

## An artists' camp flowers

**T**HE ENTIRE city was paralysed, thanks to the hartal. If there was any sign of life in the city, it was at the Changampuzha Park. Where artists from around the world converged to honour Changampuzha and his land.

Nothing, not even the hartal would stop all these artists who have come all the way from nations as different as Korea, Japan and Canada from going ahead with their creative activity. Or perhaps, they failed to comprehend the intricacies of local politics.

And the organisers of the Viswa Kalasanghamom are putting up a good example at the park.

To begin with, they have restricted the entry of motor vehicles to the park. Next, they have marked out working areas for artists, leaving pathways for the public.

At first impression, it might look a bit awkward that these artists are confined to enclosures, complete with a board outside which says, 'Artists should not be disturbed'.

The public is, indeed, taking a good amount of interest in what is going on in their locality. The artists always attract, especially on unofficial holidays like a hartal day, a good crowd around them. But is that a disturbance?

"Never. In fact, I find the crowd very kind. As I am working with metal, often I might need a couple of helping hands. And someone from the crowd would volunteer even without me asking for it.

It is remarkable, this co-operation," Mr. Sung Dong-Hoon from Korea had the answer to the question.

This is precisely the impression that the crowd at Edapally has created on other artists as well.

"In our country, artists need to beg for attention. To the public and to the media. We find the situation very



In full flow.

encouraging here," says Ms. Karen Trask from Canada. "It is the same in Japan, too," adds Ms. Reiko Nireki.

Ms. Trask and her companion, Mr. Paul Litherland, have just started working on their pieces. Ms. Trask would be carving a book out of wood and place it by the side of a tree.

"Words would be hanging from the tree. And on the stone bench nearby, some lines from a poem by Changampuzha Krishna Pillai will be engraved." What more can a poet ask for, in terms of a memorial?

As for Mr. Litherland, the idea is more universal. He has made moulds of human ear and would be casting it in tin. "The idea comes from a usage in English. The tin ear. Someone having a tin ear is not able to listen to details, is missing something. My piece is about lack of ability to communicate."

As Mr. Litherland adds, lack of communication is not something that happens in Canada alone, where politics is

oriented along linguistic differences.

Another artist from Korea, Mr. Gu Bon Ju, is also on the verge of completing his work. He has already completed work on one piece of log and has made the wax model of the other one. Ms. Nireki has also almost completed her work.

There are also Indian artists like Mr. Rajasekharan Nair, Mr. Lala Rama Nand Prasad, Mr. Chinmaya Datta, Ms. Ranjitha Chakravarthy, Mr. Muthu Koya, Mr. Rajendran, Mr. V.K. Rajan, Mr. Sunil Vallarpadom whose works are in various stages.

Participation of the crowd in the festival so far has been extraordinary. One week into the festival, they have already accepted it as a something very dear to them. Something like a local festival. All coming out in unison — to share and care.

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Photo: Mahesh Harilal