



The Kazhakootam Bulletin

A newsletter of the Old Boys Association, Sainik School | June 2026

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Kazhaks,
This edition of *The Kazhakootam Bulletin* arrives with Reunion Day 2026 just around the corner — and the Kazhak world is buzzing with anticipation. On 18 July, alumni from across the country and beyond will

converge on the School on the Hill for what promises to be a day to remember. This year, the OBA takes a step forward by formally hosting the Reunion Dinner as an integral part of the day's programme — a beginning of what we hope will grow into a full, end-to-end Reunion Day experience that no Kazhak will want to miss. I warmly invite every one of you to be part of it.

The pages of this edition are a testament to the energy coursing through our fraternity. Kazhaks continue to distinguish themselves across every walk of life — in uniform, in operating theatres, on mountain peaks, in the world of letters and ideas. Each story here is a source of quiet pride.

But what moves me even more than individual achievement is the spirit of collective action that is increasingly defining us. The 1999 batch's free medical camp at the school, the Project Lakshya homecoming for NDA cadets, the young men of the 2024 batch organising the inaugural Kazhak Premier League and reaching out to senior alumni to dream bigger — these are not isolated events. They are signs of an association that is finding its stride.

This edition also carries the weight of a moment that

touched every Kazhak heart. Ankit Suman (5345/2019), fresh out of IIM Ahmedabad and on the threshold of a promising new chapter, met with a grievous accident in May.

We are heartened that he has shown steady improvement and is now back home — a relief the entire fraternity has been praying for. The road ahead is still long, but each step forward is cause for hope. The fraternity rallied around him with a speed and solidarity that needed no prompting — as Kazhaks always do when one of their own is in need. We continue to hold Ankit and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

I also wish to gently remind every Kazhak — do share your personal milestones with us. A wedding, a new arrival, a move, a career change, a retirement. These are the threads that weave us together as a community, and the *Bulletin* is the place where they belong.

To those who have not yet enrolled as members of the OBA — I extend a warm and sincere invitation. The bond you carry for this school and this fraternity is already real; membership is simply the formal expression of it. It is a pledge of commitment to an association that works, quietly and steadily, to keep the Kazhak spirit alive across generations. There is always room for one more Kazhak at the table.

My sincere thanks to B Pradeep Nair (1159/ 1982) and the editorial team for their characteristic care and dedication in putting this edition together.

Come to the reunion. Stay for dinner. And keep the Kazhak spirit alive — in everything you do.

Jai Hind!

K M Breeze Antony
Roll No 1940/1989 Batch
President, SSKZM OBA

Farewell Cdr Sarin, Welcome Cdr Abraham Philip



The Executive Committee of the SSKZM OBA hosted a special dinner on 22 May 2026 to bid a fond farewell to Commander Sarin P M, the outgoing Administrative Officer of Sainik School Kazhakootam, and to extend a warm welcome to his successor, Commander Abraham Philip.

On behalf of the entire OBA, the EC placed on record its deep appreciation for Cdr Sarin's invaluable support, dedication, and camaraderie throughout his tenure at the

school. As he proceeds to Naval Station Kochi for his next assignment, he carries with him the affection and best wishes of the entire Kazhak community.

PROUD ALUMNUS

The EC also extended a hearty welcome to the incoming Administrative Officer, Cdr Abraham Philip. A proud Kazhak himself, Cdr Philip (4249/2006) is an armament expert who joins the school following his previous posting in Kolkata.

Dedicated mobile number for OBA

Now, the OBA has a permanent, dedicated mobile number; a milestone in our ongoing efforts to professionalise and strengthen the OBA's communication infrastructure.

The number is 91889 42505

This number will be held by the General Secretary of the OBA and handed over from one to the next, ensuring continuity.

The number will be used for official OBA communications, including WhatsApp messages from the Association.

It is also the admin contact for the OBA Members' WhatsApp Community launched recently.

Please save this number in your contacts as: SSKZM OBA (or) OBA Official. This will help you recognise communications from the Association instantly.

Praveen P R's invention awarded US patent

A patent has been granted by the United States Patent and Trademark Office for a groundbreaking technology co-invented by Praveen P R (2963/1998) titled: "Machine learning-based processing of logs containing unstructured text data."

