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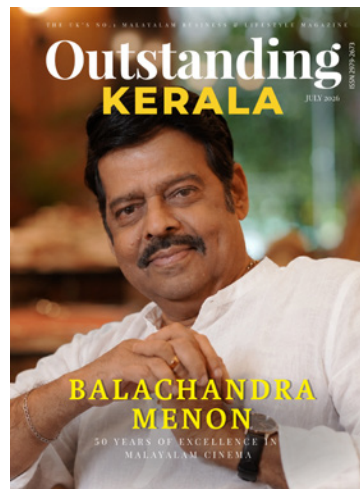
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**BALACHANDRA
MENON**

50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN
MALAYALAM CINEMA

CREATIVE TEAM



JULY 2026 Edition

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BALACHANDRA MENON

50 Years of Excellence in Malayalam Cinema

Balachandra Menon is a multi-faceted talent of Malayalam cinema. This all-rounder of Malayalam cinema needs no introduction to Malayalis. He has proven his talent in many fields including actor, director, screenwriter, playback singer and television presenter. But more than these attributes, Malayalis prefer to remember him as a filmmaker who understood the emotions and life experiences of ordinary people. His films, which portrayed the realities of middle-class life with the utmost simplicity and sincerity, are still beloved by Malayalis.

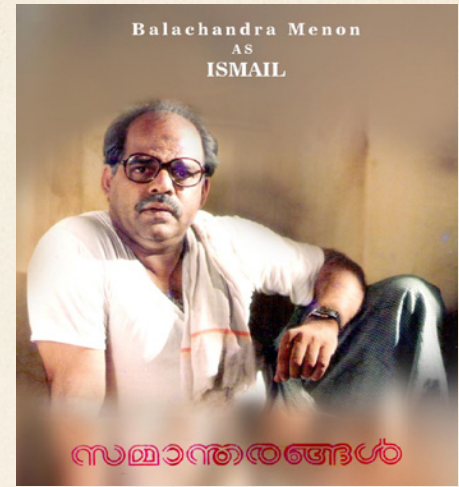
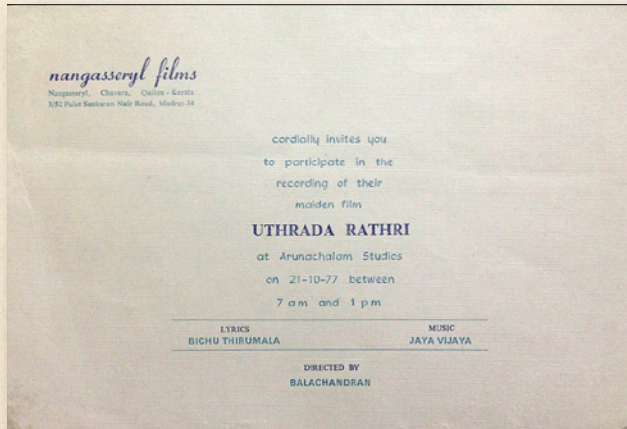


A circular gold medal with a laurel wreath border. The text "AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM" is inscribed around the top, and "NATIONAL HEALTH JOURNALISM AWARD" around the bottom. The center features the years "1974-75". A small gold ring is attached to the top.

July 2026

He started off his film career in 1977 with his first film UTHRADARATHRI (released on 21st July 1978) and 2025 marks his 50th year of his career in Malayalam Cinema.

In all his films, one can find the dedication of the writer – director to stick to family sentiments without yielding to the bad influence of commercial cinema like sex and violence which fetched him the name ‘The Family Film Maker’.



