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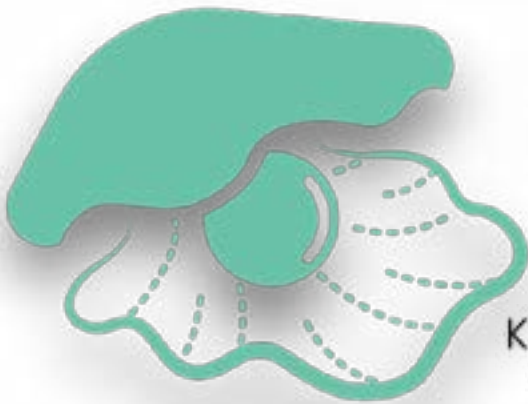
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Editor's Desk

Igniting the Spirit of Women Empowerment

With the passing of one chapter and the beginning of another, the momentum set by the SHEROES Summit 2024 continues to inspire and drive change. More than just an event, the summit became a defining moment—one that celebrated resilience, broke barriers, and amplified the voices of women shaping the future. Organized by Hues of Life Magazine, it stood as a call to action, reminding us that recognizing the hero within every woman is key to accelerating progress.

The stories shared weren't just about success; they were about transformation. From visionary entrepreneurs and industry leaders to social changemakers, each woman honored proved that empowerment is not just about recognition but about creating lasting impact. The summit reinforced that investing in women isn't a symbolic gesture—it is a necessity for collective growth.

As we embrace new opportunities and renewed energy in the days ahead, the lessons of SHEROES Summit 2024 serve as a guiding force. True empowerment begins when we stand together, amplify voices, and work toward a future where equality is not an aspiration but a reality. The journey continues, and with every step, we move closer to a world where every woman's potential is recognized, celebrated, and fully realized.

Warm regards,
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BUILDING A HEALTHCARE EMPIRE WITH HEART

THE M.S. FAIZAL KHAN WAY



MS. Faizal Khan's story is a powerful determination that has transformed the healthcare landscape for an entire region. Born on May 28, 1982, to Dr. A.P. Majeed Khan and Mrs. Saifuniza, has dedicated his life to bringing quality healthcare to the doorstep of rural communities. His journey is not just one of professional success but also a testament to the power of vision and compassion.

From his early education at Government M.T.H.S Ooroottukala and St. Mary's Higher Secondary School, Pattom, to earning his Master of Science in Software Engineering from Noorul Islam College of Engineering in 2005, Faizal has always been driven to excel. Upon completing his education, he joined the Noorul Islam Educational Trust (NIET), a pivotal moment in his career and life.

Noorul Islam Educational Trust: A Foundation of Excellence

Established by Dr. A.P. Majeed Khan, the Noorul Islam Educational Trust has been a cornerstone of educational and societal progress for over 64 years. The Trust's legacy began with the establishment of the first technical institute (Industrial Training Institute) in Kerala in 1955. Its mission has always been to uplift the educationally downtrodden rural population in and around Neyyattinkara. Today, the Trust administers 17 institutions, including Noorul Islam University, which holds an "A" grade accreditation by NAAC.

The Trust's institutions span diverse fields, offering education and training

in engineering, technology, management, applied sciences, humanities, social sciences, dental science, para-medical sciences, and more. Renowned for their high-quality teaching, research, and innovation, these institutions have earned accolades for their infrastructure and academic achievements.

When Faizal Khan joined NIET during its golden jubilee year, the Trust was preparing to embark on a new venture—the establishment of a state-of-the-art healthcare facility to serve the rural population of Neyyattinkara. Entrusted with this ambitious project, Faizal assumed the role of Managing Director of Noorul Islam Institute of Medical Science and Research Foundation (NIMS). His youthful energy and business acumen were instrumental in transforming the dream into reality.

Under the able leadership of Faizal Khan, NIMS Medicity at Aralumoodu, Neyyattinkara, has become one of the largest healthcare centres in South Kerala and South Tamil Nadu. With 40 departments, of which 20 are specialties and 20 super specialties, NIMS is a complete health institution that caters to the need for advanced treatment in every discipline.

Major specialties would include Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery, Nephrology, Endocrinology, Advanced Orthopaedic Procedures, Kidney Transplantation, Neonatology, Naturopathy, etc. NIMS hosts seven independent ICUs in medical, coronary, neonatal, etc. Its campus would boast a College of Dental Sciences, a College of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences for teaching the future members of the medical fraternity.

NIMS is known for its innovative approach to healthcare. It was the first institution in Kerala to install a fibro scan (liver scan machine) and establish a leuko reduction blood bank. Faizal's forward-thinking vision led to the creation of Asia's first hybrid green energy cardiac catheterization lab, a milestone that earned international recognition. Faizal Khan was able to present this project at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in May 2015, an honour that spoke to his commitment to sustainability in healthcare.

The motto of Faizal Khan is "Healthcare for all, irrespective of wealth." It is the philosophy that drives every initiative at NIMS. Under his leadership, several



The motto of Faizal Khan is "Healthcare for all, irrespective of wealth." It is the philosophy that drives every initiative at NIMS. Under his leadership, several charitable programs have been started to ensure that no one is left behind.



charitable programs have been started to ensure that no one is left behind. Projects like "Heart 2 Heart," free heart surgeries, and free dialysis programs have saved thousands of lives.

Another notable initiative is NIMS SPECTRUM, a comprehensive rehabilitation program for differently-abled children. This program underscores Faizal's belief in inclusive care, extending his vision of equitable healthcare to some of the most vulnerable members of society.

Faizal Khan's influence is not limited to the walls of NIMS Medicity. His efforts have brought about a significant

reduction in deaths due to heart attack within the Neyyattinkara area through the establishment of 24/7 primary angioplasty services. His focus on advanced cardiac care created the NIMS Heart Foundation in 2007, which was the first specialized cardiac care centre in South Kerala.

NIMS Medicity, through these initiatives, has become a symbol of hope and excellence, setting new benchmarks for healthcare delivery in the region. The institution constantly adapts to advancements in medical care, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of innovation.

M.S. Faizal Khan is not just an administrator; he is a visionary leader, writer, and an inspiring orator. His speeches and writings show that he believes deeply in the service of humanity and has the unwavering faith in service being transformative in itself. He integrates strategic vision with a human touch, which inspires his team to work day and night for the betterment of all.

Today, NIMS Medicity thrives; M.S. Faizal Khan's story is an excellent example of how things can be done if determination and empathy come together. Innovating, sustaining, and inclusive healthcare redefine what healthcare means to South Kerala and further afield.

Faizal's legacy is not about building institutions but building lives. His story reminds one of the fact that true leadership lies in the empowerment of others and bringing long-lasting change in the world. Through his work, he ensured that quality health care was no longer a privilege but a basic right for hundreds of people around him.

SHRI RONAK RADHAKRISHNA PILLAI & DEV SNACKS

GUIDED BY VISION, DEFINED BY TASTE

"In life, those who face obstacles and overcome them will witness true prosperity and growth."

Words to encapsulate the journey of Shri Ronak Radhakrishna Pillai, MD, Dev Snacks, Kerala's leading snack brand that has won the hearts of millions, with a story not merely about business success, but a sense of resilience, vision, and a relentless drive for excellence. His ability to overcome numerous challenges while staying true to his vision for quality transformed Dev Snacks into the market leader and inspired new entrepreneurs all over India.

Born in the quaint town of Thillery, Kollam in 1980, the life of Shri Ronak unfolded in the cradle of tranquillity and peace. Growing up, he imbued himself with all the characteristics of hard work, honesty, and resilience—attributes that would form the very base of his future entrepreneurial endeavour. His early years were spent at St. Aloysius Higher Secondary School in Kollam. But it was even as a child that he was destined to tread on roads that would be quite unconventional. While most of us learn the ropes of business, Shri Ronak had an unbridled passion for entrepreneurship that emerged from a deep desire to succeed.

In 1994, at a very tender age of just 14, he began on a journey that would finally mould his future. Shri Ronak founded Dev Snacks in Kollam town. The family-owned business began with only five employees and a single vehicle. Initially, the market was very small, serving only the Kollam district. Yet, the seed for something much greater had been sown. From the very beginning, his vision was clear: to create snacks that represent the epitome of quality, flavour, and price while maintaining uncompromising ethical standards. For most people, it takes years of experience to develop such a pragmatic mindset, but this clarity and passion distinguished him from the rest.



Paving the Road to Expansion

As Dev Snacks expanded, so did the founder's vision. By 2010, the brand had made its mark across all districts in South Kerala, and that same year, it opened its first branch outside the state in Bangalore. The growing demand for quality snacks in various regions made it clear to Shri Ronak that expanding the brand beyond Kerala was essential. Although there were significant logistical challenges

in reaching new markets, his determination to make Dev Snacks available nationwide kept him focused.

The brand's reputation for high-quality snacks at





reasonable prices was firmly established, and by 2014, Dev Snacks had successfully launched a branch in Chennai. This year was crucial, as it marked the start of the company's expansion into other states and territories. In 2015, Dev Snacks achieved another impressive milestone: a turnover of ₹50 crore. This growth was not just about finances; it reflected the company's commitment to delivering exceptional products, outstanding customer service, and efficient distribution.

Dev Snacks' Success: The Power of Consistency

Dev Snacks' rise to market leadership was driven by its dedication to maintaining the highest quality in both products and services. Shri Ronak's belief that "If you provide the best, the market will reward you with the best" became more than just a motto—it was the guiding principle for every decision made within the company. His insight into logistics and distribution was another key factor in the company's success. Shri Ronak recognized early on that building relationships with retailers would be vital for scaling the business. He made sure that Dev Snacks' products were consistently available, fostering strong partnerships with retailers and enhancing brand visibility.

With a fleet of over 200 vehicles, Dev Snacks ensures its products are delivered around the clock, keeping the brand visible and accessible throughout its market. In 2023, Dev Snacks became the market leader in Kerala, boasting 13 branches across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, including major cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, and Pondicherry. Acknowledging the rising demand and the need for growth, Dev Snacks was incorporated as Seraphine Dev Impex Pvt Ltd, led by two directors, and achieved an impressive turnover of ₹100 crore. This milestone marked a significant step in its journey, showcasing the brand's strong growth and commitment to excellence.

New Horizons: Looking Toward a Pan-India Presence

As Dev Snacks continued to expand, Shri Ronak's

vision for the future grew even more ambitious. His aim for 2025 is to establish Dev Snacks as a household name across India. The company's emphasis on quality, affordability, and innovation remains central to this vision, ensuring it can grow while upholding the high standards that have contributed to its success.

To advance this vision, Shri Ronak made bold moves in 2024 by incorporating two new companies: 'Evangeline Dev Impex Pvt Ltd' and 'Evangeline Morello Private Limited.' The former was established to take over the operations of 'Dev Ice Cream,' a beloved brand in Kerala known for its outstanding quality. Dev Ice Cream has long been a favourite among locals, and under Shri Ronak's guidance, it has continued to evolve, regularly introducing new products.

'Evangeline Morello Private Limited,' on the other hand, represents Dev Snacks' entry into new business sectors. This company will concentrate on the processing and bottling of plain and mineralized water, broadening the reach of Dev Snacks' quality products into other areas of the food and beverage industry.

Awards and Recognition

Throughout the years, Shri Ronak's unwavering dedication and visionary leadership have garnered him a multitude of state and national awards. These honours reflect his commitment to quality, customer satisfaction, and excellence in business. His skill in navigating the complexities of the snack industry while upholding ethical standards and offering affordable products has established a new standard for others to aspire to.

The success of Dev Snacks is not merely a reflection of its products but also of the values instilled by its founder. Shri Ronak Radhakrishna Pillai's journey from a small proprietorship to a multi-million-dollar brand is a tale of vision, perseverance, and determination. As he sets his sights on 2025, with ambitions for a pan-India presence, one thing is certain—Dev Snacks' future is brighter than ever.



SHEROES SUMMIT 2024

A GRAND CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S EXCELLENCE

December 10, 2024, marked a transformative chapter in the narrative of gender empowerment as SHEROES SUMMIT 2024 unfolded at the iconic Hotel SP Grand Days in Thiruvananthapuram. Hosted by Hues of Life Magazine, in association with the Kerala State Women's Commission and the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), the event was aptly scheduled on International Human Rights Day. This strategic choice emphasized the need to address the historical exclusion of women's rights from the broader human rights framework, calling for collective action to dismantle barriers to equality.





The summit radiated inspiration from its commencement, with Smt. P. Sathidevi, Chairperson of the Kerala State Women's Commission, presiding over the event. The inaugural session, graced by Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education and Social Justice Dr. R. Bindu, set a powerful tone. Honoured with the SHEROES Exemplary Leadership Award, Dr. Bindu's address highlighted the urgency of empowering women to catalyse societal progress. Adding to the solemnity of the occasion, Shri. I. B. Sathish, MLA of Kattakada constituency, led the Human Rights Day pledge, leaving an indelible impact on the audience.

The day brought together an array of luminaries whose contributions have redefined excellence in their respective fields. Padma Shri HH Aswathi Thirunal Gowri Lakshmi Bayi was celebrated with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her profound influence on arts and culture. Equally inspiring was Dr. Tessy Thomas, affectionately known as India's Missile Woman, who was also honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award for her ground-breaking contributions to missile technology and defense research. These trailblazers were joined by other notable figures, including Dr. Divya S. Iyer IAS (MD, VISL), Dr. K. Omanakutty (Carnatic Vocalist), Shri. Kowdiar Dharman (Director, Kerala Forest Industries) and Smt. Sulakshana. S. (Asst. Director - Women & Child Development), Adv. Indira Raveendran (Member, Kerala Women's Commission), each embodying the diverse achievements of modern women.





Education Excellence Award for her contributions to fostering global standards in education. Smt. Anju Kamalahasan, Chief Administrative Officer of Jobstars Group, received the Excellence in Business Leadership - HR Industry Award, while Ms. Akshaya M. Rajee, Executive Director of SP Grand Days, was recognized with the Excellence in Business Leadership - Hospitality Industry Award for her remarkable achievements in the hospitality sector.

