FEMINA ICONS of the SOUTH 2021-22

Foreword

With the dawn of a new year, we at Femina are happy to present our new version of our popular coffee table book, 'Icons of the South'. Featuring luminaries from the southern states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, this edition builds on the book from last year. This issue features a distinguished set of innovators, businessmen, doctors, actors, and multimedia and lifestyle professionals who wear their South Indian backgrounds with aplomb.

Rest assured that this carefully curated list of profiles will be bound to inspire you in their own way through their lofty achievements. To make sure we have achievers from across segments, we have chosen these people for their work and how it has made a positive impact on the lives of many others.

Many of these are fantastic examples of grit, perseverance, and hard work that are worth emulating. Even as the world is still living in the shadow of the pandemic and its unknown variants, these individuals have represented a rare caliber that has seen them sail through tough times with flying colours.

You might know of many others from South Indians who are making their mark and we hope we can tell you more about them in our upcoming issues. For now, we leave you with these success stories that we hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as we enjoyed putting them together.







TAMIL NADU KERALA KARNATAKA ANDHRA PRADSH TELANGANA

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DEEPAK LAMBA

EDITOR

AMBIKA MUTTOO

MANAGING EDITOR

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CHIEF COPY EDITOR

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CREATIVE PRODUCER

SIMRAN GANDHI

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

TUSHAR GULATI

VICE PRESIDENT - CONTENT STUDIO

VIDYUT PATRA

FREELANCE CONTRIBUTOR WRITER

BINDU GOPAL RAO

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Tamil Nadu

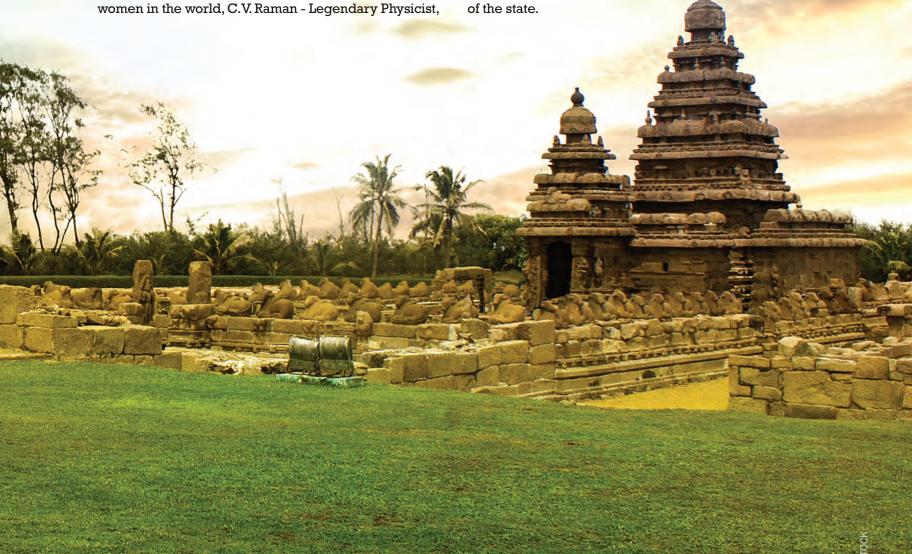
he culturally vibrant state of Tamil
Nadu has influences of the Chera,
Chola, and Pandyan regimes that
have shaped its cuisine, culture, and

architecture. Home to several historic and religious sites, there are three World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu. Interestingly there are over 2000 native species of wildlife in the state.

Some of the distinguished personalities of Tamil Nadu include M.S. Swaminathan - Father of Green Revolution, Mahesh Bhupathi - Founder of International Premier Tennis League, Indra Nooyi - One of the most powerful women in the world, C.V. Raman - Legendary Physicist,

A.R. Rahman - The Mozart Of Madras, APJ Abdul Kalam
- The Missile Man of India, Viswanath Anand - The
Tiger of Madras, Shiv Nadar - Founder of HCL, Srinivasa
Ramanujan - An esteemed Mathematician, Rajnikanth Widely celebrated actor and Narain Karthikeyan - First
Formula One driver. Sundar Pichai, Chief Executive
Officer of Alphabet, belongs to the state.

Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Kanchipuram silks sarees, Chettinad cuisine of Karaikudi, dolls, and paintings of Thanjavur, Pamban Bridge in Rameshwaram, Kallanai Dam in Trichy, and Firecrackers from Sivakasi are some of the most well-known aspects





ike its tourism tagline, 'One State

Many Worlds', the state of Karnataka

has a fantastic variety of sights that

include sights that offer tranquility,

spirituality, festivals, heritage, wildlife, grandeur, good food, and unique art forms. Karnataka has a charm like no other with its sights and sounds and Kannada is one of the classical languages as well. Mattur in Karnataka happens to be the only village where Sanskrit is spoken. The state has to its credit several illustrious personalities across sectors that have added to its allure. Starting with

stalwarts like Basavanna, Kanaka Dasa, Bahubali, C.V. Raman, Sir M. Visvesvaraya, Akka Mahadevi, Sarvajna, Madhvacharya, Purandara Dasa, Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa, and more, there are several luminaries who are from Karnataka.

A state that is largely known for its Information
Technology (IT) prowess with its capital Bengaluru
leading from the front, this is also the startup capital
of the country. Three of the Bharat Ratna's Sir M.
Visvesvaraya, Bhumsen Joshi and C.N.R. Rao are all from



Kerala



nown for its ecotourism model, much before it caught the fancy of the rest of the country, Kerala is easily one of the most popular states as far as

tourism is concerned. A state that is known for its dense coconut palms, it has a cuisine that is varied and reflects a sense of religious harmony.

Known for its scenic backwaters, unspoiled beaches, and spice markets, Kerala has sprawling tea plantations and fantastic Ayurvedic treatments. The birthplace of the dance form 'Kathakali', the style of architecture found in Kerala comes from its rich cultural history and medieval patterns are a signature element.

Some of the well-known personalities of Kerala include Kalamandalam Gopi, Mohanlal, Raja Ravi Varma, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Fr. Abel, Padmabhushan Dr. K. J. Yesudas, K. R. Narayanan, and P. Leela. P. T. Usha the queen of the Indian track and field, Arundhati Roy, widely acclaimed author, Dr. Verghese Kurien, the father of white revolution, G Madhavan Nair, an esteemed Indian scientist, M. Fathima Beevi, the first female judge of the supreme court and Manuel Frederick, the only Olympian to win a medal from Kerala are other well-known names.

The cuisine of Kerala is known for its eclectic flavours that offer a range of options that are befitting of its tag – God's own country. Known for paddy, coconut, plantains, tapioca (kappa), taro (chembu) and elephant foot yam (chena), the non-vegetarians have a plethora of options including the famed Meen Pollichathu, fried fish wrapped in banana leaf, Meen Porichathhu or fried fish and Meen Moilee, a coconut milk-based fish curry.



Andhra Pradesh & Telangana

he split of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has given rise to two Telugu-speaking states. While Andhra Pradesh is home to places

like Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Orvakallu, Dwaraka
Tirumala, Chittor, Araku, and Konaseema, Telangana
has Hyderabad and its surroundings as part of its sights.
Hyderabad is also home to the famed Ramoji film city
that offers world-class facilities for film shoots and the
industry has produced blockbusters like the Bahubali
series as well as the recent blockbuster Pushpa.

B.N. Reddy, Jaggayya, Vempati Chinna Satyam, Raj

Perugu Siva Reddy, Daggubati Ramanaidu are some of the famous names that have received the Padma Bhushan. Andhra Pradesh is also home to some ancient Buddhist sites like Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, and Jaggayyapeta. Varahagiri Venkata Giri, former President of India and Bharat Ratna awardee is from Andhra Pradesh.

Some of the places that are a must-visit include Horsley Hills, Konaseema, Suryalanka beach, Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, Ananthagiri Hills, Meredumilli and Pakhal Lake. The Rudreshwar Swamy Temple or the Thousand Pillar Temple is an architectural delight located on the Warangal highway.





Being A Good Sport

SHARATH KAMAL

Table Tennis Champion and Olympian

S

harath Kamal is a force to reckon with in the table tennis world and the sportsman is making his mark one

ball at a time. His Twitter profile reads "Professional table tennis player | Arjuna & Padma Shri awardee | 4 CWG Gold | 2 Asian Games Bronze | Record 9-time National Champion." Meet Sharath Kamal, ace table tennis player who has represented the country in the Asian Games and Olympics as well.

With a record nine Senior National Champion titles, Kamal is the recipient of the Padma Shri and Arjuna awards. He plays in the European league currently and represents the German Bundesliga for the club Borussia Düsseldorf.

In 2006 he made history by winning India's first table tennis gold at the Commonwealth Games that was held in Melbourne. Having won many medals at top international tournaments, his class was on display when he played against Ma Long in the men's singles round of 32 at the recent Tokyo Olympics. Born in Chennai, table tennis was in his genes as both his father and uncle were players. Having started with the sport when he was just four. At 15 he was faced with a tough choice to continue his studies or become a

professional table tennis player and he chose the latter. Working hard to improve his technique and style, his first National appearance was in the 2002 Commonwealth Games 16-member probables training camp, which sowed the seeds of his career when he was 20.

He won his first national title in 2003 and his first international medal at the Commonwealth Table
Tennis Championships in 2004, the same year when he qualified for the Athens Olympics. There was no looking back as awards and accolades came his way and he won the singles gold medal at the 2006
Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and gold in the men's team event. He became the first Indian table tennis player to win an ITTF Pro Tour title (Egypt Open) in 2010.

He also won gold, silver, and two bronze medals at the 2018 Commonwealth Games and two bronze medals at the 2018 Asian Games. In 2020 he won his second international title at the Oman Open as well as the bronze in the men's team and men's doubles events at the 2021 Asian Table Tennis Championships. With so many achievements he has set his sights on the next Olympics in Paris in 2024.









Screen Time

AMALA AKKINENI

Activist and Actor



n actor and animal activist, Amala Akkineni is known for her sensitive portrayal on roles on screen and is the voice of animals off the screen.

Born in Kolkata to a Bengali father and an Irish mother,
Amala Akkineni has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in
Bharatanatyam from Kalakshetra college of fine arts
Chennai. A stage performer, it was filmmaker and actor
T. Rajendar who convinced Amala and her mother to act
in films.

Consequently, she debuted in the Tamil film Mythili Ennai Kaathali, which became a big hit earning her fame that she followed up with more hits in Tamil cinema. She has also worked in Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam, and Kannada films and won two Filmfare Awards South for Best Actress in the 1991 Malayalam film Ulladakkam and Best Supporting Actress in the 2012 Telugu film Life Is Beautiful.

