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THE RESULT OF 30 YEARS OF RESEARCH, SOYVITA IS AN ALTERNATIVE NUTRITIOUS OPTION FOR INDIAN CONSUMERS

FILM

Watch **VIRUTHAGIRI** starring Vijayakanth, Meenakshi Dikshit
Director: Vijayakanth,
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Arul(Thanjai),
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Watch **SIDHU PLUS TWO FIRST ATTEMPT** starring Shanthanu Bhagyaraj, Chandini Tamilarasan, Kanja Karuppu,
Director: Bhagyaraj
Music: Dharan, Thaman S at Maris Rock(Tiruchy)
Big Cinema Paradise(Thanjai)



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Each day is a special day as a lot of handicrafts are on display at all times, observes Lakshmi Rajamani

Delightful December FESTIVAL EXPO at Poompuhar



Pic: S Arun



COME December and thoughts hover around extending a tumultuous welcome to the New Year. The festivities that herald the New Year also form part of Christmas that praises the glory of Infant Jesus. Festivities in our country mostly pertain to the divine and quite often it is a birthday feast. *Jannashami* witnesses the birth of Krishna in each home, while the birth of Jesus is heralded through a glow which beckons people to sing His praise.

Christmas is a time to decorate homes and Tiruchyites are fortunate to be provided with an opportunity to indulge in artistic creations, attracting the neighbourhood and all those who are near and dear.

Poompuhar, the sales outlet of Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation has organised an exhibition cum sales of handicrafts and cotton textile items in view of the ensuing Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Each day is a special day for Poompuhar as a lot of handicrafts are on display at all times. But festival seasons bring in novelties in the display which compete for attention by the public. Now it is time to celebrate Christmas and New Year and Poompuhar has accordingly organised an exhibition cum sales of Handicrafts and Handlooms at its showroom in the city.

The theme of the expo revolves around the birth of child Jesus in the Biblical settings. Clay images of the divine child with the other characters who were present on the occasion including the three messiahs, parents Mary and Joseph, the cattle head and others are tastefully presented by the artisan, recalling the scenes at the birth of the divine child.

The set of 18 images is available in different sizes, with the price varying from ₹300- ₹3,000.

Continuing the trend of the ancient era, huge earthen flower pots from Calcutta, with images from the Egyptian era engraved on the surface is a major attraction. These flower pots are available in the range of ₹1,500 - ₹3,000.

Another item closely related to the Holy Bible is the Last Supper, the scene in which Christ partaking of dinner with His 18 disciples prior to his arrest and crucifixion. The scene is etched in everyone's mind globally through the painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Presented in rosewood inlay work at Poompuhar, it is a great attraction, making it a lively presentation. Images of Jesus and other Biblical characters are on display in different forms, including silk paintings, white metal images, wooden inlay work.

Visitors are treated to other artifacts like massage items for all parts of the body, the latest being the one for reducing central obesity.

One gram gold plated jewellery is a delight to view and possess, with an adjustable *kada* reigning supreme. Antique sets are equally pleasing. Marble stone work and deco paintings add a lot of colour which is enhanced by the variety of textile collections. Saris, bed spreads, dresses and other home furnishings extend an invitation to the visitor for a feel and bargain. The expo on the whole beckons one and all to shop at Poompuhar for a delightful decoration of the home and hearth to herald the festive season. According to Poompuhar Manager K Chidambaramanathan, a target of ₹five lakhs is set for the current expo which will be open till Jan 1, 2011.



"It's the first time I play a double role," says Karthi excitedly. The film marks a number of 'firsts' in his career. He also plays cop for the first time, which means comparisons with Surya's *Kaakha Kaakha* is inevitable, "Not really. I would say the cop role is somewhere between his portrayal in *Kaakha Kaakha* and *Singam*! The cop I play doesn't talk much and believes more in action!" grins Karthi. So, who is the other guy who he plays on screen? "I play a pickpocket," says the actor impulsively. To prepare for that, he interacted with several pickpockets to understand the role better. "Both the characters are entirely different in temperament and it was director Siva who helped me bring out the nuances."

Incidentally, another first is the film will also see him play dad! Yet another first:



Double, and 'FIRSTS'

When the team traveled to Phuket recently, it was the first time Karthi travelled abroad to shoot a song, "The island we shot in was an hour's boat ride from the mainland and there was nothing but sea for miles around. The song is a melodic romantic number and its come out really well," he says. Stunt man Ganesh has shot a climax fight sequence which has Karthi

bashing up 19 men. The high-light is the canning of the entire proceedings in a single shot by director Sauryam Siva. The climax fight in Badami had Karthi swinging without a dupe from a bridge over 300 feet high. The movie moves between Chennai and Kannur and it was for the first time a film unit shot inside a majes-

tic old fort in Andhra, about 200 kms from Hyderabad. Summing up the film for us Karthi concludes, "*Siruthai* was a wholesome, emotional experience. I had immense scope to perform. It's got everything, from emotion and comedy to romance and action. For the viewers its going to be one jolly ride!"

