





DECEMBER 2019

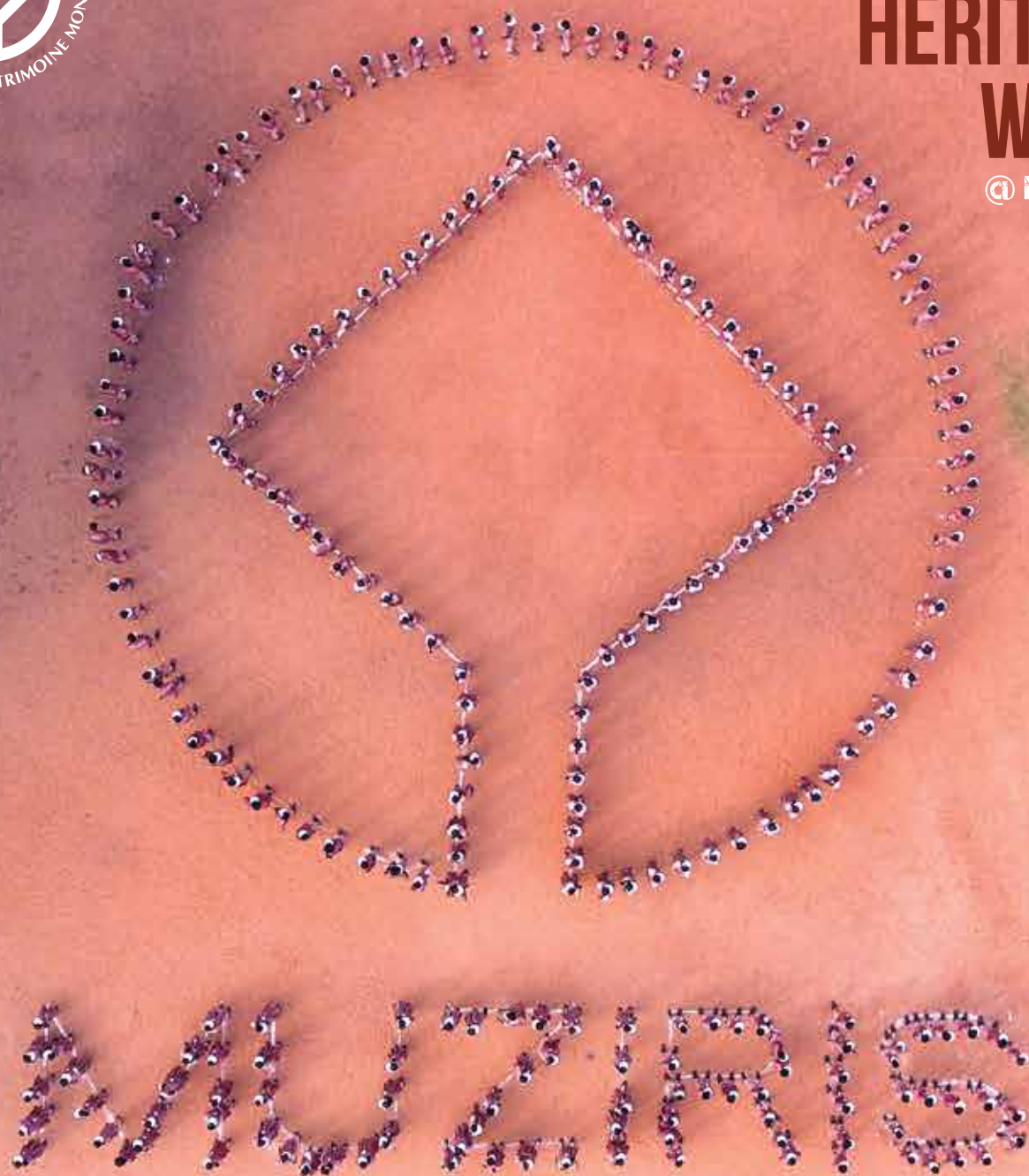
MUZIRIS NEWS

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WORLD HERITAGE WEEK @ MUZIRIS



MUZIRIS PROJECTS LTD SUCCESSFULLY CELEBRATED THE HERITAGE WEEK THAT CATERED TO A NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND ADDED VALUE THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION.



From children to the elderly around the world, travelling has always been a preferred choice. Travel to the sites of Muziris and there are many icons the project is identified with. The area is home to many significant heritage sites. All of these sites are particularly amenable to being seen from a boat ride on the waters of Muziris. The project, as a heritage conservation one, is poised to grow, buoyed by recent initiatives under its association with various organisations. We, in the tourism industry strongly believe that these initiatives have significant social relevance too.

