economy and that's really good.

Q. You are an established filmmaker who have already made strong political stance. Do you expect young filmmakers fearlessly expressing their politics through cinema

I think young filmmakers should bring their view point in their movies. I have brought mine from an earlier generation. Obviously there is a chance for young political filmmakers. So let them tell their stories. There's short films and feature films which are changing the phase of cinema. So the change is

already happening even without any kind of government support.

Q. Your films have extensively drawn inspiration from well-known authors. The adaptation of Tolstoy's "Resurrection" in "Ananda Rathriya" is an example. Your extensive reading has played a role in shaping the visualization of your story. Can we see you as a writer one day?

(Giggles) No, That won't happen. It's completely different from my work. I am more of a reader. As I recall what great filmmaker Akira Kurosawa said "Young filmmakers should read, read and read". That's how they shape ideas into storylines. I think all the aspiring film-

makers should read all Malayalam, Indian, pan Indian and other foreign writers. My medium has always been visual and will always remains the same.

Q. OTT has been the new normal. What's your take

Well, there is no OTT in Sri Lanka. It's because Sinhala films do not have such a big market. OTT is a reality that we cannot avoid. In the context of IFFK, most of the films that is shown here are not taken by the OTT. They only take films on the grounds of stardom and commercial value. I don't mind a young filmmaker finding some kind of safety net in it. I feel most of the films, you see in OTT are half baked, without going into the subject. It's mostly entertainment based with a lot of hastiness.

"Most films on IFFK are not taken by the OTT. They only take films on the grounds of stardom"

Hostel Shortage Impedes Kerala University Students

SAM PAUL
Karyavattom

The inadequacy of the hostel in Kerala University Karyavattom campus struggling students. Even after the third allotments of hostel admission, most of the students haven't managed to get into the list. In the allocation process, two hostels were designated for girls, one for boys, with two seats assigned for boys and five seats for girls from a class located at least 40 km away from the campus, notably, in the majority of classes, the number of students residing far from the campus surpassed others.

These students forced to rely on private hostels spending sizable amount every month. Though the number of students

applying for studies on the campus increased, the necessary facilities haven't matched accordingly.

"It is very difficult to spend this much money per month for a middleclass family. Our studies seriously affected as most of us are unable to make full use of the study facilities provided by the university, including the library which is open for 16 hours and several paid sites which is accessible only within the campus premises because of night curfews imposed at private hostels. It is the responsibility of the university and the governments to find an immediate solution for this crisis. The university should take up the hostels nearby and accommodate us".



The moon draws near Kanakunnu Palace, indicating on set of Global Science Festival of Kerala.

Celluloid Stories Delighted Three Days and Nights

LAYA RAJAN
Trivandrum

With a tribute to the veteran filmmaker the late K G George and articulating solidarity for Palestine in the present-day chaos, the three-day-long 1st Kerala University Campus Film Festival (KUCFF) concluded on November 29. The festival was jointly organized by the Departments Union and



Researchers Union of the campus, and started on 27 November with the screening of 'Judas and the Black Messiah'.

Thirty films under nine categories have aired on five screens during the three days. Ode to

the Master category was dedicated to renowned filmmaker Martin Scorsese while Country Focus was given to Palestine and Spotlight concentrated on migration. Panchavadi Palam and Irakal screened in honour to K. G. George.

Mukesh M, Actor and MLA, inaugurated the closing ceremony of KUCFF on November 29. "Being the most linear and general medium of communication, films possess a strong influence over society. It is somewhat represent different dimensions of human expression of creativity. So that watching classic films itself organically involve in

evolving and liberating one's critical and creative thoughts and actions"- he said.

With the screening of 'Shutter' under the category of Midnight Screaming, KUCFF officially concluded.

Embracing the Call for Sustainable Agriculture

SARANYA NAIR

In response to the growing imperative for sustainable agricultural practices, Kerala Agriculture Minister P. Prasad announced a landmark initiative on November 8, 2023. The state is set to champion climate-smart and sustainable organic farming methods with the newly established Organic Farming Mission in Thiruvananthapuram. The government's formal directives issued on October 26, 2023, underscore a commitment to fostering ecological balance and resilient farming practices statewide.

The working instructions issued under the scheme on "Organic farming and good agri-

culture practices" it lays down guidelines for process of organic certification program including the demarcation of Consulting agency for implementation planning transition process creating awareness and organising formal and informal training events to impart the transitional producers with sound knowledge.

Also guidelines related to implementing good agricultural practises during on farm production and post-production processes in order to prevent occurrence of hazards at different stages of the food chain starting right from the primary production, thus addressing food safety right from production at farm level.



