



Award recipients with Ramu Damodaran and Kerala Center officials. Honorees in the front row, from left: Dr Santosh Mathew, Gracy Varghese, Dr K M Abraham, Dr Mani Menon, Professor Murali Nair and Raju Mylapra

Kerala Center honors six

A CORRESPONDENT

At its annual banquet, the Elmont, New York-based Kerala Center honored six people for their achievements or service to society.

Ramu Damodaran, deputy director, outreach division, department of public information, United Nations, was the chief guest. He quoted Adi Shankaracharya, who said the real test of liberation is what one does after that. 'We have multiple identities like religion, community, state, nation, and now global; however, none of these identities inhibit or lessen the other,' he said.

He listed innovation, enterprise, assimilation, caring and communication as traits Malayalis could be proud of. Sreedhar Menon, venture capitalist and the Kerala Center's founder grand patron, introduced Damodaran. Thambi Thalappillil, president, Kerala Center, delivered the welcome speech.

The keynote speaker was Dr Mani Menon, the Rajendra and Padma Vattikutti Distinguished Chair in Oncology and director of the Vattikutti Urology Institute at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit. He was one of the six honoraries, for his contributions to medicine. Speaking on robotic surgery, one of his specializations, Menon said it is like playing a video game. Among the honors he has received the Dr B C Roy Award from the president of India in 2008.

Dr K M Abraham, honored in the applied sciences category, is a research professor at the Northeastern University Center for Renewable Energy Technology, Boston, and president of E-KEM Sciences, a lithium battery consulting company. His work helped to make possible the first-ever practical rechargeable lithium battery with long cycle life, the development of gel polymer electrolytes which form the basis of lithium-ion polymer batteries, and invention of the ultra-high energy density lithi-

um-air battery, being developed worldwide for electric vehicle and other applications.

Dr Santosh Mathew, honored for journalism, is a professor, researcher and science writer. He writes science columns for *The Huffington Post* and *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*. He also writes on science and Eastern philosophy in Indian newspapers and magazines.

He is a faculty member at Regis College, Weston, Massachusetts and continues his research in collaboration with the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

Raju Mylapra, also honored for journalism, was chief editor of *Aswamedham*, one of the first Malayalam publications in the United States. He writes humor columns, and has also published books and poems.

Professor Murali D Nair, director, School of Social Work at Cleveland State University in Ohio, was honored in the social sciences category. He is also the co-director, the Center for Healing Across the Cultures, and director, India Experience Program, at the university. A Fulbright Scholar, for the past 14 years he has been offering a summer study abroad program for US university students in Kerala, known as the India Experience.

Gracy Varghese, honored for nursing, is nursing home administrator, East Haven Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, in Bronx, New York, a 200-bed facility with more than 250 employees and more than 25 physicians.

At the event, Sunny Kulathakal, international coordinator for the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, Persian Gulf region, spoke. Kerala Center founder benefactor and trustee Dr Thomas Abraham was the compere and also served as chairman of the awards committee, along with Professor M T Anthony, Dr Cecily Anto and Ramesh Menon.

Dinyar Devitre joins Pratham board

A CORRESPONDENT

Dinyar S Devitre, a former senior vice president and chief financial officer, Altria Group, Inc, one of the world's largest tobacco companies, joined the board of Pratham, which he described as a 'superb organization doing ground breaking work' in educating underprivileged children in India.

Devitre held a number of assignments with Philip Morris International. From 1998 to 2001, he was executive vice president at Citigroup, and group head of Citibank's Global Consumer Bank for Europe, Middle East and Africa. He has served as a director on corporate boards including Western Union, Altria Group, Kraft and SABMiller. His nonprofit board memberships include the Asia Society, the Lincoln Center and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

'We are delighted to welcome Dinny to our Board,' said Arvind Sanger, chairman, Pratham USA. 'With his extensive experience serving on both nonprofit and for-profit boards, Dinny will be a valuable asset to the organization.'