Rebounding Into Celebrations With Amritotsavam

Soumya T A

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This year, Amritotsavam was held as a partly online and partly offline event, thereby extending it even to those students who are yet to be back in campus. While literary and cultural programs were conducted online, events like Rangoli and Mehendi were held as on-campus events. The eve of 21st April was the harbinger of the eventful days ahead, marked by the flashmob by Natyasudha, the campus dance club. On the following day, Ragasudha, the campus music club, set stage for an outdoor concert, whereby the AB1 carparking was transformed into an enchanting musical space elevated by the euphoric crowd and the chords and beats of music. To add to the magic, food stalls were up and running and featured the presence of famous cafes in Coimbatore.

The curtains went up on the grand finale of the university’s Annual Intramural Cultural Competitions on the 23rd of April. The event which was held in Amriteshwari hall was presided by Dr. Sasangan Ramanathan (Dean-Engineering, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham). The chief guests for the evening were Mr. Shibi Srinivasan, musical phenomenon, national Judo player and fencing gold medalist, and Ms. Lakshmi Haridas, a Certified Yoga Instructor, was one of the main coordinators of the event and also guided the participation of 75 crore Surya Namaskars across India, and invited all the residents, teaching faculties, academic administrative staff, lab staff and research scholars of the Coimbatore campus, were invited to participate in the mega event. Participation of all the faculties and staff members was made compulsory by the Dean-Engineering, Dr. Sasangan Ramanathan, Mr. B. Senthil Kumar, Assistant Professor at Amrita Darshanam-International Centre for Spiritual Studies, and a Certified Yoga Instructor, was one of the main coordinators of the event and also guided the participants in perfecting the postures.

In connection with the event, the University had facilitated bus services at 6.30 am at respective boarding points in Coimbatore and Palakkad on the day. Breakfast, following the event was a compliment for the participants.

The grand event held in the campus was led by Amrita Darshanam-The International Centre for Spiritual Studies, Coimbatore Campus, in association with the Department of Students Welfare. The hour-long program was held in the early hours of the day in the Main Playground, with the lush greenery unique to the campus, providing a serene backdrop. All the residents, teaching faculties, academic administrative staff, lab staff and research scholars of the Coimbatore campus, were invited to participate in the mega event. Participation of all the faculties and staff members was made compulsory by the Dean-Engineering, Dr. Sasangan Ramanathan, Mr. B. Senthil Kumar, Assistant Professor at Amrita Darshanam-International Centre for Spiritual Studies and a Certified Yoga Instructor, was one of the main coordinators of the event and also guided the participants in perfecting the postures.

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Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore Campus organized an offline yoga event in the campus on Saturday, 12th February 2022, in connection with the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of India’s Independence.

The event marked the contribution of Amrita Coimbatore towards ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’, a noble project initiated and spearheaded by The Ministry of Education, Govt. of India. The aforementioned project envisaged the performance of 75 crore Surya namaskars across India, and invited individuals, groups, organizations, and educational institutions to take part in it. The gesture of participation, apart from promoting healthy lifestyle practices, was also envisioned as a tribute to Mother India, on the occasion of the nation’s 75th Independence day celebrations.

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The highlight of the day however was the house performances themed around the four yugas. The four houses competed against each other through the stories of Hiranyakashipu from Satya Yuga, Ravana from Dwapara Yuga, Draupadi Vastraharan from Dwapara Yuga and glimpses of modern life and people from Kali Yuga. Towards the end, the winners of all competitions were announced. While the coveted house trophy was bagged by Jyothirmayi house, Anandamayi house was declared the first runner-up. The third and fourth positions were held by Chinmaya and Amritamayi houses respectively. As the day came to an end, selfies captured many a memory, flashlights of mobile cameras lit up the moments, and the winners’ cups eyed the prospective champions of the next year.

