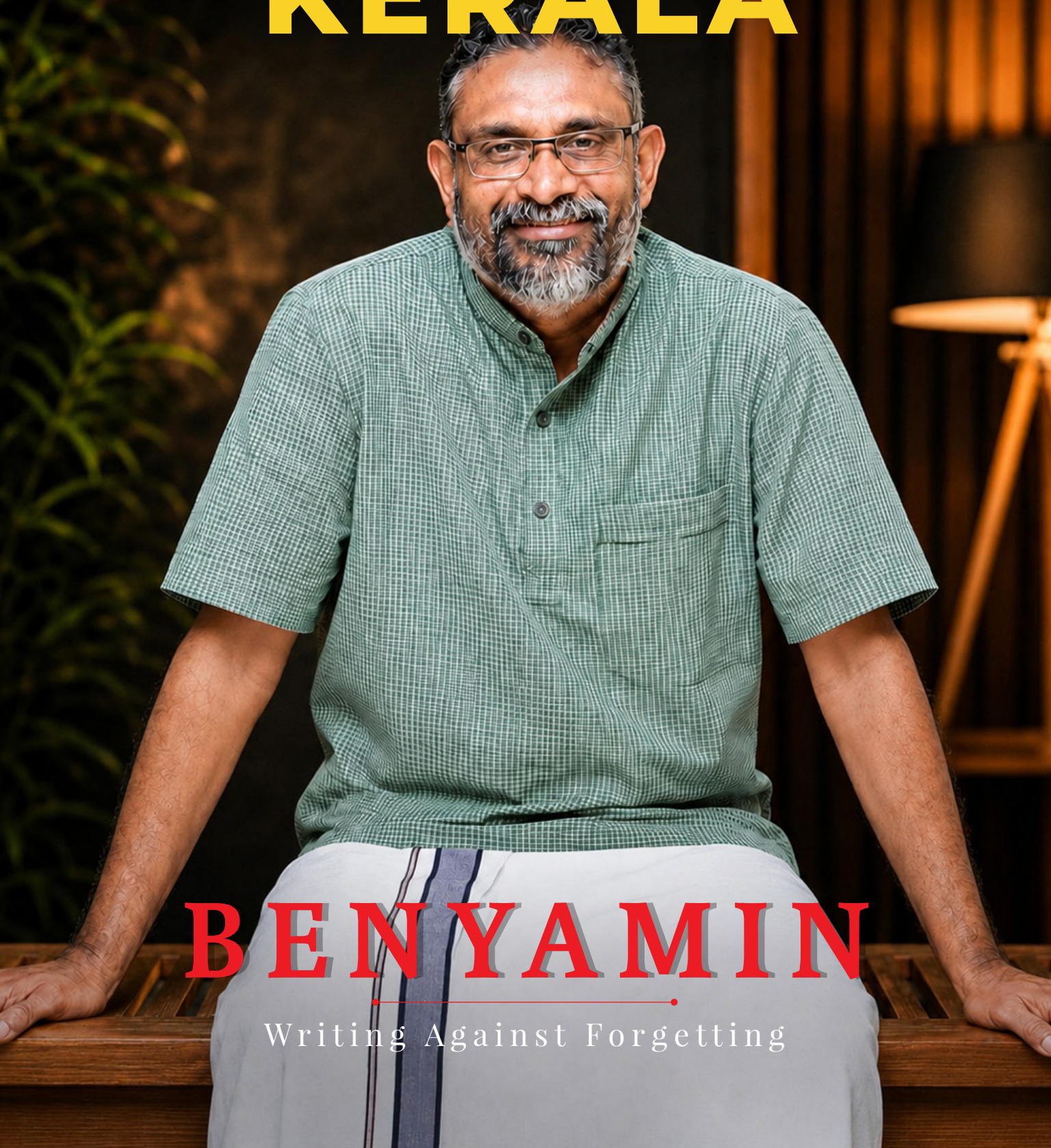


KERALA'S LEADING BUSINESS LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

# Outstanding KERALA

MARCH 2026

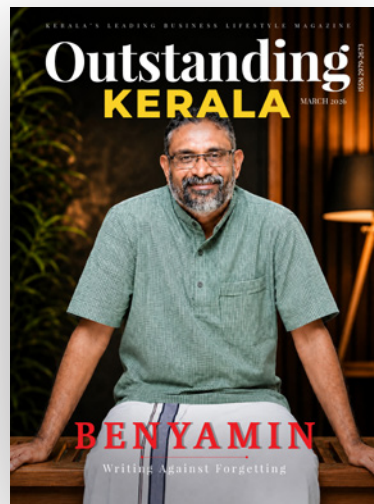
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## BENYAMIN

