

Rotary

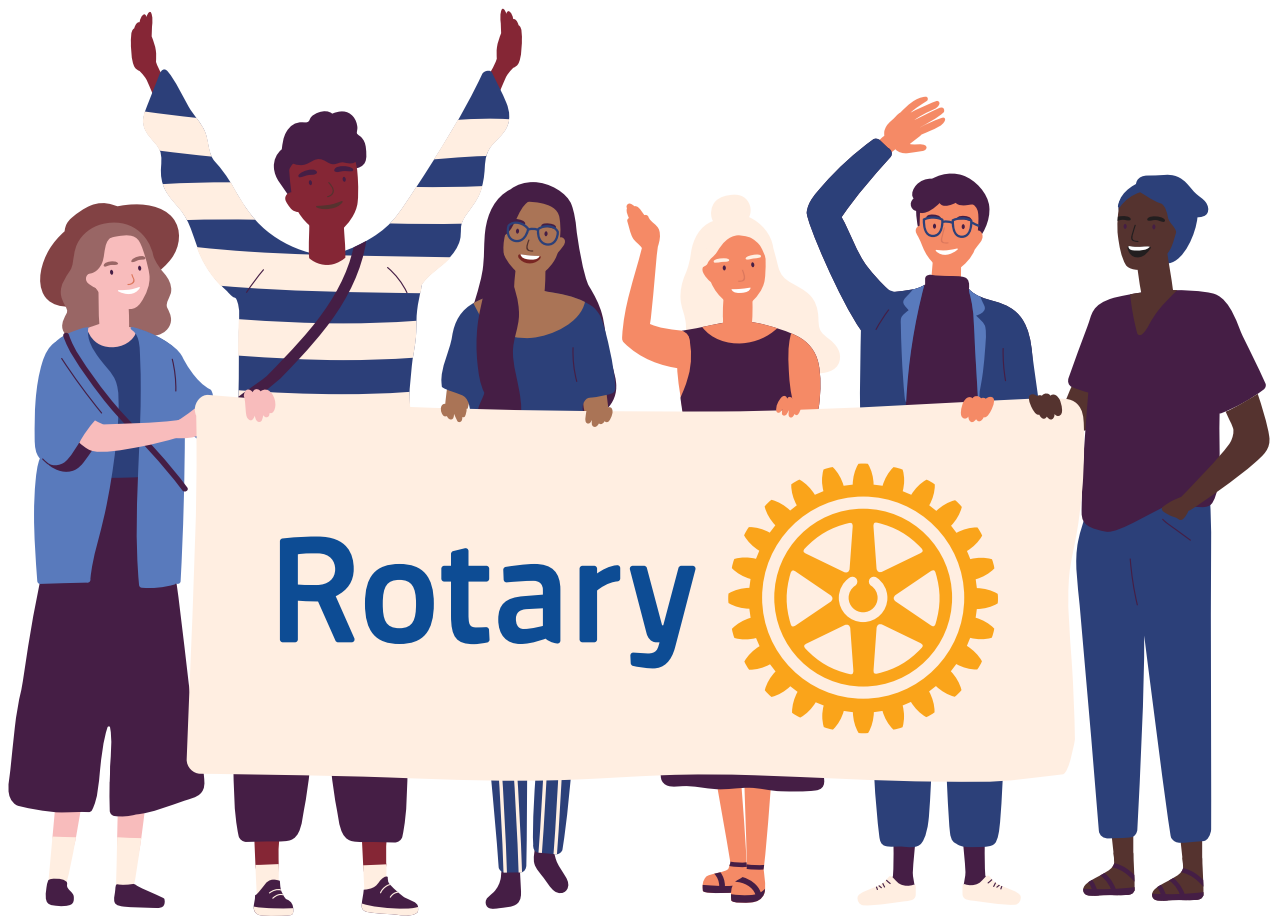
INDIA NEWS

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Rotary 



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On the cover

Past Rotary International
Director Sushil Gupta.