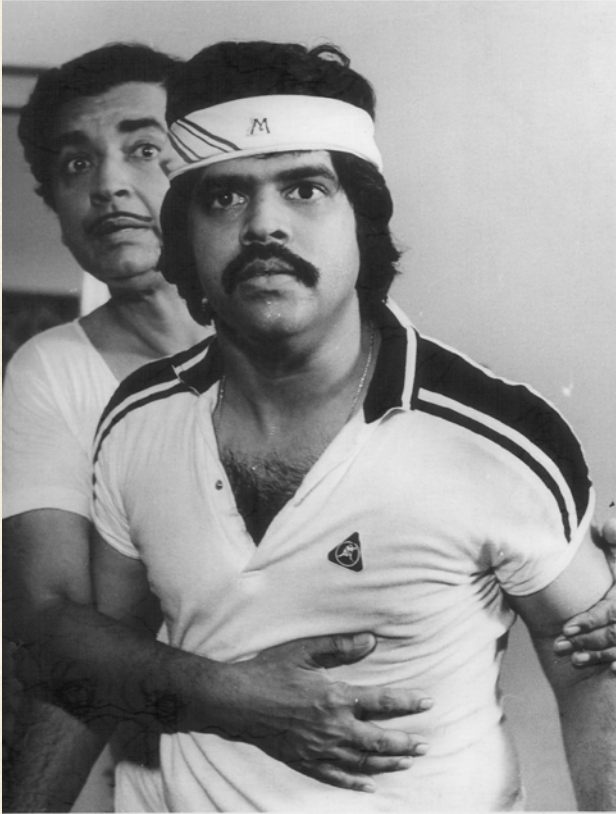
A Filmmaker Who Redefined Realistic Cinema

His style was to deconstruct exaggerated storytelling and commercial cinema through his writing. He gave audiences films that they could always relate to their own lives. Human emotions, the struggles of ordinary people, and family relationships all became his themes.

The naturalness in Balachandra Menon's acting has always been widely admired. At a time when many actors relied on dramatic expressions and theatrical performances, Balachandra Menon acted like an ordinary human being. That is why his characters never felt like typical cinema characters, but rather like people we see in our own homes and surroundings.

There was a calmness and restraint in his performances. He never needed loud dialogues or exaggerated emotions to express feelings. Through subtle expressions, pauses, and natural conversation, he managed to command the screen effortlessly. Every character he portrayed in front of the camera felt believable and real. The depth of his acting can be clearly seen in films like Samantharangal, which eventually earned him the National Award as well.

While many actors chased stardom and larger-than-life images, Balachandra Menon remained close to real life, and Malayali audiences embraced him wholeheartedly for that very reason.



Origin of the Headband

The story behind the kerchief tied around the head of Balachandra Menon comes from a Malayalam idiom that signifies readiness for action.

In Malayalam, the expression “Arayum Thalayum Murukkuka” roughly translates to tightening one’s belt or loincloth and tying a band around the head in preparation for action, such as a fight or a stunt. Symbolically, he describes it as tightening an invisible loincloth, while what the audience actually sees is only the kerchief around his head—signifying that he is ready for action.