Writing Against Forgetting

# CREATIVE TEAM



MARCH 2026 Edition

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# BENYAMIN

VOICES FROM  
THE DESERT SANDS

*Celebrating the Architect  
of Migrant Realism*



## The Interior Weather of an Exile

In the shifting dunes of a Middle Eastern desert, a man named Najeeb feels his shoulders cave under the weight of fate. In the rain-soaked lanes of Manthelir, a village's history unfolds through years of faith and friction. Across decades, Benyamin's prose has changed—the settings shift, the themes deepen. But the interior weather of his characters remains startlingly precise.

That is the paradox of Benyamin. For over two decades, he has moved across the landscape of Malayalam literature. He does not merely write characters; he absorbs them. He allows the "un-peopled" voices of the diaspora to breathe through him, to sweat, to struggle, and to survive. His genius lies not in spectacle but in suggestion, in the pause before a truth lands. Somewhere between those silences, an entire generation of Malayalis has found its own reflection.

## The Accidental Author

In 1992, a young man from Kerala traveled to the Gulf, not dreaming of literature, but seeking a livelihood. He was more interested in engineering and the daily grind of expatriate life than stardom in the literary world.

**The Beginning:** His first significant recognition came through *Aadujeevitham* in 2008, where he portrayed a chilling reality of human suffering.

**A Raw Debut:** It was not a glamorous entry into the spotlight, but the industry and the world took notice.

**Redefining Realism:** Malayalam literature, known for its literary depth, found in him a performer unafraid of moral ambiguity.

## The Rise of the Everyman

He did not fit the archetype of the romanticized writer. His characters fail; they doubt themselves on the page. In *Aadujeevitham*, the descent from a hopeful migrant into a primal state of tragedy felt painfully real. In *Mantharirile 20 Communist Varshangal*, he captured the burden of familial and political responsibility. These were not just bestsellers; they were emotional landmarks for a generation. Benjamin's genius lies in making vulnerability magnetic. He embodies the middle-class Malayali psyche—ambitious yet anxious, proud yet fragile. He is not larger than life; he is life, magnified.





“

Writing is not about "becoming" someone else, but about allowing a character to pass through your own experiences.

- BENYAMIN

## The Method Behind the Magic

### Observing Rhythms:

He studies rhythms—the way a laborer might hold a shovel or the hesitation before a desperate lie.

### The Weight of Truth:

He captures the casual arrogance of power and the silence of the oppressed.

### Self-Consciousness:

He allows silence to dominate his narratives, a lack of self-importance that has become his greatest strength.

“

He doesn't just write stories. He listens to life then writes what life whispers.

”



## The Weight of legacy

Today, Benyamin is not merely a writer but an institution within Indian literature. Younger writers measure themselves against his bibliography. Directors like Blessy spent a decade imagining the emotional bandwidth required to bring his words to the screen. He continues to experiment, sometimes succeeding spectacularly, sometimes faltering. This willingness to risk missteps keeps his career alive rather than embalmed. He carries the gravitas of the past and the curiosity of the present.

## Awards & Recognition

- 2009: Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for Aadujeevitham.
- 2018: The prestigious JCB Prize for Literature for Jasmine Days.
- 2021: Vayalar Award for Mantharirile 20 Communist Varshangal.
- Cross-Media Success: The cinematic adaptation of The Goat Life brought his vision to a global audience.

In Kerala's humid evenings, where conversations spill from tea shops into memory, someone will inevitably recall a scene from his books. A glance. A line. A breakdown that felt too real to be scripted. In that remembering, Benyamin continues to exist not as an icon frozen in time, but as a living, evolving presence. He has played the role of chronicler for the rebel, the lover, and the father. Long after the lights fade, his characters continue to breathe inside us.

# Outstanding KERALA

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## *Outstanding Malayali of Kerala*

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