Continued on Page 5
When the parliament chose to split Andhra Pradesh into two states in 2014, and when the central government executed the same, I was not only disappointed, but also shocked. Andhra Pradesh has always held a special place in my heart. Even while I continue to be a proud Keralite, I have many-a-times wondered, why I wasn’t born in Andhra Pradesh. Such was my attachment to the place that, I even went about researching on the history of my family and my community, to explore if there existed in my roots, a remote Andhra connection. Finally, look what I found! Some historians speculate that the ancestors of my community might have migrated to furthest southern India, during times of famine in mediaeval times. And I should admit that these insights did fill me with some sense of fulfillment.

Like many others, I too was introduced to Andhra culture through the popular medium of our day, cinema. In the early 2000s, I found a view-hole into the culture of Andhra Pradesh in the films, starring Ravi Teja, Mahesh Babu, and subsequently Pawan Kalyan. It would be a shame if I don’t include S S Rajamouli, whom without whom the above list remains incomplete. In my indulgence in these films, many of which were set in rural areas, I was struck by the diversity of their cuisine and the significance of food in their culture. And, like movies, I gradually acquired a yearning for Andhra food, even though I had to wait a long time to taste authentic Andhra cuisine.

The authentic flavour of Andhra cuisine finally found me in Andhra Bhawan, Delhi. Even as I was having my first bite, I realised, “Oh, this is what I’ve been waiting for!” and of course, it was well worth the wait. From that moment, till I left Delhi, I was a regular at Andhra Bhawan. Later, during my visits to Andhra, I even set aside one or two days of my journey to identify the best eateries where I could get a true sense of Andhra cuisine.

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When I heard that a feast would be organized as part of the Ugadi celebrations in Amrita, Coimbatore campus, I had no idea that it would end up becoming such a memorable event for an Andhra-cuisine enthusiast like me. My excitement reflected in my indulgence in the food, so much so that the volunteers took note, and began restocking the servings whenever I finished one. They were more than pleased to explain the name of each item, its geographical origin, and details of its preparation. I’m overwhelmed in recalling the pure joy I experienced during the feast. And I realised that people from Andhra are not just foodies, but also cultural aficionados. Their eagerness to share knowledge about their culture stands as a testimony.

My first Ugadi celebration, thus, was without doubt, one of the most memorable moments I experienced in this campus. Not just because I had the opportunity to try the cuisine I adored, but also because of the individuals who made it possible. A simple thank you would not suffice, but I am using this article to express my gratitude to all those who contributed to this occasion. Ugadi is a great example of how to share the grace and beauty of one’s culture. After the feast, my colleagues and I were discussing on the possibility of having an exclusive Andhra mess on campus, and that’s when I realised that it wasn’t only me who enjoyed this treat. Now I’m looking forward to the next year’s Ugadi celebrations, so that I can relive the wonderful experience.
Food: A Key to Quell Cultural Wars Afoot in South India

Akash G. | Opinion

Basic socio-political definitions of norm and culture in India are being redefined in this tumultuous era. A party of tolerance and ‘grand old unity’, the Indian National Congress, barred senior leaders of its Kerala cadre from attending a Communist Party conference they were invited to. Everything from Hijab to Halal, to even the generally uncontroversial and harmonious trade around the premises of temples, is going through communal discord in Karnataka. The BJP is trying to challenge the Dravidian foothold in Tamil Nadu with its state President Annamalai saying that there is no such thing as Dravidian ideology in the first place. Chandrashaker Rao is not-so-subtly pursuing a national alliance of regional parties to dislodge the BJP juggernaut at the Centre. It is clear from these circumstances that states of South India are warring tribes in the quest for ideological and strategic superiority in our federal structure.

As the adage goes, too many cooks spoil the food. The concerted efforts of the Indian South towards a federal structure with a fine balance on state rights should not be jeopardized for short-term political expediencies of a few. They are coming for our freedoms of thought, profession, practice of religion, opposition, states rights, art and expression. We can survive it all if we can remember that our individual pursuits as states with unique cultures are not exclusive of our shared history, mutual respect and cooperation in making the whole stronger because of the parts. The intertwined nature of the Indian South can no better be explained than by our shared food palette. As one sits in a Southern cuisine restaurant enjoying a good filter coffee with masala dosa and the strong steadfast journalism of The Hindu and the Deccan Chronicle, one remembers: our voices are never quelled in any fog of war.
Indian heritage attributes sculptures with myriad functions, the most significant of them being to implant traditional and cultural knowledge in everyone. This way, sculptures become symbols that point towards the rich glories of the past, letting one hark back to the glorious cultural heritage of the nation. From time immemorial, the statues in the country have been a part of human life and have never stopped to depict the ancient culture and tradition. Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore campus, employs sculptures to a unique use, in an effort to combine education and cultural awareness.

