



# The Kazhakootam Bulletin

A newsletter of the Old Boys Association, Sainik School | December 2025

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## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Kazhaks,

It gives me immense pleasure to present this newsletter, the first under our current governing body that assumed office on 19 July 2025. After a gap since our last edition in 2024, we are committed to

bringing you quarterly updates, keeping our alumni community connected and informed.

The past months have been truly remarkable. Our annual Reunion Day on 19 July, magnificently organised by the 98 batch, was a joyous celebration that brought together generations of old boys and their families.

The fifth NBN Memorial Teachers' Enrichment Programme in October marked a significant milestone creating meaningful impact in classrooms in Kerala.

I'm delighted to report the launch of our Kazhak Trek initiative, addressing a long-felt need for informal outdoor activities.

The inaugural trek to Meenmutty Falls saw enthusiastic cross-batch participation, and the upcoming Kazhak Bike Ride to Ooty (16-18 January) has generated tremendous excitement.

Our alma mater continues to make us proud — from the historic hockey championship victory to achieving the first position in CBSE Class XII results among all Sainik Schools, alongside impressive performances in shooting, technical competitions, and NDA selections. Significant infrastructure upgrades are also transforming the campus.

Our alumni bring honour to the Kazhak name across

diverse fields—from sports and cinema to defence and governance. Regional chapters, particularly Bengaluru's gathering of 106 old boys, keep the spirit alive. As P Suresh's (1998/1990) poem beautifully captures: "Senior or junior, no matter the test, Kazhak's bond remains forever best."

I commend the 1999 batch for their 'Udaan' initiative — a guidance webinar for Sainik School admissions held in October. This exemplifies the spirit of giving back as they prepare to host OBA Reunion Day 2026.

It is with deep sorrow that we remember our brothers who left us — Arun Kumar M A, Vishnu Jayaprakash, Philip Mathew V, K Venugopal, and Bino Varghese. They will forever be part of the Kazhak family.

A special word of gratitude to B Pradeep Nair (1159/1982), son of our beloved NBN Sir, for his invaluable help in putting together this newsletter. It brings back fond memories of NBN Sir painstakingly crafting The Kazhakootam Bulletin in the initial days of our Association: a legacy that continues through his son's dedication.

To alumni yet to become members, I extend a warm invitation to join us. Your membership is a pledge of wholehearted support for our initiatives and a commitment to keeping the Kazhak spirit alive.

Looking ahead, we're strengthening our quarterly communication, enhancing alumni engagement, and exploring new ways to support our school and give back to society. Your participation, feedback, and ideas are invaluable in shaping our journey.

Jai Hind!

K M Breeze Antony  
Roll No 1940/89 Batch  
President, SSKZM OBA

# Gandhara 98: Fun-filled Homecoming

The annual OBA Day, held on 19 July 2025 at Sainik School, Kazhakootam, proved to be a memorable celebration of camaraderie and nostalgia.

Organised by the energetic 1998 batch and titled 'Gandhara 98', the event brought together alumni across generations in a celebration filled with warmth, laughter, and beautiful memories, truly reviving the 'Kazhak spirit'.

## CHERISHED MEMORIES

From the moment the old boys walked through the gates, the air buzzed with excitement. The inauguration of the Rifle Club stirred pride; the touching Guru-vandanam (homage to mentors) brought back cherished memories of our beloved teachers; and the hockey matches reignited the competitive spirit everyone remembers.

The delicious lunch and impeccable arrangements added to the joy, but what truly made the day special



was the opportunity to reconnect — swapping stories with batchmates, greeting former teachers, and bridging generations with juniors and seniors.

## CONNECTING ACROSS GENERATIONS

The feedback was heartwarming: alumni rated their experience as excellent, praising the meticulous planning and the wonderful atmosphere created by the organising batch.

Many shared that simply being back on campus, reliving old times, and making new memories with their families made the event unforgettable.

Valuable suggestions for the future also emerged, including: keeping formal sessions crisper to allow more informal 'chai-and-chat' time, providing improved facilities for families, and creating even more opportunities for relaxed bonding.

Our appreciation goes to the magnificent 1998 batch for their dedication and hospitality!

## OBA DAY 2026

As the baton passes to the 1999 batch for the next year's reunion day, we look forward to another joyous homecoming, on 18 July 2026.