It is with immense contentment that Muziris Projects Ltd ends another successful year, that served the tourism industry, and the heritage segment in particular. Over the past years, the tourism industry in Kerala has been witnessing a constant upward trend. The increasing varied dimensions in the industry have given rise to new terms and concepts. Muziris Projects Ltd., we believe, has contributed much towards being responsible, and has already acquired a reputation for the brilliance of its initiatives in this regard.

Tradition. History. Legacy. Words which are often used in describing HERITAGE and what is valuable in it. The scope to explore avenues for responsible travel is vast, and the possibilities are endless. While the 'Heritage Walk' program for students has been considered a major step towards non-formal education, other initiatives are also being planned in tune with spreading awareness in history and heritage preservation.

This year we hosted a number of events. There were seminars and workshops, sporting events, cultural fests and festivals, in partnership with various organisations nationally and internationally. We launched many programs and initiated various developmental plans in the Panchayats and Municipalities of our region. We plan to organise events that offer varied experiences aimed at promoting and attracting more people to explore the various facets of this incredible project. Travellers will witness more themes along with the destinations. The 'Muziris Paddle 2020', a kayaking event for lovers of water sports that paddles for a mission is a specially curated one. The event will examine the important concern over protection and preservation of our marine environment. These events with international exposure create teams and develop bonds among participants and a continuity in our mission even after the event is over. Undoubtedly, the impact will be immeasurable.

As the year ends, we look closer and focus on the positive outcomes over the years. We at Muziris Projects Ltd wish everyone a Happy New Year and a pleasant year for travel and sightseeing.

P M Nowshad
Director Managing,
Muziris Heritage Projects

Ancient method of preservation of palm leaves

(M. Narayanan Namboodiri,
Conservation consultant, Muziris Conservation Lab)

The traditional method of preservation of palm leaves followed a study of all aspects of the material. Thus it was categorized into the country variety and refined variety. These categories differed in their characteristics, where the leaves were narrow with thick veins in the country variety, whereas the refined variety had thin veins which were more flexible.

Prolonged neglect of the manuscripts affect the physical conditions of the leaves. Mostly, they are opened to be cleaned during rituals and are kept back untouched for long. Rain and adverse climatic conditions can at any time harm the leaves. This is mostly rectified by drying under sunlight and applying the paste form of coconut leaves for country variety.

On the other hand, charcoal can be applied and then wiped out with turmeric powder for the refined variety. This will help improve both the chemical and physical strength of the palm leaves.

Palm leaves can be exposed during sunrise and sunset to prevent insect attack, growth of larva, gunges and other micro organism. Finally this can be warped using a neat cloth dipped in turmeric water. In Kerala 'Churunna' is used to insert palm leaves which allows sufficient air circulation throughout.

PREPARATION :

There are two kinds of palm leaves:

- a) PALMIRA normally called Thalla and
- b) THALIPOT normally called Srithala which is used to write or paint.

The Thalla grows 15 to 20 metres and leaves are thick so it is ideal for writing with stylus (azhuthanny) and it has higher resistance power than the Thalithala.

The Thalipot pot palm grows taller up to 20 to 25 metres. The leaves are thin and very flexible which enables writing. The palm leaves used for manuscripts are 15 inches to 35 inches in length and about 1 inch wide.

The preparation of leaves varies from place to place. In some places fresh palm leaves are dried in the shade and then coated with ginger oil for smoothness. In some other places, leaves are cut and hung in kitchens to be exposed to smoke to kill any unwanted growths and cleaned one or two times with a clean cloth. One can also boil them in turmeric water to kill unwanted things and in some places they are kept in muddy water (in a paddy) for 2 to 5 days. Writing on the palm leaves is done either with stylus or a brush.

In the former case, the letters are incised on the leaves and then rubbed with a Carbon paste and then with ginger oil.

There are two methods of incising:

1. Keep the stylus in a fixed position and move leaves gently towards the left side.
2. Write directly towards the right without moving leaves.

Chemical and Physical characteristic of palm leaves.

The deterioration factor of the palm leaves depends on its chemical and physical characteristics. For instance, the Thala leaves are thicker than the Srithala leaves and the second one is more flexible due to its very thin veins. The most noted factor is that it is highly Hygroscopic and easily damaged by its surrounding environmental factors such as light, UV radiation from the sun and oxygen and finally lack of good housekeeping.

Cause of deterioration of palm leaves manuscript.

Mishandling is the main cause of decay in manuscripts. Extra care needs to be taken while handling the thread running through all holes of each leaf. As mentioned above, palm leaves are highly hygroscopic. A showcased manuscript should never be opened in the rainy season.