Scan our QR code & read our Magazine

Good coverage on addiction menace

The cover photo in the November issue is fantastic as it exhibits pictures of almost all addiction materials visible at a glance. Kudos to the Editor for such an innovative cover picture.

I was really saddened to know the passing away of PRID Sushil Gupta who was a man of integrity, and will always be remembered by the Rotary world. RI President Mehta's comparison of TRF to the Taj Mahal is exemplary. The Editor's note details several addictions in children and Rotary's efforts to combat this evil. The detailed cover story is an eyeopener.

RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi gives us a good account of Rotary's efforts in eradicating polio. The article *Building a fairer, inclusive, sustainable society during pandemic*, by PRIP Rajendra Saboo is worth reading. Kudos to RC Haripad for their yeoman service to society by providing hearing aids to so many people. Photos of Polio Day celebrations by Rotary India are superb.

Glad to read Rtn Benjamin List got the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. All other articles are of good calibre. Congrats to the editorial team for their dedication and sustained efforts in bringing out an excellent magazine.

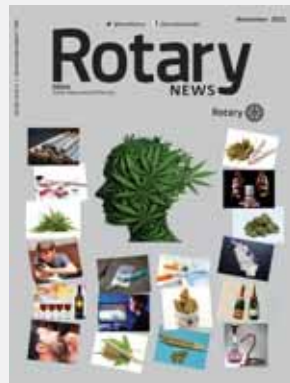
Philip Mulappone MT
RC Trivandrum
Suburban — D 3211

Inspiring articles

The article 'Words for the future' (October issue) is truly an inspiring piece since I have always been passionate about literacy. This is one project where the impact of the results will create better human beings and

better leaders as well. The participation of the GoI with Rotary is a welcome sign of many more meaningful projects getting the right visibility. We have a lot to cover in literacy.

Vivek Khandelwal
RC Deonar — D 3141



Drug addiction is a complex disease that results from a number of factors such as genetic predisposition, history of violence at home and stress. The November editorial covered various types of addictions in youth. Researchers were able to identify the factors that lead to drug abuse. Understanding the root causes of drug addiction is one of the best ways to provide effective treatment and rehabilitation.

KMK Murthy
RC Secunderabad — D 3150

The Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention (RAG-AP) under the leadership of PRIP Kalyan Banerjee is working hard over the last three years in fighting substance abuse among the youth, as detailed in the November cover story. The hard work put in by Rotarians will help this RAG succeed in its goals.

RI Prez Shekhar Mehta has rightly compared TRF to the Taj Mahal, a monument of love, in his message to Rotarians.

We can also compare this relationship to that of the unselfish love of a mother (Rotary Foundation) towards her

Editor Rasheeda Bhagat has penned a nice piece titled 'Combating addiction the Rotary way'. The tragedy is that our youth are first addicted to tobacco from 9–14 years, and then take to drugs of various kinds. RI President Mehta in his message has pointed out that Rotarians are capable of accomplishing much greater projects for the betterment of humanity. He wants us to transform our collective passion into projects that change lives.

Our greetings to the six recipients of the People of Action: Champions of Girls' Empowerment Award. Happy to learn that they will be honoured on Rotary Day at UNICEF in March.

S Muniandi
RC Dindigul Fort — D 3000

The editorial *Combating addiction the Rotary way* was an eyeopener to the public; while the article *RC Chennai Bharathi aims to empower 1,000 girls* was magnificent. The report *RC Haripad spreads cheer through hearing aids* by Rasheeda Bhagat was nice, especially the photo of local MLA Remesh Chennithala fitting a hearing aid on a beneficiary. Kiran's report *Supporting girls and women* was interesting as RC Bombay Seaside is holding self-defence workshops at schools and slums.

children (humanity).