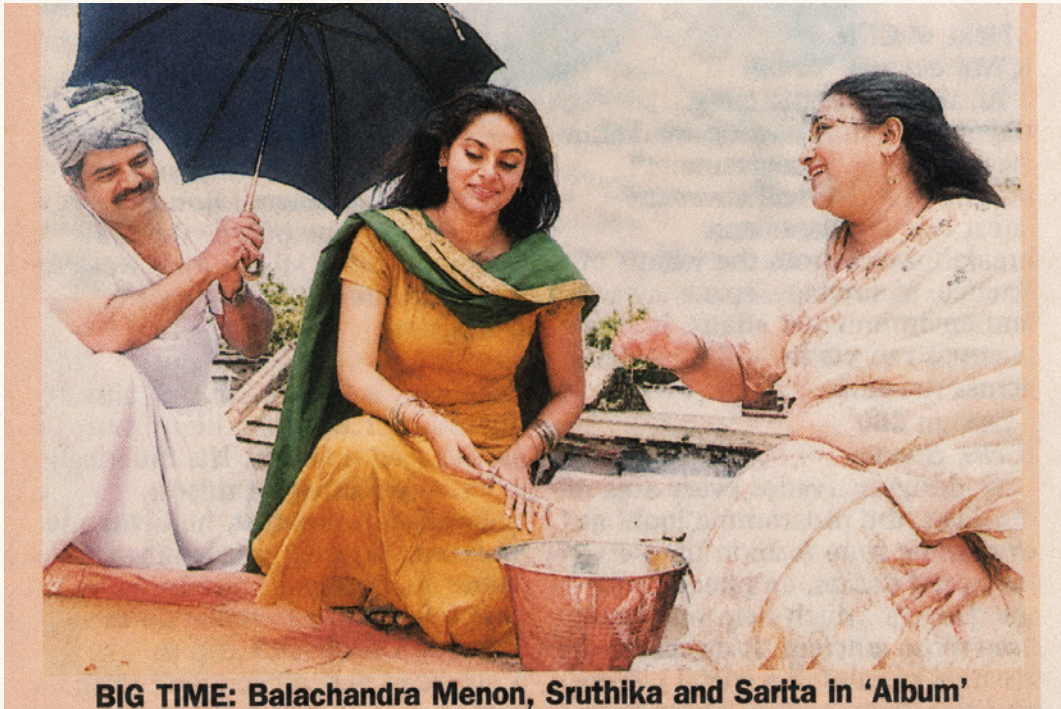
The origin of this habit goes back to the shooting of the film *Karyam Nissaram*. During the shoot, he was required to wear a wig. A person had been sent to bring it, but it did not arrive on time. As shooting was about to begin, he became anxious and restless.

Noticing his concern, actor Shri Prem Nazir, who was also acting in the film, asked about the issue. After hearing the reason, he smiled and pointed to a workshop mechanic on the set who used to tie a kerchief around his head to keep his hair in place. He suggested that he could do the same and proceed with the shoot.

From that day onwards, he began tying a kerchief around his head, which later became a distinctive part of his on-screen and off-screen identity.

Introducing New Talent

He was not someone who remained confined only to acting or directing, but a person who discovered new talents and brought them before the audience. His role was crucial in the early journey of many actors who later became major stars in Malayalam cinema.



BIG TIME: Balachandra Menon, Sruthika and Sarita in 'Album'

He was always a trendsetter who consistently promoted new talent across every department of filmmaking. Among those who received early opportunities through him were Viji Thampi, R. Gopinath, and Rajan Sankaradi (directors); Shajiyem (art and poster design); Mahendran (art direction); Hemachandran (cinematography); K. P. Nambiathiri and R. Gopalkrishnan (still photography); Sasikala Menon and Devadas (lyrics); Kizhillom Velayudhan (costume design); Raman Nair and Viswanathan (editing); and Marcose, Preetha, Janaki Devi, Kaladevi, Sreevidya, Bharat Gopi, and Venu Nagavally (playback singing), among many others.

It also deserves special mention that actors such as Srinath, Shanawas, Maniyanpilla Raju, Baiju, Riyaz Khan, and Yadukrishnan, along with many of the leading heroines of Malayalam cinema from the 1980s onwards—including Shobana, Karthika, Parvathy, Lissy, Nandini, Annie, Usha, Meera, Sara and Dakshina—were introduced or nurtured by him, making a significant contribution to Malayalam cinema.

He also holds the rare distinction of introducing actors Shammi Kapoor and Rohini Hattangadi, along with music director Ravindra Jain, to Malayalam cinema.

A True Multi-Talented Personality

Very few people in Malayalam cinema have successfully handled multiple roles the way Balachandra Menon did. He worked as:

- Director
- Actor
- Screenplay Writer
- Editor
- Playback Singer
- Music Director
- Producer
- Distributor
- Television Host

His ability to contribute creatively in so many different areas made him one of the industry's most respected all-round talents.

