



THE EDICTS



Published by The Department of Communication and Journalism | University of Kerala
www.indianhistorycongress.com ihcedicts@gmail.com www.keralauniversity.ac.in

President to Inaugurate IHC today

Kariavattom: The President of India Pranab Kumar Mukherjee will be inaugurating the 77th Indian History Congress at the Kariavattom Campus on Thursday. Justice P.Sathasivam, Governor of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala, C.Ravindranath (Minister for Education), Kadakampally Surendran (Minister for Devaswom and Tourism), Ramesh Chennithala (opposition leader), P.K. Radhakrishnan (Vice Chancellor, University of Kerala) will also be present at the occasion.

The inaugural ceremony will commence by 12.30 pm at the Golden Jubilee hall of the

Kariavattom campus. Special instructions have been given to the delegates to assemble inside the hall before 12 pm and they will not be allowed to bring any other belongings than their mobile phones to the venue. Delegates without their passes shall not be admitted inside the auditorium.

The first copy of the proceedings of the Indian History Congress will be presented to President by the Chief Minister. The President will also be conferring the Rajwada award for the best distinguished historian at the ceremony.



Caricature: Adarsh Siva

Welcome Pranab Ji..

The capital city is keenly awaiting the arrival of the Hon. President of India, Pranab Kumar Mukherjee who will be coming to Kerala for the inauguration of the 77th session of the Indian History Congress. The inauguration is scheduled to take place at the golden jubilee hall of the Kariavattom Campus, today.

Pranab holds an advanced degree in History and Political Science as well as a Law degree from the University of Kolkata. He embarked on a career as a journalist and academician.

He ventured into politics in 1969 as a member of the Rajya Sabha and has been serving the nation for the past five decades. A dedicated patron of the arts and culture also a prolific reader, he has authored several books on Indian Economy and Nation Building.



Only those with closed minds don't ask questions' – Romila Thapar

Parvathy R S Nair
 Aswathy Nair M A
 Midhula Sarma N

Kariavattom: 'Questions are fundamental to all research and logical explanations and are at the roots of understanding existing and advancing knowledge. Those with closed minds refuse to ask questions and claim it as antinational' said eminent historian Romila Thapar while addressing the crowd here at the 77th session of Indian history congress.

She was the chief guest of the ceremonial part 1 inaugural session of the three day long history congress held at the Golden Jubilee Auditorium of the Kariavattom Campus. General President Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Secretary Prof. Ishrat Alam,



Romila Thapar addressing the delegates of the 77th Indian History Congress on Wednesday

Local secretary Prof. Suresh Jnaneswaran, and celebrated historian Irfan Habib, were present at the occasion.

In her inaugural speech

Romila Thapar commented that we have a strong tradition of asking questions and that even the Upanishads supported the system of queries. Questions

will only be asked in a condition where the freedom to think and express is guaranteed. Censorship which was at its zenith during the colonial period is creeping back into the creative field. Suppression of opinion is evident

even in universities due to the outside interference. Genuine historians never claim that they speak the truth, instead they try to explain what had happened in history. History

changes in accordance with the change in evidence. Historians must cross check the details in a resource to find in what context the book was written, she added.

Prof. Shireen Moosvi explained how the nation became a hub for various cultures, faiths and religions. She expressed the strangeness of history in which one shouts Hindu-Hindi-Hindustan without realizing that every word of the slogan was of perso Arabic origin.

The ceremony also became a motivational platform for young historians of the nation as Romila Thapar gave away the awards for the best papers in history. The awards which were in 9 categories were constituted in the names of eminent historians.





Pavithra D J
Anoma Thompson David
Veena Vijayan

Kariavattom: The organisers of the 77th Indian History Congress are leaving no stones unturned when it comes to providing the best transportation facility for the delegates and guests. Delegates find no difficulty in reaching their destinations at the intended time despite the fact that the venue is about 15 kilometres away from the city.

A Committee for transportation, headed by K.S Gopakumar, syndicate member of the Kerala University and a team of more than 100 volunteers

have ensured that there are no transportation woes. The committee has made necessary arrangements which include 15 *Imnova* cars for VIPs and a fleet of more than 100 buses pooled in from the 48 colleges which come under the Kerala University. In addition, they are also providing 10 tempo traveller vehicles.

The transportation committee started working from Monday onwards by receiving international delegates from the airport and railway station. Around 200 drivers have been working round the clock for the last two days. Their daily routine starts at 6.30 am wherein they pick the delegates from hotels to bring them to the main venue. The authorities have

also provided transportation and accommodation facilities for the delegates registering on the spot.

