

## A Visit to AIR, Kochi

-Jose Jacob, VU2JOS

Kochi was a princely state before the independence of India in 1947 and had its own coins and stamps etc. It was earlier known as Cochin in English and is the commercial capital of Kerala State, South India. It is located in central part of the state in Ernakulam District and is called "Queen of the Arabian Sea". This is the first district in India to have 100% literacy. It has a Harbor, Naval Base and an International Airport. It is also famous for its Chinese Fishing nets, Kathakali Dance, Ayurvedic medicine, spices and industries. There is a Jews Street and Synagogue here. Vasco da Gama, the first European to land in India in 1458 is cremated at St. Francis Church, Fort Cochin.



Compared to other places, All India Radio station came late to Kochi only in 1989. It is the Local Radio Station of my native place. I have visited the station a couple of times in the past but decided to visit them by prior arrangement again to see the latest developments, during my recent trip.



*Chinese fishing net*

It takes about one and half hour from my home by changing 3 buses. The studios & offices are located at NGO quarters Junction, Thrikkakara in a two story building about 13 kms from the city. The studios are located in the ground floor. While I visited the station, a strike was going on by some of the staff but I could meet the Station Engineer and other officials who were doing all the odd jobs themselves. The Program Executive had contacted me earlier and requested me for an interview in English on Amateur Radio for their program for youth "Yuv Vani" which I happily obliged. She recorded it which was broadcast one week later on a Sunday at 8.30 pm for 23 minutes under the title "Mystery of the Airwaves".



The station got two FM channels. Kochi A operates on 102.3 MHz while B is on 107.5 MHz. On the A channel programs are mostly in the local language Malayalam along with some English programs and Hindi songs. I monitored many live phone in Film music request programs and those requested by email. The B channel which earlier was exclusively Vividh Bharati service is now a mixture of Vividh Bharati relayed from Mumbai and FM Gold relayed from Delhi. It was very odd to note that there is no station identification as Kochi given on the B channel. The channel signs on and signs off abruptly! The transmission in fact starts with program review of National channel and then suddenly changes over to Vividh Bharati! When I enquired about it, I was told that it was due to "staff shortage". A couple of years back the Vividh Bharati channel was changed to FM Rainbow channel but due to staff problems it was reverted back.

The transmitter site is co sited with Doordarshan TV station located about 2 kms away at Kakkanad. The transmitter details are as follows:

Kochi A	2x3 kW	BEL	HVB 164/A	started on	1 Oct 1989
Kochi B	2x5 kW	BEL	HVB 165/A	started on	15 Feb 1996

During my visit only one each of these transmitters was operational as the other one was faulty. So both channels were running at half power only. The Studio to Transmitter Link is via "CODEC ISDN Data" System. Construction work is going on there for installation of a 10 kW transmitter for Gyan Vani the education FM Channel of India. Its frequency is publicized as 106.0 MHz. Another 10 kW Transmitter is also to be installed here to replace the 2x3 kW A channel transmitters. Both the transmitters use a single antenna on the TV tower using a diplexer.







The schedule of the station is as follows:

**Kochi A 102.3 MHz**

Transmission I: 5.50 am to 10.00 am

Transmission II: 12.00 pm to 11.00 pm

**Kochi B 107.5 MHz (5.50 am to 11.00 pm)**

5.50 am to 9.00 am Vividh Bharati

9.00 am to 12.00 pm FM Rainbow

12.00 pm to 3.00 pm Vividh Bharati

3.00 pm to 9.00 pm FM Rainbow

9.00 pm to 11.00 pm Vividh Bharati

The station has issued several QSL verifications to me in the past. One can be viewed at :

[http://www.qsl.net/vu2jos/qsls/kochi\\_cochin.jpg](http://www.qsl.net/vu2jos/qsls/kochi_cochin.jpg)

**The address of the station is:**

All India Radio, B.M.C.Post, Kochi 682021, Kerala.

Telephone No.: 0484-2429113

Although many private FM stations have come up in every where, Kochi is yet to have one. Originally it was proposed to install the private FM transmitters along with the AIR transmitters but due to some dispute it did not materialize. The private FM stations are now expected to start from some temporary locations elsewhere shortly.

I visited the Doordarshan TV station during my previous visit and it has the following channels:

Channel 10 10 kW (DD News)

Channel 12 10 kW (DD1 & DD4)



During this trip I also visited the Regional office of Vatican Radio at Kochi located on the way to AIR & Doordarshan. Its offices are in Pastoral Orientation Centre (POC), at Palarivattom adjoining the Secretariat of the Kerala Catholic Bishops Council. The 3 daily broadcasts in Malayalam of 20 minutes each of Vatican Radio is coordinated from here. A monthly magazine titled "Vatican Tharangam" (Vatican Waves) is published in Malayalam from here for the last 16 years and local listeners correspond to this office. I met the new Director there, Fr. Joseph Nicholas and a few other staff who were busy preparing the posting of next month's magazine which I got a copy. I also got their latest schedules and calendar published from Vatican. The Director also presented me with a Radio Vatican Time Piece. It seems that hardly any listeners visit them. Their address is: Regional Office, Vatican Radio, POC, Box 2251, Palarivattom, Kochi 682025, Kerala. Telefax: 0484-2806227. Email: vrkochi@gmail.com



*Extreme right Fr. Joseph Nicholas, Director.*

During this trip one day I also visited the very active Dxr Mr.T.R.Rajeesh about 50 kms away from my native place in the neighboring District of Thrissur who has a very interesting collection of QSLs.



*Famous BC Dxr Mr.T.R.Rajeesh in front of his house*

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