



EDITORIAL

GLITTERING OUTLOOK

With its sparkling sheen and intense rich tones, it is not hard to understand the desire for owning gold. As a dynamic metal, gold has a range of attributes that lend itself as a medium of exchange. It is rare, difficult to mine, nearly impossible to forge, and has a magnificent track record of holding its value.

Usually, in precious metals terms, prices have remained almost same; it was the value of the rupee that had declined. But now the soaring price of gold has nothing to do with the value of rupee. It is a global phenomenon.

There exists a large, but not too large, and almost fixed quantity of gold in the world, almost all of which is held by its owners as asset. The people are concerned about the high inflation and are using gold as the traditional preserver of wealth. Currently well over ninety five per cent of the world's gold is held as a wealth store - either in coins, bars or as jewelry, which is generally considered a private monetary reserve, particularly in India.

Our country has been the world's largest gold consumer since time immemorial. In the Roman era, Indians traded spices, cotton, jute for gold and precious stones. Hindu religious books have mentioned gold as a commodity of immense value. Now India is the world's largest gold importer and uses ninety nine per cent of its total gold availability for gold jewelry making.

People in India wear gold Jewelry on most of the social functions, festivals and celebrations. Almost all women in India like to wear gold jewelry irrespective of their religious belief, social and cultural background. A large number of Indian men also wear gold.

In comparison to other states, Kerala has a higher percentage of exchange of gold ornaments rather than purchasing new ones. Keralites prefer to wear their ornaments frequently rather than only for some special occasion. Gold is an integral part of marriages in our country especially in Kerala. It has also been a popular source of retirement saving and insurance. Middle and lower class Indians use to sell or mortgage it while in need and purchase it in good times.

We cannot maintain growth rate without huge investment in infrastructure and agricultural sector. Our gold investment can be utilised for its infrastructural development and thus change the economic destiny of the people. A better way of thinking is inevitable in this regard.

It seems that Indian Gold demand will remain high with economic prosperity of the Indians. Economic and social change will change the nature of demand for gold. But the precious metal will always have a special attraction.

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MICROSCAN



Burj Khalifa

Green Kerala Express

In a novel initiative, the Thiruvananthapuram Doordarshan Kendra is launching a social reality show focussing on the panchayats and urban local bodies in the State.

The show, titled 'Green Kerala Express,' is being mounted by the kendra in association with the Department of Local Self-government, Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (C-DIT), State Sanitation Mission and Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA). The programme has been designed in the form of a contest among sustainable development models developed by the local self-government institutions. The programme would be aired from Monday to Friday every week beginning February.

The contest would be based on performance of each local body in implementing programmes relating to sustainable agriculture, conservation of water resources, food and social security, Kudumbasree, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), health, education, energy, housing, women's empowerment and participation in grama sabhas.

Each local body would be selected on the basis of a statement to be submitted by it in response to a questionnaire and a documentary of 8 to 10 minute duration. The preliminary selection of panchayats would be done by a technical jury.

K C

Burj Khalifa, known as Burj Dubai till its inauguration in Dubai is now the tallest man-made structure ever built with a height of 828 m (2,717 ft). The tower's construction began on 21 September 2004, with the exterior of the structure completed on 1 October 2009. The building officially opened on 4 January 2010. The total cost for the Burj Khalifa project is about US\$1.5 billion and for the entire new "Downtown Dubai", US\$20 billion. The tower's architecture and engineering was performed by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill of Chicago.

Prabhul

Burj Khalifa shines with fireworks at the time of inauguration





Sakshar Bharath Mission

The new adult literacy programme Sakshar Bharath Mission launched by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, aiming at ending India's dubious distinction as being the country with the highest number of illiterates is really a notable attempt.

The Mission sets itself the goal of educating 70 million learners, 60 million of them women, by 2012 through an investment of one billion dollar; it replaces the old adult literacy Mission that began in 1988. The final goal is to take national literacy levels from 64 per cent by 2017, and reduce the gender gap from 21 per cent at present to 10 per cent, eventually.

Sakshar Bharath will be administered through 170,000 panchayaths or village assemblies and not by the civil administration. It is going to concentrate on more than 300 districts where over 50 per cent of females are illiterates, as well as 33 districts where Naxalism is strong.

Geetha. S

Need more efforts

The GI tag for three varieties of rice produced in the State is indeed good news for the farmers in Kerala. Pokkali, Navara and Palakkadan Matta have been registered as GIs under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

The GI tag is used on goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation and characteristics that are essentially attributable to that region alone. Once granted, the GI status legally prohibits others from selling the product under the same name. But the tag alone brings little benefit to the farmers unless accompanied by other measures.

Without adequate follow up and initiatives on building awareness, successful marketing and appropriate branding, the achievement would not be of help to the producers.

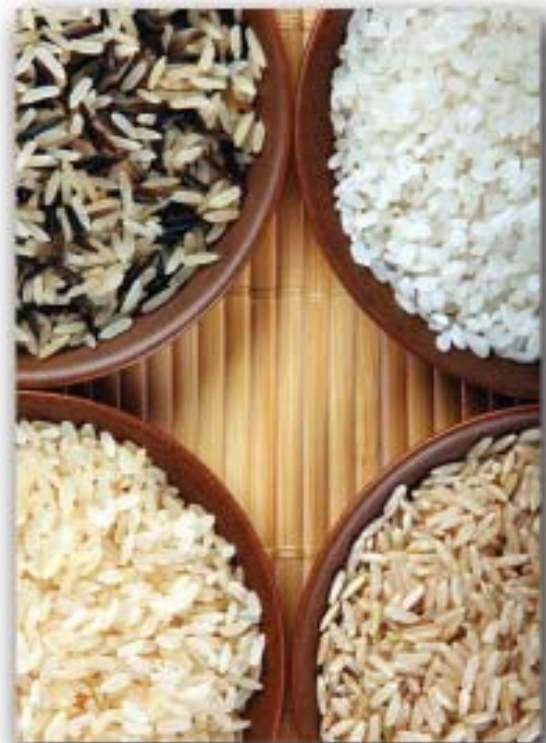
All the stakeholders, including the Government, need to build up on this achievement.

In fact, the GI tag can help in marketing the rice varieties. Hailed for its medicinal value in the Ayurvedic system of medicine, Navara needs to be popularised outside the state too.

Palakkadan Matta is popular with Malayalis all over the world and has significant export potential. The potential of Pollali rice variety is immense.

Unfortunately, the rice varieties do not have the benefits of Darjeeling tea or pochampalli saris, two products that were already popular before they attained the GI tag. One factor that often hinders such GI tagged from becoming popular is their often rural origins. In the case of the Palakkadan Matta variety, the Palakkad Matta Farmers Cooperative ran a three year campaign to earn the G.I tag. If this fails to bring in any benefits, farmers would surely switch to cultivating a cash crop, putting the food security of the State, which is already in peril, into a more dangerous position.

At a time when India is gearing up to put BT bringal into commercial production, on the argument that pesticides are harmful and low production, flight of farmers to cash crop cultivation would only lead to food revolt in the near future.



Kavita Martin



CURRENT

Dr. Manmohan Singh Prime Minister

January 03-07, 2010 Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala



Brain drain Shift

I am delighted that my first important engagement in this New Year is the inauguration of the 97th Indian Science Congress. If India has to re-emerge as a knowledge power in the 21st Century, then it can only be through developing a strong capability in science and technology. It is particularly appropriate that this Congress is being held in Kerala which has led the way in education and human resource development. I recall it was in Thiruvananthapuram that we launched India into the era of space exploration. I wish the people of Kerala - this God's Own Country - a very happy and joyous year ahead.

In the past few years our Government has invested heavily in expanding and upgrading the science, technology and innovation system in our country as well as in supporting a more broad-based

educational base. We have worked hard to do what is good for science. We are determined to ensure that what we have announced does get implemented. We also know that we need to do much more because scientific capability is what will determine our ability to overcome the challenges which lie ahead. We face new challenges of climate change and the management of our scarce water resources. We also face old challenges of food security and disease control. In all these areas, our success will depend critically on the quality of our institutions of science and technology.

Last month, world leaders came together at Copenhagen to grapple with the threat that climate change poses to our planet and to our way of life. It is a problem that is challenging the knowledge and wisdom of humankind. We were able to make

only limited progress at the Copenhagen Summit and no one was satisfied with the outcome. And yet, there is no escaping the truth that the nations of the world have to move to a low greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficient development path.

All over the world, countries are chalking out strategies to achieve greater energy efficiency and a shift to renewable sources of energy. They are also chalking out strategies for adapting to such climate change as is inevitable. India must not lag behind in these areas. Indeed we should plan to be among the leaders in the development of science and technology related to mitigation and also adaptation to climate change. The market for such technologies is not just India. It is indeed the whole world.

As far as energy is concerned, renewable and clean energy supplies



to brain gain the vision

will need to play a much bigger role than what they do currently. Nuclear and solar energy supplies will need to increase considerably. The agreement reached last year with the Nuclear Suppliers Group represents a landmark in lifting long standing restrictions on the transfer of nuclear fuel and technology to India. I am confident that we can now plan for an accelerated nuclear power development programme.

We have also decided to launch a Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission for the establishment of 20,000 MW of solar generation capacity by the year 2020. The mission provides an opportunity to our indigenous scientific institutions to contribute in this important area. I am very happy that a PAN IIT programme for Solar Energy Research has been launched by our Ministry of Science and Technology to drive down the costs

of solar energy technology options through R and D - led innovations. The Ministry has also launched joint development programmes with knowledge networks of EU and the United Kingdom on solar energy research with investments of 5 million Euro and 5 million UK pounds respectively on each side.

We live in an increasingly complex world with growing interdependence among different sectors of our economy. Every solution to a particular problem has consequences in other areas. Take forests for instance. When we thought of forests as an economic resource the focus of forest planning was almost exclusively on growing the stock of timber and other commercially valuable forest products. This led to decisions about the choice of tree species and planting practices that we now know were sub optimal because

they did not pay sufficient regard to other functions of forests like controlling water run off or for the protection of bio-diversity.

A single-minded focus on carbon reduction could lead to a similar distortion if forestry choices are based solely on how good they are in sequestering carbon. Mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions is no doubt an important goal. But it must co-exist with other equally important goals.

Water resource management is a very important area for us given the fact that per capita availability of water is declining as our population increases. The urgency of action in this area increases all the more because of the threat of climate change. The scientific input in evolving an adaptation strategy is therefore very important. I am happy that the Ministry of Science and Technology has initiated a Technology Mission for

Winning, Augmentation and Renovation (WAR) of our water resources. Technology solutions for 25 different water related challenges are being found through pilot trials under real field conditions in about 60 locations covering all our 20 river basin systems. These solutions will then be applied to 100,000 population clusters to study their financial viability and location neutral applications. If the project completes successfully by 2011, it will have an important demonstration effect of the virtues of investment in scientific solutions to economic and social problems.

Strengthening food security is another important area of emphasis in our scientific and technological efforts. Better weather forecasting is critical for sound agricultural management. A Geo-spatial Technology Applications Mission to provide crop planning and monitoring as well as flood management has recently been mounted.

Developments in biotechnology present us the prospect of greatly improving yields in our major crops by increasing resistance to pests and also to moisture stress. BT Cotton has been well accepted in the country and has made a great difference to the production of cotton. The technology of genetic modification is also being extended to food crops though this raises legitimate questions of safety. These must be given full weightage, with appropriate regulatory control based on strictly scientific criteria. Subject to these caveats, we should pursue all possible leads that biotechnology provides that might increase our food security as we go through climate related stress.

Providing affordable health care and improving the quality of life of our elderly population is yet another major challenge facing us in the 21st century. It is a matter of pride that scientists of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research have recently succeeded in mapping the genome of an Indian through a collaborative

national research effort. I also commend the DRDO for developing a new and rapid diagnostic method for detecting the H1N1 virus. We need to build our scientific capabilities in a way that they can respond in real time to problems such as pandemics.

Scientific capability depends critically on our Science and Technology education and research infrastructure. I am happy to say that our efforts to improve this base are

many more talented young women to take up careers in science. A step in this direction is a new scheme now available for women's universities named Consolidation of University Research, Innovation and Excellence (CURIE). This scheme provides financial help for complete upgradation of facilities in these universities.

I am happy to announce that the National Science and Engineering

we can convert the 'brain drain' of the past into a 'brain gain' for the future. This will require special incentives. We need to think creatively on how this can be done so that high quality minds are attracted to teaching and research in our country.

progressing well. Since I last addressed this Congress, there has been progress on a number of initiatives.

Under the Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research or INSPIRE scheme, we will soon be announcing the name of at least one science awardee per school in the age group of 10-15 in the entire country.

Our Government is considering the revision of the value of doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships as well as the formulation of schemes that would cover all research scholars with some funding support.

We are keen to make our science education outreach inclusive and also affordable. Last year I had announced a special package for the North Eastern Region. We have since started implementing a similar package for the Science and Technology sector in Jammu and Kashmir. We are planning similar investments in other regions of our country like Bihar to bridge asymmetries.

One of the imbalances in our scientific resource pool is the under representation of our women. We should redouble our efforts to attract

Research Board will start functioning before March 2010. A National Policy for Data Sharing and Accessibility has also been formulated. The Protection of Intellectual Property Bill, focusing on sharing revenue from intellectual properties with researchers will be taken up for discussion in parliament very soon.