BALACHANDRA MENON FILMS



1978 - 1984

- 1978 Uthrada Rathri
- 1979 Radha Enna Penkutty
- 1980 Kalika
- 1980 Aniyatha Valakal
- 1980 Ishtamaanu Pakshe
- 1980 Vaiki Vanna Vasantham
- 1981 Maniyanpilla Adhava
Maniyan pilla
- 1981 Prema Geethangal
- 1981 Tharattu
- 1982 Kelkkatha Shabdham
- 1982 Kilukilukkam
- 1982 Ithiri Neram Othiri Karyam
- 1982 Chiriyo Chiri
- 1983 Karyam Nissaram
- 1983 Sesham Kazhchayil
- 1983 Prasnam Gurutharam
- 1984 April 18
- 1984 Arante Mulla Kochu Mulla
- 1984 Oru Painkilikkatha

1985 - 1994

- 1985 Manicheppu Thurannappol
- 1985 Ente Ammu Ninte Thulasi
Avarude Chakki
- 1986 Vivahitare Ithile
- 1987 Vilambaram
- 1987 Achuvettante Veedu
- 1989 Kandathum Kettathum
- 1989 Njangalude Kochu Doctor
- 1990 Kuruppinte Kanakkupusthakam
- 1991 Nayam Vykthamakkunnu
- 1993 Ammayane Sathyam
- 1994 Sukham Sukhakaram

1995 - 2018

- 1996 April 19
- 1998 Samantharangal
- 2002 Krishna Gopalakrishna
- 2008 Dhe Ingottu Nokkiye
- 2016 Njan Samvidhanam Cheyyum
- 2018 Ennalum Sarath



He also directed a Tamil Movie Thaikkoru Thalattu in 1986 with the thespians Sivaji Ganesan, Padmini in the main lead.

BALACHANDRA MENON AS AN ACTOR



- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daivatheyorth - R. Gopinath • Oru Maymasa Pulariyil - V. R. Gopinath • Rithubhedham - Prathap Pothan • Oohakkachavadam - K. Madhu • Kudumbapuram - Sathyan Anthikad • Janmanthram - Thampi Kannanthanam • Isabella - Mohan • David David Mr. David - Viji Thampi • Sasneham - Sathyan Anthikad • Varthamana Kalam - I. V. Sasi • Santhanagopalam - Sathyan Anthikad • Avittam Thirunal Aarogya Sreeman - Viji Thampi • Janadhipathyam - K. Madhu • Krishnagudiyil Oru Pranayakalathu - Kamal • The Truth - Shaji Kailas • Sathyameva Jayathe - Viji Thampi • Melevaaryathe Malakhakkuttikal - Thulasi-das | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sathyam Shivam Sundaram - Raffi-Mecartin • Ishtam - Sibi Malayil • Nammal - Kamal • Saphalam - Asok R. Nath • Varum Varunnu Vannu - K.R. Ramadas • Rappakal - Kamal • December - Ashok R. Nath • Classmates - Lal Jose • College Kumaran - Thulasidas • Pranayakalam - Uday Ananthan • Nammal Thammi - Viji Thampi • Utharaswayamvaram - Remakanth Sarju • Buddy - Raaj Prabavathy Menon • Kunjananthante Kada - Salim Ahamed • Kadal Kadannoru Mathukutty - Ranjith • Oozham - Jeethu Joseph • One - Santhosh Viswanath • Pulimada - A. K. Sajan • A Ranjith Cinema - Nishanth Sattu • Prathichaya - B. Unnikrishnan |
|---|--|

He also acted in a Tamil Movie titled 'Album' directed by Vasantha Balan with Saritha under the banner of K. Balachander's Kavithalaya Productions.