Co-invented with John Hickie, Praveen's work tackles one of the most persistent challenges in modern enterprise computing: transforming messy, unstructured textual system logs into clean, actionable data insights using advanced machine learning models. The breakthrough technology significantly enhances system observability, automated troubleshooting, and operational efficiency for large-scale IT infrastructures.

Here is the link to the full details:
<https://tinyurl.com/PraveenPatent>

Academy cadets come home



Nineteen ex-cadets of SSKZM — currently undergoing training at the National Defence Academy and the Indian Naval Academy — walked back through the gates of their alma mater, not as students, but as inspiration.

Organised by the Batch of 1999 under Project Lakshya, the programme began at 8.30 am in the school auditorium in the presence of the Officiating Principal, Administrative Officer, faculty, and the full cadet strength of the school. The academy cadets spoke — about the journey, the rigour, the life — and then listened, as the school cadets asked every question they had been holding.

What followed was something no classroom can manufacture: an auditorium full of young cadets hearing the dream described by someone who had just lived it. After tea, the nineteen dispersed into classrooms, dorm-

itories, and the playground. No stage, no microphone — just conversations between those who were here not long ago and those who are here right now.

The bridge that had gone missing is back.

The idea for this initiative took root at an OBA EC meeting in December 2025 and the 1999 Batch, who is carefully and thoughtfully crafting their Fiesta '99 with a series of excellent activities, brought it to life. The OBA has since planned to formalise this as a bi-annual fixture — the next edition timed to coincide with Armed Forces Day in December — keeping the chain of inspiration unbroken, every single year.

To the Batch of 1999 — for conceiving it, owning it, and delivering it: the Kazhak community salutes you.

To the nineteen cadets who came home and gave a day to their juniors — you have already begun to lead.

Kazhak fraternity unites for young alumnus

In a remarkable display of the strength of the Kazhak fraternity, the alumni network got together in just a few days to support Ankit Suman (5345/2019) who required some immediate critical medical intervention.

Ankit, who recently graduated from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and was on the cusp of launching his professional career, was involved in a road accident in Thiruvananthapuram. As news of the crisis and the resulting financial strain on his family spread, the response from the alumni community was instantaneous.

Demonstrating the true spirit of the brotherhood, his

batchmates and the wider OBA immediately came together to pool resources, ensuring that immediate medical expenses were covered without delay.

Thanks to this rapid, generous outpouring of support, Ankit was able to undergo his critical emergency procedures successfully. His condition has since stabilised, and there is a strong wave of optimism regarding his recovery timeline.

The OBA extends its deepest gratitude to every alumnus who responded to the urgent call, proving once again that time and distance are no match for the enduring spirit of school unity in an hour of need.

Medical camp conducted

A comprehensive Free Medical Camp was organised at our school at the initiative of the 1999 batch, on 6 June 2026.

Conducted in association with SUT Pattom Super Specialty Hospital, the camp offered free consultations and diagnostics to our serving and retired school staff, their families, and the current cadets.

It was inaugurated by Col Rajeev Mannali (Retd), (421/1972), now CEO of SUT Pattom Super Specialty Hospital, who not only graced the occasion with an inspiring address to the cadets but was also instrumental in making the comprehensive diagnostic facilities possible.

Col. Mannali also presented a cheque of ₹50,000 to the school on the occasion. Principal Col Dharendra Kumar attended and warmly commended the batch for this initiative.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CAMP

- Over 12 eminent specialists across multiple disciplines.
- Free diagnostics — hypertension & diabetes screenings, HbA1c, liver & renal function tests, and FibroScan.
- Specialist consultations for boys and girls Cadets referred by the school with temporary health conditions.
- A dedicated session on dental hygiene for the cadets.
- Medical team included doctors from the 1998, 1999 & 2000 batches — our own alumni, their family and friends.

GREATER HEIGHTS

What made this camp particularly special was the spirit of continuous improvement our batches have built up over the years. The 1997 batch set a fine standard in 2024, the 1998 batch raised the bar further in 2025, and this year the 1999 batch has taken the initiative a step



further — enhancing the diagnostic facilities and introducing advanced screening tools such as the Liver FibroScan.

In an extension of the initiative, screening diagnostic tests for anaemia and hypothyroidism for the girl cadets will be conducted by 18 June 2026. This will be followed on 21 June by a follow-up review session along with an informative health interaction and class, led by physicians and gynaecology doctors — covering both the girl cadets' follow-up and reviews for all earlier attendees.