Organic farm model

'As a researcher in the field of Botany, I warmly welcome this idea of Government of Kerala shaping an "Organic Farming Mission". Organic farming, characterized by the omission of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers and genetically engineered organisms, has profound and multifaceted effects on the environment, agronomy and human health. If this mission is implemented and properly supervised, it will lead our State to an ecologically balanced farming culture. One of the key benefits lies in soil health, as organic farming practices prioritize crop rotation, cover cropping, composting, fostering a balanced ecosystem and preserving soil fertility. Furthermore, the evasion of chemical inputs condenses the risk of soil and water contamination, safeguarding ecosystems and biodiversity. Consuming organic farm products reduces exposure to potentially harmful residues and encourages the consumption of nutrient-dense foods. Exploitation due to a lack of knowledge existing in this field from time to time can be avoided. Currently, there is no system to measure or monitor what is claimed to be organic products. Protocols aligned with international standards for accurate value criteria like branding, certification and marketing of organic farming products from the State will be prepared by this project. While organic farming may pose challenges such as lower yields and higher costs, its overall impression on sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation and human well-being underscores its importance in fostering a healthier and more resilient food system.'

Rinu V Thomas
Research Scholar
Department of Botany, University of Kerala

A Touch of Sustainability in KERALA'S BRIDAL FASHION

SILPA MANOJ

Karyavattom

Brides in Kerala are opting for more eco-conscious and budget-friendly wedding experience by Renting the Bridal outfits Silpa Manoj Thiruvananthapuram from a wide range of sizes and styles, ensuring that they find the dress that complements their personality and their special day. *"The concept of renting outfits is relatively a new innovation, but its impact goes beyond affordability and is a step towards sustainability in fashion"* says Yvonne Angelina, Fashion and Marketing Manager at Mango, Abu Dhabi.

The fashion industry is known for its wastefulness, clothes are often discarded after a single use. Bridal wear rentals reduce textile waste, promote resource conservation, and minimize the carbon footprint associated with production. It's a step towards a circular fashion economy where clothes are used, reused, and repurposed she adds. The uprising of bridal



wear rental is not exclusive to POSH Wedding rentals.

There exists several other brands in India that has recognized the future prospect of outfit rental domain. Recognized brands like Flyrobe, Stage 3, Date

the Ramp have broadened their services to meet the growing expectation of the customer base. Some of these brands also foster a community and provide access to exclusive services that can be Ker-

ala is well known for its culture and extravagant weddings which comes with a hefty price tag. And one of the most significant expenses is the bridal outfit.

Purchasing a bridal lehenga or saree from a top designer can cost anywhere from several lakhs to crores, depending on the designer's name and the intricacy of the designs. Moreover, brides traditionally prefer to purchase their wedding dress associating it with the sentiment of owning the dress. But once worn its usually locked away for eternity. However, this traditional practice of purchasing fancy bridal outfits is now being challenged by a more sustainable and cost-effective approach- Bridal wear rentals. In the heart of Kollam City, a boutique is making dreams come true for brides-to-be by offering the rentals of exquisite bridal outfits and jewelleryes. POSH wedding rentals is a boutique with vision, born out of a desire to offer brides the opportunity to wear inexpensive luxurious wedding gowns.

CROSS CULTURE



ABU HAIR

Karyavattom

Erau is a lively and joyful festival that celebrates the culture and traditions of the Kutai people in Tenggarong, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The word Erau comes from the Kutai language "Eroh, which means noisy, boisterous, and festive. The festival involves various activities that are sacred, ritualistic, and entertaining. The first Erau was held when Aji Batara Agung Dewa Sakti, the first king of Kutai Kartanegara (1300-1325), was 5 years old. He performed the Tijek Tanah ceremony and bathed on the river bank. He continued to hold the Erau ceremony when he was crowned king. The Erau tradition is still preserved and maintained as a regular agenda item for the people's party and cultural festival.

A pair of replicas of male and female dragons are paraded and released in Kutai Lama (Anggana District), the origin of the legend of the dragon as a part of the festival.

Women Have What It Takes To Run a Business

MAPALO ELIZABETH

Karyavattom

The Founder of Enkindle Cameroon, Teh Francis Yai attended a 3-day 'Spread the Spice 2023' festival on October 13 to 15 at Jawahar Balabhavan, Trivandrum.

Kanthari is an international leadership training institution for social change-makers that offers an immersive, hands-on training program that equips change-makers who have overcome adversity with all the tools and skills required to start their own impactful social/environmental organization. Under the women empowerment topic, the Founder of Enkindle Cameroon, (a project that empowers rural women of Cameroon through Hands-on business training and table banking), exhibited the project's activities. EnKindle Cameroon helps rural women break



Founder of Enkindle Cameroon and Fellow Kantharis

free from generational cycles of poverty to make independent financial decisions and have independence and leadership in their destinies. This way, says Yai. Further explaining how their initiative operates, Yai told that, Rural women receive hands-on business training through a curriculum he designed in 2016 which takes into cognizance the needs of literate, semi-literate, and illiterate rural women. After the training, they have access to capital to invest in income-generating activities that will allow them to reduce their dependency and provide means to bring their children to school, and ultimately increase equality and foster human rights.

Since 2017 more than 1000 rural women have been empowered and through this empowerment, more than 3000 children have had access to a hassle-free education. He indicated that the recent Table Banking project they implemented with a donation from a foundation in Switzerland saw 84 rural women economically empowered. Seventy-nine of these women according to him were able to set up successful businesses which he mentioned are still flourishing at the moment.

