

Remembering Ameer Janmohamed's Regal Cinema, Jeevraj Air Services, Fatehali Dhala

2 Replies



Coastweek– Remembering The Regal Cinema: The troop ship I had boarded in Alexandria sailed into Kilindini Harbour and dropped anchor in the deep channel.

The year was 1949 and I had arrived from Palestine after a stint in the army for two years.

Excerpt: When my term of service ended, I joined a local aviation firm in Mombasa which was known as **Jeevraj Air Services**, which flew passengers in light aircrafts to Zanzibar, Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga.

I then flew the Cessna 170 which only carried four passengers.

Jeevraj was an Ismaili and a pioneer in Mombasa's aviation history. Unfortunately, the demand for this mode of travel was then not fully appreciated and eventually the firm was closed.

While in Mombasa my evenings were spent at the Regal Cinema as I then enjoyed watching movies.

The Regal Cinema was the best theatre in Mombasa in those days, filming such classics as "Gone with the Wind", "Casablanca", "Shane", "Fountainhead" and "Blood and Sand" among a long list of some very fine movies.

The Regal Cinema was a historical landmark, but like so many cinema houses it was overtaken by time and global technological advancement.

In those days, its foyer was flanked by the Goan pharmacist, Edward St. Rose, Husseni Stationery Mart and next to it was the "Mayfair" another quality Indian tailoring shop in that building then housing Whiteways and Laidlow, but now the Standard Bank.

Across Salim Road there were two excellent grocery shops.

One was Belliram Parimall and further up you had **Fatehali Dhala**.

Ameer Janmohamed – one of the Regal Cinema's many owners – left Mombasa in 1972 to settle in London.

The Regal Cinema was gutted by fire in 1984 and what remained of it was just an empty shell comprising nothing but charred walls from within.

Ameer wrote a memoir of those days and his life in "A Regal Romance."

The many historical buildings which made Mombasa a unique place and a real melting pot of so many cultures and civilisations are rapidly disappearing.

Cahil Marduff, Istanbul, Turkey.