



Remembering Mr Ratan N Tata: A Personal Reflection

This month, we mourn the profound loss of Mr Ratan N Tata, a visionary whose enduring support and guidance were instrumental in laying the foundation for Social Alpha. I first saw Mr Tata in 1995 while working at ICICI Bank. During the inauguration of our New Delhi office, he visited us alongside industry stalwarts like Mr N Vaghul and Dr R H Patil. Meeting the Chairman of the Tata Group was awe-inspiring. As Mr Tata prepared to leave, Mr Vaghul asked me to escort him—a fanboy moment I'll never forget. We walked to the Connaught Place parking lot, where a black Mercedes awaited him. Although I was too awestruck to speak, feeling a mix of reverence and disbelief, Mr Tata extended his hand warmly, thanked me, and shook my hand before departing. There were no smartphones, no selfies to capture it, yet that handshake remains vividly etched in my memory.

Nearly two decades later, our paths crossed again, this time at Harvard Business School in 2013 when he engaged with our batch. Mr Tata, a fellow alumnus from the class of 1975, was as humble and approachable as ever. In a brief conversation, I shared my aspiration to contribute to India's social sector, a passing mention that would change the course of my life. That encounter proved to be a pivotal moment for me, leading to an opportunity to present the idea of Social Alpha to Mr Tata and the trustees of Tata Trusts. His openness to new ideas and genuine interest in fostering innovation were transformative. Not only did he take a keen interest in the concept, but our innovation curation program received funding from Tata Trusts.

Mr Tata's support was foundational in establishing Social Alpha. He truly believed in 'the transformative power of science and technology innovations to solve some of the world's most complex social and environmental challenges'. He emphasised that innovation must engage with markets and communities, particularly in pressing areas like climate change and healthcare, which he described as 'burning topical issues'. He championed our work, encouraging us to support entrepreneurs tackling these critical challenges and continually reminding us to 'focus on impact first'.

In 2017, Mr Tata entrusted me with another mission: to set up the Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS) in Bangalore, a project very close to his heart. He asked me to build the institute and remain engaged as its life trustee. His vision for TIGS embodied his belief in the 'potential of advancements in genetics and genomics to solve complex challenges in agriculture and healthcare'. He was incredibly excited about TIGS' work on crop improvement, food security, point-of-care diagnostics, and modern therapeutics—areas he saw as pathways to creating lasting societal value.

He often pushed us with probing questions, reflecting his boundless curiosity and commitment to meaningful social impact. I grew accustomed to his insightful questions that continually pushed me to explore problems from fresh perspectives. He always wanted to learn more about cutting-edge research in fields like genetics, robotics, and AI, making it a priority to stay engaged with the latest advancements. In every interaction, Mr Tata's curiosity and humility stood out. Even as he maintained a high-level view, he often recalled specific details about Social Alpha's companies, asking thoughtful questions about their progress. He never failed to remind us of the importance of making Social Alpha self-sustaining, envisioning a model of circular and sustainable philanthropy that could support innovation far into the future.

Mr Tata's kindness extended far beyond professional interactions and his humility and grounded nature left a lasting impression. Every time I visited, he would insist on coming to the door to say goodbye, even when age made such gestures physically taxing. After a knee treatment, he expressed regret that he couldn't accompany me to the door—a courtesy he extended to his guests. That was Mr Tata: humble, attentive, and thoughtful, with a personal touch that spoke volumes about his character. His presence left a warmth that words struggle to convey. I have countless stories of his grace and generosity, and I find myself at a loss for where to start or end.

As I reflect on the journey we've taken with his support and guidance, I am deeply grateful for the privilege of knowing him—not only as a leader but as a mentor and friend. His legacy is woven into every effort we make at Social Alpha to create a better world through science and technology. In his honour, we are establishing an award to recognise scientist-entrepreneurs who, like him, are dedicated to solving complex problems for people and the planet. This award will be a testament to his vision, inspiring future generations to carry forward his legacy of empathy, curiosity, and commitment to humanity.

Rest in peace, Mr Tata. Your legacy lives on in our work and our hearts, guiding us as we strive to honour the vision you helped us build.

- Manoj



"Science and technology innovations have the potential to solve some of the world's most complex social and environmental challenges. However, this requires our innovation ecosystem to integrate with the markets and communities. We also need to create the enablers to support innovators who are solving difficult problems in areas like climate change and healthcare, both of which are burning topical issues.