Attack of living organism.

As is said: " A conservator does not have any RIGHT to kill a living thing" (food chain).

So, remedial factors to avoid deterioration need to be checked initially. For the same reason, preventive restoration is always better than curative restoration. Curative restoration becomes the last option if the artifact is found not to survive unless there is an intervention of chemicals and other structural repairs.

Again, if anything is found beyond restoration, never attempt any experimental approach. Just leave it to science and modern technology because conservation science keeps changing.



WALK THROUGH HISTORY



The student community has already recognised the 'Muziris Heritage Walk' as an interesting addition to the learning of history, through interactions with intangible and tangible elements, on a walk through the sites of Muziris.

25,573 students of classes 5 to 10 from around 50 schools and colleges covering Malappuram, Palakkad, Muziris region, Thrissur, Ankamaly and Ernakulam participated in this celebration of heritage. As Dr Midhun C Shekhar, Manager, Muziris museums says: 'It was all about creating an awareness about the tangible and intangible heritage of our land, and the 'why' and 'how' of protecting this. Muziris being a harmonious blend of all that is termed 'heritage', became the perfect model to celebrate the Heritage Week.'

The various museum sites of Cheraman Parambu, Kottappuram fort, Jewish synagogues at Paravur and Chendamangalam and the Dutch palace and nalukettu of Paliam transported the students to a new model of learning experience. It was also a tribute to many of those passionate, but dying traditional skills and crafts of the region. KIDS, the Kottappuram Integrated Development Society, had 17 of their differently abled members weave the natural fibres of water hyacinth and screw pine into products of excellence, all woven with human emotions of love. Each day concluded with children trying to learn the skill, while visitors enjoyed buying the woven products.

Dr Midhun continues: 'Crafts too are a part of history. At the Heritage Week, we used the medium of 'museum' to educate the students. Thus, museum education became an integral part of this informal education exercise. Different aspects of conservation, museums and history were explained to them'.

The event concluded with 200 students of Amrita Vidyapeeda school in a formation of the World Heritage logo at the Cheraman Parambu ground. Undoubtedly, the students felt the wondrous essence of heritage conservation in an amazing way.

Gateway to MUZIRIS



The Munakkal beach in Azhikode, Thrissur district has gained fame as a disabled-friendly beach. The scenic beach, with its shades of green from casuarina trees and the silvery blue of the sky and waters, is a favorite of tourists. The around 1300-metre walkway and food courts have already become attractions.

The beach will soon find a place on the Muziris map. Under the project, it will be beautified and more tourist amenities readied, in tune with international standards to gain global mileage. Availability of a boat jetty, hop on hop off boat rides, water taxis and more walkways and facilities for entertainment are planned under the process. The walks and boat rides around the beach will showcase the best of sweeping views.

Thanks to the efforts of Shri E T Taison Master MLA and other officials, the beach has now become the district's first of its kind beach where even wheelchair-bound visitors can enjoy the area.

Nature is always in a celebration mode at the Munakkal beach, rightly called the 'Gateway to Muziris'.

Pedalling to the Venice of the East



Rated as being of touristic and cultural importance, Muziris Projects Ltd organised a bicycle ride from Kottappuram in Kodungallur to Alappuzha. Organised by Muziris Projects Ltd and coordinated by CRANKanore Pedallers and Thrissur on a Cycle (TOC), it was flagged off from Kottappuram waterfront on November 23rd by Adv V R Sunilkumar MLA. The ride was part of the celebration of the World Heritage week. Shri K R Jaithran, Municipal Chairman Kodungallur and Shri V M Johny, Kodungallur Municipal Councillor, were present. For lovers of sports and adventure, with the aim of spreading the message of heritage conservation, more than 100 bicycle riders representing various cycling clubs took part in the 'pedaling to the Venice of the East'.

The unparalleled experience of travelling this route on a bicycle, with the ride through coastal roads of Kochi, through Cherai, Vypeen and Fort Kochi demanded an enthusiastic participation from the riders. Careful preparation, time and resourcefulness took the riders via Arthungal to the ride destination of Alappuzha, the Venice of the East. All the efforts for a cultural revival and heritage of our region were honored by Dr T M Thomas Isaac, Hon'ble Minister for Finance and Shri A M Arif, MP, at a ceremony in Alappuzha.

