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# MUZIRIS NEWS

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# KOTHIKALLU

Kothikallu or Kothi stones are found scattered in and around the Muziris region. The stones marked the boundary between the erstwhile adjacent kingdoms of Kochi and Thiruvithamkur, with the inscription of the Malayalam letter 'ko' on one side representing Kochi and 'thi', which stands for Thiruvithamkur on the other side. As such, they bear a special place in Kerala's history with much archaeological significance.

## message



Dear friends,

It is a moment of utmost pride for Kerala Tourism with two prestigious National Tourism Awards 2017-18 and three PATA Gold awards for the excellence in various categories.

Tourism in Kerala has always been in the forefront attracting the world to explore the various facets of the land. Being known over the years as a leisure destination and wellness destination, Kerala Tourism has been attracting visitors from far and wide. We have taken the step towards Responsible Tourism to benefit the community in economical, social and environmental ways. Experiences range from village life, cultural and historical heritage to adventure. A place with spectacular culture, history and tradition, Kerala has virtually everything to create events seamless and successful. We remain a beautiful destination that delivers state of the art facilities, new experiences and added value to travel, all year through. The strong public private partnership of the stakeholders of the Tourism industry contributes to the growth of Kerala Tourism and Kerala Travel Mart is the best example.

On September 27th, the industry celebrated the 'World Tourism Day', on the topic 'Tourism and Jobs: a better future for all'. The theme contributes to the continued expansion in tourism, benefiting destinations and communities worldwide. Job opportunities in the tourism segment of Kerala have great potential, being particularly optimistic about the anticipated growth in the sector.

Muziris Projects Ltd. runs on a mission to conserve heritage and has this philosophy at the core of it. The restoration, conservation and preservation of the tangible heritage in the area has developed the project into a Cultural & Heritage Story. Adding to that, the Muziris Projects Limited played host to two races of the Champions Boat League, along with other venues. We should be looking to use the momentum from this mega event to build on more and more spectacles. In terms of infrastructure, and cleanliness, let our spaces be at par with any prominent location across the world to remain competitive in the global market.

Regards,

**Rani George IAS**

Secretary Tourism - Government of Kerala

## Stones that talk History



Every object in the Muziris region has a unique story to tell you. Interestingly, they all represent the state's history of a bygone era, of trade and expansions, of gains and losses. Muziris Projects Ltd delves into this fascinating world rich with historic, cultural and touristic elements.

Apart from the museums and the historic sites of importance, numerous objects in the region hold a treasure. The 'kothikkallu' is one among them. These stones remind one of the two erstwhile kingdoms of Kochi and Thiruvithamkur. They remained independent states under the British rule till 1947 and under the Union of India till 1949. 1949 witnessed the merger of these states to form the State of Travancore-Cochin and in November 1st, 1956 the State of Kerala formally came into existence.

Before independence, since the kingdoms were adjacent to each other, it is assumed that border issues might have arisen, and later the 'kothikkallu' were placed as boundary stones between 'Kochi' and 'Thiruvithamkur'. The stones are still visible in several places that falls within the purview of the Muziris Projects. People of the region recollects having seen the stones near the forts, canals or even their houses. When developments took place, many of the stones were lost. The Kottappuram fort and the Sahodaran Ayyappan museum in Cherai, two of the prominent sites of Muziris still keeps the stones intact in their complexes.

It is also believed that following border issues in the states, the borders were fixed for the two kingdoms and official marking stones installed during the British rule itself. They were mainly placed on both sides of the boundary, the boundaries being mainly rivers, canals, and roads. The area that lay between the lines of stones on both sides came to be known as 'no man's land'.

Centuries old stories, told and re-told, still inspire us.

# AGES TO REMEMBER

## Kodungallur fort

(A discussion with Dr S Hemachandran,  
Former Director, Dept. Of Archaeology, Govt of Kerala)



Trade was an important component in the history of Kerala society. Long distance or inland trade seems to have developed and intensified in the earlier period of its history with ports and port towns emerging.

Kodungallur has enjoyed a prominent position in the history of coastal trade in Kerala. It should be assumed that trade and traders had already found a settlement in Kodungallur in the early centuries of CE. The estuary of Periyar, formed before it falls in the Arabian sea, provides the position of a natural harbour. Both the banks of the river Periyar developed as trade centres where Jewish, Christian, Arab and other traders settled.

The history of Muziris starts from this land known as 'Mahodayapuram' or 'Muyirikkode', once the capital of Perumals of Kerala.