All Indians felt proud that an Indian origin scientist, who earned his early spurs in India, was a recipient of this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry. I salute Dr. Venkatraman Ramakrishnan for his creativity, his talent and for his deep commitment to good science. I have also noted Dr Ramakrishnan's recent comment on the need for greater "autonomy from red tape and local politics" for Indian scientists.

It is unfortunately true that red tape, political interference and lack of proper recognition of good work have all contributed to a regression in Indian science in some sectors from the days of Dr. C V Raman, Meghnad Saha, J C Bose, Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan and other great pioneers of Indian science.

I urge all our scientific institutions



to introspect and to propose mechanisms for greater autonomy, including autonomy from the government, which could help to improve standards for research and development. We must make a special effort to encourage scientists of Indian origin currently working abroad to return to our country including coming to our universities or scientific institutions for a short period. In this way we can, convert the 'brain drain' of the past into a 'brain gain' for the future. This will require special incentives. We need to think creatively on how this can be done so that high quality minds are attracted to teaching and research in our country. Much of what we have to do to improve science requires money but this is only one part of what is needed. It also requires a change in mindset, including, if I may say so, the mindset of senior faculty and university administration. Sometimes that is the hardest thing to do.

I invite you all to explore all these issues and engage with the Government so that we can do what is needed to liberate Indian science from the shackles and deadweight of bureaucratism and in-house favouritism. Only then we can unleash the latent talent and creative energies of our vast scientists and engineers too.

Our Government has declared 2010-2020 as the 'Decade of Innovations'. We need new solutions in many areas to achieve our goals of

inclusive and sustainable growth in healthcare, in energy, in urban infrastructure, in water management, in transportation, to name only a few. We cannot continue with business as usual. Solutions from developed countries available are also not applicable all the time. They are often too costly and at times not sustainable.

The country must develop an Innovation Eco-system to stimulate innovations. Innovators must be challenged to produce solutions our society needs. And innovative solutions with potential must be nurtured and rapidly applied.

Our scientific establishments must be central to the Innovation Eco-system. But this system must include industry, and providers of venture funds, as well as regulators who set high standards of performance for their products. We also need to think creatively on how to increase private investment in R and D. Some innovative policy readjustments may be required to build vibrant Public-Private Partnerships in the Science and Technology Sector.

Our elite institutions such as the IITs must do more to address the technological challenges of the 21st Century. Their research goals and the expectations of the industrial and social sectors must be better aligned.

The Planning Commission has recently set up an Expert Group to strengthen the Innovation Eco-system in the country and also to point to

areas where innovations are required to meet our country's goals of more rapid, more inclusive, and sustainable growth.

I have said the Indian scientific establishment is a vital component of the Innovation Eco-system. But to fulfill its role, it should have a strong outward orientation. It must work in partnership with industry. We need to concentrate on strengthening the linkages between academic institutions, research institutions and industry. Today each operates within its own silo. Unless we close those gaps, our research and development sector may report high performance in terms of published papers but our challenges of the 21st century may still remain unsolved.

Lastly, Indian science should have a strong outward orientation. Our science establishments should step up global alliances that will expose our scientists to the best in the world and enhance our competitiveness.

The time has come to give a new boost to science and technology in India. I hope the 97th Indian Science Congress will come forward with specific proposals to this end. I hope each one of you will return to your laboratories and class rooms re-energised to do good science, and do it for the good of our people, and for the good of humanity at large.

In conclusion, I wish you all a very happy, prosperous, purposive and peaceful New Year and I wish your proceedings all success. ■



Destination Friendly

I am extremely glad that CII in partnership with Government of Kerala is organising IT Summit in Thiruvananthapuram, the home of Technopark, the first IT Park in the country. Let me, at the outset warmly welcome the guests who have come from outside and wish you a very comfortable and enjoyable stay in Thiruvananthapuram.

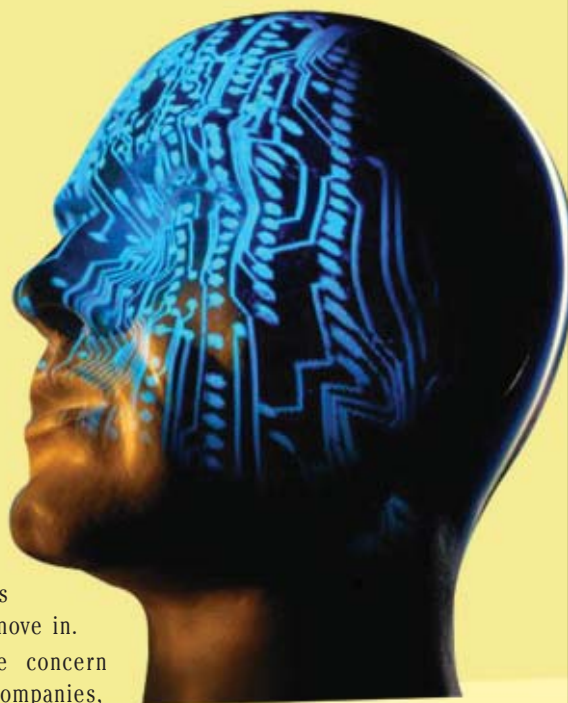


This IT Summit Meet is being organised at a very crucial time as far as the IT industry is

concerned. The IT world has experienced a slowdown in the last 12 to 18 months and there are signs of recovery. The pressures on the margins have forced companies to look for cost cutting measures. Besides, there are challenges from emerging destinations like China and Vietnam. The IT world is addressing the challenges which the slowdown has created and how to navigate as the slowdown slowly recedes. Several companies have started looking at



Excerpts of the Inaugural Speech by the Chief Minister at CII - IT Summit held at Kovalam, Thiruvananthapuram.



tier-2 and tier-3 destinations for locating their IT operations.

Kerala offers the world of opportunities for IT companies with lower cost of operations but social infrastructure and quality of life which match, if not exceed, the best in the country. The rentals, the power tariff and the wage rates in Kerala are all lower by a factor of 30 to 40 percent as compared to metro cities. Recognising this opportunity Kerala has launched an ambitious plan to expand the overall IT landscape in the State. Our objective is to make Kerala the most sought after tier-2 destination in the country. We are in the process of developing IT parks similar to Technopark in ten different locations of the State. These locations are being developed in a hub and spoke model, with hubs in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode and spokes in neighbouring districts. This strategy would ensure that companies operating from Kerala would enjoy this cost advantage not only today but for the coming years as well. Government is investing nearly Rs 2000 crore during 2009-10 and 2010-11 for the development of infrastructure in these parks. The development of these parks offers capital investment opportunities to the tune of nearly five billion US Dollar (Rs 24000 crores) to potential IT and ITES companies and IT infrastructure developers. It is a

perfect time for investors in the IT infrastructure as well as IT/ITES sector to move in.

There has been some concern that the small scale IT companies, who are unable to develop their own campuses are not able to benefit from the SEZ scheme. My Government is addressing this concern of smaller companies. Nearly two million sq ft of built up SEZ space would be made available for small scale IT companies at affordable rentals.

We have developed a robust core IT infrastructure including State Data Centres, State Wide Area Network and Akshaya Centres. Riding on these, major e-governance initiatives like e-procurement, Service Delivery Gateway, eDistrict, Spatial Data Infrastructure, Departmental WANs, Civil Station WANs, Official email system, Public Key Infrastructure, Mobile-governance infrastructure etc. have either been set up or are in advanced stages of implementation. Various Departments of the Government are also in the process of developing their e-governance initiatives. I invite the IT companies to participate in the e-governance journey of the State and help to make it a success. Government of Kerala has declared Free and Open source software as the medium for software application for the State. I would specifically welcome companies which are working in the space of Free

and Open Source to make Kerala their base.

IT companies in Kerala have witnessed growth of IT exports which are nearly two and a half times the national average during the last three years or so. Even though this growth is on a narrow base, it reflects a very encouraging positive trend. Government of Kerala has an investment friendly approach which fosters such growth. You would find Technopark, Infopark and Cyberpark as your partners helping you in setting up operations here. Given the comparative advantages which Kerala has to offer, and the indicative trends in growth, we feel that the next decade in the IT history of India would be that of Kerala. Let me conclude by inviting you to look at Kerala for exploiting the opportunities which the State offers for your operations.

Finally, I compliment the Confederation of Indian Industries Kerala Chapter for having taken the lead to organise this event in Thiruvananthapuram. I thank all of you for having participated in this conference. I wish the deliberations of the conference all success. ■



The m-governance initiative will go a long way in ensuring transparency at the check-posts to the benefit of all traders getting their merchandise transported across the State's border.

Kerala is fully equipped to change over to the goods and services tax (GST) regime from the beginning of 2010-11, if the Union Government can work out a consensus on it among the States. E-filing and e-payment facilities, introduced earlier this year, will help Kerala ensure a smooth transition from the existing system to the new one. All that remained to be done in the State was put the officials through a round of training.

Being a state receiving bulk of the items for its consumption from other States, Kerala will benefit to a much larger extent by the GST system since it envisages transferring a portion of the tax collected at the manufacturing end to the State that consumes the goods. On the flipside the State will lose out on the purchase tax revenue, which will be too

minimal, from items such as rubber produced here and consumed by other States.

It is, however, unlikely that the GST regime can be introduced by the beginning of the coming financial year, since there are differences of opinion among the States about its broad format. The system basically aimed at doing away with several kinds of levies on goods and services, charged by the Union government and the State governments, and bringing them all together under a single new levy that will be shared by the governments. Kerala is of the view that the Union government should hand over excise and service taxes entirely to the States. The revenue from these sources now accounted for only 20 per cent of the Centre's tax receipts. The Finance Commission can work out a formula

to adjust the States' share of the Central taxes accordingly.

The Commercial Taxes Department is getting ready to launch by the second week of January a mobile phone based Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) to receive complaints and initiate action for the eradication of problems such as official harassment at the check-posts. This m-governance initiative will go a long way in ensuring transparency at the check-posts to the benefit of all traders getting their merchandise transported across the State's border. It will also help the department identify weak links at the check-posts and thereby initiate action to improve efficiency.

The IVRS system will enable an aggrieved trader to dial a toll-free number, which will be announced

Share for Welfare Measures



later, to register a complaint by mobile phone anytime during the day or night. The complaint can be presented in English, Malayalam, Tamil or Hindi. The system will recite the complaint back to the caller in his or her own voice and, on re-confirmation, provide the complainant a docket number.

The complaint will be transcribed at the call centre that will be operated under the system and transmitted by e-mail to the Deputy Commissioner having jurisdiction over the area from where the complaint has come from. The official will immediately look into the issue and post the details of the action taken on the department website. The complainant will receive the reply over SMS too. The complaint and the action taken report will be made available online to top officials of the department and also the Finance Minister on a daily, weekly and monthly basis for the purpose of monitoring the goings on in the field. Mob ME, a Techno park company operating in the field of mobile media and entertainment, has designed the IVRS for the Commercial Taxes Department.

A demonstration of the working of the system has already been done to the traders and officials who

attended a workshop recently. The system's launch is tentatively fixed for January. The government will thus ensure for the traders a transparent tax collection mechanism. At the same time, the government will not relax the measures it has been taking to prevent tax evasion.

A socially secure state

Government is thinking of enhancing welfare pensions. By enhancing and expanding welfare pensions, the Government intends to change Kerala into a socially secure state in every respect. The welfare pensions were increased twice after the Left Democratic Front Government had come to power. The earlier practice of leaving the pensions pending for months together had changed. But the government wants to do more and will give priority to further strengthening the welfare measures, of which the welfare pensions constituted only one of the elements.

The one month's pension for the aged should at least be sufficient enough to buy one month's rice. More social groups will be given rice at the rate of Rs.2. Public Distribution System will be strengthened.

Insurance coverage should be enhanced by expanding the health insurance scheme. The coverage of health insurance too will be extended to all the BPL families in the State. The government has also brought in a provision to enable the APL families to join the scheme on the payment of the insurance premium. Stress should be given to safeguard the mentally and physically challenged children.

Though the last budget declaration that pension would be given to those crossing sixty and were not entitled to any kind of pension schemes, could not be materialised. The absence of pension distribution schedule is the reason for this. It is decided to prepare a uniform pension schedule of the people availing any kind of pension in the State. We will demand the Centre to select Kerala as the first state to implement the unique identification number project introduced by the Central Government.

Welfare projects cannot be implemented by borrowing money. Non tax income should be enhanced. Rs.200 crore is expected to collect this time from selling sand from the reservoirs. If this becomes Rs.600 to Rs.700 crores, welfare schemes can be implemented without borrowing money. ■



Elder Children are more Selfish

A recent study has revealed that elder children are more selfish and less willing to cooperate with their siblings, as compared to the younger ones. Researchers from the Montpellier University in France made this revelation.

The study also said that arrival of a younger brother or sister often causes a lot of emotional impact on the elder children. When they find that they no longer remain the centre of attraction of their parents, they get upset and angry and feel neglected.

The researchers adopted a unique method to prepare the study. They asked the children to play a game that involved passing money from one player to another. While the elder ones showed less interest in returning the money to their mates, the younger ones were generous in exchanging money



Can anti-depressants change mood

Can anti-depressants change more than your mood? Can they actually change who you are? A new study says yes.

Roughly seven per cent of American adults have depression severe enough to take anti-depressants. The hope, of course, is that the medicine will counteract the down effects of the depression, bringing the patient back "up" to his or her normal level. It is seen primarily as a chemical balancing, much like insulin balances a diabetic's blood sugar.