Changemaker of the Year was awarded to Smt. Anooja Bashir, CEO and Co-Founder of FlexiCloud, for her pioneering role in the tech industry. Meanwhile, Smt. Anitha K. A., the creative force behind Moongoddess Couture, was named Most Inspiring Entrepreneur, and Ms. Tanoora Swetha Menon, founder of Zera Kids LLP, was celebrated as Emerging

Under the theme Recognizing the Hero Within Her, the summit celebrated 25 remarkable women, paying homage to their exceptional accomplishments across a wide spectrum of fields. The event also spotlighted exemplary women-led enterprises for their innovation, impact, and commitment to societal progress.

One of the highlights was the Empowering Women's Savings Account Award, presented to Canara Angel Women's Saving Account for its role in advancing financial literacy and independence among women. In the healthcare sector, GG Hospital (Paragon Hospital Kerala Pvt. Ltd) received the Most Trusted & Socially Responsible Hospital Award for its unwavering commitment to excellence and community service.

Celebrating leadership and innovation, Ms. Sapnu George, Executive Director of TRINS, was honoured with the Exemplary Leadership in Global





Entrepreneur of the Year for her contributions to the fashion industry.

Other notable recognitions included Lollipopz Lifestyle, named Best Fashion Retailer of the Year, and Ocean Pearls & Gems, which won the Most Trusted Jewel Brand Award. In the healthcare sector, Dr. Hazeena K. R., HOD of Neonatology & Developmental Paediatrics at NIMS Medicity, was celebrated for her professional excellence, along with Dr. Manjula Ramachandran, Head of Nephrology & Renal Transplant at Mar Sleeva Medicity, and Smt. Deepthi P. Nair, Nursing Superintendent at NIMS Medicity, both honoured for their outstanding contributions.

Mental health and coaching were also acknowledged, with Dr. Gayathri Menon receiving the Professional Excellence - Clinical Psychology Award and Ms. Nayana G. Nair, founder of Evolve Soul Studio, being named Most Inspiring Life Coach. Dentistry was represented by Dr. Pinky Ann Varghese, founder of Dr. Pinky's JP Dental Clinic, who was recognized for her advancements in dental care.

In the beauty and wellness domain, Smt. Gitanjali Venkatesh was celebrated for her bridal makeover

artistry, while Smt. K. Remanika, founder of Remanikas Beauty Saloon and Spa, was honored for her contributions to wellness. Dr. Christin Aparna S. L., founder of Brighten Up Aesthetic Clinic, received accolades for her work in cosmetology, and Vijis Naturals (AVS Naturals) was named Emerging Herbal Cosmetic Brand for its innovative natural products.

The food industry was represented by Smt. Sabana Rahanas, founder of Broast N Grills, who was recognized for her outstanding achievements. Feminotrix by Chaithanya Herbals won Best Brand - Women Health Award, and Ayurarogya Saukhyam Foundation was awarded Best Green Initiative - Personal Hygiene for its eco-friendly innovations. Finally, Smt. Sangeetha Iyer, founder of Naughty's Pet Sanctuary, was honoured with the Guardian Angel Award for Animal Welfare.

These awards symbolized not just the remarkable achievements of these women but also their perseverance, creativity, and vision for shaping a better future. Aligning with the global theme Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress, the summit highlighted the vital role of gender parity in sustainable development and launched Hues of Life Magazine's campaign for International Women's Day 2025.

More than a celebration, SHEROES SUMMIT 2024 was a platform for dialogue, learning, and inspiration. Thought-provoking sessions featured leaders such as Dr. Priya Prasad, HOD of Rajadhani Business School, and Smt. Anooja Bashir, who shared their insights on leadership and resilience. Their stories echoed the summit's mission to celebrate women's achievements, confront challenges, and forge actionable paths toward equality.





DR. R. BINDU: LEADING KERALA'S HIGHER EDUCATION INTO A NEW AGE OF EXCELLENCE

Dr. R Bindu has emerged as one of Kerala's most transformative leaders, bringing a rare combination of intellect, empathy, and foresight to the realm of higher education. As the Minister for Higher Education and Social Justice, she is redefining what it means to educate and empower, crafting a vision that places inclusivity, innovation, and excellence at the core of Kerala's academic future. Her journey, from an acclaimed academic to a leader reshaping policy, is a testament to the power of perseverance and purpose.

Her story is rooted in a deep passion for education. As a professor and later vice principal at Sree Kerala Varma College in Thrissur, she left an indelible mark on her students and colleagues alike. A natural leader, Dr. Bindu was known not only for her encyclopaedic knowledge but also for her ability to inspire critical thinking and creativity. Her literary pursuits, spanning poetry and prose, reflect a multifaceted intellect and a profound engagement with Kerala's cultural tapestry.

In politics, she has brought the same rigor and vision that defined her academic career. Since assuming her ministerial role, Dr. Bindu has made accessibility the cornerstone of her policy. Recognizing education as a powerful tool for social transformation, she introduced financial aid schemes targeting economically disadvantaged students, aiming to dismantle barriers that have long excluded many from the pursuit of higher learning. Her initiatives are not just about enrolling more students; they are about ensuring that no talent is left untapped due to financial hardship.

Her focus extends far beyond traditional academic goals. Dr. Bindu has been a vocal proponent of embedding entrepreneurial thinking into the curriculum. For her, education is not merely about producing graduates but fostering innovators who can redefine Kerala's economic and cultural future. Under her stewardship, programs promoting

entrepreneurship are equipping students to become job creators rather than job seekers, with a clear emphasis on creativity and self-reliance.

However, her tenure has not been without challenges. The landscape of self-financing colleges, which often prioritize profit over quality, has been a contentious issue. Dr. Bindu has taken a firm stand, pushing for stricter regulations to ensure these institutions deliver value to their students. She understands that unchecked commercialization can erode trust in the education system, and her commitment to fairness and accountability has earned widespread respect.

Equally vital is her emphasis on research and development, a domain she believes is pivotal for Kerala's progress. Dr. Bindu is working to transform universities into hubs of innovation, where students and faculty collaborate to solve real-world problems. Her vision includes fostering an ecosystem that supports cutting-edge research, positioning Kerala as a leader in scientific and technological advancements.

Her journey has not been without hurdles. From addressing the financial strain on students to improving faculty recruitment in specialized disciplines, the road ahead demands resilience and strategic thinking. Yet, Dr. Bindu's determination to confront these issues head-on reflects her unwavering commitment to a future where education is not just a privilege but a right.

Dr. R Bindu's leadership is not about incremental change; it is about reimagining the very foundation of education in Kerala. Her ability to balance the roles of academic, writer, and politician with grace and purpose has positioned her as a transformative figure in the state's history. As she continues to champion equity, innovation, and excellence, Dr. Bindu is not just leading Kerala's education sector—she is reshaping its destiny.



I. B. SATHISH

A CHAMPION OF EQUALITY AND PROGRESS IN KERALA

B. Sathish, a prominent member of the 14th Kerala Legislative Assembly, is an influential political figure known for his commitment to social justice, equality, and development.

■ Representing the Kattakkada constituency, he is a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), a political organization with deep roots in Kerala's socio-political landscape.

Sathish's political journey has been marked by resilience, determination, and a firm belief in addressing the issues faced by the marginalized and underrepresented sections of society. His victory in the Kerala Assembly elections, where he defeated the influential N. Sakthan, the Speaker of the 13th Kerala Legislative Assembly, was a significant moment in his political career. This victory was seen not just as a personal achievement but also as a testament to the people's trust in his ability to bring about meaningful change in their lives.

As an MLA, I. B. Sathish has been actively involved in championing the rights of women, minorities, and the economically disadvantaged. His participation in events like SHEROES SUMMIT 2024, where he delivered the Human Rights Day pledge, further highlights his commitment to advocating for gender equality and human rights. In his address, Sathish emphasized the importance of empowering women and dismantling the societal structures that perpetuate inequality. His words resonated deeply with the audience, reaffirming his dedication to creating a more inclusive and just society.

One of the key aspects of Sathish's leadership is his focus on creating opportunities for all, regardless of gender, caste, or creed. He has consistently worked to improve access to education, healthcare, and employment for the people of Kattakkada, understanding that true empowerment comes from giving individuals the tools to succeed. His policies and initiatives have been instrumental in fostering local economic growth, improving infrastructure, and ensuring that the voices of the people are heard in the legislative process.

Sathish's commitment to social justice is also reflected in his active engagement with grassroots organizations and his collaborative approach to governance. His approach is rooted in the Marxist ideology of equality and fairness, and he has consistently advocated for policies that prioritize the welfare of the working class and the marginalized. Beyond his political career, I. B. Sathish is regarded as a forward-thinking leader who understands the importance of integrating modern technology and innovation into governance.

I. B. Sathish is a political leader who has dedicated his career to the service of the people, especially women and marginalized groups. His unwavering commitment to human rights, gender equality, and social justice makes him a respected figure in Kerala's political arena. As he continues to serve the people of Kattakkada, his legacy as a champion of equality and progress is sure to inspire future generations of leaders to fight for a more inclusive and just society.



ASWATHY THIRUNAL GOWRI LAKSHMI BAYI

TORCH BEARER OF ROYAL HERITAGE IN KERALA

Aswathy Thirunal Gowri Lakshmi Bayi is one of the most illustrious figures from the proud house of Travancore Royal Family of Kerala, which has dedicated her life to the rich tapestry of royal heritage and a lively literary existence. Born in 1945 to Karthika Thirunal Lakshmi Bayi and Lieutenant Colonel Godavarma Raja, the tale that follows is one of elegance, wisdom, and an unflinching commitment to protecting and sharing the cultural riches of the homeland she loves.

Educated by Anglo-Indian tutors with her siblings, the early years of Aswathy Thirunal became a fusion of tradition and modern influences. Her studies went on to take her to Government College for Women in Thiruvananthapuram, and in 1966 she completed her graduation in Economics. Still, her heart was not inclined towards this realm of economics; her interests remained anchored to literature and the living heritage of Travancore.

Over the years, Aswathy Thirunal developed into a celebrated writer by having thirteen works on her list, be it poetry, essays, or detailed studies of Kerala's architecture, culture, and temples. Her masterwork, *Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple* (1998), is focused upon the iconic temple of Travancore, which stood as a benchmark in cultural literature; it still enchants not only readers but also scholars, who have reprinted it several times.

Her writing, however, transcends mere exploration of history; it is a profoundly personal journey. Her inaugural published work, *Thirumulkazhcha*, a

collection of English poems, captures the innocence and wonder of her childhood days spent near the revered Padmanabhaswamy Temple. With her evocative words, she crafts a vivid tapestry of an era steeped in devotion and tradition, a world that many of her readers yearn to revisit through her prose. Her writings are not only trying to preserve heritage but also have the spirit of giving back to society, encapsulating the very essence of a royal legacy dedicated to the welfare of the people.

The latest recognition is indeed Padma Shri in 2024, making her the first member from the Travancore Royal Family to be recognized at this level. The Padma Shri award will not only be an acknowledgment of her literary endeavours but also a testament to the unwavering commitment made toward the preservation of Kerala's cultural soul.

Her latest book, *History Liberated: The Sree Chithra Saga*, continues this mission by imparting to the reader an understanding of the legacy that Travancore had and the desires of its rulers. From *Kerala Temple Architecture: Some Notable Features to The Dawn*, her works are both a repository and a vibrant celebration of a rich heritage.

Aswathy Thirunal Gowri Lakshmi Bayi's life unfolds as a tale of unwavering devotion—devotion to her heritage, her art, and her community. With her eloquent words, she bears the significance of a noble past, all the while lighting the way for future generations to recognize and value Kerala's vibrant cultural legacy.



TESSY THOMAS

THE WOMAN WHO REDEFINED INDIA'S AEROSPACE AMBITIONS

Dr. Tessa Thomas, who is celebrated for her pioneering work in defence research and aerospace technology, is hailed as the “Missile Woman of India.” She has made incredible contributions toward the development of missile systems and pioneering leadership in the defence programs of India that have earned her international accolades. Currently, she is the Vice Chancellor of NICHE University in Kanyakumari, leading the institution with her experience and visionary leadership to unparalleled academic and technological advancements.

Dr. Tessa Thomas’s academic journey showcases her dedication to mastering complex fields. She graduated with a Bachelor of Technology in Electrical Engineering from Calicut University in 1985, and later received a Master of Engineering in Guided Missiles from the Institute of Armament Technology, now known as the Defence Institute of Advanced Technology, Pune, in 1986. She earned a PhD in Missile Guidance at Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), Hyderabad, in 2014. In addition, she holds an MBA in Operations Management from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in 2007, thus highlighting her ability to take on technical as well as operational challenges with a multidisciplinary perspective.

She was on faculty of the Guided Missiles section in Institute of Armament Technology, Pune, right from the very early years of 1986. Then she was working as a scientist in Scientist ‘B’ scale of DRDO’s Inertial Navigation Group since the year 1988, Hyderabad. Her contributions went into foundational developments

related to the successful maiden flight of the Agni missile programme. Dr. Tessa Thomas designed the guidance systems for long-range missile systems, which are now part of all Agni missiles. She was the first to develop the country’s energy management guidance scheme for an all-solid-propelled long-range system, for which she received the Agni Self Reliance Award in 2001.

During her more than 32 years of service, Dr. Tessa Thomas has made immense contributions to fields such as guidance, control, inertial navigation, trajectory simulation, and mission design. As Project Director for Agni-4, she managed the design and successful test of the state-of-the-art systems with many cutting-edge technologies. She also acted as Project Director (Mission) for Agni-5, which was under her development as India’s longest-range intercontinental ballistic missile.

A combination of academic brilliance and public service has further earned her honorary doctorates from renowned institutions. Some of those include a Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) from Kalyani University, Mangalayatan University, Hindustan University, Sri Padmavati Mahila Vishwavidyalaya University, ITM University, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University, and the Central University of Karnataka.

The journey of Dr. Tessa Thomas from a dedicated scientist to a national icon is a testament to her vision, perseverance, and transformative contributions to Indian science and technology. Her legacy inspires generations to break barriers, pursue innovation, and contribute meaningfully to the nation’s progress.

LOLLIPOPZ

A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE, FASHION, AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

In 2017, Sruthy Noreen Lal, a Business Intelligence Professional at Infosys, took a leap of faith that would transform her career and the retail landscape of her hometown. She launched Lollipopz, a small boutique in Kottarakkara selling ladies' and kids' clothing, as well as toys. The idea was born out of a personal need, as Sruthy struggled to find high-quality children's clothing and accessories in the area for her son. To solve this, she started sourcing items from Thiruvananthapuram, and even while managing the boutique, she kept her full-time IT job. Over time, she moved to Bangalore with her husband and son,

continuing to run the business remotely.