AARSHA

Karyavattom

In the world of sports, were passion and dedication often converge, the love story of Varsha G, a 23 year old in National level athlete in high jump, long jump and basketball, is nothing short of remarkable. Varsha, hailing from Kollam district, has overcome incredible odds to achieve her dreams. What makes her story even more extraordinary is her marriage to Mr Akhil Chandran, a national level volleyball player who, like Varsha is also deaf and and mute. Their love story is a testament to the power of shared dreams and unwavering support.

Varsha, who is a central government employee at the Indian postal Department in the Pathanamthitta Office, holds an impressive academic background with a BCom degree and a PGDCA in computers. Her journey to success, however, was paved

Love Blossoms on the Track

with challenges, and her mother played a Pavitra role in her life. In her childhood she lost her father, and her mother's relentless hard work and determination become the cornerstone of Varsha achievements.

Not only is Varsha an accomplished athlete, but she has also ventured into the world of modeling. she has competed in several beauty pageants alongside high profile contestants and even achieved the title of second runner up in Mrs Trivandrum 2022. Her modeling career soared further when she competed and won the title of Mrs India deaf in 2023. The Pinnacle of her journey now awaits her as Varsha has been selected to represent India in the upcoming Mrs international deaf pageantsto be held in Thansania, South Africa, on November 20th, 2023.

This global event will feature participants from more than 90 countries, making it a significant moment in varsha's life and an opportunity to showcase her remarkable journey on an international stage.

Varsha's achievement extend beyond sports and modelling. she has also graced to ramp for numerous prestigious companies and served as chief guest at various fashion shows. Her story is a true inspiration to everyone, a testament to the power of determination, love, and the pursuit of one's dreams regardless of the challenges life may throw in the way.

Varsha and Akhil's story is a is a beacon of hope and resilience, reminding us that with dedication and unwavering support, one can achieve the impossible

A Cry for Humanity in the Heart of Tragedy

The ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict, which has recently reached unprecedented levels of violence, demands not just our attention but an urgent collective response from the international community. The distressing details emerging from the conflict zones paint a grim picture of suffering, loss, and the devastating toll on innocent lives, especially the children caught in the crossfire.

The assault launched by Hamas on October 7, 2023 from the Gaza Strip, resulting in 1,200 casualties and the taking of hostages, marked a tragic escalation. Equally disheartening are the Israeli attacks that claimed around 100 Palestinian lives in a single day. Amidst the chaos, the most heart-wrenching statistic is the United Nations' assertion that 41% of those killed in Gaza since October 7, 2023, have been children—a stark reminder that **the most vulnerable among us bear the brunt of conflicts they did not choose.**

The characterization of Gaza as a “graveyard for thousands of children” by the United Nations reflects the unimaginable human cost of the conflict. The innocence lost, the potential extinguished, and the trauma inflicted on an entire generation are consequences that demand global attention and action. The international community must unite in condemning the indiscriminate violence and advocating for the protection of children, who find themselves in the perilous intersection of geopolitical disputes.

The geopolitical chessboard that frames this conflict is complex, with both sides expressing their grievances and asserting their goals. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's declaration of a “clear goal of destroying Hamas's military and governing capabilities” and securing “overall security responsibility” for Gaza raises concerns about the humanitarian consequences of such actions. The world cannot turn a blind eye to the civilian casualties, the displacement of millions, and the dire conditions in Gaza's hospitals, where only a fraction remain partly functional.

The recent release of hostages during a temporary truce offers a glimmer of hope, demonstrating the potential for diplomatic solutions. However, the complex web of armed groups involved in the conflict, the ongoing military operations, and the heartbreaking reports of displaced populations, damaged infrastructure, and humanitarian crises necessitate immediate, meaningful intervention.

The United Nations' call for a humanitarian ceasefire must not fall on deaf ears. The international community, as represented by the recent non-binding resolution at the UN General Assembly, should stand firm in demanding an end to the violence and the initiation of dialogue for a lasting solution. The U.S. vote against the resolution should not hinder the broader commitment to prioritizing human lives over political considerations.

In this hour of darkness, **the world must rise above political divides and prioritize the well-being of those affected by the conflict.** The children of Gaza, whose innocence has been sacrificed in the name of war, deserve a chance for a better future. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the tragic designation of Gaza as a “graveyard for thousands of children” becomes a call to action—a call for peace, compassion, and the unwavering protection of the most vulnerable among us.

AI and Journalism Navigating the Nexus and Conflict

AKHIL THAZHATH

Karyavattom

Over the past eight months, a tremendous dispute was taking place in America. The Writers Guild of America (WGA) went on strike with Alliance Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). One among the demand was to reduce the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in content and creative writings as a mere helping tool for the professional writers. It is evident from this scenario that how the advent of AI would possibly going to affect another writing profession like journalism.

