

## The University Herald

Combined issue published in July 2019



am indeed happy to share my thoughts and views on higher education in general and University of Kerala in particular, through our newsletter the University Herald. At the outset, let me share my happiness on the NIRF ranking of 2019 in which University of Kerala achieved 22<sup>nd</sup> rank among universities in India and 35th among higher education institutions in the country. I dedicate this to all my fellow colleagues, students and stakeholders of our university. I am sure this would ignite our spirits to achieve new milestones and reach new heights in terms of imparting

quality education with equity and inclusiveness. This is also an occasion to remind ourselves of the inner potential we possess and to rededicate our efforts towards attaining benchmarked quality standards of World Class Institutions. Let us redefine our priorities and examine "what we have and what we can", well recognizing the limitations and possible weaknesses which would demand corrective actions.

The year 2019 witnessed the blossoming of a host of our initiatives reflecting upon our desire to move with the times and move with determination. A firm resolve to learn from the best was evident through our flagship program, "Interaction with eminent scholars", eminent scholars from India and abroad visited our campus sharing best practices in research and learning, this also included a Nobel Laureate in chemistry. Science week was extensively observed with lectures, visits and open houses. Relevance of research was well recalled upon through a "three-minute presentation" competition among scholars on research outcome and applications. Interdisciplinary learning and creative thinking for betterment was the objective of the Annual Inter Disciplinary Academic Meet, AIAM 2K, organized at the School level involving Departments under the School. Students and scholars need motivation to think out of the box and come out with innovative ideas on the right use of their learning and research outcomes, IDEA Day was observed with this objective in association with

Kerala Start Up Mission, scholars ventilated their brilliant IDEAS which was appreciated by KSUM. Another notable achievement this year is the timely and effective way in which we conducted the PG admission process, results for the entrance examination was published in a record time of 3 days. The results of CBCSS examinations were published within two weeks after completion of examinations.

We are moving to the OBE model in curriculum design and delivery for which a series of workshops are being organized. Skilling initiatives for students through new policy measures, strengthening our placement support, NET coaching, clean campus drives are all events that made our campus vibrant.

We have launched new innovative programs of learning this year and are indeed fortunate to have MOUs with Global centers. Many of our departments have successfully organized a number of Seminars and workshops where interaction with experts have been of benefit to the learning community. This year our outreach programs have taken off well. All the above facts bear testimony to our urge to move forward with a firm resolve to make this university unique and a place with sound learning and research ecosystems.

The coming year would unfold new challenges where our team work and resolutions would be put to test, we are preparing for the NAAC accreditation which is due in March 2020, SAAC is yet another initiative of KSHEC to which we need to respond. A host of institutional mechanisms need to be rooted deep in to our systems, these include Institution Innovation Council, Research Council, E Courses, Examination reforms, Student Life Cycle and so on. Improving up on campus infra structure, Laboratories and libraries, E resources, External centers are all challenges to be addressed. I am sure we can very well approach them with an open mind and a free will to work collectively to make University of Kerala a shining STAR among HEIs globally.

May I request all my dear students, teachers administrative staff, parents, alumni and other stakeholders to put your minds and hands together to achieve this dream. Let us build up a mighty team, the KU –TEAM which is committed to this cause. When we work as a team, no force can stop us, no act deter us in our march to see true learning happen in a wonderful environment where all our products witness the joy of what their University has imparted for them. Feel free to share your genuine concerns on our university with me and do suggest all that we can do to transform ourselves. Wishing one and all the very best in all your endeavors, I solicit your support on all our KU TEAM initiatives.

I take this opportunity to thank the members of our syndicate, all the teachers, students, team leaders, statutory officers and staff of our University. I also acknowledge the support from the Government of Kerala, MHRD, UGC and other agencies. Let wisdom guide us all to action.

