**Mohanlal Viswanathan** (born 21 May 1960), known [mononymously](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mononymous_person" \o "Mononymous person) as **Mohanlal**, is an Indian [actor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actor), [film producer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_producer), [playback singer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playback_singer), [film distributor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_distributor), and [director](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_director) who predominantly works in [Malayalam cinema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayalam_cinema) besides also having sporadically appeared in [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_language), [Hindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi), [Telugu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telugu_language) and [Kannada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kannada)-language films.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-thehindu.com-3)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-Kumar-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-Desk-5) Mohanlal has a prolific career spanning over four decades, during which he has acted in [more than 400 films](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal_filmography).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-Kumar-4)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-6) Mohanlal's contributions to the [Malayalam cinema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayalam_cinema) have been praised by his contemporaries in the [Indian film industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_India).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-7)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-8)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-9) The [Government of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_India) honoured him with [Padma Shri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Shri) in 2001,[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-Padma_Awards2-10) and [Padma Bhushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Bhushan) in 2019, India's fourth and third highest [civilian honours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orders,_decorations,_and_medals_of_India),[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-Padmabhushan2-11) for his contributions to [Indian cinema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_India). In 2009, he became the first actor in India to be awarded the honorary rank of [lieutenant colonel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant_colonel) in the [Territorial Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_Army_(India)).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-12)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-13) Mohanlal was named as one of "the men who changed the face of the Indian Cinema" by [CNN-News18](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNN-News18).[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-14)

Mohanlal made his acting debut at age 18 in the Malayalam film *[Thiranottam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thiranottam" \o "Thiranottam)* in 1978, but the film was delayed in its release for 25 years due to censorship issues. His screen debut was in the 1980 romance film *[Manjil Virinja Pookkal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manjil_Virinja_Pookkal" \o "Manjil Virinja Pookkal)*, in which he played the antagonist.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-rediff-15)[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-thiranottam-16) He continued to do villainous roles and rose to secondary lead roles in the following years. By the mid-1980s, he established himself as a bankable leading actor and attained stardom after starring in several successful films in 1986; the crime drama *[Rajavinte Makan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajavinte_Makan" \o "Rajavinte Makan)* released that year heightened his stardom.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-rediff-15) Mohanlal prefers to work in Malayalam films, but he has also appeared in some of [Hindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bollywood), [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_cinema), [Telugu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telugu_cinema) and [Kannada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kannada_cinema) films. Some of his best known non-Malayalam films include the Tamil political drama *[Iruvar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iruvar" \o "Iruvar)* (1997), the Hindi crime drama [*Company*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_(2002_film)) (2002) and the Telugu film *[Janatha Garage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janatha_Garage" \o "Janatha Garage)* (2016).[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-17)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-18)

Mohanlal has won five [National Film Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Film_Awards)—two [Best Actor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Film_Award_for_Best_Actor), a [Special Jury Mention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Film_Award_%E2%80%93_Special_Mention_(feature_film)) and a [Special Jury Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Film_Award_%E2%80%93_Special_Jury_Award_(feature_film)) for acting, and an award for [Best Feature Film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Film_Award_for_Best_Feature_Film) (as producer), also nine [Kerala State Film Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala_State_Film_Awards) and [Filmfare Awards South](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filmfare_Awards_South) and [numerous other accolades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_awards_and_nominations_received_by_Mohanlal). He received [honorary doctorates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorary_degree) from [Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sree_Sankaracharya_University_of_Sanskrit" \o "Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit) in 2010[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-auto-19) and the [University of Calicut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Calicut) in 2018.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-20)

Mohanlal is also known for his philanthropic endeavours. He founded the [ViswaSanthi Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ViswaSanthi_Foundation" \o "ViswaSanthi Foundation), a non-profit charitable organization that was started to create and deliver high-impact and focused programs to the underprivileged sections of society in the areas of Healthcare and Education.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-21)[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-22)[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohanlal#cite_note-23)