Education, apart from the transfer of knowledge, is also the most efficient means to inculcate Indian culture and tradition in students. Is the activity of education confined to the limits of rooms? One might have to say no. The university has taken an innovative step to educate its students on the past glories of India, through the many exquisite sculptures installed inside the campus. Explaining the philosophy behind the statues decorating the campus, Air Cmde Satish Menon (Retd.), Campus Director of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore, says, “The statues in our campus depict the great Gods, Goddesses and sages, who have always showered their blessings upon us”. He added that apart from the statues which have already been open to the public, there are three more to be inaugurated soon.

The campus is soon to unveil the statues of Kannagi, who was a paradigm of chastity; and Arjuna, an epitome of strength and courage.

To add to the above list, is a most awaited sculpture – one that depicts Lord Nataraja– which is to be inaugurated to adorn the façade of Academic Block 2. Nataraja, the cosmic dancer represents Lord Siva as the creator of the cosmos and as a symbol of the cycle of life and birth. “This statue will be one among the largest Nataraja statues in India”, Mr. Menon added.

Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham also sets a commendable example by using alternatives to rock in the creation of these sculptures, in an effort to uphold its eco-friendly and eco-sensitive policies. Commenting on the process, Mr Menon further adds, “We do not destroy mountains to extract rocks for making the statues; Instead we use cement and other natural materials that are also less expensive.” All statues that have become the very identity of the campus, are creations of the talented artists and sculptors of Amrita Shilpa Kalakendra, Trivandrum, which has already cut out a niche for itself in making eco-friendly sculptures.

Much thought also goes behind deciding where these statues get installed. For instance, while the Kannagi statue will be installed near Mythreyi Bhavanam, to depict the power and courage of women, the sculpture depicting Arjuna will be unveiled near the library to imply intelligence, wisdom, integrity and ambidexterity. These artistic marvels are to be unveiled on various auspicious occasions in the near-future, by dignitaries like Prof. C E Veni Madhavan, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, who had recently inaugurated the Gautam Buddha statue near Academic Block- 3.
Amrita celebrated Maha Shivaratri with fervour

Varsha Menon & Anjali S

Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore campus celebrated Maha Shivaratri with fervour on 1st March 2022 at the main ground. After two years interval due to COVID-19 pandemic Amrita celebrated a fest having students with pomp. University welcomed the students with an elegant and exquisite event, creating eagerness and enthusiasm in them. The Maha Shivaratri celebrations started with chanting of Amma’s Ashtotharam followed by the lighting of lamp by Pujiya Swami Ajamritananda Puri’s joined by Prabhudhamrirta Chaithanya, Directors, Deans and Brahmacharis.

Traditionally, the eldest member of the family teaches the significance of each festival and narrates stories related to it to the rest of the family. Similarly, Swami Ajamritananda Puri enlightened the students and the staff about the significance of Maha Shivaratri celebration. He advised the crowd to take essence from the ‘puranas’. With a hope that the pandemic will end soon, swamiji connected the creation of life by Shiva, with new beginnings. By the end of his session, the whole Amrita family present there was invited to offer Abhishekam to Lord Shiva and start the new chapter of their lives with the lord’s blessings.

Maha Shivaratri- 2022 was a feast to the eyes with the charming mini Kailasa set up in the venue. The Deputy Manager of general works Mr Mahesh A M and his team had set up the piece of art bringing in the complete essence of the festival. Maha Shivaratri has been celebrated in the Campus for many years now. But this was the first time such a creative approach was being adopted. “Ever since we started celebrating Sri Krishna Jayanthi, we used to come up with something creative. But this is the first time we did something for Shivaratri. I thought why not set up a Kailasa model instead of just a simple stage”, said Mr Mahesh. “This is our first experience. Seeing this big event for a Hindu festival is kind of refreshing. The theme of the whole festival is like Kailasa where Lord Shiva lives. The lighting and smoke effects look pleasing and are giving the perfect mood for the festival” stated Sai Kishnan Raja of CSE department.

