Malayala Manorama

Malayala Manorama depends on its SAP ERP applications to meet tight publishing deadlines—and with its existing database approaching end-of-support, the company targeted a future-ready data platform based on SAP HANA in-memory technology. To deliver optimal performance for this new database platform, Malayala Manorama deployed a robust server solution based on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications.

Overview
Based in the state of Kerala, India, Malayala Manorama is a morning newspaper and online news site in the Malayalam language. With a readership of more than 20 million people, it is the sixth most widely circulated newspaper in India. Malayala Manorama keeps readers up-to-date on a wide range of topics including current affairs, sports, entertainment, lifestyle, travel and more. First established in 1888 as a weekly newspaper, Malayala Manorama is published by Malayala Manorama Company Limited.

Challenge
For news organisations, tight deadlines are business-as-usual. Within short timeframes, they must meet rising expectation from readers, who want up-to-the-minute breaking news online and well-crafted articles accompanied by vibrant photography in print each day. In the increasingly crowded news sector, organisations must stand out from the crowd by delivering unique content fast.

With an increasingly discerning readership and in the face of growing competition, Malayala Manorama Company Limited must stay on its toes to protect and extend its audience share. Behind the scenes, the organisation keeps complex processes and numerous teams working smoothly to ensure that it tempts readers back time and time again.

At the heart of Malayala Manorama’s operations is a suite of SAP business solutions, which it relies on to keep its operations running with maximum efficiency.

V V Jacob, General Manager, Systems at Malayala Manorama Company Limited, says: “Our readers look to us to keep them in the loop on everything happening in India and across the world. For more than a decade, we have relied on SAP to run our business.”

“As SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications is so highly optimised, we were able to configure the new SAP environment in a fraction of the expected time.”

V V JACOB
General Manager, Systems
Malayala Manorama Company Limited

Malayala Manorama at a Glance:
Established in 1888, Malayala Manorama Company Limited publishes one of India’s most widely circulated morning newspapers.

Industry and Location
Media & Entertainment, Kottayam, India

Product and Services
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications

Results
• Enables a 98 percent increase in end-user SAP application performance
• Offers high performance for compute-intensive SAP HANA workloads
• Avoids lock-in to proprietary hardware, helping to control costs

Success Story
SAP Solutions
SAP solutions underpin almost every aspect of operations at Malayala Manorama. This includes, but is not limited to: booking of advertising space in its papers, management of its financials, and distribution of 2.5 million copies per day to reach millions of readers. “At every step, our SAP applications help us to coordinate our work in an integrated, efficient way,” adds V V Jacob.

**CHOOSING A NEW PATH**

In the past, Malayala Manorama used SAP ERP with industry solutions for media, running on x86 servers. The company planned to migrate to the future-ready SAP HANA data platform, and recognised the chance to multiply the benefits by undertaking a transformation of its IT environment on a wider scale.

“We saw an opportunity to refresh our IT infrastructure—from the physical servers in our data centre all the way through the software stack,” says V V Jacob. “To maximise the value of our investment in SAP HANA, we knew that we would need high-performance compute resources and a robust server platform. We set out to find a new solution by investigating the options available in the market.”

As a business that operates round-the-clock, achieving a smooth implementation was a key objective for Malayala Manorama. Specifically, the organisation targeted a migration to the new platform with minimal disruption to operations.

“We have around 550 concurrent users who depend on the SAP solutions being available whenever they need them to do their jobs,” comments V V Jacob. “We publish a new paper every day and update our website on a continual basis, so unplanned downtime is simply not an option. Our aim was to find the right technology and partner to help us refresh our IT infrastructure while maintaining exceptional levels of service continuity.”

**Solution**

To support its new SAP HANA data platform, Malayala Manorama selected Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) servers with SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications.

“We felt that SUSE Linux Enterprise was a safe choice of platform,” says V V Jacob. “The close technical collaboration between SUSE and SAP developers assured us that the solution would meet our needs for SAP HANA not just now, but in the long term too.”

As well as delivering the levels of performance and scalability Malayala Manorama was targeting, the organisation also rated the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications as a highly cost-effective solution. “In every IT project, cost is a central parameter,” adds V V Jacob. “We felt that the price-performance ratio offered by SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications was extremely favourable, giving us confidence that we had made the right choice.”

