

A season of cheer and celebration

Industry heads and Indian expats, these UAE residents share messages of hope and celebration on the occasion of Onam



“Onam celebration in the UAE is a time when Keralites explore nostalgic memories of their home state. Attired in new clothes, people gather for cultural shows and exchange Onam greetings. In the UAE, we are lucky to celebrate Onam with splendour, with the blessings and permission of the Rulers. Here is wishing *Gulf News* readers all over the world a very Happy Onam!”

Syam Panayickal Prabhu
Managing Director & Senior Consultant, Aurion Business Consultants



“Onam, a festival that celebrates the spirit of unity cannot be more relevant anywhere else than here in the UAE. Having said that, extended family gatherings and the fun and frolic enjoyed by siblings and cousins is something that was considered long lost, but thanks to technology, it's now making a comeback.”

Arun Kumar Krishnan
Chief Technology Officer & GM, UAE, Fresh to Home

CATCH UP ON ALL THE SCREEN ACTION!

With cinema theatres still shut due to the Covid lockdown, viewers can catch up on all the action at home thanks to these Malayalam OTT releases



Ⓢ KURUTHI

Starring: Prithviraj Sukumaran and Roshan Mathew
Release: August 2021
Platform: Amazon Prime

Directed by Manu Warriar, *Kuruthi* takes us on a journey of self-reflection where we discover the seeds of hate sown in each of us throughout our childhood with respect to our ideologies, perspectives and our religion.



Ⓢ KURUP

Starring: Dulquer Salman
Release: September 2021
Platform: Netflix - The movie is based on the life of Kerala's most wanted criminal, Sukumara Kurup.



Ⓢ MINNAL MURALI

Starring: Tovino Thomas
Release: September 2021
Platform: Netflix - The film revolves around the main character of Murali, played by Tovino Thomas, who gets hit by lightning and obtains supernatural powers. How he uses these powers to help those in need forms the crux of the story.



Ⓢ KUTTAVUM SHIKSHAYUM

Starring: Asif Ali
Release: August 2021
Platform: Netflix - The movie is based on a true robbery story that took place at a jewellery store in Kasaragode, Kerala. Ali is a master of his craft, so expect some fireworks here.



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Dubai P.O. Box 6519
Editorial: 04 406 7688
Advertising Sales: 04 406 7455
Email: gnfocus@gulfnews.com
Abu Dhabi P.O. Box 7441
Tel: 02 634 5144

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AQUA DE FONTE

A leading brand in packaged drinking water solutions

Yogesh Valaulikar, Managing Director of UAE-based Aqua de Fonte, elaborates on the brand's success mantra

As a packaged drinking water brand what is Aqua de Fonte's USP?

Aqua de Fonte is a youthful and energetic brand targeted at the urban middle class. This is best represented by the vibrant colours of the brand logo which signify the youthful energy of Aqua de Fonte. Since the brand launch in 2017,

Aqua de Fonte has created a niche for itself over the last three years and won customer loyalty because of its quality, taste, consistency and smart packaging. With the capacity and scale that we have created in the last one year along with an expanded distribution and logistics network, we witnessed tremendous growth. Starting with a capacity of 5,000 bottles per hour (BPH), our plant, housed in a state-of-the-art facility at Dubai Investment Park 2 (DIP 2) we have now reached 30,000 BPH. Our plant compares with the best-in-class internationally in terms of efficiency and hygiene.

Drinking water solutions are constantly evolving in terms of packaging, what are your views?

Packaging does play an important role in creating customer appeal and new customer segments. We recently

launched a 200 ml pet bottle which has become an instant hit. Due to extreme sensitivity to hygiene, people nowadays want to carry just the right volume of water in a bottle that can be used and discarded readily. New packaging solutions are also in the mix in the new year.

Any plans to broaden your product profile?

As Aqua de Fonte gains traction and brand equity, we will leverage this to launch new products in allied market and customer segments. For instance, responding to increased demand for hygiene accessories, we launched Aqua de Fonte brand of hand tissues just last week, and are drawing up plans to enter the fresh and natural juices segment next year. We are also strategising to get Aqua de Fonte to gain prominent shelf space in leading UAE supermarkets and hypermarkets. Our enhanced distribution fleet will also help us cater to a wider geography in the UAE and expand to other GCC countries. We are already official beverage partners of many A-league UAE hotels and will be expanding in this space. More importantly, we have added leadership talent in our marketing and strategy team with experience in the B2C space, which will enable us to execute our brand growth. I can assure you that Aqua de Fonte will become the fastest growing bottled water brand in the UAE in the coming year.



● Yogesh Valaulikar

AURION

Wishing all patrons a very happy Onam!



● Syam Panayickal Prabhu, Managing Director & Senior Consultant, Aurion Business Consultants

Onam is a unique ten-day long festival celebrated in Kerala in South India. It is unique in the sense that it is celebrated by all, irrespective of religion or culture. During Onam, the weather is especially enchanting in southern India, the sun beams in all its glory, flowers bloom and rivers flow in full spate. Local youth clubs in each small town conduct various competitions, tug of war, football matches and "puli kali" or the tiger dance, performed by people painted like tigers. The celebration reaches its peak on Thiruvonam day with the Onam Sadya, a traditional sumptuous lunch on a banana leaf. Here in the UAE, despite the scorching heat of sum-

mer, Malyalees never miss the opportunity to lay out intricately shaped floral arrangements or the pookalam. The Onam Sadya is available ready-made across all Kerala restaurants, as well as get togethers of families and social groups. The celebration in the UAE by various social and community groups is carried on during all Fridays for one to two months. But the real Onam ambience is lacking since there is no outdoor competitions or activities.

On this auspicious occasion of Onam, Team Aurion wishes all Gulf News readers a very happy Onam. We urge everyone to stay safe and have a peaceful Onam with friends and family.