But now comes a research study of 240 adults that finds that important personality changes also take place in many patients who take antidepressants, including an increase in extrovert behaviour and a decrease in neurotic behaviours. The patients became more confident, outgoing and optimistic even after they stop the anti-depressants.

Neuroticism and extroversion are two of the five traits thought to define personality and shape a person's behaviour and daily thoughts (the other three are conscientiousness, agreeability and openness to experience). Previously, it was thought to be very difficult to change any of these traits.

This decade 'warmest on record'

This decade is on track to become the warmest since records began in 1850 and 2009 could rank among the top-five warmest years, the U.N. weather agency reported in the 192-nation climate conference. Only the United States and Canada experienced cooler conditions than average, the World Meteorological Organisation said, although Alaska had the second-warmest July on record. In central Africa and southern Asia, this will probably be the warmest year, but overall, 2009 will "be about the fifth-warmest year on

record.

The agency also noted an extreme heat wave in India in May and a heat wave in northern China in June. Parts of China experienced their warmest year on record, and that Australia so far has had its third-warmest year. Extremely warm weather was also more frequent and intense in southern South America.

The decade 2000-2009 "is very likely to be the warmest on record, warmer than the 1990s, than the 1980s and so on.



India to have over 500 Million Mobile Phone Users

India will soon have over 500 million mobile phone users - second largest in the world after China. While only the number of mobile subscribers will touch the 500 million mark, it will be much higher, if we take into account the number of fixed line subscribers. The overall mobile phone and fixed line connections have gone up to over 550 million in India till date. While 97 percent in urban India have mobile phone subscriptions, just 18 percent people in rural India have the access to mobile phones India was at 488.40 million (wireless) subscribers at the end of October 2009. Ironically, only 7.5 million people in India have access to broadband Internet connectivity.



A new surgical technique using glue to repair breastbones intentionally broken during open-heart surgery speeds up recovery time and is "substantially less painful" for patients, a University of Calgary scientist said. The standard practice in operating rooms is to sew the breastbone back together with wire after open-heart surgery. That procedure takes weeks to heal and often requires strong pain medication to withstand. "We can now heal the breastbone in hours instead of weeks after open-heart surgery," Fedak, who pioneered the new procedure, said. The procedure uses a special adhesive called "Kryptonite," made by Doctors Research Group.

A study involving over 20 patients in Calgary found that people whose chests were glued back together were able to get back to full physical activity within days instead of the months it normally takes with the wire stitches. Over one million open-heart surgeries are performed in the world each year by splitting the breastbone.

The study also found that pain and discomfort were substantially reduced by using the new procedure and that the use of pain-killers was reduced if not completely eliminated. Fedak is now training surgeons in other Canadian and European hospitals on the procedure.

Look young live longer

A new study has shown that people who look young for their age enjoy a longer life than those who look older than their years. The study, conducted by a team from the Institute of Public Health at the University of Southern Denmark, observed 387 twin pairs, aged between 70 and 99, to reach the conclusion.



Three groups of people assessed the photographs of the twins at the old age. The groups included geriatric nurses, older women and young male student teachers. All the pictures were mixed up, with each twin assessed on a different day to their sibling.

After a period of seven years, experts noted that the bigger the difference in perceived age within a pair, the more likely it was that the older-looking twin died first. The study also showed perceived age was linked with an important molecular biomarker of ageing called telomeres.

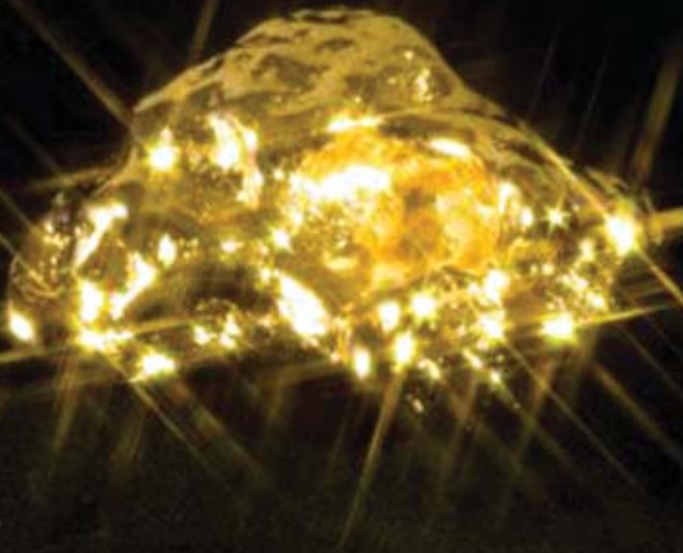
A telomere of shorter length is believed to signify faster ageing and has been linked to a number of diseases. People who looked young in the study had longer telomeres.

KN Harilal

Gold economy of Kerala is growing incessantly. Unfortunately we do not have reliable statistics to study different aspects of the growth of the economy of this yellow metal in the State. But, it can be safely said that the gold sector has been growing much faster than the rest of the state's economy. It must be obvious even for a casual observer who take into consideration the number of jewelry shops in the State or look at advertisement campaigns in the local media. What are the implications of such disproportionate growth of the economy of this precious metal? It is obvious that Keralites are buying and holding on to more and more gold. How does one explain this gold preference of Keralites? Is this investment preference realistic and rational? Is it good for individual investors on the one hand and for the society as a whole on the other? Such questions assume special importance in the context of the present boom in gold prices.

Kerala is a State, which earns more than what it produces domestically. In other words State's income is higher

than the State domestic product. The difference between these two macro aggregates is explained by the inflow of remittances. In fact, Kerala is one of the highest remittances receiving regions in the world. Remittances contribute roughly around 20 to 25 per cent of the State's income. On account of the huge remittances Keralites maintain a high savings rate too. As a result they are also on the look out for attractive investment opportunities. They need to park their savings in a proper mix of assets. In the portfolio of assets of Keralites gold has a preeminent position. The bag of assets includes bank deposits, shares and debentures, government securities, land, etc. The investment demand for gold depends a lot on alternative avenues of investment. It is here the recent global recession appears to have played a major role. The crisis of financial sector and the collapse of real estate business appear to have prompted investors not only in Kerala but also in other parts of the world to look for alternative investment opportunities. Gold emerged as one of the most preferred alternative in



GOLD'S OWN COUNTRY



most countries. The consequent rise in gold prices in world markets tended to increase the attraction of gold as an asset pushing its demand as well prices further up. Added to this has been the effect of the changes in the foreign exchange market. Volatility in exchange rates and weakening of the U.S dollar have prompted many a central bank to shift composition of their reserves in favour of gold. For instance, China, India, and Russia have become notable purchasers of gold, buying 450 tonnes, 200 tonnes, and around 120 tonnes respectively.

Growth of the gold economy of Kerala cannot be explained exclusively in terms of the investor demand. In Kerala Jewelry demand play a coequal and perhaps a more consistent role in the growth of the sector. Gold ornaments are a part of the culture of the people here. Men and women both wear gold and if anything the craze for gold ornaments has been increasing fast in recent years. Advertisement campaigns employing advanced techniques and strategies, involving super stars, and even manufacturing of tradition as exemplified by akshaya thrithiya has been contributing significantly to the growth in jewelry demand. The spurt

in jewelry demand for gold is socially constructed.

According to World Gold Council the advantage of gold and hence the growth in investment demand for it are likely to continue in 2010. There are not many reasons to suspect the optimism of the Gold Council. Financial assets and real estate will take more time to regain investor confidence and replace gold. Therefore those who invest in gold cannot be referred to as irrational. Investment in gold may yield better return compared to other available assets. But, what is good for individuals need not be so for the society as a whole. What is individually wise may be collectively foolish. Speculative investment in land and gold targeting capital appreciation need not contribute to production or the process of development. Obviously, there are many alternative avenues of investment that could have helped the state realise more production and development. In fact, speculative investment in land and gold can even impair development. As Kerala's recent experience show speculative investment in land has pushed up land prices and rendered the region costly and less attractive for productive investment in industry as well as agriculture. Similarly investment in gold can adversely affect availability of funds for other areas of investment. Therefore, the State should ideally try to orient available savings away from

gold and land and towards more productive areas of economic activities. This is a major contemporary development challenge that Keralites face as a social group.

The disproportionate growth in jewelry demand and its adverse impact on the society are widely discussed. One justification for gold ornaments was that they offered 'a last resort in difficult times'. But, the burgeoning demand for gold ornaments in Kerala, especially the race for changing the ornaments too often to catch up with fast changing fashion, has no such justification whatsoever. What it amounts to is a race for demonstration of wealth. Like all other races this one also has winners and losers. In a sense it is a race set up and run for segregating those who win and those who lose out. Those who win establish their 'superiority' over the ones who lose out. It is fast developing into an efficient mechanism for perpetrating social inequalities and segregation.

The present gold economy of Kerala is built on individual choices and preferences, fashioned largely by gold merchants. It is high time that Keralites apply their collective wisdom on gold matters. Collective action is the only way out that we see in the horizon to overcome the crisis caused by atomistic decisions of individual Keralites. ■

The writer is Member, Planning Board



COVERSTORY

Alex Thomas

GO FETISH

Gold is an internationally traded commodity. Interestingly, the life of an Indian is closely associated with the use of the yellow metal. Indian marriages and other auspicious events in the family have become occasions to showcase the elaborate sets of golden jewellery. Bullion analysts estimate 15,000 tonnes of gold worth more than US \$ 601 billion are with the Indian families. The unprecedented increase in prices of gold has put the average Indian, especially those in the south in a state of tension. The upward movement in the metal is increasing the blood pressure of the parents who are preparing for marriages in the family. Rising gold prices will dampen demand and families will be forced to look for other options for their assets.

Gold continues to be one asset that appreciates steadily. The price of gold hit a fresh high of US \$1,217 per ounce on 2nd December, 2009. The average

change in price of gold since 2004 is about 18 per cent which makes it an important investment proposition. Outside India, investors often use gold as a hedge against financial turmoil and inflation, often triggered by high oil prices. Gold is still a major vehicle for saving for large number of low and middle income households in rural and urban India. For the poor in India, gold serves as collateral for loans in the absence of documents to prove their income.

Almost all of India's gold demand is met by imports. India consumes nearly 800- 850 tonnes of gold that accounts for 20 per cent of the world gold consumption. Of this nearly 600 tonnes go into making jewellery. About 150 - 200 tonnes of recycled gold form a part of our annual consumption. The domestic market is estimated to be around US \$ 16.1 billion. According to the World Gold Council (WGC), India's gold demand stood at 137.6 tonnes in the third

quarter of 2009, showing a fall of 49 percent year on year. The cumulative demand till September 2009 was 264 - tonnes, against 553 - tonnes in the same period last year. While South India has more gold per capita than any part in the country, Gods Own Country accounts for one-third of the annual consumption of gold in India.

The global demand for gold rose by 38 percent in the first quarter of 2009 to reach 1016 tonnes. The price of gold has gone record high as the American dollar weakened against the major international currencies. Demand for gold in the post World Financial Crisis scenario was driven mainly by two factors - a weak dollar and investor's search for safe assets. A weak dollar encourages speculation in the market which drives prices further up. The price of gold attained new heights in terms of all major currencies of the world. Dollar could not attract the investors because of the prevailing low interest rate and

LD NATIONAL



the falling exchange rate.

The gems and jewellery industry in India which account for more than 10 percent of our export earnings have been adversely affected by the spiralling gold prices. In 2008 we imported around 420 tonnes of gold. The imports for 2009 should be between 200-220 tonnes. Gold prices affect India than any other country as it constitutes the world's largest physical gold market. India is the largest importer of gold. The record hike in the world price has brought down demand and India's 800,000 gold jewellery retailers are feeling the pinch.

The interest in Gold has come not from the house hold sector alone. Reserve Bank of India too has shown interest in Gold. Central banks in China, Russia also have shown interest to protect them against economic uncertainty arising out of the world economic slowdown and a weakening dollar. In November 2009, RBI acquired 200 tonnes of gold from the International Monetary Fund. The move by India to top its reserves have contributed to the latest rally in gold.

The November fall in the unemployment rate in the US is a good omen for the stake holders. The meltdown in the global economy has started showing signs of recovery. This should keep away investors from investing in gold and look for other avenues of investment such as stock, mutual funds, government securities and bonds. With the signing of the ASEAN Free trade Agreement,

import of gold will become duty free from 2012 and India will become an important gold trading centre competing with China.

From generations buying ornaments and investing in gold has been part of the culture of Keralites. The economic and social transformation of the society may change the nature of demand for gold. The demand at the time of the spiral showed the lack of options before the parents for a substitute for gold. It is time that we break the ancient link between gold and rituals. Unless new options emerge, the precious metals' special attraction will remain. ■

The writer is Lecturer, Govt Arts College, Thiruvananthapuram

COVERSTORY

B Rajendran, Dr. K Sasikumar

EXCH GOL

been one of the major avenues to both short term and long term investors. But the global financial crisis adversely affected the stock investment in the world around. Owing to the high volatility in stock market, many people consider buying gold as a safe investment. But now many people turn to E-Gold as safer and more convenient means of investment as the price does not depreciate in the form of various hidden charges when you try to sell physical gold.

In the context of dollar depreciation, the financial turmoil and ongoing economic uncertainty, people began to consider gold as a safe mode of investment. Also almost all major Central Banks in the world still maintain a significant portion of their reserves in gold bullions. The ongoing price rise, the safety and liquidity together and the increase in the demand leads to the increase in the price of the gold.