The Covid-19 pandemic posed a significant challenge for Lollipopz as retail shops were forced to close, resulting in a sharp drop in sales. However, Sruthy saw the situation as an opportunity to pivot the business. She began creating videos showcasing women's clothing and designs on social media, which quickly gained traction. Her digital strategy not only attracted new customers but also gave the brand the flexibility to thrive during the pandemic. As the lockdowns eased, Sruthy worked on building Lollipopz' e-commerce platform. What initially began with sales via WhatsApp soon expanded into a fully developed online store.

Sruthy, with her tech background, brought an analytical approach to her business, constantly monitoring customer behaviour through likes, shares, and comments on social media. She quickly recognized the potential of e-commerce, and by introducing four to five new models every day, Lollipopz became a trendsetter in the fashion industry. This approach allowed the brand to stay on top of consumer preferences, launching collections that often became popular before others even noticed the trends.

Lollipopz prides itself on sourcing only the finest fabrics, working with suppliers across India—from Andhra Pradesh's cottons to Kutch's traditional embroidery and Jaipur's rich prints. The brand also imports fabrics from China and Thailand to bring variety and uniqueness to its collections. Sruthy emphasizes the importance of educating customers about the natural characteristics of fabrics, particularly when it comes to color bleeding. She explains that colour bleeding, especially with fabrics dyed using natural dyes, is not a flaw or indication of poor quality. Instead, it reflects the use of organic, eco-friendly materials in the production process. Sruthy reassures customers that these fabrics are safe, sustainable, and crafted with care, highlighting that such traits are integral to maintaining the authenticity and natural beauty of the clothing. Her transparency and dedication to educating





her clientele have played a key role in building trust and loyalty toward the Lollipopz brand.

Lollipopz is not just a clothing brand; it is a style movement that embraces diversity. The brand showcases its clothes on models of all shapes and sizes, challenging the traditional norms of fashion. This inclusivity has resonated with customers, leading to an increase in pre-orders and a strong, dedicated customer base. Handmade clothes are carefully packaged and shipped with care, and the brand offers an easy return policy to ensure customer satisfaction.

In July 2024, Sruthy expanded her vision by opening Lollipopz Lifestyle, a modern textile store in Kottarakkara. The store's staff, all fashion-conscious professionals, help customers select clothes that suit their personal style and comfort, providing a customized shopping experience. Meanwhile, Lollipopz' online presence continues to flourish, serving customers not just across India but internationally as well.

As Lollipopz grows, the brand has diversified its offerings. It recently launched Yeame, a fast-fashion kurti line, and Pops Accessories, a jewellery collection. Sruthy has even bigger plans for the future, including expanding into the luxury fashion market. With a dedicated team and a strong vision, Lollipopz is well



on its way to becoming a name synonymous with both style and innovation.

Sruthy credits much of Lollipopz' success to the teamwork between her and her husband, Jain V. Reji. While Sruthy manages the marketing and analytics, Jain oversees production and sourcing, ensuring that every product is made to the highest standards. Their son Ryan, a fourth-grader, is also part of the family business, balancing school life with the entrepreneurial journey.

Sruthy believes that entrepreneurs should never wait for the perfect moment to act. "Make fast decisions," she advises, "and stay ahead of the trends. It's crucial to understand the market and act quickly to stay relevant." Her commitment to continuous learning and growth ensures that Lollipopz will continue to innovate and expand, setting new standards in the fashion industry.

From a small boutique in Kottarakkara to a popular e-commerce brand, Lollipopz' journey is a testament to the power of resilience, creativity, and hard work. Sruthy's story proves that with vision, determination, and adaptability, anything is possible. As the brand looks to the future, it's clear that Lollipopz is not just about fashion—it's about creating a brand that empowers individuals to embrace their true selves.



ANJU KAMALAHASAN

A JOURNEY OF VISION, LEADERSHIP, AND EXCELLENCE IN THE HR INDUSTRY

Ms. Anju Kamalahasan has etched out a niche for herself as a transformative leader in the lively and ever-evolving world of human resources. As the Director and Chief Administrative Officer of Jobstars HR Solutions Private Limited, she has risen to become a wayfinder of excellence, driving innovation and inclusion in an industry that walks on the thin line of strategy and people management. Her journey is one of resilience, vision, and an unwavering commitment to nurturing growth—both for people and organizations.

Anju's professional journey began with solid academic foundations. She holds a degree in B.Tech, Computer Science from VISAT Cochin, which brought her the analytical and problem-solving skills needed to deal with complex problems. This kind of technical background has stood as a bedrock foundation for building her career path in human resources, making it an easy step to incorporate most technological advances into HR. Anju has more than five years of experience in this industry and has always maintained great leadership skills, a knack for strategic thinking, and adaptability in the change in business landscape.

With such leadership skills, as a leader, Anju has played a pivotal role in the success of Jobstars HR Solutions Private Limited. Her company has witnessed remarkable growth during her stewardship and become one of the most prominent global HR service providers. Her innovative approach to talent acquisition, recruitment strategies, and client negotiations has propelled the organization to the forefront of the industry. She has been instrumental in implementing advanced HR systems, streamlining operations, and ensuring that every client receives top-tier services. Her ability to identify and address gaps in the market has not only driven business success but also set new standards of excellence in the HR sector.

Anju's success does not go unnoticed. She was

awarded the title of Youngest Women Director in 2023 by FemmeTimes Magazine. The recognition marked the early successes of her professional life and her endeavours toward inclusivity and empowerment in the workplace. The next year saw her receiving the Excellence in Business Leadership in HR Industry Award from R. Bindu, Minister for Higher Education and Social Justice, presented in a grand ceremony conducted at Trivandrum. The award recognized how she transformed the HR business, never compromising on the best industry practices and her commitment.



Anju is focused on empowering individuals and organizations alike in her leadership style. She believes in providing opportunities for growth, not only within her company but across the HR industry. Her ability to build strong relationships with clients, coupled with strategic insight, has earned her the trust and respect of peers and collaborators. Her approach to leadership is innovative and empathetic, ensuring that decisions made benefit all stakeholders involved.

Reflecting on her journey, Anju remains committed to driving innovation and inclusivity within the HR sector. For her, work is not a career but a platform that can make a difference in people's lives. For the future, she plans to scale greater heights with Jobstars HR Solutions Private Limited and expand the company's reach while continuing to set new benchmarks in the industry.

Anju's story is inspiring testimony to what can be achieved through vision, determination, and a commitment to excellence. From the early days of a young professional with a dream to the present role of being a transformative leader, she has continuously pushed boundaries and challenged norms. As she continues to inspire future leaders, Anju Kamalahasan builds a legacy defined by innovation, integrity, and impactful leadership, leaving an indelible mark on the corporate world.

SREELEKSHMY PALLIYIL

A PIONEER IN HR ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Sreelekshmy Palliyil is an outstanding leader in the field of HR administration, known for her transformative approach to operational excellence and strategic optimization of complex processes. She has shown exceptional skills in streamlining internal workflows and creating a thriving, efficient, and collaborative work environment throughout her career. Her leadership is defined by a commitment to ensuring that every aspect of an organization's operations is running smoothly, which has led to a significant improvement in productivity and the overall performance of business.

Her HR industry journey has been one of continually evolving success. Years of expertise gained through a pool of ideas, innovative strategy making that bases itself in both human resource management as well as business operations, stand out for Sreelekshmy. She has been into administrative functions where she finds the ability to deal with several large teams at work, have to monitor compliance, and execute optimizing systems with a level of precision that earned her respect and admiration from her peers.

What sets Sreelekshmy apart is her ability to not only lead operational improvements but also inspire and empower those around her. Her leadership style fosters a sense of community and collaboration within the teams she manages. She understands that the success of any organization is built on a foundation of strong relationships, open communication, and a shared commitment to the organization's values. Under her guidance, the employees are motivated to perform well in a workplace where diversity, inclusivity, and mutual respect are appreciated.

Throughout her career, Sreelekshmy has proven

that true leadership in HR administration is about much more than managing systems. It's about setting a high standard of excellence, inspiring others to achieve their best, and leading by example. She has been able to drive both the immediate success and long-term stability of the organizations she has worked with by keeping laser focus on excellence.

Operational efficiency is matched only by the commitment to continuous learning in Sreelekshmy. She realises how the landscape of HR and administration is constantly changing. Her great achievements have not been left unnoticed. For years now, Sreelekshmy has become one of the most recognized experts in HR administration. Her technical and human sides of her job are balanced, which has gained her respect and continues to inspire those in the industry. Sreelekshmy is also passionate about mentoring future leaders.

For Sreelekshmy, leadership is not about personal accolades or recognition but about creating lasting change that impacts the entire organization. Her vision extends beyond operational success; it's about fostering an environment where individuals are encouraged to reach their full potential, where administrative practices are not just about keeping things running but about driving sustainable growth and success.

Through her leadership, Sreelekshmy has shown that true success in HR is not just about managing processes—it's about creating an environment where both organizations and individuals can flourish. And with her continued dedication to innovation, integrity, and empowerment, Sreelekshmy will undoubtedly inspire future generations of HR leaders to follow in her footsteps.





UNCOVERING THE MIND

DR. GAYATHRI MENON'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Dr. Gayathri Menon is a guide lamp of hope and resilience in the field of clinical psychology, known for her exceptional ability to offer mental health support to children, adolescents, and young adults. As the founder of Dr. Gayathri's Wellness Space, an innovative cloud clinic and through her engaging social media presence, she has transformed countless lives by advocating for mental health awareness and personalised therapy. It has not been just a professional journey, however, into the field of clinical psychology.

Gayathri found math to be an early hindrance in her life when she grew up. She was raised by both her mother, a senior clerk who herself was quick on the uptake and her father, a man who could explain the nuances of stock market dynamics.

For Gayathri, mathematics was not exactly her strength. The subject became a source of frustration and psychological distress. But her parents, recognizing her challenges, sought help from Dr. Pisharady, a renowned clinical psychologist, to understand the root cause of her difficulties. When Gayathri met with Dr. Pisharady, he reassured her that every child has their own unique talent, and that success cannot be solely defined by one's academic performance in subjects like mathematics. This very important advice not only helped Gayathri reduce her stress but also laid out a foundation for her future career of psychology.

The understanding about how success can be measured in diversified ways brought a change about in Gayathri. She was always on toppers in literature and other social studies in high school. However, the mounting pressure to do well with maths always made her experience tremendous stress. She remembered the words of Dr. Pisharady, and with more confidence she decided to pursue the Humanities stream in her higher secondary education. It was here that her interest in sociology took shape, and she slowly began to understand and appreciate her own strengths. According to Gayathri, it is Dr. Pisharady who has helped her realize the significance of appreciating one's own path, rather than just following the textbook definition of success.

Her academic life underwent a radical change during her period at Sacred Hearts College, Thevara. There, she developed the acceptance of herself. She was spurred to look within herself at the college where she spent her academic life. She transcended the inferiority complex she carried since her childhood days—the one of being a dark-skinned girl and one who had performed poorly in Mathematics. Teachers like Rev. Fr. Paulose Kidangan, Fr. Johnson X. Palackappillil, and Sister Rose Mary played pivotal roles in nurturing her academic and personal growth, offering guidance and encouragement that helped her build the confidence she needed to excel.

Gayathri's quest for knowledge led her to Christ College, Bangalore, where she was exposed to a diverse and multicultural environment. Here, she gained profound insights into human psychology and life itself. Exposed to a multiplicity

of cultures, backgrounds, and languages, she realised the vast horizon outside doctor, engineer, and civil servant jobs. A new awareness that complemented this, along with improvement in English skills, gave her an added dose of confidence, which defined her understanding of the world. Gayathri credits her teacher, Dr. Ram Vivekananda, for having a tremendous impact on her education. She was a very strong teacher who would never go forward if a student did not understand what was taught to him.

After graduating, Gayathri completed her Master's from Pondicherry Central University and later an MPhil from Sweekar Academy of Rehabilitation Sciences. It was during this time that Gayathri started her research under the mentorship of Dr. S. S. Nathawat. Her research, which focused on Faith Healing, included a study of the psychotherapeutic components at Mehandipur Balaji Temple. She looked at the ambiance of the temple, its psychological processes, and the therapeutic aspects of the rituals, including exorcism, through a scientific lens. Gayathri had also drawn inspiration from Professor Sudhir Kakar's famous book *Humans, Mystics, and Doctors*. Malayalam movie *Manichitrathazhu* also inspired her in order to explore religion, therapy, and healing together. Chottanikkara Devi Temple in Kerala is also included in the research,



further deepening her understanding of how religious practices can contribute to mental wellness.

However, the loss of her mentor, Dr. S. S. Nathawat, was a turning point in Gayathri's life. His unexpected death left her grief-stricken, both personally and professionally. The void left by his passing was immense, as he had been a guiding figure in her academic and research pursuits. Fortunately, Gayathri's resilience led her to Dr. Vismitha Paliwal, who helped her complete her research.

After completing her education, Dr. Gayathri took up teaching at Christ University for a year. She soon realised that she wanted to be in direct contact with the patients. Her need for personal care brought her to the de-addiction centre Mindful Rejuvenation in Ernakulam, where she acquired precious clinical experience. It was at Mindful Rejuvenation that Gayathri built her first client base, which she would later expand through online consultations. Her time at Mindful Rejuvenation also gave her a deeper understanding of patient needs and reinforced her belief in the importance of personalised care in mental health.

After moving to Delhi with her husband, Army Lt. Col. Josh Mathew, Dr. Gayathri established Dr. Gayathri's Wellness Space, an online clinic where she could continue offering psychological services to individuals from all walks of life. What began as a small venture soon grew into a trusted platform for mental wellness, with referrals from psychiatric centres and doctors across the country. As she grew in reputation as a trustworthy psychotherapist and trauma healer, she began to work with clients whose problems were far ranging: from self-image issues and hyperactivity to social anxiety, toxic relationships, and addiction.

Her therapy approach is holistic and very personal. She has different methods such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Trauma Healing Therapy, and Solution-Focused Therapy. Each individual's session is customised to the respective client's needs, and she uses modules, which are developed in co-operation with Shanitha Habib, a tech whiz from Kerala.

