



Some sequences in *Thuppakki* will be deleted following protests by Muslim outfits in Tamil Nadu

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SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON KANNADA CULTURESCAPE

Poet, writer, playwright and documentary filmmaker

CHINWAG WITH...

JULIUS MITCHELL



The 22-year-old Sri Lankan beat-boxer, who teaches at a performance academy in the island nation, is in Bangalore to perform at Freeze, the Hip Hop festival. Freeze focuses on all the elements of Hip Hop and beat-boxing.

How did Freeze happen?

The whole Freeze beatbox came through Vineeth Vincent, a city-based beat-boxer. I met him three years ago in Bangalore and we clicked as musicians. Since then we have been in touch. As a solo beat-box artist, it's the first time in India, but I've been here before for musical events.

What can we expect from you at Freeze? Do you have a playlist?

I don't have a playlist as such, it's instantaneously created freestyle beatbox sessions. There's a bit of pre-planning. I like to feed on the crowd's energy because I feel it's pointless to stick to a strict beat-box routine considering how each audience prefers different kind of music.

How big is beat-boxing in India when compared to the scene in Sri Lanka?

I would say India's beatboxing scene is much bigger, but the Hip Hop scene is quite good in our country. We have local artists doing their own thing with Hip Hop music; we even have Sinhalese and Tamil tracks down there.

Does beat-boxing have its limitations?

Well, if you ask me I would say that I cannot see a limit because 'voice' is such an amazingly versatile instrument and the best part is each person's voicebox is different. So we literally get millions of different instrumental and original sounds out of each individual which is extremely unique in its way. It all depends on what you put your mind into because if your mind wants it your voice can do it.

What do you think is the future of beat-box?

I think it's going to be massive. You literally can do it anywhere, anytime and any place.

— Prashanth Vidyasagar

Freeze on November 17 @ St John's Amphi Theater and November 18 @ Mount Carmel College

(Chinwag is an informal conversation with people from the field of art, music, theatre and culture and on their latest works)

THE BACKBENCHERS

The launch of 'Pada' software offers hope for Kannadigas who use computers. Meanwhile, Kannada is yet to get the Unicode support unlike Tamil and other regional languages

"There is a need for a strong political will to implement this. States like Tamil Nadu are at least 15 years ahead of us on this issue," said Jnanpeeth Dr Chandrashekhara Kambara. The writer was referring to getting the approval of Unicode software support for Kannada.

"They say that in this Internet age, every three years amount to a 'yuga', so we are at least five yugas behind Tamil. Leave alone e-mail, it's a pity we are not able to send even an SMS in Kannada. Nothing has been done for the last three years to get approval of Unicode software support for Kannada. The file is gathering dust at the chief minister's office," Kambara said at a book launch recently.

(Unicode is a computing industry standard for the consistent encoding, representation and handling of text expressed in most of the world's writing systems. Unicode's success at unifying character sets has led to its widespread and predominant use in the internationalisation and localisation of computer softwares. Now take a look at the list of font converters in Tamil:

NHM Converter is available both online and offline versions. It converts Unicode, Bamini, Vanavil, ShreeLipi, TSCII, DiaCritic, TAB, TAM, SoftView fonts to one another. The software is very robust and even large data conversion can be done seamlessly.

Suratha Pongu Tamil, one of the earliest free online Tamil font converters, focuses mainly fonts of online Tamil magazines. (Converts IndoWeb, Murasoli, Web Ulagam, Dhina Thanthi, DinaMani, Dhina-Boomi, Anjal, ThatsTamil, Libi, Amutham / Dinakaran, Mylai, Vikatan (Old), Tab, Tam (Kumudam / Vikatan), Bamini, TSC, Romanised, Koeln, anu graphics (pallavar), nakkeeran (senthamiz).) However, many of the sites mentioned here have already migrated to Unicode fonts.

Azhagi- Unicode - TSCII bulk converter.

ELCOT Tamil font converters for Linux and Windows.

Sarma has a paid software for converting Tamil fonts.

Bamini - Unicode and Unicode - Bamini Font converters from University of Colombo, School of computing.

Adhiyaman - converts TSCII, TAM, TAB, TUNE, Daily Thanthi, Dinamani, Chene, Kambur, Kalam, Keeravani, Kambar fonts to Unicode.

Compared to this, in Kannada we



have Baraha, the first software to be developed by Sheshadri Vasu whose pioneer efforts deserve high appreciation. He taught an entire generation to use the language without which we would have been a thousand yugas behind in being tech savvy. (No, the Karnataka government does not see him eligible for Rajyotsava Award). Then came Nudi which was an effort by the Kannada Ganaka Parishat, supported by the government. Then we have Shrilipi, a paid software. It has several Indian languages, but for reasons unknown, the Kannada one has been discontinued. The latest to enter the arena is Pada developed by Lohit D Shivamurthy. Hailed as the new gift for Deepavali, Pada is a word processor

which has several new features which will make major breakthroughs in using Kannada in computers. (Pada means a 'word' in Kannada language. The software is a collection of tools for Indic scripts, like simple word processor, IME etc.)

PADA HAS BEST FEATURES

Expert Mahesh Malnad says, "For fonts to be able to be converted, the source code should be available on the net, meaning it should be open source. For Kuvempu Tantramsha developed by Poornachandra Tejasvi and Chidananda Gowda and Nudi developed by the government, the source code is not open. If there is no convertibility then each software will stand alone and there will not be

uniformity. It is for the government to take up standardisation of fonts and make them common for all to use. Tenders called by government to develop these softwares are going to the same company and hence the disgruntled tech savvy are complaining against it. Baraha has an inbuilt converter which allows for it to be adaptable. Pada has now introduced more user-friendly features and is a major step forward."

The main features of Pada are: available for both Linux and Windows; auto-completion of words while typing; four keyboard layouts: phonetic layout - for beginners, Phonetic-2 - For intermediate, Nudi (KP Rao) Layout - For Advanced, Transliteration - Similar to Google transliteration; Create and Edit following type of documents: Plain text, Rich text, HTML; Create PDF documents; Online Wiktionary support - Using this you may find the words definition from Wiktionary project; Pada-Kosha - Offline dictionary for Kannada (only) language. English - Kannada, Kannada-Kannada. Contains more than 2 lakh words already; Find and Replace: Friendly Find and Replace for both Unicode and ANSI; **Script-Converter**: Convert script from one Indic script to another. Also supports ANSI (English) to Indic Unicode conversion; Spell Check support for Kannada script. Easily extendible to any other Indic script; **Pada-IME**: Using which one can write Indic scripts directly in any other windows application. For ex: Emails, Notepad, WordPad, MS Word, MS Excel, FireFox, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome etc.

The best part is that it is free. Thank you, Lohit D Shivamurthy.

WHY THE DILLY-DALLYING?

Using Kannada in computers and on the Net is not difficult. One needs to have an inclination and can get started. Why the government is dilly-dallying about approving Unicode is because it feels conversion is a major hurdle. All government records are in Nudi format and it would take considerable time and effort to convert all the records to Unicode format. A time table for the conversion of all records has to be chalked out. Officials must be trained how to use the new format. The Kannada Software Development Committee had submitted a draft policy to the government long back but it is yet to be placed before the State Cabinet for a final approval only after which a government order in this regard can be issued. Now how long before we catch up with Tamil? Any guesses?



It will take at least five yugas for us to catch up with Tamil Nadu