



ELDERS' VOICE

JUNE 2018

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

Editor: Pushpa Mathew

The President's Message

P. I. John

Social sector activism has traditionally been motivated by altruism. The recent trend is to make altruism sexier with financial rewards. There are now many programmes to motivate youth into this field through entrepreneurial initiatives. Start-up India and Stand up India are examples.

Smartfifty is a contest launched by IIM Calcutta Innovation Park in partnership with Department of Science & Technology, Government of India to identify, recognize & reward aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs and innovators across targeted social sectors. They will be facilitated through strategic networking, seed funding, and mentoring support.

The contest launched last year had received close to 15,000 applications, of which 50 teams (40 teams India and 10 from Boston and Singapore) were shortlisted. These start-ups have been working in the areas of sustainability, health care, agriculture, analytics and education. The top 50 teams will get a grant of Rs. 4 lakh each from IIM Calcutta Innovation Park

The top ten include very innovative ventures. Extracarbon is a

last-mile mobilizer of more than 40,000 rag-pickers in eight cities. Community members can use this platform to schedule their recyclable waste pick-up service and also buy & sell second hand items. Takachar is a waste-to-charcoal dissemination network that has a technology to transform unmanaged organic waste such as corn cobs/husks, rice husks, sawdust, bagasse into clean cooking fuel. They help set up a network of local waste-to-charcoal micro-franchise, each consisting of a briquetting facility operated by a local entrepreneur.

Nasofilters, is a respiratory nasal filter that sticks to your nose and prevents the entry of harmful air pollutants like tiny suspended particles emitted from vehicles, coal-burning power plants, factories, burning of charcoal and other air pollution sources. Nasofilters are made from nanofibers, which ensures minimal pressure drop while breathing, ensuring ease of breathing.

"Jaipur Belt", is a lightweight, protective and therapeutic device that supports the backbone enabling people to work normally in manufacturing, construction and other labour-intensive industrial and

agricultural sectors.

Based on the results of the clinical trials, the belt will be further modified, manufactured commercially and marketed in India and abroad.

Let us hope that all these efforts converge to success and that our social sector would see rapid and all round growth!



Methane ice dunes on Pluto

Images taken by the New Horizons spacecraft show Wind-blown ice dunes on Pluto. Modeling shows that these dunes could be formed by sand-sized grains of solid methane ice transported in typical Pluto winds. (Science, 1 June, 2018)

Editor's Musings

Pushpa Mathew

Hello everyone,

I am back after a two-month hiatus as I had first gone on a tour of Israel and Jordan and then made a visit to Melbourne to spend some glorious time with our children and grandchildren there. Thank you, Dhanya for holding the fort in my absence and keeping the flag of the Elders' Voice flying.

One of the first news items I saw after my return was the CBSE results with Meghna Srivastav scoring 499 marks out of 500 in the class 12 board exams! While I am quite awed by her achievement, I am still wondering at the system of marking now-a-days. In my time, getting a 70 or 80% was considered fantastic. I can understand a 100% score in maths or science subjects but not in English or humanities. These subjects have an infinite scope for imagination and creativity and giving full marks would tantamount to saying that it cannot be bettered.

Besides, students, who get such marks have obviously put their lives on hold, spending sleepless nights

for several years to earn these scores, at the cost of their physical and all-round well-being through sports and other extra-curricular activities. Last year the cut-off in Delhi University was a ridiculous 98.6%! Imagine spending 4 years of your life without sleep or any fun activities and then being rejected by your chosen college as you have scored only 98% marks! Be that as it may, it is only my personal take on the topic. I am sure all the professors and teachers in our Forum are training their guns on me now.

June 5th was World Environment Day. In 2016, under directions of the Supreme Court, Environment education was made a compulsory subject in school curriculum. This would make children aware of the importance of preserving our environment and also open to them the avenues for higher education courses in the subject. Given the fact that, in future, all industries would have to take care of effluent management, solid waste disposal, water resource management, remed-

iate polluted sites and improve air, water and land

resources, there will be ample scope for those educated and trained in environmental engineering.

But the most sickening spectacle on World Environment Day is that of our politicians planting seedlings and saplings only to leave them to be trampled upon and uncared for later. Proper care of the saplings planted over the past few decades should have resulted in full-grown forests in our schools and government office premises by now! A steady nurturing of the saplings planted and a real enforcement of the "Swacch Bharat" ideals through proper collection and disposal of waste is the only way to improve our environment.

Until next time, then.



India claims first Exoplanet discovery!

Indian researchers have discovered their first exoplanet (Planets that orbit around stars other than the sun) orbiting a star 600 light years away from earth. The discovery came after a team, led by Abhijit Chakraborty of the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad, spent one and half years studying the light emitted by the planet's host star, EPIC 211945201 or K2-236. The planet will be called EPIC 211945201b or K2-236b. The surface temperature on EPIC 211945201b is around 600 degrees C, being very close to its host star, making it an unlikely candidate to host life.

"The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark"

Michelangelo

SHALOM!

Pushpa Mathew

(Continued from the May Issue)

We then went to the town of Cana, where Jesus had accompanied his mother to a wedding and at her request performed his first miracle –changing water into wine. Several of us, took the opportunity to renew our wedding vows, which the Franciscan priest at the Cana wedding church was ready to do for us.



