

# Telling the untold story of Wadiyars

**W**ith his looks, sensibilities and interests, he could very well be every girl's dream man. But, hang on. His priorities are different altogether. This young, charming, 28-year-old soft-spoken banker with an Engineering degree from BITS PILANI has set his eyes on the world of literature. At 28, he has already released a good 800 pages (well, almost!) book on Wodeyars of Mysore. But, why Wodeyars? Doesn't Chetan Bhagat's "One night at call centre" climbing the popularity charts lure him away from history?

"No," says Vikram Sampath rather assertively. This author of "Splendors of Royal Mysore: The untold story of the Wodeyars" published by Rupa & Co says he was dead sure about his first book which took roots in his mind very early.

"I don't rule out fiction. But then, I wanted to start with Wodeyars since I was disturbed by the humiliating portrayal of Wodeyars of Mysore in the Sword of Tipu Sultan, made by San-



jan Khan. I was 12 then, and the book started forming in my head," he says.

It took couple of close interviews with Wodeyars, many interviews with people associated with them, numerous visits to Mysore, Srirangapatna and Talakad, scanning through huge amounts of information in various libraries (including the library in Palace) and get a symmetry between all of

them to keep the reader on toes through the pages. "With all this, we had to fix the price of the book trifle high (Rs 1500). It is a collector's item," he says. "I know it is difficult to keep the reader engaged with interesting details all along. These kind of books need a different mindset altogether. I am aware of my audience," says Vikram, who is also part of Citibank's Global Decision

Management team in Bangalore. His father Sampath, who is also a banker, supported his son's tryst with the world of literature along with his wife Nagamani. "They must have spent few lakhs on this attempt of mine which is really high according to what a middle class family could afford in Bangalore 10 - 15 years ago," says Vikram with a hint of gratitude in his

eyes. Vikram is also trained in Carnatic vocal under Jayanth Kumaresh and Bombay Jayashree. What next? The Mathematician-cum-writer fiddles with his Emerald finger ring (birthstone, he admits sheepishly) and says he is busy promoting his book in India and overseas right now. "May be fiction...next!" he smiles.