



ELDERS' VOICE

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News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

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The President's Message

P. I. John

In 1949 George Orwell wrote the book '1984' about a world which was 35 years into the future. The book spoke of a world governed by propaganda, surveillance, and censorship. By 1984, many of these began to assume reality, especially in the Communist countries.

In the calendar year 1984, Isaac Asimov, one of the world's most famous science fiction writers, was commissioned to write about what he thought a future after another 35 years would look like. This would be 2019.

He forecast world government. He said that the industrial waste problem would be solved by shifting industry into space. He forecast increasing reliance on computers for business and home. He had hoped that by 2019, our technologies would have helped remedy the deterioration of the environment. The other big miss, of course, is that Asimov's famous robots are not nearly as common as he may have foreseen.

As we enter 2019, it is natural to be concerned about what is in store for us in 2019.

A year back we would have forecast BJP winning the coming elections in May. This is no longer a certainty. However, Dr. Gaurav Pradhan, a specialist in 'Mood Analytics', where data is gathered from what people talk across social media platforms believes that Modi would win.

What is certain is that during the course of the year, India's economy would become the fifth largest in the world ; overtaking the UK's.

India's startups have begun penetrating world markets. Oyo, the hotel chain, is one such. Ola Cabs launched operations in Perth, and then expanded those services to customers in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Canberra. HackerEarth, a Bangalore based software company has tripled its revenue from international markets. This trend will continue in

2019.

World Data Lab estimates that on the

New Year's Day 2019, just under 60 Crores people across the world will live in extreme poverty. This excludes Syria. This is the lowest prevalence of extreme poverty ever recorded in human history—less than 8 percent.

World Data Lab anticipates that a level of extreme poverty in India today affects only 5 Crore people, which is a poverty rate of below 4 percent.

2019 could be the year in which internet-savvy Indians would upgrade to high-speed fibre networks. JioFiber is offering 100 MBps speed Internet.

So, on the whole, 2019 should be an interesting year!



Brexit Retribution

Britain's rupture with the European Union is proving to be another act of moral dereliction by the country's rulers. Partition - the British Empire's ruinous exit strategy - has come home.

Business people are outraged by the cavalier disregard for the economic consequences of new borders between Britain and Ireland. But none of this would surprise anyone who knows of the breeziness with which the Britain drew

lines through Asia and Africa and doomed the people living across them to endless suffering.

The malign incompetence of the Brexiteers was seen during Britain's exit from India in 1947. In the first week of June 1947, Mountbatten suddenly proclaimed that the transfer of power would happen on Aug. 15, 1947. In July, a British lawyer named Cyril Radcliffe was entrusted with the task of drawing new boundaries of a country he had never previously visited.

Given only around five weeks to

invent the political geography of an India flanked by an eastern and a western Pakistan, Radcliffe failed to visit many villages, communities, rivers or forests along the border he planned to demarcate. Radcliffe delivered a plan for partition that effectively sentenced millions to death or desolation while bringing him the knighthood.

Excerpt from Pankaj Mishra's column in the New York Times, Jan. 17, 2019

Editor's Musings

Dhanya Gopinath

Dear friends,

Let me begin by quoting a few lines from Tennyson's poem:-

"Ring out the Old Ring in the New

Ring out the old, ring in the new,

Happy, happy bells; The year is going, let him go,

Ring out the false, ring in the true,

Ring out a slowly dying cause,

And ancient forms of party strife, Ring in the nobler modes

Of life,

With sweeter manners, purer laws."

Although Kerala began 2019 by announcing a State Hartal that was promptly followed by a nation-wide two day hartal, the stupendous performance of our cricketers in the OZ makes us feel that there is something to cheer about.

I feel that there are some more

good things happening around us.

Manipur, our tiny state in the north-east, has become the first state in the country to hold public officials criminally accountable if they fail to prevent Hate Crimes.

This is in response to the supreme court order that has issued a directive to both the Union and State governments to protect the 'Pluralist Social Fabric' of our country from Mob Violence.

According to Harsh Mander, the author of the article, "Manipur shows the way", the most substantial contribution of the law, is that it is the first in the country, dealing with the protection and rights of vulnerable sections of the population.

