

Chronicle of Mysore's rulers

On Saturday, the city played host to Vikram Sampath who was here to launch and read from his maiden book, 'Splendours of Royal Mysore: The Untold Story of the Wodeyars'. In it, the Bangalorean writer seeks to give a definitive account of the Wodeyars, the Mysore royal family, through six long centuries of their regime, replete with wars, palace intrigues, romance, valour and deceit. Banking professional cum freelance journalist, Vikram Sampath was inspired by misrepresentations of Mysore's rulers in a tele-serial to delve deeper into the history of Mysore.

With people rather than cold facts as a backdrop, 'Splendours of Mysore' portrays in detail the characters who dictated the fortunes of the most powerful dynasties of the Deccan after the fall of the mighty Vijayanagara Empire. Tracing the history of the Wodeyars is to trace the history of Mysore, that saw not only palace intrigue, transfer of power from the Wodeyars to Hyder Ali-Tipu Sultan and the Wodeyars again, but also had the unique distinction of registering high industrial and socio-economic growth by the time of India's Independence, thus forming the foundation for the current boom in Bangalore.

Vikram's passion for classical vocal music, history, art and culture also finds a special mention in the section on the growth of Mysore as the cultural capital of southern India, alongside Tanjore, with royal patronage in the areas of classical music, dance, folk tradition, painting and literature.

Despite its eulogy of Mysore and its rulers, Vikram Sampath does not fight shy of touching upon any controversial situation. The book is a painstaking labour of love and should appeal to anyone with an interest in Karnataka, history or both.

