'Saving' the million-dollar IT dreams

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 30: Good things and long associations, quite often, happen unexpectedly. For confirmation, just ask Kurian Thomas and Jayakrishnan K, whose Xtend Technology bagged the best products award at the recently concluded IT Kerala-2000. They are now masters at developing software and hardware products, but still remember clearly how it all started.

Thomas, then a BTech student in Maharashtara, landed in Kochi, his hometown, for a brief holiday in the early Nineties. A day before he returned, he visited his friend Sunil Warrier, a software professional. He fed a program into Warrier's PC and challenged him to delete his name (Thomas Kurian) from the program. After an abortive attempt which lasted for hours, sunil admitted defeat.

A little later, he remembered his friend Jayakrishnan K. Soon Jayakrishnan, who had given up his degree course in Zoology to embrace software, was browsing through the program. A few minutes later, the name had been deleted.

Kurian was more than impressed. Thus began a fruitful association which has now culminated in an award. "That day we talked about our dreams in the IT field till into the night. After a few years, precisely in 1997, we set up our shop in Kochi - Xtend Technology (P) Ltd - with just one computer," Jayakrishnan told NIE.

In the initial years, the two concentrated on consumer software products. But, later, they began developing their own software and hardware products based on Internet and telecommunication technologies. " We wanted to make sure that our products made life easier for the common man," said Kurian.

Soon, the XFCT (Xtend Fixed Cell Terminal), XSMS (Xtend Short Messaging Server) and XIVR (Xtend Interactive Voice Response System) were out in the market. And, finding takers too.

XFCT is a small unit which consists of a cell phone and other unit. The call received by the cell will be transmitted to the other unit, which, in turn, will transmit it to the EPABX or other phone on the premises. The advantage is that a telephone facility can be made available even in a remote place where there are no land telephones. Since the incoming and outgoing calls can be barred the phone will not be misused.

XSMS automatically sends messages to mobile phones and receives messages from the cell phone. If installed in a bank, a customer can automatically get his latest account position. XIVR on the other hand, is a software which finds use at a railway station or gas agency. At the railway station, a passenger can get the train timings and other details without help at the other end. At gas agency too, booking a cylinder is made much easier.

"We were lucky to get such an enthusiastic response at IT Kerala-2000. A lot of people evinced interest in our products. We plan to develop more innovative products in the days to come. This award has come as a great boost." The duo said.