E-Gold, the gold backed Exchange Traded Gold Funds (ETGF) is being more and more attractive to an increasing number of retail investors. As a result, investors tend to purchase gold not in its physical form but to buy it electronically through the Stock Market – a form of safe and convenient investment.

Exchange Traded Gold Funds (ETGF)

Another name for this is Gold Exchange Traded Funds (GETF). The gold funds listed in the recognised

E-Gold, the gold backed Exchange Traded Gold Funds, is being more and more attractive to an increasing number of retail investors.

Gold is always gold. The price of gold is soaring higher and higher. Though it is true that Indians are the largest consumers of gold ornaments, the price of gold is determined globally. We know very well that gold is not simply meant for decoration but it is a form of investment.

Several factors play in the steep rise in gold price. The reason could very well be the low interest rate in bank investment, volatility in stock market, oil prices, exchange rate, dollar depreciation and so on. Here comes the concept of E-Gold.

Equity investment has always

ANGE DEN



stock exchanges (mainly Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and National Stock Exchange (NSE)) are called ETGF.

ETGF is listed and traded on stock exchanges like any other Stock. In ETGF one unit of fund represents one gram of pure gold. Another advantage is that ETGF can be bought and sold throughout the trading day.

When gold price goes up, ETGF appreciates and when gold price goes down, the ETGF depreciates. It aims to track the price of gold. It is one of the easiest means to buy, sell and store gold.

To buy and sell ETGF one needs to have a demat account and a Trading account. De-mat

account is an account for keeping valuables in electronic form and Trading account is for monetary transactions. Both the demat and trading accounts can be opened with a registered broker or a sub-broker. The documents required for opening a demat and trading account is a copy of colour photo of the person, a copy of pan card, address proof and a copy of pass book.

Merits of investing in ETGF

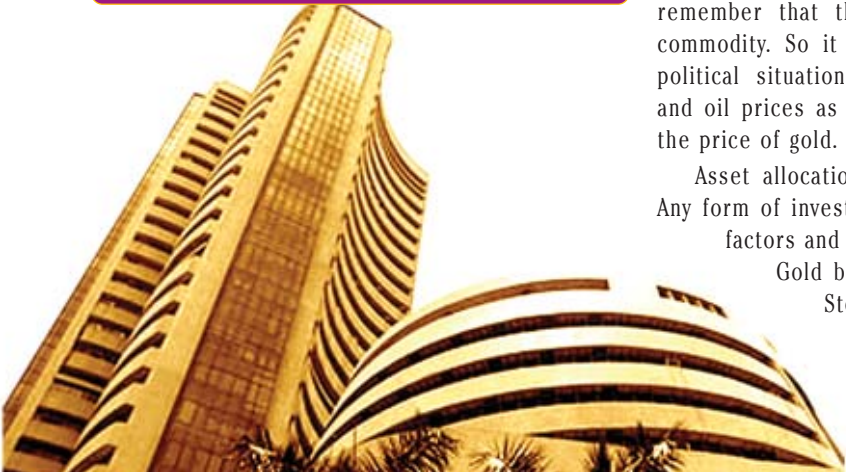
- Need not own gold in physical form. More convenient if held in electronic form under the de-mat account.
- Eliminate losses while buying and selling gold.
- Storage/Locker or security is not necessary.
- It can be traded on stock exchange like buying and selling of stock.
- Ideal for retail investors for buying and selling units of gold.
- Purity of gold is assured.
- Completely insured with custodian or Asset Management Company.
- Easily convertible to cash (High Liquidity).

Though the physical possession of the yellow metal has become an obsession, and though it is true that some exposure in gold can stabilise portfolio return, E-Gold is the safest and the most convenient form of investment as it is equivalent to the material form of the metal. E-Gold is an advanced form of investment in gold. When someone invests in gold they should remember that the gold price also fluctuates like any other commodity. So it would be advisable to keep an eye on global political situation, currency movement, stock exchange trends and oil prices as they are the major factors that strongly affect the price of gold.

Asset allocation is crucial for overall portfolio construction. Any form of investment must be based on expected returns, risk factors and liquidity from various asset classes. In short, E-Gold bought in the Stock Market and Stock bought in Stock Market are equally important for a wise portfolio. Stock is Gold. ■

The writers are Asst. Professor, Kerala Institute of Cooperative Management (KICMA), Neyyadam and Head and Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Kerala.

The major ETGF available in India		
Name of ETGF	Asset Management	Company
GOLD BEES	Bench Mark	Mutual Fund
KOTAK GOLD	Kotak	Mutual Fund
GOLD SHARE	UTI	Mutual Fund
REL GOLD	Reliance	Mutual Fund
Q GOLD HALF	Quantum	Mutual Fund
SBI GOLD	SBI	Mutual Fund



A Saj Mathews

GOLD



Once again the world is witnessing an amazing gold rush with the prices of the yellow metal skyrocketing in an unprecedented bull-run, creating ripples in the market. As gold becomes dearer, it needs not necessarily hurt the consumer as gold is establishing itself more and more as one of the most secure and remunerative investments than anything else. So its time to become wise and make better use of gold as a solid investment

Of all the precious metals, gold continues to be the most popular as an investment. Investors generally buy gold as a hedge or safe haven against any economic, political, social or currency-based crises. These crises include investment market declines, burgeoning national debt, currency

failure, inflation, war and social unrest. Investors also buy gold early in a bull market and sell it before a bear market begins, in an attempt to gain financially.

India that imports and consumes the largest quantity of the yellow metal in the world. In this backdrop, the latest gold boom is attracting global players to India. India imported nearly 400 tonnes of gold in 2008. Gold imports and sales have been sluggish in 2009, but analysts have predicted that bullion market will continue to be booming in India in the years to come.

Therefore, leading global banks are chalking out plans to trade gold in India. They include HSBC, Scotiabank, Standard Bank and Citibank. The plans from these banks include launching whole sale trading and hedging in gold, import of gold and tying up with India's local banks to sell gold coins and start several gold deposit schemes.

Scotiabank, Canada's second-largest bank, is the final stages of launching trading and hedging in gold and other precious metals like



RUSH NEVER ENDS



Indian Gems and jewellery market

What makes India a lucrative haven of Gold is the vibrant gems and jewellery trade of the country. The Indian gems and jewellery industry is one of the fastest growing segments in the Indian economy with an annual growth rate of approximately 15 per cent.

The domestic market is estimated to be around US \$ 16.1 billion. The All India Gems and Jewellery Trade Federation, a nodal agency representing 300,000 jewellers across the country, expects it to grow to US \$ 25.2 billion in two to three years.

The country which is the largest consumer of gold in the world consumes nearly 800 tonnes of gold that accounts for 20 per cent of world gold consumption, of which nearly 600 tonnes go into jewellery making alone.

The latest development is that India is also emerging as the world's largest trading centre for gold. The trade volume is targeted to touch US\$ 16 billion by 2010. The industry has the best skilled manpower for designing and producing high volumes of exquisite jewellery at low labour costs.

Contd.....

diamonds, platinum and palladium in India. The bank has applied to India's Commerce Ministry to start wholesale trading and hedging in precious metals.

If Scotiabank's aspirations materialises, the bank may enter into a strategic tie up with either HDFC Bank or ICICI Bank to start trading in gold and other precious metals through India's commodity exchanges, according to analysts. Scotiabank is already in the process of setting up a wholly-owned subsidiary to trade in gold.

The bank's spokesman has gone on record recently saying that it has

plans to participate in wholesale trading and hedging in precious metals, import and export of metals and deal in trading of precious metal commodity derivatives.

Experts say plans by foreign players like banks to enter into gold trading in India bodes well for the massive bullion industry in the country. "India is the largest importer and consumer of gold in the world. So it makes sense for banking majors to cash in on the gold business in the country," says Harish Chawla, a bullion analyst in Mumbai.

.....Contd from Page 23.

The Kerala scenario

Other than politics what hits headlines in Kerala today is nothing but gold and its price trends. Gold is intrinsically linked to marriages in Kerala with all its agonies and ecstasies.

The entire cities and towns of Kerala are dotted with gold and jewellery shops in greater numbers than anywhere in the country. According to some reports, God's Own Country can boast of the largest number of jewellery showrooms in the world. Showrooms of the leading gold jewellery brands in Kerala ranges from as sprawling as 15,000 sq ft to 1500 sq ft.

The fact that buying ornaments and investing in gold is part of the very culture of Keralites for generations means that this south Indian state would continue be a major hub of gold for many more years.

The latest happening in the gold trading scenario in the State is the coming up of an exclusive five lakh sq. metre Gold Souk in Kochi, the emerging metropolis of Kerala. The mall promises to have showrooms of reputed jewellers from both India and abroad. Analysts are optimistic that

this kind of an extravaganza will most likely to click given the fact that the State accounts for one-third of the 800-odd tonne annual consumption of gold in the country of late the state government has also started giving encouragement to the jewellery trade. The Kerala Government recently sponsored a three-day business to business Jewellery event in Kerala that attracted thousands of visitors and generated business worth several crores.

Factors influencing the gold price

Today, like all investments and commodities, the price of gold is ultimately driven by supply and demand. Unlike most other commodities, the hoarding and disposal plays a much bigger role in affecting the price, because most of the gold ever mined still exists and is potentially able to come on to the market for the right price. At the end of 2006, it was estimated that all the gold ever mined totalled 158,000 tonnes. This can be represented by a cube with an edge length of just 20.2 metres.



Given the huge quantity of stored gold, compared to the annual production, the price of gold is mainly affected by changes in sentiment, rather than changes in annual production. According to the World Gold Council, annual mine production





Investment in gold can be done directly through bullion or coin ownership, or indirectly through gold exchange-traded funds, certificates, accounts, spread betting, derivatives or shares.

If the return on bonds, equities and real estate is not adequately compensating for risk and inflation then the demand for gold and other alternative investments such as commodities increases.

Investors generally buy gold for two main reasons: because they believe that gold prices will continue to rise and thus that they can gain financially, and/or as a hedge or a perceived safe haven against any economic, political, social or currency-based crises. Of course prices can fall as well as rise, so investors must make a best guess on what the future holds.

Methods of investing in gold

Investment in gold can be done directly through bullion or coin ownership, or indirectly through gold exchange-traded funds, certificates, accounts, spread betting, derivatives or shares.

Several global banks are lining up majors plans to enter into bullion trading in India as the country has emerged as one of the biggest and most active marketplace for spot and futures gold trade.

The price spiral

Since April 2001 the gold price has more than tripled in value against the US dollar, prompting speculation that the long secular bear market or the Great Commodities Depression

has ended and a bull market has returned. A World Gold Council report released on February 18, 2009 showed physical gold demand rose sharply in the second half of 2008.

A gold exchange-traded fund (or GETF) is an exchange-traded fund (ETF) that aims to track the price of gold. Gold exchange-traded funds are traded on the major stock exchanges including Zurich, Mumbai, London, Paris and New York.



As of October 2009, gold ETFs held 1,750 tonnes of gold in total for private and institutional investors. There are also closed-end funds (CEF's) and exchange-traded notes (ETN's) that aim to track the gold price.

Yes the gold rush is on and its time to think how to make the best out of it ■

of gold over the last few years has been close to 2,500 tonnes.

About 2,000 tonnes goes into jewellery or industrial/dental production, and around 500 tonnes goes to retail investors and exchange traded gold funds. This translates to an annual demand for gold to be 1,000 tonnes in excess over mine production which has come from central bank sales and other disposal.

Central banks and the International Monetary Fund play an important role in the gold price. At the end of 2004 Central banks and official organisations held 19 percent of all above-ground gold as official gold reserves.

In early 2006, China, which only holds 1.3 per cent of its reserves in gold, announced that it was looking for ways to improve the returns on its official reserves. Analysts are of the view that this signals that China might reposition more of its holdings into gold in line with other Central Banks. India has recently purchased over 200 tonnes of gold which has led to a surge in prices.



The silver screen brides and bride grooms are heavily bejewelled. The sparkle of this yellow metal, called Gold, is reflected in the high voltage smiles and glowy skin of the models.

An exquisitely dressed mermaid wearing exotic designer jewellery emerges from the blue waters and is knocking at the door of a dreamy male. He smiles at the thought. Why not? A treasure is waiting at his door step.

The poor girl watching the show, seated near her parents, either inside her house or at a cinema hall, is equally mesmerised. She visualises herself in the mermaid's robes, her knight arriving atop a horse.

These are manmade images tactfully created by shrewd business acumen, hard investor motives and supportive media interests. These alien elements capture the imagination of common man and instigate a mass hysteria for which there is no immediate cure. The amazing increase in the number of jewellery shops in the State during the last decade is a curious case for thorough social research. The market never bothers about the social commitments of its customers. The focus is solely on their purchasing capabilities.

The gold mafia aided by the Advertisers and supported by the media has created a fascinating world of temptations which no one could resist. Call it 'passion' 'craze' or 'zest' the longing for this yellow metal has become an incurable epidemic fast spreading to all sections of our society. Like rats dancing to the tunes of pied piper we are following a trend - a dangerous psychic disorder.

May sound as a 'cliché' but the fact is that the male dominated society driven by the market forces pressurises the women into succumbing to its demands.

The silver screen brides and bride grooms are heavily bejewelled. The sparkle of this yellow metal, called Gold, is reflected in the high voltage smiles and glowy skin of the models. The girl watching the screen is in a daze. The problem arises when she awakes into the real world and finds herself in lack luster environments.