BALACHANDRA MENON AS AN AUTHOR



- Ammayane Sathyam (an autobiography)
- Kaanatha Sultanu Snehapoorvam (Essay collection)
- Ninne Enthinu Kollam? (Collection of essays)
- Ariyathathu Ariyendathu (Essays)
- Balachandramenonte 12 cherukathakal (short stories)
- Ithiri neram othiri karyam (Filmy experiences)
- Ente adhika prasangangal (Speeches compilation)
- Mukham abhimukham (an interview collection)
- Achuvetantey veedu (screenplay adaptation)
- Samantharangal (screenplay adaptation)
- April 18 (screenplay adaptation)
- Krishna gopalakrishna (screenplay adaptation)
- Manicheppu Thurannappol (Flashes from flashback)
- Start Action, Musings of a Movie Maker (English)

Awards and Accomplishments in Cinema

- Kerala State Award as the Best Story Writer - 1979.
- Kunchacko Award for the Best Director - 1980.
- Filmfare Award for the Best Director -1983.
- Cinema Express Award for the Best Director - 1984.
- National Award for the Best Actor - 1997.
- National Award for the Best Feature Film on Family Welfare as Producer -1997.
- National Award for the Best Feature Film on Family Welfare as Director -1997.
- Kerala State Award for EXCELLENCE in Various Areas of Film Making - 1997.
- Filmfare Award for the Best Actor - 1998.
- Sathyan National Award as Actor - 1998.
- Film Critics Television. Award for the Best Actor in Television.
- Muthukulam Award as Best Screenplay Writer in 1998.
- Rajiv Gandhi Award for ALL round EXCELLENCE in Film making in 1998.
- Lions Award of Excellence in appreciation of invaluable service rendered to Indian Cinema as Writer , Director & Actor in 2000.
- Highest Award CHALACHITHRA RATNA by the Kerala Critics Association CHALACHITRA RATNA in 2000.
- Premnazir Foundation Award for Achievements in Cinema in 2006.
- Bharat Gopi Foundation Award for Best All rounder in Cinema in 2007.
- Balachandra Menon was the proud recipient of the PADMASRI title the Nation conferred upon him in 2007 handed over by His Excellency The President of India Sri A P J Abdul Kalaam.
- As the Author of the book ' Start Action : Musings of a Movie Maker ' Balachandra Menon received Special Mention for the Book Award for Excellence in Writing on Cinema at the 20th Mumbai Film Festival in 2018 .
- Lifetime Achievement in Malayalam Cinema from 'Vanitha' Film Awards (Malayala Manorama Group) in 2019.



Other Unique Achievements:

- As a **singer** he might be the only actor to have lent his voice not only for himself but for three other actors namely Madhu, Bharath Gopi & Manoj K Jayan.
- Introduced the successful ONV - Johnson pair to the Malayalam Music Industry.
- He was a Music Director for 4 films, editor for 5 films, Background Scorer for 1 film , Produced & Distributed 6 films & Acted in 35 films with other Directors other than the films 30 films he directed.
- Winner of Karshakasri award for the best Farmer in 1998.
- An author Of 9 books, script adaptations of 5 films & A Publisher of 3 books. 6. He is an Orator and perhaps the Only Film maker who has a book of his compilation of speeches & Interviews.
- He is perhaps the only Indian film maker whose film 'samaantharangal' won a national award as the best actor & best feature film on family welfare as producer & director. It requires special mention that balachandra Menon has handled 10 departments like story, screenplay, dialogue,