Piyush Doshi
RC Belur — D 3291

I am happy to see the article *A Rotary hospice in Hyderabad at a cost of ₹14 crore*. RC Banjara Hills set up the hospice as a

The cover photo in the October issue — a child with a congenital heart defect being treated at the Sathya Sai Hospital — is heartbreaking. The Editor's note on girls' empowerment is interesting to read. Congrats to RC Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh for their humanitarian service. Kiran Zehra's article *Rotarians feted for Covid relief work* is excellent. Team Rotary News's article *Focus on Women's Wellness* is good. Nice to know that RID 3080 has provided decent seating facilities for school children

Daniel Chittilappilly
RC Kaloor — D 3201

Thanks to the Editor for the cover photo of a brain surrounded by various substances. This picture is in consonance with the recently held COP26 summit in Glasgow where all the world leaders were hopeful of meeting the low carbon emission targets in the coming years. Rotary clubs are taking up massive tree plantation drives, a right step towards creating Green Minds. I congratulate the editorial team for flashing an idea for a better world to live in. Let us Rotarians contribute towards eliminating hunger and working for better health and humanity.

Abhay Kishore Sandwar
RC Dhanbad Midtown — D 3250

home for terminally ill patients by constructing a 60,000 sqft building. Club president Vikas Ranga says that they had worked on this big project in a phased manner. Happy to note that this hospice accommodates around 4,000 patients.

N Jagatheesan
RC Eluru — D 3020



Cliff Dochterman no more

With deep regret we announce the passing away of Past RI President Cliff Dochterman. He served as RI president for 1992-93, and TRF chair during 1997-98. He authored the booklet, *The ABCs of Rotary*. "Real happiness is helping others" was his presidential theme.

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For Rotary, good health is a human right



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

Greetings, dear changemakers of Rotary,

Public health is on everyone's mind due to the global pandemic that still threatens the safety of ourselves and our loved ones. In a sense, Covid-19 has made all of us much more aware of the roles and responsibilities of medical professionals than we were before we had to wear masks and maintain social distance. In addition, while moving through this pandemic, we have also learned about the role we can play in keeping others safe.

December is Disease Prevention and Treatment Month in Rotary. The pandemic unfortunately has schooled most people on the toll that disease takes on our communities. But fighting disease is something that Rotarians around the world have been doing for decades. In fact, it is one of Rotary's seven areas of focus.

As Rotarians, we believe that good health and well-being is a human right — even though 400 million people across the globe do not have access to essential health services. The work we do in establishing clinics, eye hospitals and blood banks, as well as in building infrastructure for medical facilities in underserved communities, all returns to a central belief that access, prevention and education are the keys to stopping

deadly outbreaks that harm the most vulnerable.

My exposure to health work began with my club, RC Calcutta Mahanagar. There, among other things, I helped pioneer a programme called *Saving Little Hearts* that over the years has provided more than 2,500 free heart surgeries for children from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Africa. Before the programme went international, it started locally with the goal of performing just six surgeries within our community. Today, our goal is to complete another 20,000 surgeries over the next five years.

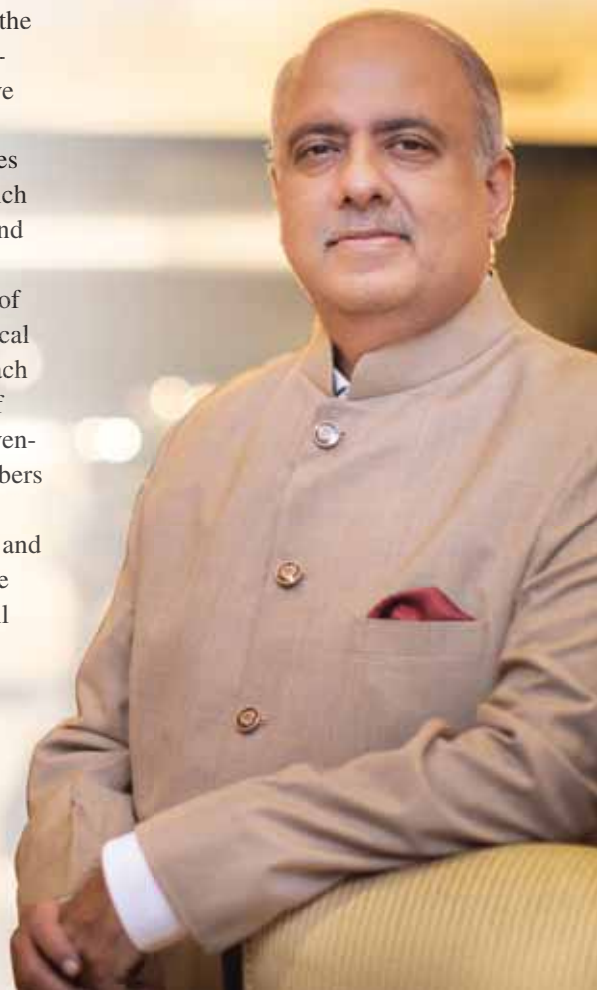
The world relies on Rotary to tackle challenges like these and to set an example for others. Over the past decade, medical professionals and government workers have provided free health services to 2.5 million people in 10 countries during Family Health Days, which are organised by Rotarians around the world. Similar health camps in India also provide thousands of surgeries to those in need. Medical missions from India to Africa each year are an excellent example of hands-on service in disease prevention and treatment. Rotary members can also get involved at a local level; clubs in the United States and Mexico, for example, fund a free health clinic in Guerrero, a small town in Mexico.