Prof. (Dr.) V.P Mahadevan Pillai Vice Chancellor

### **New Flora and Fauna Discovered**

hree new plant species under the two genera Symblocos Jacq and Lasianthus Jacq have been discovered recently from the Southern Western Ghats by a field exploration team consisting of R.Jagadeesan, research scholar, Department of Botany, Dr.A.Gangaprasad, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany and Dr.Sam P.Mathew, Senior Scientist of INT-BGRI, Palode. Symblocos abrahamii R. Jagadeesan et.al.and Symplocos nicolsonii R. Jagadeesan et.al. are the newest additions to the genus Symplocos under the family Symplocaceae and Lasianthus agasthyamalayanus R.Jagadeesan et.al. was added under the genus Lasianthus of Rubiaceae. Symblocos abrahamii is apparently a large shrub or a tree around 8 meters high, found to occur an altitude around 2000m along the slopes of the Shola forest in Eravikulam National-Parkand is named after the late Prof. Dr A. Abraham, the founder of the Botany Department of University of Kerala. Symplocos nicolsonii, a tall evergreen tree of around 15 meters height located from an evergreen forest of the Mathikettan Shola National Park at an altitude of 2200 meters approximately and is named after the late Dr Dan H.Nicolson for his great contributions to the

field of botanical nomenclature. Lasianthus agasthyamalayanus is a small evergreen shrub of three metres height with white flowers. Owing to its location, the specific epithet of the new taxon is named after the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.

The research team in the taxonomy laboratory of the Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries discovered twelve new crab species during the year 2017. The crab species include Kani Maranjandu Biju Kumar, Raj &Ng, Typhlocarcinus Kerala Ng, Devi & Kumar, Karkata ghanarakta Pati et.al., Karkata kusumbha Pati et.al., Pilarta punctatissima Pati et.al., Cylindrotelphusa breviphallusPati et.al. Cylindrotelphusa longiphallus Pati et.al., Laleonectes kuriya Meddoza & Devi,



Symplocos nicolsonii



Symplocosabrahamii

Pliestacantha kannu Ng, Ravinesh & Ravichandran, and Oziotelphusaravi, Raj, Kumar & Ng. A species of lobster namely Petrarctus jeppiaari Yang, Kumar & Chan was also found from this region. The notable among this was the discovery of the first tree crab from India by Dr Biju Kumar and Smrithy Raj from the Kottoor Reserve Forest Region of the Agasthyamala Biological Park. Their habitat is phytotelms

(water-filled cavities in the large tree). The genus is named as 'Kani' (Kanikkaran) the tribesmen who helped to locate the crab, while the new species is named Maranjandu, the vernacular name of tree crab. The discovery is very important in the context of conservation of the Western Ghats Biodiversity Hotspot as they can very well serve as ecological indicators, reflecting the health of the ecosystem. As water holding hollows, the discovery also stresses the need for the conservation of large trees in the degraded forest ecosystems of the Western Ghats.

Lasianthus agasthyamalayanus



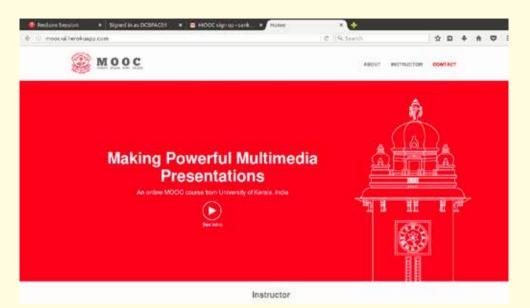
# 'Next food'-educating the next generation of professionals in the Agri-food system

The Centre for Agroecology and Public Health, in association with Welthungerhilfe (WFF),is partnering with the European Union project (co-ordinated by Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) titled 'NEXT FOOD- educating the next generation of professionals in the Agrifood systems', for a period of four years (May 2018-May 2022) with a vision to enhance the co-creation of innovation and knowledge in agriculture, forestry and related food value chain. The Centre is indulging in activities that facilitate case studies to identify gaps and needs, testing new relevant curricula and training methods, identifying

policy instruments that support the transition towards action and practise-oriented research. As a part of the project, Dr Manju S.Nair (Hon.Director, Centre for Agroecology and Public Health) participated in the workshop organized at the University of Gastronomic Sciences, Pollenzo from September 17-19 and the inputs from the workshop were used to plan and understand the sustainable food and farming initiatives around the world. The Centre also conducted a 'Certificate Course on Agroecology: Action, Research and Education' in collaboration with the Norwegian University of Life Sciences from April 18th to May

