



## EDITORIAL

# HUMANITY

Hello GYRAites,

We live in an era brimming with technological marvels and unprecedented connectivity, yet we face an ironic paradox: immense friendships but no friends. As Rob Horning poignantly states, we experience "companionship without companions." Our comfort with machines has eclipsed our ability to connect deeply with human beings. We are increasingly immersed in simulations, preferring virtual interactions over real-life engagements.

A recent YouTube post, "Friend Reveal Trailer" by friend.com, exemplifies this shift. It showcases a world where digital companionship substitutes genuine human connections. This trend raises critical questions: How can we claim to be human without humanity? Are we losing our essence amidst technological advancements?

As GYRA scholars, how about some of you delving into research that examines these contradictions? Perhaps your investigation of how reliance on technology impacts our social dynamics and emotional well-being could reveal ways to balance our technological prowess with genuine human connections. Consequently, your research could pave the way for a more harmonious integration of technology in our lives, ensuring we do not lose sight of what makes us human.

**"The most successful scientists are not the most talented. But they are the ones who are impelled by curiosity. They've got to know what the answer is" ~ Arthur Leonard Schawlow ( Got Nobel Prize in Physics in 1981)**

## CURIOUS FACTS

# Rocket Boy

Yan Hongsen, known as the "Rocket Boy," is a Primary Five student from Zhejiang province in eastern China.

Since kindergarten, he has taken online programming courses and self-studied physics and chemistry through books, videos, and forums with astronomy enthusiasts.

To support his interest in aerospace, Yan's parents converted their living room into a rocket research studio for him.

Starting in August 2022, Yan spent 10 months building his first homemade solid-fuel rocket.

In June last year, he launched his first rocket, naming it Sen Xing, which means “moving forward”, and symbolises his desire to reach greater heights in aerospace.

However, shortly after the rocket ascended, its booster failed to deploy its parachute after separation. The remaining components also sustained damage, leading to its crash.

Undeterred, Yan gathered the scattered debris without showing any sadness, and set about analysing the cause of the failure.

“The nitrocellulose didn’t explode as expected, the spring and lithium battery were also damaged. Maybe there is still an issue with the rocket’s body connection,” Yan said.



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## International Research Conference for Children (IRCC) 2024: A Grand Success in Kochi

The second International Research Conference for Children (IRCC) 2024, organised by GYRA in collaboration with STEM4Girls, USA, took place in Kochi, Kerala, from July 12–14. Dr. Pradeep Kumar T., Vice Chancellor of the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), inaugurated the event. The opening ceremony saw the presence of notable dignitaries, including Prof. Chandrabhas Narayana, Director of the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology; Mr Pramod G. V., Deputy Collector of Ernakulam; Dr. Renju Joseph, Chair of IRCC-24; Ms Raina Raphy, President of STEM4Girls; and Iris, the AI Robot.

Iris, the AI robot, was a standout attraction at the event, engaging with participants and introducing the keynote speakers. The conference featured scientific sessions by leading researchers, sparking interest and enthusiasm among budding scientists. Over 20 scientists shared their expertise and engaged with students, answering their questions and inspiring a passion for research and discovery.

Keynote speakers included Dr. Chandrabhas Narayana, Director of the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Dr. Dinesh Kaipally from the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, Dr. Jayasree R S from Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Rev. Dr. Francis Xavier from Dr. Ambedkar Cultural Academy, and Dr. Giji Joseph from Nirmala College, Muvattupuzha.

Young scholars had the opportunity to present their research through paper presentations and poster sessions. IRCC 2024 emphasized inclusivity by inviting students with disabilities to present their research, highlighting their determination and limitless potential.



The three-day conference showcased remarkable talent, innovation, and dedication from over 1,000 students representing around 250 schools. The event featured 12 plenary talks, 5 featured talks, and 2 panel sessions, chaired by GYRA coaches. Notably, scientists from prestigious institutions like Harvard and MIT covered diverse subjects, enriching the conference with their insights.

The valedictory function was officially opened by Ms. Mila Heavens, a GYRA Scholar, alongside Dr. E. P. Mathew S.J., Provincial of the Kerala Jesuit Province, Dr. Renju Joseph, Chair of IRCC-24, Ms. Preeti Pinto from STEM4Girls, and Dr. Manjula Devananda, who delivered the Presidential Address. Winners of the oral and poster presentations were awarded certificates and cash prizes. The first phase of the STEM4 Creativity Challenge fund was also released during the valedictory function.



The event garnered extensive coverage in visual and print media, highlighting stories from schools in Mumbai and the achievements of special scholars. IRCC-2025 was announced to be hosted by Vidyadhiraja High School and Junior College in Mumbai, with Dr. Nisha V. M. as the chair and Ms. Lekshmi Surjith as the co-chair of the upcoming conference.



Prepared and Presented by Team GYRA

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