Amala married Telugu actor Nagarjuna in 1992 and her son Akhil Akkineni is also an actor. She quit acting in 1992 and made her come back after 20 years in 2012. She is the co-founder of Blue Cross of Hyderabad, an NGO that is involved in animal welfare and preservation of animal rights. She is also the Director at Annapurna College of Film and Media.

She has worked in more than 55 films and has been part of films like Siva and Nirnayam with her husband Nagarjuna. In 2014, she was part of the Tamil TV serial Uyirmai. She has several author-backed roles in the pipeline as well.

Despite her acting career, she is a vocal supporter of animals and has focused much of her energies working on animal welfare and rescue. She has been quoted saying she would like to focus on other roles and will not act full time. The talented and dignified artist certainly is like no other.









A Good Sport

ANIL KUMBLE

Cricketer

orn in Bangalore, interested in cric and made his firs he was 19 repres

orn in Bangalore, Anil Kumble was interested in cricket as a youngster and made his first-class debut when he was 19 representing Karnataka. He

made his debut in the Austral-Asia Cup in 1990 and test debut against England in the same year.

In his illustrious career in the Indian cricket team, he was part of over 132 Test matches. In 1996 he was selected for the World Cup where he was the most successful bowler of the tournament with 15 wickets in seven matches.

Kumble initially began his career as a medium pacer but soon became the most successful spinner. Among his records holds the record for the maximum number of caught and bowled dismissals in tests of 25 and 6 wickets for only 12 runs against West Indies at Kolkata's Eden Gardens in 1993.

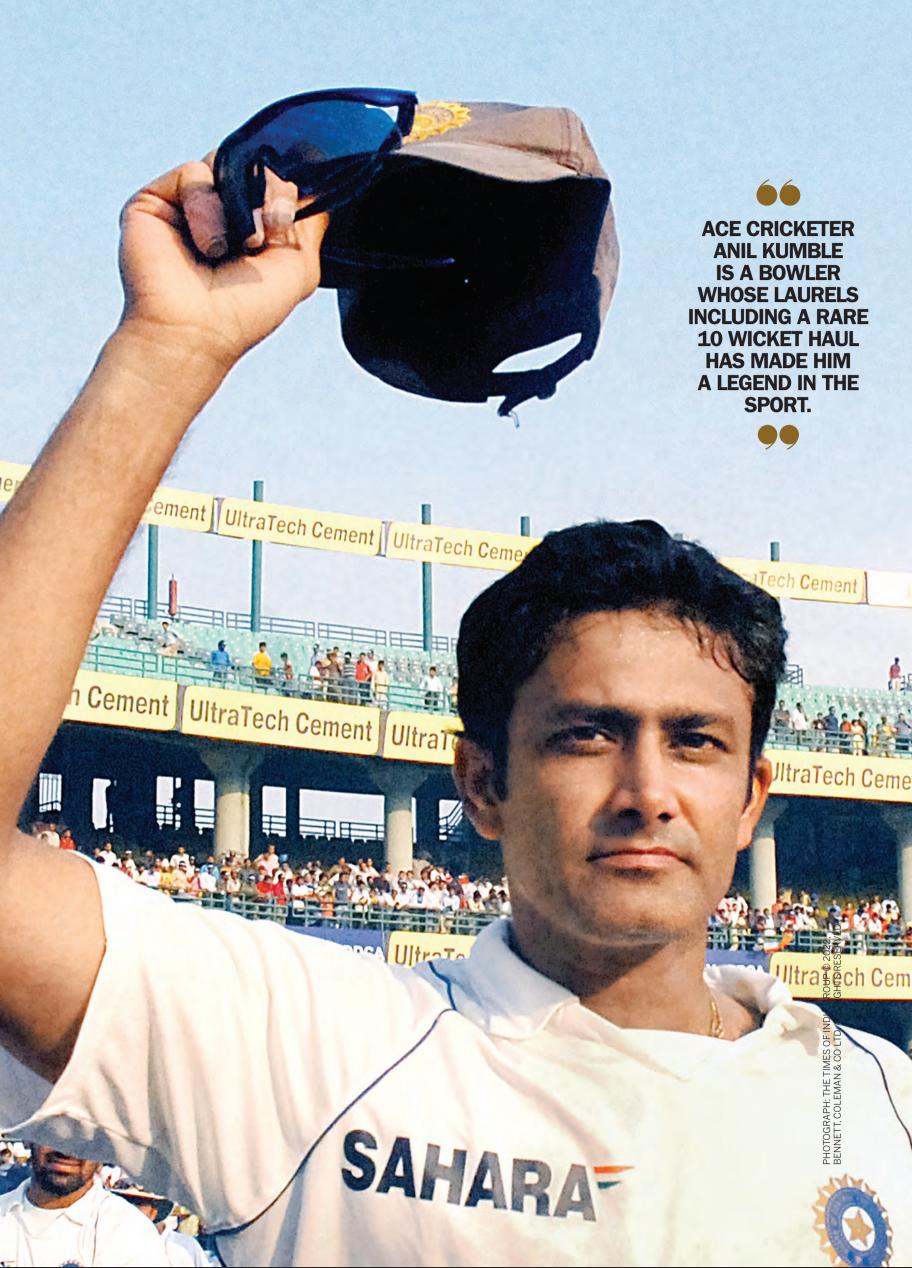
Highly disciplined, hard-working, and skillful he has been one of the best wrist spinners in the world and has been instrumental in winning several matches for the country. The lanky leg spinner, affectionately referred to as "apple" and "Jumbo", has an Engineering degree from Rashtriya Vidyalaya College of Engineering. He is married to Chethana and has three children.

A Padma Shri, he played for 18 years and retired in November 2008. In October 2012, he was appointed the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC)'s cricket committee. He was elected president of the Karnataka State Cricket Association and served a three-year term between 2010-2013.

He was the chief mentor for Royal Challengers
Bangalore and Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier
League and worked as a head coach of the Indian
cricket team. Notably, he became the fourth Indian
cricketer to be inducted into ICC Hall of Fame in
February 2015.

In his brilliant career, the soft spoken Kumble took all ten wickets in an innings against Pakistan in 1999 in Delhi. In December 2001, he became India's first spinner to take 300 Test wickets on his home turf, Bangalore. In 2002, he became the first player to get 300 wickets in one-dayers. He was named India's Test captain for the home series against Pakistan, a series that he went on to win.







On the Right Track

ANJU BOBBY GEORGE

Indian Athlete



nju Bobby George is the first athlete to win a medal at the World Championships in long jump and is one of the most respected athletes of

the country.

Born in 1977 in Kerala in a Syrian Orthodox family Anju was initiated into athletics by her father and subsequently by her trainer in her school at Koruthode. As a student she won the 100 m hurdles and relay and came second in long jump and high jump events in a school athletic meet in 1991-92 where she not just became the women's champion but also gave a glimpse into her talent. In the national schools' games, she won third place in 100 m hurdles and 4×100 m relay.

She scripted history when she won the bronze medal in long jump at the 2003 World Championships in Athletics in Paris and became the first Indian athlete ever to win a medal in a World Championships in Athletics. Another feather in her cap came when she won the gold medal at the IAAF World Athletics Final in 2005.

Winner of prestigious awards like the Arjuna Award, Khel Ratna, BBC lifetime achievement award for best athlete in India and Padma Shri, she was in the 5th position at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

The soft-spoken athlete who believes her work should do the talking has a quiet determination that has seen her come out trumps in several situations. What very few people know is that most of her achievements have come even though she has only one kidney.

She has also been awarded the Woman of the Year Award by World Athletics (WA) for her work in grooming talent and advocating gender equality in the country. In 2016 she started a training academy for young girls that has produced a world U20 medalist.

As the Senior Vice President of the Indian Athletics Federation, she is hands on as a mentor for schoolgirls whom she grooms for future leadership positions within the sport.

She is married to Robert Bobby George, a former national champion in triple jump and her coach and has two children Aaron and Andrea.







College Cues

DR. ANNIE JACOB

Director, KCG College of Technology & A Passionate Educationist



Doctorate from IIT – MADRAS,

Dr Annie Jacob is at the helm of affairs as

Director, KCG College of Technology, a

progressive Engineering college under

Anna University.

KCG College of Technology has been setting new standards in the field of education carving a niche for itself under the able administration and leadership of Dr. Annie Jacob for the past 15 years. During her tenure, the Institution has attained A+ grade from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), one among the many other milestones achieved. She is also a member of the Board of Management and Academic Council Member of the Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science. Following the mantra of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, "Educationists should build the capacities of the spirit of inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership among students and become their role model," Dr Annie also works towards women empowerment and initiated the Women Empowerment Cell in KCG College of Technology as a space to motivate and empower women to achieve their highest potentials. She was awarded The Eminent Women Edupreneur by the Times Group and The Best Women Entrepreneur Award by ICTACT Bridge. Adding to the key role at KCG Tech, she is also the Executive Committee Member at the Confederation of Indian Industries - Tamil Nadu Technology Development and Promotion Centre (Women in Stem) and a Campus to Career Task Force Committee Member at the Confederation of Indian Industries - Indian Women Network (CII-IWN)-Southern Region. An Education Task Force Panel Member

at the South India Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SICCI), she is also the Leadership Vertical Lead at the Confederation of Indian Industries - Indian Women Network (CII-IWN) - Chennai Zone.

Adding a feather to her cap, she was conferred Women of Impact Award and Women in STEM Award by IIT Madras Foundation and IIT Madras Alumni Association respectively for her phenomenal contribution in the field of Engineering and Technology education. With over 10 Educational institutions of repute, Hindustan Group of Institutions offer quality education from Kindergarten to Post-Doctoral research in the schools of Arts and Science, Management, Engineering and Technology. KCG College of Technology, a Unit of Hindustan Group of Institutions continues to impact the lives of several lakhs in the community under able guidance of Dr. Annie Jacob. She is primarily involved in administering the planning and execution of operations and resources to achieve the set institutional goals. Dr Annie joined the Y's Men Community (An International Service Organisation) in the year 2009 as a member of Mylapore club, Chennai District, and is dynamically involved in various activities of Y's Men International. She is currently the Area Director for Y's Menettes - India Area and has held various posts in the regions and districts. Under the leadership of Dr Annie, Centenary community care projects are being executed for the benefit of the underprivileged. To conclude, she believes and lives by the words of Falon Fatemi, "at the end of the day, you are the only one that is limiting your ability to dream, or to actually execute on your dreams. Don't let yourself get in the way of that."