15th, 2018. Prof. Tor Arvid and Anna Marie Nicolsyen from the Norwegian University acted as the resource persons for this course. The course served as a pedagogical framework for initiating and developing new and innovative learning activities through practising competencies that foster green skills and soft skills to bring about a green shift and learning to deal with case situations on the farm and in communities. Dr.Manju S.Nair and Megha Radhakrishnan, research scholar, visited the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and participated in the initial days of MSc Agroecology course.

### First MOOC from University completed



he University of Kerala has successfully undertaken its first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) under the instruction of Prof. Achuthsankar S. Nair, Head of the Department of Computational Biology and Bioinformatics. The MOOC certificate course on 'Making

Powerful Multimedia Presentations' received over 1,000 applications, registration was restricted to 300 learners in the first batch. The course involved six-minute lectures, four quizzes and two assignments. Eight persons from the United Arab Emirates, three each from Kuwait and Malaysia, two from

the U.S., and one each from Madagascar, Canada, Sweden and Australia were among students. Besides registrants from Kerala, there were those from other states: Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, New Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

# Institutional repository to furnish intellectual outputs to academia

he Department of Computer Science had launched its own Institutional Repository named as irtd@desku, to digitally showcase and share intellectual outputs to the academic community with technical assistance from MIT. Dr.V.P Mahadevan Pillai, Dean,

Faculty of Applied Sciences officially launched the innovation on September 23rd 2017. The project was initiated by Mr.Jyothi Babu G, Assistant Librarian under the technical guidance



of Dr.Madhu S Nair, Assistant Professor of this department thereby making the department, a pioneer in the University to create such an institutional archive for its research and develop-

ment. The repository supports the academia by collecting and maintaining intellectual contributions of students, faculty, staff and of their collaborators from around the world.

# National Seminar in honour of Prof. Jacob John Kattakayam

The Department of Sociology organized a Two-day National Seminar titled "Ageing Care and Wellbeing -Towards Empowerment and Fulfillment" in honorary of Prof. Jacob John Kattakayam, Emeritus Professor of the Department, on October 27th and 28th, 2017. Endeavouring various positions and responsibilities in the University as well as in his profession, Prof. Kattakayam has been in the forefront of the discipline at the regional,

national, and international realms and has contributed immensely to the betterment of his discipline. The seminar empowered the participants to revert to the concept and practice of care giving of the elderly in India and set forth a number of programs and provisions that may empower the elderly so as to confront ageing with more grace and dignity. The inaugural session was presided over by Prof. C. Venkatachalam, Coordinator, School of Social Sciences

and Head of the Department of Sociology, Periyar University. Prof. Michael Tharakan, Former Vice Chancellor, Kannur University and Chairman of KCHR formally inaugurated the Seminar by lighting the lamp. The felicitations were followed by the releasing of "Elderly Window", a book written by Dr Sandhya R. S, Associate Professor, School of Gandhian Studies, MG University.

# 'GIAN' programme to augment India's scientific and technological potential to global excellence

he Department of Computer Science, University of Kerala conducted a 12-day GIAN course on 'Advanced Digital Video Coding Standards' during January 1-12, 2018 funded by the Department of Higher Education, MHRD to elevate India's scientific and technological capacity to par excellence at the global level. The Global Initiative for Academic Networks (GIAN) Programme aims at tapping the talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs internationally to encourage their engagement with the institutes of Higher Education in India. The course was coordinated by Dr Madhu S Nair, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and the academic sessions were managed by the International Faculty Dr K R Rao, Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Texas, Arlington. Participants from various National Institutes, State Universities and Colleges



attended the course. The objective of the GIAN course was to provide the participants with a thorough exposure to Image/Video Coding Standards.

