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THE WORLD IS HIS FRAME

Photographer Leen Thobias on panoramic photography and breaking world records

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Leen Thobias is a name to be equated with panoramic photography in India. A few years before the start of the millennium, Leen, a photojournalist then, stepped into panoramic photography, an all-new, unheard medium, with the skills acquired through self-learning, on Apple's QuickTime. He is a Limca Book of Record holder, for capturing the tower of the Padmanabha Swamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram as a giga pixel panoramic image, the largest photographic image in the country, in 2012. He created his first Limca record way back in 2007 for creating the first photography in India about noted playback singer KJ Yesudas.

Hailing from Kollam in Kerala, in between his bachelor's in commerce and master's in journalism, Leen, whose love for photography started during

childhood, went on to pursue a one-year diploma course in photography offered by the Government of Kerala.

As he grew older, he became a photojournalist at a leading Malayalam daily. He also did a course in the renowned Light and Life Academy in Ooty and underwent training at the Thomson Foundation, London. He holds professional membership in the International Virtual Reality Photography Association (IVRPA) in the US. Leen joined an institute in Denmark to learn more about panoramic photography.

Taking a trip down memory lane, Leen recalls his early days in panoramic photography. "It occupies the space between still photography and videography. Those days, the problem was people did not know how to see it. So I mailed the images to people I knew," Leen recalls. He set out to make his professional panoramic im-



oramic images which enables cropping of unwanted portions and more zooming. His creations, the panoramic images of the Padmanabha Swamy Temple, Sabarimala and The Torch Hotel in Qatar were well-received.

So what gives him satisfaction? "Through the pictures, many people get

a tour-like experience to several locations. On a single day, I get 10-12,000 visitors on my site, almost 60 per cent comprise foreigners. Whereas, while being a photojournalist, the photographs I took reached a limited audience," he says.

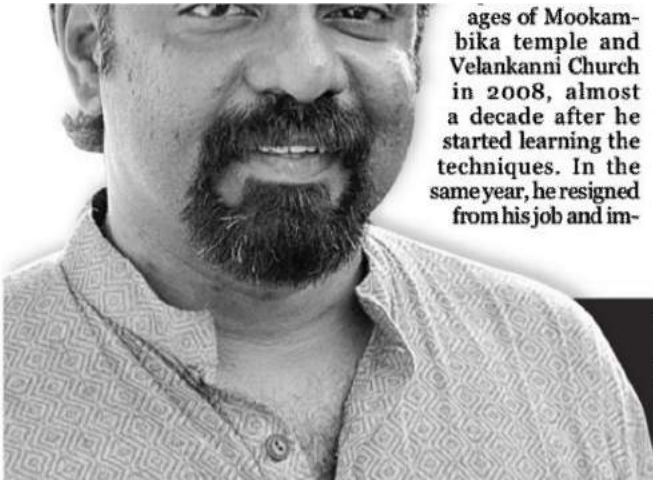
Speaking about the possibilities of panoramic photography in India, he believes this technique can be used for doing crime scene investigations and in journalism for e-papers.

Now 42, Leen finds tremendous demand in professional photography and has in the pipeline an institute for photography. "By bringing expert faculty and charging reasonable fee, the institute will provide good training. The syllabus has

mersed himself fully into the art.

A panoramic image provides a 360 degree view of a subject, which is captured by fixing the camera on a tripod and making clicks surrounding it. Divided into various small angles, a High Dynamic Range (HDR) image is finally made after carefully linking them with the help of software. The final image will make the viewer feel as if he/she is standing at a place and seeing it from top, bottom, left and right angles, of course, much more specific than human vision can offer. The viewer can see the image on the computer from any angle, rotated or zoomed. Experience it by logging onto his website, www.p4panorama.com.





ages of Mookambika temple and Velankanni Church in 2008, almost a decade after he started learning the techniques. In the same year, he resigned from his job and im-

Leen's images came as a blessing to tourism and real estate sectors when it fetched clients at international level by providing a detailed image of a place on fingertips with moving elements and background music. The arrival of social media earned him wider exposure.

Two years back, Leen began to concentrate on Gigapixel pan-

already been devised and it will start this year or next." He also has plans to publish books based on his work and countries he has visited. He is also into breaking his own record for making the largest photographic image by producing a larger image of Khajuraho.

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