OBA Annual Awards announced

The recipients of this year's annual awards were announced recently. The names of the awardees were approved by the OBA Executive Committee on 27 May 2026.

P C Satish Chandran Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award

The Awards Committee received nine nominations this year. After careful deliberations, the following seven distinguished alumni have been selected for this prestigious recognition:

- Sri T Sampath Kumar (Posthumous) — 507/1970
- Sri G Jayakumar — 892/1979
- Air Commodore B S Krishna Kumar, KC (Retd) — 1076/1981
- Lt Gen M Unnikrishnan Nair, PVSM, AVSM, SM (Retd) — 1055/1981

- Lt Col Korath V Mathew (Retd) — 1099/1981
- Air Marshal R Radhish, PVSM, AVSM, VM (Retd) — 1130/1981
- Sri Benny John — 1098/1981

Fg Offr M P Anil Kumar Memorial Achiever of the Year Award

Six nominations were received. The following three alumni have been selected:

- Dr Binoy D S — 2425/1993
- Dr Cecil Kunnappilly — 2785/1997
- Sri Lineesh N — 2758/1998

The awards will be presented during the Old Boys Day on 18 July 2026 at the school.

The OBA Executive Committee has placed on record their felicitations to all the awardees and gratitude to the Awards Committee for their diligent work.

Book Club explores Basheer's *Mathilukal*



The Kazhak Book Club met on 13 June 2026 at the Naval Officer's Institute, Kochi, marking its third discussion, following the second online session on N S Madhavan's *Higuita*. Fifteen members attended.

The discussion on Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's 1965 classic *Mathilukal* unfolded across a wide range of perspectives, at times humorous, at times philosophical, but always deeply engaged with Basheer's world.

There was a recognition of Basheer's ability to say profound things with remarkable simplicity. The idea of love, central to *Mathilukal*, was explored in multiple ways. Some reflected on its physical absence and emotional intensity, while others questioned whether Narayani herself is a "truth" or a beautifully crafted illusion, a truth told with a twist. The incompleteness of the relationship led to an interesting divide: is the lack of fulfilment the essence of the story, or do we instinctively seek a more resolved, "happy" ending?

There was also an exploration of Basheer's craft from a wider lens, placing him alongside figures like Chekhov

and Chaplin, where humour, pathos, and simplicity coexist. His writing seemed to move between hunger, freedom, and love, *vishappu* holding together the most fundamental human experiences.

The screening of Jim Jarmusch's *Paterson* opened up another dimension. The idea that a writer is not just someone who writes, but someone who sees differently, became a key thread linking the text and the film.

The gathering was enriched by a beautiful musical interlude by Renjith P. Dinesh (2692/1997 batch) and his wonderfully talented daughter Nidhi K P.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Commander Cibin V Charlie and Balachandran Sir for their support in helping us secure the Naval Officer's Institute, making it possible to host the meeting in such a welcoming and affordable setting.

The Kazhak Book Club continues to evolve as a space where literature is read, shared, critiqued and collectively appreciated. The session was moderated by Aravindan S S (2006 Batch).

Col N J Nair's bust unveiled



In a moving tribute, a bust honouring Col N J Nair was unveiled in Pune, by our former Hindi master Mr M B Vitekar Sir, who was his housemaster in school, during a reunion of the Pune chapter of the OBA at the Aundh Military Station in Pune 19 April 2026. The project was initiated and executed by Col Jithin Thomas (3681/2005), CO of 15 Maratha LI.

Col. Nair is the only officer in the Indian Army to have been decorated with both the Ashoka Chakra (posthumous) and the Kirti Chakra — the nation's highest and second-highest peacetime gallantry awards.

The memorial stands as a testament to his final act of extraordinary bravery in Nagaland in 1993, where despite being mortally wounded, he broke a massive ambush to save his men.

Following the solemn ceremony, OBA members gathered at the Maratha Mess for a celebratory lunch. The venue held profound symbolic value, honouring Col. Nair's deep institutional roots with the Maratha Light Infantry. The atmosphere quickly shifted into a warm, spirited reunion defined by the unique brotherhood of "Sainik School Kazhaks".