As an active member of the ever growing middle class population, I share most of its vices. Every marriage invitation pours fuel into the fire inside me. Being the mother of three teenage girls is not an easy task these days. My evolution as a gold crazy individual profits the state exchequer immensely. 'Kanakadhara' lottery is so popular among women folk that the government is compelled to print more and more tickets to meet the increasing demands. Thus far good - let the country prosper.

But what about the rest? As a media person, I call people participants or artists. I try hard not to get involved in their



MESMERISING YELLOW MAKING YELL

affairs. But more than often, I find myself deeply entangled in their affairs. The entire crew wept with the girl whose father committed suicide the day before her marriage as he was not able to keep 'his promise'. 'The Bank cheated', the daughter told us.

I tried to suppress the anger rising within me. She was custom bound to believe that gold and cash is part of her marriage party. Though she cried for her departed father, she never felt that she had to protest against the social norms set apart for her. There was no anger, only pain.

Vijayalakshmi, Sumitha, Shajeena beevi, Stella- all victims of the craze for the yellow metal. The insult, the

shame these women endured during their lifetime need to be chronicled in a separate article.

My daydreams and nightmares are now centered in a forlorn village of Tamil Nadu 'Thiruttugramam'. The village headman is setting targets every month – fifty sovereigns per head. Destination operation: Kerala the God's own country. And why? Our people have risen up to the expectations with their own version of the tourism slogan, 'Gold's' own country. Welcome. The USP - treasure in every house.

I do not regret being the mother of three girls. In fact, I am extremely proud to be their mother. You educate

the girls, give them good food, instill in them the courage to face the world, to protest when you are wronged. We as a society have lost our humane face.

The market friendly forces will continue to hypnotise people with their magic potions. It would be wiser to control such forces and implement the existing anti dowry legislations rather than running after the yellow metal.

Let me conclude with the story of Shajeena Beevi . She was a participant of my programme. She came with her two kids to our studio. She hugged them and told me that they were school toppers. Her watery eyes and skinny body got me involved in her story. She wept before our cameras. There was a deep cut in her neck. She was married off at the age of fifteen. Her kids were well below the age of ten. I knew she was around thirty but she looked forty plus. Her father's entire savings went to her as dowry - forty sovereigns of gold and two lakh rupees of cash. After five years of torture at her in- laws, she is back with her mother fighting for survival. A school drop out, a job is well beyond her reach. What to do next? ■

The writer is Asst. Director, Doordarshan, Thiruvananthapuram

The market friendly forces will continue to hypnotise people with their magic potions. It would be wiser to control such forces and implement the existing anti dowry legislations rather than running after the yellow metal.



Kavitha Martin



CONSUMPTION ROYAL

Au' or Aurum sounds strange to many but dear to many in its physical form. Aurum or gold is the most sought after metal today in the world. It is not just a precious metal which can reap in fortunes for its owners, but Gold is more than it actually to many. Many consider it as the bench mark for referring quality and auspicious omen. Wars were fought for it and life is considered secondary to achieving it by many.

The rarity and its qualities have made gold the most sought after metal on earth. With the evolution and social changes, man attached gold with his cultural ethos and traditions world over. In many parts modern countries have earmarked gold as their State Mineral and emblem. Gold has symbolised the eternal shining light of heaven for many. Many cultures see gold as a metaphor for long-lasting relationship unaffected by the

passage of time and wedding rings are traditionally made of gold. All great human achievements are frequently rewarded with gold in the form of gold medals and decorations.

Gold has also been associated with the extremities of utmost evil and great sanctity throughout history. Gold has been used as a symbol for purity, value, royalty, and particularly roles that combine these properties. Thomas More in his treatise Utopia, has made fun of the craving for the precious element. On the imaginary island Utopia, gold is so abundant that it was used to make chains for slaves, tableware and lavatory-seats. When ambassadors from other countries arrive, dressed in ostentatious gold jewels and badges, the Utopians mistake them for menial servants and paid homage to the most modestly dressed of their party instead of the leaders.

Like her counterparts across the globe, India also held gold high for its precious characters and rarity and considers it as a standard for assessing purity and quality. Today India is the most lavish gold consumer in the world. Kerala called God's Own Country for its abundant natural beauty and tourism potential, can now be called as Gold's Own Country as the State has achieved its top position being the biggest gold consumer in the country. The State is estimated to account for one-third of the 800-odd tonne annual consumption of gold in the country. The State tops in gold consumption as it's in the forefront in many other fields too. And a small village town called Chavakkad in central Kerala, which consumes 20 per cent of all gold sold in the country, has more than 115 glittering gold jewellery shops!

Changing lifestyles and rising



incomes have directly influenced the gold consumption habits of Keralites. Whether its men or women, the style statements give way to unconventional design selection against the earlier days' chunky, bulky jewellery flaunted by them as the mark of prosperity. But the demand for heavy conventional jewels is still there. Buying ornaments and investing in gold has become part of the culture of Keralites for generations. In the olden times the royal families in the state used to be fond of gold ornaments which are handed down generations as heirlooms.

Defining gold is simple. Its is a dense, soft, shiny and ductile pure metal known. Pure gold has a bright yellow color and luster traditionally considered attractive, which it maintains without oxidizing in air or water. Gold is one of the coinage metals and has served as a symbol of wealth and a store of value throughout history. Gold standards have provided a basis for monetary policies.

The government is encouraging gold business in terms of buying and selling. Sale of gold coins through banks is doing well as it offers serious investor quality product and the price tag is bouncing at higher speed in the bullion market. The State government as part of its encouragement to the gold business has conducted a jewellery show in Kochi recently. The State Industries Minister Elamaram Kareem, has announced that the government would take all steps to

support the jewellery sector and was planning to turn the jewellery show into an annual event to coincide with the annual Grand Kerala Shopping Festival.

Now IndiaPost has also introduced sale of gold coins in Kerala in a few cities to meet the increasing demand of Keralites to invest in gold. The value of gold is expected to soar above \$2000 per ounce in the next decade,

Southern India's Deccan region has been surveyed as having one of the richest deposits of the yellow metal. The Government of India has sought the help of Geological Survey of India (GSI) to tap the country's potential to dig out gold and diamond reserves.



beginning 2010 and is likely to remain the hottest investment asset compared to the declining US dollar.

Gold is not just a long term investment for many. It's a easy and handy property when in need of a loan as many Banks provide gold loans which are less risky. While India is the proud, No 1 consumer of gold in the world, that golden status may move over to China by next year. Bullion analysts and WGC have already forecast that China may overtake India in gold consumption soon. India's total gold holding is between 10,000 tonnes and 15,000 tonnes of which the Reserve Bank of India has only around 600 tonnes.

According to studies and surveys conducted in India, it is estimated to have 20,000 tonnes of gold and diamond reserves spread over several states. Southern India's Deccan region has been surveyed as having one of the richest deposits of the yellow metal. The Government of India has sought the help of Geological Survey of India (GSI) to tap the country's potential to dig out gold and diamond reserves. The government has also accorded the public sector company Hindustan Copper Ltd to diversify into gold and diamond mining in collaboration with leading foreign companies.

India currently produces hardly 0.4 per cent of its gold consumption despite having 9 per cent of global gold reserves under the country's land mass. ■

The Incan civilization has an ethereal aura about it. There is no clear evidence about the origin of these ancient people who have left everything under the shroud of mystery. The legendary Incas of Peru have been held with mythical fascination by the Western world. Four hundred years ago the fabulous wealth in gold and silver possessed by these people was discovered, which was systematically pillaged and plundered by Spanish conquerors. The booty, which they took home, changed the

European economy to a great extent. The Incan empire was short-lived, lasting a shade below hundred years. The origins of the Incan civilization can be traced back from 1438, when the Inca ruler Pachacuti and his army began conquering lands surrounding the Inca heartland of Cuzco, until the coming of the Spaniards in 1532. Most of the historians agree that there were thirteen emperors in all and an emperor was generally referred to as 'The Inca'.

The Incas were hardy people and

ruled the Andean Cordillera, which is considered to be the second in height and harshness to the Himalayas. These people lived at altitudes ranging from 15,000 to 16,000 feet and their rituals were performed at heights up to 22,057 feet at Llullaillaco in Chile, which is the highest Inca sacrificial site known. They built roads and sacrificial platforms at these heights, which speaks in volumes of their strength and courage. This ability of the sandal clad Inca to thrive at extremely high elevations continues

Machu Picchu

The lost city of the Incas



to perplex scientists even today.

The Incas were famous for their gold. They mined extensive deposits of gold and silver, but this wealth ultimately brought disaster in the 16th century, when Spanish soldiers came seeking riches for themselves and their king.

Gold, to the Incas, was the 'sweat of the sun' and Silver the 'tears of the moon.'

Money existed in the form of work. Each subject of the empire paid taxes by labouring on the myriad roads, crop terraces, irrigation canals, temples, or fortresses. In return, rulers paid their labourers in clothing and food. Silver and gold were abundant, but only used for aesthetics.

It was this abundance of gold and silver, which ultimately led to the downfall of the Incan Empire. Spanish soldiers were awestruck by the riches possessed by the Incas.

In 1532, Francisco Pizarro and his entourage of mercenaries, planned their plot cunningly, and duped the Incan emperor, Atahualpa, into a peaceful gathering. They kidnapped the emperor and held him for ransom. After getting the money Atahualpa, who was promised to be set free, was strangled to death by the Spaniards who then marched straight for Cuzco and its riches.

Sadly what remains of the Inca legacy is limited, largely because of the plunder and loot and secondly it was not discovered until the 20th century. The plunderers looted almost all of the Inca treasures and in doing so, dismantled many structures painstakingly built by the Inca craftsmen. What is astounding is that the last bastion of the Incan empire remained out of bounds of the Spanish conquerors and was finally discovered by the explorer Hiram Bingham in 1911.

He had found Machu Picchu, the lost city and citadel atop a mountainous jungle along the Urubamba River in Peru. Grand steps and terraces with fountains, lodgings,

and shrines flank the jungle-clad pinnacle peaks surrounding the site. It was a place of worship to the sun god, the greatest deity of the Incas.

Machu Picchu

This legendary lost city was built 500 years ago by the Incas and is Peru's most visited tourist attraction. It is estimated that over 500,000 people visit this place every year. Machu Picchu is now occupies a coveted position as one of the seven new wonders of the world and is a UN heritage site. This glorious city is perched atop a tropical mountain forest, which overlooks river Urubamba. At about 7000 feet above sea level the mist and cloud cover lends a magical and intriguing charm, adding to the mystery surrounding this ancient marvel. The Incan empire, though short lived, has left and indelible marks in the sands of time thanks largely to Machu Picchu. The amazing fact is that the structures have been remarkably well preserved in spite of the elements of nature. The city is made of large stonewalls with lots of temples dotting the lush green terraces. Machu Picchu overlooks a canyon on the Urubamba river and the Andes mountain as well as a great deal of greenery from the Amazon basin.

No doubt Machu Picchu finds a place among one of the best and impressive archaeological sites and is situated 120 km from away from city of Cusco in Peru. Machu Picchu is also one of the Inca's best kept secrets,

Machu Picchu was constructed around 1450, at the height of the Inca Empire, and was abandoned less than 100 years later, as the empire collapsed under Spanish conquest. Hiram Bingham, the credited discoverer of the site, and a few others originally hypothesized that the citadel was the traditional birthplace of the Inca people or the spiritual center of the "virgins of the suns."

The original entrance to the complex is on the southwestern side of the citadel at the end of the Inca Trail, a short walk away from

"Intipunku " (Sun Gate), the ancient final check point to Machu Picchu. The present entrance on the southeastern side leads to the agricultural section. The complex can be divided in three distinct sections: Agricultural, Urban, and Religious.

This colossal work of architecture is an incredible achievement for such a primitive culture. The stone masonry and engineering are near construction perfection, remaining intact for centuries. Wandering through this ancient citadel, you will find a maze of temples and palaces reserved for the top Incan royalty. Two must-see temples are the Temple of the Sun - a circular tower with the best stonework, and Temple of the Moon with carved structures on boulders.

Machu Picchu is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Kerala Tourism will be benefited if a study is made on this ancient wonder from a Kerala perspective. With a number of heritage sites, Kerala Tourism in the long run will be able to preserve these and generate revenue by following the example of Machu Picchu. Sustained tourism being the buzz word in Tourism today, preserving our heritage for the years come should be our motto. Machu Picchu is a perfect example for this.

Modern man with his hectic schedule and never ending thirst for grabbing goodies of life, seldom get time to unwind and relax. This amazing destination will no doubt take the visitor back to the old times, when man used to toil for earning his daily bread and was still happy with the reward he got. Yes, some things happen in life, which leaves a deep impression in our minds and this journey to Machu Picchu is definitely one its kind. Destinations around the world provide different experiences to the visitors and Machu Picchu is quite different with its uniqueness. With its place permanently engraved in the annals of history, Machu Picchu will continue to lure visitors for centuries to come. ■

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A R T

Dr. B Hariharan

The 22nd Keralanatyotsavam of Drisyavedi, Thiruvananthapuram stood out for the focus on the Kathakali performances that emphasised the figure of Lalitha. The organisation of a theatre festival on these lines breaks new ground as it explores the nuances of not just an eponymous name, but the emotional states that will the characters on stage. This Kathakali festival was unique for the sheer variety in the performance as well as for its academic interest it maintained. Spread for six days, Lalitha's different facets were explored in all its multiple dimensions and underlined the drama

Lakshmana. The depth that he brings to the words was rendered as always even as it was a promise of the rich fare in the evenings to come.

