



APRIL - JULY 2021

# MUZIRIS NEWS

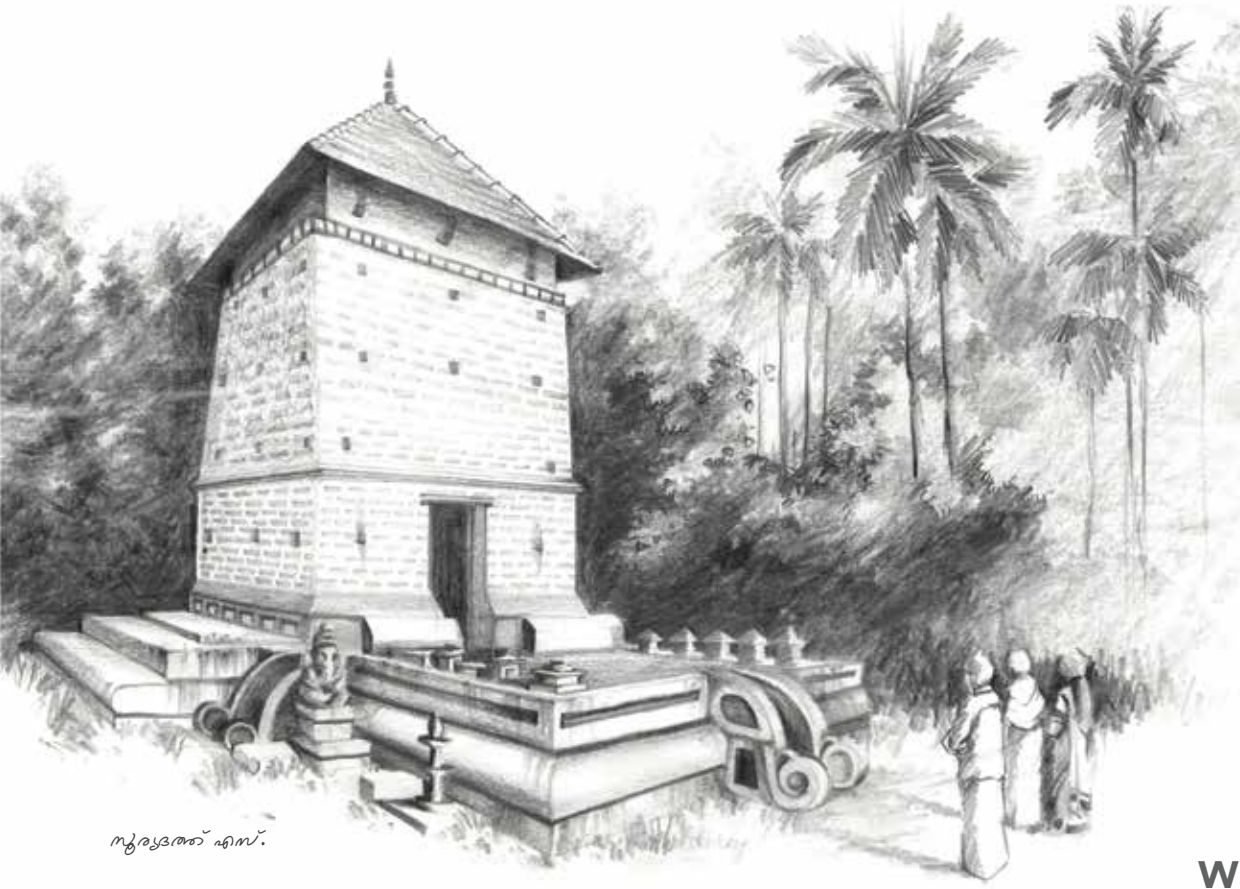
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## Deification of Pandemics





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**WORLD  
HERTAGE DAY  
CELEBRATION  
- APRIL 18**

**MY HERITAGE**

Muziris heritage project celebrated World Heritage Day on April 18th for spreading consciousness of our cultural diversity and the significance of safeguarding our glorious past. The theme was "Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures". Conservation of cultural heritage requires critical examination of the past. In light of the above, the Muziris heritage project had organized a mobile photography/pencil sketch competition, 'My Heritage', for the high school students to bring Kerala's tangible and intangible heritage to the public and make everyone understand heritage conservation values.

