



UCSI: One big cultural melting pot

UCSI was part of an auspicious and colourful occasion on Monday, 15th January, 2007. The foyer area was clad with beautiful and colourful decorations. The Indian Cultural Society (ICS) celebrated the “Ponggal” festival and the atmosphere in UCSI was splendid. Students, both guys and girls, were dressed in traditional attire of sarees, Punjabi suits, kurtas and dhotis. The event was launched by Professor Dr. Norfadzillah bt. Hitam, Vice President of Research and Corporate Affairs and attended by Mr. Chin Peng Kit, Vice President (Academics), Mr. Sudesh Balasubramaniam, Senior Director of Students Affairs, Mr. Kumaresh Kumar, Manager of Campus Activities and Communications and Ms. Mabel Tan, the advisor of ICS.



From right: Kit, Sudesh &. Prof. Nor

“Ponggal” is a Hindu harvest festival. The word “Ponggal” in Tamil means ‘boiling over’. It is traditionally celebrated to mark the abundance of crops from the harvest. The ritual of boiling milk together with glutinous rice, brown sugar and other condiments such as raisins, cashew nuts is done during the “Ponggal’ festival.

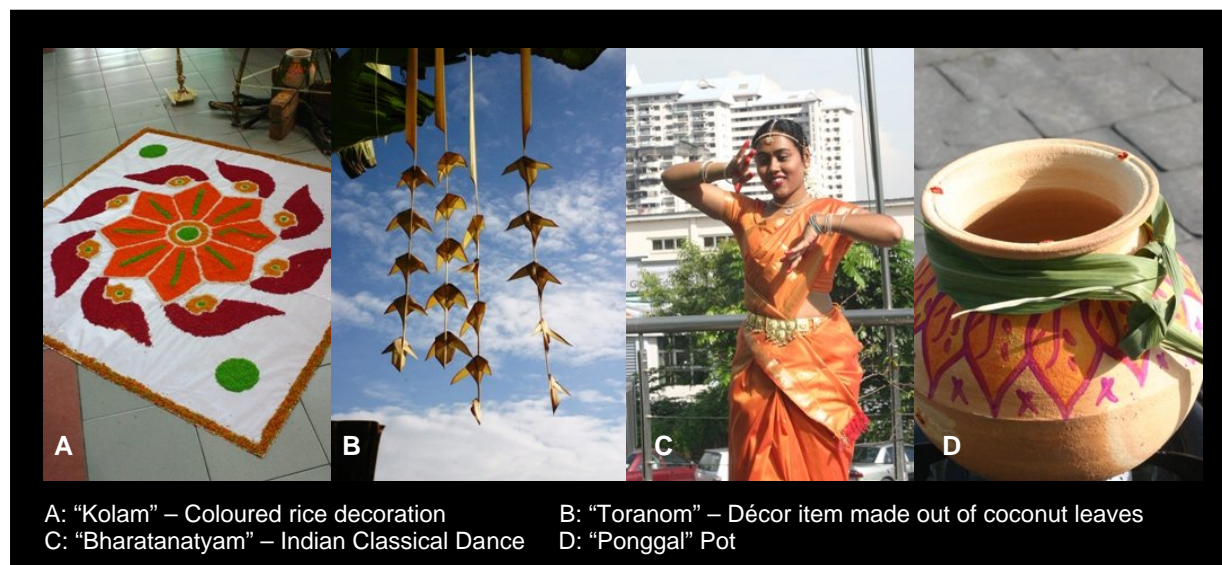
According to the Organising Chairman of the event, K. Munieswaram, the festival is celebrated by the whole Tamil population from different parts of the world such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Malaysia. The President of ICS, S. Magesan, said the objective of the event was to foster closer ties between students and staff of UCSI. He also added that this type of cultural event would be an eye opener for international students. "It enables them to experience one of the many cultural celebrations that are practised in Malaysia," he said.

The festival saw the ritual of cooking a sweet glutinous rice dish in the pot. The VIPs including Professor Dr. Norfadzillah and Mr. Chin Peng Kit, poured fresh milk into the clay pots that were placed on oven stoves. As the milk boiled and overflowed, the members of ICS added other condiments to complete the "Ponggal" dish. Even students from other races and countries took part in the "Ponggal" making. After the dish was done, it was distributed to all UCSI staff and students who attended the event.



Some international students taking part in making the sweet glutinous rice.

A classical dance was performed by one of the ICS members. The Indian dance, also known as "Bharatanatyam", was performed by aspiring dancer, and UCSI nursing student, S. Rajamani. She performed two beautifully choreographed dances. This event was a resounding success as the ICS members managed to bring this beautiful cultural occasion to UCSI's doorstep and enabled everyone in this institution to experience 'Malaysia' in a most unique way.



A: "Kolam" – Coloured rice decoration

C: "Bharatanatyam" – Indian Classical Dance

B: "Toranom" – Décor item made out of coconut leaves

D: "Ponggal" Pot