## International workshop on In-vitro toxicology

5-day International training workshop on "in-vitro toxicology, with emphasis on integrated discrete multiple organ co-culture (IdMOC)" was held at Cutaneous, Cancer and Ayurveda Biology Research Lab, Department of Zoology, University of Kerala, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The workshop was organised in close association with Department of Zoology; A centre for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research in Cutaneous Biol-



ogy; Society for Translational Cancer Research. The workshop proved to be a prominent meeting point for scientists, doctors, teachers, research scholars and students from prestigious institutions to exchange new scientific findings, experiences and knowledge. The inauguration was presided over by Prof. Dr. M C Subhash Peter, Head – Department of Zoology, University of Kerala.

## Erudite Scholar-in-Residence program held at Dept of Geology

he inaugural Erudites Scholar-in-residence lecture series was anchored by Prof. Thomas Oommen of Michigan Technological University at Dept. of Geology, the University of Kerala from 18th to 21st September 2017. Talks on concepts like, 'State-of-the-art techniques in asset management and infrastructure monitoring, 'Drone: a new toy in the toolkit of engineering Geology', theoretical aspects of Interferometric SAR technology', were concluded by an interactive session with the students. He is the co-author 'Landslide Atlas of Kerala'. From 9th to 13th October 2017, a 5-day lecture series was held by Prof. William M White of Cornell University, Ithaca, USA. He delivered a lecture on 'What can we learn from Geochemistry? A few highlights', along with other intensive lectures. The third session of Erudite lecture series was delivered by Prof. Nicholas T Arndt of Universite Grenoble Alpes, France from 25th November to 2nd December 2018. Apart from a few lectures, Prof. Arendt held two debates: 1) Plate tectonics started around 3Gs ago and 2) Morality of mining, which gained much student participation.

## National Workshop on Cytological Techniques at Dept. of Botany



Dr S R Yadav's inaugural lecture on 'Cytology in relation to Taxonomy' focused on the significance of studying cytology. It was followed by other lectures by prominent resource people in the area with topics ranging from 'Centromere Oriented Genome Elimination and Double Haploid' to 'Cytological Techniques in Sugarcane' and so forth. The talks were followed by practical sessions as well. A demonstration of slides showing pachytene stage chromosome in Coixlacryma-jobi & Chromosome Banding techniques and various other cytological techniques.

# Democratising Historical knowledge



he Fourth International Annual session of Kerala History Congress was held on 20th, 21st and 22nd December at Karyavattom Campus under the aegis of the Department of History with a vision to promote Kerala studies. The session was inaugurated by the Minister for Higher Education, Welfare of Minorities, Dr. K.T Jaleel. He indicated the implications of fundamentalist outfits of attempting to distort history and challenging the founding ideals of the country. An interactive session with Rajmohan Gandhi, Professor at the Centre for South Asian and Middle Eastern studies held as a curtain raiser to the main event. While interacting with the faculty members and the students, he opined that the situation is disheartening in North India as lynching continues in the name of caste and religion. Noted historian Prof. Sugata Bose, grand nephew of Subhashchandra Bose and Professor of Oceanic History and Affairs, Har-

vard University delivered the Vakkom Abdul Khader memorial lecture on "1943: A year of Heroism and Martyrdom". The family members and the admirers of Vakkom Abdul Khader attended the meeting. The valedictory session inaugurated by Dr. P. P Ajayakumar, Pro-Vice-chancellor of the University of Kerala and distributed cash awards and Memento to the winners of the essay writing competition. P. Manesh convener, KHC Annual conference and General Secretary, Research students Union welcome the gathering and John Williams, Convener, KHC Annual sessions and Vice-chairman, University Union delivered the vote of thanks. More than one thousand delegates participated in the three-day mega event from across India and abroad on various walks of life and society.