Dr. Gayathri Menon is one of the most preferred professionals due to her work with the individual rather than symptoms. Besides active clinical practices, her presence on social media network has significantly played a role in educating and guiding her audience. She managed to make personal connections with individuals by posting informative videos and insights through the social networking sites and thereby established her position as an authority within the domain of mental health. Gayathri connects to people not only in India but all over the world, giving them invaluable guidance and support on her social media platform when needed.

Even after the success with Dr. Gayathri's Wellness Space, she is still mindful of the number of severe problems she faces with each of her clients. Underlying

issues such as anxiety and depression often hide major traumas of her clients. Childhood experiences, family conflicts, and many more are the crucial factors forming their mental health. She states that every psychiatric condition arises from biological, social, and personality-related factors. The solution of these cannot be effective individually but must involve all factors together.

A common problem she sees in her student clients is math phobia, often culminating from bad early experiences with the subject. She says most children develop the fear of mathematics due to its way of being taught—a way that does not help mitigate the fear. She argues for a more empathetic and sensitive approach to learning, where people are helped to identify their true strengths rather than being forced into areas where they feel weak.

For Dr. Gayathri, eliminating stigma surrounding mental health is of utmost priority. In India, mental health issues are often considered a taboo; therefore, the people face many struggles and suffer in silence. They have no idea where to turn for help. Gayathri believes that mental health therapy should be as accessible and acceptable as physical healthcare. She advocates school-level mental health education and encourages corporate institutions to give their employees access to mental health services, including counselling with clinical psychologists. At the corporate level, there should be dedicated spaces for mental well-being, similar to the way breastfeeding rooms are integrated today. These rooms could serve as sanctuaries for individuals experiencing panic attacks, offering a calm and safe environment to recharge and regain composure.

Dr. Gayathri has made such a huge difference in many people's lives, allowing them to take back control over their mental health through her professional work. Whether it is coming out of social anxiety or childhood trauma or breaking out from toxic relationships, Gayathri's holistic approach, indeed, has made the world of difference in lives. She is devoted to her clients, empathizing with their struggles, and she is not in the least doubtful of the potential effectiveness of therapy. Her reputation as a clinical psychology figure has thus been sealed.

Dr. Gayathri Menon's story testifies that adversity can be overcome, but a sense of purpose in helping others helps. It is a testimony to the power of self-acceptance, resilience, and deep impact of mental health care. Each moment with her portrays a commitment to heal others, and she never stops inspiring the people around her through this never-ending pursuit of shattering the stigma of mental health. She looks to the future, the mission remains crystal clear in her mind: to ensure that every person who steps into her physical or virtual space feels recognized, valued, and empowered to take charge of their mental health journey. "The greatest joy is seeing someone rise from their struggles, knowing that they've found the strength to change."

BRIGHTEN UP AESTHETIC STUDIO

YOUR DESTINATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL BEAUTY CARE



Brighten Up Aesthetic Studio has quickly emerged as a trusted name in cosmetology and aesthetic treatments. Located in Pallichal, Thiruvananthapuram, this premier clinic offers a wide range of innovative services designed to enhance natural beauty and boost confidence. From advanced skin rejuvenation to body contouring and hair treatments, Brighten Up combines expertise with state-of-the-art technology to deliver remarkable results.

The studio is led by the dynamic duo, Dr. Christin Aparna and Dr. Rahul R.J. In just a couple of months, their clinic has managed to capture public attention and earn the trust of countless clients—an evidence to their dedication and the quality of their services.

The journey of Brighten Up began with a personal quest. Dr. Christin Aparna, facing unresolved skin concerns, sought treatments at various clinics but struggled to find a solution. This experience inspired her to delve deeper into the field of cosmetology. Her determination paid off, and she not only found effective solutions but also decided to share her expertise with others.

Dr. Rahul, a specialist in gastroenterology and diabetes, was equally inspired. Recognizing the transformative impact of cosmetology, he pursued a fellowship in the field, joining forces with Dr. Christin to create a space where science and beauty converge.

Together, they established Brighten Up, a clinic that goes beyond conventional cosmetology to offer comprehensive care.

Brighten Up's services include advanced treatments in cosmetology, plastic surgery, and hair transplants. Whether clients seek solutions for skin concerns, hair restoration, or body contouring, the clinic provides personalized care tailored to individual needs. What sets Brighten Up apart is its holistic approach. Alongside aesthetic treatments, the clinic emphasizes overall well-being, offering fitness training programs for men and women, available both online and offline.

The founders believe that true beauty starts with a healthy lifestyle. Their commitment to addressing lifestyle-related concerns alongside cosmetic needs has made Brighten Up a trusted name in the community.

Clients at Brighten Up benefit from a combination of expertise, advanced technology, and a personalized touch. The clinic's ability to deliver outstanding results while prioritizing client satisfaction has earned it a stellar reputation.

For those seeking more than just a beauty treatment, Brighten Up Aesthetic Studio offers a transformative experience—where science meets care, and confidence is redefined.



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MOON GODDESS COUTURE

A CELESTIAL BLEND OF STYLE, STRENGTH, AND GRACE

Hailing from Thrissur, Anitha K.A. grew up immersed in the textile business, with her father and paternal family deeply rooted in the industry. By the time she was a first-year nursing student, Anitha was already running four textile shops. Today, she stands as the driving force behind Moon Goddess Couture, a celebrated name in the fashion world.

Moon Goddess Couture began its journey as a modest boutique in Angamaly. From the outset, Anitha's philosophy was to think big, even when starting small. She envisioned a brand name that resonated with women, exuded an international flair, and was timeless. Drawing inspiration from the idea that every woman is a goddess, she chose the name "Moon Goddess," paying homage to the beautiful Greek deity. The name, free from cultural or religious ties, symbolized inclusivity and elegance, setting the stage for the brand's future growth.

However, the road to success was not without challenges. The devastating floods of 2018 forced Anitha to close the boutique. Yet, she found a silver lining by venturing into online sales under the banner of Moon Goddess Couture. Back then, social media

marketing for clothing was still in its infancy, but Anitha seized the opportunity, building her brand's presence one step at a time.

In March 2020, just as she was preparing to reopen the boutique, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill. Faced with uncertainty, Anitha welcomed four workers stranded from another clothing store into her team, offering them food and accommodation. Together, they transformed the adversity into an opportunity. Moon Goddess Couture thrived during the pandemic, leveraging the shift to

online business. Anitha, her husband, and their son worked alongside these employees, strengthening the foundation of their business.

Moon Goddess Couture stands out for its meticulous design approach. Recognizing the diversity in colour preferences, patterns, and sizing across India, Anitha ensures her collections cater to all, transcending boundaries of age, shape, and complexion. The brand's designs are celebrated for their versatility, with every piece created to appeal to a wide range of customers.

Early on, financial constraints prevented Anitha from hiring



professional models. Undeterred, she modelled her designs herself, believing no one could represent her brand better. Today, this innovative approach has become a trendsetter, inspiring others in the industry.

In a highly competitive market, Anitha relied on lessons from her father about the nuances of the textile trade. While many competitors sold clothing at premium prices, Moon Goddess Couture maintained affordability without compromising on quality. This strategy not only earned customer loyalty but also challenged the status quo. When competitors spread false rumours about her products, Anitha responded by increasing production and meeting the growing demand head-on.

The success led to the establishment of an office in Panampilly Nagar, one of Ernakulam's most affluent areas. Here, Anitha continued her mission of offering high-quality clothing at reasonable prices, proving that style and affordability can coexist.

Moon Goddess Couture's production operations are based in Kolkata and Surat, with quality checks and packaging meticulously handled in Kerala. This decision reflects Anitha's commitment to contributing to Kerala's development by ensuring the state benefits from the associated GST.

With a focus on ethnic wear and traditional designs, the brand draws inspiration from celebrity outfits and the beauty of nature. Anitha, who owns a dye unit, is passionate about experimenting with unique colour combinations. Moon Goddess has also gained recognition for setting trends, with many of

its designs being emulated in major textile hubs like Surat and Kolkata.

Anitha credits her team as the backbone of Moon Goddess Couture. As a leader, she prioritizes their well-being, providing training, counselling, and relaxation activities to ensure a healthy work environment. She believes in nurturing self-love and resilience among her employees, enabling them to deliver their best.

Anitha's vision for the future is ambitious yet grounded. She calculates her progress through turnover and embraces her role as a queen in her realm, striving for continuous growth.

Her family—husband Akhil Jeevan and 10-year-old son Avon John Paul—remains her greatest support system. A new children's clothing line named after his son is launching on January 14, 2025. The collection will feature black-and-white outfits adorned with Avon's artwork, funded by his savings from drawing and allowances. This venture reflects Anitha's commitment to instilling independence and financial literacy in her son, preparing him for a self-reliant future.

From her humble beginnings to leading an influential fashion brand, Anitha K.A. has consistently demonstrated resilience, creativity, and a passion for empowering others. Through Moon Goddess Couture, she continues to redefine the fashion industry, proving that challenges can be stepping stones to extraordinary success.



FEBRUARY 2025



HUES OF LIFE 29

REWILDING THE SELF

HOW NAYANA G. NAIR IS CHANGING LIVES THROUGH TRAUMA HEALING

In a society where emotional well-being often takes a backseat, the concept of trauma coaching is still unfamiliar to many. It remains a subject shrouded in misconceptions, with few understanding its depth and significance. Nayana G. Nair, a renowned trauma-focused mind coach and healer from Kerala, is changing this narrative. Her avant-garde service goes beyond simply understanding how trauma affects individuals; she directly addresses its roots, guiding people toward profound healing and self-discovery.

When asked about trauma, many people define it as a deep wound caused by shocking or catastrophic experiences. Nayana challenges this limited perspective, emphasizing that trauma is subjective and deeply personal. It can stem from seemingly insignificant events that overwhelm an individual's ability to process them. Trauma, as she explains, is an overwhelming situation where the logical brain shuts down to protect the person, and unresolved memories remain in the body as cellular memory. This separation between the body and the rational brain often leads to many prolonged emotional triggers long after the original event.

It was Nayana's personal life that led her into the world of alternative healing. The emotional battle in the life of Nayana revolved with severe sensitivity, anger, and sudden outbursts at even the slightest triggers. She began to read the works of Dr. Brian Weiss, whose writings introduced her to the concept of past-life regression therapy and the idea that many present struggles stem from unresolved past experiences. This realization transformed her perspective, as she came to understand that present triggers often serve as windows to the past.

In 2011, Nayana started looking for trauma-healing resources in Kerala, but none were available then. After searching for a long time, she finally found a mentor who introduced her to trauma-focused healing. This was the transformative experience that inspired her to go deeper into the field. Determined to help others who might be facing similar challenges, she pursued extensive training in various healing modalities. Her formal journey had started with the practice of Theta Healing and marked her arrival in the area of alternative healing. She gained more expertise within time, working under mentors' guidance and attaining experience till she finally gave birth to a healing institution. She founded five years ago with the name of Evolve Soul Studio. In 2011, Nayana began her search for trauma-healing resources in Kerala but found none available at the time. After extensive searching, she finally found a mentor who introduced her to trauma-focused healing. This transformative experience inspired her to delve deeper into the field. Determined to help others who might be facing similar



challenges, she pursued extensive training in various healing modalities. Her formal journey began with Theta Healing, a practice that marked her transition into the realm of alternative healing. Over time, she expanded her expertise, learning from mentors and gaining experience that culminated in the establishment of her healing institution, Evolve Soul Studio, five years ago.

Through her signature coaching program, Rewild Yourself, Nayana has developed a unique approach to healing. She draws from her decade-long experience, combining various techniques tailored to the specific needs of each client. Her work attracts individuals seeking solutions for challenges in areas such as career, finances, relationships, and health.

This intergenerational trauma is one of the core bases for her work. Nayana reveals that trauma transcends the span of a lifetime and can actually be passed from generation to generation. She claims that unresolved trauma from parents or grandparents can create a variety of problems, ranging from relationship problems to financial challenges. These patterns often have no clear origin but could be traced to the experiences of ancestors. She helps her clients uncover and resolve these often-hidden dynamics through family constellation therapy and creates space for lasting change.

Nayana also emphasizes the importance of acknowledging emotions. From a young age, people are often taught to suppress their feelings, creating a harmful cycle where emotions are seen as weaknesses. Nayana believes that all emotions, even those deemed negative, have a purpose. Anger, for example, is often a reactive emotion masking deeper feelings of sadness or helplessness. By validating and addressing these suppressed emotions, individuals can break free from the patterns they create.

Central to Nayana's philosophy is the idea that the outer world reflects the inner world. This principle guides her work, which focuses on helping clients clear suppressed emotions, outdated belief systems, and cellular memories of trauma. She emphasizes that lasting change requires addressing the root causes of emotional distress rather than merely treating surface-level symptoms. While



motivational speeches or temporary solutions may give one a boost in the short run, they hardly ever leave an impact because they do not reach the root cause. Her approach is further supported by insights from epigenetics, which reveal that while genes may

predispose individuals to certain conditions, their expression depends on the environment.

Her approach is further supported by insights from epigenetics, which reveal that while genes may predispose individuals to certain conditions, their expression depends on the environment. By altering the emotional and physical environment, it is possible to deactivate negative gene expressions and create opportunities for healing. This scientific understanding underscores the potential for transformation through alternative healing.

Nayana's clients often come to her unaware of the trauma they carry. Many believe they are unaffected by trauma simply because they have not experienced catastrophic events. Nayana points out that trauma touches everyone in some form. It is a universal aspect of the human experience, and by acknowledging and validating their emotions, individuals can begin to heal. She has helped countless people, including those who grew up in highly conflicted environments, to lead new lives free from the burdens of their past.

The essence of Nayana's work lies in her ability to guide individuals through the process of reconnecting with themselves. She focuses on the trilogy of mind, body, and spirit, recognizing that true healing requires addressing all three. By helping her clients tune into their suppressed emotions and cellular memories, she enables them to neutralize distressing experiences and move forward with clarity and confidence.

Through her work, Nayana has made a significant impact in the field of alternative healing. Her dedication to addressing the root causes of trauma and her innovative methods have transformed the lives of many. For Nayana, healing is not just about overcoming challenges but about empowering individuals to create a life of balance and fulfillment. Nayana's mission is to empower individuals to confront and heal their traumas, guiding them toward a life of peace, resilience, and emotional freedom.

