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Tireless feet

27-year-old Janet Orlene, a Bengaluru-based poet and traveller, walked 750+ kilometres along Kerala's coastline. "Climate change is far worse than we can imagine," she says



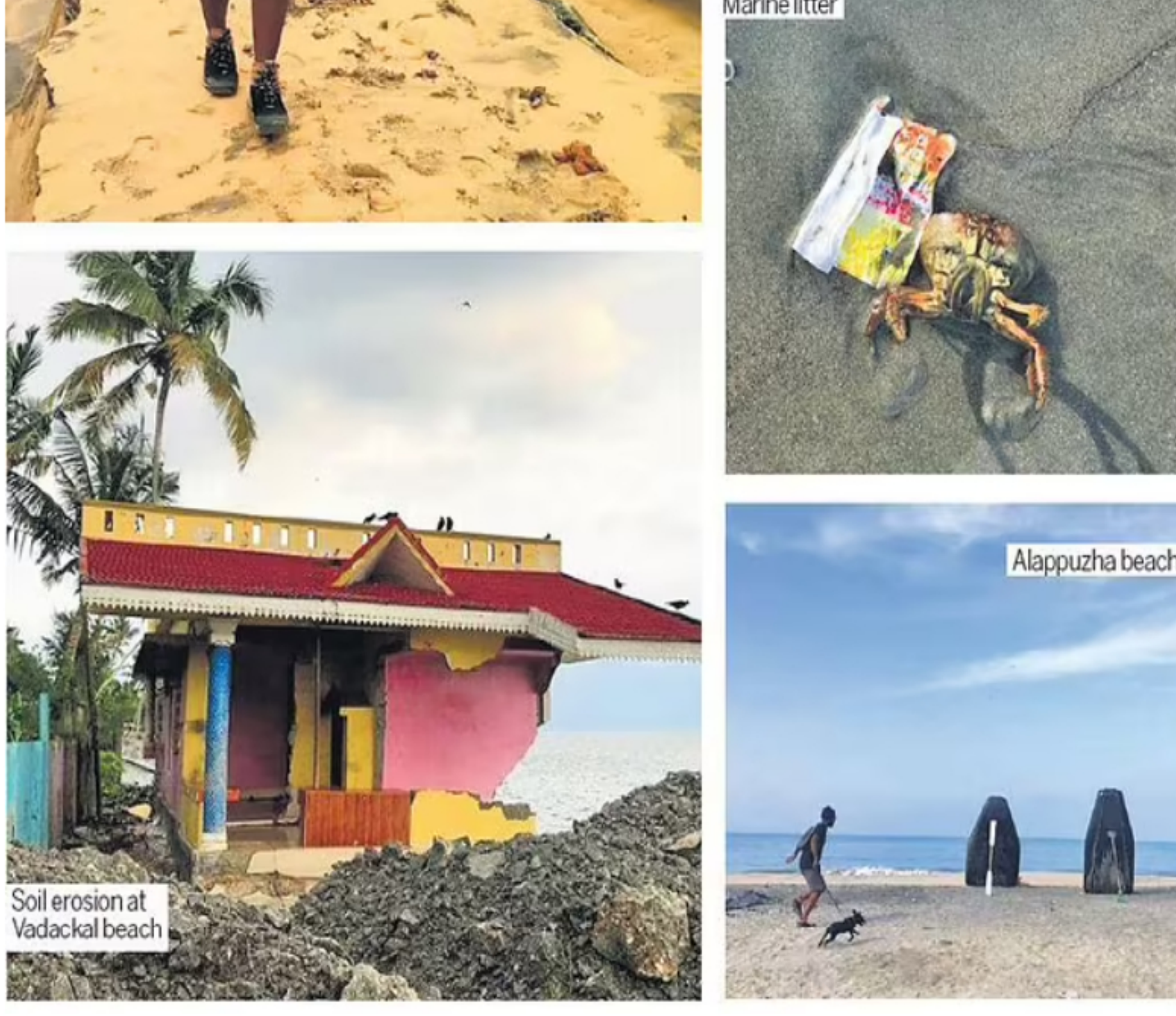
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By [Likhitha P Nair](#)
Express News Service

KOCHI: "I will definitely do it again"; 27-year-old Janet Orlene's spirit is infectious, even over the phone. This Bengaluru-based poet walked over 750 kilometres along the coastline of Kerala, for her K2K walk that started in October 2019. On October 5, she started from Batapady Beach near Bengaluru, travelling through Kasaragod, Bekal, Pallikkara, Kanhangad, Payyannoor, Kannur, Thalassery, Mahi, Koyilandy, eventually reaching Kanyakumari. Janet and her small team travelled for 62 days, winding up their adventure on December 6.

"If you look around, there is very little left for all of us to explore in this world. The last bit of wilderness is to be found along the coastlines," she says when asked why she chose to travel along beaches. "That is the hard part of living in a city. If you want to speak about nature or climate, you speak to people, you get information. But there is not a benchmark that you can relate to, because you have never been there. The day it hits us, we will be too consumed to even understand it," she adds in a tone of caution, one that is seasoned by over two months of experiences.



It wasn't easy. Off the coast of Payyannur, Janet was chased away, mistaken for a trespasser, by Navy officials. Despite the struggle, she put up with the pitch dark surroundings to find her way back and is now amused how great a story it would make a few years later. As she was crossing a beach on the Tamil Nadu-Thiruvananthapuram border, she spotted groups of jellyfish being washed ashore. Women were waiting with pots and one of them told her how the fishermen haven't had a good catch for almost a week now. "We will starve in two days", Janet remembers her dull tone.

"There were days when I almost cried. Seeing the damaged, broken home, people morbidly joking about the end of their lives. But it was important for me to remain objective, to be present for the whole journey. I was observing," she says. The data that Janet collected over the K2K walk will be sent over to the state's Suchitwa Mission, which will use it to make amends to the maintenance being done in coastal areas.

"In most places, it's sheer carelessness. People littering, companies throwing garbage into the sea. That is the most saddening to watch," she adds. When resorts or private properties are close, the difference is quite visible, she says. "You see small stretches of the beach being clean, and you know someone has been cleaning it. But that would be like trying to clean water under an open tap," Janet says.

Concluding the conversation, I ask her, "where did you find the most untouched beaches?" "If I told you, It wouldn't stay that way for long," Janet laughs, and I couldn't agree more.

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