And of course, our effort to eradicate polio is by far the best story in civil society healthcare.

This month, think about how your club can focus on preventing and fighting disease. This is the time to take a bigger, better, bolder approach through both club and district projects that can impact more people. Re-evaluate where you are with your goals. Create strategies that can sustain change over years, not months.

Everyone deserves a long, healthy life. When you *Serve to Change Lives*, your actions today can help extend the lives of others.

Shekhar Mehta
President, Rotary International





Remembering Sushil Gupta

It is with a heavy heart that we at *Rotary News* are bringing out this issue of the magazine, which has on the cover the picture of a remarkable Rotarian, and an even more remarkable human being — past RI director Sushil Gupta, who is no longer with us. The man who did reach the pinnacle of Rotary International by getting nominated as the RI President for 2020–21, but had to step down because of ill-health, was a multifaceted and fascinating personality. Observing his humility, and simplicity, you could never imagine that he was one of the biggest hoteliers of India, and had such powerful political and industry connections, that for getting nods and permissions from the government to do community service projects that involved, say a railway station, a government hospital or any other government entity, where our babus, seated on high perches, would act all high and mighty, Gupta would skillfully nudge open a door.

Playing golf, at the Delhi Golf Club, was his passion. In one of his interviews to me, he had chuckled that many of his golf buddies were drawn from government ranks and when Rotary's intent of doing good to the community was properly explained, they would quickly "open doors for us". A gentleman to the core, and a gallant one at that, his sense of humour was another endearing quality. His laughter was hearty and his genial and generous hospitality, as he hosted you a meal at his hotel or home, was legendary. As his chefs danced attention on you at his hotel, you felt like a queen!

My colleague Jaishree knows how elephantine was his memory and meticulous his follow-up. A passionate Wash in Schools warrior, his penchant for water conservation and augmentation was well-known throughout the Rotary world, and hence he was chosen as the first global chair of WinS when the programme was introduced. After she had covered a Rotary WinS project in a rural Karnataka school, where a bright-eyed school girl had emerged as a champion of every home in the village building a toilet, as the Rotarians were leaving, she requested them to provide a laptop for the school. A promise was made, and was reported in *Rotary News*. Gupta read it, stored it in his memory and would periodically call Jaishree and the club officers to find out if the laptop had indeed been gifted to the school as promised. His calls never stopped, till the laptop had been given!

That was the kind of sincerity and attention to detail that Gupta brought into his Rotary service. No project was too small for the man, who always thought out-of-the-box, dreamt big and accomplished big. More important, he believed that when a promise is made, even though it might be only to an inconsequential, unknown schoolgirl in a village, it has to be honoured. Tells you so much about the man.

Sushilji, you will be missed by the entire Rotary world; you were a true dyed-in-the-wool Rotarian, and did much more than just mouthing Rotary's core values.

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Director

Time for the magical DisCons

It is that time of the year when the sun is said to be born again and begins a new journey across the heavens. It is a time for joy and kindness towards one's fellow beings. Christmas is just around the corner and people all over the world shower gifts on their loved ones. It is time for love, affection and fellowship.