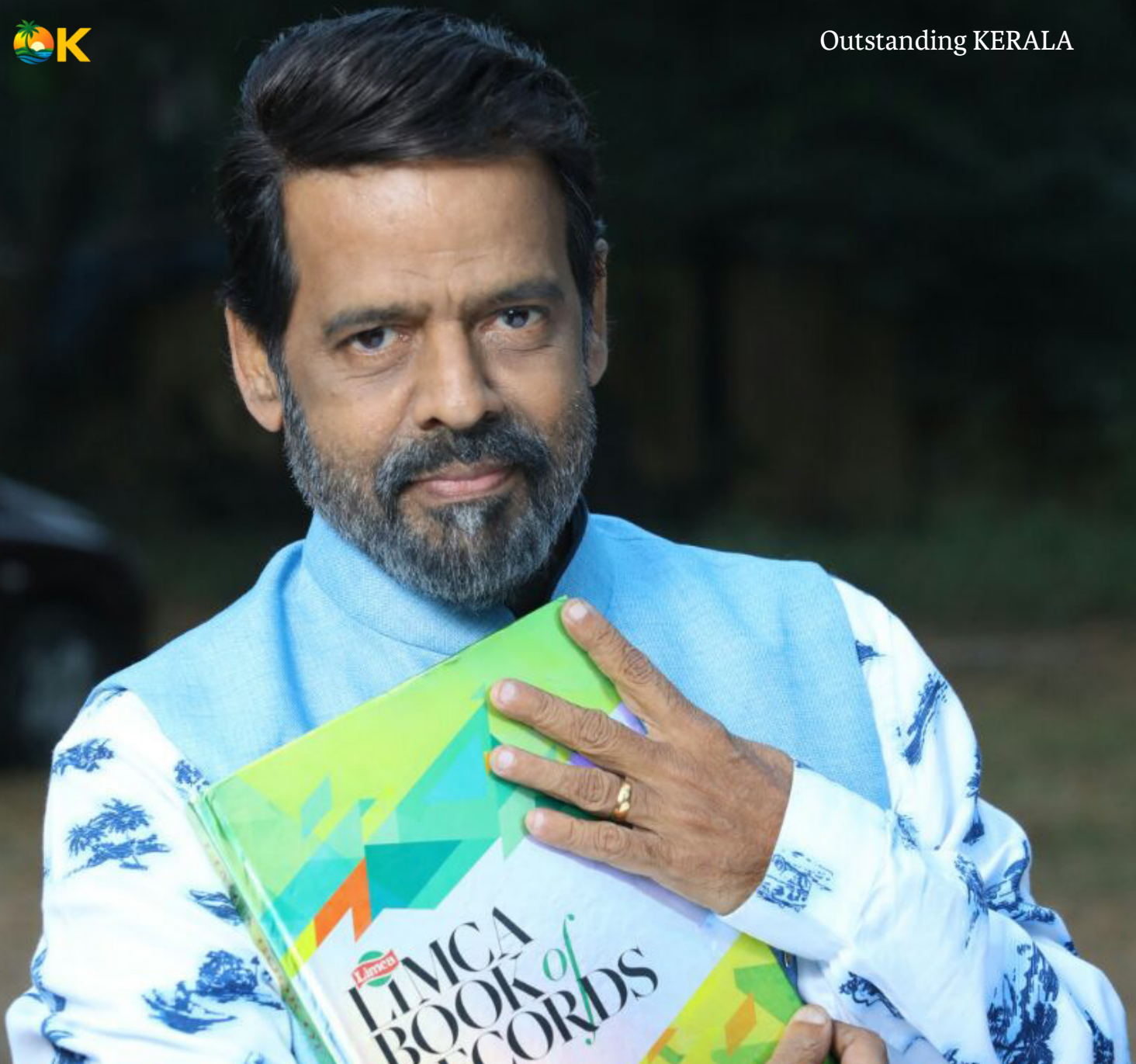


direction, acting, editing, music direction, background music, production and distribution in this film.

- He has also Produced and Directed Telefilms and Documentaries based on Socially relevant themes like Road safety, Purpose of Clean Environment , Misuse of telephone etc.
- Founder of Roses, the Family Club for promoting healthy co-existence and a Stage Performer where he spreads the values in society through songs and his speeches.
- Won an entry into the Limca Book of Records 2018 as the film maker who has done maximum number of films (29) scripted, acted and directed by himself. His last film will enhance the record number to 30 films.

