Kerala celebrates first transsexual wedding

Surya and Ishaan overcome obstacles, become the first such couple to tie the knot in the State

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

They had many battles to overcome before they could come together. When they finally did on Thursday, they created history by becoming the first transsexual couple in Kerala, and perhaps in the country, to tie the knot.

Laughter and songs filled the air as Surya, decked up in traditional bridal wear, was escorted to the stage by her friends. Ishaan, who sported a dapper brown suit, tied the thali around Ms. Surya’s neck amid the playing of traditional music.

The gathering broke into applause as they exchanged garlands. With the couple eschewing traditional rites for the occasion, their marriage was solemnised and registered under the Special Marriage Act.

Hundreds of well-wishers, including members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) community, thronged the venue at the Mannam Memorial National Club in Thiruvananthapuram.

Among those in attendance were Kerala Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran, Thiruvananthapuram Mayor V.K. Prasanth, Haritha Keralam Mission executive vice-chairperson T.N. Seema, and dubbing artist and actor Bhagyalakshmi.

Ms. Surya, 31, has worn many hats in her life, including those of a television anchor, activist, and more recently, a member of the State Transgender Justice Board.

Mr. Ishaan, 33, is a member of the District Transgender Justice Board. They had met at an event six years ago and have been together ever since.

Mr. Ishaan underwent the procedure two years ago to assert his identity as a trans man.

‘Living our dreams’

“We have shown society that we too can live out our dreams,” an elated Ms. Surya said. Mr. Ishaan, who comes from a conservative Muslim family, was hopeful that they would become a model couple for the community.

For the couple, the celebrations have only just begun. They were felicitated by Oasis, a self-help group for transgenders, on Thursday evening. The government is expected to host a formal reception for them on May 30.