THE ART OF SAVING LIVES

DR. MANJULA RAMACHANDRAN'S JOURNEY IN NEPHROLOGY

In 1990, a fifteen-year-old Manjula Ramachandran hit the headlines when, after securing state sixth rank in her SSLC examinations, she announced her ambition to become an IAS officer—a departure from the conventional aspirations of becoming a doctor or engineer. The granddaughter of the legendary Kathakali artist Kudamaloor Karunakaran Nair, her unique vision captured public attention, earning her a spot on the front page of a leading newspaper. But life had something else in store for her, one dedicated to relieving human suffering. Today, Dr. Manjula Ramachandran is the Senior Consultant and Head of Nephrology at Mar Sleevea Medicity, Palai, having performed over 100 renal transplants successfully.

Dr. Manjula's academic career was glorious from the beginning. With a flair for biology, she pursued medicine, keeping alive her dream of clearing the civil services in the beginning. But during her third year at medical school, her contacts with patients brought her face-to-face with an overwhelming sense of empathy and changed her focus towards relieving them of pain. Though cardiology would have initially interested her, she was motivated to pursue the specialty of nephrology by the inspiration of her mentors, Dr. Kashi Visweswaran and Dr. Vimala, as a relatively unexplored field at that time.

Dr. Manjula went on to further her credentials by achieving an MRCP from the Royal College of Physicians, UK, in 2009 after gaining a gold medal and ranking first in her DM Nephrology from Kottayam Medical College in 2007. Her academic accolades include three international publications, but she remains humble, pointing out that academic success is secondary to the compassion and empathy a doctor must offer his or her patients.

She started her professional journey as an Assistant Professor at Kottayam Medical College along with her husband, Dr. Ajay Kumar, an obstetrician-

gynaecologist. During the seven transformative years at Muthoot Medical Centre in Kozhencherry, she led community outreach efforts, including a mobile laboratory deployed to over 2,000 rural areas to educate on kidney health. Her recorded messages became beacons of information, and her in-person classes empowered thousands of people with knowledge about kidney disease.

Reflecting on the evolution of nephrology, Dr. Manjula notes that dialysis centres were abundant during her early career, but kidney transplants were



rare. She has since worked tirelessly to change this narrative, often describing transplantation as a “rebirth” for patients enduring the hardships of dialysis. She joined Raihan Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Erattupetta as the Senior Consultant & Head of Renal Transplant Services. Her efforts in Kottayam were ground-breaking, especially when she and her team performed three renal transplants within 24 hours during the inaugural private-sector transplant program at RIMS in 2017. The feat, achieved with the guidance of renowned renal transplant expert Dr. George Abraham, marked a turning point in Kerala’s transplant history and earned widespread acclaim to Dr. Manjula and her team.

Beyond her surgical achievements, Dr. Manjula is a passionate advocate for patient education. She emphasizes that chronic kidney disease (CKD) often goes unnoticed until it reaches advanced stages. With 70% of patients discovering their condition only at stage five, she stresses the importance of early detection and lifestyle modifications to prevent kidney-related complications. Her approach is holistic, addressing the root causes of kidney problems, such as hypertension and diabetes, to manage patients comprehensively.

Dr. Manjula’s pioneering work has made kidney transplants more accessible and affordable in smaller towns like Kottayam. She highlights that a transplant can cost less than two years of dialysis, yet misconceptions often deter patients. Her empathetic approach—taking the time to explain the realities of transplantation—has encouraged many to overcome their fears and embrace life-changing solutions.

Her team at Mar Sleeva Medicity performs only four transplants per month to ensure the utmost attention to each patient. With a success rate of 99%, she attributes this achievement to advancements in surgical techniques, including



Dr. Manjula’s pioneering work has made kidney transplants more accessible and affordable in smaller towns like Kottayam. She highlights that a transplant can cost less than two years of dialysis, yet misconceptions often deter patients.



laparoscopic and robotic surgeries, and improved anti-rejection medications. Dr. Manjula also played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic, devising protocols to protect dialysis patients from the virus.

In 2018, she achieved another milestone by leading the successful transplant of a 78-year-old patient, defying conventional age limits and underscoring her belief that overall health, not age, determines transplant eligibility. Her inclusive approach extends to accepting donors often turned away by other hospitals, crediting her surgical team for their skill in

managing complex cases.

Looking to the future, Dr. Manjula envisions a world where transplants become simpler and more accessible. She speaks with optimism about emerging technologies, such as bio-artificial kidneys developed through nanotechnology, which could eliminate the need for donor organs and rejection medications. She also advocates for promoting medical tourism in India, highlighting the country’s exceptional doctors and cost-effective treatments.

As one of the few female nephrologists specializing in renal transplants, Dr. Manjula credits her success to her family’s unwavering support and the collaborative spirit of her team. Her philosophy is rooted in mutual trust between doctor and patient, ensuring that every individual receives compassionate, holistic care. With over two lakh dialysis patients in India annually but only 10,000 transplants, she views it as her moral responsibility to dispel misconceptions and foster confidence among patients.

Dr. Manjula Ramachandran’s journey from an ambitious teenager to a trailblazing nephrologist exemplifies resilience, dedication, and the transformative power of empathy in medicine. Her contributions have not only advanced the field of nephrology but also brought hope to countless lives.



GITANJALI VENKATESH

FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD TO BEAUTY ARTISTRY

Gitanjali Venkatesh is a native of Kozhikode who goes about her work balancing two apparently contrasting careers. She trains professionals to excel in their roles as a customer experience coach at Allianz but finds her real passion in makeup. Being a passionate makeup artist, she has acquired skills in hairstyling, airbrush makeup, saree draping, and many others from certified institutions.

Gitanjali is interested in make-up and beauty grooming from childhood. Gitanjali has been the in-house make-up artist to herself and to other family members of the home while preparing everyone for functions; making people beautiful filled her life, and over the years only seemed to add depth to the pursuit. Upon finishing her master's in Communicative English and Literature from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, Gitanjali opted for an MBA in Marketing and HR from Amity University, Bangalore. She then spent three years in corporate but her creative aspirations were alive.

The turning point came when Gitanjali decided to take her love for makeup to a professional level.

Convincing her family of her plans, she enrolled in her first formal makeup course with Sakshi and Urvashi in Delhi. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in her life. Determined to excel, she furthered her training under celebrity makeup artist Atul Chauhan, who added next level makeup ideas to her toolkit. Her quest for learning didn't end there; she pursued certification from renowned institutions and artists such as Asmitha Makeover Artistry in Chennai and Bloom by Nehaa in Bangalore.

Over the years, Gitanjali has built an impressive portfolio, completing over 80 assignments ranging from bridal makeup to styling grooms and bridesmaids. Her clients rave about her ability to enhance natural beauty while creating looks that are flawless and elegant. Despite having a full-time corporate job, she initially managed to dedicate her weekends to makeup. As her popularity grew, she started taking bookings on weekdays too, gradually transitioning to making her passion her primary focus.

What sets Gitanjali apart is not just her technical skill but also her ability to connect with her clients. She

believes every face is unique and approaches each assignment with care, tailoring her techniques to suit individual needs. Her calendar is booked until August 2025, a testament to her talent and dedication.

Gitanjali attributes much of her success to the unwavering support of her family. Her parents and brother were her first cheerleaders, encouraging her to follow her dreams. After her marriage, her husband, Vishnu Jayapal, became her greatest ally. An assistant manager at Allianz, Vishnu not only understands the demands of her dual career but also actively supports her. He accompanies her to assignments, manages logistics, and ensures she can focus entirely on her work. Gitanjali describes him as her biggest source of strength, especially now as they navigate parenthood with their six-month-old daughter, Mamika.

Gitanjali has not slowed down after two years of



marriage and shifting base to Thiruvananthapuram. Instead, the move has strengthened her resolve to grow in makeup artistry. Makeup, for Gitanjali, is a job beyond jobs-it is self-expression and happiness. She considers every face as a blank canvas, and it makes her proud to create looks that boost confidence and celebrate individuality. She often says that the most rewarding part of her work is seeing her clients happy and confident.

Gitanjali had so much to offer, such an ardent interest in makeup, turning out to become a certified makeup artist with full of bloom career journey is just worth talking about. One needs support and encouragement to keep going that the sky seems endless and it happened here. As far as words from Gitanjali about how to begin, " Keep learning, remain passionate, don't give up on what you really love. You will start noticing your success.

Looking forward, Gitanjali will give herself completely to the beauty world. With talent, experience, and an increasing number of faithful clients, she is ready to become a headliner in makeup artistry. Her story goes beyond professional achievement; it goes about following your heart and passion to turn them into a satisfying career as she was able to work towards a dream while juggling responsibilities.

DR. PINKY ANN VARGHESE

A VISIONARY DENTIST REDEFINING SMILES AND CONFIDENCE

Dentistry has undergone a significant transformation over the years, evolving from a field associated merely with tooth extractions and fillings to a sophisticated branch of medical science that impacts overall health and self-esteem. At the forefront of this change is Dr. Pinky Ann Varghese, the Chief Dental Surgeon at Dr. Pinky's JP Dental and Multi-Specialty Clinic in Kaloor, Kochi. Through her dedication to innovation and personalized care, Dr. Pinky has carved a niche for herself, transforming lives one smile at a time.

Dr. Pinky's journey into dentistry began with a personal story that continues to inspire her work today. As a young girl, she faced dental issues that affected her confidence. A visit to a skilled dentist not only resolved her problems but also sparked her interest in the profession. "That experience made me realize the transformative power of dentistry," she recalls. "It's not just about teeth—it's about changing lives." This realization motivated her to pursue dentistry as a career, combining her love for science with a desire to help people feel confident and healthy.

After completing her education and training, Dr. Pinky moved to Kochi following her marriage. Recognizing the city's openness to technological advancements, she established her clinic in Kaloor with a vision to deliver world-class dental care. Today, Dr. Pinky's JP Dental and Multi-Specialty Clinic is a trusted name, offering a wide range of treatments across various dental specialties.

Dr. Pinky firmly believes in staying ahead of the curve when it comes to advancements in dentistry. To ensure her clinic offers the best to her patients, she actively participates in Continuing Dental Education (CDE) programs and workshops led by industry experts. "Dentistry is a field that evolves rapidly. I make it a priority to stay updated and integrate innovative techniques into my practice," she explains. This commitment has helped her clinic become a hub for state-of-the-art dental care in Kochi.

One of the standout features of Dr. Pinky's practice is her expertise in biomimetic dentistry. This advanced approach focuses on replicating the natural anatomy and functionality of teeth, ensuring that restorations blend seamlessly with the patient's existing dentition. Unlike traditional methods, which often compromise tooth structure, biomimetic dentistry preserves the strength and integrity of the natural tooth. "Restoring the anatomy of teeth is my passion," she says. Through precise aesthetic restorations, particularly for anterior teeth, Dr. Pinky has helped patients regain not just their smiles but also their confidence.



Dr. Pinky's clinic is equipped with cutting-edge technology to enhance the patient experience. Digital scanning has replaced traditional

impressions, eliminating discomfort and ensuring greater accuracy. These digital impressions can be stored and reused, streamlining the process for both patients and dental laboratories. Laser-based treatments, including teeth whitening and gingivectomy, offer painless and effective solutions for a variety of dental concerns. Such innovations have not only elevated the standard of care but also attracted international patients who appreciate the convenience and efficiency of her clinic.

For Dr. Pinky, the patient experience is paramount. She takes the time to educate her patients about their treatment options, ensuring they feel informed and empowered. "Many patients come to us feeling anxious or unsure," she shares. "It's our job to give them the confidence and comfort they need." Her empathetic approach has made her a favorite among patients, particularly those with dental phobias.

Over the years, Dr. Pinky has successfully treated numerous complex cases. One particularly challenging case involved a 27-year-old man with severe bone loss and extensive dental damage. After carefully explaining the treatment plan and addressing his concerns, Dr. Pinky restored his smile with a full fixed bridge. The results were life-changing, not just for the patient but also for Dr. Pinky, who finds immense satisfaction in helping people rediscover their confidence.

Functionality is a cornerstone of Dr. Pinky's practice. She emphasizes the importance of ensuring that patients can eat, speak, and smile without discomfort. "A beautiful smile is important, but so is function," she notes. Her meticulous attention to both form and function has helped resolve issues caused by improper treatments elsewhere, including cases where patients experienced difficulty opening their



mouths or chewing properly.

Dr. Pinky also places a strong emphasis on preventive care. She advises her patients to visit the

dentist regularly, ideally every six months, rather than waiting for problems to arise. "Dentistry isn't expensive—negligence is," she asserts. Regular check-ups and cleanings can prevent costly and painful complications down the line. She likens dental care to an investment in one's overall health and well-being.

Beyond her technical skills, what truly sets Dr. Pinky apart is her ability to connect with her patients. She takes the time to understand their concerns and tailors her treatments to meet their unique needs. Her compassionate approach has earned her a loyal clientele, including patients from abroad who appreciate the accessibility and quality of care at her clinic.

Dr. Pinky's passion for dentistry extends beyond the clinic. She actively participates in community initiatives to raise awareness about oral health and the importance of preventive care. Through these efforts, she hopes to dispel common myths about dentistry and encourage more people to prioritize their dental health.

Reflecting on her journey, Dr. Pinky is proud of the impact she has made on her patients' lives. "Dentistry is not just about fixing teeth—it's about changing lives," she says. Her dedication to innovation, patient care, and lifelong learning has made her a trailblazer in the field and a source of inspiration for aspiring dentists.

As she continues to push the boundaries of what's possible in dentistry, Dr. Pinky remains committed to her mission of transforming lives, one smile at a time. Through her expertise and compassion, she has redefined what it means to be a dentist, proving that a confident smile is not just a physical transformation—it's a gateway to a brighter, more confident future.

TRAILBLAZER IN TECH

THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF SHANITHA HABIB RAHMAN

Shanitha Habib Rahman's story embodies deep resilience, determination, and vision, stretching from the academies of Bangalore to the vanguard of innovation in Qatar's healthcare IT arena. Born and raised in Bangalore, Shanitha had an unwavering desire to forge her identity as a professional woman, an environment that nurtured her passion for education and intellectual development. She has learned the values of hard work and perseverance from her father, who was a purchase manager of KIMCO. She had always wanted to be a doctor, but destiny had other plans. A close shave in the medical entrance examinations sent her down the engineering road—a decision that later opened up avenues to a field she would embrace with passion.