PUBLICATIONS

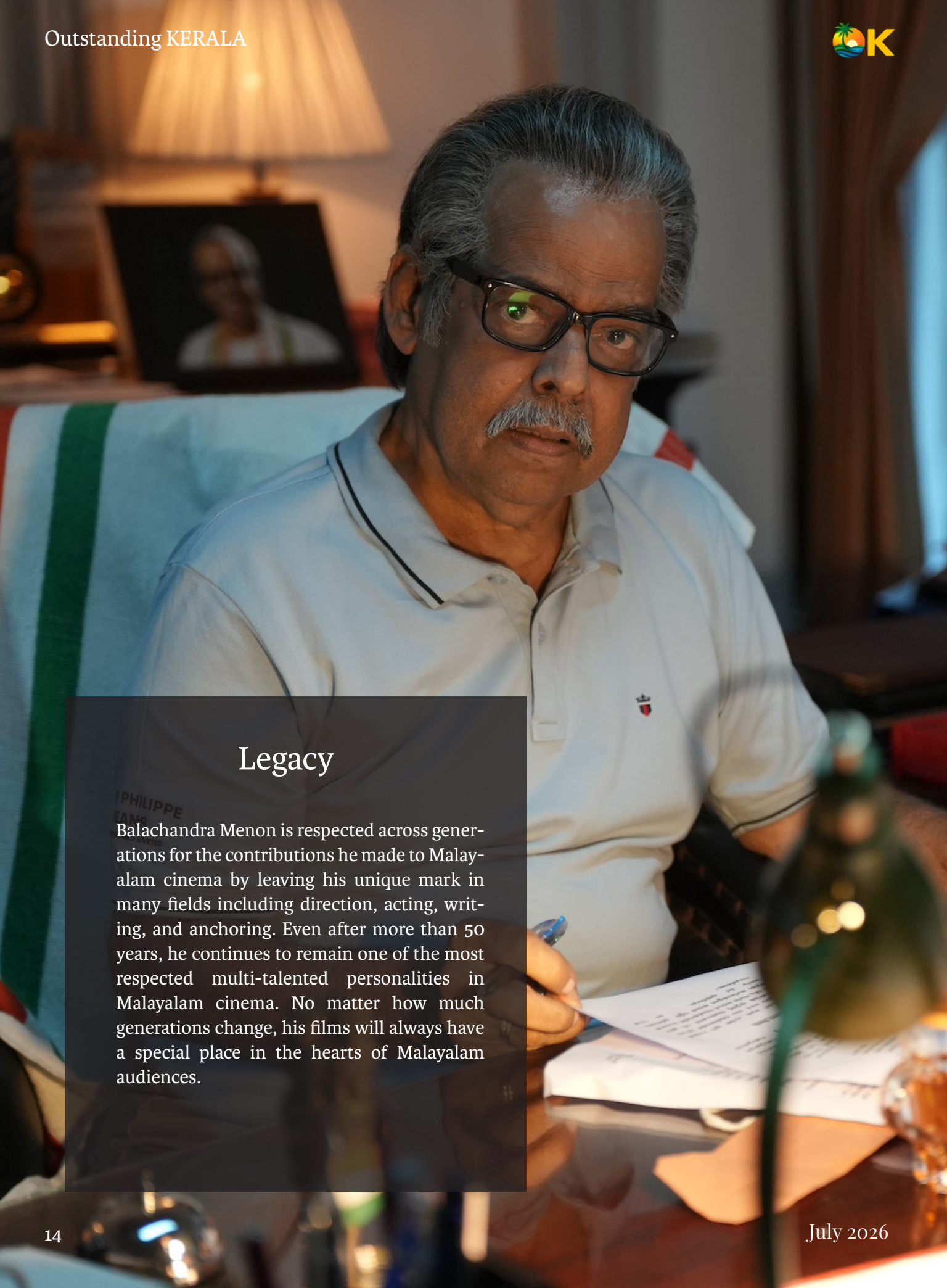




Balachandra Menon and the Changing Malayalam Cinema

Since the time Balachandra Menon entered cinema, the Malayalam film industry has undergone major changes when examined today. The methods of storytelling, technologies, and the audience's perspective towards cinema have all changed according to the times. Today, Malayalam cinema has evolved into a style that is faster-paced and gives greater importance to technical excellence and visual beauty.

