





FEBRUARY 2020

MUZIRIS NEWS

Past Perfect, Present Continuous

muzirisheritage    
www.muzirisheritage.org



JELLYFISH

• WATER SPORTS •



AS THE PANORAMA OF THE MUZIRIS REGION UNFOLDED LIKE A HUGE MIRROR OF TIME, THE KAYAKERS OF MUZIRIS PADDLE 2020 EFFORTLESSLY TRAVERSED MOMENTS TO RESTORE HISTORY, HERITAGE, WATERSPORTS AND PROTECTION OF MARINE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.



■ *Prof Dr Kesavan Veluthat*

As Muziris Heritage Project looks forward to continuing its momentum into yet another impressive New Year, it is proud of the immense recognition that Prof Dr Kesavan Veluthat, eminent historian, academician and consultant to Muziris Projects Ltd, has gained.

Currently the Director of Institute for the Studies in the Heritage of Coastal Kerala (ISHCK) in Kodungallur, Dr Veluthat has been providing insights on heritage conservation to the project. Muziris has been embarking on new chapters as it seeks to forge relationships with organisations and nations across the world. He brings more than four decades of experience to the heritage conservation project of Muziris.

Extremely prolific in writing of early and early medieval Indian history with focus on South India, Dr Veluthat has taught in various institutions. Prior to joining Mangalore University in 1982 from where he took retirement as Chairman of the Department of History (2008), he taught in a few Govt colleges in Kerala from 1975. He was later invited to the Chair of Ancient Indian History in the University of Delhi which he held with distinction for seven years (2009-2016). He has also served Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and the University of Hyderabad as a Visiting Professor.

The books and articles he has authored and edited are seen as landmarks that map our history through time. He has published many books in English and Malayalam, including three monographs and three collections of essays. He is best known for his studies on the brahmana settlements in Kerala and political structure in early medieval South India, besides earning recognition as the theorist of South India's early medieval epoch.

On 26th November 2019, on its Foundation day, the Asiatic Society of Mumbai, an institution created to generate, systematize and disseminate knowledge of India and the Orient conferred upon him the Society's Campbell Memorial Gold Medal for the years 2016-2018. This medal is awarded in three years to a Scholar "in recognition of distinguished services in Oriental research in the form of a treatise, pamphlet or a book in English on the subject of Oriental History, Folklore or Ethnology, calculated to further the objects of the Society, namely, the investigation and encouragement of Oriental Arts, Sciences and Literature."

Dr Veluthat was elected General President of the Indian History Congress (IHC) the largest association of professional historians in South Asia in its 8th session held in Kannur in December 2019. He had earlier been a sectional president and joint secretary of the Indian History Congress.

Dr Veluthat's areas of engagements with Muziris Heritage Project are manifold and the organisation congratulates him and looks forward to his continued association with it.

Muziris Paddle 2020




Think of Muziris , and there comes to mind something – a monument, , a landscape, or aspects of history and culture or cuisine. That is why, Muziris should be a natural draw for any tourist.

The region witnessed Kerala’s most incredible nature experience at the Muziris Paddle 2020, on January 4 and 5. With the motto, ‘paddle to preserve’, Jellyfish Water sports organised the event in association with Muziris Heritage Project. Promoted as a kayaking and stand-up-paddling (SUP) event , it targetted domestic and international tourists, adventure seekers and paddling enthusiasts alike.

As the focus was given to generate awareness about our neglected marine world, to clean and preserve the waterbodies, offer more training in water sports and promoting the heritage sites of Muziris, it was open to beginners and experienced paddlers alike. They were all brilliantly trained by expert kayakers and river guides. But, it was strictly to those who were passionate about preserving our nature and marine environment. This is why the paddlers took on the mission to clean the waterbodies while they paddled.