Traders settled down on the south and western side of the Cheramanparambu where there is a ditch, as seen outside of fortification, still visible, which separates the palace and temple complex from the settlement of the traders on bank of the river Periyar. During the debris clearing activity of the Department of Archaeology in 2009, the remains of certain old buildings and the remains of a big compound wall had been found at Cheamanparambu. This suggests an earlier residential context in the site. The earlier excavation conducted in 1946 - 47 by Anujan Achan, Government Archaeologist, of the erstwhile state of Kochi found potsherds of Celadon which were one of the evidences of trade contact with China. Dishes of celadonware had been found at sites of affluent areas in the coastal belt of Kerala. The explorations conducted by Kerala State Department of Archaeology at Kottappuram collected a headless Buddha idol and lot of potsherds both assignable to the period between 8th and 10th century CE. This confirms the view that the south west area of Cheramanparambu was given to traders to settle down.

The accounts of travellers of the 12th to 14th centuries also serve as evidence to the extensive trade contacts of the region. The Jews, Christians, Arabs and other trading communities from other parts of India established trade here. This settlement extending from the Kottappuram fort area to Azhikkode might have fetched the name 'Shingli' for Kodungallur. The tragic flood of 1341 may have adversely affected the trade in this

region. But let us assume that the trade continued, but on irregular intervals.

From 15th century, the Samuthiri of Kozhikkode had established control over Kodungallur. The Samuthiri had extended all support to the traders of Kodungallur. The appearance of Portuguese at the end of 15th century broke the balance of trade in the coastal belt of Kerala. Though the Samuthiri had tried his best to avoid the building a fort at Kochi, the Portuguese succeeded in constructing a fort with mud and wood in 1503 CE at Kochi. When the Portuguese returned to Portugal in the end of 1503, the Samuthiri attacked the fort and drove the left over Portuguese force to the southern tip of Vaipin Island. Samuthiri had used Kodungallur as a base to attack Kochi. When the main force returned from Portugal in 1504 they retaliated by attacking the traders who helped Samuthiri. Since they could not resist the cannon attack from the Portuguese ships from the river Periyar, they abandoned Kodungallur and settled in other areas of Kochi. After thoroughly



Photo courtesy: Dept of Archaeology, Govt of Kerala

destroying the area, the Portuguese decided to construct a fort in south eastern corner, the strategic point of Kodungallur on the bank or river of Periyar. Though they took the decision in 1508, the fort named as Fort Santhom or Cranganore fort was completed in 1536.

The main aim of the fort was to control inland trade of spices from the east and north to Kochi to avoid taxes and other control by the Portuguese. In course of time, settlements rose around the fort like churches, seminaries, markets, libraries, palaces for Bishops, residential buildings, etc. The fort extended through the current Kottappuram market area. The fort developed from period 1508 to 1535 under different Governor Generals. The Captain was the chief of the fort. There were seven big bastions and four small bastions. The fort constructed in the beginning had only four bastions and a round tower. Mainly the European officers, soldiers, and engineers stayed there.

Thus, Cranganore fort had a prominent place within the military and trade history of Kodungallur.

# Know India Programme

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. The nation has witnessed the fusion of numerous beliefs and customs, traditions and rituals that constitute the rich heritage of the land. More than anything, the history of the nation reveals to one the magnanimity in its growth to one of the leading economies of the world. Every development in the country instills a sense of national pride in the heart of every Indian, whether residing in India or abroad. It is perhaps this sense of pride that prompted the visit of 40 students from abroad to India on October 06th.

These students belonged to the third generation of Indians who have spent a substantial amount of time abroad. Muziris Projects Ltd offered them a

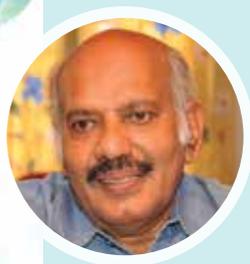
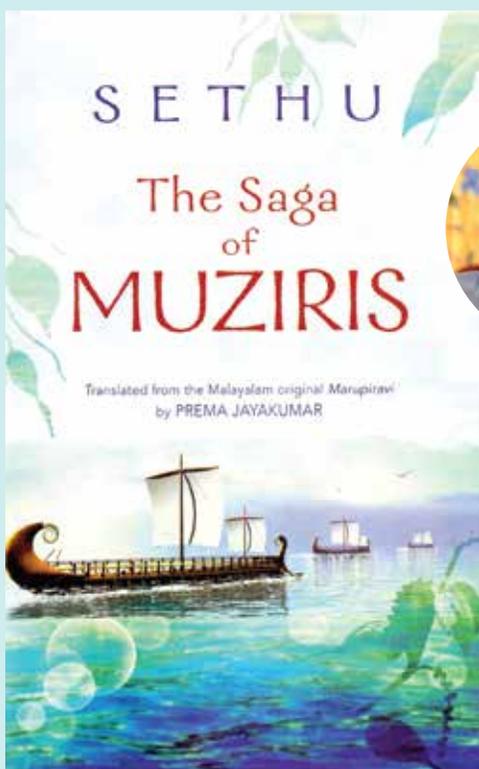