Kalamandalam Shanmukhan's Lalitha was a study in contrast in more than one sense in Bakavadham Kathakali. While Soorpanakha had transformed into Lalitha on seeing Rama to marry him only to be mutilated by Lakshmana as she is unable to rein in her desires, Hidimbi's appearance as Lalitha transcended the erotic. While Surppanakha Lalitha pushed the limits of Sringera beyond its limits to lust, Hidimbi Lalitha stood out for her rare show of dignity in love. The moment of intimacy between Bhima and Hidimbi was very tender preparing for the thiranokku of Ghatolkacha in scene four. Kalamandalam Balasubramanian's Bhima was an embodiment

LALITHA

Facets Different

in the presentation. The choice of such a unifying principle for different Kathakali performances is an important variation over the tried and tested presentations featuring Pachcha and Kathi veshams. The only Lalitha who was not a transformed demon on stage was Urvashi. The six different Lalithas have a strictly structured stylisation in their performance.

Margi Vijayakumar's Lalitha in Kharavadham Kathakali set the tone for the subsequent performances. Minute detailing of Sringera could be seen in Vijayakumar's portrayal of Surppanakha Lalitha with the intention of marrying either Rama or

of majesty; it is not every time that one would get a senior artist to perform from the beginning in such a role. His presence greatly enhanced the range of Shanmukhan's performance of 'Marasadrsha'.

Margi Vijayakumar returned again on the third day as Urvashi in Nivatakavachakalakeyavadham Kathakali. His histrionic skills this time had to match Sadanam Krishnankutty's Arjuna. Urvashi was a full presence as Vijayakumar's elaboration of lasya and Sringera was a remarkable detailing of the song in pathinha padam rendered by Kottakkal Narayanan, Kalanilayam Nandakumar and Rajeevan. The transformation of the desiring Urvashi into the spurned lover was very well modulated and it peaked in her curse of Arjuna. While



Vijayakumar's Srīngara had drama the Krodha towards Arjuna was dramatic as it brought out in full force her desire for the Pandava prince.

Kirmeeravadham Kathakali on the fourth day was a completely different experience. Kalamandalam Rajasekharan's Lalitha sets out to lure Kalamandalam Vaisakh's Panchali to present her before her brother Kirmmeeran. Unlike the presentations in the previous days, the scene involving Lalitha and Panchali failed to rise to the occasion. It was as if Lalitha had reached her greatest height with Urvasi the previous day. The performance started communicating emotion when Panchali started expressing her fears and resisted Lalitha's efforts to abduct her. The performance reached a different height thanks to the sterling

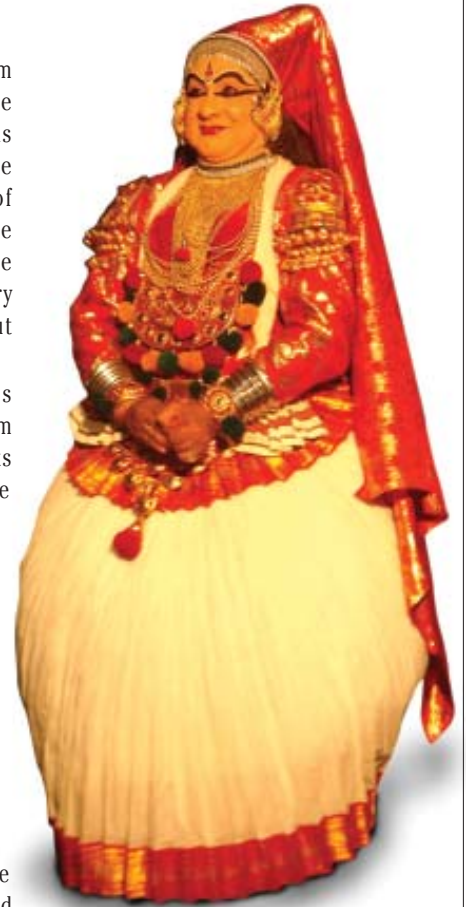


performance of Kalamandalam Ratheesan as Kirmmeeran. He elevated the evening right from his thiranokku through till his death at the hands of Bhima. His presentation of the mutilation of his sister and the preparations for war brought out the extent of his anger. It was very energetic and lively as it brought out the best in Ratheesan.

Kalamandalam Shanmukhan's Lalitha in Narakasuravadham Kathakali was different in its execution when compared with the other scene of attempted seduction in Nivatakavachakalakeyavadham Kathakali. His enactment of Lasya and Srīngara did not stereotype Lalitha or women for that matter; it attested instead the different levels male actors reach in presenting women on stage as they exaggerate gestures and body language to realise an emotional state on stage. Pathiyoor Sankarankutty's rendering of the pathinha padams for Lalitha and Narakasura and Kalamandalam Krishnadas' chenda took the level of performance a notch higher. It was a wonderful topping for such a performance with Kalamandalam Krishnakumar's Narakasura who was fiery and full of energy.

Poothanamoksham Kathakalai on the last day was an endearing performance thanks to Kalamandalam Vijayan's Lalitha who comes to Ambady to kill Srikrishna. The scene where Lalitha forgets her mission and breastfeeds Srikrishna was very tender and evoked maternal feelings. This certainly was not Poothana in popular imagination, comics and television serials. Vijayan's performance was appropriate enough to bring the curtains down on the six-day Kathakali feast as all the excess of emotions and desires was transformed in that final moment of revelation as Poothana attains Moksha at the lotus feet of the Lord.

Margi Suresh, Margi Ravindran Pillai, Kalamandalam Rajeevan, Margi Sukumaran, Kalanilayam Vinod, Kot-



takkal Ravikumar, Kalamandalam Sudip, Kalamandalam Hari R. Nair, Nellyodu Vasudevan Namputhiri, Margi Balasubramanian, Kalamandalam Prasanth, and Inchakkatt Ramachandran Pillai also performed. While FACT Damu, Margi Mohanan, Kalamandalam Babu Namputhiri, Kalanilayam Babu, Kalamandalam Jayaprakash, Kalamandalam Vinod, Kalamandalam Harish, and Tiruvalla Gopikuttan rendered the songs, Margi Venugopal, Kalamandalam Narayanan Varanasi, Sadanam Ramakrishnan, R.L.V. Somadas, Kalamandalam Srikanth, and Kalabharathi Unnikrishnan accompanied on the Chenda; Margi Krishnankumar, and Kalanilayam Ratheesh on the Edakka and Margi Ravindran, Margi Ratnakaran, Margi Baby, Kalanilayam Manoj, and Srikantheswaram Mohanachandran on the Maddalam. ■

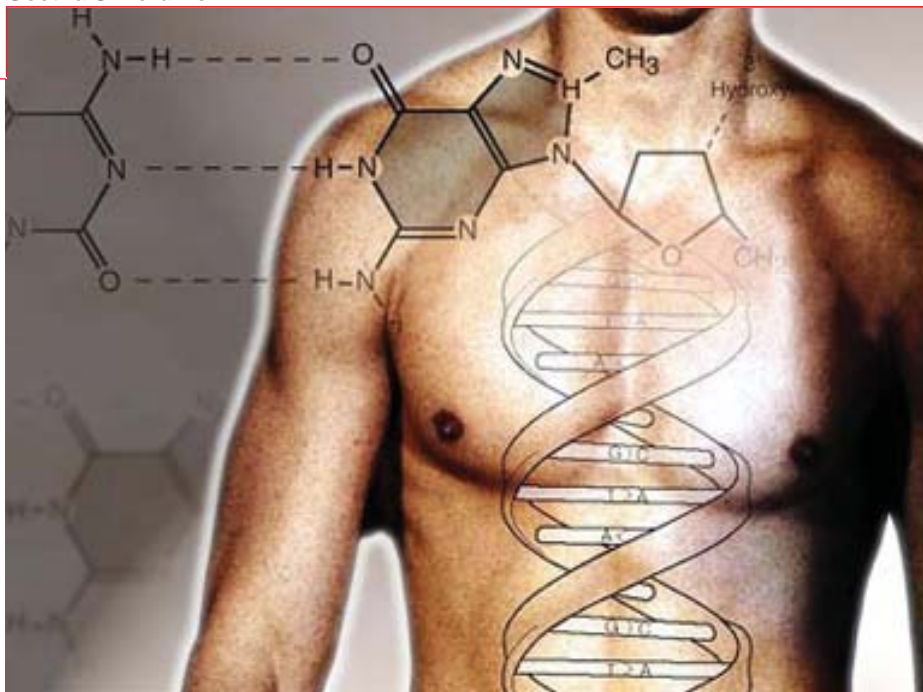
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SCIENCE

Geetha S Perumon

The development of the human genome project kicked off an era of science unlike anything the world had ever seen. In fact human genome project is largely viewed as the most successful medical advancement in the history of public health.



Human Genome Project Shaping strategies

Do you take pride in the marvels of medical projects? – used to discover how human live? Rightly yes. Each human cell displays unique. The genome of any individual is unique. All human diseases are genetic in origin even if he is an Indian, English, Mangolian or a Negro. The mapping of human genome is an important step. Human Genome Project helps to understand how genes control the functions of human body. It is a process of changing genes by analytical search as we erase and rewrite the pencil written matter from a notebook. This knowledge will provide new strategies to diagnose, treat, prevent diseases and to perform everyday activities as well.

Brain map is a study of controlling body parts by each part of brain. As

like brain map, human genome mapping helps to improve lives by sequencing the genome. It has served to explore our genetic environment to make us aware of the beneficial resources that might contribute to understanding and improving our lives. Genes are the factors which effect our healthy growth. Continued improvement of the bio-techniques researchers begin to develop map of chromosomes.

The objective of the Human Genome Project (HGP) is a listing and location of our genes – the single unit of heredity responsible for how we develop from conception, how we grow and mature, how we live and how we die. ‘Revolutionary, unprecedented, unsurpassed’ – these adjectives are being used to describe

the human genome project’s potential to benefit society.

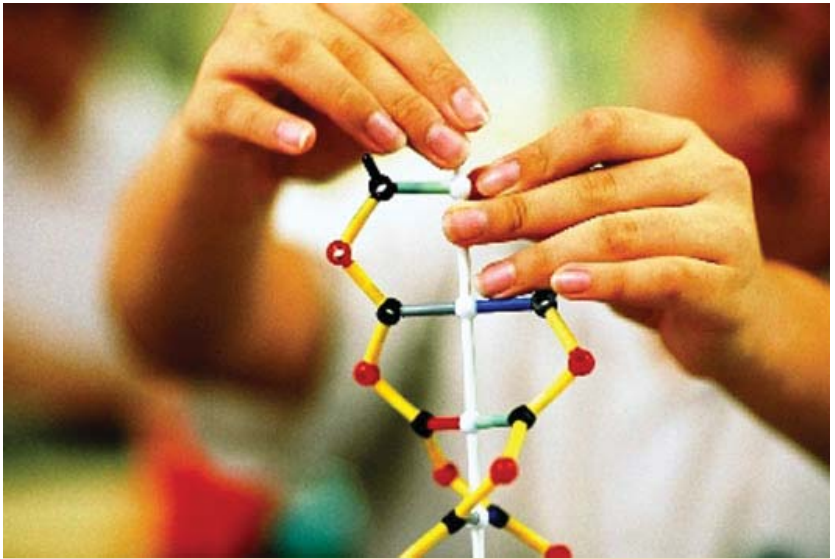
Dr. James Watson, one of the most well-known proponents of the human genome project along with Francis Crick, Rosalind Franklin and Maurice Wilkins to our understanding of the nature of DNA through the discovery of the structure of the DNA double helix. This discovery has changed the focus of modern genetics.

Gene mutations probably play a role in today’s most common diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, immune system disorders and birth defects, when genes for diseases have been identified, scientists can study how specific environmental factors such as food, drugs or pollutants interact with these genes.

Once a gene is located on a

chromosome and its DNA sequence worked out, scientists can then determine which protein the gene is responsible for making and find out what it does in the body. This is the first step in understanding the mechanism of a genetic disease and eventually conquering it. One day, it may be possible to treat genetic disease by correcting errors in the gene itself, replacing its abnormal protein with a normal one or by switching the faulty gene off.

Mapping the human genome actually began in 1911. When the gene responsible for red-green, colour blindness was assigned to the x-chromosomes. This flowed from the observation that colour blindness was



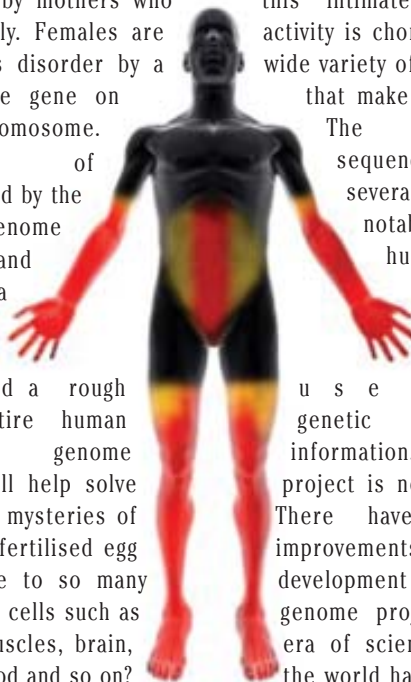
Gene mutations probably play a role in today's most common diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, immune system disorders and birth defects.