“We are trying to pick and drop the delegates from their respective hotels to the venues in a punctual time frame, but the real challenge we are facing are the traffic blocks and the distance between the spots”, says Mr. Suresh the driver of a Kerala University bus . The delegates are able to utilise these facilities very useful as they get information about the timing of the buses through announcements. The transportation facilities are available till 31st December.

Though some delegates are facing difficulties with the language, the transportation committee took necessary steps to meet this limitation. Volunteers have been assigned to accompany the delegates.“

“The transportation team consists of 100 volunteers which includes NSS volunteers of various colleges and students from the University Campus. Their efforts to fulfil the needs of the delegates are praiseworthy. They have been given necessary guidelines by the organizers for proper functioning of the committee. The committee is happy with the performance of volunteers” says K. S. Gopakumar.



The Dutch Cemetery at Fort Kochi

Deepthi Renjith | Anandu R Nair | Abhijith S S

Kariavattom: It is a well-known fact that the Dutch along with English broke the Portuguese supremacy to take over the trade in Asia. From then the presence of Dutch on the Indian subcontinent lasted for many years. During this time, the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), referred to by the British as the Dutch East India Company, built hundreds of bases in Asia for trade purposes. Dutch India is the term used to refer to these settlements and trading posts of the Dutch East India Company which were located on the Indian subcontinent.

The second day will start with the panel: “Dutch Sources on India: Much More Than Trade”. The introductory remarks will be delivered by Ruby Maloni, who is a specialist in the history of medieval India. Lennart Bes will be presenting the session: “Papers and powers: Dutch East India Company records and Nayaka court politics”. This description of the meeting between the Dutch and the Nayaka kings will shed light on the way Indian kings travelled in their lands. It also explains how diplomatic rituals proceeded, and even a bit about how the Dutch were perceived by Indians across the subcontinent.

Anjana Singh will present the paper titled: “Writing early modern socio- economic history of the Malabar Coast: Usage and significance of Dutch sources”. It will give a detailed portrait of the Dutch urban community of the VOC. She will re-create Fort Cochin (which was the capital of Dutch Malabar) from the archives created by the people.

Jinna Smit will lead the session “What is in a name? From Dutch to Indian heritage”. She will explain valuable VOC records by sharing her views on Dutch cultural heritage and community as well as its impact on Indian heritage. “The Dutch sources and the dynamics of state formation in Eastern India along the Ganga River, 1700-1850” by Murari Kumar Jha will focus on the river Ganga (and its plains) and how it acts as a historical roadmap.

Anna Pytlowany’s paper will be an exploration on the impact of the Dutch United East India Company on the circulation of linguistic knowledge. Gijs Kruijtzter’s session will cover all known sources relating to Dutch contacts with South Asia. Nikhil Bellarykar’s session will deal with the Dutch- Maratha relations during the famous *Dakshin Digvijay* (Southern Conquest) by Chhatrapati Shivaji.

And finally, Merve Tosun’s will talk about the slave trade of the VOC at Cochin. The entire session will conclude with a general discussion by Ruby Maloni.



A view from the exhibition of Manuscripts

Archives of Legacy

Arunchith D S
Meenu S Prasad

Kariavattom: Kerala has got a tradition of preserving historical and cultural heritage. The effort by the Oriental Research Institute and Manuscript Library of the University of Kerala has been monumental in its preservations. It is one of India’s largest manuscript library having a collection of more than 65,000 manuscripts. This wide range of collections include scripts in Assami, Burmi, Vattezhuthu, Kolezhuthu, Andra etc. Different writing equipment like traditional palm leaves, handmade paper, animal skin and Narayam are exhibited here. An incompatible collection of the largest paper manuscript- Yoga Vasistam, lengthiest palm leaf manuscript - Jatakaphala Vishesh Niroopanam, largest manuscript with 611 leaves- Kandapurana (Tamil) and the smallest manuscript of India makes this collection unique in nature. Handwritten texts of famous poets and scholars like Vallathol Narayana Menon, Ulloor S Parameswara Iyer, P.Govinda Pillai, Dr. T. Ganapathi Sastri, Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Thampuram, Sardar K.M.Panikkar are the major attractions here. Along with these, there is a collection of ancient coins and currencies from around the world.

