

Bar Mitzvah in Jewish Synagogue after 34 yrs

Synagogue to host ritual commemorating religious adulthood of two boys, of which one is a British citizen

ANU KURUVILLA @Kochi

AFTER nearly three decades, Kochi will serve as the venue for Bar Mitzvah, a Jewish religious ritual commemorating the religious adulthood of a boy. In fact, the Paradesi Synagogue in Mattancherry will host Bar Mitzvah of two boys on Saturday. That's not all. One of the boys celebrating the auspicious occasion is a British citizen who is coming to Kerala from England with his family. "Two boys will celebrate their Bar Mitzvah. While one of them, Menahim Ryan Pallivathukkal, is a Malayali, the other hails from the UK," said Josephai Abraham, a member

of the Jewish community residing in Mattancherry. He said the rabbi officiating the ceremony is from the Kochi office of STAR-K Certification Inc. The ritual was last observed in Kochi around 34 years ago. The caretaker of the synagogue said the UK natives decided to host the Bar Mitzvah of their son at the heritage monument as they were impressed by it. "The parents visited the synagogue in 2016 and became fascinated with it," he said.

Talking about Bar Mitzvah, Abraham said, "The ritual takes place on any occasion when the boy turns 13 during which the Torah (compilation



FILE PIC

The ritual takes place on any occasion when the boy turns 13 during which the Torah is read. However, the event generally occurs during a Sabbath — Josephai Abraham, a member of the Jewish community residing in Mattancherry

of first five books of the Hebrew Bible) is read. However, the event generally occurs during a Sabbath.

"Once the boy reaches turns 13, he is deemed personally responsible for fulfilling all the commandments, may don religious symbols on the forehead and left arm during weekday morning prayers and may be counted as an adult whenever 10 male adults are needed to form a 'minyan' for public prayers," Abraham said. After the religious ceremony, there is often a festive kiddush (prayer over a cup of wine), with a family social dinner or banquet on either the same day or the following day.

For the Jewish community in Kochi that has just around 28 members left, such ritualistic celebrations are few and far in between. "The next Bar Mitzvah in our community will take place after several years. There are not many boys in the community. The next candidate, Menahim's younger brother, is just five. After that is my grandson who is just one-and-a-half years old," Abraham said. The same ritual for girls is observed when they turn 12. "Bat Mitzvah doesn't take place in a synagogue, and is often celebrated with creative projects, meaningful gatherings and joyous parties," he said.

QUICK READ

UDF wins all four seats in local body by-elections

Kochi: The Congress-led UDF won all four wards in the district where by-election results were announced on Friday. UDF wrested two seats from CPM-led LDF in Ezhikara and Pallipuram grama panchayats and one from an independent in Vadakkera grama panchayat. In the election held in Ward 10 in Pallipuram panchayat, Deepthi Praju of Congress defeated the CPM candidate by a margin of 72 votes. T.P Soman of Congress won in Ward 3 Vadakkupuram of Ezhikara grama panchayat by a margin of 62 votes by defeating CPM's Navaneeth M.S. In Mookkannoor grama panchayat, the party wrested Ward 4 Kokkundu, where an independent won in 2020 polls. Sini Mathachan defeated Sismol Rijo, an LDF-backed independent by a margin of 268 votes while the party retained Ward 11-Muravanthuruth of Vadakkera grama panchayat. Nikitha Joby won by a margin of 228 votes defeating LDF-backed independent K.S.Suni. DCC president Mohammad Shiyas said that the impressive victory of the Congress in the local body by-elections in Ernakulam district is a verdict against the LDF government which is looting the common people. "UDF wrested three sitting seats of LDF. This should be seen as a reflection of public ire against Pinarayi government's tax plunder. The government is testing the patience of common man," said Mohammed Shiyas.