After her father's transfer to Kannur during her 10th grade, Shanitha pursued PDC there and later secured admission to engineering in Bangalore. At a time when it was uncommon for women to stay away from home for studies, her father's unwavering support made it possible for her to thrive in hostel life and chase her dreams. Soon, she found her niche in programming. She was intrigued by the logical challenges, creativity, and problem-solving aspects of the field.

Later, she married Habib Rahman, who was working in Qatar. After completing her studies, Shanitha began working as a computer science lecturer at the prestigious Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology in Bangalore. She inspired young engineers to explore the opportunities that technology offered for two years. But then, life took a dramatic turn when she moved to Qatar to join her husband.

A professional career in an international setting was a challenge. With very little professional experience, Shanitha took small programming jobs to establish her career from 2001 to 2004. In 2004, she joined Qatar Electricity and Water Corporation, where her husband worked, for which she worked for one year. The next year, she moved to Gulf Exchange, where she honed her skills for two years. These jobs helped her build her basic skills in software development and improved her understanding of the industry.

She got her big break in 2007 when she joined Hamad Medical Corporation, a prestigious healthcare organization with over 40,000 employees today. Her small software development team consisted mostly of Indian engineers. She managed to quickly learn, adapt, and think out of the box to take up a key role in developing internal applications that were specific to the requirements of the hospital. Over time, she played an important role in the development of systems for patient billing, budget management, SMS automation, and a public patient portal that transformed the operations of the hospital. Her expertise proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic—a period of immense pressure when patient service took precedence. She has been working tirelessly, often beyond regular hours, to respond to urgent needs and ensure smooth operations with timely solutions.





Shanitha's roles extended into the development of innovative tools, such as data capture and management analytical applications, to empower Hamad Medical Corporation to present national statistics of patients in conferences. Through her commitment, Shanitha had shown the transformative power of IT in revolutionizing healthcare.

"When we started, our team was small, handling everything from infrastructure to database management. It was a steep learning curve but incredibly rewarding," Shanitha recalls.

Her leadership has played a big role in creating applications that helped make hospital work smoother. They have ranged from patient registrations to analytics used in national conferences. Among her key successes is creating an automated SMS system that personalizes appointment confirmations for various facilities, making it a total game-changer for patient communication.

Her turning point in career was the leadership role she took in developing the My Health Portal, an all-inclusive electronic network that allows access to patients' records without hassle, facilitates statistical analysis, and offers live data on medical activity. The platform not only saved time but also enhanced the quality of health services. Shanitha's vision for the future earned her the Stars of Excellence Award from Hamad Medical Corporation.

"The development of My Health Portal was challenging but rewarding for sure. It presented the vast opportunity technology offered to improve health care systems," she states. The portal ended up being a valuable tool for the hospital, as it helped with everything from tracking patient recoveries to

evaluating usage of new medical equipment. It also streamlined data collection for national documentation of health care services, increasing accuracy and accountability.

"It was tough," Shanitha says with a quiet confidence, "but sometimes people doubted if I or my team could take up major projects. Instead of words, we let our work speak." Her success stands as a light for women aspiring to break barriers in STEM fields.

Shanitha believes that confidence is the foundation of success: "Every woman should believe in her abilities and prove them through action. Challenges will

always exist, but persistence and hard work will lead to success."

Her vision predates the popularization of AI and automation into healthcare. Shanitha further emphasizes that while manual processes were once prevalent in the industry, technology is now indispensable. From pharmacy management to clinical diagnostics, IT solutions have revolutionized healthcare.

"The field has changed so much since I entered. Now, with plentiful resources and opportunities, it's an exciting career path for anyone who would like to blend technology with health care," she adds.

Shanitha has also mentored aspiring IT professionals, encouraging them to explore the potential of technology in unconventional domains like healthcare. She believes that the integration of artificial intelligence, data analytics, and automated systems will continue to shape the future of the industry, opening new avenues for innovation.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Shanitha is an ardent activist for women's empowerment. According to her, women have to fight societal norms and stereotypes to get their things done. "It's not about proving others wrong; it's about proving yourself right," she says.

Shanitha's journey today is not only a professional success story but an inspiring tale of overcoming obstacles, embracing change, and pioneering innovations. It reflects how technology, led by visionaries, can revolutionize industries and improve lives. Shanitha Habib Rahman is a trailblazer who shows that determination and vision can break barriers and make lasting impact.

CRAFTING NATURE'S BEST

HOW VIJI GOPAL BUILT VIJIS NATURALS

From a humble beginning in Alappuzha, Kerala, to becoming a household name in the beauty and wellness industry, Viji Gopal's entrepreneurial story is a testament to resilience, innovation, and authenticity. Starting her career in 2013 with Ruchi Foods, a brand specializing in pickles and packaged foods, Viji ventured into the beauty sector with her second brand, AVS Naturals. Named after her family—her husband Sreekumar, and daughters Aparna and Archa—this brand quickly gained traction, especially in the e-commerce space, for its natural and effective products.



Two years ago, Viji decided to rebrand AVS Naturals to Vijis Naturals for simplicity and memorability, aligning the brand name with her personal identity and commitment to quality. The transition from AVS to Vijis Naturals has been seamless, with her loyal customer base embracing the change. Today, all cosmetics under the AVS label are being phased out in favor of the refreshed branding.

Vijis Naturals stands out in the crowded beauty market for its uncompromising dedication to natural ingredients. Viji's approach is simple: she insists on creating products that are safe enough for her own family to use. Every product undergoes rigorous testing—first by Viji herself, then by her daughters, close friends, and family. Only after receiving positive feedback does the product reach the market. The raw materials for Vijis Naturals products are sourced directly from farmers, ensuring high-quality, organic ingredients. Beeswax, a vital component in creams, provides nourishment and hydration, while manjistha (Indian Madder), known for its benefits in promoting blood circulation, features prominently in lip balms, creams, and the renowned Kunkumadi ointment. Other natural dyes and ingredients like aloe vera, beetroot, gooseberry, basil, henna, and indigo ensure chemical-free formulations. The brand's traditionally crafted eye shadow, made using natural castor oil, is another unique offering that pays homage to heritage beauty practices.

Vijis Naturals has earned a loyal following for its

results-driven products, such as the lip balm, celebrated for its effective hydration and healing properties, and the eyebrow oil, which enhances the appearance of sparse or non-existent eyebrows. The brand's innovations aren't confined to its own label; many of its products are outsourced to other companies and reach international markets like Canada and Singapore. Despite competition from these outsourced items, Vijis Naturals continues to thrive, driven by the authenticity and personal touch Viji brings to every creation.

Viji's entrepreneurial vision extends beyond beauty.



One of her upcoming projects, Bamboo Vita Health Mix, highlights her commitment to wellness. Made from bamboo rice, this health mix is positioned as a nutritious alternative to synthetic corporate health drinks. The project's first phase was inaugurated by Agriculture Minister P. Prasad, signalling its potential impact in the health and wellness sector.

Viji Gopal's journey has also made her a mentor for aspiring entrepreneurs in value-added products. She has penned four books, including a collection of 213 jackfruit recipes, which has inspired countless individuals in the food industry. Her expertise and dedication to sustainable practices have made her a respected voice in entrepreneurship. Behind every successful venture is a supportive network, and for Viji, her husband Sreekumar has been her pillar of strength. From sourcing raw materials to providing encouragement, Sreekumar's



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involvement has been instrumental in the brand's growth. Their daughters, Aparna and Archa, are not only her inspiration but also active participants in testing and providing feedback on new products.

Viji Gopal's entrepreneurial journey is a shining example of how dedication and authenticity can create a meaningful impact. By blending tradition with innovation, she has built Vijis Naturals into a trusted name in beauty and wellness. With an unwavering commitment to quality and a focus on empowering others through her mentorship and books, Viji continues to inspire. As she looks ahead, her vision for sustainable and natural products, like Bamboo Vita Health Mix, promises to extend her legacy of thoughtful entrepreneurship. Viji Gopal is not just building a brand—she's crafting a legacy of trust, care, and excellence.



FROM CODE TO CURTAINS

THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF SAIRA K. S.

A secure, high-paying job at JP Morgan Chase and ten years of experience as a software engineer might seem like the pinnacle of professional success. For many, it would represent stability and fulfilment. But for Saira K. S., a native of Ernakulam, it wasn't enough. Beneath the comfort of corporate life was a deep-seated passion for acting—a dream she had nurtured since her school days but set aside for the demands of her career. The call of the stage became louder, and she knew it was time to make a bold choice.

Leaving behind the security of a high-profile IT job, Saira embarked on a journey of transformation. Today, she is a celebrated theatre artist, drama teacher, and writer who has carved out a unique space for herself in the performing arts. Her story is one of courage, creativity, and an unwavering belief in the power of following one's dreams.

A Leap of Faith

It wasn't a decision Saira made overnight, shifting from being a software engineer in to an actress. "I knew it wasn't too late to follow my dreams," she shares, looking back on the life-changing move.

The IT world had given her financial security but little joy. She often found herself longing for a creative outlet, a place where she could express her true self.

Breaking free from the corporate grind, she began to attend drama schools and was performing at both intermediate and professional levels. "At first, it was pretty daunting," she remembers. "I was stepping into a world I didn't fully

understand."

She later graduated from the prestigious Acting Out Drama School in Edinburgh, Scotland, which marked a turning point in her journey. The rigorous training there helped her refine her craft and gave her the confidence to take on more significant roles.

The Edinburgh Acting School Experience

Currently a student at the Edinburgh Acting School, Saira describes her time there as transformative. "The environment here makes me wake up happy every day," she says with a smile. The faculty at the school, known for their nurturing approach, made a lasting impression on her. "They treated us like equals, encouraging us to explore, experiment, and grow."

One of her most proud moments was when she portrayed iconic roles in re-enactments of famous plays. She worked in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and portrayed Nora in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. "Playing Nora was a challenge—it's a complex role that demands both emotional depth and restraint. The applause and feedback I received after the performance were overwhelming."

These experiences made her believe that she was born for the stage. "Every role taught me something new about myself, and my confidence grew with each performance."

Rising Through the Ranks

Saira's journey took an exciting turn when she joined the Edinburgh Fringe Media Team, one of the most coveted roles in the world's largest arts festival. To earn her spot, she submitted a review of *A Doll's House*, in which she had acted and written. Her writing was remarkable for its simplicity, depth, and relatability.

She was soon given the task of reviewing plays for the official team, which she took up very seriously. Her reviews went into each and every aspect of the performance—from the script to the staging—and were worded in a way that was appealing to both a casual reader and a connoisseur of the theatre. "I wrote from the point of view of an ordinary viewer," she says. "I wanted everyone to connect with what I was saying."



Many celebrities started sharing her reviews widely on social media. Ticket booking of plays went really haywire when the rating comes out as 5 star by Edinburgh Fringe Media, and the same can be said of many for Saira's rating too.

In Conversation with Icons

It goes without saying that Saira got to interview some of the biggest stars in the entertainment industry while doing this. Amongst them was the British actress Nina Conti, British comedian Jason Byrne, Britain's Got Talent finalist Georgie Carroll, Irish sketch comedy group Foil Arms and Hog. She came out from each one inspired.

One interview that really sticks in Saira's mind is with the former Scottish MP Mhairi Black. "She was incredibly down-to-earth," Saira recalls. "An MP who talks to homeless people and drinks coffee with them—how often do you meet someone like that?"



Prodigal Son from Guillermo del Toro. Here she played a Gothic era character, plunged deep into an atmosphere of dark drama. It was an experience at once thrilling and humbling.

"Guillermo is a visionary," she says. "He treats everyone on set with the same respect, whether you're an actor or a technician. Every day, he brought sweets for the crew—it's these little gestures that make him so special."

The role allowed Saira to explore a new facet of her creativity, and she is eager for audiences to see the final product.

A Creative Philosophy

Saira believes that creativity is not just an innate talent but something that can be nurtured. "I wasn't always creative," she admits. "But through practice and encouragement, I developed it." Her advice to aspiring artists is simple: "Follow your passion. Don't stay stuck in a place where you feel no growth or joy. Hard work and dedication will always lead to success."

Waiting for the results of her audition at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Saira keeps her hopes high. Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is ranked as one of the top acting schools in the world, offering opportunities that are just unparalleled, including placements in Hollywood. "It's a dream to study there," she says.

With the unwavering support of her husband, Vishnu Raj, a fellow software engineer, and their son Dhruv, Saira continues to push boundaries. "My family has been my pillar of strength throughout this journey," she adds.

From writing code to commanding the stage, Saira K. S.'s journey is a testament to the transformative power of passion and perseverance. Her story inspires anyone daring to rewrite their narrative and embrace the unknown.



One of the other highlights was her interview with Dylan Mulvaney, the American media personality who has more than 25 million followers on TikTok. Saira attended Mulvaney's musical comedy performance, which chronicled her gender transition, and found it deeply moving. Her subsequent article about Dylan's journey was widely praised and helped bring attention to the emotional depth of the show.

Stepping into Hollywood

The movie was, of course, the opportunity through which Saira went to Hollywood, namely

THE JOURNEY OF REMANIKAS

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO A BEAUTY BRAND



It has been almost 25 years since Remanikas Beauty Salon and Spa opened its doors in Cherthala as a modest ladies' beauty parlour. Today, it stands tall as a unisex salon offering state-of-the-art beauty and grooming services that are synonymous with excellence. Behind this thriving brand is Remanika Jayan, a visionary entrepreneur whose passion and perseverance have made her name a hallmark in Kerala's beauty industry.

Remanika was born to a large family, as she was the seventh of eight children. She completed her schooling at Pullikkanam School in Vagamon. She went on to study at Sree Kerala Varma College in Thrissur, her father's hometown, and then landed government jobs in both the clerical sector and the Kerala Police Department. A career in either didn't seem to fit with her creative and ambitious spirit. Remanika, an award-winning actress and university basketball player, wanted to pursue a career in either arts or sports.

When beauty parlours were not so common, one of her closest friends pushed her into this field. She was interested in doing so, and she was signed up in a beautician course. She would then realize that it was indeed not just a career option but a call for her.

The early 2000s were not easy times to step into the beauty and wellness industry. The field carried several misconceptions, and even her family had reservations. Determined, Remanika took it upon herself to educate them about the industry's potential and its impact. Their eventual support marked the beginning of her remarkable journey.