I am delighted to note that Social Alpha prioritises some of these challenges in its work, focusing on impact first. I wish the entrepreneurs working on these challenges, and the Social Alpha team all the best in this journey."

Ratan N Tata

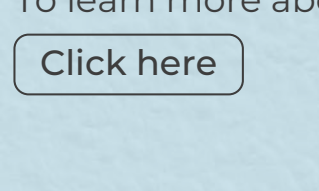


IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Ai Health Highway Raises Pre-Series A Funding to Advance AI-Driven Cardiac Care

Social Alpha-supported healthtech start-up Ai Health Highway has raised \$1 million in a pre-Series A funding round led by Turbostart. This is part of a larger \$1.5 million round that includes additional investments from Rainmatter by Zerodha, The Chennai Angels, BITS BioCyTiH Foundation, and other angel investors. The funds will support the start-up's expansion in India, accelerate international regulatory approvals, and enhance its AI/ML offerings in the cardio-respiratory domain.



To learn more about Ai Health Highway

[Click here](#)

MONTHLY SCOOP

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And the Winners Are...

We highlight the incredible achievements of a few start-ups supported by Social Alpha as they continue to make a lasting impact.

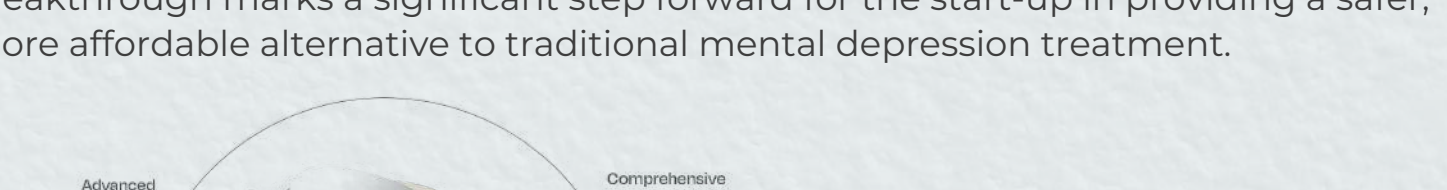
SolYield's innovative platform designed to maximise lifetime returns from rooftop solar and battery installations has been named the winner of the SolarX Start-up Challenge 2024, organised by the International Solar Alliance.

Satyukt Analytics clinched the top spot in the Smart Farm Grant Challenge (SFGC), organised by STPI, for its groundbreaking solution for predicting the optimal sugarcane harvest time through its satellite-based precision agriculture platform.

Krimanshi's sustainable nutrition solution for livestock has been selected under the 'Innovators for Bharat' program, powered by the SBI Foundation and Villgro.

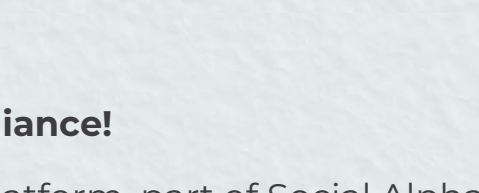
Himalayan Rocket Stove has won the prestigious Australian Good Design Award for its commitment to providing clean, efficient heating and cooking solutions to Himalayan communities.

NASSCOM recognised **Manastu Space Technologies** as a 'League of 10' winner at the Emerge 50 Awards 2024 for revolutionising satellite propulsion with green, high-performance technology.



Marbles Health Receives CDSCO Approval for its Mental Health Innovation

Marbles Health, a Social Alpha-backed start-up, has announced that EASE, its made-in-India brain stimulation device, has received CDSCO approval. This breakthrough marks a significant step forward for the start-up in providing a safer, more affordable alternative to traditional mental depression treatment.

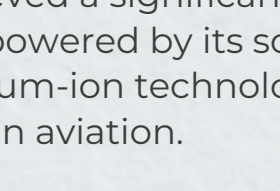


To know more about Marbles Health

[Click here](#)

TraceX Raises the Bar With SOC 1 Type 2 Compliance!

TraceX, a blockchain-powered food traceability platform, part of Social Alpha's portfolio, has successfully achieved SOC 1 Type 2 Compliance, ensuring the highest standards of internal controls over financial reporting. This achievement reinforces TraceX's commitment to building climate-resilient, sustainable supply chains while ensuring enhanced security, transparency, and risk mitigation for businesses using its solutions.