Alumni from various batches spanning several decades shared nostalgic stories of life at the "School on the Hill" and celebrated the accomplishments of the "Pune Kazhaks" across military and corporate sectors. Reflecting on the indelible mark left by the hero, an alumnus remarked, "A man may die, but his ideas and his example live on. Today, NJ isn't just a memory; he is a permanent part of Pune's landscape."



Cambridge award for Paul Antony

Paul Kattuman (Paul Antony 630/1975), Professor of Economics at Cambridge Judge Business School, has been awarded a prestigious teaching prize for excellence. The announcement was made on 11 June 2026 at a ceremony led by the Dean and Vice-Dean for Programmes, celebrating outstanding faculty members across the business school's diverse curriculum. Paul Antony was specifically recognised for his exceptional teaching on the MPhil in Finance programme.

Students particularly commended his sharp sense of humour, which helped foster a relaxed and positive classroom environment, as well as his respectful approach that made them feel like valued colleagues.



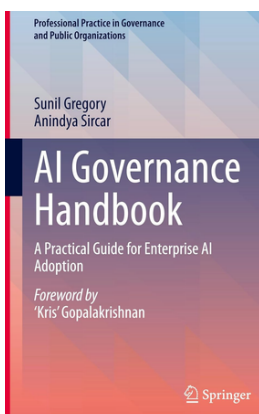
Ramakrishnan conquers London Marathon

K G Ramakrishnan (1438/1983) successfully crossed the finish line at the prestigious TCS London Marathon held on 26 April 2026.

Navigating the iconic 26.2-mile course through the heart of the British capital Ramakrishnan clocked 4 hours, 19 minutes, and 04 seconds. This spectacular feat of physical endurance and determination serves as a wonderful inspiration to fitness enthusiasts across all batches.

The London Marathon was founded by athletes Chris Brasher and John Disley in 1981, and is typically held every April. It's set around the River Thames, starting in Blackheath and finishing at The Mall. Since 2006, it has been part of the World Marathon Majors, which includes seven of the world's top level marathon races.

Sunil Gregory's guide on AI governance



Sunil Gregory (2731/1997), recently authored a highly acclaimed book titled *AI Governance Handbook: A Practical Guide for Enterprise AI Adoption*.

Published by Springer Nature, the handbook has emerged as an essential roadmap for organisations striving to bring AI under structured corporate control.

The book is thoughtfully framed around four pillars: strategic, technical & operational, ethical, and legal & regulatory, and Sunil has leveraged his practical experience working with several top-line companies on how to build resilient, internal corporate frameworks that successfully bridge technology with legal foresight. The book is available here: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/3031892658>

He also recently appeared alongside his co-author, Dr Anindya Sircar (IPR Chair and former IP head at Biocon and Infosys) on Episode 17 of the "AI Governance Across Borders" podcast, hosted by Matt McCallum. Watch it here: <https://tinyurl.com/Sunilbook>

During the engaging hour-long episode, Sunil shared invaluable advice for enterprise leaders and Chief Information Officers.

Divyalal wins bronze



Divyalal R K (3062/1999) won the bronze medal in the Master 1 - 83 kg category, at the Kerala State Classic Powerlifting Championship held at the Indoor Stadium, Kottayam, from 19 to 21 April 2026.

Sreejith's tech column

Sreejith Sreedharan (2239/ 1991) has begun penning a weekly technology column for the premier news platform, *Firstpost*. Building upon the deep insights from his previously published three books on AI and the evolving workplace, Sreejith's new column aims to drive vital conversations on how artificial intelligence is reshaping the future of work, leadership, learning, and human capability. His write-ups delve into the harder, critical questions surrounding human judgment, corporate responsibility, and strategic adaptation in an AI-driven world. Read them here: <https://tinyurl.com/Sreejith2239>

Kazhak Premier League kicks off



The first edition of the Kazhak Premier League (KPL) kicked off on 30 May 2026. It brought together three recently passed-out cohorts — the Batches of 2024, 2025, and 2026 — in a spectacular display of unity, energy, and combined institutional pride.

The photos above show the winners (on the left in red jersey) and the runners-up (on the right in white jersey.) This was an initiative of the Batch of 2024.

The thrilling finale was between 2024 and 2025, and the Batch of 2024 emerged victorious, lifting the coveted championship trophy alongside substantial cash prizes.

