

Royal meal to tickle tastebuds

4/8/10
Olympia Shilpa Gerald

TIRUCHI: Step into the Swarnam Hall and find yourself transported to the opulence of a bygone era. A royal welcome is accorded by attendants dressed like courtiers, while the sound of a muted *nadaswaram* fills your ears. Majestic throne like chairs are set at tables draped with red velvet, loaded with delectable fare from the kingdoms of yore. The Durbar Bojana Vizha organised by Hotel Ramyas celebrates the finest of royal cuisine from across India.

Guests are greeted with a complimentary drink, the Soma Panam, touted to be an appetizer. With 50 dishes to choose from, the spread has lined up starters, soups, curries, rice dishes, breads, ice-creams and sweets, wittily named after kings and queens.

"The recipes have been collected from books in Thanjavur Tamil University and



FIT FOR A KING: Durbar Bojana Vizha Food Fest at Swarnam Hall organised by Hotel Ramya's in Tiruchi. - PHOTO: R. M. RAJARATHINAM

Saraswati Mahal," says Executive Chef K. Dorairaj, the brain behind the banquet.

For a taste of what the Mughals favoured, dig into the Babar Malai Chicken with a hint of herbs or the tawa style Akbar's Court Chicken or the Humayun Fried Chicken with Szechwan sauce, adding a Chinese quirk.

If sea-food is your calling, the Ghazni Mohamed Prawns

Bhurji could be the ideal choice, though the King Serfoji Prawn Curry might be more tempting. For die-hard fish lovers, the variety replete with the Manu Neethi Cholan Spiced Fish; the Harsha Bengali Fish Curry and the King Ashoka Thabari Machi adds spice to the repast.

Vegetarians need not despair, for though the choice is limited, dishes like the Rajen-

dra Cholan Vegetarian Thali; the King Pandiyar Kaikari Pirattal; Karikala Cholan Cheppan Chops and Jhansi Rani Aloo Tikki promise to delight the palate.

Besides an assortment of biryanis and pulaos, a range of soft breads including the Kaabuli Naan, Makkai-keroti and the mixed fruits romali with honey and dates are available. And if you've never tasted Mutton pickle or Kosu Mali, this is your chance!

To wash down the feast is a selection of sweets and fruits. But if you prefer to wind up with an ice-cream, choose from the historic couples: Mumtaz Shahjahan, Laila Majnu or Saleem Anarkali. A special paan counter also supplies fifteen varieties of paan. The ambience is invigorating; the food appetizing but a royal feast comes at a hefty price. Coinciding with the Aadi festival, the food fest is on till August 8 with lunch between 12 to 3:30 and dinner from 7 to 11:30 p.m.