Remanika, after thorough training under professional mentors, including Vanitha in Thanneermukkam and advanced courses in Thiruvananthapuram, honed her craft. The family of her elder brother's friend in Cherthala played a crucial role in providing her with the resources and support she needed during her early days. Every client's smile and satisfaction became a testament to her growing skills and boosted her





confidence to start her venture.

In 2000, Remanikas Beauty Parlour was born at Cherthala Court Junction. She had a vision to provide quality services and also started teaching beautician courses, sharing her knowledge with others. More than 300 students trained under her, and many of them are now running successful establishments across Kerala. She, in her philanthropic spirit, provided free training to girls from economically weaker sections, enabling them to secure livelihoods.

Marriage with Jayan, who hails from Ernakulam, ushered in more responsibilities. She continued all these while balancing her personal as well as professional life, moving to Cherthala permanently to manage her flourishing venture. For three years, she even taught rudimentary beautician courses to the students of Cherthala SN College, strengthening her position among mentors in the locality.

Remanikas is today synonymous with quality. Skincare and body care, nail art, and bridal makeovers are some of the wide range of services offered here. The salon uses premium products from trusted brands like Param Pavithra Organics, Shahnaz Husain, L'Oreal, and more. Each service here is designed according to the comfort and satisfaction of the client.

Hands-on, the key factor behind Remanika's success: whether it's saree draping, hairstyling, or intricate bridal makeup, each and every minute detail is executed. She discusses treatments like hair smoothing or straightening, explaining to

the client its pros and cons and goes ahead with them only if she is given complete consent. Such quality and client welfare have always separated her in this industry which otherwise is famous for cutting corners.

Despite the competitive nature of the beauty industry, Remanika has upheld high standards, warning against the pitfalls of untrained practitioners. "Experience and proper training are

crucial in this field," she says, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning to stay updated with evolving trends like body spa, hair spa, and advanced makeup techniques.

Remanikas has served a wide variety of clients over the years, from film and television professionals. The serene location of the place, away from the hustle and bustle of the town, is an ambience that complements its premium services.

Faith plays a big role in her journey. "I believe in the power of prayer," she shares, crediting her spirituality for her success. This belief, combined with her meticulous approach, has earned her a loyal clientele and widespread recognition.

As the state president of Kerala State Beauticians Association, she continues to guide and inspire other aspiring beauticians. She always hopes to increase the number of Remanikas in other places, leaving a legacy that mixes beauty with power.

Through each phase of her life, he is like a pillar of strength to her husband, Jayan; she needed him in every step for all her moves. Their joint vision transformed the small-town beauty parlour into a brand touch such large masses of humanity.

A small girl with a dream is turning into a path-breaking entrepreneur - the story of Remanika Jayan. Her passion, resilience, and commitment to excellence shine through as she sets her eyes on the future and looks to keep Remanikas at the top of Kerala's beauty and wellness industry, where beauty is all about dedication and hard work.

JAVEES CINEMA RESTAURANT

A CINEMATIC DINING EXPERIENCE IN KOLLAM

Javees Cinema Restaurant, nestled in Kallumthazam, Kollam district, is a destination that goes beyond the usual dining experience, transforming each meal into a cinematic journey. This unique restaurant is the brainchild of Jayamohan, a Kollam native and passionate cinephile, who took his love for film from the screen to the plate. After a successful 20-year career in the home appliances industry, Jayamohan decided to fulfil his dream of blending his two passions—film and food—creating a space where visitors can not only eat but also immerse themselves in the magic of cinema.



The Dream Behind Javees Cinema Restaurant

For Jayamohan, starting Javees was more than just a business decision; it was a way to channel his lifelong interest in film and art direction. Motivated to venture into a new field before turning 40, he envisioned a restaurant that would allow patrons to feel as though they were stepping into a living cinema encyclopaedia. Despite scepticism and discouragement from those around him, Jayamohan stuck to his vision and launched Javees Cinema Restaurant in 2021.

Although the restaurant faced challenges early on with the second wave of Covid-19, its unique appeal quickly captured attention, and Javees became a favorite for cinephiles and food lovers alike.

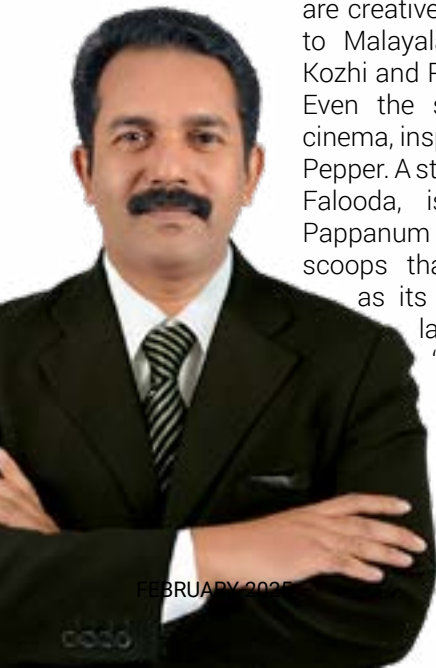
While theme-based restaurants are common, Javees goes further by dedicating each dining room to different film industries, genres, or eras. This immersive experience begins from the moment guests walk in, making every visit feel like a new cinematic chapter.



A Thematic Journey from Bollywood to Hollywood

Every detail at Javees Cinema Restaurant is meticulously designed to create an authentic cinematic atmosphere. Each room offers a distinct theme, capturing the spirit of various film industries and eras. The Hollywood room exudes the glamour and sophistication of American cinema, while the Bollywood room showcases the vibrancy of Indian film culture. Other rooms celebrate different cinematic aspects, such as the "Rhythm" room, which honors music legends, and "Kollam Nammude Illam," dedicated to prominent Kollam-born figures in the film industry like poet O.N.V. Kurup and Oscar-winning sound designer Rasool Pookutty.

At Javees Cinema Restaurant, even the menu card reflects the cinematic theme, presented on a clapboard to capture the essence of filmmaking. Instead of the usual "Menu" title, it's labeled "Ulladakkam" – a nod to a popular Malayalam movie, complete with the film's original font. Each dish has its own cinematic twist, making the menu both playful and nostalgic. Beef dishes are titled "Jallikattu," after the famous Malayalam film, while fish dishes bear the name and font of Jayan's classic movie Meen. Poultry dishes are creatively labelled with references to Malayalam films like Kunukkitta Kozhi and Ponmuttayidunna Tharavu. Even the salads carry a touch of cinema, inspired by the movie Salt and Pepper. A standout dessert, the special Falooda, is cleverly named Shaji Pappanum Pillerum, offering various scoops that make it as intriguing as its title. Instead of standard labels, the menu highlights "Special Show" for special dishes and "Morning Show" for breakfast, with "Special Show" replacing the typical "Today's



Special." Since its inception, Javees has consistently evolved, bringing fresh cinematic variations to the menu, ensuring that every visit offers something new for both film buffs and food lovers alike.

Expanding the Cinematic Experience

Javees Cinema Restaurant is more than just a themed dining space; it's a sensory experience designed to captivate people of all ages. To add to the ambiance, a black-and-white room celebrates the golden age of cinema with photos of legendary actors from yesteryears, and vintage film reels from old theatres have been repurposed into lighting fixtures. As part of the experience, diners can snap selfies with a life-sized statue of a classic movie director holding a vintage camera. Created over 30 days by fine arts graduates, the statue stands as a welcoming landmark at Javees, embodying Jayamohan's vision of bringing cinema to life.

The restaurant's success has inspired expansion plans, and a second outlet in Punalur is on the horizon. This new location will feature exclusive additions, such as an Oscars-themed corner. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, Javees remains committed to delivering quality food and service. According to Jayamohan, combining good food, efficient service, and a welcoming atmosphere is the key to a successful restaurant. This dedication to quality has made Javees a top contender on food delivery platforms like Swiggy and Zomato in Kollam.

In addition to Javees, Jayamohan is launching a sister brand named Ila, which will specialize in traditional Kerala meals wrapped in banana leaves. This nostalgic offering, known as Pothichoru, will focus on providing hearty meals packaged sustainably in banana leaves. It's an endeavour that not only supports eco-friendly practices but also celebrates Kerala's culinary heritage.

With his sights set on creating an auto-pilot operational model, Jayamohan has trained his team to run Javees Cinema Restaurant smoothly, ensuring a consistently great experience for guests. With its innovative fusion of cinema and cuisine, Javees continues to win hearts, offering an unparalleled journey through the world of film and food.

KAYMAS RESTAURANT

BRINGING THE AUTHENTIC TASTE OF THALASSERY BIRIYANI TO SOUTH KERALA

For years, Kerala's culinary landscape has been home to numerous styles of biriyani, each with its own twist on flavour and ingredients. Yet, among them all, Thalassery Biriyani stands apart, celebrated across the state for its distinct Malabar flavours. However, until recently, this iconic dish had been hard to find in southern Kerala. Enter Kaymas Restaurant in Punalur, Kollam, where founder Muhammed Eesa has brought the authentic taste of Thalassery Biriyani to his hometown. Since opening in October 2019, Kaymas has become a beacon for food lovers, offering an unmatched dining experience that transports them to the heart of Malabar.

Originally a mobile accessories entrepreneur, Muhammed Eesa saw a golden opportunity when a nearby biriyani shop closed due to staffing issues. Motivated by a personal passion for food and a long-held dream to share the Thalassery culinary experience, Eesa decided to open Kaymas Restaurant. Driven by this vision, he created a place where southern Kerala residents could savour genuine Thalassery flavours, free from the modifications typical of other regions.

Filling a Flavour Gap in Southern Kerala

In southern Kerala, biriyani is often prepared with additions like cherries, added essence, tutti frutti mix and other embellishments that depart from the more straightforward Malabar approach. For years, food lovers in this region had been longing for a restaurant that served an authentic Thalassery Biriyani, with its short-grain Kaima rice and fragrant spices. Recognizing this demand, Kaymas launched as a small, intimate eatery near the Punalur private bus stand, initially operating with only 10-12 seats and serving lunch from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. However, word quickly spread, and by noon, the restaurant was often sold out, testament to the locals' enthusiasm for a taste of authenticity.

Just a few months after its promising start, Kaymas faced an unexpected challenge with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The restaurant was forced to close temporarily, a setback that could have ended Eesa's journey. Instead, this time allowed him to reimagine Kaymas with a fresh perspective,

ultimately reopening as a 50-seat, multi-cuisine, air-conditioned space near the KSRTC bus stand. This new location offered an upgraded dining experience, appealing to families and larger groups seeking a premium setting to enjoy traditional biriyani.

Commitment to Quality Ingredients and Authenticity

One of the distinguishing features of Kaymas Restaurant is its dedication to quality and authenticity. At the heart of Thalassery Biriyani lies the fragrant Kaima rice, a short-grain variety known for its distinctive taste and aroma. Kaymas sources only premium Kaima rice to ensure each biriyani plate captures the essence of Thalassery. The chefs adhere strictly to authentic recipes, carefully blending Jeerakasala rice with hand-picked spices that bring out a balanced yet rich flavour profile.

From the beginning, Kaymas has emphasized consistency and culinary integrity. Remarkably, the restaurant has retained the same core team of chefs and staff since its launch in 2019. Eesa believes that keeping experienced hands in



the kitchen is essential to maintaining quality, training new team members rigorously in the exact recipes. Kaymas Biryani is free from artificial additives—no Ajinomoto, synthetic colours, or artificial flavours are used here. Instead, only natural colours are used, sourced directly from Chennai to ensure safety and purity. The restaurant's biriyani, therefore, tastes lighter and healthier, made exclusively with RKG ghee, steering clear of hydrogenated fats like "dalda" that many establishments use as a cheaper alternative.

This commitment to quality extends to every ingredient. Chicken is purchased fresh daily, and mutton is sourced only from indigenous male goats. The restaurant takes transparency seriously, clearly labelling buffalo meat as distinct from traditional beef, giving diners the freedom to make an informed choice. No pre-cooked or stored meats are used, ensuring that every biriyani is crafted fresh, day by day, for the optimal taste experience.

Freshness and Balanced Flavours

At Kaymas, freshness is more than a standard; it's a philosophy. Each ingredient, from meats to spices, is chosen for its ability to create a harmonious and natural flavour profile. The restaurant's biriyani is seasoned with fresh ginger, garlic, garam masala, and other spices in the exact quantities required, resulting in a taste that's balanced and authentic without being overpowering. Unlike some biriyanis that lean heavily on one spice or ingredient, Kaymas' Biryani offers a more nuanced flavour that doesn't overwhelm but invites you to savour every bite.

Kaymas has a strict no-leftover policy, taking pride in



servicing only freshly prepared food. Unsold items are offered at discounted rates through local WhatsApp groups by the end of the night, ensuring minimal wastage. In addition to biriyani, the menu includes Arabic dishes and broasted chicken, crafted with a special in-house masala that has been perfected without Ajinomoto, bringing yet another layer of originality to Kaymas' offerings.

A Name Rooted in Legacy

Many patrons might assume that the name "Kaymas" is a nod to Kaima rice, but its origin is rooted in family legacy. Muhammed Eesa named the restaurant in honour of his father, K. Muhammed Sahib, who ran a successful provisional store called "KMS" four decades ago. This heartfelt tribute combines family history with culinary tradition, perfectly embodying Kaymas' mission to connect the past with the present, one plate of biriyani at a time.

Looking ahead, Muhammed Eesa envisions Kaymas expanding across southern Kerala, with plans already underway to open additional locations. As he brings the distinct taste of Thalassery Biryani to more towns, Eesa's goal is not just to grow a restaurant but to create a movement that preserves and celebrates authentic Malabar flavors in a region that has long been underserved in this regard.

With each bite, Kaymas Restaurant offers diners more than a meal—it offers a story of passion, dedication, and the pursuit of authenticity. Kaymas has set a new standard in Kollam's dining scene, proving that with the right ingredients, a commitment to quality, and a touch of nostalgia, a local eatery can become an institution.



A RARE FLAVOUR OF SUCCESS

INSIDE MR. JOHNS BAKING COMPANY'S RISE



In an industry as competitive as the bakery and restaurant sector, it's rare to find brands that balance health-conscious offerings with delectable taste. Many businesses pop up every year, only to fade away due to lack of proper planning, but Mr. Johns Baking Company has not only survived but thrived by standing out in this crowded space. At the heart of this brand is Mr. Johns Thomas, a visionary from Kottayam, whose journey into the world of baking is as remarkable as the success of his business.