The event came to an end with the bhajan group singing bhajans of Lord Shiva and followed by Arati and Shanthi manthram.

Moreover, a surreal experience it was very cinematic. All the students were amazing on the stage. The crowd was electrifying. The confidence level of the performers and how they presented it was inspiring. I thoroughly enjoyed the show.

Mr. Shibi Srinivasan
Musician/Playback singer

I feel really proud and happy today as a chief guest. It’s been an amazing journey for me since 2013. I have so much fun and experience from my performances in Amrita. Here I got so much opportunity to develop and nurture my artform. And now it’s like coming back to home after watching all the performances today. I can feel that closeness still in Amrita. I am very thankful to Amrita.

Ms. Lakshmi Haridas
Amrita Alumni
Actor/Dancer

Field Visit: Students of Mass Communication during the field visit to Isha yoga foundation as part of Deeksharambh 2022, student induction program.

Pc: Binoy

Amrita talkies film club meeting held on 6 April 2022 at Amriteswari hall.

Pc: Harsh Nambiar

Pc: Gourishankar & Navneet C
NOT AN END, BUT A NEW BEGINNING - “HASTA LA VISTA”.

Athira Susan Lalu
Vaidehi. S .Pradeep

Everything started with a hello, today it is hard to say goodbye. The unforgettable moments and memories are always hard to leave behind but it is time for everyone move up a level in their lives. It is time for Hasta La Vista (goodbye, see you again). Hasta La Vista, a farewell party was conducted by the second year BA and first year MA Mass Communication students, for their seniors. The event was held in Sudhamani hall on April 22.

The event commenced with the rendering of a prayer on Saraswathi and was followed by the lighting of the lamp. What began as a formal event with the faculties addressing the BA and Ma final years, later took a fun turn with many entertaining events lined up. Songs and dance performances lifted the mood of the evening and was followed up with games such as Dumb charades, Chinese whispers and Musical chairs, among others. The event also marked the gifting of souvenirs such as hand designed T Shirts, as a token of affection. The event concluded with a fun ramp walk which saw the crowning of Mr. and Miss. Mass Communication on two outgoing students. The event also saw lip-smacking refreshment.
Mounting On To Campus Life With Dheeksharambh

The Student Induction Program that was overdue in time but outstanding in experience

Sowmya T. A

A year and a half went by with the onset of COVID-19, and students got used to waking up 5 minutes before the online classes and attending them in pseudo-incognito mode with the mics and cameras, turned off. Then came a reassuring circular bearing the news of college reopening, and soon one saw, cars queuing up and crowding the roads leading to hostels. As the students slowly realized how big the campus was with every step they took, a week full of enlightenment and fun awaited them, only to fill those walks with a purpose.

The Dheeksharambh Student Induction Program arrived a little late for the 2020 batch but perhaps it was also the brightest one ever, with it additionally marking the end of the pandemic-induced global crisis. The induction commenced with a parent-student orientation and kept the students on their toes throughout the field trip and cultural programs. Each day began at 6 am with many a sleepy-but-eager head, marching for the physical exercise slots. The hours ahead were filled with informational and motivational programs in the form of alumni lectures, department visits, and guest sessions.

Day 1 and day 2 of the induction program, through talks by faculty members, centered around the topics of academic planning and learning outcomes, also touching upon the life in Amrita campus. One of the week’s highlights was the interactive session conducted by Disha Bhaarat. This organization focuses on the nation’s youth and emphasizes knowing about oneself and their country. They conducted on-the-spot yoga sessions, self-assessment activities, quiz, and army games, to instill team coordination in the students.