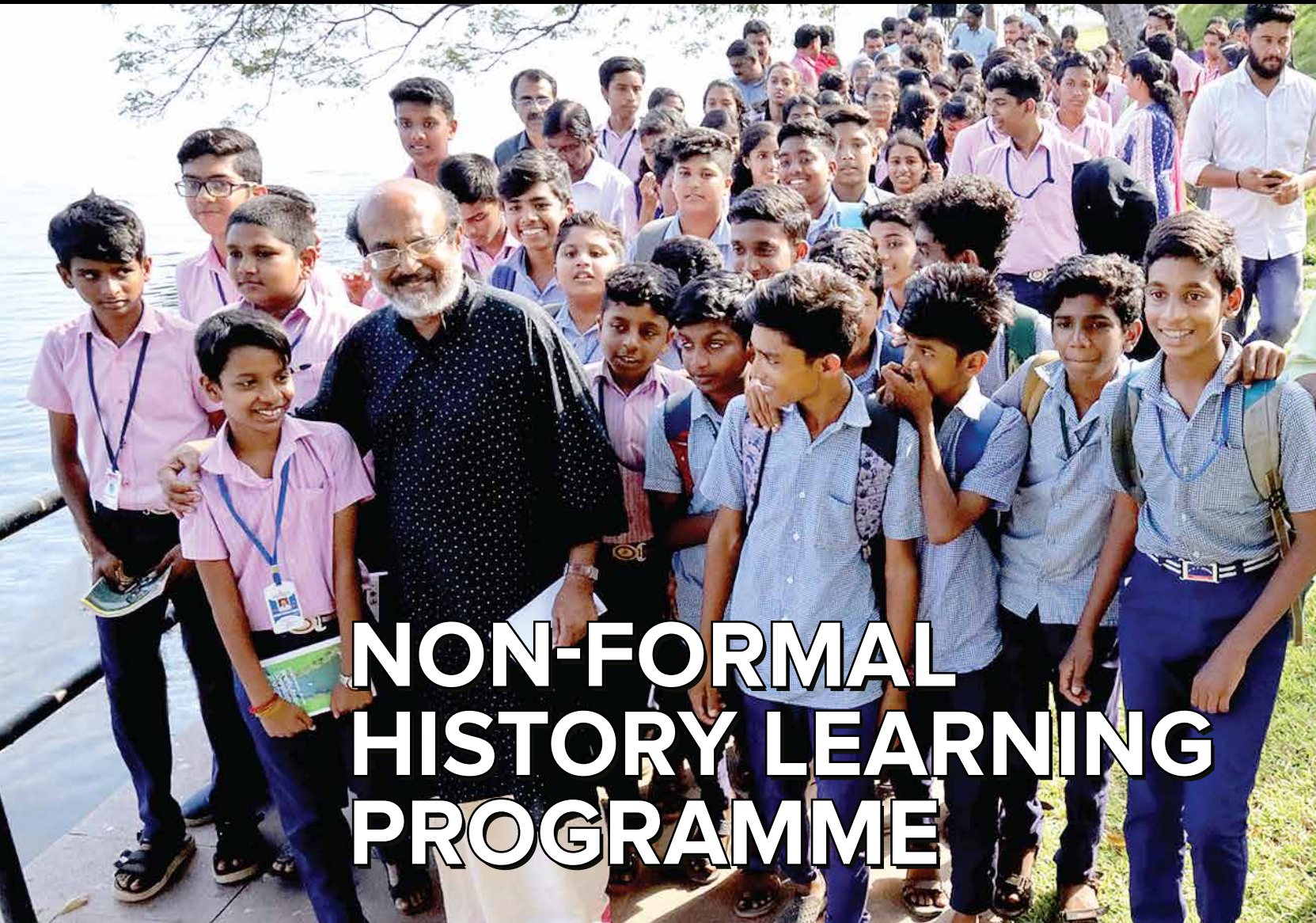
Kayaking sounds like a concept new to Kerala. Muziris Heritage Project, under the Dept of Tourism, Govt of Kerala, with Jellyfish Water sports aimed at promoting the compelling need to strengthen the bond between man and nature. ‘ We think it’s a great idea to combine watersports with conservation. Since 6 years we have been promoting water sports activities like kayaking, SUPing, sailing and canoeing, by bnringing together people from all walks of life and ages. Professional paddlers to un-experienced and from kids to senior citizens. You preserve what you love and paddling lets people build a strong bond with waterbodies , with nature’, says Kaushik Kodithodi, founder, Jellyfish Watersports.

The riveting expedition saw the kayakers paddling through the Muziris waters and covering an overall distance of 40 km through the backwaters of Kerala. On the route, they were fortunate to visit the Muziris sites of Manjumatha church, Pallippuram Fort, Sahodaran Ayyappan smarakom in Cherai and Paravur synagogue.

The event was flagged off at the Muziris Kottappuram waterfront on January 04th by Shri V R Sunilkumar MLA. The event concluded on January 05th at the Bolghatty island in Kochi.

Another highlight of the event was the presence of Ms Sandy Robson , winner of the Australian Geographic adventurer of the year 2017 , leading the expedition.

‘Responsible travel’, as one can call it, the Muziris Paddle took off in a big way and has left a permanent mark in the memory of many a paddler in Muziris. Possibly, like in no other event, the Muziris Paddle , was imbued with an elegance that seems to be linked to its social consiousness.