It is also the time when we think back to the New Year resolutions we made last January, and wonder whether we kept them or completely forgot them; the good habits we decided to pick up, the bad habits we promised to give up.

December marks the end of the first half of the Rotary year; six months down, six more to go. It is time to appraise our own performance as Rotarians and Rotary clubs. Have we given enough to our Rotary Foundation? Have we brought enough new members to Rotary? Have we done enough to serve to change lives?

As lockdown restrictions are slowly lifted, Rotary clubs are gradually moving back to regular physical meetings. While we did our best to use virtual platforms over the last 18 months, last year's

fall in membership highlights the importance of meeting each other in person.

District governors will now be preparing for their respective district conferences, the high point of their tenure. Rotarians everywhere look forward to the great fellowship, exchange of ideas and exposure to the world that comes from attending the district conference. There must be a lot of planning, organising and trouble-shooting afoot as the conference team rustles up maximum registrations, the best speakers and the best entertainment for you.

I urge all new Rotarians not to miss their district conference. This is where you can experience the magic of Rotary beyond the club level. The RI President's Representative will be there to share the Rotary leadership's thoughts with you.

I would love to be there at your district conference to meet and shake hands with each one of you.

I wish you all the best! Have a wonderful Christmas, and let us prepare to welcome the New Year on January 1, 2022!



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Mahesh'.

Dr Mahesh Kotbagi
RI Director, 2021–23

Earth is our only home

Rotary shares an interest in protecting our common legacy — environment. The recently added Area of Focus has kindled the enthusiasm of several Rotarians around the world and the younger generation in particular. Clubs in our region are actively engaged in activities like afforestation, protecting water bodies and other similar ones. Judicious use of fossil fuels and reducing the use of non-biodegradable plastics have to be promoted on a wider and larger scale.

We need to be conscious of the fact that we coexist with other species and preserving this delicate balance among various species of flora and fauna should top the agenda. While this may interest the younger generation more, as they perceive their stake to be higher, everyone must realise that they are all stakeholders in preserving this planet.

Rotarians have to be in the forefront of this campaign. We must not only talk but walk the talk as well. A lot can be done by each one of us — in our daily personal lives and in professional activities as well. The availability of global grants coupled with the interest several corporates have



shown in supporting this cause augurs well. However, we need to act with urgency. I urge clubs and Rotarians to think, plan and implement projects in protecting the environment. There are several experts available in our regions as resource persons. This planet is our house and keeping it in order and preserving it for posterity has to be our job.

In our professional activities, many of us have a Plan B, should the first plan fail. But we must remember that in this instance, we do not have the luxury of a planet B. We cannot afford to fail and must act now!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. S. Venkatesh'.

A S Venkatesh
RI Director, 2021–23

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Together, we can reach our goals



December marks a special time of the year. It's a time of holiday gatherings and family reunions (Covid-19 permitting). It's also the halfway point of the Rotary year, when we look back on our goals, reflecting on the what and the why of our work.

First, the what. This year, to stay on course to reach our goal, we need to raise \$50 million for PolioPlus, with a 2-to-1 match by the Bill & Melinda Gates

Foundation bringing the total to \$150 million. To keep our Rotary Foundation programmes running strong, we set a goal to raise \$125 million for the Annual Fund. We also aim to raise \$95 million for the Endowment Fund in outright gifts and new commitments, and a further \$40 million for other outright gifts.

So how do we reach our grand total of \$410 million? We must remember that in all great endeavours, including Rotary, we are part of a TEAM: Together, Everyone Achieves More.

You can't have a great team without great PEOPLE. P stands for pride in our organisation, our achievements, and our potential. E is our empathy for others, which we transform into service. O has two parts: the tremendous opportunities to make a difference that Rotary has granted us, and an obligation to pull others up and to increase our ranks. Our second P is for perseverance, helping us stick to our goals, like polio eradication, when the going gets tough. L stands for leadership, and E for enthusiasm — the fuel of Rotary.

