

Reminiscence the events of February 2026



Greetings, PSGIM Alumni!

Your February edition of the Alumni Newsletter is here to offer a brief look at the month's community interactions, initiatives, and shared moments.



Rappor't 2026 - Unplugged:

A fund-raising event, Rappor't 2026 - Unplugged, featuring Thaikkudam Bridge, was hosted by PSG Institute of Management and PSG Management Alumni Association at PSG Convention Center on February 28, 2026. The dynamic confluence of music and culture drew over 1,200 participants from the PSG community, the Coimbatore region and beyond.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. V. Srividya, Director, PSGIM, and Mr. T. Rajkumar, Chairperson, PSGMAA, reflected on the legacy of PSG Institutions and alumni-academia synergy in societal progress.

Alumnus in News:

Mr. Stany Pothen (MBA - 1999)

Former Vice Chairman, Spices Board India, Chairman Cardamom Planters Federation, Member of Plantation Business Advisory Committee, Govt. of Kerala



State's tale of two spices: Queen rising, black gold fading

Cardamom surges on global shortages, lifting Kerala's hill economy with record prices and rising acreage; pepper slips amid disease, climate stress and land ceiling constraints

RAJESH ABRAHAM @Kochi

LAST April, Stany Pothen — one of Kerala's biggest cardamom planters — found himself deep in the hills of Guatemala, the world's largest producer of the aromatic spice. For a month, he walked plantations, spoke to growers, and studied their methods. What he saw confirmed a growing global reality: the cardamom market is tight, and Kerala is quietly stepping into a moment of advantage.

"There's a global shortage," says Pothen, who also heads the Cardamom Planters Association. The brutal summer of 2024 hurt yields in India — and Guatemala too. Yet, despite being the world's largest producer, Guatemala's cultivation practices remain largely small-scale and dependent on rainfall. "Their systems are not as advanced as ours — especially irrigation," he notes.

The result is visible in the market. With Guatemala's output yet to recover — by some estimates down by as much as 40-50% — global inventories have tightened sharply. Prices have surged to Rs 2,500-2,600 per kg, a multi-year high that is now driving renewed



Stany Pothen with a local Guatemalan farmer at a cardamom farm in Cobán area of Alta Verapaz district — Central American country's major cardamom-growing region — last April

optimism across Kerala's cardamom belt.

For growers in Idukki's three taluks — Udumbanchola, Peermede and Devikulam — the 'queen of spices' is suddenly the flavour of the season. Production this year has climbed anywhere between 30% and 70%, reversing last year's slump when output had dropped from 22,889 tonnes in 2023-24 to 18,310 tonnes in 2024-25. The higher prices have also expanded the cultivated area to

around 1.25 lakh acres, nearly doubling from earlier decades.

The boom is a reminder of the cyclical fortunes of spices. Six years ago, cardamom prices had touched an all-time high of Rs 5,000 per kg in June 2019, only to crash to Rs 900 by mid-2022. Now, with global demand firm — particularly from the Middle East and strong domestic consump-

SPICE ROUTE A look at area under cultivation and production

| | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cardamom | | | |
| Kerala | 22,165/40,345 | 22,869/40,345 | 18,310/40,345 |
| Karnataka | 833/25,135 | 867/25,135 | 902/25,135 |
| TN | 1,466/4,930 | 1,495/4,930 | 1,484/4,930 |
| Pepper | | | |
| Kerala | 27,654/73,732 | 30,798/72,669 | 21,941/72,669 |
| Karnataka | 80,805/207,811 | 86,000/222,394 | 47,891/163,667 |
| TN | 1,642/7,465 | 1,722/7,720 | 1,710/8,117 |

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tion — Kerala's growers are once again betting big.

But just as one spice rises, another continues its long slide. Pepper — once Kerala's 'black gold' — is struggling despite decent prices. The state that once dominated India's pepper output has seen production fall steadily from around 45,000 tonnes annually in the mid-2000s to roughly 22,000 tonnes in 2024-25. Karnataka has overtaken Kerala, producing nearly 47,891 tonnes last

year. Older farmers recall a different era. N J Joseph, now in his seventies, remembers harvesting 20 quintals of pepper from just five acres in his farm at Kallarkutty, Idukki, in the 1980s. The following year disease wiped out his vines. Over time, erratic weather patterns compounded the problem. Like many others, he shifted first to rubber — another crop now fac-

ing its own slow decline. The story of pepper's retreat is not just about climate and disease. Policy growers say has played a decisive role.

Unlike tea, coffee, rubber or cardamom, pepper is not classified as a plantation crop under the Kerala Land Reforms Act. That means farmers are effectively capped at around 15 acres for large-scale cultivation. "This is a major constraint," argues Pothen. In Karnataka, corporate estates integrated pepper vines into expansive coffee plantations, dramati-

cally boosting output. Kerala's regulations, he says, have kept large investors away. Former Spices Board chairman V J Kurian recalls that several schemes were launched to revive pepper, including new varieties. But structural constraints remain. Requests to declare pepper a plantation crop — thereby exempting it from land ceiling limits — have yet to translate into policy change. An IIM Kozhikode study has even suggested loosening

multi-cropping restrictions on plantations, but reform has been slow.