Gift of Fertility

DR ARAVIND CHANDER AND DR RESHMA SHREE

Doctors

G

uinness World Record Holder, India Book of Records holder, and national fertility awardee, Dr Aravind Chander and Dr Reshma Shree A are the names

behind Dr Aravind's Iswarya IVF – Fertility & Pregnancy
Centre. Giving hope to thousands of childless couples,
Iswarya IVF has branches in Tamil Nadu and Kerala is a onepoint advanced IVF, Fertility, and Laparoscopic Centre. Dr
Aravind Chander is a fertility super-specialist and gynaec
laparoscopic surgeon who has a Post-Doctoral Fellowship
in Reproductive Medicine and Masters in minimal access
surgery and Diploma in minimal access surgery from Kiel
University, Germany and has done ART fertility training
from NUH Singapore and his better half, Dr Reshma Shree
A also a fertility super-specialist and gynaec laparoscopic
surgeon run the place.

"I always had an interest in the medical field inspired from my grandfather Dr P.R. Subbaiyan who is a Cooper Surgical Awardee from British period and had the interest to pursue training in laparoscopic surgeries. But when I was pursuing my education, I saw a huge gap in treating women's fertility and laparoscopic procedures and I found that there were very few doctors concentrating in this segment. To fulfill this gap and with a vision to eradicate infertility from India," says Dr Aravind Chander.

Iswarya IVF has introduced genetic screening and geneticbased treatment among couples who had a recurrent miscarriage and repeated IVF Failures and is one of the few doctors who started practising genetic screening in IVF in India. "Preimplantation genetic screening (PGS) and Preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) techniques are used for infertile couples, especially those that have had a miscarriage or genetic abnormality so that they can become healthy parents," says Dr Reshma.

The team not just attends but also conducts conferences to keep themselves updated. This center is a one-stop solution for all kinds of fertility treatments, Gynaec Laparoscopic procedures including high-risk pregnancy care and takes a holistic approach making it a homely center with affordable cost. "We have all facilities from basic follicular scan for natural cycle and 3D-4D Scan to all higher-end procedures including ICSI, IMSI, Freezing and thawing procedures, Egg freezing, PGS and PGD," says Dr. Aravind. Iswarya IVF has given free fertility counselling to more than ten thousand infertility couples in India and abroad.

Iswarya IVF currently has advanced Centres at Coimbatore (Ganapathy), Tirupur, Erode (Perundurai Road), Salem, Hosur at Tamil Nadu, and Palakkad and Kozhikode at Kerala and Colombo, Sri Lanka. "Our motto is to provide fertility services throughout India in upcoming years at a very affordable cost with a high success rate," Dr Reshma. Iswarya IVF has excellent atomised documentation software, where every procedure will be completely documented, barcoded, and be completely confidential. "Even our embryo freezing and identification has another two to three levels of check systems in place and every level is completely confidential and the treatment protocol is easily followed," says Dr Aravind.









MUSIC



The Right Tone

BINDU SUBRAMANIAM

Musician

B

indu Subramaniam, daughter of Dr. L. Subramaniam is making her mark in music with Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts (SaPa).

Bindu Subramaniam is a singer-songwriter, music educator, and entrepreneur. She sings as part of The Thayir Sadam Project and SubraMania bands she formed with her brother Ambi Subramaniam and has performed extensively in Europe, the US, and Asia. She completed the Stanford Seed Transformation Program, has a master's degree in law from London University, a master's certificate in songwriting and music business from Berklee College of Music, an MPhil, a diploma in the Montesorri method, and a PhD. She started SaPa in Schools program with her brother Ambi Subramaniam in 2014. As co-Founder and CEO of SaPa, her vision is to use the power of music to make the world a better place and make quality music education accessible to every child. SaPa in Schools uses music to teach children 21st century skills like empathy and teamwork.

"The idea is simple; we can't predict what the workplace will look like decades from now, but we will always need well-rounded, responsible people

on board. SaPa in Schools uses music to help children appreciate cultural diversity and build language skills. It impacts 30,000 children across India each year."

She has built an ecosystem for music education from scratch and its five pillars, curriculum, syllabus, teaching methodology, teacher training, and assessments. All this has been designed in-house and verified by global research. So far, she has partnered with The Norwegian Academy of Music, UNICEF, the Akshaya Patra Foundation, the International Society for Music Education (ISME), Fondation Royaumont, BookASmile, and more.

In 2020, SaPa proved to play an important role in children's emotional well-being at a time of extended isolation and used music to bridge many of the gaps created by a lack of community time. SaPa launched an online learning platform hosting self-paced courses by some of the world's best musicians like Dr. L Subramaniam, Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, Usha Uthup, Pankaj Udhas, Russ Miller, and more. She was among India's first educators to build a child-focused music training curriculum and has co-authored 20 SaPa textbooks.







The Right Moves

BRINDHA PARAMESHWAR

Dance Master

horeographer Brindha is making all the right moves as she literally makes film stars dance to her tune.

Born as the youngest into a family

of seven girls in Erode, her elder sister Jayanthi has acted in a few films while her second sister Girija, a Bharatanatyam danseuse and her youngest sister Kala are also leading choreographers. Her nephew Prasanna Sujit and niece Gayathri Raghuram are also into choreography. She also introduced her niece Keerthi as an anchor in her dance reality show Maanada Mayilada.

For someone who came from a humble background, Brindha always had an interest in extracurricular activities as a child. She loved dancing from a very young age and trained in Bharatnatyam under Raghu Master, a well-known choreographer.

After she made her debut in the 1987 Hindi film Insaf Ki Pukar where she was an assistant choreographer, Brindha went on to become an independent choreographer in South India. Her first movie was the 2000 release Mugavaree in Tamil that had Ajith Kumar and Jyothika in lead roles. This was a great start to her career as a full-fledged choreographer as she received the Tamil Nadu State Film Award for Best

Choreographer in 2000 for her work in the movie.

She then continued to work in many South Indian films including Vaaranam Aayiram, Maan Karate, Kadal, and Theri choreographing dance sequences that have seen her win the National Film Award for Best Choreography as well. She has won two Tamil Nadu State Film Awards for Best Choreographer and four Kerala State Film Awards for Best Choreography. She has worked in several Hindi movies like Phool Aur Kaante, 'Ashoka The Great', 'Hulchul', 'Chup Chup Ke', 'Bodyguard' and 'PK' as well as in South Indian movies like 'Aavida Maa Aavide', 'Chatrapathi', 'Kannathil Muthamittal', 'Immini Nalloraal', 'Kaaki Sattai' among others.

Among her recent work is Mani Ratnam's Ponniyin Selvan, a movie that has an ensemble cast including Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Karthi, Jayam Ravi, Vikram, Sarathkumar, Jayaram, Lal, Trisha and Aishwarya Rajesh, among others. She has also recently turned director with her movie Hey Sinamika has Dulquer Salmaan, Kajal Agarwal, and Aditi Rao Hydari in lead roles.

She has worked with established stars like Rajnikanth and Aamir Khan and is the recipient of Filmfare awards as well. She is married to Parameshwar and has twin children.







Health Check

CHANDRASEKHAR NAIR

Co-Founder & Chief Technology Officer - Molbio Diagnostics



handrasekhar Nair the inventor of Truenat, a one-of-a-kind diagnostic device that can test 30+ infectious diseases and is being extensively

used for testing COVID-19 and TB across the country. He is the Co-Founder & Chief Technology Officer of Molbio Diagnostics, one of India's leading healthcare companies in the In-Vitro Diagnostics (IVD) segment, and the manufacturer of the renowned molecular diagnostic platform Truenat® Real-Time PCR. He is also the founder of Bigtec Labs, a fully owned subsidiary of Molbio Diagnostics. He is responsible for all the R&D activities of the company.

A scientist at heart, Nair is deeply interested in the translational impact of technology on public health, the seeds for which were sown during his stint as a student at Anand Niketan College, Warora setup by Padma Vibhushan Shri Baba Amte.

Though he later studied chemical engineering, the multi-disciplinary atmosphere at BITS Pilani allowed him to dabble in multiple areas of science and engineering. After completing his master's in chemical engineering at BITS Pilani, Chandrasekhar joined the

Vittal Mallya Scientific Research Foundation, one of India's first private sector specialty R&D center. He has a Ph.D. from the Vellore Institute of Technology in BioMEMS.

He spent over a decade at the Foundation, primarily working on translating laboratory technology to scale in fermentation, downstream processing, and natural product chemistry. His interest eventually shifted to in-vitro diagnostics and along with a few likeminded professionals, started bigtec Labs to focus on emerging technologies in Point of Care diagnostics. In 2010, bigtec joined hands with Sriram Natarajan to form Molbio Diagnostics, and eventually, bigtec became a fully owned subsidiary of Molbio. The duo envisioned democratizing point of care molecular diagnostics in India. Truenat® MTB is already rolled out by the National Tuberculosis Elimination Program in about 1760 DMCs in the first phase and global roll out plans are underway. TrueNat for COVID-19 is amongst the first real-time PCR tests to be approved by ICMR and since then has been at the forefront of COVID testing in India. In his spare time, he likes to read, and his interests are in ancient Indian Literature.







Talented, Brilliant And Beautiful A Class Act

DEEPA RAO ACHARYA

Founder & CEO - Lit Spirit Foundation

S

ocial entrepreneur, author, speaker, lifestyle influencer, philanthropist and event curator - Deepa Rao Acharya juggles many roles with rare aplomb.

A prominent Bangalorean from a reputed hotelier family, Deepa has a Master's from Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication – based at the iconic poet's heritage home. "In a meaningful serendipity, it was my maternal grandfather's first hotel before housing the college; he was a key influence in my life. He gifted me an antique rosewood writing desk once owned by her, which I cherish. I always wanted to be a writer and that truly inspired me while growing up."

After a stint as a journalist with a leading national English daily, Deepa worked as a film and television script writer in Mumbai with some eminent industry names.

Well-connected in film and high society fraternities, today she focuses on harnessing her varied life experiences and goodwill, to curate bespoke events and celebrity collaborations. Her beautiful, well-crafted, soirees, are sought after by the elite; her intellectual background ensuring they appeal to both the literati and the glitterati. Amazingly, she donates all proceeds to worthy causes – including indigenous weavers, environmental initiatives, spiritual wellness and the underprivileged - through

her charitable Foundation, Lit Spirit. "As a committee member at the historic Century Club, I'd organized a well-received Women's Day gala. An A-lister in the field suggested I should look at it as a career option as I was good at it. Kirtilals Diamonds was my first client since then there's been no looking back."

A much-admired connoisseur, socialite and fashion

icon, Deepa is firmly entrenched in the luxury industry. She has collaborated with – and modelled for – luxe international and national brands in the hospitality, F&B, jewellery, designer and lifestyle segments. "I believe in working on my inner energy. A woman who walks in purpose does not have to chase people or opportunity, her light causes people and opportunity to chase her. That's been my experience in life." Deeply spiritual, Deepa is inspired by a sense of oneness with Mother Earth, and being connected to her higher purpose – making her a social changemaker, popular speaker and mentor. Her spiritual fiction book 'Lit Spirit', is ready for release. "My spiritual wellness retreats are going well too it's something the world truly needs now. I also plan to take the Foundation to newer heights with some

She makes women proud!

exclusive charitable fundraisers."