Timeline of HGP

- 1911** Human Genome Mapping began
- 1953** The paper by James Watson describing the structure of DNA was published in the journal
- 1960** Biologists fused human and mouse cells to create hybrid cells
- 1970** Scientists learned to sequence the genes they isolated
- 1980** Automated high-speed sequencing by machine
- 1990** Human Genome Project began
- 1994** Genetic Map
- 1998** DNA sequence
- 2000** HGP have dramatic implications
- 2002** Finished sequence
- 2003** Human sequence variation, gene identification and model organism
- 2007** Craig Venter published his complete DNA sequence
- 2009** Scientists decode horse's genetic blue print

passed on to sons by mothers who saw colours normally. Females are protected from this disorder by a normal copy of the gene on their second x chromosome.

Two teams of researchers – one led by the national Human Genome Research Institute and the other by celera Genomics announced that they had completed a rough draft of the entire human genome. Human genome project research will help solve one of the greatest mysteries of life. How does one fertilised egg “know” to give rise to so many different specialised cells such as those making up muscles, brain, heart, eyes, skin, blood and so on? For a human being or any organism to develop normally, a specific gene or sets of genes must be switched on in the right place in the body at exactly the right moment in development. Information generated by the human genome project will shed light on how



this intimate dance of gene activity is choreographed into the wide variety of organs and tissues that make up a human being. The human genome sequence has revealed several surprising features notably all aspects of human health.

Today we face many important challenges to the use and distribution of genetic research and information. Human genome project is not an end in itself. There have been dramatic improvements. The development of the human genome project kicked off an era of science unlike anything the world had ever seen. In fact human genome project is largely viewed as the most successful medical advancement in the history of public health.

Nature's ways to humble our pride are mysterious, indeed. ■

The writer is Science Journalist

IFFK-2009 Final Cuts Hit Well

The 14th edition of IFFK, held from 11th to 18th December in Thiruvananthapuram, has been well placed in the map of International Film Festivals of the world. The festival has already gained its momentum and it has become one of the annual destinations of the filmmakers, programmers and cineastes throughout the world.

The film festival had a grand opening this year with the lighting of the traditional lamp by India's legend master craftsman Mrinal Sen, who was also given the first Life Time Achievement Award instituted by IFFK in 2009. The Turkish film 'A Step into the Darkness', directed by Atil Inac, happened to be the inaugural film, with its contemporary concentration on terrorism.





Harichandra's *Factory*, *Just One Chance* and *Maya Bazar* stand apart in the Indian Cinema Today section. Gautam Ghosh's *Calcutta My Love* has nothing new to tell us, except the same old story of unsuccessful naxal movement of the 60's.

World Cinema

The diverse nature of confusions and confrontations the humanity is prone to be manifested in the form of art and the cinema is no exception. The World Cinema proudly reflects the dilemma of the mankind and IFFK too had its share. *Whisper* with the

works of the great filmmakers and it was indeed an occasion to rediscover the films of Mrinal Sen and Jaques Tati with all its craftsmanship and humanism. It was also a befitting homage to A. Lohitadas, who has scripted and directed some of the notable films in Malayalam.

Contemporary Masters

The most attractive part of IFFK-2009 was the inclusion of the films of Raoul Peck (Congo) and Pen-Ek Ratanaruang (Thailand) in the Contemporary Masters section. Raoul Peck, born in Haiti, lived most of his



Competition films

The films entered the competition section determine the standard of the festival. Unfortunately the current festival could showcase only a very few of the gems from Asian, African and Latin American Countries. It is advisable to reduce the number of films if sufficient numbers of competent entries are not received.

Malayalam and Indian Cinema Today

The six films entered this section really represent the cross section of meaningful productions attempted in Malayalam in 2009. *Ramanam*, *Kerala Cafe* and *Patham Nilayile Theevandi* are distinctive with the innovations in narratives and executions.

Wind (Iraq), *Be Calm* and *Count to Seven* (Iran), *Shirin* (Iran), *The Other Bank* (Georgia), *Revisited* (Poland), *Katalin Varga* (Romania), *The Fish Child* (Argentina), *Dream* (Kim Ki-Duk), *Antichrist* (Denmark), *General Nil* (Poland) and an array of entries made the world cinema section worthy of viewing.

Retrospectives

It is customary on the part of any film festival to honour the legends of yesteryears. In IFFK-2009, Mrinal Sen (India), Jaques Tati (France), Mikio Naruse (Japan), Arturo Ripstein (Mexico), Lohitadas (India) and Francesco Rosi (Italy) were honoured justifiably. Retrospectives give one an opportunity to refresh the magical

time in Congo. His films reflect his life journey where Haiti and Congo have been the central concern of them. His acclaimed films like *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet*, *Sometimes in April*, *Moloch Tropical*. *Lumumba* and *Man by the Shore* were screened. Pen-Ek's internationally acclaimed films are characterised by their original plot with a lingering concern of life, alienation, conciliation, loneliness and death. *Sixty-nine*, *Transistor Love Story*, *Last Life in the Universe*, *Invisible Waves*, *Ploy* and *Nymph* had an overwhelm welcome by the spectators.

Focus

In country focus we had this time films from Cuba to commemorate its

IFFK- 2009 Awards

Suvarna Chakoram for the Best Film in Competition (Rs 10 lakhs) Shared by about Elly (Asghar Farhadi / Iran) Fishing Platform (Ravi Bharwani / Indonesia) Rajatha Chakoram for the Best Director of the film in Competition (Rs 3 lakhs) Nosir Saidov (True Noon / Tadjikistan) Rajatha Chakoram to the Best debut director (Rs 2 lakhs) Madoda Ncayiyana (The Secret Sky / South Africa) Audience Prize Rajatha Chakoram (Rs 1 Lakh) True Noon (Nosir Saidov / Tadjikistan)

Other Awards

FIPRESCI

Award for the Best film in Competition- A Fly in the Ashes (Gabriela David /Argentina) Award for the Best Malayalam Cinema – Patham Nilayile Theevandi (Joshy Mathew)

NETPAC

Award for the Best Asian Film in Competition-Fishing Platform (Indonesia) Award for the Best Malayalam Cinema – Kerala Cafe Hassankutty Award for the Best Indian Debut Director – Paresh Mokashi (Harishchandra's Factory/ Marathi)

50th year of revolution. The Cuban films showcased had the ethnic charm and political sensibility akin to the country's history and the all time favourites like Lucia (1968) and Memories of Underdevelopment (1968) were part of the film package. Films of Newton Aduaka (Nigeria), Haile Garima (Ethiopia), Ralph Ziman (South Africa), Wanuri Kihiu (Kenya) and Dyana Gaye (Senegal) were representing the contemporary African Cinema. It was a fabulous occasion to revisit the French New Wave with the films of Godard, Chabrol, Jacques Demy, Agnes Varda, Lois Malle,



Eric Rohmer and Truffaut.

The debut films by some of the filmmakers based in France were also a rewarding experience.

Homage

The year 2009 witnessed the sad demise of a bunch of film personalities who have contributed immensely to Malayalam Cinema as producers, artistes or writers. Befitting homage was offered to Sobhana Parameswarean Nair, K.P.Thomas, Adoor Bhavani, Madhavikutty, Murali and Rajan.P. Dev by screening the immortal films bearing their stamp.

The celebrated filmmaker from Africa, Raoul Peck,

delivered Aravindan Memorial Lecture- 2009. The Open Forum and the Meet the Press programme proved to be quite ineffective. The active interaction of the audience with the guests in these meetings never happened except for a few out of place comments. However, a series of book releases were done in these forums.

With an overall 165 films in different packages, screened in 8 venues, the 14th IFFK could keep up its established tradition. The organisational set up of the Festival needs to be appreciated. The reservation system for Balcony seats was really a blessing. And the computerised checking system proved to be quite effective too. It is happy to note that our audience is getting matured to be true festival delegates. The use of mobile phones inside the cinema hall, the unwelcome disturbances caused by handful of delegates and above all the hang outs of 'the festival birds' have reduced to a minimum, if not fully. Exhibiting remarkable self-discipline, the delegates were in queue to enter in theatres.

The presence of more than 8,000 delegates, most of them from Kerala, is the real asset of IFFK-2009. But a question should be raised, apart from the festivity of the festival, are we cine enthusiasts really supporting the good cinema movement in Kerala? The answer is a big negative: we are not genuine in our approach to good cinema. A State boasting of high film literacy can hardly have a good run for a good cinema! A paradox, indeed! ■



About Elly (Asghar Farhadi/Iran/2009/35mm/ Colour/Persian)

About Elly is a simple, but well executed, film about the disappearance of a guest from a family on a

vacation. Elly is a nursery school teacher and Sepideh invites her to the holidaying family to introduce her to Ahmed, who just had an unhappy ending for his German marriage. As things went on well, suddenly Elly vanishes and the whole family searches for her in the sea and surroundings, but in vain. Tension mounts within the family, they accuse one another and the vacation is utterly spoiled inviting the inevitable end too. The film narrative is on a pure realistic level that one forgets the incidents are part of a preconceived plot. Asfar Farhadi's cinematic sense in composition and fast cutting techniques act as instruments to keep the tempo of the film till the last shot.

The Fishing Platform (Ravi Bharwani / Indonesia-Netherlands-Germany- Switzerland / 2008/ Indonesian)

The Fishing Platform (Jermal) is the story of a 12 year orphan boy who tries to get back his father sacrificing a lot. The boy Jaya reaches his father Johar after his mother's death. But Johar, who had some dark secrets, is unwilling to accept the boy as his son. Jaya had to undergo all the hardships on the platform, caused by the bullying boys and his own father. Eventually they understand that they cannot escape from the inseparable truth, which binds them to the past. The sea also becomes a strong character in this melancholic drama of human relations.



True Noon (Nosir Saidov / Tadjikistan / .2009 /Tajik- Russian)

A very poignant theme executed in simple, but subtle frames, True Noon is on the separation of human souls by fences, set

in the background of the division of Soviet Russia in the post Gorbachev scenario. On a fine morning there appears a borderline, made secure by placing mines underneath, between two closely related villages of Tajik and Uzbek. And the marriage celebrations of Nilufar and Aziz, who now belong to the villages from the two sides! The scientist in the observatory, indeed, finds a way out. Though the film develops itself into a melodramatic outpour towards the end, Nosir Saidov has something to convey to the world, which the political will ever fail to understand.



ETHNICFOOD

Indu Narayan



Murukku

Raw rice - 4 cups
 Urad dal - one cup
 Sesame seeds - 4 tsp
 Salt to taste
 Ghee - 2 tbsp
 Asafoetida - ¼ tsp
 Oil- for deep frying

In a frying pan dry roast urad dal till smell comes. Wash the rice and spread over a clean cloth to drain the water thoroughly. powder finely both urad dal and rice separately. Sieve through a fine sieve and keep each separately. Preserve 8 cups raw rice powder and one cup urad dal. Add ghee, sesame seeds and required amount of salt. Pour just enough water to make it into thick dough. Place a neat polythene sheet (1x1 feet). Dip your hand in oil; take a small portion of the dough in your hand. Using your thumb and forefinger and middle finger make zigzag rounds with your dough on the polythene sheet. Heat oil in a kadai, transfer 5 or 6 muruks. When the sound slowly subsides turn the other side over. Deep fry till it become light brown in colour on both sides. Like wise make the rest.

Muthurasam

Raw Rice Powder- 4 CUPS | Channadal - one cup
 | Moong dal- one cup
 | Urad dal= ¼ cup | Red chilli powder- 2 tsp | Asafoetida powder- ¼ tsp | Ghee- one tbsp | Oil- to fry

Roast the dals separately and powder finely, sieve through a fine sieve and keep. Mix 4 cups rice powder and one cup mixed dal powder. Add all ingredients (except oil). Adding enough water prepare a third dough. Heat oil in a kadai. Place a big lump of the dough inside a seva presser and press it straight down into the hot oil in a rotating motion. Gently disappears, turn the other side over. Deep fry till golden and crisp. Remove from the oil with a perforated spoon and keep over a colander base. Store in an air tight container after a few minutes.



Omapodi

Channa dal powdered - 3 cups
 Raw rice flour - one cup
 Powdered ajwain - 2 tsp
 Red chilli powder - 2 tsp
 Ghee - 2 tsp
 Salt to taste
 Oil to fry

Sieve channa dal powder and rice flour through a fine sieve separately. Add all the other ingredients, except oil and make thick dough by adding sufficient water. Make portions of the, put each portion inside a seva presser. Press it straight into the hot oil in a rotating motion. When crisp turn the other side over and deep fry till golden colour and crisp in both sides. Remove from oil.



Ribbon Pakkavada

Raw rice flour - 3 cups
Channa dal, powdered—one cup
Ghee - one tbsp
Oil - to fry
Salt to taste
Asafoetida - ¼ tsp
Red chilli powder - 2 tsp



Sieve the rice flour and channa dal powder through a fine sieve. Mix all the ingredients except oil in a bowl. Add just enough water to make a thick dough. Heat oil in a kadai. Put small portions of this dough in a sev presser and press it down straight into the hot oil. When it is slightly crisp turn the other side. When crisp and golden on both sides, transfer to a plate.





Cheerful calendulas

Calendula, otherwise called Pot marigold with its bright yellow and orange flowers, is a familiar sight in every cottage and country gardens. It is a very prolific, easy to grow annual flower. The plant, a native of southern Europe, grows to a height of about half a metre and possess a long flowering period.

