RIT-KaChaTaThaPa-Sayahna

Font Competition

2026



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Rachana Institute of Typography
(Guidelines)

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The electronic versions were generated from sources marked up in LaTeX in a computer running GNU/LINUX operating system. PDF was typeset using XeLaTeX from TeXLive 2025 and the cloud framework, Ithal (ഇതൾ). The base font used was traditional script of RIT Rachana, contributed by KH Hussain, et al. and maintained by Rachana Institute of Typography. The font used for Latin script was Linux Libertine developed by Philipp H. Poll.

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Cover: Malayalam Calligraphy 5448, a calligraphic creation by Narayana Bhattathiri. The image is provided by the author and is gratefully acknowledged.

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RIT—KACHATATHAPA—SAYAHNA

Font Competition 2026

As in the last year, an Open Font Design Competition in traditional script of Malayalam has been launched to promote independent font creation and to introduce font technologies to the young enthusiasts. Participation is open to all, that includes the students from various professional and arts/science educational institutions nationwide, as well as both professional and aspiring amateur Malayalam font designers.

This collaborative effort involving the Rachana Institute of Typography (RIT), KaChaTaThaPa Foundation, and Sayahna Foundation aims to foster the creation and dissemination of fonts under open licenses (e.g., SIL Open Font License (OFL)) that allows unrestricted use of the fonts by the community. Additionally, it seeks to introduce the typographical and aesthetic elements of Malayalam script to the younger generation through typeface design.

Participants are required to submit their entries along with a selection of fifteen glyphs, specified below, for initial screening. Only those who pass this preliminary stage will advance to the competition.

- List of characters to be uploaded for screening the eligibility to participate:
  ഊ ജ സ ഭ യ മ ങ്ങ വ്യ കൃ ണ ഗ്ഗ ദ്ധൂ സ്സ ങ്ക ഞ്ജ.
- Last date for submission for screening:
  June 15, 2025.

Winners of the first round will receive technical support for font creation from the Rachana Institute of Typography, provided through a two-day workshop in Trivandrum.

All the fonts eligible for public use will be published under the terms of the Open Font License by the Rachana Institute of Typography.

Guidelines

1. It is not essential to have the knowledge of font engineering technology. The ability or skill to design characters is sufficient.
2. The characters shall be designed using any of the popular vector graphic software like Inkscape or Illustrator or classical font creation languages like METAFONT/METAPOST. The character shapes shall be finally exported to SVG format, which is supported by all the vector drawing applications nowadays.
3. Use the following templates for reference on x-height, cap-height, ascender, descender and other metrics: https://rachana.org.in/ref-glyphs-inkscape.zip. Note, the guidelines will be visible only on Inkscape.
4. Each character must be created as a separate SVG file.
5. All glyphs should have a height of 1000 (px or unit), and should be aligned at the baseline. The width may vary depending on the character.



6. Each of the file containing the character shapes must be named according to the RIT specified convention. The naming convention is available here: https://rachana.org.in/rit-glyph-naming.pdf.
7. Final submissions must be made before the deadline.
8. Interested persons shall register here: https://sayahna.net/fcomp-2026 and upload the initial characters.

Prizes

1. First prize: Rs. 3,00,000
2. Second prize: Rs. 2,00,000
3. Third prize: Rs. 1,00,000
4. Encouragement prizes of Rs. 50,000 each for three participants.

Regulations

1. Character designs must be original (modified versions of currently available fonts are not permitted, so also the use of AI tools). A declaration to this effect needs to be furnished by the participants.
2. Those willing to create body text fonts alone need to participate in this competition.
3. The entries shall have all the glyphs in the definitive set.
4. A list of glyphs in this set is available here for information: https://rachana.org.in/glist-rachana-regular.html.
5. The entries falling in the categories other than body text font — calligraphy, display, script, oranamental, decorative fonts — shall be rejected.
6. If more than one person are engaged in a design, the roles and responsibilities of each participant must be clearly defined and the share of the prize money shall be specified.
7. A jury's panel consisting of experts in font design and engineering, typography, and language technologies shall evaluate the submissions. The decision of this panel shall be final.
8. The copyrights of the fonts created shall jointly be held by the following:
   - Designers (for design)
   - Rachana Institute of Typography (for font creation technology and related processes)
9. Participants submitting the fonts must agree to release them under the terms of Open Font License. A duly filled in online consent form must be submitted to RIT by all participants.
10. Winners shall be required to make necessary changes according to the jury's instructions before their fonts are published.
11. 50% of the prize money shall be distributed once the judging committee have announced the results. The balance 50% will be released as soon as the jury's corrections/changes are incorporated and re-submitted.
12. If any of the participants are desirous of continuing the design and development of newer fonts, further instructions and technical assistance required shall be provided by RIT and the fonts shall be published under Open Font License.
13. Deadline for complete glyph set submission: **October 15, 2025**.
14. Contact Id: mailto:info@rachana.org.in.

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Rachana Institute of Typography, Jagathy, Trivandrum 695014