NON-FORMAL HISTORY LEARNING PROGRAMME



The defining characteristics of education found new meaning when a group of school students experienced a learning method new to them. Hon'ble Minister for Finance and Coir Dr T M Thomas Isaac inaugurated the state-wide launch of 'Heritage Walk' programme initiated by Muziris Heritage Project at 2.30 pm on 14 January 2020 at the Kottappuram fort in Kodungallur. It was an exclusive day for the students. They were taken to a few enriching moments when the Hon'ble Minister shared information on history, asked them questions and gifted them books for the right answers as he walked with them around the fort area and spent more than an hour for interactions. He told them the importance of understanding the history behind any place that one gets to visit. 'Muziris is a place that generates and disseminates knowledge', concluded Dr Isaac in his inaugural speech.

At the inaugural ceremony, Dr Kesavan

Veluthat and Dr Michael Tharakan too shared anecdotes from history. Paliam Palace and its history, Cheraman Masjid, Kottappuram fort, Pattanam excavations all became topics for the interactive sessions.

Following the success of the exhibitions organised as part of the World Heritage Day across the museums of Muziris, the project introduced the two-day tour-cum-study programme. The initiative will provide them with a first-hand experience and knowledge about Kerala's history. Already students of classes 8,9 and 10 who follow the Kerala SCERT stream are familiar with chapters on Muziris and the state's heritage from their history lessons. A 'Heritage Walk' through the various museums including Kottappuram fort and the Jewish synagogues at Chendamangalam and Paravur and the Paliam Dutch Palace and Paliam nalukettu will unfold experiences in

the form of learning, activities, games, fun, cultural events with performances of traditional artforms and interactions. The students will be provided with interactive learning aids too. The activity books for High school students were introduced during the programme. 'Muziris is the only one place that offers a continuous learning of Kerala history from Pattanam excavations to the present', added Shri P M Nowshad ,MD, Muziris Heritage Project in his speech.

Adv V R Sunil Kumar MLA, Shri E T Taison Master MLA, Prof Dr Kesavan Veluthat, Director ISHCK, Dr Michael Tharakan, Shri P M Nowshad, MD, Muziris Heritage Project, teachers of various schools were present at the event. Students from Govt Girls Higher Secondary School Paravur, St Anne' s school Kottappuram and Govt Boys High school Kodungallur actively participated.

As a part of this non-formal history learning initiative, the project targets one lakh students in 2020 to walk through the landmarks of the port town of Muziris.



KOTTAPPURAM MURALS

Every road , every lane and bylane in the Kottappuram market area arrives into the Muziris waterfront , a beautiful destination under the project. Each object there endears itself to the visitor with its unique beauty. A start point of the Muziris boat ride, and a widely famed venue after the two recent legs of the Champions Boat League, ' history' is of paramount importance here. The area that includes the Kottappuram market carries its own stories and memories from the past : stories and memories of all those who traversed its waters. As stamping it all into pages of documented history, artists have decorated its walls with works of art. Artist K G Babu's soaring 26 ft tall wall painting depicting characters of ' Khazakinte Itihasam' impresses anyone. Shyam V S, a Fine Arts student of Thrissur and friends joined the enthusiasm of the CBL, working day and night to adorn the walls . Each wall carries an artwork, truly narrating one or the other anecdote from the history of the land called Muziris. As the market itself, these murals too were meticulously planned.



HISTORIC MOMENTS

The past of this tiny hamlet was always exciting, but it is the present continuous that makes for a fascinating study. To walk through the roads of Chendamangalam and into the shrine and historic enclosure itself is to step into another world. The appeal of historic monuments and sites is something of a rarity.

Chendamangalam, situated 4 kilometers from North Paravur has earned its niche in the Muziris Heritage project as it bears the rare stamp of Hindu- Muslim- Christian-Jewish culture co-existing in one location, exemplifying cordiality and tolerance. As one finds references to Chendamangalam in many of the literary works, the name may have derived its name from 'Jayanthamangalam' or 'Choornimangalam'. The place also carries a rare geographical combination of rivers, islets,



a hillock, and an expanse of green plains and the the confluence of the Periyar and the Chalakkudiyar off its eastern boundary.

Kottayil Kovilakom, in the village of Chendamangalam that once housed the palace of the Villarvattom king or the Villarvattom Swaroopam, is an important site in the Project. Lying in close proximity to the hill where the palace was located are a temple, a mosque, a Jewish cemetery below the valley, Holy Cross church and the Chendamangalam Jewish synagogue in the once active Jew Street. The remains of the Vypeekotta Seminary built by the Portuguese is preserved as a protected historic monument under the Dept of Archaeology. There were many buildings on the premises, which were destroyed during the wars in later period. The Holy Cross church, believed to be built in 1577, that functions in the same compound was renovated later . It has inscriptions in 'vattezhuthu', the early script used to write Malayalam, fixed on its walls.