Wellness programme held for Infopark women employees

Kochi: The Confederation of Indian Industry-Indian Women Network (CII-IWN), Kerala, in association with Infopark, organized a wellness program for women employees. Around 100 women entrepreneurs and employees from various companies participated in the 'Wellness 360' event organized at Infopark Kochi. After inaugurating the program, Infopark CEO Susanthil Kurunthil said that Infopark is committed to uplifting and encouraging women workers to bring them to the forefront of society and will provide support of all kinds for the same. Dhanya Menon, Director, Avanzo Cyber Security Solutions Pvt Ltd, and India's first woman cyber-crime investigator, gave the keynote address on the challenges faced by women in cyberspace.

Elderly couple found dead at home in Perumpadappu

Kochi: A couple was found hanging at the kitchen of their house in Perumpadappu on Friday morning. The deceased people are Antony, 57, and wife Ratna, 55. The police suspect it to be a case of suicide. According to the police, as Antony was suffering from a heart disease, the couple was under depression. "The duo had borrowed money from many people for Antony's treatment. Due to financial stress, the couple might have taken the extreme step," said a police officer. Their bodies were handed over to relatives after postmortem examination. Palluruthy police registered a case for unnatural death and started a probe.

BIG SALES FOR THIRUVONAM BUMPER LOTTERY

M.S. VIDYANANDAN @TPuram

FORTUNE seekers are making a beeline for this year's Thiruvonam Bumper Lottery offered by the State Lotteries Department. Ticket sales commenced on July 27, and as of Friday, a staggering 17 lakh tickets have already been sold. This fortnight's sales figure has surged by 36% compared to the previous year's corresponding period, which saw 12.5 lakh tickets sold.

Security measure

The bumper ticket incorporates an additional security measure in the form of fluorescent ink printing. This innovative feature is aimed at deterring the circulation of counterfeit tickets. Moreover, it safeguards against the possibility of duping lottery agents through the production of high-quality photocopies of winning tickets. This security measure was initially introduced for the Thiruvonam bumper ticket in the preceding year, and notably, no incidents of fraud were reported following its implementation

Palakkad emerged as the frontrunner in ticket sales, closely followed by Thiruvananthapuram. The annual Thiruvonam Bumper lottery captured national attention when the department boosted the first prize to an unprecedented ₹25 crore, up from the previous year. This jackpot is arguably the biggest in the country. The addition of one lakh extra prizes for the bumper flick this year likely contributed to the surge in sales.



The Thiruvonam Bumper now offers a total of 5,34,670 prizes, marking a notable increase of 1.36 lakh prizes compared to the previous year. The cumulative prize money reaches an impressive ₹125.54 crore, with ₹12.55 crore allocated for agents' commissions. During the ticket launch, Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal said the augmented number of prizes aimed to enhance the ticket's popularity.

In the year 2022, a total of 66,55,914 lakh tickets were sold, with the number of prizes amounting to 3,97,911. In the previous year, the second prize equated to ₹5 crore for a single ticket. However, this time, the second prize has been set at ₹1 crore, with 20 fortunate winners. Moreover, the third prize of ₹50 lakh will also boast twenty winners, in contrast to the ten, third prizes of ₹1 crore provided in the preceding year. Priced at ₹500 per ticket, with an agent's commission of ₹97, the tickets will be distributed across ten series. The maximum ceiling for the number of tickets available stands at 90 lakh.



TAILOR-MADE

Jubina Shihab, a Kudumbashree worker from Kalamassery in Kochi, has been stitching the Indian flag with the support of her husband Shihab since 2019. With another Independence Day around the corner, the couple hopes for brisk sales | A.SANESH

Organic veggies by ex-mental hosp inmates to hit Onam markets

CYNTHIA CHANDRAN @TPuram

THIS Onam is extra special for 18 inmates of Shradha Care Home, a facility run by the Thiruvananthapuram district panchayat at Venjaramoodu. For, the organic vegetables that they planted at the facility hit the market soon for sale during the festival season. The men, all aged between 40 and 60 years, had planted the vegetables, including bitter melon, ladies finger, long beans, brinjal, cucumber, salad cucumber, green chilly, different plantain, red lady papaya and Vietnam super early jackfruit, at the home as part of their horticultural therapy.

also engage in fish farming, poultry farming and cattle rearing at the care home sprawling 2 acres. The activities are overseen by agriculture department official K.G. Binulal. In fact, last year, they generated ₹4.5 lakh from the sale of vegetables, milk and eggs, after meeting their requirements.