Needless to say that scientific inventions and technological advancements were cardinal at every juncture of historical progression. Every breakthrough inventions had brought the world a great leap forward within a small span of time by leaving the old ways be-

hind. It's now a bit complicated when it comes to the role of AI. It is indisputable that the use of AI going to bring upheaval hitherto undreamt of. AI is taking part as every technology simplified and substituted human labour in the history of mankind. But, unlike previous times AI is intervening in the sphere of intellectual labour instead of manual labour. Journalism would be one of the professional field which is affected by this.

Nowadays, there are two major challenges being confronted. One is obviously probability of the exclusion of considerable human labour force. Secondly, the concern over the complete replacement of human labour by AI. For the first one, there will be a conflict resolution over time and the concern regarding the capacity of AI that could surpass human output is not at stake so far. Nevertheless, in journal-



ism AI has made significant strides in recent years, particularly in its ability to produce readable and unbiased content. However, AI still lacks the emotional appeal that human writers can convey. A study conducted among readers found that they generally prefer human-written articles for topics that require emotional connection or abstract thought. For example, readers were more likely to choose human-written articles on topics such as literature, philosophy and poli-

tics than they were for AI-generated articles. This suggests that AI may be well-suited for producing factual and unbiased content, but it may not be the best choice for topics that require more human empathy and critical understanding.

The impact of AI on the future of journalism remains uncertain. Some experts believe that AI will eventually replace human journalists, while others believe that AI will simply augment the work of human journalists.

Decline of DEMOCRACY

SAM PAUL

Karyavattom

The global state of democracy initiative report says that there is a continuous decline of democracy for the last five in most countries. From Africa to Europe most of the countries facing democratic backsliding in contrary to that leaders from these states claim that they are the most democratic rulers. It is often seen that forced judiciary regulations in Netanyahu's Israel, arresting journalists in India, and America forcing curtailment on freedom of speech cases increased.

In a Democracy ruling system, the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them or indirectly through a system of representation through free election.

The democracy has three pillars they are legislature, judiciary, and executive. These three branches should work independently without interfering

with each other. This is called the division of power. Considering Manipur as an example, even after three months of simultaneous chaos, there is no end to its communal riots. If a riot continuous even after 24 hours it says, the riot will definitely have support of the government because the villages in India are surrounded by 18000 police stations making India a police state. Nothing happens without their knowledge.

The rate of unemployment in India is rising like never before. India is going down in global hunger index whereas the 90% of total wealth of the entire country has accumulated with rich who are less than 10% of the population. This is affecting the social life but are we doing anything about it? Are we using our power to pro-

test and dissent in law making which our constitution grant us? State sponsored propaganda films like Kashmir Files and Kerala Story are circulating in our cultural sphere and we believe what we see is true without any thinking twice. Meanwhile when the railway stopped 3.5 lakh jobs all of a sudden, communal riot started between two tribes in Manipur for granting reservation rights to the other. But both of them are facing the same issue of poverty and unemployment.

We live in the largest democratic society in the world. NEP 2020 implemented by the BJP government is an example of the state denying proper education and democratic principles. For Ambedkar the way of democracy is through: liberty, equality, and fra-

ternity, but he also argues that equality and liberty are not enough to sustain them and thus any of democracy is fraternity. Fraternity is therefore the root of democracy.

We the future of the society its our duty ensure and educate fraternity and democratic principles in the grass root level of the society. He offered three suggestions: holding fast to constitutional methods, not allowing hero worship of its leaders and recognizing that political democracy is not enough. **LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY** as the principles of life. The law makers coming out from such democratization process can lead democratic practices.

- B.R. AMBEDKAR



LENS

HOPE AND HARDSHIP

Behind the beauty of Kerala lies a dark story – the story of the thousands of migrant workers who toil tirelessly to keep the state running.

Migrant workers play a vital role in Kerala's economy, contributing significantly to the construction, agriculture, and service industries. However, despite their contributions, they often face a multitude of problems



Migrant workers are often paid lower wages than their local counterparts and face unfair labor practices such as long working hours, unsafe working conditions, and lack of basic amenities. Migrant workers are often unaware of their rights and have limited access to legal aid, making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse

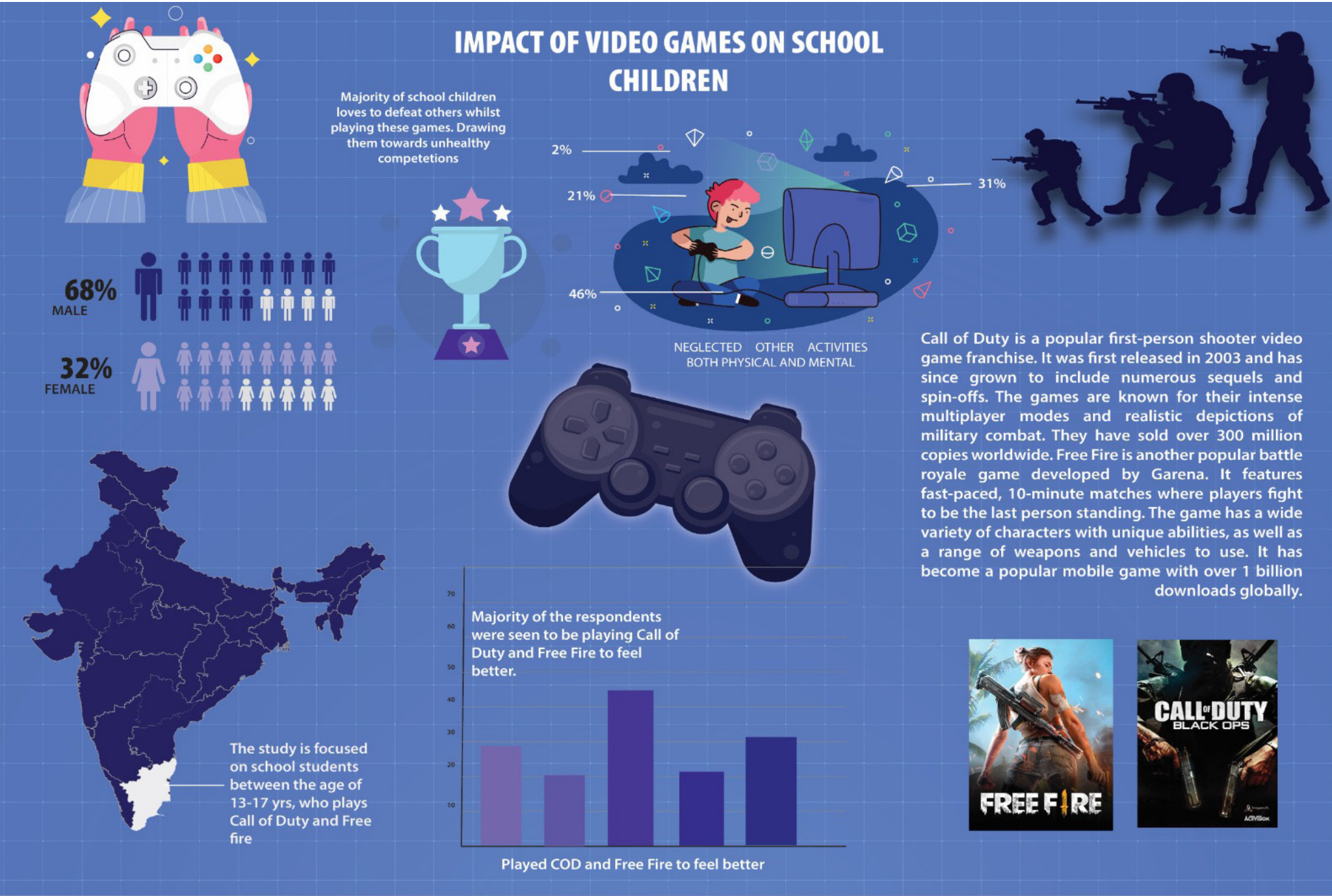


The total population of migrant workers in Kerala was estimated to be around 3 million

Migrant workers often face discrimination and exclusion based on their ethnicity, language, and religion



Shot by Sam Paul



IN-CONVERSATION

Unveiling **KISA**: An Organisation for International StudentsMAPALO ELIZABETH
Karyavattom

An Interview with Mr. Dyson Billiat, KISA Secretary. It focuses on Kerala International Students Association and its activities for international students at University of Kerala.

Q: Can you provide an overview of KISA?

KISA, which stands for Kerala International Students Association, was established in 2015 with the goal of uniting students from different countries who are pursuing their studies in Kerala. The association ensures the coordination of students' welfare and is currently led by Ms. Sukai Cham, the president from the University of Kerala. KISA has over 281 international student members.

Q: What was the inspiration behind the formation of KISA?

The association was inspired by the increasing number of international students in various universities and colleges. There was a need for a formal and well-informed body to facilitate effective communication

regarding issues and information relevant to the entire international student community. This way, authorities can easily reach international students in a formal manner.

Q: Walk us through some of KISA's milestones and the ways it has benefited international students?



Since its establishment in 2015, KISA has successfully fostered unity and good relations among international students. The association has organized football tournaments to promote friendship, cultural exchange and unity among students. KISA also ensures the welfare and safety of students

upon their arrival in India. The president and I work tirelessly to facilitate airport pickups to prevent students from being stranded in a foreign country. We collaborate with the university's administration and the Center for Global Academics, under the coordination of Dr. Sabu Joseph, who kindly provides university cars upon our request. KISA has played a crucial role in establishing an international hostel in

“KISA also ensures the welfare and safety of students upon their arrival in India”

Palayam to protect students from exploitation by private house owners charging exorbitant rents.

Q: What are the challenges that KISA faces in fulfilling its mandate, and how do you propose addressing them?

Despite the success that KISA has achieved, there are several challenges. Firstly, the association often faces financial constraints since it relies on funding, which is sometimes lacking due to the lack of dedicated members. Secondly, coordinating activities across different universities and colleges is challenging, as their academic calendars may not align. However, KISA recognizes the importance of prioritizing academic responsibilities while still finding time for leisure activities.