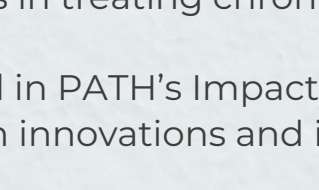
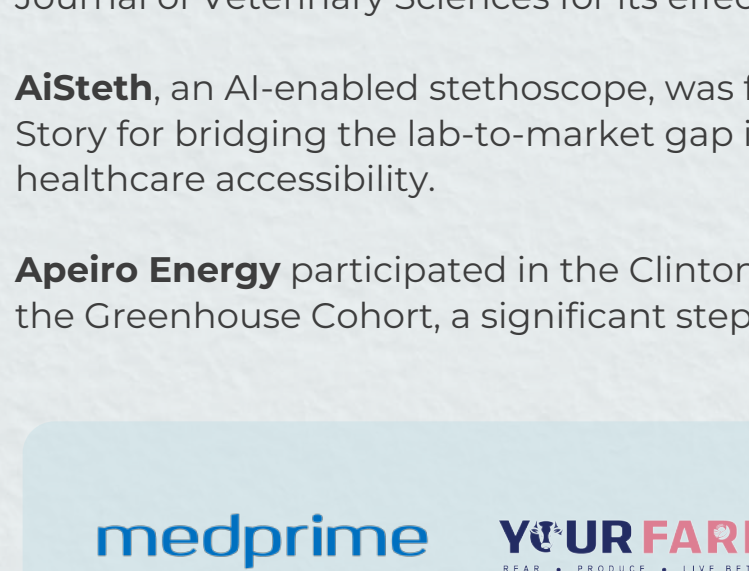


To read more about TraceX

[Click here](#)

Rechargion's Sodium-ion Drone Takes Flight Toward Sustainability

Rechargion, a Social Alpha-backed start-up, achieved a significant breakthrough with the first successful vertical flight of a drone powered by its sodium-ion battery! This achievement highlights the potential of sodium-ion technology as a sustainable, cost-effective alternative to lithium-ion batteries in aviation.



To learn more about Rechargion

[Click here](#)

Innovations in Action: Social Alpha Start-ups Shine

This month, several Social Alpha-supported start-ups have been recognised for their groundbreaking work, showcasing their solutions to a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

Medprime Technologies presented its breakthrough cancer diagnostic tools, CLILKA and MICALYS, at CANPATH 2024.

AniMeta's herbal remedy for livestock, Herbowart, was featured in the International Journal of Veterinary Sciences for its effectiveness in treating chronic warts.

AiSteth, an AI-enabled stethoscope, was featured in PATH's Impact Lab Success Story for bridging the lab-to-market gap in health innovations and improving healthcare accessibility.

Apeiro Energy participated in the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting as part of the GreenEnergy Cohort, a significant step in opening access to the US market.

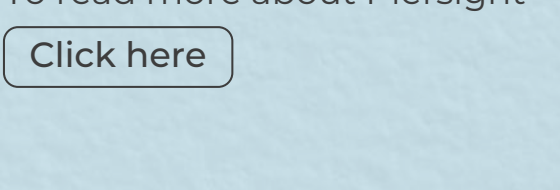


START-UP SHOUT-OUT

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Social Alpha Communities Program Introduced Farmers to Rapid Soil Testing Technology

India Agritech Incubation Network, a Social Alpha Communities program, showcased Krishitantra's groundbreaking AI-powered rapid soil testing device to farmers in Odisha. Facilitated by our partner PRADAN, the demonstrations provided farmers with an opportunity to see this innovative tool in action. Krishitantra's cutting-edge solution can generate detailed reports on 12 soil parameters in under 40 minutes, offering crop-specific advisory services that farmers can use to optimise inputs and boost productivity.



To learn more about Krishitantra

[Click here](#)

PierSight recognised at INDUS-X

PierSight, a Social Alpha-supported start-up, recently gained recognition in the White House Joint Fact Sheet during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, highlighting its success in the INDUS-X challenge, a partnership between the US and India to advance defence innovation and technology. PierSight was the only company to win both the US and Indian challenges in the DIU-IDEX Maritime Challenge at INDUS-X in February for its cutting-edge solution, which uses multi-sensor satellite imagery and AI/ML algorithms to improve the accuracy and speed of detecting and monitoring oil spills.