The contrast could not be sharper: cardamom drawing new acreage and investment, pepper losing ground despite strong export demand from the US, Russia and the EU.

And yet, Kerala's identity is inseparable from both. For centuries, traders from Rome, Arabia, Greece and China sailed to the Malabar Coast in search of these very spices. Pepper — then worth its weight in gold — made ports like Muziris legendary long before European ships appeared on the horizon. Vasco da Gama's arrival in 1498 was driven by the same lure.

Today, the ships have been replaced by global supply chains, but the stakes remain the same. Cardamom is enjoying its moment in the sun. Pepper, battered by disease, changing weather and stiff land rules, is fighting to hold its place.

In Kerala's hills, the old spice story continues — one queen ascendant, one black gold fading, both still shaping the land that once drew the world to its shores.

Read full article:

https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2026/Feb/12/keralas-tale-of-two-spices-queen-rising-black-gold-fading?fbclid=IwY2xjawQvSs5leHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcf9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEebziQAYa-0paHw4aUtKh4F6KYka8pvoTfXiOwImnWSuJqX0ATX1TOLnweD7I_aem_dqtuwoyZfY86S6Un8KgHAQ

Alumni Engagement

Admission Process:

As part of the 2026 admissions process, 4 alumni served as panellists during interviews, offering a practical perspective through their industry experience, helping to identify upcoming talent.

The following alumni participated as panelists in the admission interviews conducted on January 31:

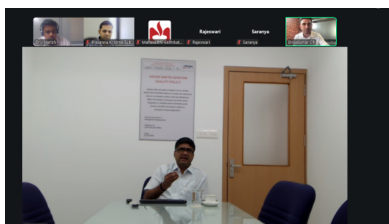
- Mr. James Graham Steward (MBA '22), Third Party Risk Auditor, EY
- Mr. Sujay Sundar (MBA '22), Senior Consultant at EY GDS

- Ms. Klementa Sharon Jemima (MBA '22), Assistant Manager - Human Resources, Suguna Foods Pvt. Ltd.
- Ms. V. Deekshitha (MBA '23), Consultant, Mobius Knowledge Services

Young Entrepreneurship Summit (YES 2026): The Entrepreneurship Cell (E-Cell) of PSGIM organised the 2nd Edition of One-Day Young Entrepreneurship Summit (YES 2026) on February 27. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students representing various colleges, who showcased their innovative business ideas and working prototypes.

The following alumni contributed to the summit as mentors and jury members:

- Ms. S. Gajoll (MBA '25), Business Analyst, Societies General
- Mr. Dhruv Mehta (PSG-UT MBA '12), Director, Rakshas Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.
- Dr. S. Vaishnavee (PSG-UT MBA '08) Proprietor, PNK SRT Bus Transports
- Mr. S. Anand Raj (PSG-UT MBA '12), MD, Visakam Properties



Monthly Meeting:

The monthly meeting of PSGMAA Office Bearers was held on February 16, 2026, to review the activities undertaken during the previous month and to discuss upcoming initiatives. The meeting also focused on planning and reviewing arrangements for the fund-raising event, Rapport-Unplugged 2026.

Alumni Visits:

In February 2026, the campus welcomed and reconnected with the following alumni representing batches from 1999 to 2024.

- **Mr. Aar Krishna** (MBA '99), Founder & CEO, Transcendent
- **Mr. Sudheer Raveendran** (MPIB '04), Ex-Consultant Client Partner, TCS
- **Mr. K. Suresh** (PSG-UT MBA '16), CEO, Ponmani Industries
- **Mr. Velmurugan V. S.** (MBA - WM&SE '24), Sales Officer, Madura Coats Pvt. Ltd.
- **Mr. M. Hariharan** (MBA - WM&SE '24), Business Analytics, Verteil Technologies
- **Mr. Vijaya Ragavan M. P.** (MBA - WM&SE '24), Data Analyst
- **Mr. Kamesh Kumar K.** (MBA '23), Social Media Strategist, The Infinity Canvas
- **Mr. Jothishwar S.** (MBA '23), Research Analyst, Beroe



In the photo: Mr. Aar Krishna (MBA '99), Founder & CEO, Transcendent

In the photo: Mr. Sudheer Raveendran (MPIB '04), Ex-Consultant Client Partner, TCS



In the photo: Faculty, Dr. R. Deepa and Mr. K. Suresh (PSG-UT MBA '16), CEO, Ponmani Industries



In the photo: (L-R) **Mr. Vijaya Ragavan M. P.** (MBA - WM&SE '24), Data Analyst; **Mr. Velmurugan V. S.** (MBA - WM&SE '24), Sales Officer, Madura Coats Pvt. Ltd.; **Mr. M. Hariharan** (MBA - WM&SE '24), Business Analytics, Verteil Technologies

In the photo: (L-R) **Mr. Jothishwar S.** (MBA '23), Research Analyst, Beroe; **Mr. Kamesh Kumar K.** (MBA '23), Social Media Strategist, The Infinity Canvas



We look forward to your active participation and involvement in the PSG community. Together, we can continue to uphold the legacy of excellence that the PSG Institute of Management represents, where you can leverage the opportunity to reconnect with old friends, forge new connections, and contribute to the growth of PSGIM's vibrant alumni community.

Thank you for being an integral part of our PSG family.

Stay connected, and stay proud!