Q: What is KISA's vision, and what steps is the association taking to achieve its goals?

KISA is actively planning to increase interactive sessions to help students understand the relevance and importance of KISA. KISA is striving to align its activities with the academic calendars of universities and colleges. Above all, the association remains committed to addressing any challenges directed at students since this is its primary mandate.

INT'L
INSIGHTS

AUDREY HOBA
MBA
Zimbabwe

I have experienced the scenic landscapes, lush greenery, and diverse wildlife of Kerala. Truly, this is God's own country. I particularly like the people; they're one of the most hospitable and friendly. Oh, their dishes! Puttu and Kadala Curry enlists among my favourites. Actually Puttu is a cylindrical steamed rice cake cooked with coconut shavings, served with a spicy curry of black chickpeas. Yummy, right?

“

To a foreigner who lived in Delhi for three years, Kerala has been a delightful discovery. Native to a mountainous country and its beautiful yet congested capital city, I was resolute in choosing Kerala as a haven. Here I can embrace unspoiled nature, unpolluted air, serene landscapes and golden beaches, feast on exotic fruits and scrumptious dishes like dosha, idli, puttu, sadya, kumbilappam, as well as meet friendly and

equable people. As I recently embarked upon my academic journey as a research scholar, I am hopeful of enjoying an extraordinary time on- and off campus in the years to come.



FIRDAVS MAVLYANOV
PhD, Political Science
Tajikistan

KERALA CM ACCORDS FOREIGN STUDENTS WARM WELCOME

Kerala becoming a higher education hotspot for international students: Pinarayi Vijayan

LARRY EFFANDE
Karyavattom

Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan, has expressed warmth and welcome to some foreign scholars in the state during an International Students Summit at Kanakakunnu palace, Trivandrum. The situation prevailing in Kerala which is marked by the rare unity of minds is something distinctive at a time when various parts of the world are quickly turning into hot beds of friction and hatred. A 43,500 sq ft international hostel facility is being constructed for foreign students in Kerala. The State is becoming more

and more appealing to students from other Indian states as well. This is testament of the State's emphasis on pluralism and multiculturalism, he said.

Higher Education Minister R. Bindu, who presided, said efforts are on to transform Kerala into a hub of academic excellence.

Finance Minister K. N. Balagopal delivered the keynote address. General Education Minister V. Sivankutty, MLAs C. K. Hareendran and I. B. Satheesh, Mayor Arya Rajendran, district panchayat president D. Suresh Kumar, Kerala Media Academy Chairman R. S. Babu, were among those present.



Kerala CM with International Students

The event also featured cultural presentations by the international students.

In the meantime, the Kerala University 2023 graduating batch of international students have been called upon to be global models of the institution. The Honour-

able Vice Chancellor, Professor Mohanan Kunnummal gave the charge, Wednesday October 3, 2023, during a farewell ceremony for the twenty graduates.

The convocation-like event at the Kariavattom Campus of the also saw the announcement of the

imminent construction of an International Students' Hostel. According to authorities, will meet the dire accommodation needs of foreign students. The total number of foreigners admitted to the university and its affiliate colleges have more than doubled in three years. There are over 160 international students from some twenty-five countries currently studying at the University of Kerala.

The 2023 farewell ceremony was preceded by a welcome and orientation session for scores of newly admitted international students. The University of Kerala, the Registrar said, is the most sought after higher

institution of learning by foreigners in the entire state of Kerala and has attracted a record-high number this year with 78 students retained from one thousand, six hundred applicants.

The newcomers were entreated to use the facilities of the 86-year-old institution. This, Prof. Gabriel Simon Thattil emphasized, will add relevance to their skills. The professor who is a member of Kerala State Curriculum Committee for Higher Education, Head of the Department of Commerce at University added that "strong minds, strong hearts, and strong hands are the bedrock of societal relevance."



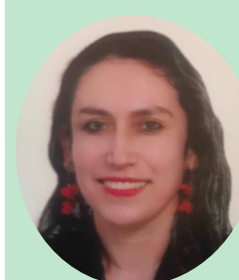
MUHAMMED
Msc. Psychology
Nigeria

“From eating Appam puttu, idiyappam, porta, fish curry to enjoying the rich flavours of coconut and spices, the local cuisine has become an integral part of my daily life. The warmth and hospitality of Keralites have made my stay truly memorable. My academic journey in Kerala has been shaped by the vibrant atmosphere of the university.

“Adapting to the coastal climate in Kerala has been challenging for me, with swelling in my legs and hands. I suspect it may be related to food intolerance. Despite this, I enjoy the local cuisine and find the people friendly, though unsure about their smiles. Overall, Kerala is considered okay.



LENAH
Phd. Public Adm.
Kenya



ANA LILIANA
Phd. Education

“I enjoy the climate in Kerala landscapes, beaches and the sea. It's been hard for me adapting to spicy food. The best part of my experience in India is meeting new people, friends, and students like me from different countries. The university campus is marvelous, with huge buildings, classrooms, surrounded by nature. My academic life has been very productive. I learned many things about research, education and my career as teacher.