The Best Player was Amal A M (2024 batch); the Top Scorer was Arun V. (2024 batch) and the Best Goalkeeper was Avinash Krishna (2024 batch). The tournament was aided by a corporate sponsorship extended by young entrepreneur Nakul Sijesh (6065/2025).

Reflecting on the milestone achievement, the organising committee from the 2024 batch noted: "Given this was our first major undertaking in sports management, we focused heavily on creating a successful pilot programme with our immediate junior batches.

"Now that the proof of concept is successfully established, our ultimate dream is to scale the Kazhak Premier League into a massive, inclusive carnival that spans all OBA batches across generations."

NEXT EDITION

To realize an expansive vision of this magnitude, the young organisers are reaching out to senior alumni networks globally for logistical guidance, operational synergy, and organisational backing. With momentum running high, the fraternity eagerly anticipates an even grander second edition of the KPL.

M J Sureshkumar achieves a landmark in surgeries

Renowned orthopedic surgeon M J Sureshkumar (1409/1983) recently completed 1,100 knee replacement surgeries in the government health sector. Currently serving as the Chief Consultant, a top-ranking position in the Orthopedics Department in Kerala, Dr Sureshkumar, works at the Pathanamthitta General Hospital.

Ninety percent of these procedures were done free of cost for underprivileged patients under the government's Karunya Health Security Scheme.

On the personal front, Dr Sureshkumar is married to Dr K N Leena, who serves as a Senior Consultant Physician at the Alappuzha General Hospital. The couple has two children, Kavya and Karthik.



With a Kazhak at the helm, ECHS Polyclinic T'puram tops Southern Command



Col P G Suresh Kumar (Retd) (1764/1987) took charge as Officer-in-Charge of ECHS Polyclinic, Pangode, Thiruvananthapuram in April 2024. The polyclinic, one of the largest of its kind in Southern Command and indeed in the country, serves over 70,000 beneficiaries —

a responsibility that demands nothing short of exceptional leadership and administrative acumen. Under Col Suresh Kumar's stewardship, the polyclinic has risen to the very top.

In a command-wide Best Polyclinic Competition conducted across Southern Command's 116 polyclinics — spanning Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala — ECHS Polyclinic Thiruvananthapuram emerged as the undisputed best.

Assessed across over 100 parameters covering patient care, infrastructure, amenities, innovations and best practices, Thiruvananthapuram scored an impressive 957 out of 1,000, edging out Jodhpur (940) and Chennai (939) to claim the top honours. All staff were felicitated with certificates and medals, and a Rolling Trophy was presented by the Station Commander.

Drill Boots to Heart Beats



A biography detailing the extraordinary life of Col. Rajeev Mannali (421/1972) has been published. Titled *Drill Boots to Heart Beats: A Journey of Duty, Leadership and Service*, the book has been authored by his daughter, Dr. Aswathi R. Mannali.

Col. Mannali's journey took him from our school to the NDA culminating in over three decades of distinguished service in the Indian Army.

The book captures his commanding roles during crucial times like Sri Lanka peacekeeping operations and the Kargil conflict. It also highlights his remarkable second career in healthcare administration, where he translated core military values into building and leading major hospitals across South India. The book stands as a blueprint for purposeful living, resilience, and reinvention. It is available on Amazon and Flipkart.

Lt Gen Vijay B Nair takes over command of Infantry School



Lt Gen Vijay B Nair (1563/1985) assumed command as the Commandant of the prestigious Infantry School in Mhow. A highly distinguished infantry officer with nearly four decades of service, Lt Gen Nair was commissioned into the 21 Punjab in June 1988 and later had the rare honour of commanding the same battalion.

His extensive operational experience spans diverse terrains, including commanding the Vajra Corps in the plains, the Tiger Division in Jammu & Kashmir, and the Leh Sub Area in Ladakh. A well-regarded military scholar and alumnus of the National Defence College, his deep instructional expertise will be pivotal in shaping the Indian Army's tactical doctrine and modernising the infantry for future battlefield challenges.