At the end of every day, the inmates earn an incentive of 1% from the produce they sell, mostly to people in the neighbourhood. When asked what he does with his day's incentive, a 45-year-old inmate told TNIE, "I love eating good food. I am extremely happy here doing everything from cleaning the cattle shed to tending to the vegetable garden," said the inmate, an Adoor native. "I have 10 brothers and a sister. None want me back," he said.

Housed in State Mental Hospital (SMH) in Oolampara earlier, the inmates were brought to the care home after their families refused to accept them back even though they were completely cured. Besides horticultural therapy, the inmates



An inmate tending to the vegetable garden set up at Shradha Care Home in Venjaramoodu, Thiruvananthapuram

S. Sabarinathan, project manager of the horticultural therapy being provided at the home, said the Adoor native is completely cured and does almost every work. Sabarinathan said they were able to send eight inmates back to their families, under the 'Back Home' project.

Rejected by families

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"It was a moment of great pride and satisfaction for us," he said.

Meanwhile, Thiruvananthapuram district panchayat president D. Suresh Kumar told TNIE that several new projects would be started at the home. They included setting up a biogas plant, solar panel, as well as a rain shelter where 1,000 vegetable seedlings would be planted and later sold.

Vilappil Radhakrishnan, chairman of the panchayat's welfare standing committee said 25 more inmates from the mental hospital, who were com-

pletely cured, will be brought to the care home. "We do not impose anything on the inmates. They don't have to meet any targets. The produce are put up for sale after meeting the home's requirements," Radhakrishnan said, adding that doctors from Vamanapuram public health centre and Gokulam Medical College, Venjaramoodu, conduct medical checkups at the home every month.

Added attraction

The inmates are looking forward for Thiruvonam, when they would be joined by actor Suraj Venjaramoodu for Onasadya at the care home. Suraj, who lives nearby, calls on the inmates whenever he comes to his house. Moreover, the inmates will, for the first time in their life, take a flight to Kochi, where they will go on a cruise, and take a ride in the Metro, before returning to Thiruvananthapuram by train.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

12th August: At the centre of our galaxy lies a huge black hole, sucking in as much matter and energy as it can cope with. One day it may even suck us in as well, but not for several thousands of millions of years. By then humanity might well have worked out how to travel through time, which would offer a handy escape route.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

The Moon's monthly passage through an ambitious region of your solar chart always brings a heightened concentration on career and worldly aspirations. All the signs are that today's activities should be less complicated than they often were in the past, which should be a relief.

Taurus (Apr 21 - May 21)

You're ready and willing to take on the responsibility for seeing that joint plans work out. In fact, the businesslike alignments in your chart are so strong that even love affairs fall under their sway, in a manner of speaking. In other words, you'll have to work to keep relationships on the line.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You've been to do the right thing, and the ethical situation is looking interesting. So say the least. You'll probably find that at the root of all working relationships and obligations lies a general concern over standards. Other people may disagree, mind you.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

You've made some fine judgements, and a calculated risk could now pay off. The best purchases and investments are likely to combine beauty with tradition - antiques, for example. The most ideal romantic partners are those offering security in addition to passion.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)

People at home are unlikely to make many demands. But, even if they only make one, they will force the issue with such persistence that you will have to be very strong indeed if you are to resist. It's all to do with a challenge from the Moon - but it won't last long.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)