# Honouring a Legacy: Training Teachers



The Old Boys' Association hosted the fifth edition of the NBN Memorial Teachers' Enrichment Programme on 24 and 25 October 2025. The two-day programme was held at the Asian School of Business (ASB), Pallipuram, Thiruvananthapuram.

This annual initiative honours the legacy of the late N Balakrishnan Nair (NBN Sir), our beloved teacher and founder of the OBA.

This year marked the programme's debut hosting in the State capital (outside the SSKZM campus); twice earlier it was held in Kochi.

The programme adopted a need-based approach, consulting schools directly to identify genuine challenges ranging from student engagement and mental health to curriculum pressures and technology adoption.

## **SESSIONS AND SPEAKERS**

The two-day programme featured sessions delivered by highly accomplished professionals, providing practical and transformative insights for the participating educators.

Notable speakers included Prof K Unnikrishnan Nair (1317/1983) of IIM Kozhikode, who presented on "Becoming an Impactful and Influential Teacher"; Dr T R John (1371/1983) of Aster Medicity, who addressed mental health in students; and Ms Sheela Chacko, Head of Schools at Cochin International School, who discussed new teaching pedagogies.

The sessions also covered emerging trends in higher education, collaborative learning techniques, and participant engagement strategies.

## **LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT**

Col Sanjeev Nair (Retd), CEO of Technopark, delivered the inaugural address, focusing on the critical need to embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and nurturing digitally capable, socially adept students. Col Dharendra Kumar, Principal, SSKZM, and OBA Patron, graced the valedictory function and presented certificates to all participants.



The programme was honoured by the presence of B Pradeep Nair (1159/1982), son of NBN Sir, along with his wife, Sreerekha Kaimal, on both days. Several former masters and alumni, including Sudhir Krishnan (1014/1980), K Rajendran, N G Babu, Sandhya Babu, S R Ramachandran, and M K Thomas, also attended.

## **POSITIVE FEEDBACK**

Educators from multiple schools, in and around Thiruvananthapuram, participated, offering overwhelmingly positive feedback. Sessions on mental health, impactful teaching, and modern pedagogy were described as insightful and transformative.

Participants particularly appreciated the interactive delivery, practical relevance, and the shuttle bus service between Thampanoor and ASB. Moving forward, participants requested more hands-on workshops and subject-specific modules, expressing strong interest in teacher well-being, AI in education, and advanced classroom management techniques.

The NBN Memorial Teachers' Enrichment Programme continues to embody our Association's commitment to giving back to society while honouring the values of excellence in education that defined NBN Sir's remarkable life.

# ALUMNI NEWS

## Basketball Team Strikes Gold



The Maharashtra Women's Wheelchair Basketball team, which was coached by Cmde Louis George (Retd) (642/1972), came up with a spectacular performance at the 9th National Wheelchair Basketball Championship, held in Gwalior from September 1 to 10, 2025.

They secured a double victory by winning championship titles in both the 3x3 and 5x5 formats, marking their fifth consecutive Gold Medal at the national level. The success extended across the entire contingent. The Maharashtra Men's team, showcasing their own stellar performance, secured titles in both the 3x3 and 5x5 formats, claiming their eighth Gold Medal.

## Marathon Achievement



Rajesh Das (2662/1996) secured the second runner-up spot in the 10K run at the Wipro Marathon in Bengaluru on September 22, 2025.

## Alumni Golf Tournament

The National Sainik Schools Alumni Golf Tournament 2025 concluded in grand style with an impressive award ceremony at the Banquet Hall of the Boulder Hills Golf and Country Club, Hyderabad.

Several Sainik School alumni from across the country

gathered to compete in this two-day championship.

Lt Col Hemant Raj VSM (3368/2002) emerged as the overall Best Golfer of the tournament and the winner of the prestigious Gross Category. He achieved this feat with an impressive gross score of 156 over the two days.

Furthermore, he was also the winner of the prize for the maximum number of birdies recorded across the entire tournament. Sainik School Korukonda emerged as the Champion School.