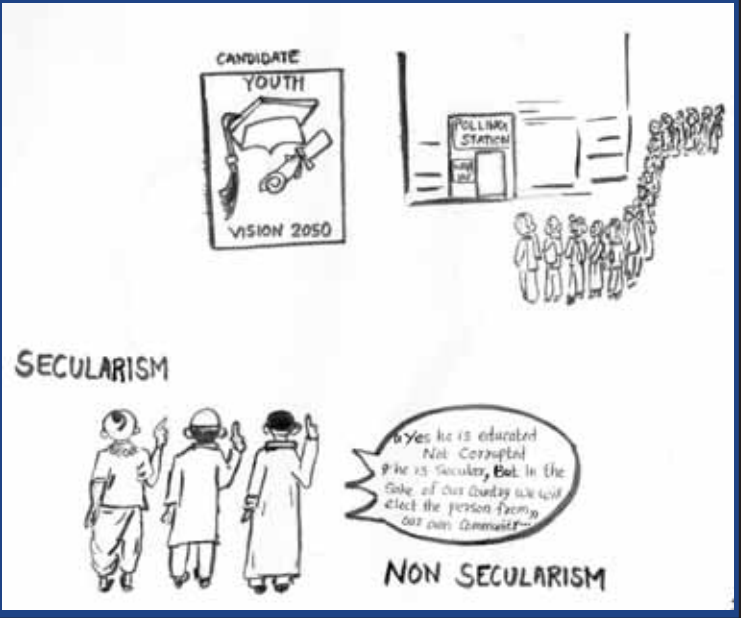
‘The Edicts’ released



Kariavattom: The special newsletter on The Indian History Congress, ‘The Edicts’ has been released Tuesday at the main venue. A copy of ‘The Edicts’ was handed over to the member of the syndicate, Dr. K. Shaji by Dr. M.S. Harikumar, Head of the Communication and Journalism department, University of Kerala.

Cartoon Corner

Shahana A R



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In conversation with Professor Romila Thapar

Appam, Fish Curry and Secularism...

Col. Anand Kumar

Renowned historian Professor **Romila Thapar** is currently attending the 77th session of the Indian History Congress at Thiruvananthapuram. She is the author of several books including the popular volume, *A History of India*, and is currently Professor Emerita at JNU, New Delhi. Her principal area of study is ancient India. She was the General President of the IHC in 1983 and is the proud recipient of the Kluge Prize in 2008 for the study of Humanity, awarded by the U.S. Library of Congress. Despite her hectic schedule she consented to an interactive session with the editorial member of *The Edicts* at the Kariavattom campus. Below are excerpts from the interview.

First of all, a very warm welcome to Kerala. How do you like the place and its cuisine?

Thank you very much. It is an honor to be here. I always feel I'm warmly welcomed here which is why I always come here though it's quite warm and humid. As regards the cuisine I relish Appam and fish curry the most.

The IHC has come a long way since its inception in 1935. Do you feel it is still relevant in today's context?

It is extremely relevant because it is a professional body of historians and they have to realize their obligations to society by doing intensive inquiries and critical research into the past. They need to question the mythological versions of the past. Hence, it is very important to have such meetings.

What is your view on the introduction of uniform syllabi in History for universities across the country?

I think that is not the right step because every university needs to work out its own syllabus in terms of what their requirements are and what it wants to project. Education is about questioning existing knowledge.

Hence investigations are required to quote, prove the reliability as well as analyse the evidences available. These are methodological necessities which professional historians carry out. Unfortunately those who are creating myths around history do not follow these procedures.

In your book 'The Public Intellectual in India', you highlighted that the liberal space is threatened by religious fundamentalism and attack on freedom of expression and secular values. How can we overcome this malaise?

First of all it is not a malaise. It is not a sickness that can be cured in a hurry. People have to be made deliberately aware of secular values through education and public discourse. It needs to be deliberately cultivated and inculcated. People need to understand the importance of asking questions on everything that is told to them.

You have mentioned that there is a break in the self imposed silence by intellectuals. Is there any further improvement in this regard?

I wish I could say yes and that they are now speaking up, or at least a majority of them are. But it tends to be generally the same intellectuals who speak every time there is a crisis of confidence in authority. I wish there were more.

How do you visualize India in the near future with respect to humanism and secularism?



Romila Thapar in conversation with Col. Anand Kumar, editorial member of the 'The Edicts'

At the moment it isn't. Mostly the authorities that seem to control us are really unaware of the meaning of secular society or else they are opposed to secular society. I think that this is a dangerous situation. As I have mentioned earlier, you cannot divorce secularism from democracy. If you say you are a democratic society then ipso facto you have to be a secular society. You cannot say some communities have priorities because of religion, caste or language. Everybody is equal.

"If you say you are a democratic society then ipso facto you have to be a secular society"

What do you feel about the pervasiveness of the media as you would have seen the media evolving over a period of time?