Secondly, the law says that no State sanction is required to register crimes against public officials, who fail in their duties to prevent hate crimes such as lynching.

Thirdly, the law clearly lays down the duty and responsibility of the State government to make arrangements for the protection of

victims, and witnesses against any kind of intimidation or coercion.



Let us hope the Union and all other state governments in India will emulate the sterling example set by Manipur.

Harsh Mander concludes by saying that he hopes this law, if enacted by all other states in India, 'could substantially prevent hate attacks, ensure that public officials are faithful to their constitutional responsibilities and victims, and that their families and communities are assured of protection and justice.'

Hate violence targeting religious and caste minorities is certainly not what our great Constitution has guaranteed the citizens of India.

Permit me to sign off by hoping that all is not lost for our country.

December Meetings

Dhanya Gopinath

The Kottayam Senior Citizens' Forum had to cancel the first meeting scheduled for 14/12/2018, due to the Hartal that was proclaimed that day.

The second meeting of December 2018 was held on the 28th of the month at 4pm in the SEERI auditorium.

This meeting marked the Christmas day celebrations of the Kottayam Senior Citizens' Forum for the year 2018. The presence of a few guests made the evening more enjoyable.

A one-minute silence was observed to honour the memory of

two departed souls - Mr. Joy Jacob, who had served the SCF, both as a Secretary and as a Vice-president, and Mrs. Susy Gabriel, w/o member Joseph Gabriel.

Mr. P. C. Thomas had been invited to deliver the Christmas message.

Mr. Thomas bemoaned the fact that the consumerist culture that had gripped the world was creeping into holy events like Christmas also. The Chief Guest concluded the message by speaking about Christ's message on Truth.

This time the carol singing was done by a young choir group from the Kottayam cathedral.

Kottayam Baburaj and Mr. Philipose came out with their

parodies.

While Mr. Baburaj sang a song that referred to Kerala's dependence on migrant labour, Mr. Philipose sang a song penned by him on the Hartal Culture plaguing Kerala.

Membership Request

Mr. Varghese Tharakan and Mrs. Sossamma Tharakan, Kottayam have expressed their interest in joining the Senior Citizen's Forum, Kottayam. Their application has been sponsored by Mr. A. M. Mathew

This is for the information and approval of the members.

Joy Jacob (1945-2018)

Joy Jacob: Born on May 19, 1945 at Kavalangad, Kothamangalam. After completion of high school, he pursued Bachelors in Engineering at Banaras Hindu University in chemical engineering and Masters in Engineering from CUSAT in Polymer Technology. He started his professional career at Hindustan Latex where he served for 8 years. He moved to Rubber Board in 1978. One of his major achievements during his stint at Rubber Board was establishing the factory for crumb rubber production and its successful management. He retired from Rubber Board as Joint Director (Factory Management).

He was very passionate about his job and his contribution to the firm he was associated with. Daddy valued rules and regulations and always instilled in us the importance of following them. He was always unbiased in the way he

treated his fellow human beings and never discriminated based on cast, creed, religion or qualification making sure his deeds would benefit the society. Daddy wanted us as well to do the same. He was the



frontrunner for establishing the Youth Club to encourage talents of youngsters at CRC and had a very uncanny ease of getting along with all the youngsters who were even less than half his age.

Post retirement he kept himself busy being active at Thursday Club- YMCA, Senior Citizens Club, CORAK, Baker Hill Residents Association, Shekinah Apartments Residents Association up to his last days. He served as Professor in Chemical Engineering Department at Sahrdaya College, Thrissur for 6 months. He maintained his routine from his working days in his daily life after retirement as well, which I believe helped in his healthy and preppy lifestyle.

He will be remembered as the most youthful character from his days in Campus Residents Council (CRC), Rubber Board. To anyone who has spent time with him, he will be remembered as the most gentle, patient, morale boosting personality with wise words from his own life experiences.

Deepak Joy Jacob

Banking Facilities for Senior Citizens.

Pushpa Mathew

In our last issue, I had brought up the income tax concessions available to senior citizens. This time I wish to point out the facilities for senior citizens that banks are required to provide, as per the directives of the Reserve Bank of India.