SPORTS



Building Blocks

DIPIKA PALLIKAL

Squash Champion

ipika Pallikal's prowess on the
Indian professional squash is worthy
of being emulated even as she
continues to work towards making a

comeback to the sport. Dipika Pallikal Karthik turning professional in 2006, won three WISPA tour titles in 2011. She is the first Indian professional squash player to be ranked within the top 10 in the PSA Women's rankings.

She is a graduate from the Ethiraj College for Women majoring in English and is married to Indian Cricketer Dinesh Karthik and has twin boys, Kabir and Zian. While she has several achievements on the squash court, Dipika is known to be a person to raise her voice for women's empowerment. In 2012, she boycotted the national championship to protest to ensure equal pay for women and men. The Squash Rackets Federation of India eventually agreed to increase the prize money for women in 2016.

She won the squash women's doubles gold medal with Joshna Chinappa in the 2014 Commonwealth games, the first of a kind for the sport in the Commonwealth

Games. In the 2016 South Asian Games, she was part of the gold medal-winning Indian Women's team and in May 2016, she won the silver medal with the women's team at the Asian Team Championship in Taipei. She won a silver medal in the 2018 Commonwealth Games in the doubles and the mixed doubles category. Dipika has not played competitive squash for over two years now because of an ankle injury and is working on getting back to being fit to be back on the International (PSA) tour and aims to play in the Commonwealth and Asian Games.

After consecutive injuries in 2018, she decided to take a break from the sport to come back on the circuit feeling fresh. She has deliberately kept a low profile as she recovered and focused on her rehabilitation and says she has a lot more to contribute to the sport that has traditionally been considered one that is maledominated.

The Arjuna and Padma Shri awardee added another to her cap by turning entrepreneur with her new venture Studio 2112 with partner and friend Praneetha Rebala. This is a design firm that she is very excited about.







THE MULTITASKER

DR. FLORENCE HELEN NALINI

Founder & Director of Shreya's Global Academy



n entrepreneur and psychologist from Chennai, Dr. Florence Helen Nalini was also crowned Mrs. India 2021. She lives her life with the mantra, "keep your

feet on the ground but let your heart soar as high as it will. Just try new things."

Say hello to Dr. Florence who has a diverse academic background, in Psychology, English Literature, Public Administration, Business Administration, and Life Sciences. She is also a Neuro-Linguistic Programmer, Hypnotherapist, Emotional Intelligence Coach, Life Skills, Behavioural, and an Effective Language Trainer.

An edupreneur by profession and a psychologist by passion, she is the Founder and Director of Shreya's Global Academy, a franchise partner with Little Millennium, a chain of preschools, Global Art, and a Montessori Institute. She is the Chairperson of All Ladies League, Tamil Nadu Chapter, and Council Member of Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tamil Nadu Entrepreneurship Council.

Being a successful entrepreneur as an emerald Direct at Amway India, she continues to inspire women to lead extraordinary lives. Known to multi-task, she recently won the 'Mrs. India 2021' beauty pageant at The International Glamour Project TIGP® representing Chennai, on the National Platform. As winner of the title 'Ms. International World Classic India 2021', she will be representing the country on The International Platform at Miami, Florida, the USA in the middle of 2022.

She used this platform to support and raise funds towards the Right to Education for Children. She was supported by 366 Donors globally for this noble cause. "I believe that learning is a continuous process for me. I have always been academically strong, but the fashion industry is completely new to me. My interest in pageants comes from my zest and it drives me to explore and learn new things as well as to transform myself into a better version and grow by accepting new challenges."

She credits her mentors Dr. Akshata Prabhu, CEO, Brand Ambassador of TIGP® Ms. International World 2021, and Dr. Swaroop Puranik Managing Director of TIGP® whose motto 'Guts, Glamour and Glory' inspired her to compete in the pageant. Her message to women is "learn it once and learn it right - because knowledge is power. Continue learning, try new things and follow your heart."







Fabric Whisperer

GAURANG SHAH

Designer, and textile revivalist

G

aurang Shah is doing his bit as he works across the country reviving its rich textile heritage and working with artisans to keep their craft

intact. As a young boy, Gaurang Shah would help his father at his sari and matching blouse store. Perhaps it was then that his love affair with textiles started. A self-made textile designer, he went on to become one of India's most reputed textile designers.

For a self-confessed lover of weaving traditions of India, he has spent the last two decades working with over 7000 weavers and craftspeople across 16 states to help them have a steady means of livelihood. He combines his skills and the craft of the artisans to weave traditional Indian textiles into fabric pieces that merge art, craft, and design.

His luxury brand Gaurang represents the bold reinvention of heritage handwoven saris and Indian outfits. His design aesthetics and unparalleled craftsmanship come together to make each of his creations unique, in its own way. Incidentally, his brand was the first to introduce indigenous weaves in mainstream national and international fashion. So much

so that his work with ingenious craftsmanship, makes his saris like wearable art.

In 2001 when handlooms were waning, he took on the mantle to bring them back to the fashion world. He worked with traditional weavers across the country to create handcrafted masterpieces from the collaboration. His eponymous label Gaurang creates saris and outfits that showcase textile art traditional motifs and modern textures.

He has also extensively worked on the Jamdani technique making it an integral part of his fashion repertoire and his clients include the likes of actors like Sonam Kapoor, Vidya Balan, Tapsee Pannu, and Kirron Kher among others. He also retails in his stores across Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Kolkata. A regular at the Lakme Fashion Week (LFW), he has also showcased at the Berlin Fashion Week and has launched his online store that will retail his casual, formal, and bridal clothing lines.

Having made sure that he continued to support the weavers through the hard COVID days, Shah has ensured that traditional textiles never lose their sheen.









Fashion Files

DR. HEMAMALINI LAKSHMAN

Mrs. India Universe



rs. India Universe 2018 Dr.

Hemamalini Lakshman has always
beaten stereotypes and has
balanced academics and fashion.

"When you follow your heart and dreams you can make them a reality." It was her belief in these words that saw Dr. Hemamalini Lakshman crowned as Mrs. India Universe Queen 2018. Cheered on by her family including her children Abhijith and Diviya, the beauty queen also won the subtitle of Mrs. Beautiful.

Born in Chennai, where she completed most of her education, literature was always an area of interest.

Armed with a Masters' degree in English literature, topping the college with a Gold Medal, she married young to Dr. K Lakshman, an eminent leading pathologist from Mysore, who motivated her to do her PhD Doctorate in English Literature.

Despite her lofty academic achievements, she admits that the tiara has always fascinated her. "I have been passionate about fashion since I was very young. But I like to put my own spin and style on it. I believe that fashion is what you buy, and style is what you do with it." Her father Dr. D. Jayakumar was the one who made her believe she was very special and encouraged her in all her endeavors. "He made me feel like a princess and gave me a very high sense of self-esteem."

Her win at the contest also came from a lot of hard work

and preparation from fitness, costumes, skincare and haircare routines, makeup sessions, and more. "Being a beauty queen requires hard work and perseverance and I worked on it persistently for a year. My day started with one hour of yoga early in the morning, current affairs knowledge sessions, and grooming classes. We all had to make a presentation on violence against women that needed much research."

For someone who balances her personal and professional life with aplomb, she says it is always family first and admits they are the reason behind her success. "My husband Lakshman was there to reassure me at every step and he and my children encouraged and gave me critical feedback. I can say that whatever I have achieved in life, it is only because of the support of my husband."

She is also passionate about gardening and organic farming that she pursues at her picturesque lakeside farm on the outskirts of Mysore known as H.L Tranqvilla. She loves working with children and conducting workshops on the importance of a green environment. She and her husband extend voluntary services to poor patients. She also conducts grooming workshops for aspiring models, women empowerment projects, and works of charity for the less fortunate. She counts her mother Rajivi Jayakumar as her inspiration and role model as she balances her life perfectly.









Music Matters

ILLAYARAJA

Music Composer

llayaraja, 78 is a name synonymous
with good music and his foundation
started early with his initiation
into Tamil folk music. He joined

his brother's travelling musical troupe when he was just 14 and completed a music course with Professor Dhanraj. A gold medalist in classical guitar from London's Trinity College of London, he learnt classical music from T.V. Gopalakrishnan.

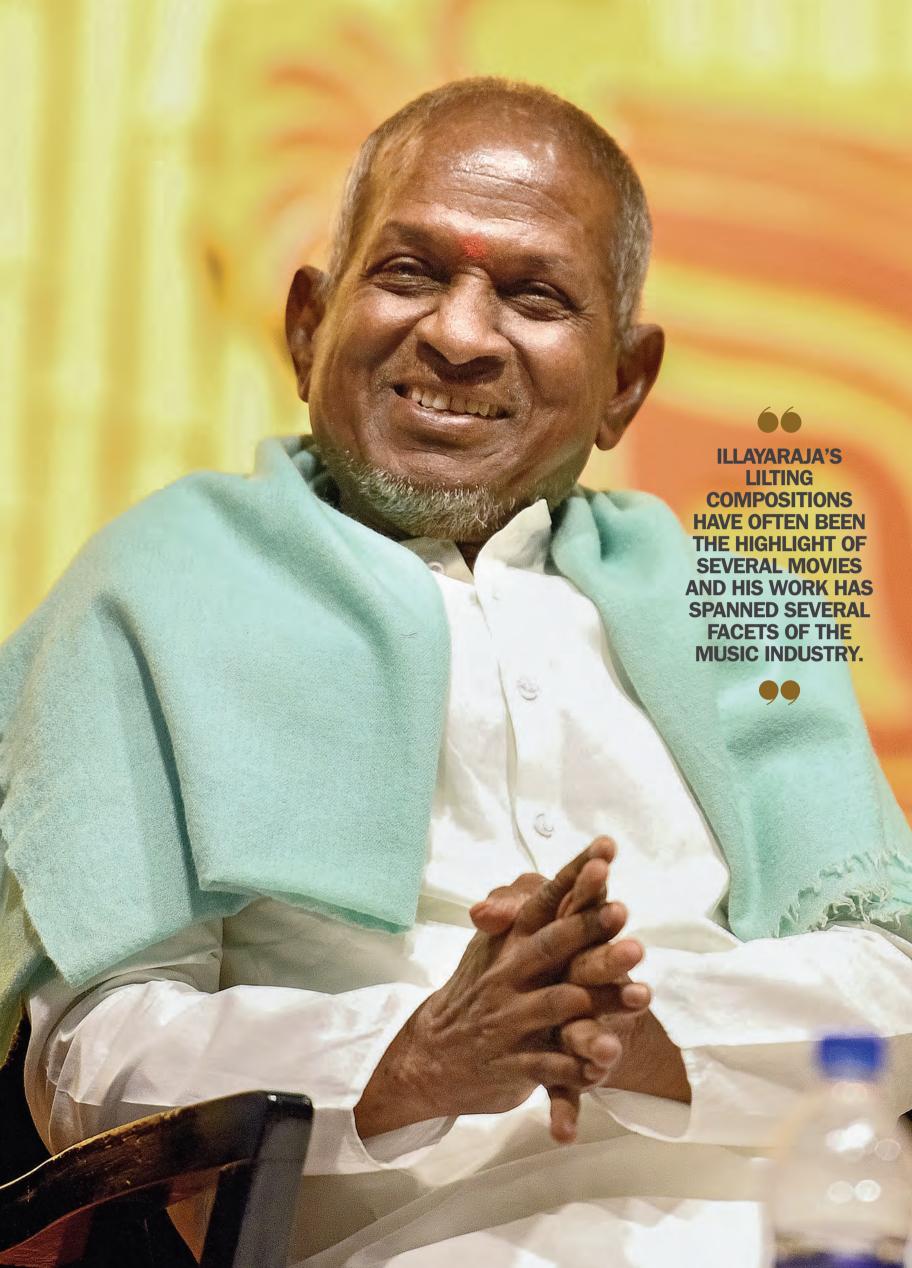
After working in a band, he started working as a musical assistant to Kannada film composer G.