The Jury Convener, Shri. Manoj Kannan, Principal, Government Fine Arts College, Thrissur, made the selection of the winners. Suryadath S, standard 10, Kollam City Central School, won first place in the drawing competition.

Jagannath KM, standard 4, Kadambur Higher Secondary School, Kannur, won second place, and Abhinav C standard 10, G H S S, Nenmara got the third position. Photographer Shri. K R Sunil, Cinematographer Shri. Nanthakumar Menon and Shri. Biju, C. A., Drawing Teacher, Pullut Govt. School were present selection committee. The first-place student will get a cash prize of Rs. 15,000, second place Rs. 10,000 and third place winner will get a cash prize of Rs.5000. Winners will also get mementoes and certificates, a one-day heritage boat trip, and accommodation with their families to visit the Muziris heritage sites. The competition was organized in the categories of Pencil Drawing and Mobile Photography. However, the results were not published in the Mobile Photography section as the photos did not meet the criteria set by the Muziris Heritage Project. The Project wishes the winners and all other students who participated in the competition.

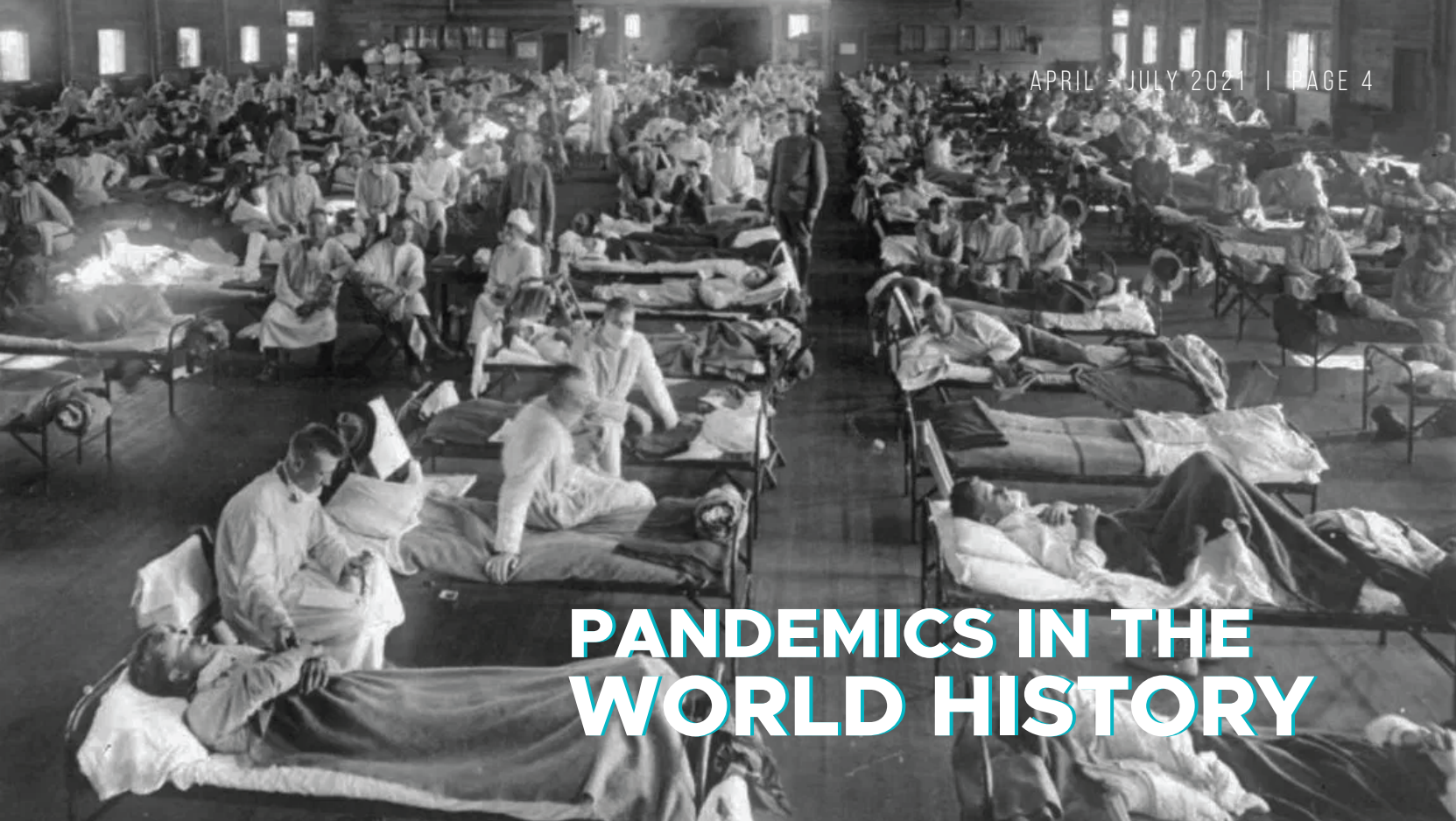






## VISIT OF PROF. AMARESWAR GALLA IN M U Z I R I S

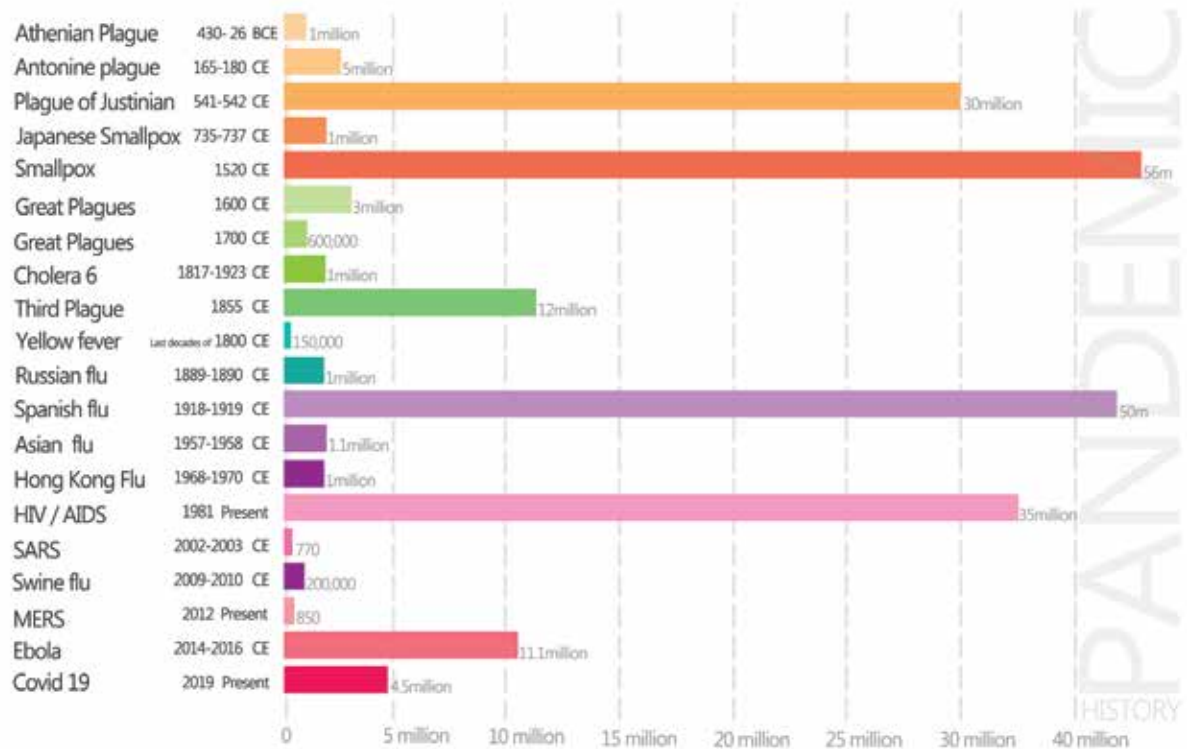
Amareshwar Galla, Director of Anant National University, the UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Museums & Sustainable Heritage, and the Emeritus Faculty of the Australian National University visited Muziris in April 2021. His visit was in connection with organizing an international research conference on tourism and leisure studies. The Common Ground Research Network (CGRN), Anant National University and the Muziris Heritage Project will jointly organize the conference on June 27 and 28, 2022. Leading scholars from different parts of the world will participate in the workshop. He said The Muziris Heritage project has different developmental potentials that might contribute to the sustainable development of this area. In terms of sustainable development, these potentials are not necessarily economic but also include social, environmental or cultural aspects. The conference will be more effective for future developments in the Muziris heritage projects.