“I arrived here in August, and was shocked by the extreme heat! I come from a country that scarcely ever experiences temperatures above 28°C. Despite my efforts to explore the cuisine at its best, I can't help but to build a bit of reluctance due to the spicy nature of the food, which does not go well with my delicate taste buds.



MOHAU
BBA
Lesotho



HUSSEIN
Phd. Linguistics
Yemen

“I am doing my doctoral studies and I must acknowledge that the environment in which I find myself, is characterized by its hygienic dining establishments, exceptional cuisine offerings, and favorable climate, has a profound influence on my personal and academic journey. This impact is one that I intend to perpetuate as I progress in my academic pursuits. God bless God's own country.

“I have been fortunate to experience life in various states throughout India and it's no secret that Kerala presents the most pleasant weather all year round. The diversity in food from North to South is astounding and though some foods might be spicy, but the general cuisine is delicious. I am a huge fan of typical Kerala made “Ela-Appam”. I have had two academic stints in Kerala University from 2015-2017 and then again from 2019 to present. From a personal and academic perspective, Kerala University will always remain the right choice for higher education.



SHAD
Phd. Archaeology
West Indies

A story of perseverance and triumph

Abu's Decade Long Journey to Pursue Education in India

LARRY EFFANDE
Karyavattom

In a world where opportunities are often elusive, dreams can be shattered, and ambitions can be put on hold indefinitely. However, there are those who refuse to give up, and chase their aspirations, no matter the obstacles they face. Abu Hair, an unwavering Indonesian boy, exemplifies this spirit of resilience and determination. After a decade of relentless effort, he has finally achieved his long-cherished goal of studying in India, overcoming failure, setbacks, along the way.

In 2013, “I embarked on my first attempt to pursue university studies in India” - Abu tells. Filled with hope and anticipation, he faced the challenging admission process, only to be met with disappointment when his application was rejected. “It was a devastating blow, but it did not deter me from my ultimate goal of pursuing higher edu-



Abu Hair at Keraleeyam

cation in India” he adds. Undeterred by the setback, Abu decided to continue his undergraduate studies in Indonesia. Although he had to put his dreams of studying in India on hold, he remained focused on his education and excelled in his chosen field. For the next ten years, Abu Hair worked tirelessly towards his goal, navigating through professional and personal challenges. This persistence eventually paid off in July 2023 when he was awarded the prestigious Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarship by the Indian government to pursue his Master's degree in Communication and Journalism. “It was a moment of sheer joy and validation for all the sacrific-

es I had made over the years.” Abu articulates with a dimpled smile. Fueled by excitement and an untiring passion for his chosen field, Abu Hair made the life-altering decision to leave his Administrative Assistant job in Indonesia and embark on a new chapter of his academic journey at Kerala University.

Abu Hair's journey and eventual success have had a profound impact on the Indonesian community. His story has inspired countless others, particularly young students, to pursue their dreams relentlessly and not be deterred by setbacks. “I have become a role model and source of encouragement for aspiring students who face similar challenges in their pursuit of higher education abroad. I share my experiences through online speaking engagements and mentoring programs, aiming to provide guidance and support to those who aspire to follow in my footsteps.”

University of Kerala's International Students Engage in Philanthropic Initiatives

MAPALO ELIZABETH
Karyavattom

A group of international students studying at the University of Kerala has formed a dedicated committee aimed at organizing humanitarian projects to benefit underprivileged individuals in Trivandrum. The seven-member committee will be responsible for coordinating various charitable activities, including the distribution of food parcels and clothing to those in need, with a particular focus on elderly individuals and vulnerable children. The students plan to collaborate with local religious leaders to identify the most deserving beneficiaries.

It has been revealed that previous groups of international students have also undertaken similar initiatives in the past, albeit without a formal organizing team.

Lisemelo Lethoba, a student who has previously participated in humanitarian acts, expressed that the experience of helping those in dire need is “humbling.” She described the feeling of being able to extend a helping hand to those who are desperately in need as a testament to the divine intervention that makes it possible. When asked about the inspiration behind her humanitarian efforts, Lethoba explained, “In my home country of Lesotho, my friends and I founded an NGO called Bright Vision Civil Society, with a primary goal of assisting marginalized groups in society. We strongly believe in serving wherever we are because there will always be people in need. Therefore, I initiated multiple humanitarian activities in Trivandrum as well.”

Furthermore, Lethoba stated that she chose Asha Bhawan Trust of India as the recipient of



Lethoba and team during a donation drive

her donation because it aligns with the core mission of her charity organization back home, which is to protect and assist the most vulnerable members of society, without any form of prejudice.

The committee formed by the international students at the University of Kerala is dedicated to organizing various humanitarian activities in Trivandrum. Their primary focus is on assisting the less privileged members of society, particularly the elderly and vulnerable children. The students aim to make a positive impact by providing food parcels and clothing to those in need.