K. Venkatesh, and soon started writing his own compositions. In 1975 he composed the music for the Tamil film Annakkili with a fusion of Western and Tamil influences. Once his career took off there was no stopping him and by the mid-1980s he had worked with most of the big names in the Tamil film industry. It's no surprise that he's been dubbed Isaignani, which translates to "musical genius." A maestro in his

own right, he has been one of the earliest composers to use string instruments and Western classical music harmonies in film music creating his own distinct style of music. His body of work includes composing over 7000 songs for over 1000 movies and performing in over 20000 concerts which has ensured that he is counted among the greatest music composers in the country.

Having composed a song only in the ascending notes, believed to be the only composer in the world to do so, he has been honoured with the Padma Vibhushan. He has announced his own app, Isai OTT, that will have behind-the-scenes trivia about his songs. He was voted as the all-time greatest film-music director of India by CNN-IBN in 2013, and it is his work as a film score composer, lyricist, music director, songwriter, singer, conductor, instrumentalist, arranger, and orchestrator that has stood the test of time.









The Power House

JAYESH RANJAN

Indian Administrative Service (IAS)



ayesh Ranjan is the Principal
Secretary of the Industries &
Commerce (I&C) and Information
Technology (IT) Departments of the

Telangana government. Jayesh Ranjan, an IAS topper from the 1992 batch who works in Telangana, has a master's degree in Psychology from Delhi University. He also holds a degree in Business Management from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and a Master's in Public Management from Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. The winner of the World Bank's Social Capital Visiting Scholarship in 2002 and the British Government's Gurukul Chevening Scholarship in 2005, his international consultancy assignments include stints with World Bank, UN-ESCAP, Sedatu project of Mexico, and for international NGOs working for Youth Issues like YES, Inc of the USA and NMC from Italy. He is credited with opening IKEA's first Indian store in Hyderabad and was awarded the Royal Order of the Polar Star by His Majesty The King of Sweden in 2019 for promoting Swedish business interests in India.

His work includes developing a policy framework, attracting new investment, identifying opportunities for utilizing IT in various government processes, and promoting the digital empowerment of the citizens. He has worked in the Industrial Promotion sector as Commissioner and MD of the Industries Department, Secretary in the Tourism Promotion Department, and Vice-Chairman of the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (HUDA). As part of the 12-year stint he worked in Tribal Development, Natural Resources Management, Poverty Alleviation, and other related Social Development Sectors.

As Principal Secretary Industries and Commerce, Government of Telangana, he recently launched the Hyderabad Chapter of the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI).

He also supports several social, cultural, and charitable causes including being on the board of United Way (Hyderabad), Save A Child's Heart (SACH) Foundation, Young Lives India, Save the Children, Sparsh Hospice, Heal a Child Foundation, Moving Images, Society to Aid the Hearing Impaired (SAHI), and more.









Hands That Give Life

DR KAMALA SELVARAJ

Doctor



amala Selvaraj, an obstetrician and gynecologist who is best known for the first test tube baby of South India studied at Sacred Heart Matriculation

Higher Secondary School, Chennai. She did her MBBS at Kasturba Medical College, Karnataka and MD at Madras Medical College, Madras University.

She has several journals and articles in medical and other magazines to her credit and has also authored Editor and Author for the book titled 100 Questions & Answers for Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

She has received several awards and accolades and earned her PhD in 2002 for her thesis on 'Premature Ovarian Failure and its management'. Her test tube baby is a boon for couples with fertility issues and over 800 babies have been born using assisted reproduction therapies at her sprawling GG Hospital in Chennai. The hospital incidentally houses an Invitro Fertilization

(IVF) lab and is equipped with hi-tech state-of-art infrastructure.

For someone who has constantly been learning and training with international institutions, Selvaraj also made a surrogate baby possible for the first time in India in 1992. It was during the same year that her clinic performed the first sperm attached Oocyte Fallopian tube Transfer and in 2008 she made the first Frozen Egg (Oocyte) baby possible. It was also under her care that a patient with Mayer-Rokintansky-Kustner-Hauser Syndrome had twins through a surrogate. She is known to have helped couples not just in India but also from other countries like Dubai, UK, US, Australia, Sri Lanka, and Canada. A researcher at heart, she is currently working on newer Assisted Reproductive Techniques and Rapid (Vitrification) and slow freezing of Oocytes, ovarian tissue freezing and is doing research in stem cell therapy.







Betting On Biotechnology

DR. KRISHNA ELLA

Founder, Bharat Biotech and Ella Food



pearheading India's indigenous vaccine, COVAXIN® that has helped India fight COVID-19 is Dr. Krishna Ella, Founder, Bharat Biotech. The

pandemic has changed life as we all know it forever.

Leading the country's fight against the coronavirus,
Dr. Krishna Ella, Founder, Bharat Biotech launched
COVAXIN®, India's indigenous COVID-19 developed
in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical
Research (ICMR) - National Institute of Virology (NIV).
A graduate of the University of Agricultural Sciences,
Bangalore, he moved to the US for his MS from the
University of Hawaii and Ph.D., from the University of
Wisconsin-Madison.

Because he had the vision to develop innovative remedies for developing world healthcare challenges, he returned to India with his wife Suchitra in 1996 and started Bharat Biotech International Limited. Today under his leadership, the company has made over 4 billion vaccine doses that have been distributed to over 116 developing countries. The company has 160 patents and 16 plus vaccines in its portfolio and has received grants of more than \$165 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, \$4 million from the Wellcome Trust, and others. Partnering with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the company successfully developed Rotavac®, India's first new

molecule and the world's most affordable vaccine against Rotavirus. The company has also launched Typbar TCV®, the world's first clinically proven and WHO pre-qualified Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV).

Dr. Ella's has been on committees of Scientific Advisory
Committee to the Cabinet, Government of India,
Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, Central Food
Technological Research Institute, Council of Centre
for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Forecasting and
Assessment Council, ILS, Bhubaneswar, and National
Institute of Technology, Warangal.

His lofty achievements have earned him over 100 National and International awards including JRD TATA Best Entrepreneur of the year, ET Now Special Recognition for Healthcare Industry Award, Best Innovative Company of the year by Bio Spectrum, Business Leader of the Year, Pharma Bio World – 2011, Best Technology and Innovation Award, Prime Minister of India – 2008, Lifetime Achievement Award, TANA, USA 2019 and Biospectrum Award, Under Top 20 BioPharma Companies 2019 among many others.

In the pipeline, he has three more COVID-19 vaccines in collaborations with the University of Wisconsin, ICMR, and Thomas Jefferson University, followed by Chikungunya, Malaria, Cholera, Zika vaccine and he continues his focus on helping Indian farmers.









Plant Power

KUNAL MUTHA

Founder & Managing Director, Only Earth



unal Mutha has a passion for vegan lifestyle, concern about climate change and animal cruelty that have resulted in his brand Only

Earth. A fervent leader, family-bred entreprenuer, Kunal Mutha is backed by experience from the wellestablished Mohan Mutha Group. In 2013, he began his career by leading the expansion of the group into manufacturing in his capacity as the CEO of MM Polytech. He set up a state-of-the-art manufacturing unit of flexible packaging material in Sricty, India. The company catered to multinational clients like Mondelez, Perfetti, Unicharm and exported large volumes of production to over 20 countries. He is also a budding vegan athlete who has completed about three Ironman Triathlons in New Zealand, Italy, and Sri Lanka. He spends hours training each day and prepares for the next sporting challenge. His passion for the vegan lifestyle, concern about climate change and animal cruelty leads him to venture into the Plant-Based food and beverage

Business. He is the Founder and Managing Director of Naturise Consumer Products. With Singapore as the company's headquarters, Mutha plans to establish its flagship brand Only Earth as a leading player in the plant-based sector.

Since its launch in 2021, Only Earth has been spreading its wings via retail, E-Commerce, and HORECA Channels. The products are now retailing in over 1000 outlets across 12 Indian Cities and leading the category across all major online platforms. Oat's milk has become a customer favorite and caught the attention of restaurants and cafeterias. In today's food categorization, veganism is slowly growing steadily and hence HORECA channels such as Starbucks, Oberoi, and the like have partnered with Only Earth for supplies of plant-based alternatives.

With health and wellness being a key topic of focus for the majority of the population, the year 2022 is going to be the most instrumental year for the plant-based Industry as this lifestyle is going to see mass adoption at a rapid pace.







The Big Screen

MAMMOOTTY

Film Actor

id you know Mammootty is a qualified lawyer? Well, chances are you may not but while he studied law, acting was what he always

wanted to do. And with three National awards for best actor, it has clearly been the right choice for him. At 70, he has acted in over 400 films over five decades and he is a force to reckon with in the Malayalam film industry. He debuted as a junior artist in the 1971 film Anubhavangal Paalichakal, directed by K. S. Sethumadhavan while his first film with a lead role came in the 1980 film Vilkkanundu Swapnangal. After this, there was no looking back as he made giant strides in the industry. In fact, he acted in over 150 films between 1982 and 1987. Apart from Malayalam, he has also acted in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, and English films.

He counts M T Vasudevan Nair and KG George as his mentors and says that it was his passion for the

medium of acting that has been behind his illustrious career. Naturally, then he has won three National Film Awards for Best Actor, seven Kerala State Film Awards, and thirteen Filmfare Awards and he has been awarded the Padma Shri for his contribution to cinema.