While we are revisiting our goals, we also need to remember the why. For me, this needs little explanation. Why wouldn't you help expectant mothers and their children survive and thrive by supporting a Rotary Foundation grant? And why wouldn't you initiate programmes to help preserve the environment, our cherished home? The pandemic has only renewed my conviction that life is precious, and we must seize every opportunity to enhance the lives of others.

You are one of the PEOPLE on our TEAM. I encourage you this month to join other leaders who participate in Rotary's strong tradition of philanthropy by making a gift to The Rotary Foundation. It is the season of giving, and every gift counts. Please contribute any amount that feels right by Dec 31, and your gift will keep on giving in 2022 and for years to come. There are many ways to give, as a club or an individual — why not set up a giving plan? TRF offers us countless opportunities to help make a difference in the world. Let us never squander those opportunities, nor take our Foundation for granted.

Judy and I wish you the happiest of holidays.

John F Germ
Foundation Trustee Chair

Little drops make an ocean

The growth and recognition of Rotary as a service organisation for over a century is closely linked to TRF. Doing good in the world does pay dividend; TRF puts contributions from Rotarians and others into service projects that change lives around the world.



Paul Harris said, "Whatever Rotary may mean to us, to the world it will be known by the result it achieves." Undoubtedly the singular Foundation programme that got the world to sit up and take notice of Rotary was the polio eradication campaign. In 1979, Rotary undertook a project to immunise six million children in the Philippines. This success led to launch of PolioPlus in 1985 on a global scale. There are many stories about TRF's work in various avenues but the one given below is the stuff legends are made of.

A four-day ceasefire was declared during the insurgency in Northern Sri Lanka so that RI could administer oral polio vaccine to children. I urge all the Rotary stalwarts who seek contributions for TRF to relate such stories, as everyone is moved by stories that make a difference.

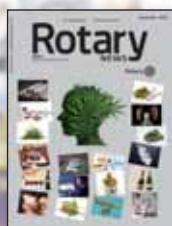
To Rotarians who want to contribute but do not because of the mistaken belief that the amount they have in mind will make no difference to the big picture, I say, "Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land. So the little minutes, humble though they may be, make the mighty ages of eternity."

I am often asked how an apparently meagre individual contribution can be of any use to TRF. Let me say that for as little as ₹42, a child can be protected from polio; ₹3,500 can help provide clean water to prevent water-borne illnesses. Rotarian Arthur Sheldon who joined RC Chicago in 1908 and coined the Rotary motto, said in 1922, "Giving precedes the getting as certainly as seed time precedes the harvest."

Friends, think of giving to our Foundation not as a duty but a privilege.

Gulam A Vahanvaty
Trustee, The Rotary Foundation

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District Wise TRF Contributions as on October 2021

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contributions
India					
2981	51,542	1,112	0	151,814	204,468
2982	27,046	5,633	0	2,449	35,128
3000	3,630	11	0	1,500	5,140
3011	6,322	3,572	0	81,879	91,774
3012	19,993	3,811	25,041	228,613	277,458
3020	31,924	5,828	19,596	4,620	61,968
3030	13,187	267	18,027	0	31,481
3040	18,924	250	0	20,328	39,502
3053	3,052	211	27	0	3,290
3054	2,902	766	0	166,680	170,348
3060	32,014	176	0	64,607	96,797
3070	8,395	0	0	27,600	35,995
3080	7,033	4,086	0	1,404	12,523
3090	13,498	0	28,000	0	41,498
3100	16,170	0	0	2,137	18,307
3110	5,120	0	0	0	5,120
3120	21,030	1,000	0	0	22,030
3131	167,336	26,206	0	187,001	380,543
3132	18,860	1,139	5,000	3,507	28,506
3141	224,282	1,876	64,865	181,499	472,521
3142	132,508	1,554	8,145	24	142,231
3150	12,721	6,087	0	18,120	36,928
3160	4,449	2,387	17,264	0	24,100
3170	26,454	8,504	1,710	29,297	65,964
3181	5,411	1,999	0	0	7,410
3182	8,762	5,225	0	0	13,986
3190	81,600	6,437	30,411	0	118,448
3201	37,266	51,967	0	203,255	292,488
3203	14,149	13,706	6,086	145,938	179,878
3204	1,091	412	0	1,036	2,539
3211	13,655	280	0	13,200	27,135
3212	9,268	1,099	1,036	588	11,991
3231	7,278	5,203	0	2,851	15,332
3232	32,932	47,321	16,601	208,433	305,287
3240	18,615	9,686	0	34,070	62,371
3250	4,098	2,335	1,036	12,746	20,215
3261	3,645	304	0	28,489	32,438
3262	1,670	277	0	250	2,197
3291	45,042	1,651	11,171	10,166	68,029
India Total	1,152,875	222,375	254,014	1,834,100	3,463,364
3220 Sri Lanka	34,232	6,383	1,510	1,000	43,125
3271 Pakistan	308	316	0	5,240	5,865
3272 Pakistan	12,595	10,623	0	0	23,217
3281 Bangladesh	12,173	4,121	13,000	16,399	45,693
3282 Bangladesh	9,881	1,182	1,000	500	12,563
3292 Nepal	29,440	4,898	0	62,704	97,041
South Asia Total	1,251,504	249,897	269,524	1,919,943	3,690,869