Shri P M Nowshad, MD, Muziris Projects Ltd was honored for his continued support in promoting sports and cycling among the youth in the Muziris region. Others in the team honored were Arun Kaushik and team from Tamil Nadu for spreading the Muziris Heritage legacy beyond boundaries, and Jackson Joseph Pulikkan for bringing up the most vibrant and fastest growing cycling club in the region, the Muziris cyclists club, cyclist Ziya Beevi for promoting responsible cycling and standing up for social causes, Najumudheen Tripayar for his source of motivation, Shajahan, a civil police officer for the best road safety initiative, Sandith Thandassery, CEO of Navgathi Marine Design for socially and environmentally innovative entrepreneurship, and 78-year-old Jose who completed a 300 km cycle ride, and is also a marathoner and swimmer.



Weaving with care

A visit to KIDS (Kottappuram Integrated Development Society) will prove to you that creating just about anything on natural fibre needs constant self-control. A brief conversation with the trainers and members will tell you that.

Established in 1987 and registered in 1988 as a social service society of Kottappuram diocese, it began to focus on the marginalised sections of the society. In 2008, it gained approval from the Ministry of Textiles as a Craft-based Resource Centre, one among the few in the country. Around 300 women work here, including nearly 30 differently abled members, purely dedicated to weave products out of natural fibres.

The aim of the Natural Fibre Craft Department is the promotion of the craft so as to serve hundreds of artisans with a sustainable income. Over the years KIDS has been focusing on the integrated development of the traditional artisans in the areas through value addition to

Screw pine (Thazha in Malayalam) and Water Hyacinth.

Fr Paul Thomas Kalathil, Director, KIDS, says 'A fibre like screw-pine was used only for one purpose - to be used as a mat. Through value addition, we have made bags, decorative items, cushions, pillows etc to a range of around 60 products now, which are in demand among domestic and international buyers of such products. The process of procurement of raw material to the final product involves effort from a lot of people. It has to be dried too, and so every person here has a job. Through their effort, we are informing people that such products, are an easy alternative to plastic too'.

Next on their list is water hyacinth, also called the wicked weed, which again turns into impressive products through the weavers' hands. Fr Paul continues: 'We need the plants which have a lengthy stem. We obtain those from Edathuruthy now. At Areppalam near Mathilakom, there is also a 14-acre plot of land that grows screw

pine'.

Another attempt from KIDS is to encourage groups in those regions, where the raw material is available in plenty, to work from homes. Only the finished products reaches the KIDS office. In a slow yet focussed way, they are working on jute and bamboo products too.

With preparations in full swing for the festive season of Christmas and New Year with hand-worked and extraordinarily beautiful products, the members have made it a spectacular place the people there want it to be.

And, NID-trained designers and weavers have made it arguably the most telling craftsmanship to love. Every bit of their product has something to do with professionalism.

Fr Paul concludes: 'Our dream is to create a Crafts Village which works on products with 25 natural fibres'.

EVENTS OF THE MONTH

The Paravur boat jetty area, which is one starting point of Muziris boating, is undergoing a beautification process. This will beautify the entire area, stretching towards the Paravur market. As part of this, Muziris Projects Ltd inaugurated a new fish sale counter on the market premises.

The stall was inaugurated by Shri D Raj Kumar, Municipal Chairman, Paravur. Shri P M Nowshad, MD, Muziris Projects Ltd welcomed the gathering. Parur Municipal councillors Smt Mini Shibu and Smt Jincy, Shri Pradeep Thoppil, Standing Committee Chairman - Health, and Ms Sajna Vasanthraj, Manager, Muziris Projects Ltd were present.



Gothuruthu is synonymous with immaculately prepared food. The recently opened Gothuruthu Muziris restaurant is an addition to the region's culinary delights. The restaurant has been inaugurated as part of Gothuruthu Muziris Heritage Project chavittu nataka centre. Adv V D Satheesan MLA inaugurated the same on 05 December 2019. Adv Anoob T G, Chendamangalam Grama Panchayat President, Muziris Projects MD Shri P M Nowshad, Fr Thomas Kolarikkal, representatives of grama Panchayat and block panchayats, staff of Muziris Projects Ltd., members of Gothuruthu Muziris society, and natives of the region participated in the inaugural ceremony. The restaurant is run by Shri Teddy Thomas Pynadath. 'The restaurant should turn out to be a place that serves authentic cuisine of Gothuruthu to domestic and international visitors alike', added Adv V D Satheesan MLA in his inaugural speech.



Jellyfish Water sport in association with Muziris Projects Ltd and Kerala Tourism successfully launched the Muziris Paddle 2020 logo.

Hon'ble Minister for Finance and Coir Dr T M Thomas Isaac unveiled the logo by handing it over to A M Arif, MP, Alappuzha.

The event highlights tourism promotion of Muziris sites, in addition to making the network of waterways pollution-free, preserving it and encouraging water sports.