# PANDEMICS IN THE WORLD HISTORY

## History's most deadly pandemics

Pandemic is an outbreak of global proportions. It happens when an infection due to a bacterium or virus becomes capable of spreading widely and rapidly. Disease and illness have plagued humanity since the earliest days. As humans spread around the world, infectious diseases became their constant companion. Even in the modern era, outbreaks are nearly constant.



PANDEMIC HISTORY



## Trade and Pandemics

Extensive trade relations created opportunities for human interaction to speed up the spread of epidemics. Thus more civilized humans got chances to increase their contact with different populations and ecosystems. Gradually ruthless encroachment on wildlife habitats, rampant urbanization, deforestation, unbridled promiscuity and global travel and more exotic trade routes are the perfect breeding ground for the outbreak of killer diseases. Diseases including Malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, influenza, smallpox, and others appeared among people during the early centuries. It is possible to assume that the ancient ports on the Malabar Coast, which functioned as trading centres in the last centuries, were severely affected by such epidemics through the traders of the time. In that way, Infectious diseases that have spread across various continents may have obscured the entire early human habitat.

## Pandemics and religion

In many ancient societies, people believed that spirits and gods inflicted disease and destruction upon those that deserved their wrath. This unscientific perception often led to disastrous situations that resulted in the deaths of thousands.

In several places in the Bible, there is mention of pestilence or pandemics affecting people. Such belief may encourage one to understand the causes of catastrophes to be avoided in the future. In addition to this, the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian is one of the most enduring themes in Western religious art. The execution scene so often portrayed - with the Saint transfixed with arrows - is based on the legend about his life and death

during the reign of the Roman emperor, Diocletian. In medieval times, he was regarded as a saint with a special ability to intercede to protect from the plague, and devotion to him greatly increased when the plague was active. The plague died out, but the image of St. Sebastian continued to inspire Christians even today.

Quran: prophet's sayings have always instructed Muslims to remain distant during Epidemics. Reflection on some verses of the 74th chapter of the Quran may lead to clues regarding the appearance of a pandemics,

## Vasoorimala, Deification of pandemics

*Vasoorimala* is an important *UpaDevata* or subsidiary deity in the Bhagavathi temple at Kodungallur. To the southwest of the temple sits a small stone structure called 'the *Samadhi* of *Vasoori*. *Vasoorimala* is the deification of smallpox, chickenpox, mumps and other contagious diseases. The deity sits on an auspicious seat in *savyalalthasana* carries in her right hand probably the gesture of boon bestowal and in the left holds an unidentifiable object. She has *kirita*, *kundala* (ear ornament), *māla*, *mundamāla*, *kangana*, *keyura*, *pādavalaya*, lower garments etc. At the back of which is flanked by sheep doing reverence circumscribed by aureola (*prabhavali*). Devotees make offerings of turmeric and pepper powder sprinkled inside the temple and rubbed on the temple walls. People believe that they get relief from disease after offering such a form of worship.

There are sayings that the virus is 'God's judgment on the wickedness of humanity. It is believed that the concept and worship of goddess *Vasoorimala* may have originated during Medieval Kerala as protection against *Vasoori*. The *Vasoorimala* temple is situated in Kodungallur, the known ancient trade centre. Kodungallur had hosted world traders for many centuries and witnessed the various epidemics that swept across the sea and different continents. There is speculation amongst historians that the early traders from different countries might have transmitted the disease to this region. The Deification of *Vasoorimala* at Kodungallor can be connected with assumptions mentioned above set forth by historians.

People must understand all that is happening (including disasters) and find solutions to survive. Humanity's understanding of the causes of disease has improved today, resulting in a drastic improvement in the approaches towards modern pandemics. Our predecessors have survived various epidemics that have spread across the continent. Today we are also fighting, thereby becoming part of history.