Annual Fund (AF) includes SHARE, Areas of Focus, World Fund and Disaster Response.

Source: RI South Asia Office.

Sushil Gupta, the Rotary soldier, lives on in our hearts

Kalyan Banerjee

If I ever had to write a piece for the *Reader's Digest* magazine on the most unforgettable character I had ever met, then Sushil Gupta, a Rotarian, would surely be the one I would write about. He is unforgettable because Sushil was a man of many parts and the more you got to know each one of those parts, the more you loved him and admired him.

I had first met Sushil around the mid-1980s, as a past district governor from Delhi of the then RI district 301. I met him in PRID Sudarshan Agarwal's office in the Parliament Building in Delhi and Sushil immediately struck me as someone different and special, with his laughter, his ideas and his zest for life. And the forty-odd years, that we spent together as friends, only enhanced my admiration for him.

Sushil was a man of many parts, all packaged beautifully together. Apart from being a religious man, Sushil believed in, learnt and practised Pranic healing.



Sushil in fact, was a man of many, many parts, all packaged beautifully together. For instance, apart from being a religious man, Sushil had as his guru a Pranic healer from Manila who influenced him greatly. He believed in it, and then learnt and practised the art of Pranic healing on his own with a series of mantras and chants and waving of his palms. And, if anyone had a backache or a headache, Sushil would immediately put into practise his Pranic prowess, and then ask, how do you feel? Do you feel better? And, more often than not, the illness seemed to have abated.

Sushil was also a keen and regular golfer, and everyone in the Delhi Golf Club, the big shots and the not so-big ones, all seemed to know him.



PRID Sushil Gupta and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee.

Travelling was another of his favourite pastimes and he believed in taking difficult treks in the Himalayas. I remember a trip he took to the Mansarovar, with Chinese permit, for Tibet travel, with his daughter Gunjan and mine, Ruma, all of them camping in tents beyond the Tibetan borders.

Sushil, of course, had a knack for making friends and the fact that he ran the

wonderful Hyatt Regency Hotels in Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai, enhanced his connectivity manifold. What always amazed me was that he was a business person, not looking for any government connections and concessions, never doing anything less than legal, and yet the entire bureaucracy at Delhi respected him a lot. In recent years, as he built his own 500-room JW Marriott Hotel in Delhi, a top-of the line, six-star facility, Sushil himself worked so hard to sort out problems of getting it ready, of management, of getting the required permits from the various government departments for fire, safety, installing facilities or importing quality food, furniture

or security systems, and he would proudly tell me, “Kalyan, I have never ever spent on anything, more than what is legally required.” And Sushil ran his hotels, with the help of his partners and his son Sandip, with the kind of love and care which only a creator can give, and it was no surprise that he was always the preferred host of prime ministers and kings, or received recognition from the government with a Padma Shri Award.

