

Colours of the cosmos

The hues associated with Deepavali have a lot of significance, writes **Aneeta Sundararaj**

DEERPAVALI, celebrated in the month of Kartik, is often called the festival of lights.

Deepavali evokes thoughts of homemade tosai, mutton curry, chicken varuval, muruku and all kinds of sweetmeats. Other than light and food, there are also the colours associated with Deepavali.

Astrologer G. Suresh explains: "Sunlight from the cosmos goes through molecules and undergoes a prism effect to generate the seven colours of the rainbow. We use all these colours to celebrate Deepavali and other festivals. The significance of these colours goes beyond religion. In Tamil, there is a saying, *pancha varna kilikoodu* which means a nest of birds has five different colours. We understand that these relate to five different organs in the human body.

"For example, the heart is pink, the liver dark brown, gall bladder is green, veins are blue and the omentum is yellowish. When we die, our blood becomes black. And white represents our soul. So, in total, we have seven colours."

Suresh emphasises: "Deepavali is not just the Festival Of Lights. It's a Festival of Light over Darkness."

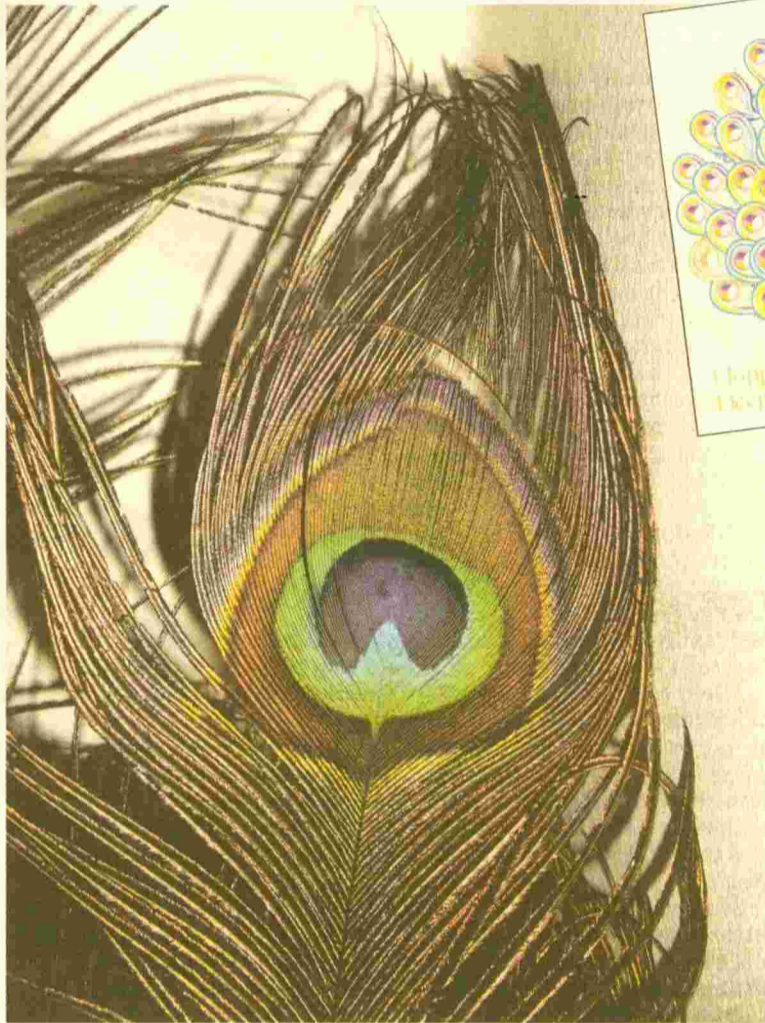
He explains that in Hindu mythology, one of the three gods who rule the world is Lord Vishnu (The Preserver). There are 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu and Deepavali celebrates the times when good triumphs over evil.

"For example," Suresh says, "Deepavali is the day when Lord Vishnu manifested in his fourth avatar, that of Narasimha, half man-half beast, and vanquished the demon king, Hiranyakshana."

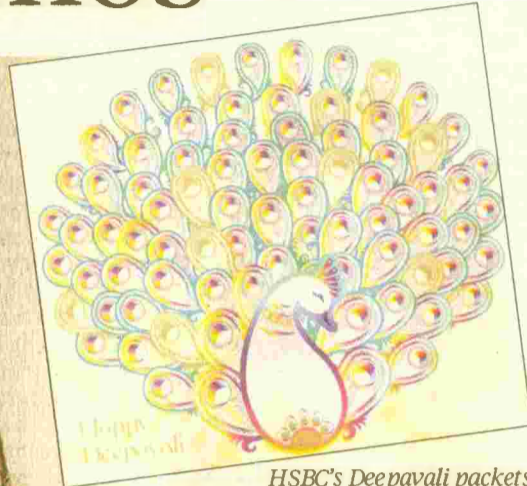
It is also believed that Deepavali celebrates the time when Lord Krishna (Lord Vishnu's eighth incarnation) killed the evil King Narkasura.