To read more about PierSight

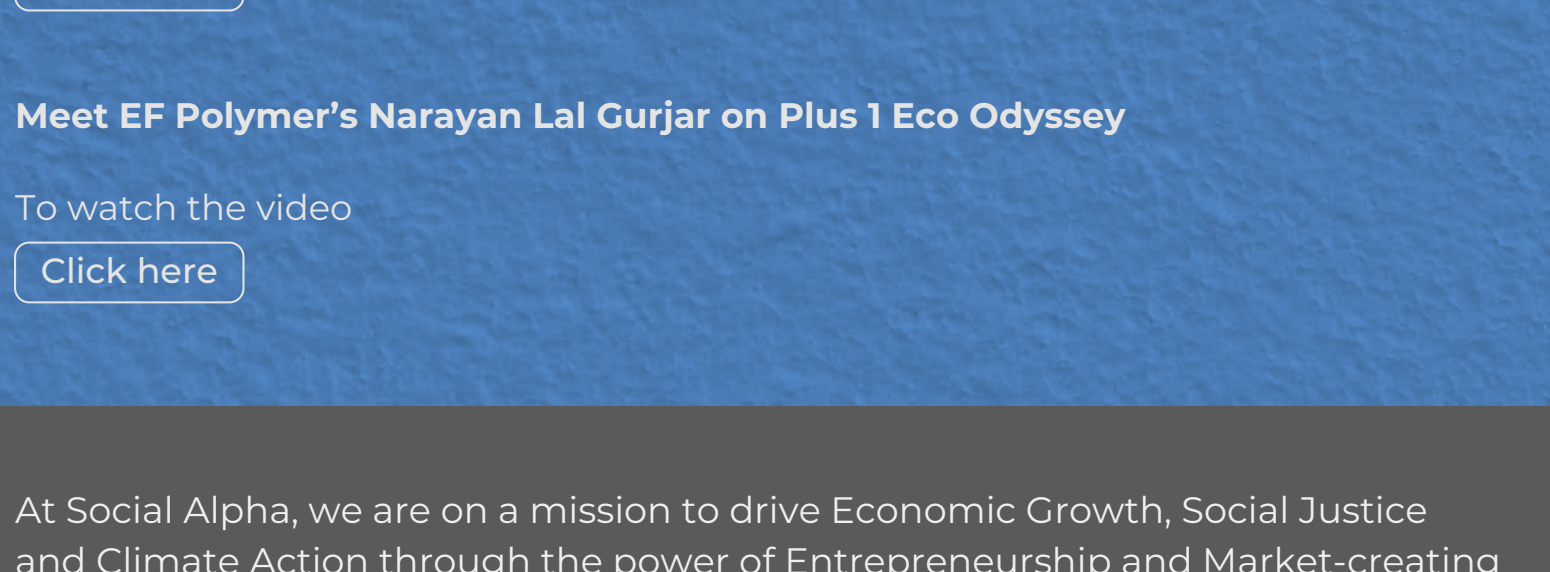
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PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

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Announcing the Winners of Techtonic: Innovations in Sustainable Urban Transition

Meet our new cohort driving sustainable urban transitions! Congratulations to the winners of Techtonic – Innovations in Sustainable Urban Transition: Angirus, Strawture Eco, CarbonCraft, recycleX, Panjuri Labs, MedCuore Medical Solutions, Albatross Energetics, Accelero, Solinas Integrity, and Lambert Water. We look forward to supporting these visionary start-ups as they build pioneering solutions to help cities transition to low-carbon systems and build resilience against climate change.



IN THE MEDIA

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Circular Economy Innovations for Environmental and Social Impact

Aishwarya KS and Rushali Shivprasad, Social Alpha

To read the article

[Click here](#)

Euronews Culture Features Anish Malpani, the Indian Eco-Trailblazer Who Threw Shade at Corporate Life

To watch the video

[Click here](#)

Meet EF Polymer's Narayan Lal Gurjar on Plus 1 Eco Odyssey

To watch the video

[Click here](#)

At Social Alpha, we are on a mission to drive Economic Growth, Social Justice and Climate Action through the power of Entrepreneurship and Market-creating Innovations.

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For any media enquires or further information, reach out to us at communications@socialalpha.org