## THE CONSERVATION OF ATHANI, PORTERS REST

Today, the objective of cultural heritage projects is to preserve historical and artistic values for future generations in the best possible state without compromising the value of authenticity. The aim of conservation of a monument should be subjected to the minimum - whilst only necessary - interventions to maintain its authenticity and integrity. Original/historical material and architectural/decorative details (structural or non-structural) must be valued and retained for as long as possible.

### Athani

The Athani (Porter's Rest) is used for unloading loads from the head of porters who used to carry loads over long distances. Usually, an Athani relatively flat stone is supported by two or more orthostats about four feet in height. Athanis were known by various other names such as Chumaduthangi, Elappu, Thangikkallu, Unnukallu, Athanikkallu, and Moonnukallu. A few Chumaduthangis still survives at Sringapuram, Padakulam, Kodungallur, and Athani, few that have not fallen victims to road widening, natural calamities or human vandalism. The restoration of Padakulam Athani, which was wrecked by a vehicle, was carried out under the supervision of the Muziris heritage project.





## Preliminary Works before Restoration

Documentations and diagnosis are important steps in the conservation of monuments. Before starting the stone restoration, technically examined issues of the Athani. The history of Athani, the period in which the monument was built, the technique that prevailed in the erection of orthostats and overhang have been carefully studied. For example, it has been noticed that there is an inscription on the overhangs. Specialists closely examined scripts and taken photographs. Gave great care to conserve the stone inscription on a scientific and technical basis.

## Mechanical stitching of orthostats

This method stabilizes and arrests wide cracks that extend deep into or through a stone unit. The stitch pins are usually stainless steel to resist corrosion and accommodate the tensile forces that caused the stone to crack. The broken surface was drilled in a "U" shape and inserted stitch pins. Then, patched the pinholes and the crack surface together. Used Cementitious material to treat small areas of the stone. M sand was used to match the patching material's colour and texture to the existing stone, along with adhesive.

## Reattach overhangs

Since the inscribed broken stone slab required increased support, an additional load-bearing platform has been provided. Gave proper support for overhang by using an angle bar or L shaped bracket. As temporary support, the stainless steel prop was fixed to keep the overhangs in position. Epoxy resin was applied to each broken surface, then allowed to dry for seconds and fixed together. The coping stone was then treated with adhesive and Granite dust for filling the cracks. The area immediately around the porter's rest was demarcated by laying laterite blocks.





## DAVINCHI SURESH'S INSTALLATION AT MUZIRIS MUNAKAL BEACH

Kerala's handling of the coronavirus pandemic has received applause from across the globe. Artist Davinchi Suresh, an artist from Kodungallur, was active during the lockdown to create awareness against COVID-19 and spread the importance of social distancing among the public. His artistic installation at Muziris Munakkal is praiseworthy. It transmits messages about how the pandemic has hit people in the world hard and their struggles and eagerly waiting for mask free new era. The artistic installation is the symbolic consolidation of a masked man and a Chinese dragon. The Chinese dragon connects the Wuhan province (first outbreak of Covid 19 reported) symbolically.

## Turquoise Glazed Pottery (TGP)

Museum : Pattanam Children Museum  
Name of Object : TGP  
Material : Clay  
Size : Potsherds

### Site Description:

Potsherds recovered from the archaeological site called Pattanam (N. Lat. 10°09.434'; E. Long. 76°12.587'), located in Vadakkekara village of Paravur Taluk in the Ernakulam District in Kerala, India.

### Artefact Description:

TGP is a class of alkaline-glazed earthenware that has a light beige fabric with green, yellow, white or blue glaze. Glaze is a type of slip applied to pottery through firing in a high temperature. These sherds belong to the category of West Asian ceramic vessels from Babylonian times which continued into the Islamic period. It is believed that these ceramics were principally manufactured in Southern Iraq.

Generally, it can be seen in the form of bowls, plates or jars of varying sizes. Unearthed TGP sherds from Pattanam are found in the Early Historic layers. Most of the sherds are belonging to 3rd century BCE and 8th century CE.



Base : Turquoise Glazed Pottery