A stressful and challenging aspect can be turned to good advantage if you are determined to succeed - and unwilling to be put off by temporary distractions. It's excellent for all who are genuinely in search of new work, or who are happy to broaden their horizons.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)

A financial risk may be a better bet than an emotional one, but only if, paradoxically, your goal is to maintain the status quo. Your main romantic consideration will be the desire for long-term stability, and all social arrangements must be placed on a formal footing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

It's a time for elegance, grace and traditional values. You may be strangely fascinated by romantic bad luck, but it is no use dwelling on memories or wallowing in regret. Instead, you should actively plan your future in the knowledge that, even if plans don't work out as intended, they might work out better than you hoped.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)

Mercury's delicate relationship with Neptune is just one aspect which teases you with nostalgia and sentiment. If you're in business, shuffling huge sums of cash or making large purchases, do be aware that such feelings will influence your financial decisions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)

It is ironic that while today's lunar aspect gives you the advantage at home and in family affairs, it also makes you more sensitive. Then again, perhaps you will get what you want more easily if you are prepared to reveal your feelings. Partners' respect for you can only increase if you show how honest you are.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)

Keep yourself to yourself, and don't let anyone probe into affairs which are yours and yours alone. Also, remember that at work, and in the public arena, it is your ability to get on with authority figures that is crucial. It's all a matter of reaching a suitable compromise.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)

A discreet romantic connection may be given a formal dimension. Which is to say that you and a loved one will be happy to be left alone and free from prying eyes, even when you're out with the gang. If there's one point to remember though, it's to keep talking!

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9 in some cells.

SUDOKU EVIL TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

Crossword puzzle grid with some numbers and letters filled in.

CROSS WORD

ACROSS

- 1 They avoid humiliation with visors (4-6)
6 Heroic tale in 'The Pickwick Papers' (4)
10 Manor transformed into a type of villa (5)
11 Performer appearing all bare in movement (9)
12 School of painting (3,5)
13 Claw that can pick up a pound in weight (5)
15 It contracts to continue one's circulation (7)
17 Fruit gathered in fall (7)
19 It's plain it was the place for ancient games (7)
21 One giving a talk - on the radio? (7)
22 Refuses to face about fifty charges (5)
24 Strikebreaker promises to pay for a plant (8)
27 Fears to be converted to traditional English food (5,4)
28 An animal or bird that runs from left to right (5)
29 Wild rose as a symbol of love (4)
30 A country unable to exercise self-control (10)

DOWN

- 1 Consolidated company (4)
2 Doesn't like being snapped at? (6-3)
3 Describing a boom in restored icons (5)
4 Be all tremble yet brave it somehow (7)
5 Arrives in bundles (5,2)
7 A number after a new hip flask (5)
8 Secures rent for one of a group of shops (5,5)
9 Taken by those who are sick and tired of work? (4,4)
14 The police chief's last resort (3,2,5)
16 It is brought in to resist on the other side (8)
18 Reconciliation officer who works behind the scenes? (6,3)
20 Harsh wind from south and east (7)
21 A bit that's appropriate (7)
23 Uplifting holy books are an inspiration to poets (5)
25 Did little after I'd made the running (5)
26 Beg audibly for a victim (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Returns, 5 Cover, 8 Situation, 9 Box, 10 Like, 12 Migrate, 14 Chides, 15 Across, 17 Unlitter, 18 Act, 21 Spa, 22 Great Dane, 24 Limer, 25 Tadpole.

DOWN

Down: 1 Resin, 2 Tot, 3 Rear, 4 Spirit, 5 Contract, 6 Vermous, 7 Rackets, 11 Chieftain, 13 Pentagon, 14 Counsel, 16 Defect, 19 Irene, 20 Stud, 23 Ado.

Jumble puzzle with words EBTER, COEVI, SLNMOA, TULIDE and a cartoon illustration.

Jumbles: MESSY ENTRY NATIVE VIOLET Answer: After deciding to go with granite counters, their new kitchen plans were - SET IN STONE