The Golan Heights

The Golan Heights was another interesting place we visited. Israel had seized the Golan Heights from Syria after the 1967 six-day war. The Golan contains important water sources and has a strategic value because it overlooks north-eastern Israel including the Sea of Galilee. From the top of the Golan Heights, we had unrestricted view of Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria! A UN Peace-keeping force is stationed there and we even met an Indian Army Major, who is part of the UN force! We also visited Kibbutz Shaar Hagolan. A kibbutz is a collective community in Israel, traditionally based on agriculture but now involved in other economic branches like industrial plants and hospitality. The United Kibbutz movement was set up in 1927, where members originally lived together, sharing all possessions. They did not marry and

children were brought up separately in children's houses. Later the kibbutzim began to assume a more prominent military role and they fought in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. With the establishment of Israel and the flood of Jewish refugees from across the world, kibbutzim expanded with the opportunity of cheap labour. Kibbutzim enjoyed a steady and gradual improvement in their standard of living and this led to changes in their communal framework.

While kibbutzim members earlier received an equal remuneration according to his or her needs, regardless of what job they held, now in many kibbutzim, members are paid differentially based on the work they do. Tel Aviv is a bustling modern city and is generally referred to as "Non-Stop City". Jaffa, the oldest part of Tel Aviv is an ancient port city. It has a unique old-world atmosphere with winding alleys and an extensive flea market.

We saw that while Jordan was dry and dusty, akin to North India, Israel was lush green, thanks to their drip irrigation. Everywhere we saw orchards of oranges, apples, nectarines, mangoes, grapefruit and pomegranates. No wonder Israel is one of the world's leading fresh citrus producer and exporter. Every meal had an abundance of salads and juices. The common foods associated with Israel are falafel, hummus, shawarma, pita bread and baklava. Roasted vegetables like bell peppers, tomatoes, onions, egg plants and zucchini are served with grilled meat. A large variety of dishes are made with roasted egg plants. And breakfast always meant a variety of cheeses – cottage cheese, white cheese, yellow cheese, salt-brined cheese etc.

Traditional attire in Israel is similar to the western style, while orthodox Jews dress according to

Jewish laws. While visiting holy sites, the general norm is that knees and shoulders should be covered – so no shorts and no sleeveless. Most Israelites – men and women - serve 2 years in the army, immediately after completing school. In Israel there is no public transport on the Shabbat i.e. Saturday. In our hotels, there was even a Shabbat lift that kept going up and down, stopping on all floors on the Shabbat day.



With an Indian peacekeeping force officer at Golan Heights

Most churches in Israel are built over earlier churches. In fact, at some places, we could actually go underground and see the earlier church that had existed. Recently, an area in Jerusalem was being excavated to build a museum. But they found the old city of David underground! So they simply covered it with glass and we even saw a Sound and Light show there. Another mind-boggling fact was that the entire area outside the old Jerusalem is covered by miles and miles of Jewish tombs, all facing the Jewish Temple.

Our ten-day tour of Israel and Jordan helped us experience the rich history and diverse cultures of the region. Our tour guide too was a mine field of information on the history of the region and left us with lasting memories and experiences.

(Concluded)

Felicitated!



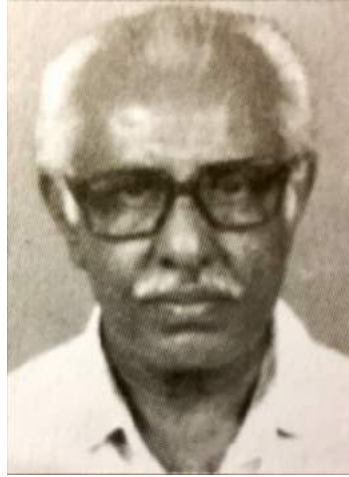
Dr. Mathew Parackal being presented with a bouquet on the occasion of his felicitation on 25th May, 2018 for receiving the "Changanassery Archdiocese Excellence Award"

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!

Dr. Mathew Pulicken	1st June
Lally Mathew	1st June
Jose M. Stephen	1st June
Joseph J. Manooparambil	3rd June
M M Thomas	5th June
Sony Mathew	21st June
S. S .Ayyar	29th June
Mrs Daisy Cherian	29th June
Dr. Markose Arackal	30th June

Obituary



Mr P Thomas Mathew of Maramon Paalakunnathu family passed away in the early hours of 29th May 2018. A retired officer of MRF, Mr Mathew is survived by his wife, Titty and their three daughters - Anila, Sunila and Vinila.

A member of the Senior Citizens Forum, Kottayam for a long time, Mr Thomas Mathew used to regularly lead the group meetings with his prayer-songs. A jovial and fun-loving person, he was an active participant in all the discussions at the Forum meetings and come Onam, he would lead the members with foot-tapping "vanchi-paattukal".

He was always ready to ferry anyone who needed a ride in his Maruti Omni and he never missed a picnic or outing organised by the SCF. His last outing with us was last February when he was one of the group that visited the Kitex factory at Kizhekambalam. On the bus-ride to and fro, he regaled everyone with his jokes and songs.

May his soul rest in peace.

A **blockchain** is a distributed database of records or public ledger of all transactions that have been executed and shared among participating parties. Each transaction is verified and certified as authentic by a majority of the participants in the system. Once entered, each transaction is encrypted and is unalterable. Transactions are validated by a network of users called "miners" .

Blockchain technology is finding application in wide range of areas: Banks can use blockchain to make secure, low-cost and faster transactions. Beyond financial transactions, blockchain technology can be used to put proof of existence of all legal documents, health records, royalty payments, notary, and private securities.