I feel that the media has to ask itself a lot of questions as to why it tends to become anti-secular and antidemocratic at times. You don't have the kind of serious debates media one expects. For instance, if you take something current like demonetization, everybody is highlighting as to how good it is or about people suffering in long queues which is the reality but there is no discussion on what impact it will have on the economy. One expects the media to be more responsible and hold regular forums on the impact of what the government pronounces.

What do you feel is the impact of 'Cultural Pollution' now? Do you feel its effect has reduced with Indians historians voicing their autonomy to preserve facts?

Well there are only a few historians and academicians who are putting in the effort to reduce cultural pollution and to protect cultural and intellectual independence. I expect more people to do it.

You have mentioned that secularism means giving equal status to all religions. Do you see it fructifying?

Secularism is not just the coexistence of religions which is just a small step. The major step is to insist that all religions

have equal status. More important is how secularism handles law and justice and how it secularises that. There should be a common secular civil law.

Don't you think the above is a utopian thought process?

Of course it is, one needs to understand an ideal direction to work towards an aim in order to achieve something.

What are your views on censorship?

I am totally opposed to censorship. Views needs to be discussed openly rather than saying that a chapter needs to be expunged.

You are the proud recipient of many laurels and recognition as a renowned historian, especially the kluge prize. Which is the one that is close to your heart?

I have no hesitation in saying that the recognition from my fellow historians and academicians is closer to my heart than the others and I value it immensely.

The Kluge prize is indeed a great honour as I was told that my name was recommended by a panel of 49 eminent historians.



GP Pillai: Malayali, Journalist, Nationalist

G. Paramaswaran Pillai (1864–1903), commonly known as G. P. Pillai or simply GP was one of the first leaders of modern political agitation in southern Kerala, and also the first to use press as a tool for attacking the then autocratic rule. Born in Pallippuram (now a part of the technocity of Thiruvananthapuram), he was a student of the University College in the city, and was expelled for his articles criticizing the state administration. He escaped the arrest of Travancore police by shifting his base to Chennai and acquired a bachelor's degree from the Madras Presidency College. He wrote on a regular basis for *The Hindu*, *The Mail* and *The Madras Standard*, of which he became an editor in 1892. He drafted the 'Malayali Memorial', a memorandum to the then Maharaja of Travancore, seeking a fair share of jobs in Travancore government for Malayali youth. He raised in the British Parliament, the issue of the side-lining of the Ezhava community.



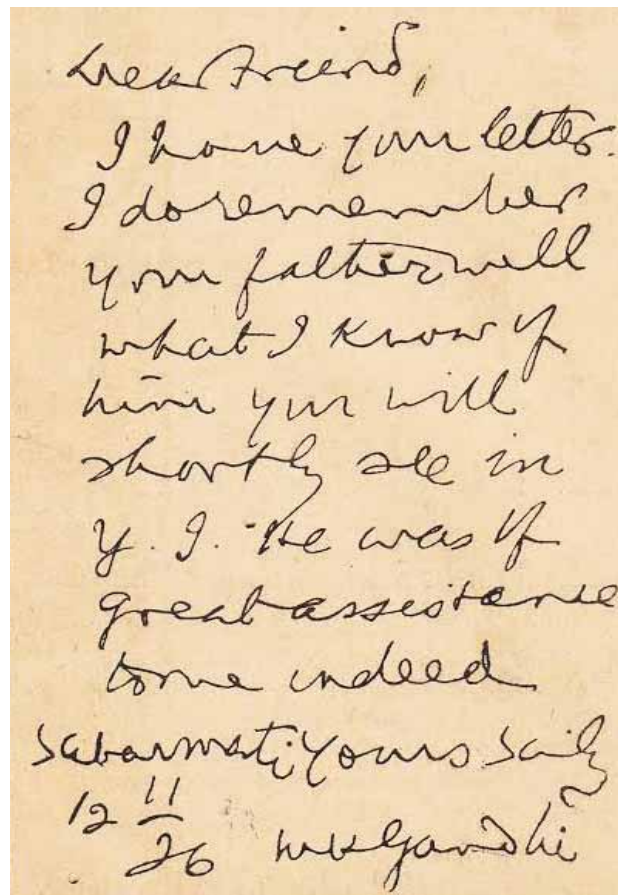
GP Pillai

S George remarked, "G. P. Pillai personified, in an exemplary way, the symbiotic union of journalism and nationalism in India". John Eardly Norton, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, once said, "With him died a brave unselfish spirit,

Local Nugget

He had wide contacts in Britain as well as India. G. P. Pillai was one of the earliest leaders of the Congress Party, from Kerala and twice served as its General Secretary. Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged his help and guidance in *Young India* and has also written about this in his letters to GP Sekhar, son of GP Pillai. He returned to Travancore in 1902 and enrolled himself as a Barrister in the High Court of Travancore. He declined the offer of judgeship which was presented to him many years later. He lived only until the age of 39, and died on the 21st of May 1904.