## Recognitions

- Col Rajeev Mannali (Retd) (421/1972), Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Pattom SUT Super Specialty Hospital, was honoured with the 'Business Excellence Award' at the 'World Malayali Council's Business Summit' in Thiruvananthapuram.
- Lt Gen M U Nair (1055/1981) was featured in the MIT Sloan Management Review's Policy 50, a definitive list of 50 leaders steering and shaping the nation's digital economy.
- Dr Krishna Kishore (1351/1983), a journalist associated with Asianet News, was recently honoured with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. The accolade recognises his remarkable career and significant contributions to the fields of journalism and public service. The presentation took place during the IPCNA (India Press Club of North America) 11th International Media Conference and Award Night, which was held from 9 to 11 October 2025 at the Sheraton in Edison, New Jersey.
- The Mahesh Foundation National Award for the Best Design Professional in India, instituted by the College of Architecture Trivandrum, was presented to eminent clay artist and designer Jinan K B (693/1976) in Bengaluru on 26 November 2025. The function was a part of the 25th Global Design Summit, jointly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the World Design Organisation.

## Awards and Honours



- Christo Tomy (4075/2005) won the coveted National Film Award for the Best Malayalam Feature Film for his debut feature movie, *Ullozhukku*, at the 71st National Film Awards. This victory is particularly remarkable as it is Christo's third National Award overall, solidifying his status as an exceptional filmmaker.
- National Award-winning director Rajeev Nath (80/1967) was honoured at the International Film Festival of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, marking 50 years in the industry, with a special screening of *Janani* on December 17, 2025.
- Actor and director Prithviraj Sukumaran (3105/2000) was presented with the Best Actor Award for his role in *Adujeevitham: The Goat Life* at the 54th Kerala State Film Awards ceremony on 16 April 2025 in Thiruvananthapuram.

## Alumni-students Interactions

- Under the patronage of Air Marshal Balakrishnan Manikantan PVSM AVSM VSM, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Central Air Command (1386/1983), cadets of Class 9 and Class 11 were hosted at the Air Force Stations Agra and Gwalior respectively from 15 to 19 September 2025. At Agra, Flt Lt Mohammed J S (4862/2015) served as host. Major Lithin K (4286/2010) interacted with cadets exhorting them to strive hard to join the defence.
- Brig Venu G (Retd) (1021/1980) conducted SSB classes for eligible students on the school campus on 11 October 2025. Dipping into his wealth of experience, he spoke of the challenges that the students face and how they should tackle them.

## Kazhak Trek: A New Tradition



With the aim of addressing the long-standing need for informal, cross-batch interactions, the OBA recently launched outdoor activities for the alumni.

The inaugural edition, Kazhak Trek, was held on 15 and 16 November 2025.

Led by Manu Mohan Nair (3873/2006), 20 participants came together for a day of adventure and camaraderie. The group comprised 17 alumni from 1976 to 2015 batches, along with three ladies.

The trek began with a scenic boat ride from Neyyar Dam, followed by a forest trail leading to the stunning Meenmutty Falls.

Participants enjoyed a refreshing dip in the falls before returning.

The day concluded with an evening of conversations, food, and music around a campfire.

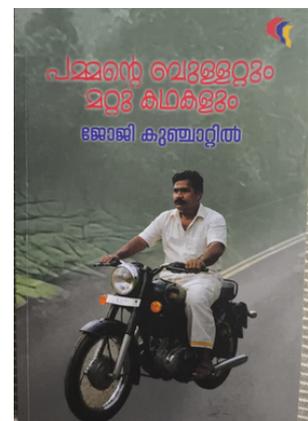
The overwhelming enthusiasm has already paved the way for the creation of the Kazhak Trekking Club. The next adventure, a Kazhak Bike Ride to Ooty, is scheduled for 16 to 18 January 2026.

## Alumni Authors

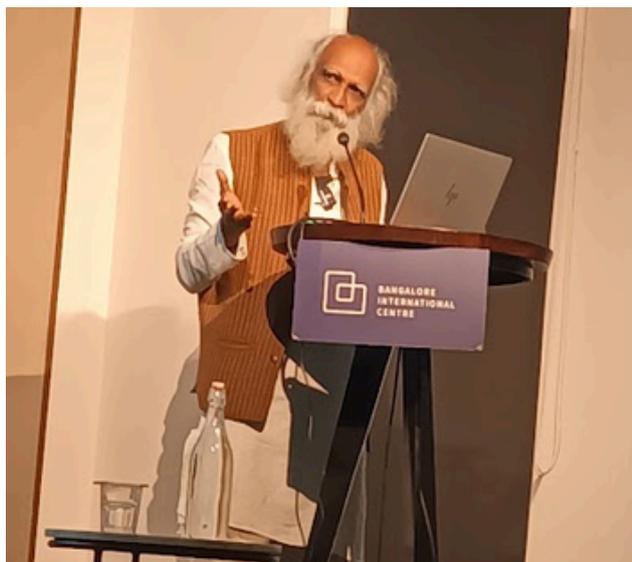
Jojoy Kunchattil (430/1972) has authored a compelling collection of ten short stories titled, *Pammante Bullettum Mattu Kathakalum*.

