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PRESS RELEASE

Crowds throng to watch Margi Usha's Nangyarkoothu at Kanakakkunnu Palace

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 28: As air outside buzzed with the electrifying drumbeats of Onam week celebrations, the Kanakakkunnu Palace came alive with an explosion of Kerala's vibrant arts.

The stage in the colonial-era structure transformed into a captivating spectacle featuring mesmerising performances of Koodiyattam, Kathakali, Nangyarkoothu, Chakyarkoothu, and the enchanting Aksharashloka Sadas.

In a serene atmosphere, the mature audience keenly observed the performances held as part of the Tourism Department-organised weeklong festivities that opened on Sunday.

The traditional performing art forms are showcased at the Palace at 4 PM every day, drawing a discerning audience, and yesterday it's Margi Usha's turn to mesmerise them.

A packed house, including foreign visitors, gathered to enjoy Usha's Vaamanaavathaaram.

One of Kerala's unique art forms, the Nangyarkoothu performance captivated spectators of all ages, from five-year-olds to those in their nineties.

Having dedicated nearly sixty years of her life to the arts, Usha has performed Koodiyaattam in various venues both abroad and in India, earning numerous accolades for her contributions.

Currently, Usha teaches at the Koodiyattam-Nangyarkoothu school in the state capital.

PC Vishnunadh, the minister for tourism, cinema and culture, said such programmes aim to promote Kerala's indigenous arts, including Koodiyaattam, which UNESCO has recognised as a ritual art form of world heritage.

The minister emphasised that these art forms should be introduced to younger generations, and the Onam celebrations turned out to be the perfect venue.

"The government is committed to providing more venues for Kerala's ritual arts and supporting artists who dedicate long hours to this demanding craft," he said.

Margi Usha remarked that Koodiyattam is the fountainhead of Kerala's arts, and she commended the Tourism Department's efforts to promote it.

"I see providing a stage within the palace for these performances, which were traditionally held only in koothambalams, as a tribute to the art form," she said.



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Usha noted the growing societal recognition of ritual arts and highlighted a recent presentation of a sloka from Balitharpanam, based on Naaraayaneeyam.

She expressed that there is no better venue than this to present Vaamanavathaaram, which narrates the story of Mahabali and Vaamana.

Ends