His son Dulquer Salmaan is also a popular actor today. Apart from acting, he is the goodwill ambassador of Akshaya, a district-wide e-literacy project and the patron of a charitable organisation in Kerala that works to improve the quality of life among patients with advanced cancer called Pain and Palliative Care Society. This apart he has lent his name and support for several other philanthropic causes.

In 2021 he had two releases The Priest and One and in 2022, he has three films in post-production as well as is filming the fifth installment of CBI. Clearly, the actor in him shows no signs of stopping and fans are certainly not complaining.







Raise Your Voice

DR NARTHAKI NATRAJ

Transgender activist and dancer



r Narthaki Natraj is a transgender Bharatnatyam dancer who has overcome several trials and tribulations and is a member of the

State Development Policy Council of the Tamil Nadu Government today.

Born in the non-descript village of Anuppanadi in Tamil Nadu Nataraj was just 10 when her family noticed that their son was different. Growing up with nine other siblings in a joint family, the severe backlash and rejection forced her to leave home when she was just 11. She and her friend fled to Thanjavur to find dance guru Kittappa Pillai who made her wait for a year before agreeing to teach her Bharatanatyam and named her Narthaki, meaning dancer.

This proved to be a boon and she stayed and learned the dance form in his gurukul for 15 years. She mastered the Thanjavur-based Nayaki Bhava dance form said to be known to few dancers as it is a rare and ancient composition that was performed in old Tamil temples. For Nataraj, Bharatnatyam became the medium to express her femininity.

Along with learning dance, she also completed her higher secondary, using the money earned from dance performances. While she was keen to pursue law, she had to give up her education as she was denied admission to a law college based on her sexuality. However, in 2016, she received an honorary doctorate from Periyar Maniammai University. Her story, in fact, is a chapter in textbooks for class 11 students in Tamil Nadu to sensitize them and also share her success story.

Today she has her own Bharatanatyam dance school in Chennai, the Velliambalam Trust School of Dance that has branches in the US, UK, and Norway and uses the funds she generates for the empowerment of the transgender community in India.

Being the first transgender artiste to be honoured with the Padma Shri award, she is a member of the State Development Policy Council (SDPC) in the government of Tamil Nadu. Working tireless towards an inclusive society and removing gender stereotypes, she hopes to address the lack of proper healthcare facilities and job opportunities for the transgender community.







Making Connections

DHANYA MENON

Cyber Crime Investigator and Director, Avanzo Cyber Security Solutions Pvt Ltd



r. Pattathil Dhanya Menon is India's first woman Cybercrime Investigator and has a wealth of knowledge on cybercrimes and their prevention.

She is India's First Woman Cybercrime Investigator,
Winner of Government of India's First Woman Achiever
Award, and Director of Avanzo Cyber Security
Solutions Pvt Ltd.

The recipient of the Women Leadership award 2021 – GCPIT, she completed her Diploma in Cyber Crime from Asian School of Cyber Law, Pune, and bachelor's degree in computing from British Columbia University, Canada. During her diploma, she conducted workshops on cybercrime awareness for schools, colleges, and police forces of many states of India. She then started working as a visiting faculty for the Asian School of Cyber Law and between 2004-2006 when cybercrimes had spiked, she was completely involved with her awareness programs for various organizations.

She completed her Post Graduate Diploma in Cyber Crime from ICFAI and a Cybercrime Investigation course from Asian School of Cyber Law and was selected as an associate of the Cybercrime Investigation Team of the Indian Government where

she worked on several complex cases.

For someone who strongly advocates that prevention is better than cure, she has a Cyber Awareness Program (CAP) that was introduced by her company Avanzo for schools across the country. She started Avanzo in Kerala to work in formulating security policies for corporates, cyber forensics, Cyber Legal Audit & IS Audit for Banks Intellectual property rights in cyberspace, and Security Audit as per ISO 27001. A speaker at international forums, she has not just worked as a trainer for both corporate and students but is also socially committed to the cause of cyber security and has done paper presentations at different seminars.

She was honoured with the 'First Women Achievers Award' by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Govt of India under Maneka Gandhi and has also received an award from President Ram Nath Kovind for being the First Women Cyber Crime Investigator of India.

She is also a trained Kuchipudi Dancer, something that she confesses is an insatiable passion for her. She has performed in numerous stages across India and abroad and when she is not cracking a cybercrime, you will probably find her dancing.







Fragrance Files

PHILIP SAMUEL

Chairman & Managing Director at Indfrag Biosciences Pvt. Ltd.



anufacturing engineer, serial entrepreneur, venture idea generator, inventor, and innovator, Philip Samuel

is capturing the aroma of fresh flowers. Philip Samuel completed his schooling and mechanical engineering graduation in distinguished institutions in Madras and worked for private and government corporations for 12 years in manufacturing, projects, venture idea development, foreign collaborations, and executing large-scale start-ups.

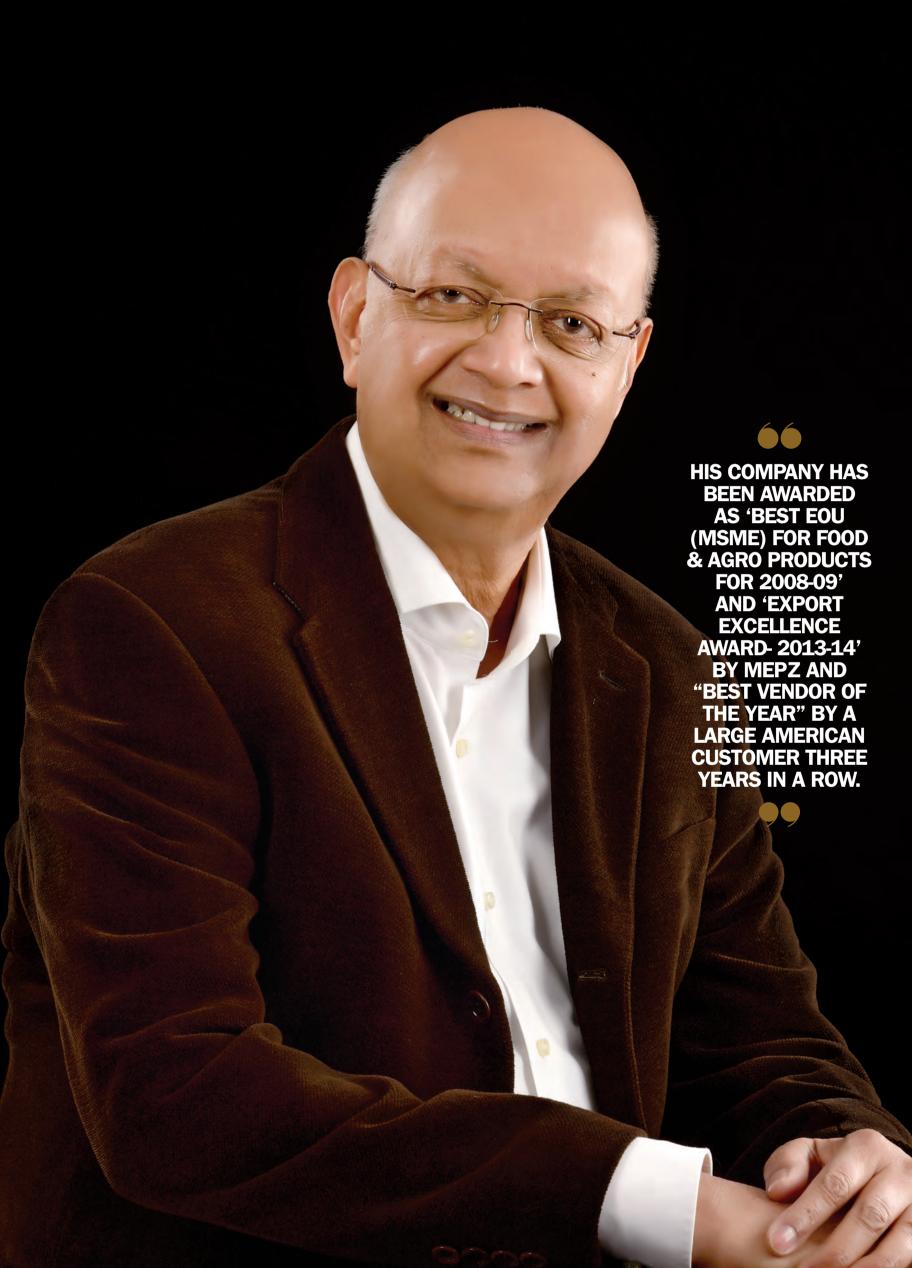
He then started Transprojects, a consultancy company for the identification of unique venture ideas and tying up foreign collaborations- Solar air conditioning (Australia), high vacuum technology (Liechtenstein & USA), coal beneficiation (USA), optical lenses (USA). One of the projects was making the essences of fresh flowers in collaboration with a small French company, owned by Unilever who entrusted Samuel to execute this project as an entrepreneur. Samuel was reluctant to leave the comforts of consultancy but was persuaded by Unilever with a buyback guarantee and technical help. He consequently started Indfrag Biosciences, a factory near Bangalore to extract the fragrance of flowers like

Jasmine and Tuberose. From 1989, Indfrag has grown at a good pace to make many kinds of plant extracts for health and beauty. It has become the largest manufacturer of Garcinia and green coffee extracts in the world.

His company has been awarded as 'Best EOU (MSME) for Food & Agro products for 2008-09' and 'Export Excellence Award- 2013-14' by MEPZ and "Best vendor of the year" by a large American customer three years in a row. Most factory employees are from villages and Indfrag firmly believes in women empowerment and has a girl power team who have several achievements to their credit.

COVID-19 has had a positive impact on the company's performance as customers started increasing their intake as they were in the business of health and beauty combined. Samuel is inspired by Indfrag's customers and suppliers who have developed deep personal relationships with each other. Indfrag works together with them for achieving sustainability, carbon neutrality, green chemistry, and similar activities. Samuel spends his time mentoring small entrepreneurs and helping the underprivileged affected by COVID-19.









Scientific Temper

DR. PONNUSAMY SENTHIL KUMAR

Head, Centre Of Excellence In Water Research (CEWAR) and Professor In The Department Of Chemical Engineering, Sri Sivasubramaniya Nadar College of Engineering, Chennai



r. Ponnusamy Senthil Kumar has worked on the power of science to make a positive difference to the environment.

Born in 1982 in Madurai in Tamil Nadu, Dr. Ponnusamy Senthil Kumar has worked extensively researching pollution control treatment methods, water/wastewater analysis, environmental nanobiotechnology and alternative fuels.