However, even amidst such changes, Balachandra Menon's films continue to remain relevant. The reason for that is very clear. No matter how much times changes, human happiness, sorrows, and the complexities of life never become outdated for audiences. That is precisely why film lovers are still able to hold his films close to their hearts even today.



Legacy

Balachandra Menon is respected across generations for the contributions he made to Malayalam cinema by leaving his unique mark in many fields including direction, acting, writing, and anchoring. Even after more than 50 years, he continues to remain one of the most respected multi-talented personalities in Malayalam cinema. No matter how much generations change, his films will always have a special place in the hearts of Malayalam audiences.

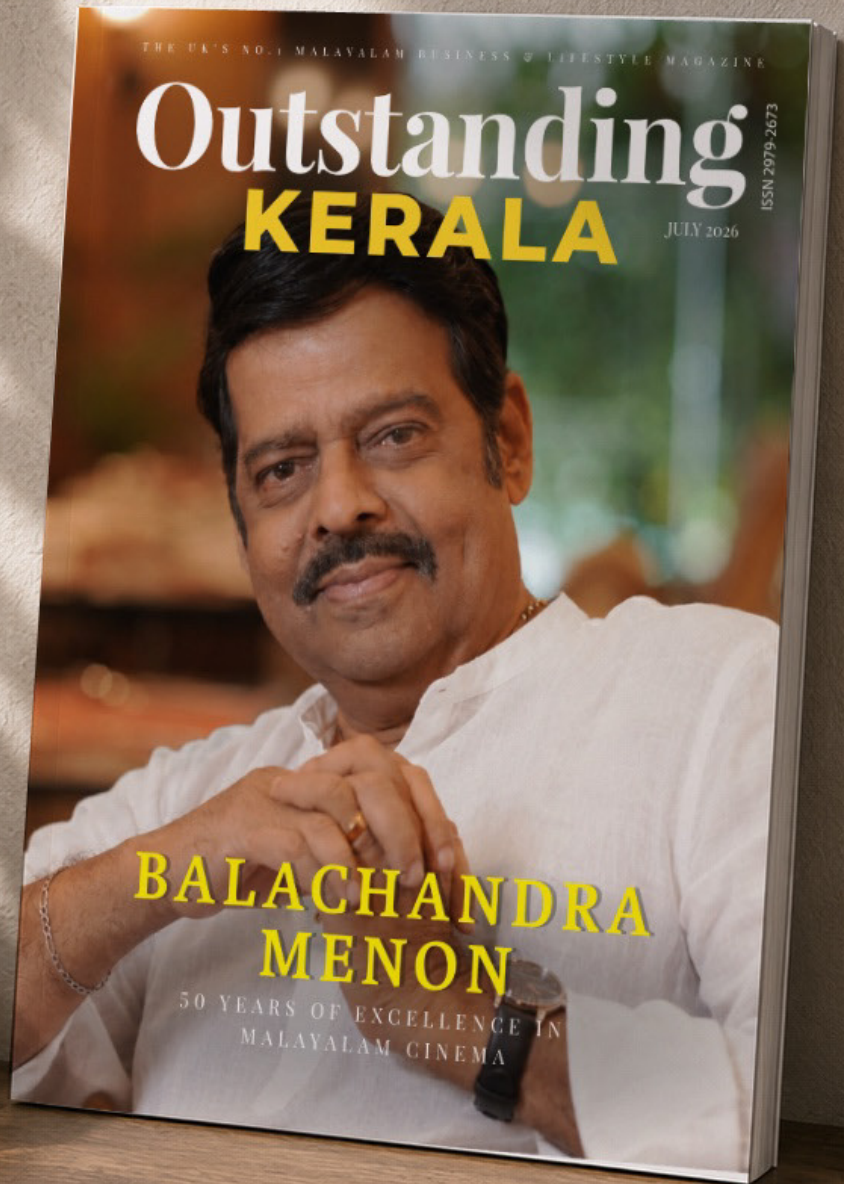
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