To ensure efficient distribution and reach the right beneficiaries, the students plan to collaborate with local leaders. By working together, they can identify individuals and communities who are most in need of assistance. This approach helps ensure that their efforts are targeted and effective.

Laurels in Archery for University of Kerala

University of Kerala Students Secure Medals at Zonal Archery Competition



Deepti

In a remarkable display of skill, two students from the University of Kerala clinched medals at the Zonal Archery Competition held at DPE Stadium PMG on December 4 and 5, 2023.

Deepti, from the Bioinformatics department, secured a prestigious Gold in the Indian round after an impressive performance of 36 rounds.

“Archery is a sport that requires patience, focus and discipline”

Vivek Ajai, from the Department of Commerce, exhibited excellence in the Compound round, earning a Bronze medal with an outstanding performance across 12 rounds.



Their outstanding performances showcased the university's diverse talents, bringing home well-deserved accolades.

Vivek Ajai



A Glimpse of Che International Chess Festival 2023

GOKUL G.L

Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala mounts stunning comeback to beat Cuba as they win a friendly chess match against at the Che International Chess Festival 2023 with a score of 42.5-37.5. Kerala secured the victory with one Blitz match to spare. The top scorer of the match was GM S L Narayanan with 14.5 points, followed closely by IM Jubin Jimmy with 14 points. GM Elier Miranda Mesa and GM Dylan Isidro Berdayes Ason scored 12 and 11.5 points, respectively. Despite being the underdogs, the younger Kerala team emerged victorious in a closely contested battle against the more experienced Cuban players. The match was more about fostering friendship and harmony between Kerala and Cuba rather than just focusing on wins, losses, or scores. The chief Minister of Kerala, Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan, inaugurated the Che International Chess Festival. During the ceremony, he made the opening move alongside IM Lisandra Teresa Ordaz Valdes.

The event was attended by notable figures including V Abdurahiman, Kerala Sports Minister, Olympian, Alejandro Simancas Marin (Cuban Ambassador to India), Arya Rajendran Mayor of Thiruvananthapuram,

and other distinguished guests. In Opening Day, Kerala's young talents faced off against Grandmasters and International Masters from Cuba. Notably, six-year-old Devanarayanan Kalliyath, who began learning chess just a year ago, surprised everyone by holding his own and securing a draw against IM Rodney Oscar Perez Garcia. GM S L Narayanan dominated with a perfect 12-0 record, while GM Dylan Isidro Berdayes Ason conceded only one draw, finishing with an impressive 15.5-0.5 score.

Kerala chess players believe that organizing international tournaments in the state is a great opportunity for them to compete in the best possible way and enhance their skills by playing against foreign players. V. K. Ramachandran, the Chairman of the Planning Board, presented trophies to both teams.



Kerala and Cuba Team Members

REMEMBERING

DHYAN CHAND
29 August 1905 -
03 December 1979

Dhayan Chand was a legendary Indian field hockey player, who mesmerized the world with his unparalleled skills and unmatched goal-scoring prowess. The three-time Olympic gold medalist, also known as the "Wizard of Hockey," showcased extraordinary control and finesse on the field. His legacy continues to inspire generations, defining excellence in Indian sports history.



Awesome Australia beat India to win the ICC Men's World Cup

RONALDO J XAVIER
Thiruvananthapuram

In the final clash of ICC men's world cup Australia won easily over India at the Narendra Modi stadium which was crowded with more than 90,000 passionate Indian fans. Victory for Australia is a crowning moment in what can be a phenomenal year for Pat Cummins' side across formats adding to their win over India in the world test championship final in June and their subsequent retention of their ashes.

Australia won the toss and choose to bowl. From this important decision made by the mighty Aussies shows that they analysed the pitch at Narendra Modi stadium earlier which was very much different from their country.

At first it was India who got off to a flier, inspired once more by Captain Rohit Sharma as usual. The early loss of Shubhman Gill didn't halt India's attacking momentum, as partnership of Virat and Rohit building the score card with 80 runs coming in the first powerplay equalling the record for a Men's world cup cricket final. However, the departure of the skipper for 47 from 31 balls was followed by Shreyas Iyer for 4 in

the very next over and thus runs dried up in the middle over. Looking to rebuild in the face of some excellent bowlers Kohli and Rahul ended up at least a competitive score. Wickets fell frequently as Australia's bowling attack looked to press home their advantage, and the final Indian wicket gone with just a total of 240 runs.

The second innings

got off to a frenetic start, with David Warner scoring 15 runs in the thrilling first over itself. Then the game proceeded further the wicket of Warner in the second over.

An energising crowd roared on as India pressed hard for more powerful wickets to add bricks on their defending wall of 240. Bumrah added the hope of lakhs of Indians by taking the wickets of both Mitchell Marsh and Steve Smith. But the mighty Aussies fought back with the aid of Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne. Their partnership crossed a hundred in a stage of winning the match, and adding flame to the fuel Travis Head scored a century. And by this the entire crowd was silenced as said by their captain Pat Cummins.

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