venue to get in touch with the best of India. It took them into the most fascinating aspects of Indian culture. The Parur Jewish synagogue, one of the oldest synagogues, gave them an idea of Jewish history. The Paliam museums gave them an insight into the history of Kerala lifestyle and history. While the Paliam nalukettu presented the Kerala architectural style, the Dutch palace depicted the stages of evolution of the Kochi kingdom and the life of nobility. The students also visited the excavated fort of Kottappuram, built by the Portuguese.

The pioneering initiative 'Know India Programme' was an attempt by Norka Roots, in collaboration with central and state governments, to help the students maintain relations with India and know the nation better.

The students were from Fiji, Guyana, Israel, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

These initiatives are reminders of India's manifold charms, from the awesome beauty of the land to the rather more wholesome appeal of its heritage.



## SETHU The saga of MUZIRIS

During my school days in Chendamangalam, I had heard quite a number of old stories about ships anchoring in the port of Muziris, near Kodungalloor, just across the river. However, nobody knew about its exact location and the nature of activities carried out. When I was planning to write a novel on the rich heritage of my area, including the migration of Jews into my village, I could logically connect it to the active Indo-Roman trade of the early centuries. The initial finds at Pattanam, and the references in the Sangham literature in Tamil provided the perfect background for the narrative.

Thus was born my novel Marupiravi, where my attempt has been to wade through the mires of history and re-create the past in my own way.



## Portuguese in search of their

# HISTORY

Portugal is important to Muziris on many counts. History defines Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama's eventful journey to Malabar as the most striking episode in the Spice Route trade. Obviously, this opened the doors to the New World. The ancient port of Muziris held a strategic position as the hub of trade along the Spice Route.

Under the initiative 'India – From the Coromandel to the Malabar Coast', the organisation Centro Nacional de Cultura (CNC), took on a journey to India from August 31 to September 14, 2019, bringing together those from the media, films, art and writing, and mathematics. The visit was part of tracing the Portuguese history in South India. The focal point of this initiative was Muziris, the site that houses the excavated Kottapuram fort and Pallipuram fort, both built by the Portuguese.

CNC's main objectives are to promote, defend, disseminate and register Portuguese cultural heritage, promote "cultural tourism" based on an integrated idea of tourism, environment, heritage and cultural itineraries, and to educate the younger generations on a feeling of global citizenship. Its action can be summarised as a policy of "establishing contacts", "articulating", "making things happen".

Muziris Projects Ltd played host to a successful discussion with H.E. Mr. Carlos Pereira Marques, the Ambassador of Portugal in India, and his team of 26 eminent scholars from Portugal. The visit to the historic sites of Muziris in Kodungallur on September 10 generated a great level of learning and academic exchanges between the two teams.

Dr Anisio, art historian observed: "The style of Portuguese architecture can be seen in the Palli fort. The shape of the watch tower is typical. It is in the hexagonal plan which is common in their architectural style. There is a cellar that was used to keep weapons. Inside the fort, a square-shaped well provided a source of fresh water. The position of the well is significant because it was built for defence."

The team led by Dr Anisio Franco, art historian, and Ms Helena Serra, was welcomed by Sri P M Nowshad, Managing Director, Muziris Projects Ltd., Dr Benny Kuriakose, Conservation consultant, Muziris Heritage Project, Sri Rubin D'Cruz, Advisory Committee member, Dr S Hemachandran, Former Director, Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of Kerala, Prof K S Mathew, Dr Michael Tharakan, Director, KCHR, and Prof Kesavan Veluthat, Director, ISCHK.



# CHAMPIONS BOAT LEAGUE

The 6th leg of CBL flagged off by Adv. V.S. Sunil Kumar, Minister for Agriculture, Govt of Kerala, in the presence of Adv V R Sunil Kumar MLA, Sri K R Jaithran, Kodungallur Municipal Chairman, and Sri Bala Kiran IAS, Director- Tourism.

