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The Local

A U N I Q U E P E R S P E C T I V E O F T H E N I L G I R I S



Dial 100:

Nilgiri Police - an overview



I love Ooty:

Full marks for Ooty tourism



working on this time tested art of the indigenous folk - fine embroidery on cotton.

the local market, we are told. Threads used are woollen. The elders, replying to a question on what dictates the intricate design, shared that almost all the shapes one finds on a shawl are related to Nature. For instance, the shape of a mountain range is something one would usually find on a shawl. Fire, a grain of rice, water, the sacred buffalo's horns

the daily market etc., Let all the colour and creativity however, not hide the fact that this is a dwindling indigenous community with several problems to tackle. The resilience on the face of the oldest lady in this group is inspirational. Her quest for perfection too. In all the patience that this art requires, we are told that if even one stitch is misplaced, they will redo the entire design. ■

What's in this issue?

The subject of tribal co-existence in the Blue Mountains, which we chose to title, 'harmony in the hills' was thought of some time last year. Historians have recorded that the indigenous communities in Nilgiris have little or no record of conflict amongst themselves. In fact, there existed a subtle understanding between them; an understanding that helped them trade services and goods with each other.

Rev. Philip K Malley, a historian, with particular interest in the Nilgiris, took on this subject with relative comfort, like only he could. His well researched views on several aspects of the indigenous tribes may serve to enlighten us on the practices that local communities followed, some of which stand discontinued today. The aspect that the Badagas were in possession of more buffalo herds than any other tribe denotes a pastoral characteristic long

before the community turned expert farmers. And then, the documentation of Kota music and traditions, and in another section, their skill in pottery, will enthuse the creative mind in many. We hope you enjoy the special on the indigenous people of the district. It is but natural, to romanticize here, that the traditions of hospitality and peaceful coexistence in this district, go way back in Time.

A not-so-romantic thought must also be spared for the state of affairs that most of the communities are going through. The lot of the smaller tribes is of concern. Access to healthcare, education and a means of livelihood are always troubling issues. We were inspired however, by the activities of the Kotagiri based NGO (Non Governmental Organisation), Keystone Foundation for their far reaching efforts particularly amongst the Kurumbas, Kotas and the Irulas, locally. We chose to bring you an insight into the objectives of this quiet, socially inclined group. Our

appreciation for the time they set aside for TheLocal Correspondent and the details extended. The story, the Keystone Effect is found on p 23. Trust you will find it as inspirational as I did.

The visit of World chess champion Koneru Humpy caused a flutter amongst the team members. Who will interview her? We finally chose to send a local chess champ Ms R Kamala, who we soon discovered, was nervous enough to warrant the presence of Dr K there as well. The champion, with a brief on herself and her game, had some kind words for this paper too.

Finally, there is a tongue-in-cheek account by Ms J Pillai on what it means to be a woman driver. This, in light of Women's Day! Men, read with care. You are forewarned!

Do enjoy the issue and as always, hope to bear your views on the performance of the paper.
- The Publisher's desk

Government in women's view. Pic above shows their depiction of the hill ranges in the distance!

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