The book showcases Jojoy's unique talent for narrative, with many of the stories featuring unexpected, endings that leave a lasting impression

on the reader. The collection spans various genres, including an intense crime thriller. The author provides intricate details and realistic precision to both the settings and the characters, lending a believable touch to even the most imaginative tales.



## Awakening Beauty: A New Book on Reawakening Our Senses



Researcher, designer, and educator Jinan K B (693/1976) has published a book *Awakening Beauty*, which is the culmination of over three decades living with non-literate artisans and observing children.

The book was released at a function at the Bangalore International Centre on 2 December 2025.

During a presentation, Jinan spoke compellingly of his

journey of discovering beauty. He posits beauty as the essential triad of being: the Why (Value), the What (Cognition), and the How (Beauty).

He argues that when this triad is whole, our actions become inherently sustainable, meaningful, and graceful.

Conversely, he suggests that the current civilisational crisis — whether ecological, social, or spiritual — is a direct result of its fragmentation.

Jinan suggests the path forward requires a profound 'un-learning' — a shift from a life mediated by reading, thinking, and reasoning about the world, to one rooted in sensing, feeling, and being.

This involves a critical move from 'knowledge', which is always second-hand, to 'knowing', which is direct and embodied.

For over three decades, Jinan has worked across education, design, and indigenous 'knowing systems' to reveal how life naturally learns, creates, and knows — without instruction or ideology.

He is currently developing a series of 'See Through Books' — designed to help readers see through the text and into the real world. Each title serves as an entry point into crucial themes like knowledge, childhood, parenting, illiteracy, and language, guiding readers back to the senses, the body, and the living world as the true ground of understanding, and encouraging them to use language consciously, carefully, and wisely.

## Alumni Meetups

### NORTH AMERICA CHAPTER



The annual SSKZM Old Boys' North America meet was attended by alumni from across the continent for a three-day event from 19 to 21 September 2025, at the Caledon Country Club, a suburb of Toronto, Canada.

A total of 125 people were present, comprising 67 old boys and their families. The attendees ranged from the 1965 batch to the 2014 batch. On the evening of 19 September, there was an informal gathering focused on networking and fellowship.

This was followed by the distribution of custom hoodies and giveaways to all attendees, who then got together for a celebratory dinner.

The main day, 20 September, saw cricket, volleyball, and tug-of-war competitions. This was followed by group photographs, and a traditional Ona Sadhya.

The afternoon activities included fun games for spouses and children, besides a number of entertainment programmes like magic show, competitive round of Kazhak trivia, Bharatanatyam performance, and live music.

The final session was a sentimental moment, featuring an introduction of all attendees based on their year of passing out. A group of alumni went on a tour on 21 September to Niagara Falls.

## BENGALURU CHAPTER



The Bengaluru Chapter hosted its annual get-together (pictured above) on 2 November 2025, achieving, as is customary, a huge turnout. The success of the event, which celebrated alumni camaraderie, was a testament to the hard work of the organising team and the support of Major General V T Mathew (1569/1985).

A total of 106 old boys attended the event. As many as 17 were from the 2000 batch onwards, indicating strong participation from the younger alumni.

The 1982 batch claimed the highest representation, with seven OBs present. As many 63 old boys attended with their families, bringing the total attendance for the reunion to 206.

Meanwhile, the Mumbai chapter had a get together in September 2025.

## 1972 BATCH MEETUP



The 1972 batch held a reunion (pictured above) in Kannur from 28 November to 1 December 2025. The 1995 batch had a get-together in Pattaya in July 2025.

## Webinar to guide SSKZM aspirants

The Batch of 1999 organised a free online guidance webinar for parents, students, and educators on 23 October 2025, ahead of the Sainik School Entrance Exam for 2026–27. Organised under 'Project Udaan', the objective was to promote SSKZM to a wider audience and ensure students discover the holistic opportunities the school offers. The programme featured guidance from alumni, including serving defence officers and professionals from diverse fields. Key topics included:

**The Sainik School Advantage:** Holistic growth, discipline, and leadership, highlighting the role of alumni as capable citizens across all fields, not just the defence.