Pot marigold, scientifically named 'Calendula officinalis' is a plant in the calendula genus which consists of about 12-20 species of annual or perennial herbaceous plants in the sunflower family. The 'calendula' name comes from the Latin 'Kalendae' meaning 'first day of the month' presumably because pot marigolds are in bloom at the start of most months of the year. Pot marigold typically blooms quickly in bright yellows, reds and oranges throughout the summer. The petals have a pungent, spicy flavour. It is considered as one of the most versatile flowers to grow in a garden since it is easy to grow.

Choose a site in full sun or a half sunny location with well drained soil.

Calendulas are grown from seeds. Sow seeds early in the season and cover lightly with a quarter inch thickness of garden soil. Add compost to the soil as basal application. Also side dress with additional compost or leaf manure when the plants are well established. Water deeply during dry spells but avoid getting water on the leaves. Young plants need to be pinched back to encourage bushiness. Once pot marigold have grown to a reasonable size (about 8 weeks) they can be transplanted into the garden. Dwarf calendula species should be planted about 20 cm. apart, whereas normal ones should have a spacing of around 50 cm. Pot marigold makes a great border plant and also a good container plant. It is also an attractive cut flower and can be grown in the vegetable garden to help with insect control. The culinary uses of the plant include the petals of the flower being used in fish and meat soups, rice dishes, salads and as a colouring for cheese and butter.

Harvard Halts Works on Allston science complex

Harvard University will suspend work on its planned \$1 billion science centre early next year after losing almost a third of its endowment.

Allston project would be "slowed" because of a bleak economic environment. The Harvard Corporation, the university's governing body, reviewed options for the complex and decided to delay the next phase of construction while continuing to examine future possibilities. The first phase of construction -- completing the foundation and bringing the structure to ground level -- is expected to be finished by spring 2010.

Science programmes that were to be housed in the complex have been placed in alternate space on campus.



Stem cell researchers who were scheduled to move into the science complex by the original 2011 opening have been relocated to renovated laboratory space on Harvard's Cambridge campus.

Kids Learn to Reason Early

Until now, scientists have struggled to understand how and when children learn to reason from multiple perspectives at once. Five-year-olds can reason about the world from multiple perspectives simultaneously, according to a new theory by researchers in Japan and Australia.

Using an established branch of mathematics called Category Theory, the researchers explain why specific reasoning skills develop in children at certain ages, particularly at age five.

Controlling mosquitoes

Interfering in mosquitoes' sex lives could help halt the spread of malaria, British scientists say.

A study on the species of mosquito mainly responsible for malaria transmission in Africa, *Anopheles gambiae*, showed that because these mosquitoes mate only once in their lives, meddling with that process could dramatically cut their numbers. Researchers from Imperial College London found that a "mating plug" -- used by male mosquitoes to ensure their sperm stays in the right place after mating -- is essential for the fertilization of eggs during the female's lifetime.

Without the mating plug, sperm is not stored properly and fertilisation is disrupted, the researchers found out. The researchers' team analysed the composition of the mating plug and found that it is formed when an enzyme called transglutaminase interacts with proteins in the male mosquito's seminal fluid. This interaction causes the fluid to clot into a gelatinous solid mass.

When the researchers knocked out the enzyme in male mosquitoes, the plug could not form and reproduction failed. If this process could be developed for use in the field, perhaps in a spray form like an insecticide, it could effectively induce sterility in female mosquitoes in the wild.



The new theory shows that these reasoning skills have similar profiles of development because they involve related sorts of processes. Around age five, children begin to understand that if John is taller than Mary, and Mary is taller than Sue, then John is also taller than Sue - Transitive Inference. They also begin to understand that there are more fruit than apples in a grocery store - Class Inclusion.

Despite decades of previous experiments, the causes of the remarkably similar profiles of cognitive development across such apparently dissimilar paradigms of reasoning have largely been a mystery.

Skull Bone Holds the key to Tackling Osteoporosis

Scientists at Queen Mary, University of London have uncovered fundamental differences between the bone which makes up the skull and the bones in our limbs, which they believe could hold the key to tackling bone weakness and fractures.

It is well known that bones in the arms and legs become weak and vulnerable to breaks when they are not maintained by weight bearing exercise. However skull

bone, which bears almost no weight remains particularly resistant to breaking.

The new research offers an explanation for this phenomenon for the first time. The researchers say that their new understanding of the differences between the two types of bone could lead to new ways to treat or prevent osteoporosis.

People who develop osteoporosis have fragile bones which are prone to

breaking. The condition becomes more common as we age, especially in post-menopausal women when levels of oestrogen fall dramatically. In the over 50s it affects half of all women and a fifth of all men.

The researchers made a detailed genetic study of the two types of bone cell. They looked at which genes were active in the two types of cell and found a startling level of difference between the two.



Eat fish, cut heart risk

The researchers from University of Athens in Greece found that consuming fish one to two times per week can help reduce the risk of left ventricular systolic dysfunction (LVSD) in post acute coronary syndrome (ACS) patients.

However, a higher consumption of fish did not result in further protection from the occurrence of LVSD.

Previous research has shown that consumption of a wide variety of fish is best for minimising mercury exposure and increasing omega-3 fatty acid intake.



Earth-like, water-rich planet

Astronomers have discovered a new Earth-like planet that is larger than our own and may be more than half covered with water, according to a study published in the science journal Nature.

The so-called "super Earth" is about 42 light years away in another solar system and has a radius nearly 2.7 times larger than that of our planet, according to the study by the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics.

The discovery of the planet, called GJ 1214b, represents a "major step forward" in the search for



worlds similar to the Earth, added the University of California's Geoffrey Marcy in a commentary also in Nature.

The "newfound world" is too hot to sustain life as its temperature is estimated at between 280 and 120 degrees Celsius (536 and 248 degrees Fahrenheit) with its host star about one-fifth the size of the Sun, according to the scientists.



Special ward to the victims of endosulfan



The government is setting up a special ward at the Kasaragod General Hospital and is planning to operate mobile vans for reaching medical assistance to the victims of endosulfan in Kasaragod district.

Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan told after a conference convened to discuss the relief and rehabilitation of the victims that the mobile medical service would have allopathy and ayurveda doctors to extend suitable treatment to the victims. The Chief

Minister announced that sufficient budget provisions would be made for relief and remediation of the victims. Besides, funds would be raised for relief and remediation by district and grama panchayats, Social Welfare Department and non-governmental organisations.

Of the 1,996 victims identified by the Health Department, 103 are severe cases. A family member who is looking after such a patient with a severe handicap will be sanctioned monthly assistance of

Rs.250 under a scheme of the Social Welfare Department. That will be in addition to the pension for the disabled at Rs.250 a month. Surgeries will be continued to be done at Pariyaram Medical College Hospital for those requiring surgical intervention. The Science and Technology and Health departments will jointly conduct a study on the effects of endosulfan and the condition of the victims.

The Chief Minister took strong exception to a statement of Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar against the ban on endosulfan. The Union Minister had made the statement without making any studies. Endosulfan had contaminated the soil and water resources in the district and Pawar, who is the Minister for the entire nation, should not have ignored that, Chief Minister said. He added that the ban on endosulfan would continue in Kerala. Health Minister P.K. Sreemathy and Special Secretary Usha Titus and other officials attended the conference.

Pay revision by next year

Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan has said that revision of pay scales of government employees and teachers would be implemented next year. The Chief Minister was talking to the media after discussions on pay revision with the organisations of employees and teachers. Chief Minister said the government stood by the principle of pay revision every five years. That would mean that the revision would have effect from July 7, 2009. The Cabinet will decide on the constitution and terms of reference of the commission after considering all the views.

Asked about the demand of employees for interim relief, Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac said the question did not arise now as the arrears in dearness allowance had been cleared.



Law to clear projects on time: Karim

The State government intends to amend the Single-Window Clearance and Land Area Development Act of 1999 for the benefit of small entrepreneurs, Industries Minister Elamaram Karim has said. He was inaugurating a one-day workshop on 'Responsible tourism' organised by the Calicut Management Association (CMA). The Minister said the changes in the legislations were aimed at avoiding delays in assessing and giving approvals to investment proposals.

The Bill would be presented in the next session of the State Assembly. The need for such an amendment was felt as there had been delays on part of various departments in granting clearances to investment proposals. Under the proposed amendment, the proposal would be considered approved if the departments concerned failed to give their clearances in a specified time.



Electronic media division

Planning should bring happiness

“What is happening at the very basic level in society needs to be examined minutely. We have to study the impact of the social and economic development we have achieved... on the family life and individual psyche of our people. Amidst the claims of our stupendous achievements, we should not miss the subtle notes of disquiet at the micro level,”

commensurate economic development, have attracted the attention of the entire world. The high stress on human development was an approach initiated by the Communist government of 1957 in the State. Although different political combinations had come to power in the State since then, the path set by the first EMS government could not be changed.



Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan said while inaugurating a workshop on human development in Thiruvananthapuram.

“Planning can be called successful only when there is happiness also in society, along with the measurable human development indicators,” He noted that Kerala’s development experience, with its high human development achievements unaccompanied by

He said the credit for this should go to the politically sensitive and highly literate Kerala society.

State Planning Board vice-chairman Prabhat Patnaik presided over the inaugural session of the workshop. The workshop was organised by the State Planning Board under a UNDP-Planning Commission project for strengthening State plans to achieve high levels of human development.

Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan said news channels were currently providing inadequate space for development-oriented reporting which was why state government decided to start a news division which would supply video clippings of development activities to channels. Inaugurating the electronics media division of the Information and Public Relations Department in Thiruvananthapuram, he said that with the changes in the media world over the years, the print media was now forced to follow up the news of the previous day brought live before viewers by TV channels. This resulted in a trend that the entire media was now following debates and controversies while neglecting many other news items the people want to know. The government and media had the same responsibility to help reach development news to the people so that they knew the benefits of various development works. The government should take an active role in reaching development and official news to channels and the I& PRD’s new effort was towards this end, the Chief Minister said. The electronic media had its limitations in getting development-oriented news visuals along with other news stories and the new system would help solve the issue.

Visuals of official and development news would be provided to channels live by and the I& PRD’s Electronic media division from different parts of the state and New Delhi. PRD Electronic media division would also document historical events. The Chief Minister also inaugurated the new scheme to include reporters of the visual media in the pension scheme for journalists.



Finishing school for women



A finishing school, the Resources Enhancement Academy for Career Heights (REACH) for women, established by the Kerala State Women's Development Corporation has been launched. Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Krishna Tirath, inaugurated the school in Thiruvananthapuram. It was launched under the Flagship Programme on Finishing School announced by the State Government under the 11th Plan.

The Minister has said Rs.12.32 crore will be released to the State Social Welfare Department for implementing women's empowerment schemes in the State. It will open up a world of opportunities for job-seeking young women. Health Minister, P.K. Sreemathy, presided over the inaugural function.

REACH is aimed at fine-tuning the skills of professionally qualified women. The academy offers IT-enabled training and communicative English courses for B.Ed holders, IELTS training for nurses etc. REACH will train 650 candidates in the first year. Seventy per cent of the seats will be reserved for BPL candidates. The academy will also provide hostel facility.

- Prabhul K. Nair



Students of Indian Origin hailing from abroad are with VS Achuthanandan, Chief Minister in a photo session at Secretariat. The students travel the length and breadth of India to imbibe their mother culture and find their roots.

Minister for Tourism looks on the floral fiesta after inaugurating the flower festival held in Thiruvananthapuram. V. Surendran Pillai MLA nearby.



RESPONSE



Mail to:
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Editorial Materials

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

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Kerala Calling welcomes free expression of divergent views and exchange of ideas through its pages.

Consider Children

The International Film Festival of Kerala is noted not only for its public support but for its industrial benefits also. I would like to point out the authorities concerned that children are being ignored by the cinema management and distributors nowadays. Last year several films were released for the children interest. Films must have also been released at DVD versions very precisely. Watching films on a big screen is something else indeed. I would therefore request the relevant authorities to pin point this matter to cinema workers. They should consider children while selecting films for film festivals and at least one film should be released for them on the big screen every month.

Ganeshkumar K

Gopalapuram, Palakkad.

Promote Positive Thinking

I'm impressed to read about the seminar on 'Changing face of media'. Keep up the good work!

Nowadays media play very important role in our daily life and effects on our moods and thinking as well. So it is my request to all the journalists please promote those programmes and reports, which produce healthy minds. Those would help our youth to understand the issues and problems that we are facing, instead of creating tension or sensationalism. Promote their solutions, positive thinking and hopes so as to produce good future rather than highlighting talk shows which create disturbances among communities. Because we need patience and tolerance to resolve issues.

Nitha S. L.

Mannam Memorial Model School
Malayinkil, Thiruvananthapuram.



Yeoman Service

The December issue of *Kerala Calling* has done an yeoman service to the cause of good cinema by dedicating itself to the 14th edition of IFFK. It is heartening to note that IFFK, over the years, has become an important event in the calendar of world cinema. Cinema has always been a powerful medium in Kerala. Movies in Malayalam are strongly linked to the cultural, social and political aspects of the society. I hope crass commercialism will not get the better of our cinemas and good cinema continues to have its audience. It is disappointing to note that Malayalam still lacks long standing heroines and women behind the camera. There is still a lot of social stigma attached to women working in the field of cinema. Given the fact that Kerala is a leading state in women empowerment the apathy towards women working in movies is an anachronism.

Sarath S. Pillai

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