Muziris Heritage Project conserves the remnants of Kerala's great past as museums. Chendamangalam synagogue, a prominent among them showcases the lives and rituals of Kerala Jews. The synagogue stands as testament to India's rich Jewish heritage and atmosphere of tolerance.

Paliyam Nalukettu museum , ancestral abode of Paliathachan, who was the prime minister to the erstwhile kingdom of Kochi in the 17th and 18th centuries presents to the visitor, the architectural model of Nalukettu , the traditional homesteads of a main house along with few satellite houses. This was occupied by the women of the Paliyam noble family who followed the matrilineal system. The Paliyam Dutch palace museum is an architectural hybrid of Dutch and local styles.

The temples owned by the Paliyam Group Devaswom Trust, the Paliyam 'oottupura', the market during the celebration of Vishu reminding the 'exchange market' or 'maatta chantha' that followed the bartering system and the festivals serve landmarks of an eventful past. Chendamangalam is also known for its bell metal work, an ancient art of Kerala and the weaving of authentic handloom fabrics known for their excellence worldwide.

Finally, not to be ignored is the beautiful landscape the land has. The visitor taking a Muziris boat ride to Chendamangalam will be lucky enough to get his first glimpse of this at the Paliyam boat jetty itself.





65th ANNIVERSARY OF MALA JEWISH AGREEMENT

Mala, a small town in the Thrissur District, is rich in history, culture and tradition. A former Jewish settlement in Kerala, this place connects one to the distant past of Kerala. A wide range of monuments survive here including the Jewish synagogue, cemetery, 'kadavu' and a neighbourhood that still remind one of the centuries old settlement.

At the time of migration to Israel in the 1950s, the Jewish community handed over the synagogue and cemetery to the Mala Panchayat by means of a registered agreement on 04 January, 1955. The historic deed provides for the conservation of the synagogue and the cemetery by the Mala Panchayat. Commemorating the 65th anniversary of this Mala Jewish agreement, an international seminar on 'the Jewish Heritage in Kerala with special reference to Mala', was

organised by Muziris Projects Ltd in collaboration with Mala Grama Panchayat on January 04, 2020 at the Mala Panchayat Community Hall.

Students from schools and colleges participated in the 'Heritage Walk' from Mala kadavu to the Jewish synagogue. This was aimed at inculcating a non-formal approach to the learning of history of Kerala among students. Shri P M Nowshad, MD, Muziris Heritage Project, updated the audience with the ongoing process of conservation of the synagogue to be opened as a museum under the project. Shri V R Sunilkumar MLA, in his inaugural address pointed out the significance of Muziris in India's history and the noticeable position that Kodungallur and Mala holds in it. Smt Smitha P Menon recited a poem on the immigration of Kerala Jews written by Vyloppilly. Prof Kesavan Veluthat,

Director, ISHCK made the introductory address. Smt Sobha Subash, President, Mala Grama Panchayat, spoke on the occasion and Shri Biju Urumees, Chairman, Standing Committee for Education and Health proposed the vote of thanks.

Dr Ophira Gamliel, University of Glasgow UK, who presented the topic 'A History yet to be told: Mala in the fading memories of Kerala Jews', was gifted with a copy of the book Karkuzhali, an anthology of Jewish women songs in Jewish Malayalam.

In the various sessions held, Dr Ophira Gamliel, Prof C Karmachandran and Dr Laju Paul K presented papers on Jewish Heritage in Kerala – Mala. Shri Elias Josephai, Kadavum Bhagam Synagogue, Ernakulam, and Dr Yahuda Kovesch, anthropologist, Cuba, led the session for Jewish representatives. Shri P K Kittan, Shri John Kalliath, Arnos Pathiri Smarakom, Thrissur and Shri Varghese Antony, Muniyattukunnu Samrakshana Samithi, presented papers on local initiatives for heritage conservation. The programme also organised a photo exhibition related to Mala and its heritage.



EVENTS OF THE MONTH



Dr Benny Kuriakose, conservation consultant, Muziris Heritage Project, conducted a one day 'workshop on conservation' for the agencies who have undertaken the civil works of Muziris monuments. The workshop was held at the Muziris Research and International Convention Centre, Pullut on 09 & 10 January 2020.



Announcing the launch of the 'Gothuruthu Fest 2020', a new boat jetty under Muziris Heritage Project for the visitors to Gothuruthu was inaugurated by Shri V.D.Satheesan MLA. Chendamangalam Grama panchayat President T G Anooob presided over the function.

Rene Von Berkel, South Asia Head of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and Dr Zinaida Fadeeva, Senior Advisor- Strategy and Policy at United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) visited the Muziris sites of Paravur synagogue, Kottappuram fort, Kottappuram market and Paliam palace on 11th January 2020