**Practical Considerations:** What to consider before



choosing a school and offering practical insights.

**NDA Pathway:** Detailing the foundation for nation-building provided by the school and the pathway to NDA.

**Life at SSKZM:** A glimpse of daily life, covering academics, sports, camaraderie, and values.

**Application Guidance:** Step-by-step guidance for the entrance exam and application process.

It ended with an open Q&A session. This initiative was widely appreciated for its valuable and practical guidance.

## PROMOTIONS

The following officers have been promoted as Colonel: Lt Col Liju R (3888/06), Lt Col Gerry George John (3688/05), Lt Col Jilu Jacob (3552/04), and Lt Col Renjith K R (3611/04)

## MENTION-IN-DESPATCHES

Lt Cdr Davis E Veeton (4373/10) and Maj Srihari Vijay B (S/o B Balachandran 1363/83) were awarded the prestigious Mention-in-Despatches (M-in-D) on 15 Aug 2025 for their acts of courage in the line of duty.

## OBITUARY

With profound sadness we note the passing of the following alumni. Our deepest condolences to their families and friends.

- K Venugopal (320/1973) on 10 Aug 2025;
- Arun Kumar M A (1762/1987) on 10 Sept 2025;
- Philip Mathew (108/1967) on 16 Sept 2025;
- Bino Varghese (1554/1985) on 21 Sept 2025;
- Vishnu Jayaprakash (5427/2020) on 21 Oct 2025.

# SCHOOL NEWS

## ACHIEVEMENTS

**CBSE Academic Excellence:** Sainik School Kazhakootam achieved the 1st position in merit among all Sainik Schools, based on the overall performance in the CBSE Class XII Board Examinations for 2024–25.

**UPSC Exam:** A total of 51 cadets cleared the UPSC written exam for NDA & INA entry on 14 Sept 2025. This total comprised 32 cadets from the current Class 12 (Academic Year 2025–26) and 19 successful candidates from the previous batch.



### Hockey Tournament:

The school hockey team participated in the All India Sainik Schools Inter-Group Hockey Tournament held at Sainik School Amaravathinagar

from 22 to 30 July 2025.

SSKZM emerged as the champions, securing a historic victory in the tournament 2025–26.

The team subsequently qualified for and participated in the recent Nehru Cup held in New Delhi.

**Shooting Championship:** Seven cadets from the SSKZM shooting team participated in the Kerala State Shooting Championship, which was organised by the Kerala Shooting Academy on 15 August 2025. The team secured two Gold, three Silver, and three Bronze medals at the district-level championship.

The 16th South Zonal Shooting Championship was held at the National Games Shooting Range, Vattiyurkavu, Thiruvananthapuram, from 11 to 14 October 2025. Cadet Ashish Abhilash (Roll No. 6275, Class 11) represented the school in the 10-metre Air Pistol event on 8 October 2025.

**Technical Competition:** The school achieved the Overall Championship Trophy at 'SPARK 2025', a technical competition organised by ACE College of Engineering, Thiruvallam, Thiruvananthapuram, on 6 November 2025. Forty cadets participated, securing the first position in Robotics and second positions in both the Quiz and Project categories.

## ACTIVITY

A campus walk, aiming to make the current cadets aware of the old traditions and practices of the school and to share memories, was held on 20 July 2025. It was led by Capt (IN) Ramesh Babu (Retd) (888/1979); and several cadets from Class 10 took part in the activity.

## ALUMNUS VISIT

Major General Hari B Pillai (1561/1985), ADG, HQ Recruiting Zone, Bengaluru, visited the school on 1 September 2025.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

**Enhanced Learning Environment:** All classrooms and laboratories are now equipped with Tata Edge interactive panels – an initiative sponsored by the Old Boys Association.

**Water Supply Upgrade:** A 24x7 water supply system has been installed in the toilet blocks of all dormitories, complete with geysers.

**Improved Mess Hygiene:** An automatic dishwasher has been installed in the Cadets' Mess.

**Sports Kits:** The Millennial Batch (Batch of 2000) contributed sports kits for the Sainik School Lower Primary School on 1 December 2025.

## 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**'.