The event calendar of Kodungallur boasts spectacular events all year round, all performed with great elan.

It was with extra vigour and excitement that the waters of Kottappuram welcomed Kerala Tourism's maiden initiative of a boat race patterned on the league format of cricket.

The Champions Boat League, popularly known as CBL, started on August 31st with the Nehru Trophy Boat Race and will end with the President's Trophy Boat Race in Kollam on November 23rd.

And Muziris waterfront at Kottappuram took pride in having catered to two consecutive legs of the Boat race, on October 12th and October

19th. In CBL, nine chundan valloms participate in 12 different venues in the backwaters of Kerala, to decide one champion.

Prior to the event, Hon'ble Minister for Revenue and Housing Shri E Chandrasekharan inaugurated the Organising Committee office of the CBL at the Kottappuram waterfront on 26th September 2019.

The waterfront walls were adorned with murals depicting various phases in the history of Muziris.

Cultural events and processions showcasing the various art forms of Kerala, prior to the event and on the event days took people in awe and admiration.

One thus finds in these races all the authentic sense of festive spirit and real affection, which offers an overwhelming experience to all the participants. No other event has come to epitomize the quintessential Kerala.



## ചെക്കട്ടി The Doll of hope turns one

The website of Chekkutty reads-

*"Chekkutty is a mascot of the emerging Keralam, being rebuilt through our solidarity, resilience and beauty of hearts despite some of the stains and scars that will remain in our lives.*

*Chekkutty has scars.*

*Chekkutty has stains.*

*But Chekkutty represent each one of us who survived the floods".*

Thus, Chekkutty stood for all that the floods left behind. The doll soon became a 'beacon of resilience'.

As Chekkutty celebrated her first birthday on September 09th, 2019, it is with pride that all those hands behind creating the doll look at the impact it has had on people across various regions.

We have seen Chekkutty travelling abroad, to the offices of Facebook and Google, to the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, to people and places unknown to Chendamangalam, the place of her birth .



Children wrote poems, they shared stories of Chekkutty in Youth festivals and through different forms of art and social activities.

Chekkutty has thus inspired people from every walk of life.

The Muziris Projects Ltd waterfront at Kottapuram was the most fitting venue for celebrating Chekkutty's birthday, inviting all those dear to it.

With Onam round the corner, Lakshmi Menon, the creator of Chekkutty, Chekkutty family members fondly known as 'Chekkutty kootam', and members of Chendamangalam Handloom societies prepared the 'pookkalam', decorated the waterfront with chekkutty dolls, and sang songs. Artists painted Chekkutty, and the amphitheatre witnessed one of the best birthday celebrations.

The highlight of the event was the traditional 'villadichanpattu' performance by members of Thathappilly Jawahar Arts Club and Library, Mannam .

By integrating love and care into making a doll, the creators behind the campaign make us consider rekindling our fondness for the skilled hands who toil for us.





On the occasion of the celebration of Gandhi Jayanthi on Wednesday, 02 October 2019, Muziris Projects Ltd officially launched the 'cleanliness awareness' program in the project areas of N. Parur. As part of the 'Clean Muziris Green Muziris' campaign, the Parur Municipal Chairman Ramesh D Kurup inaugurated the initiative at the Parur Muziris boat jetty area. With the aim of inculcating a respect for nature, 70 saplings were planted in the Jew street area and boat jetty area. Madhavi Kataria IAS, Special Secretary (Coordination), Govt of Punjab planted the first sapling. North Parur Ward counsellor C Mini, the NSS wing and teachers of Govt. Girls' HSS, N. Parur and staff of Muziris Projects Ltd were also present.

## CLEAN MUZIRIS GREEN MUZIRIS

Professor Nariaki Nakazato, Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo, and tourist-scholars Professor M. Ueada and Dr. H. Suzuki from Japan visited Muziris Projects Ltd sites - Kottapuram fort, Kottapuram market, Parur synagogue, Paliam palace and Paliam Nalukettu on 14 September, 2019, accompanied by officials from Muziris Projects Ltd., Pullut.



## VISITORS BOOK KERALA JEWISH HISTORY MUSEUM

Comments by **Nariaki Nakazato**  
Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo

*Really impressed with the fine work of restoration and conservation. Important project.  
Nariaki Nakazato, Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo,  
14 Sep. 2019.*