— Rinku Gupta



Atheism and theism peacefully coexist here, L Chellappa points out, speaking about the distinction of Kumba konam

A TOWN AS FAMOUS AS THE FESTIVAL

THE temple town of Kumbakonam is just about 15 km from my native village of Umbalapadi in Thanjavur district. I used to visit this place as a child as this town served as a market place and a shopping centre for the surrounding villages. At that time, people used to travel only in *othamattu vandi*, cycles and very rarely in buses. Since I did my schooling in Papanasam, college in erstwhile Madras and had worked in Tiruchy, I have never lived in Kumbakonam until I was posted as a lecturer in the Government Arts College there for three years, from 1983-1985. Memories of that brief period are very precious as it was marked by vibrant social, cultural and religious visits.

Government Arts College is an important landmark in Kumbakonam apart from the grand temples that dot the town. The college was established as a provincial school in 1854 and was upgraded into a government college in 1867. It has the distinction of being one of the oldest educational institutions set up by the British in this region and people felt privileged to study there. St Joseph's College, Tiruchy, though it was older and quite reputed in the region, was a private college. Being a Government institution, people preferred this college as it provided them quality education at an affordable cost.

The institution has also had the honour of having produced stalwarts like Srinivasa Ramanujan, Rt Hon. V S Srinivasa Sastri, Dr U V Saminatha Iyer and many more erudite and successful people. With its colonial buildings, the college has its own inimitable charm. Since, it is situated on the banks of the river Cauvery, students and teachers alike had to cross a narrow

bridge to enter the college. And, because of this, it has earned the sobriquet — Cambridge of the South.

I had earlier heard that the college had its own boat club called Canoe Club. There were about 20 boats and every year on the *Aadi Peruku* day boat races were organised. The races were held for a distance of ten km in which the students and the faculty competed with one another. And, as always, the students won the race. But, sadly after the signing of the Cauvery accord, water was hardly in spate even on the *Aadi Peruku* day and thus the club became defunct over the years. The club also arranged boat trips every year from Kumbakonam to Grand Anicut stopping at Kabistalam, Ganapati Agraharam and Thirukattupalli.

I used to visit the Pattiswaram Temple and Nageswaran Temple every Friday and the Uppiliappan Temple every Saturday. There was not much of entertainment those days. Television was in its infancy and people spent their time reading, visiting temples, listening to radio and occasionally visiting cinemas. Political meetings used to take place regularly near the Sarangapani Sannithi and people without any political affiliation used to flock and listen to what a leader spoke. Although this place is marked by religious fervour, it has also produced a lot of rationalists. Atheism and theism coexist peacefully even to this day which is an important feature of a democratic and pluralistic society.

I have attended many a social func-



tion during my stay in this charming town as compared to my entire life in Tiruchy. Marriages, engagements, *kadhani vizha*, *aruvadham kalyanam*, *manjal neeratu vizha*, *karumadhi* and you name it. The tradition here is that the people do not keep the occasions simple and private.

It is always a grand affair and not necessarily as a show of opulence, but as a symbol of sheer love and affection for one and another.

The railway station here is bigger than many other stations in the whole of the delta region, with the sole exception of Trichy. It is explained that a sea of humanity confluences at this town during *Mahamaham* once in 12 years. To accommodate that extra crowd, the station was built well with various facilities so that pilgrims in transit could use the platforms as resting place. The Boat Mail was once a popular train that ran from Chennai Egmore to Danushkodi. Kumbakonam, apart from its temples, is famous for its betel leaf and filter coffee. And, the flavour of the steaming coffee I had tasted at Venkatramana Hotel at Gandhi Park and Panchami Iyer Hotel near Ramaswami Temple, in the company of my relatives and friends still lingers. This little town offers so much to satiate one's senses in every way. And, importantly, it does strike a chord at one's heart. Now isn't that enough to get a tinge emotional about a place?

(L. Chellappa is Retired Principal, Raja Serfoji College, Thanjavur)

—As told to Sukanya Chellappa



IN STEP WITH THE DIVINE: Students of Revathi Muthuswamy of Srirangam Bharathanatyalaya presented Vallikalyanam, Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam and Peacock Dance at Thanjavur Big Temple as part of the Sadhaya Thiruvizha celebrations. Choreography, costume and visualisation of the scriptural episodes won the appreciation of the audience