1968 batch trip to Balkans



It has become a tradition for the 1968 batch to go on regular global tours. The latest was to the Balkans in May-June 2026. The team comprised Col K J Samuel, Lt Gen G M Nair, Cmdr R Krishna Kumar, Col Samuel Varghese, Cdre K M Nair, Gp Capt Zachariah Kuruvilla, Vijay Kumar, Suresh Bhaskar, C K Thampy, Col Jacob Dominic, Lt Gen Ananthakrishnan, Col Prasad Pillay and Maj Gen K S Venugopal, and family. Among the places they went to were Belgrade (Serbia), Podgorica (Montenegro), Dubrovnik (Croatia), Split (Croatia), Plitvice (Croatia), Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Budapest (Hungary). They then headed to Rugen, Germany. Earlier the group had been to Bali, Vietnam, Russia, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Japan, Korea, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Australia and New Zealand.

Pattaya party of 1995 batch



The 1995 batch had one of their most memorable get-togethers in July 2025, when they took their reunions international! Families were excluded for the practical reasons of travel logistics and budget restrictions. About 40 batch-mates attended. They are looking forward to next big international reunion in 2028, when most of them will turn 50.

Reunions: 1984 batch ...



The 1984 Batch met at Kumarakom. Our Hindi, Sanskrit and GK teacher G D Tekale Sir too attended the whole event.

Meetup in the city of dreams



The OBA Mumbai-Pune Chapter reunion was held at the scenic Oriol, Integrated Mess and Sports Complex in Colaba on 28 Sept 2025. It was attended by around 25 alumni along with their beautiful families. The meet was conducted under the able leadership of Cdr Ninan Mathai (7/1965). The seamless execution of the day's programme was the result of the tireless efforts of Capt Jenish George (2736/1997) and Capt R Praveen Kumar (2770/1998).

Doha chapter get-together



Sitting (L to R) - Rajeev (2124/1991), Krishnakumar (1941/1989), Mukesh (1745/1987), Col. Issac Mani (1146/1981), Alex Paul (1619/1985)
Standing (L to R) - Advait - s/o Viju, Priyanka - d/o Col. Thilakan (835/1979), Soorej (3637/2001), Viju (2853/1997), Sajil (2610/1995), Midhun (4035/2004), Lineesh (2758/1998), Akash (3016/1999).

The Doha chapter of the OBA hosted an alumni get-together on 8 June 2026. There was a good turnout, spanning from the batch of 1981 to 2004. While those who couldn't attend this time were deeply missed, the Doha chapter is looking forward to its next gathering.

... and 2011 batch



2011 Batch had a get-together at Kuttikanam, Idukki, in the second week of May.

Zuhra summits Mt Everest



Zuhra Cherukappalli, wife of Sirajuddin V (3425/2002), summited Mount Everest on 20 May 2026. Following an arduous expedition lasting more than a month, she reached the roof of the world at 12.51 pm.

During the previous summit season, Zuhra had reached 7,500 metres, the final staging area of the ascent, only to be forced back by severe weather. Refusing to view it as a setback, the 40-year-old mother of two continued her rigorous training and set out again this season. The elements tested her this year as well; notably, a massive icefall stranded the mountaineers at the base camp for nearly a week.

It was back in 2017 that the desire to climb first sparked in her mind. She took her baby steps exploring the rugged hills of Wayanad, Siraj's hometown, and there was simply no looking back.

The Manjeri native is now only the third woman from Kerala to summit Everest, joining the elite company of Safrina Latheef and Shreesha Ravindran.

Santhy Balachandran is 'Changemaker of the Year'

Actor-turned-writer Santhy Balachandran was awarded the prestigious 'Changemaker of the Year' award at the second edition of The Hollywood Reporter's Women in Entertainment gala, held in Mumbai on 25 March 2026. Santhy is the daughter of our alumnus, Balachandran M (697/1976).

Santhy received this high-profile recognition following her stellar contributions to additional screenplay and

dramaturgy for Dominic Arun's 2025 blockbuster "Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra". The film, which features a female lead and made box office history, shattered industry conventions under her creative vision.

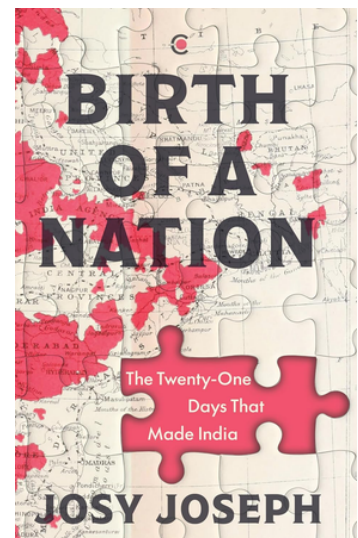
Taking the stage to deliver her acceptance speech, an emotional Santhy shared a fond childhood memory: "At the age of six, when my mother found me in a huge bucket, I told her I'm Alice going down a rabbit hole in Wonderland."