With a postgraduate degree in commerce and no prior experience in the bakery field, Johns took a daring step into the unknown. His inspiration came from his aunt, who was involved in the bakery business in Thiruvalla. After spending just a few days learning the ropes from her, Johns realised his passion for creating baked goods. In 2021, despite the challenges posed by the global pandemic, he launched his dream venture—Mr. Johns Baking Company—in Eerayil Kadavu, Kottayam.

Right from the outset, Johns had a clear vision: to provide premium, high-quality products at reasonable prices. His bakery was not just a place to pick up a loaf of bread or a pastry; it was an experience, combining a Borma unit with a restaurant to offer both baked goods and savory delights. However, the second wave of COVID-19 hit just six months into his venture, forcing a temporary shutdown. Despite this setback, the brand's commitment to quality helped it

withstand the storm, and soon Mr. Johns Baking Company found its footing in the market.

Johns attributes his success to thorough research and an unwavering dedication to health and quality. Unlike many who cut corners with substandard ingredients, Mr. Johns is committed to providing products that not only taste good but are also good for you. For example, rather than using ghee washes that cost less, Johns insists on butter wash for buns, ensuring a higher standard of product. His philosophy has resonated with a growing segment of consumers who are willing to pay more for food that supports their well-being.

Over the past three years, Johns has learned invaluable lessons about space, customer satisfaction, and market demand. His bakery and restaurant, though clubbed together at first, will soon undergo a transformation. The bakery will focus on counter sales and live cakes, while new outlets will incorporate cafes serving coffee alongside his signature baked goods. By the end of 2024, Johns plans to open two new outlets, one in Karukachal and the other in Pampadi, Kottayam, each featuring a blend of café and bakery products. His dream is to establish ten outlets across the district, with a larger production facility already in the works.

Looking ahead, Johns is eager to introduce product variations that cater to people with diabetes. The goal is to launch a line of sugar-free, wheat-based products, including Ragi and Oatmeal Cookies, allowing even those with dietary restrictions to enjoy his bakery's treats. A dedicated 'Sugar Free' counter will make it easier for customers to find these healthier alternatives. It's a challenge that Johns is





tackling head-on, aiming to change the way people think about baked goods and health.

Even the colours in Mr. John's bakery products are carefully considered. Rather than relying on artificial colouring, Mr. Johns uses natural alternatives from Symega Food Ingredients. In his restaurant, ingredients like ajinomoto are strictly banned, and even popular dishes like butter chicken are served without artificial colouring, ensuring customers are aware of the purity of the ingredients used. Whether it's the vibrant natural hues of his bakery products or the simple, authentic flavours of his savoury dishes, everything at Mr. Johns Baking Company emphasises health without compromising on taste.

However, Johns acknowledges the challenges of introducing healthier alternatives. Customers have been hesitant to embrace products without colour, like white versions of traditionally vibrant snacks such as laddu or jalebi. While natural, colourless variations of some snacks, like star sponge or tea rusks, were slow sellers, Johns remains committed to his vision. The higher cost of natural colouring, at over 2000 rupees per litre means the products cannot be sold at lower prices, but customers are increasingly recognizing the value of quality and health.

Through perseverance, a focus on quality ingredients, and a clear vision, Mr. Johns Baking Company has carved out its niche in the competitive world of baking and restaurants. The brand's story is a testament to the power of providing premium, health-focused products while maintaining fair pricing. As Mr. Johns looks to the future, expanding his business and introducing innovative new products, his company stands as an example of how success is not just about surviving—it's about thriving by staying true to your principles.





In 2018, Trivandrum found itself at the brink of a culinary revolution. While the city's diners were beginning to embrace novel flavors, a notable lack of diverse dining options left much to be desired. Spotting this gap in the market, Dr. Mehboob Nathani, Mr. TK Thomas, and their children envisioned a dining space where authentic global culinary traditions could meet the city's growing appetite for variety and quality. Their vision took shape as The Gourmet House, a standalone restaurant that opened its doors in Pattom in April 2018.





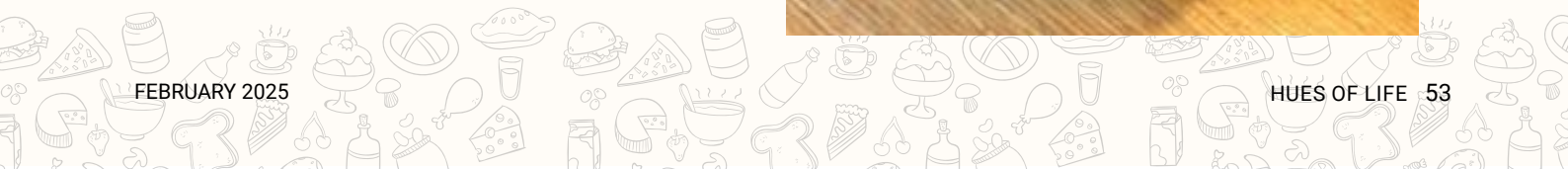
Yet, The Gourmet House isn't content with simply being a pioneer. With plans to expand its menu and launch additional outlets, the restaurant continues to push boundaries, evolving alongside its patrons' tastes and preferences.

From its bold culinary experiments to its legacy of firsts, The Gourmet House stands as a beacon of innovation in Trivandrum's ever-growing food scene. It's not just a restaurant; it's a celebration of global flavors, shaping a rich and dynamic culinary culture for years to come.

The Gourmet House
Pattom Kowdiar Road Junction
Near Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram
Ph: 0471 485 0767

Bringing pan-Asian and continental cuisine to the forefront, The Gourmet House quickly earned a reputation as a trailblazer. It was perhaps the first to introduce sushi and ramen to Trivandrum's food enthusiasts, setting a new standard for the city's gastronomic scene. Amreen Nathani, the managing partner, sums it up best: "We wanted to bring something new to the food scene." True to their word, The Gourmet House has consistently raised the bar by blending innovation with authenticity.

One of its most appealing features is its monthly specials, offering a rotating array of global cuisines. From the spicy allure of Korean dishes to the refined artistry of Japanese flavors, Continental classics, and the vibrant zest of Malaysian specialties, these carefully curated specials keep the dining experience fresh and exciting.



TRADITIONAL RECIPES, MODERN CELEBRATIONS

AKG CATERERS' JOURNEY OF CULINARY LEGACY



A handful of Kerala's culinary heritage thrives in the picturesque coastal towns of Alappuzha and Cherthala. Here, AKG Caterers and Events has redefined catering by blending generations-old flavours with unmatched quality. Founded by chef and Arthunkal native Bright Sebastian alongside his two brothers, AKG Caterers captures the essence of Kerala's timeless recipes, offering guests a taste of home-cooked goodness with a professional finesse that makes every event unforgettable. Through a commitment to authentic local flavours, the brothers have transformed AKG into a trusted name in catering, beloved not only for its delicious food but for its devotion to tradition and innovation alike.

A Culinary Legacy Passed Down Generations

Growing up in Arthunkal, Bright was surrounded by food prepared with skill and love by his grandmothers and mother. Known for their culinary prowess, his family rarely relied on outside cooks for family functions. Inspired by these early influences, the Sebastian brothers learned from a young age the importance of wholesome, well-prepared meals. AKG Caterers and Events was born from their collective dream to bring the unique, nostalgic tastes of their home region to a wider audience while honouring the culinary legacy of their ancestors. Their brand name, "AKG," which stands for their family name, Arattukulam, combined with "Group," symbolises the deep connection to their roots and the family values that fuel their work.

In 2010, Bright and his brothers entered the catering industry with a fresh perspective, having noted key challenges in the sector. Despite the quality of food, many catering setups they observed felt chaotic and relied heavily on disposable plates, leading to waste and environmental strain. Determined to set a new benchmark, AKG Caterers embraced eco-friendly practices, using reusable ceramic plates instead of disposable options. Their commitment extended to meticulous arrangements, with thought-

fully designed spaces and waste management systems to ensure a smooth experience for guests and hosts alike. AKG's approach revolutionised the catering experience, creating a visually appealing and hygienic environment that showcased both food and hospitality at their finest.

Embracing Tradition Through Authentic Flavours

The brothers' approach to cooking is grounded in simplicity and authenticity. They are committed to preserving the timeless flavours of Kerala, preparing each dish with recipes that have been passed down for generations. Local ingredients are at the heart of their menu, with fish sourced from nearby harbours and spices selected for their freshness and quality. Known for traditional Kerala fare, AKG Caterers excels at serving a variety of iconic dishes that celebrate the coastal region's rich culinary heritage.

Karimeen pollichathu is one of AKG's signature dishes, featuring fresh pearl spot fish marinated in a spice blend, wrapped in banana leaves, and slow-cooked to infuse the flavours. Another favourite, Fish Molee, offers a delicate coconut-based curry that complements Kerala's native fish varieties, especially pomfret (Avoli) and seer fish (Neymeen). AKG's commitment to quality extends to other favourites, including different fish fry, and their sumptuous Duck Mappas, a rich and spicy dish slow-cooked to perfection.

AKG's offerings go beyond seafood. Their beef fry, a popular item cooked in firewood with ample coconut shavings, mirrors the traditional style found in rural Christian homes. This dish has become a signature at AKG-catered events, providing an authentic taste of Kerala's unique blend of spices and cooking techniques. They also serve chicken roast and pork dishes, prepared with a Kerala twist, as well as a wide



range of vegetarian dishes, making sure every palate is satisfied.

In addition to these specialties, AKG regularly features Kerala's celebrated sadya, the vegetarian feast served on banana leaves. The sadya package includes classics such as sambar, avial, olan, and thoran, offering guests a taste of Kerala's traditional Onam celebration meal. AKG's dedication to authenticity ensures that each sadya they serve respects the intricate flavours and preparation methods of this beloved festive meal, making it a sought-after feature at their events.

Innovating in Times of Need: From Takeaway to Restaurant

During the COVID-19 pandemic, AKG Caterers found themselves facing a challenge like no other, as events halted and their staff's livelihoods were put at risk. Rising to the occasion, the Sebastian brothers adapted quickly by launching a takeaway service from a small shop in Arthunkal, providing a new way to serve their community while supporting their team. Orders for takeaway meals came from local residents and even from abroad, especially those requesting meals for elderly relatives or patients. This service was a lifeline, helping to re-establish AKG's presence and affirming their commitment to quality even in challenging times.

As the takeaway model gained popularity, AKG Caterers took it a step further by opening a full-fledged restaurant in 2024. Located in front of the famous St. Andrew's Basilica Church in Arthunkal, the restaurant has become a local landmark. The COVID-19 era brought to fruition a long-held dream to create a

space where diners could enjoy AKG's signature flavours in a relaxed, welcoming environment. Their restaurant menu now includes popular traditional dishes and new additions which have become a favourite at weddings and gatherings, adding a contemporary touch to their traditional repertoire.

Commitment to Culinary Excellence and Ethics



AKG Caterers' dedication to quality extends beyond the flavours they serve. Bright, who currently serves as the Alappuzha District Secretary of the All Kerala Caterers Association, is vocal about maintaining high standards in the catering industry. He notes the rising competition in the field, with many new entrants offering low-cost, low-quality options that compromise on food safety and taste. Unlike some in the industry who have chosen to cut corners to meet pricing demands, AKG has remained steadfast in its commitment to using only the best ingredients, refusing to compromise on the quality of food or the preparation methods. Their longstanding relationships with suppliers, who share their values, ensure that each event is a showcase of freshness and flavour.

Bright firmly believes that food should be both enjoyable and nutritious, a belief he upholds in every meal served by AKG Caterers. His vision is simple: everyone, from guests from the locality to dignitaries, should experience the same high standard of food that he would serve his own family. This philosophy has earned AKG Caterers not only loyal clients but also respect in the community, as they continue to uphold the value of "food with a conscience."

Through AKG Caterers and Events, the Sebastian brothers have built more than a business—they have created a legacy of taste, tradition, and trust. From their expertly arranged catering services to their restaurant venture, each aspect of AKG's offerings reflects their commitment to culinary excellence and the heritage of Kerala's flavours. Their attention to detail, from sourcing ingredients to the presentation at each event, has set them apart in a competitive field. AKG has had the honour of catering for dignitaries and families alike, delivering an experience that goes beyond food to create memories steeped in Kerala's culture.

For Bright, Praveen, and Abin, AKG Caterers is not just a job; it is a lifelong passion rooted in the values of their family and their homeland. With every event they cater and every meal they serve, AKG Caterers and Events continues to celebrate Kerala's culinary heritage, one unforgettable bite at a time.



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- Space that feels casual, welcoming, and homely.
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A CULINARY HAVEN FOR GASTRONOMES

Nestled in the upscale neighbourhood of Kowdiar, Trivandrum, The Yellow Chilli is part of the globally renowned chain of Indian restaurants helmed by Master Chef Sanjeev Kapoor. Since its opening in 2019, Viji and Unnikrishnan have played a pivotal role in bringing this celebrated brand to the city. Known for its commitment to culinary excellence, the restaurant has garnered several prestigious awards in the food industry, recognizing it as the best North Indian restaurant in the region.

The menu is a delightful showcase of Sanjeev Kapoor's mastery, offering a blend of authentic Indian flavours and modern innovations. Signature dishes such as tomato basil shorba, shaam savera, lalla mussa dal, and nizami tarkari biryani reflect India's rich culinary traditions. The dessert selection, featuring favourites like gulab-e-gulkand and shahi tukda, completes the experience with a touch of sweetness. Every dish is crafted to perfection, ensuring a memorable gastronomic

journey.

The Yellow Chilli caters to a wide range of dining preferences with their dine-in services, home delivery, take-away, outdoor catering, and corporate lunch boxes. One of the most cherished offerings is the "Delivering Emotions" initiative, which allows overseas Indians to send meals to their loved ones in Trivandrum. This thoughtful service adds a personal dimension to its already extensive repertoire.

With a warm ambiance, exceptional service, and a menu that resonates with centuries of culinary heritage, The Yellow Chilli stands as a lamp of excellence in the food industry. Whether for a casual outing, a family gathering, or a special celebration, it offers an unparalleled dining experience that continues to delight food enthusiasts across Trivandrum.



The Yellow Chilli, Aswathy Complex, Near Narmada Shopping Complex, Trivandrum

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