### **WORKSHOPS**

- ▶ Workshop on 'Medicinal Plant Taxonomy, Cultivation and Conservation' was organised by the Botany Department on 11th and 12th December 2017. The workshop was sponsored by State Medicinal Plants Boards, Department of AYUSH, under Government of Kerala. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr A.G. Pandurangan, Director of INTBGRI, Palode. He also released the book entitled 'Medicinal Plant Taxonomy, Cultivation and Conservation' edited by Dr. A. Gangaprasad and Dr. S. Suhara Beevy, published in connection with this workshop.
  - The Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS) joined hands with its alumni association and organized a one-day Workshop on Plagiarism on 20th January 2018. The department has also organized a two day National Workshop on 'Social Media for Libraries' in the Computer Centre, Kerala University Senate House Campus, Thiruvananthapuram on 23rd, 24th March 2018. The technical sessions were handled by Dr. N.S. Harinarayana, Associate Professor, Department of Studies in Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Rupesh Kumar A., Assistant Professor, Department of Studies and Research in Library and Information Science, Tumkur University, Tumakuru and S.L.Faisal, Librarian, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pattom. Thirty LIS professionals from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka participated in the Workshop
- ▶ The Department of Environmental Sciences came up with numerous workshops that broadened the



scope of environmental studies discipline. The first of the workshops titled "Biogeochemistry of the coastal lakes" and the second one "Environmental Modelling" was conducted during January 2018. The third workshop on "Environmental waste and Energy Auditing" during 21st to 23rd February 2018 saw the active participation of more than 50 people.

A workshop on transcriptomics was conducted from 14th to 16th February 2018 as part of the erudite scholar-in-residence programme. Dr. Joseph Chappal, Scientist and Chairperson of Dept. Of Pharmaceutical Science at College of Pharmacy, Kentucky headed the workshop.



▶ The Department of Sociology, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017, organised a one-day international workshop on the theme 'Cultural Psychology of Beauty in Everyday Lives' under

the auspices of ICSSR. The workshop focused on the synthesis of aesthetic, sociological and psychological domains as it developed internationally within the cultural psychology framework. It offered a unique progressive exploration of the human decoration. During the discussion emerged, several further research ideas and participants reported that the theoretical concepts would be used in their current dissertations.

- The Department of Malayalam had coordinated an eight-day 'Malayalam Computing' Workshop for the third successive academic year from December 15th to 22nd, that encompassed training in Inscript Malayalam layout, and the guidance needed for the completion of research thesis using Wikipedia and Letech. The workshop was officially inaugurated by Pro. Vice-Chancellor Dr. P.P Ajayakumar. Former Kerala University Vice-Chancellor and Present Planning Board member Dr.B Iqbal released the Proceedings Book which comprises of Journals and Articles drafted by Expert Professionals in Malayalam Computing.
- The Department of Computer Science, University of Kerala had coordinated a Three day National

Workshop on Image Analysis in Bioscience Research in consociation with the Division of Tissue Culture, Biomedical Technology Wing, Sree Chithra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram from 29th November to 1st December, 2017 at the Computer Science Seminar Hall. The inaugural ceremony was done by Dr. T.V Kumari, Scientist and Head(Retd), Division of Tissue Culture, BMT Wing, SCTIMST. The workshop comprised of lectures and handson training sessions led by expert professionals in the field. 20 participants including Faculty members,



Scientists and Research Scholars from various renowned Universities, Colleges and Research Institutes attended the workshop.

The Department of Computer Science, University of Kerala, organised a three day National Workshop on "Technologies and tools for scientific research" during 25th-27th September 2017, to provide exposure to theoretical and practical aspects in research activities. The workshop equipped the participants with insights and knowledge on research ethics and other major technical tools. Around 20 participants including the Research scholars, M.phil scholars from various institutions procured practical training in this area.