The Reserve Bank of India issued a circular RBI/2017-18/89, instructing banks to assist senior citizens and differently abled persons for availing banking facilities at branches. Notwithstanding the need to push digital transactions and the use of ATMs, the RBI conveyed that it is imperative to be sensitive to the needs of senior citizens and differently abled persons. In view of the above, banks have been advised to provide a

clearly identifiable, dedicated counter, which provides priority to senior citizens.

Banks were also instructed to issue cheque books to customers, whenever a request is received, without insisting on the physical presence of the senior citizen. A minimum of 25 cheque leaves are to be provided in a year, free of charge in savings bank accounts.

If an account is KYC compliant, banks are required to automatically convert the accounts into senior citizen accounts, with all the accompanying facilities, on the basis of the date of birth recorded in the bank. As you are aware, senior citizens are eligible for a higher rate of interest than others,

Banks are also required to provide senior citizens Form 15 H once a year in April, to enable them to submit the same, where applicable, within the stipulated

time.

In view of the difficulties faced by senior citizens of more than 70 years of age, banks have been



advised to make concerted efforts to provide basic banking facilities such as pick-up of cash and instruments against receipt, delivery of cash against withdrawal form, submission of KYC documents and Life Certificate at the residence of such customers.

If your bank does not offer these services although you are above 70, you can write a complaint and seek redressal from the Reserve Bank of India.

150 years ago, the Russian chemist Dmitrii Mendeleev published a periodic table, which put the known elements into a logical order and left room for elements not yet discovered.

Margins of Viability

Prof. Roy K Philip

Adjunct Professor of Neonatology, University of Limerick and Consultant Neonatologist, University Hospital Limerick, Ireland.

A poem reflecting the compassion, conflicts, dilemmas and outcome in the management of an extremely premature 22+4-week gestation baby girl. Challenges faced by neonatologists in offering the optimal care to the extremely low birth weight (ELBW) newborn infants and their families is summarised in this poem as an emotional transaction between the clinician and the periviable baby.

I could listen to her pounding heart, so filled with love and hope

I could feel her gentle breath, so fast, as she struggled to cope

I could see her eyes held tight, as if too shy to watch the world around her

I could sense she holding my fingers, a gentleness beyond the soothing words

She had the softest skin I have ever felt, so pale, yet blushes with cry

She had the subtlest movements I have ever seen, so

delicate and detailed to try

She had the deepest thoughts I have ever witnessed, so different and heavenly to be

She had the rarest affection I have ever sought for, so fulfilling I fail to narrate.

The sparkle in her eyes, behind the wale of lids debating whether to open

The spikes and waves in her little brain, telling me something I strive to grasp

The lights and sound of machines holding her life, woke her up from a wondrous dream

The body and the mind slowly swept her away, to a destiny so hard to explain.

May be I have failed, to care enough for her?

May be I have trailed, not acting fast enough for her?

May be I have tried it all, but her soul had better plans?

May be I have touched her heart, but she indeed has touched mine for sure!

(Prof Roy Philip is the son of our member, Shri. P. K. Philipose. The poem was originally published in the *Irish Journal of Medical Science* and the final publication reference is ISSN 0021-1265)



Christmas songs being sung by a group from the CSI Cathedral Choir on 28th December 2018.

Coming Events

Dr. Jose Joseph, Principal of the Kottayam Medical College, will be our chief guest on the 8th February.

The Annual Picnic of the Senior Citizens' Forum is planned for 23rd February. Likely venues are the 'Kuruvies Nest' or the " Casa Maria Retreat Centre.



Mr. K. K. Mathew, our member gave a video presentation on 11th January, 2019 on his trip to Antarctica with his wife, Mrs. Kochurani.

WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

May your birthday and every day ahead be filled with the warmth of love, the joy of good health and blessings in abundance!

Prof. K. M. Varghese - 10 January

Dr. Radhakrishnan Nair - 10 January

Mr. P. I. Mani - 16 January

Mr. George Mathew M - 16 January

Dr. K. P. George - 21 January

Mr. M. Mathew - 26 January

Mr. Bhasi Ipe - 31 January