**SUCCEEDING IN A SEAMLESS MIGRATION**

Working together with teams from SUSE and HPE, Malayala Manorama deployed SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications on its new HPE platform, virtualized with VMware vSphere.

SUSE teamed up with HPE to accurately size the solution for Malayala Manorama. By drawing on expertise from SUSE and HPE to plan the migration in detail and execute it carefully, the organisation kept impact on its operations to a minimum.

“We completed our migration to SAP HANA with no unplanned downtime for our business users, which was one of the key goals for the project,” comments V V Jacob. “As far as our users were concerned, they could carry on focusing on bringing the latest news to readers, while we updated technology behind the scenes.”

The Malayala Manorama IT team already had experience with Linux in other areas of the organisation’s estate, helping them
to adapt to the technology very quickly. “There was practically no learning curve with SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications for our employees, which proved an unexpected benefit of the project.”

Malayala Manorama took advantage of built-in features to rapidly customise the platform to its specific requirements, enabling it to get up to speed fast and start using the solution to its full potential.

“SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications is so highly optimised, we were able to configure the new SAP environment in a fraction of the expected time,” remarks V V Jacob. “The SUSE solution is designed to automate a lot of tasks. As a result, we could get back to concentrating on our core focus—enabling the business to greater heights—sooner.”

**EXPLORING NEW FUNCTIONALITY**

At present, Malayala Manorama replicates data at the storage level to enable high availability. With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications, the organisation has the option of utilising the cost-optimised high availability (HA) feature to slash recovery times.

The SAP HANA System Replication function enables users to replicate data to a secondary SAP HANA system. By constantly pre-loading the replicated data into memory, the solution minimises recovery time objective (RTO). SUSE offers a clustering solution that facilitates seamless failover between the two SAP HANA instances.

With cost-optimised HA, users can leverage the secondary SAP HANA instance for additional workloads (such as quality assurance or development). This enables them to use business-critical SAP systems and SAP HANA databases without interruption and without the overhead of compute, storage and networking resources that are only used occasionally for failover. “It is always an advantage to have options,” comments V V Jacob. “We may look at SAP HANA System Replication and cost-optimised HA and what it could do for our environment in the future.”

**Results**

Today, more than 550 concurrent business users across Malayala Manorama are harnessing the SAP HANA data platform to drive their work. With an IT infrastructure it can depend on, the organisation can reliably bring timely information to readers in Kerala and further afield, both in print and online, helping to protect its competitive position.

“We simply can’t afford downtime in our SAP environment, comments V V Jacob. “With SAP HANA on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications, we can continue to deliver high levels of availability to the business. Our employees can build on this to bring content to readers more quickly and effectively, allowing our audience to trust that we will always be the place to go for the latest news.”

In the unlikely event that Malayala Manorama encounters issues with its SUSE solutions, it can call on support from SUSE to enable a fast resolution. “One of the things that impresses us most is the quality of SUSE support, particularly for our VMware solutions,” explains V V Jacob. “It gives us great peace of mind to know that we have high-quality support resources on hand whenever we need them.”

**KEEPING A FINGER ON THE PULSE**

With SAP HANA, Malayala Manorama is driving up performance for its SAP users. The organisation is seeing compute-intensive tasks completed faster, giving employees the tools that they need for greater productivity.

“Reports that used to take three days to run now complete in just 45 minutes, which is a huge improvement that translates into a significant positive impact on the business,” says V V Jacob. “The consistently high performance of SAP HANA on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications helps our employees work more efficiently and our processes run more smoothly.”
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For the first time Malayala Manorama is able to offer senior decision-makers real-time dashboard reports. “By putting insight into operations at managers’ fingertips, we are equipping them with information that they can use to guide the business to success,” adds V V Jacob.

Based on its positive experiences with SAP HANA, Malayala Manorama is already planning for the future. Playing a key role in its IT strategy is SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, which offers a long-term roadmap that aligns with the organisation’s goals.

“As soon as our SAP industry solutions for media are supported on SAP S/4HANA, we aim to make the move,” explains V V Jacob. “SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications is so simple to manage, it makes our lives easier. This project has illustrated that in SAP and SUSE we’ve found a partnership that will support our business for years to come.”

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