She expressed her deep gratitude to her long-time collaborator and director Dominic Arun, producers Dulquer Salmaan and Jom Verghese for backing a female-led franchise, and her technical crew and cast.

Acknowledging the room full of inspiring women who paved the way before her, she concluded her heartfelt speech by saying, "Tonight... I can truly say Santhy is in wonderland."

A Kazhak chronicles the nation's birth

Josy Joseph (2136 /1991), one of India's most celebrated investigative journalists, has authored a new book which will be out this June. *The Birth of a Nation: The Twenty-One Days That Made India*, published by Westland Books, reconstructs the extraordinary 21-day window between 25 July and 14 August



1947, when the fate of the nation hung in the balance. Drawing on archival records, the book traces the efforts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's States Department to prevent dozens of princely states from breaking away and fracturing the emerging Indian Union. Josy also highlights the role of ordinary citizens in stabilising the nascent country, arguing that the foundation of modern India was shaped as much by everyday people as by its leaders.

No stranger to landmark works, Josy is also the author of *A Feast of Vultures* and *The Silent Coup: A History of India's Deep State* — books that have shaped national conversation on corruption and governance. The fraternity congratulates him on yet another significant addition to his body of work — a Kazhak telling the story of how India became India.

Cadet Mantra Hirpara conquers Rupin Pass



Cadet Mantra Hirpara (6926/Class 10B/Nehru House) successfully completed the gruelling Rupin Pass Trek, reaching a staggering altitude of 15,279 feet.

The high-altitude expedition, which snakes through demanding mountain routes and dramatic Himalayan terrains, connects the Shimla district to the Kinnaur district.

Throughout the challenging trek, young Mantra was tested against the extremes of nature: navigating rugged, unpredictable landscapes, steep snow-covered passes, and sub-zero temperatures that demanded immense physical stamina and mental fortitude.

Refusing to back down in the face of these severe conditions, Cadet Mantra pushed forward with unwavering courage and determination.

On 18 May 2026, he successfully reached the summit and proudly unfurled the Sainik School flag at the peak, bringing immense pride and honour to our institution.

The school fraternity and alumni salute Cadet Mantra Hirpara on this spectacular achievement and wishes him many more successful expeditions ahead!

WEDDING

- Sqn Ldr Muhammed J S (4862/2015) and Capt Surbhi on 4 April 2026.

OBITUARY

- Thomas Joseph (866/1979) on 30 April 2026.
- Ravi Kumar P C (404/1972) 12 June 2026

Meeting with NJ Governor



Krishna Kishore (1351/1983) and Vidya Kishore recently held discussions with the newly elected Governor of New Jersey Mikie Sherrill and Lieutenant Governor Dale Caldwell at the Governor's official residence. Both serve as commissioners of the New Jersey - India Commission established by the State of New Jersey.

50 Years of Johnny Blues

Nearly 50 musicians converged at the Trivandrum Club on April 17 for a special tribute show titled '50 Years of Johnny Blues'. The event honoured veteran musician Bernard 'Johnny' John (fondly known as 'Johnny' or 'Crow'), who marks his 75th birthday this year. Barnard John is our alumnus (43/1968) and son of former matron Jessie John.

His musical journey began in Kollam during the late 1950s, heavily influenced by an early exposure to Western music. Over the decades, Johnny fronted and performed with several legendary bands across the state.

SHARE YOUR MILESTONES

- Given the wide range of alumni activities, there may be inadvertent omissions in this publication.
- Please share details of alumni-related information, like weddings, childbirth, higher educational qualifications, new job appointments, change of organisation, transfer or relocation, promotions, retirement, awards or medals, participation in major sports events, sports championship wins, group activities, alumni meetups, and other notable events.
- Such updates may be emailed to: **office.sskzmoba@gmail.com**
- For easy identification, please mention in the subject line: 'For The Kazhakootam Bulletin'.