With over 14 years of teaching and research experience and one year of industrial experience, he also has a patent on 'Shrimp Shell Waste into Biodegradable Grocery Bags'. A prolific writer he has to his credit articles in over 400+ International Journal Publications, 100+ book chapters and 100+ National/ International conference publications. He is the author of the book 'Modern Treatment Strategies for Marine Pollution' which has been published by Elsevier. With over 10000+ citations with a Google Scholar

h-index of 51+ along with i10 index of 175+, he has been the recipient of the Malaviya Memorial (Young Faculty) Award 2019, IEI Young Engineers Award 2017-2018, Hiyoshi Think of Ecology Award 2017, CTS Best Teacher Award and Many Young Scientist Awards.

A recognized Anna University Research Supervisor to guide Ph.D./M.S. candidates, he has guided 11 Ph.D. Scholars who have completed, and eight Ph.D. scholars who are currently pursuing in the various fields of environmental and chemical engineering.

He has been featured in Stanford University's list of the world's top 2% scientists and is ranked globally at 8288. As one of India's youngest scientists on this list, his research primarily focuses on ground-breaking technology around wastewater management and

In a career spanning just over a decade, he leads the Centre of Excellence in Water Research (CEWAR) to promote water research.

optimizing agro-waste.





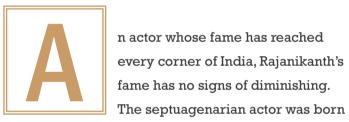




Screen God

RAJINIKANTH

Film Actor



Shivaji Rao Gaekwad in Mysore and worked as a bus

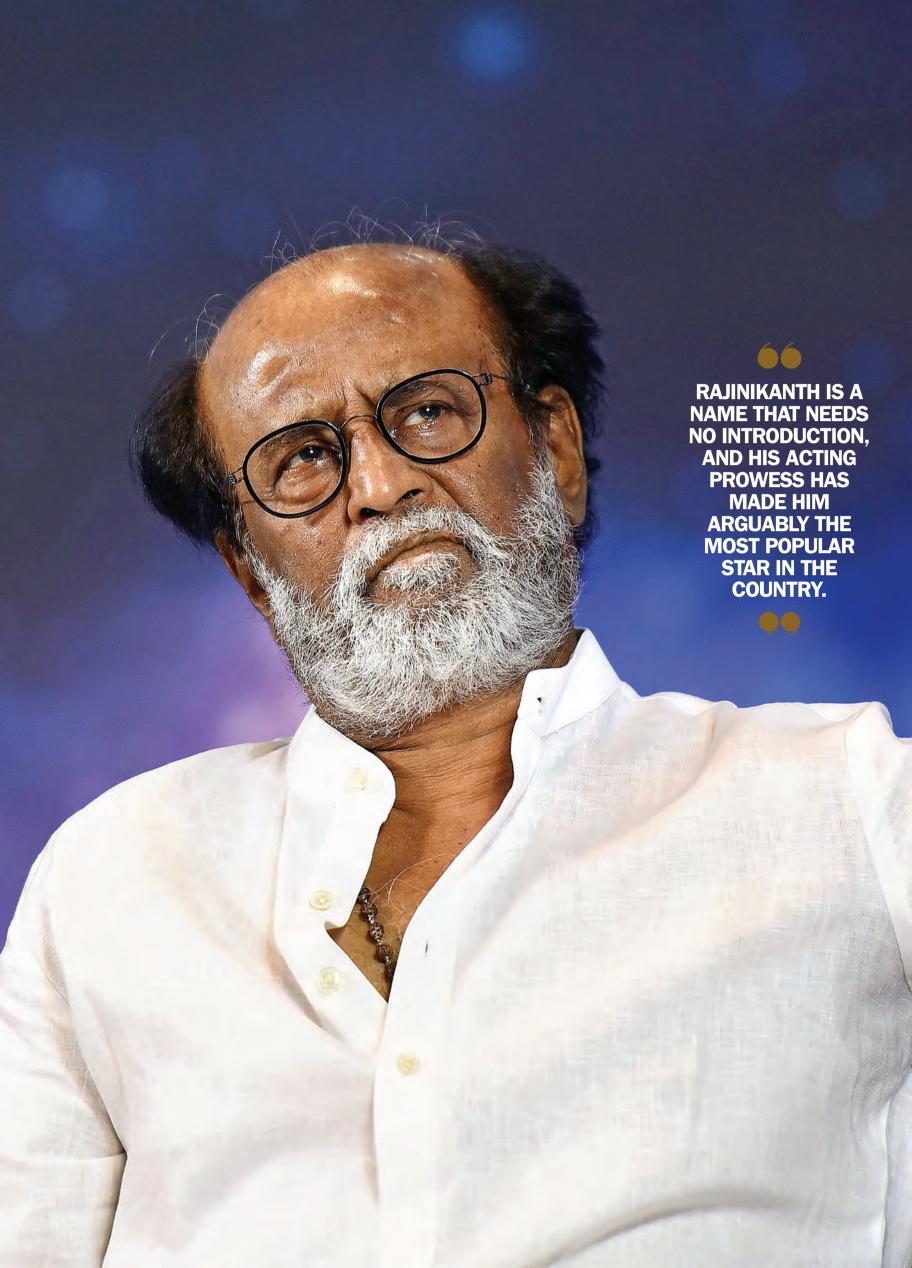
for the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation. For someone who had always participated in plays and did theater, he progressed to taking an acting course at the Madras Film Institute, which kick-started his film career.

His first movie was the 1975 Tamil release Apoorva Raagangal where he had a cameo that he quickly followed up with larger roles in Telugu and Kannada films as well. His popularity soared, and in 1978 he had 20 movies released in the same year.

It was from the 1990s that he became the superstar he is today, with almost all of his movies becoming blockbusters. He also worked on the hit film Hum with Amitabh Bachchan. While he had a roller-coaster ride in the first decade of 2000, things started picking up. His 2010 science fiction release, Enthiran dubbed as the most expensive Indian film ever made, eventually became the second highest-grossing film in India. In fact, the film is a case study at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad elective management course called "Contemporary Film Industry: A Business Perspective."

Since 2011, he has been in and out of the hospital several times, often sparking debates about his health. However, he has always returned stronger. While he announced his intention to enter politics in 2017, he dissolved his party in July 2021, citing health reasons. Known for his flamboyance, especially in his acting mannerisms, he is also a philanthropist who prefers to keep a low key as far as his charitable activities are concerned. Apart from numerous awards and being hailed as a legend, he has also been given the second-highest civilian award of the Republic of India, the Padma Vibhushan.







Culture Queens

SHASHI REDDY & DR. SREENAGI B.RAO

Founders Gudisambaraalu



hashi Reddy & Dr. Sreenagi B.Rao are ensuring that Indian culture remains relevant through Gudisambaraalu. Shashi is the daughter of Gaddam

Ganga Reddy from Nizamabad, a well-known politician who is known for his charity and philanthropic services. Shashi, like her father, is generous, kind, humble and has left an everlasting impression on everyone who knows her.

Sreenagi is a physician by education, administrator by profession, and an aesthete of art and culture. As a person, she is deeply concerned about the preservation of culture and environment and came up with an idea to preserve and give a better India for future generations to come.

It was their common love for temples and divine traditions of India that brought them together. Both Shashi and Sreenagi started Gudisambaraalu under a foundation called Parampara in 2015 with an intention to safeguard and promote Indian culture from going extinct and are successfully running this for the last six years.

Art in temples is being made accessible and understandable to help people understand the rich heritage and culture of the country through this venture. Consequently, Gudisambaraalu is an initiative where

hundreds of artists were brought under one platform.

A lot of old temples were identified, and
many performances were held to bring audiences
to the premises in temples across Telangana and
Andhra Pradesh.

Acclaimed artists performed in the temples of Vijayawada, Bapatla, Nellore, Kondapalli, Guntur, Dharmapuri, Nizamabad, Bhongir, Warangal, and Karimnagar. Performances of artists from Nithyagram, Nangiar Koothu, Surabhi, and many more from around the country as well as folk artists from Rajasthan and other states have participated in the programs. This is a forum that gives free access to the public, particularly the poor to watch the performing arts. The festival is all about knowing the history of unknown and old temple traditions in the two states.

To build the interest around the temple festival, the founders came together to create a series of classical dance performances in these temple sites taking people back into the past, making sure to merge tradition with contemporary art. Sambaralu, which means temple festivities, is to bring back the practice of temples being the centre of social and cultural activity. Bringing dance and art to temples is certainly the best way to ensure heritage and culture come together for all. And this duo is certainly leading from the front.









Happy Feet

SHOBANA

Dancer, Film Actor

S

hobana Chandrakumar Pillai, better known as Shobana is a danseuse who is known for her acting prowess as well. Lalitha, Padmini, and Ragini,

the Travancore sister trio are well known for being ace classical dancers. Their niece Shobana is also a dancer who has made a mark in the film industry too.

Born in 1966 in Kerala, she was introduced to films by Hema Malini's mother. She debuted as a lead actor in Malayalam films in 1984 when she acted in four films and in 1985, she had over 15 releases and soon went on to become a sought-after star. She has a large body of work includes 200 films including Malayalam, Telugu, and Tamil films as well as Hindi, Kannada, and English films. With two National Film Awards, one Kerala State Film Awards and several other awards, her acting matches steps with her dancing.

After she worked as a leading actress for many decades,

she won the National Film Award for Best Actress two times, for the Malayalam film Manichitrathazhu (1993) and the English film Mitr, My Friend (2001).

She also veered towards dance, having trained under the Bharata Natyam dancers Chitra Visweswaran and Padma Subrahmanyam. Post 2000, she also increased her focus on dancing and gave several independent performances on stage. She is also a dance choreographer and runs a dance school, Kalarpana, in Chennai.

Her contributions to the arts have also garnered her the Padma Shri from the Government of India and the Kala Ratna Award from the Kerala State Government. Shobana also has a honorary doctorate from Dr. M.G.R. Educational and Research Institute and Doctor of Letters degree from Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit.

Her appearance in Bollywood includes roles in films like 'Swami Vivekananda', 'Apna Asmaan' and 'Mere Baap Pehle Aap'.







Colour Coded

SHUBHRA CHADDA

Creative Head, and Co-founder, Chumbak

S

hubhra Chadda the name behind Chumbak, India's first designled home and lifestyle brand is the bundle of energy behind

her company's inherent vibrancy. Shubhra along with her husband and business partner Vivek Prabhakar started Chumbak in 2010 as a brand that emerged from their passion for traveling. Began as a kiosk, Chumbak's signature vibrant and globally inspired designs are retailed across chumbak.com, marketplaces, and 50+exclusive brand stores in India. The company has come a long way since 2010, from being a collectibles and accessories pop-up store at airports, theatres, or niche design stores, to a fullfledged home and lifestyle brand today. Shubhra reminisces about everything from carrying hundreds of boxes full of products to a rented apartment, which once worked as Chumbak's office cum storeroom, to convincing retailers to stock the products. While the journey hasn't been an easy one, it's surely one that keeps Shubhra motivated.