That Lord Krishna is always depicted in Indian art with peacock feathers in his headgear. It reminds Suresh of another aspect of the interplay between light and dark. He says: "Peacocks always watch the sky. When the sun is behind clouds, they become anxious and cry. When the sunlight peeps through the clouds, peacocks spread their wings and dance. This symbolises the triumph of light over darkness."

The peacock is the inspiration behind the design of this year's



The peacock's feathers are often depicted in Indian art.



HSBC's Deepavali packets combined both modern and traditional Indian elements.

colours. We also played with the gold element as it has a special significance and is a symbol of wealth. In Hindu mythology, some of the gods and goddesses are described as golden-hued."

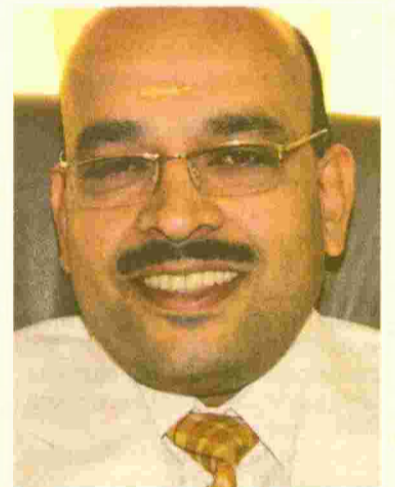
Equally aware of what's trendy today, C.W. Goh, managing director of ICI Paints Malaysia, announced that a variation of purple named Inspired Violet is AkzoNobel's Colour Of The Year for 2013 (Akzo Nobel completed the acquisition of ICI in 2008).

"Purple combines the stability of blue and the energy of red," says Goh. "It symbolises power, nobility, luxury and ambition, conveying ideas of wealth and extravagance. Historically, the colour is associated with royalty. Inspired Violet is a reflection of the way things interconnect to create networks, dialogues and innovations. Like the dreamy ocean landscapes hidden from everyone but deep sea divers, the colour give us a sense of tranquillity and stability which is very restful."

Another colour that comes to



Turquoise is Suleka's theme colour this Deepavali.



Suresh explains the significance of colours.

mind when one thinks of the ocean is, of course, turquoise. "Turquoise is a unique colour which can calm and invigorate at the same time. It also symbolises youth, strength, confidence and health," says Goh.

Young and dynamic Suleka Supiah, PR consultant with Edelman, also picked turquoise for this year's Deepavali celebrations. She says: "It is bright and I believe it depicts energy, freedom and confidence."

Almost echoing Suresh, Suleka, 27, adds: "Good doesn't have just one colour. It has many colours. In fact, my mother says that yellow is a colour that many Hindus believe is auspicious."

Goh, however advises caution with yellow as in some Western countries, yellow stands for cowardice and weakness. Keeping this in mind, it may, perhaps, be wiser to choose the deeper saffron.

Goh says: "Saffron has a rich, golden appearance. It's a spicy hue with a sense of luxury and elegance."

What emerges finally is the realisation that colours like turquoise and purple have been picked for the Deepavali festival not because they are trendy or popular but because of an understanding and acceptance that they represent facets of a complex religion steeped in mythology — Hinduism.

Deepavali packets from HSBC Bank Malaysia.

Its head of marketing, Abdul Sani Abdul Murad, says: "We decided to move away from the traditional packet designs while maintaining elements of the Indian culture. In Indian culture, the peacock sym-

bolises grace, glory, beauty and love. The flap of the packet is curved to maintain the design of the peacock's tail feathers, its most beautiful and unique element."

The colours the bank has picked complement each other. "Purple and turquoise are the current popular



Goh says purple is a colour of power, nobility, luxury and ambition.

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Your Colour Inspiration

Now that you've zoomed in on the mood of your space, it's time to coordinate colour for your walls and furniture.

First, choose your primary colour. **Be brave!** Consider something vibrant. Next, think about the effect you want to achieve with your secondary colour.

MONOCHROMATIC: Use lighter and darker shades of the same colour to achieve a subtle, tranquil look.

ANALOGOUS: Use colours next to your selected colour on the colour wheel to achieve a harmonious look of dynamic but complementary shades.

COMPLEMENTARY: Use colours that lie opposite each other with the greatest contrasts to create a vivid, tonal dash for an energetic and uplifting mood.

For more colour ideas, please visit www.ici.dulux.com.my

Need Help? Ask Dulux for Professional Colour Consultation Advice

3 EASY STEPS:

- Step 1:** Snap a photo of the area you wish to paint.
- Step 2:** Email us the photo together with your name, contact and address to customercare.my@akzonobel.com.
- Step 3:** You will receive a colour scheme proposal in a minimum of 6 working days.