On the occasion of his death centenary in 2004, celebrated journalist T J



Gandhi's letter to G P Sekhar, Pillai's son from Sabarmathi in 1926

not lightly to be deterred from the sense of public duty by threats of social ostracism or the loss of official favour".

Literary Delights

Asif Abdul Khalam
Vidya Vijayakumar

Kariavattom: The book expo organized as a part of the 77th Indian History Congress at the Kerala University, Kariavattom Campus is attracting a huge crowd. The expo showcases books of many genres from across the world. Books from international and national publishers such as Oxford, Cambridge, Primus and Routledge are available at the expo.

Routledge Publishers have brought out many books as a part of a series of studies they have conducted in various fields like, Media Histories, South India, Asian Studies, Exclusion Studies, Gandhi and International politics. Among them the most noteworthy publications are "South India's Modern History – Thematic Perspectives" by Michael Mann, "Pakistan's Political Labyrinth – Military, Society and Terror" edited by Ravi Kalia, "State Policy and Conflicts in Northeast India" by KS Subramanian, "The Tamil Separatist War in Sri Lanka" by Channa Wickremesekera, and "Mahatma Gandhi and Indian Constitution" by Narendra Chapalgaonker.

"Combating Hunger and Achieving Food Security" by MSSwaminathan, "Cambridge History of Scandinavia" and "New History of the Andaman Islands" are the chief attractions at the Cambridge stall. Cambridge University Publications have also displayed for the first time in India, many of their newest



A view from the book exhibition near the food court at Kariavattom Campus

collections, which have been imported from the UK. They have a special series dedicated to the history of India's neighboring countries.

Various books from Oxford Publications are also catching the attention of the delegates. "Growing the Tree of Science; Homi Bhabha and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research" is emerging as the crowd favorite. "Historiography in the Modern World; Western and Indian Perspectives" by Shashi Bhushan Upadhyay is a book that covers the historians of the world and their areas of study. The *Nehrus in Prison* and "Roads to Freedom", two books about the prisons of India, written by Mushirul Hasan, are also available at their stalls.

Orient Black Swan is also

present at the venue, exhibiting books like "Adivasis; In Colonial India; Survival, Resistance and Negotiation", "Mysore Modern; Rethinking the region under Princely Rule", "Decolonization and the Politics of Transition in South Asia", "History of India; 1707 to 1857"

Kerala University Publications have also displayed some of their books at the expo. These include Historical books like Hendrik Van Rheed's 'Hortus Malabaricus' (Garden of Malabar) and Citramayana (Ramayana in Palm Leaf Pictures) collected and edited by Dr.K Vijayan. Hortus Malabaricus is a comprehensive study of the flora spread across the Western Ghats. It has been written in Latin, during 1678. It is published by University

of Kerala in 12 complete volumes.

Chintha Publications have showcased their latest book in the expo; which is the autobiography of freedom fighter and martyr Moyarath Sankaran. This book is their newest release and was unveiled by the Chief Minister only this Tuesday. "Samakalika India; Oru Samootha Shasthra Veekshanam", the translation of "Contemporary India: A Sociological View" by Satish Deshpande is also available at their stores.

Other than these, publishers like PRIMUS BOOKS and Manohar Publishers are also present at the expo venue. Indian Council of Historical Research Publications has also set up a stall where delegates can buy books at a 30% discount.



Panel Session on Dalit History and Politics

Nandana U S
Geethu V Nair
Athira M M

Kariavattom: After 68 years of India's independence, dalit issues still continue to be a burning topic. Hence the panel discussion on Dalit History and Politics acquires great prominence at the 77th Indian History congress.

Professors and historians including Dr.B.Rama Chandra Reddy, Prof. B.S.Chandrababu, Dr. K.B Usha, Dr.P.Sanal Mohan, Dr.Priyadarshini Vijaisri, Dr.Rajesh Komath, Roshni Padmanabhan, Prof.S.Victor Babu, Dr Shambhulinganand S. Shireshi, Ms Sudarshan Bhaumik, Dr. Thallapally Manohar, Dr. Vikram Harriman, Dr.Raj Shekhar Basu and Prof.Yagati Chinna Rao will be present in the panel.

Under 'Modern India' 5 papers are included under 'Dalits Descriptive' and around 9 papers are considered for 'Dalits-Thought and Movement'. In 'Contemporary India' 6 papers are included under 'Dalits and Caste System'.