### **SEMINARS**

#### **AWARDS & ACCOLADES**

- Department of Sociology, University of Kerala in collaboration with Centre for Cultural Psychology, Aalborg University, Denmark organized a two day International Seminar on the topic "Gender at the intersection of Identity and Community: Viewing the Landscape of Culture in the changing World" on November 7th and 8th, 2017. The prime objective of the seminar was to advance the frontiers of Cultural Psychology through discussions about gender and identity across cultural settings by closely introspecting the gender roles in different cultures. Dr. Anitha Devi Pillai from the National Institute of Education, Singapore formally inaugurated the seminar. Unlike habitual sessions, the presentations schemed with a flexible format resembling the round table discussions in lieu of individual presentations.
- ▶ Three-day international seminar on "Recent Biochemical Approaches in Therapeutics (RBAT) iv" was organized by the Department of Biochemistry from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The seminar series launched in 2013 and hosted in alternate years provide an excellent opportunity for young talents to present their research findings and foster their collaborations with scientific leaders.
- A three-day national seminar on "Global Malayalam: State and Prospects" held at the Department of Linguistics, the University of Kerala from 12th to 14th December 2018. The seminar had its broader objective on the evaluation and assessment of the present status of Malayalam language and its prospects to grow as a global language. The seminar brought together students, researchers and stalwarts in the field of linguistics and was effective in evoking vibrant discussions on the nuances regarding the position of Malayalam in a world which is dictated by globalization, liberalization and more recently glocalization.

- Dr. Madhu S. Nair, Assistant Professor of the Department of Computer Science, bagged the prestigious National Award titled IETE- Smt. Manorama Rathore Memorial Award is given by the Institute of Electronics and Telecommunications Engineers, New Delhi. The award consists of a medal and a citation. The award was given away during the IETE Annual Technical Convention held at Rajagiri School of Engineering and Technology, Kochi, on 17th September 2017.
- Ani Deepthi, Assistant Professor of Department of Chemistry has received the Best Project Award 2016-17 from the University of Kerala under the Faculty of Science and Applied Science and Technology for the SERB project entitled "Synthesis and Reactions of Vicinal Tricarbonyl Compounds and Related Systems".
- Dr. Annie Abraham (Biochemistry), Prof. V.P. Mahadevanpillai (Optoelectronics), Prof. K. S. Chandrashekharan (Management) and Prof. C. R. Prasad (Malayalam) was awarded the prestigious 'Dewang Mehta National Education Award' for the best professors in their respective disciplines, on 20th January 2018, at an event held at Taj Vivanta.
- Dr. P.K. Sureshkumar, Assistant Librarian, Kerala University Library, has been presented the "Best Research Paper Award-2018" for his paper "Plagiarism in the PhD theses of the Universities in Kerala; An investigation" by the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Manipal University) in the National Conference on Management of Modern Libraries (MCL) on the theme "Transformation of libraries for tomorrow" organized by the Health Science Library and Department of Library & Information Science, Manipal Academy of Higher Education during 9th and 10th February 2018.
- Saritha Devi H.V., research scholar of optoelectronics department, bagged the best scientific paper award in the 30<sup>th</sup> Kerala Science Congress held at Thalassery.
- The Kothari Postdoctoral Fellow of the Dept. of Environmental Sciences, Dr Prince S Godson, has been selected for the best poster award in the Estuarine Coastal Science Association's 57<sup>th</sup> conference held in Perth, Australia during 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2018.

#### **Editorial Committee**

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### **MERALD PHOTO GALLERY**



Prof. (Dr.) V.P Mahadevan Pillai took charge as Vice Chancellor of University of Kerala on 25.10.2018



Prof. (Dr.) P.P Ajayakumar took charge as Pro-Vice Chancellor of University of Kerala on 16.11.2018



Department of Arabic in collaboration with King Abdul Azeez Centre for Arabic Language, Riyadh celebrated 'International Arabic Day ' on 18th December 2018 at Hotel Appollo Dimoro, Thiruvananthapuram . The event was inaugurated by Dr. K. T. Jaleel, Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education, Minority Welfare, Hajj and Wakf



Prof. A.P. Andrewskutty Memorial Lecture organized by Department of Linguistics on 31st October 2018





Relief and rehabilitation programme by NSS on 22 & 23 August 2018 during the Massive Flood

### **NEWLY INAUGURATED BUILDINGS**



Controller of Examinations – Annexe Building



Inauguration of Controller of Examinations – Annexe Building at Senate House Campus, Palayam by **Shri. E. Chandrasekharan**, Hon'ble Minister for Revenue and Housing on 27.02.2019



**CLIF** Building



**Dr. K. T. Jaleel,** Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education, Minority Welfare, Hajj and Wakf inaugurated ONV Memorial Building and CLIF Building at Kariavattom campus on 27.02.2019





ONV Memorial Building