The company is known for its quirky products, many of which are inspired by the owl prints is known for a product line that spans from clothing to accessories to home décor and more all of which have one thing in common – vibrant colours.

The company has a plethora of products including magnets, stationary, clothing, footwear, bags, wallets, souvenirs, key chains, jewellery, and more. The decade-long journey of this quirky label has seen several changes as it added to its product profile.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the stores and there has been a shift to online sales to adapt to changing times. Shubhra hopes to take Chumbak to greater heights and says she dreams that it becomes a lifestyle brand born in India that is recognized and respected internationally.

As a leader, Shubhra has always been about teamwork and transparent processes. Since the pandemic and the start of the work from the home era, Shubhra misses working with her team and brainstorming over never-ending cups of tea and conversations other than work.

For 2022, the vision is to continue creating products that are warm, joyful, engaging, and accessible for the home décor enthusiasts. Secondly, enhance customer experience with omnichannel presence, customizable options, and lastly strengthen Chumbak as the brand of choice when it comes to home and lifestyle for the globally aware, millennial woman.







The Stage Is Set

SUHASINI MANIRATNAM

Actor, Producer, and Director

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uhasini has worked as an actor, director, producer, and writer in the film industry making her mark across South Indian language

movies. Wife of ace director Mani Ratnam and niece of actor Kamal Hasan, Suhasini Maniratnam or Suhasini as she is usually known has carved a niche that is her own. Born in 1961, she has worked in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada films. Born in 1961, she has worked in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada films. Her first movie was the 1980 Tamil release Nenjathai Killathe, which won her the Tamil Nadu State Film Award for Best Actress.

In 1985 she won the National Film Award for Best Actress for her role in Sindhu Bhairavi. Some of her important roles have been in films like Swathi, Ezhuthapurangal, Amrutha Varshini, Nuvvu Naaku Nachav and Gabbar Singh among many others.

She married film director Mani Ratnam in 1988 and has a son Nandan. Suhasini has also directed several films including an anthology mini-series Penn in 1991 for Doordarshan Chennai. She directed and wrote the screenplay for the film Indira in 1995 and runs a production house Madras Talkies with her husband Mani Ratnam and G. Srinivasan. In 2020 she directed

a segment Coffee, Anyone? as part of Putham Pudhu Kaalai that was released on Amazon Prime.

She is also the honorary council for the country of Luxembourg and has been named as the head of the jury of the Kerala State Film Awards last year. She has actively supported several charities and has a focus on working for causes related to women and children. While she started her career in the film industry with a Tamil movie but has made a name as being one of the finest actresses across South Indian cinema and has made her mark in movies like Ezhuthappurangal (1987), Vaanaprastham (1999), Theerthadanam (2001) and Nenjathai Killathe (1980). Apart from being an actress, she has also dabbled in direction and dialogue writing.

Suhasini is also a trained costume designer, hairstylist, and cinematographer, apart from being a talented make-up artist. In fact, Suhasini has had volunteered to do Radhika's hair in her movie, 'Keladi Kanmani'. Incidentally, she is the first woman to graduate from the Madras Film Institute.

In 1996, she directed her first film Indira, where she also wrote the screenplay. She and her husband are both involved in the running of their production company Madras Talkies, along with G. Srinivasan.











Setting the Bar

THANGAVELU MARIYAPPAN

Paralympic High Jumper

aralympic High Jumper, Thangavelu
Mariyappan has worked his way
up in sports despite his crippling
injury. A true example of grit and

determination, Thangavelu Mariyappan has overcome many odds to emerge as a successful Paralympic high jumper winning many laurels for the country. He is only the third Indian to win multiple medals at the Paralympics, after Joginder Singh Bedi and Devendra Jhajharia.

Born in the small village of Periyavadagampatti, about 50 km from Salem, he was just five when he met with an accident. While he was on his way to school, a bus ran over his right leg and it had to be amputated. Having been brought up by his single mother Saroja who was a daily wage labourer and vegetable vendor, the family took a loan for his medical expenses. He received financial compensation after a 17-year legal battle of which half was spent on legal expenses. While he enjoyed playing volleyball, it was his physical education teacher R Rajendran who recommended that he switch to high jump that he immediately took too and soon started winning

competitions too. He holds a BBA degree holder from the AVS College of Arts and Science at Ramalingapuram.

He trained under coach K. Elamparithi at the Salem Sports Development Authority and after that moved to Bengaluru where he was trained by Sathya Narayana. He also started earning a stipend here.

He has often said that his right deformed big toe helps him by giving him the extra leverage to get the leap and says it is his gift from God. In March 2016, he qualified for the Rio Olympics after jumping 1.78m in the men's high jump event and cleared the 1.89m hurdle in his second attempt ensured he won the gold medal. He used the prize money to buy a paddy field for his mother and built a new house for his family as well.

For his outstanding achievements he also won the Padma Shri and Arjuna Award in 2017, Asian Para Games Bronze in 2018, World Championships Bronze Medal in 2019, Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna in 2020, and a silver medal at the 2021 Tokyo Paralympics. In fact, if the rain had not played spoilsport Mariyappan could have won gold in Tokyo, a dream he cherishes to realise one day.









Golden Girl

PT USHA

Athlete



s a name that is synonymous with track and field athletes in the country, there is no one that comes close to P.T. Usha. Fondly called

'Payyoli Express', Payyoli Tevaraparampil Usha or P.T. Usha is arguably one of India's most successful athletes. A sprinter who ruled the running track for close to two decades, she has the distinction of over 30 international awards and 13 gold medals at the Asian Games and Asian Championships.

For someone who had a lean figure, athletics coach, O. M. Nambiar discovered her at a sports prize-distribution ceremony and started coaching her.

Results yielded soon and she had six medals at the inter-state meet for juniors in 1978. She won 14 medals in the year's Kerala State college meet and many medals at the 1979 National Games and 1980 National inter-state meet, smashing records on the way.

For someone who had a humble upbringing and

faced some health issues as a child, she never let her adversities come in the way of her goal of pursuing sports. When she participated in the Moscow Olympics in 1980, she became the first Indian woman to compete in the Olympics. A silver medal at the Asian Games in 1982 meant there was no looking back.

In 1985 she won five gold medals and a bronze at the Jakarta Asian meet. However, it was heartbreak as she lost the bronze medal by 1/100th of a second at the Los Angeles Olympics.

It was her tally of four gold medals and one silver medal at the 1986 Seoul Asian Games that gave her the deserved title of 'Sprint Queen'.

Her lofty achievements on the track have earned her an Arjuna award as well as the Padma Shri. Post her retirement she is active in the sport and trains future women athletes at her Usha School of Athletics at Koyilandy, Kerala.







Woman With An Unborrowed Vision

VANDANA BOGGARAM

Director, Sarathi International & Founder, WOW - World of Women

andana Boggaram is helping change the narrative around menstrual hygiene by ensuring that her NGO works with women who need it the

most. "I Do A Thing Called, What I want" is what her Twitter profile reads. Meet Vandana Boggaram who is managing her family and multiple professional roles with aplomb. After she got married soon after her graduation, she would accompany her husband to his family business of handcrafted incense, Sarathi International Inc, which has a 75-year-old legacy of exports to over 45 countries. As she started her role as a perfumer, she became aware of the problems and challenges faced by women especially as far as menstrual hygiene was concerned as she found out the problems in the women's toilets in her company.

Soon she took matters in her hand and sorted the issue with an educational session on hygiene awareness. This then led her to start World Of Women (WOW), a registered non profit organization working towards menstrual management among rural women across India. "World of Women was born out of a passion to empower and educate women about an issue that is still considered taboo. We reach out to women that cry for dignity. WOW aims to help our girls live better because menstruation matters." World of Women started five years

ago has reached 50000+ women across 350 + locations, spreading happy periods for over 19,20,000 months.

Naturally, she says she is inspired by her husband whose professionalism and leadership skills as well as hard work, discipline, commitment, value system and perseverance and treating the workplace as a place of worship has taught her much about being in business. She was among the 200 shortlisted women transforming India and has been featured among the top 100 MSME women entrepreneurs. She has been awarded The Bengaluru Youth Award, Youth ICON, Inspiration Ambassador, Woman Of Substance, Shining Star - Woman of the year award, Digital influencer, Karnataka Women Achievers Award for the Role Model Of The Year, among many others.

Her association with social causes includes Teach India and Bacche Mann Ke Sacche where she helped many underprivileged children and slum children to help go to school. She has also worked with Arogya Sethu in the pandemic as she helped coordinate with state departments with respect to various health verticals. Her vision for her company is to help provide jobs to thousands of workers and support the livelihoods of many more employees who have been impacted during Covid. She is also working towards making Indian-made incense sticks prominent on a global scale.







Making The Right Moves

VISWANATHAN ANAND

Chess Champion and Grandmaster

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iswanathan Anand is a name that is synonymous with chess in the country and is the grandmaster that the country looks up to. When he

was just six years old, Viswanathan Anand's mother, a chess enthusiast, initiated him into the game. He won the National Sub-Junior Chess Championship in 1983 when he was just 14. At 15, he was an International Master. Crowned the Indian Chess Championship every year between 1986 and 1988 and the World Junior Championship in 1987, his class in chess is incomparable.

The first grandmaster from India (in 1988), he has an Elo rating of 2800, a feat that is rarely matched. Winning the world chess championship five times, Anand has created a name for himself in the world of chess legends like Garry Kasparov and Karpov. For someone whose career saw a meteoric rise, he has been acclaimed as one of the greatest chess players of all time for all the right reasons. In fact, his successful run in the field of chess has inspired and encouraged several young children to take up chess as a sport.

Apart from being the first recipient of the Rajiv

Gandhi Khel Ratna award, he is also the first sportsperson ever to receive Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian awarded by the Government of India. There is also a small planet that orbits between Mars and Jupiter named after him - 4528 Vishyanand.

A polyglot who can speak not just his mother tongue, Tamil, he can also speak German and Spanish. For someone who has admitted that it is impossible to stay unaffected by failures, he works out heavily after losing a game as he says it helps him stay sane and distract his mind.

He is married to Aruna and has a son Anand Akhil. He has deservedly won the Chess Oscar Award six times. Interestingly, he has earned the nickname of the 'Lightning Kid' in India. He is known for quick tactical calculations that have augured well as he has won many 'speed chess' titles. In 1998 he even published a collection of his games, Vishy Anand: My Best Games of Chess, and in 2001 added to the book by including many new games.

Despite his lofty achievements, Anand is a man of humility and simplicity, something of a rarity in many sports persons and a reflection of his fine upbringing.