The local trip to Isha Yoga was refreshing in terms of what the place offered. It helped the students to bond with each other more, with the trip involving a long bus journey, apart from requiring exploration of a new destination in groups, to avoid getting lost. Following the trip, the students were kept on the edge of their seats, by the brilliant and soulful event by Prof. Pushparaj and his MCube team. MCube stands for Music, Mediation, and Memory, and Prof Pushparaj showcased his excellent skill at effectively using all three. The musical concert by the professor and his band featured all-time hits that were carefully curated to cater to the students’ current interests. Additionally, there were creative arts events in the evenings, driving students to pursue their extracurricular interests.

The last day of induction saw a lecture delivered by guest speaker Dr. Ponni, a psychologist, who talked about crucial aspects of being a young adult and a student. The students ruled the rest of the day with three hour-long cultural performances. Soothing Carnatic songs and popular film numbers rendered by talented students set the mood for the evening. A pair of confident beatboxers shook the hall with a hit, and mono-actors and cheerful dancers set the students roaring. An informal and interactive anchoring by senior students weaved together the many segments seamlessly and brought the curtains down on the grand and memorable event, marking the beginning of a colorful campus life.

SADGAMAY: A Thought Leadership Effort and Workshop For Environmental Awareness Through Documentary

Akash G.

From David Attenborough’s narration to Earth Day Youtube specials, environmental awareness in the form of documentaries has never been more popular. On 12th April 2022, Acharya Hall in AB-1 was set to witness a mind-opening forum on nature and humanity under the context of impactful documentary works. The event this scribe is referring to is SADGAMAY, a thought leadership effort and a one-day workshop on documentary film making, organized by the Department of Mass Communication that featured reputed photojournalist and independent documentary film maker, Mr. Shaju John. The event was organized in association with Elements studio Chennai and Students energy at Amrita.

Throwing light on vulnerable south Indian landscapes, Shaju John has contributed independently to nature’s cause through his various photo documentations and video documentaries. This includes a twenty-year long effort to record the environmental depletion in Pallikkaranai marsh land in Chennai and an ongoing project on filming the environmental depletion affecting the Western Ghats. Providing a sense of escapism in rough times on one and contrasting the carelessness of human nature on the other, Mr. Shaju holds the baton for change with his camera. A former chief photo editor at The Hindu and an independent artist, photographer, and documentary maker, Shaju John lead the participants from darkness to the light of his camera flashes, staying true to the title, ‘SADGAMAY’.

Trailers and clips of few of his documentaries were screened, followed by an insightful panel discussion. Topics of conservation, awareness and responsibility of government as an authority for environmental changes, among others, were discussed in the forum with active participation from the students. Mr Shaju reiterated the importance of being sensitive to nature, in order to train oneself to see, observe and take note of nature’s changes. The second half of the event consisted of an interactive workshop with the guest where he displayed his photographs and projects while discussing about interpretation, the ideation and process of the shoot and addressing various social issues through these efforts. The event concluded with a showstopping slideshow of Shaju’s impactful pictures accompanied by his narration of the story behind them, planting the seeds of thought in the minds of the students.
Summer is here and its time to pack away our woolen jumpers and cozy socks and replace them with flowy, bright-colored summer-wear. As per the tradition, the sun keeps shining, the heat remains unbearable and no matter what we wear or do, at the end of the day, we all return home sweaty, stinky, and grimy. This might instill a sense of hate for this very season but this article right here will try to prevent that. Let’s now look into a few tips about college-appropriate summer-fashion which will amp up your style and keep you comfortable, all at once.

1. Flowy clothes- Despite the common misconceptions of how flowy clothes make one look “fat”, one could agree that they are the most comfortable clothing option ever. The fabric and stitching allow your skin to breathe and prevent perspiration along with giving you a cozy, relaxed feel. Flowy/loose clothes may include wide leg jeans, summer dresses, oversized ethnic-wear etc.

2. Pastel and “baby” colors- As one may know, colors play a major role in absorbing heat and that’s exactly why its advisable to wear light colors during summer. Pastel and baby colors also help in setting the summer-mood (2-in-1 action).

3. Cotton! Cotton! Cotton! – It can’t be stressed more than one should only wear cotton during these extreme weathers as the fabric is absorbable, comfortable and controls body odor.