Rotary has always been an organisation he loved and I have

When I met him for the first time, he immediately struck me as someone different and special, with his laughter, his ideas and his zest for life.

never seen many Rotarians with total commitment to the causes they believed in. He took up Rotary's initiative in water management, controlling India's myriad droughts or floods through barrages and check dams and raising of groundwater levels where water did not exist or collecting rainwater. He would go to the driest and most arid areas in Rajasthan and give direction to help raise funds for managing and augmenting water resources. Controlling pollution or creating new toilets for the masses, and working with the biggest names in the field, such as Sunita Narayan or Rajendra Singh or Dr Bindeshwar Prasad, or working in Kutch to help build schools and homes after the devastating earthquakes, or dashing off to the coasts in Odisha or

Chennai after cyclones and tsunami to start relief work — all these were what he absolutely loved to do. I would often wonder about his many personalities — the outstanding hotelier, the dedicated social worker, the great golfer, the untiring mountain trekker, the dedicated Rotarian, the loving family man and above all, an unforgettable friend.



It was in mid-2015–16 that Sushil, who had served Rotary both as director and as TRF trustee, was urged by Rotarians and friends to offer to serve Rotary not only locally but go global. By then, the new JW Marriott near the Delhi airport was functional, and Sushil had some time on his hands. He convinced his spouse Vinita to continue his Rotary adventure, and the flood of friendly support from the Rotarians persuaded him to put in his bid and lo and behold, on his very first attempt at the top job, he was the unanimous choice of the Nominating Committee for RI President for the year 2020–21, the fourth Indian ever chosen to lead our organisation.

After the statutory wait for three months, and then joined by Vinita, Sushil started going around clubs, and districts meeting people, basking in their joy, planning with past president Raja to select his theme for the year and getting ready for his year on the job.

During all his fairly hectic travels, Sushil started to notice that he was sometimes having



PRID Gupta, PRIP Banerjee and PRID Jackson Hsieh at a Polio Summit in Delhi in 2012.

difficulties while speaking, specially towards the end of a speech when he would get a bit garbled, and stammer more often, sometimes getting tired too. He started consulting his doctors including his medical friends in Rotary, Dr Subramanian, incoming governor from district 3011. He seemed to be developing some kind of a nervous disorder and the doctors decided that a more detailed and thorough professional investigation was required. Sushil and Vinita then went to Houston, US, for a detailed clinical investigation and Sushil was diagnosed to be afflicted by a rare progressive neurological disease. There is no known cure, though a hereditary origin is reported in about 15 per cent of the cases, but medication and treatment can slow down its progress.

Immediately on his return, Sushil announced with regret that he would be unable to carry on with his responsibilities for Rotary and

was therefore resigning from his post as the president nominee of Rotary.

Sushil first stayed at home, and was able to walk around in the initial stages. He then moved around in a wheelchair and finally was confined to bed.

He was fully aware of the illness and its consequences and displayed enormous strength of character, both in accepting it and in dealing with it. His cognitive function, his memory and desire to communicate remained intact for a long time. He continued to communicate through writing and using an iPad and eventually, through eye contact and foot movements, while he and the family fought bravely. The family and the home care attendants provided exemplary medical care and emotional support. Vinita was always by his side 24/7, and sometimes visitors would drop in. But slowly, the visits too slowed down and then, stopped.

Sushil was ever the soldier and Vinita was his Florence Nightingale. And he fought valiantly and never, ever gave up.

So, what does one say about such a man? And his destiny?

Gen Douglas McArthur, the US Commander-in-Chief in the Pacific, said, after World War II was over: 'Old soldiers never die. They just fade away.'

But Sushil, the Rotary soldier, will never fade away. Because to live in the hearts of those he leaves behind is to live forever.

Sushil Gupta, my friend, Rest in Peace.

The writer is past RI president

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat and from Sushil Gupta's archives.

Designed by Krishnapratheesh

Sushil Gupta ... memories and moments



PRID Sushil Gupta
with spouse Vinita.



With PRID Bharat
Pandya.



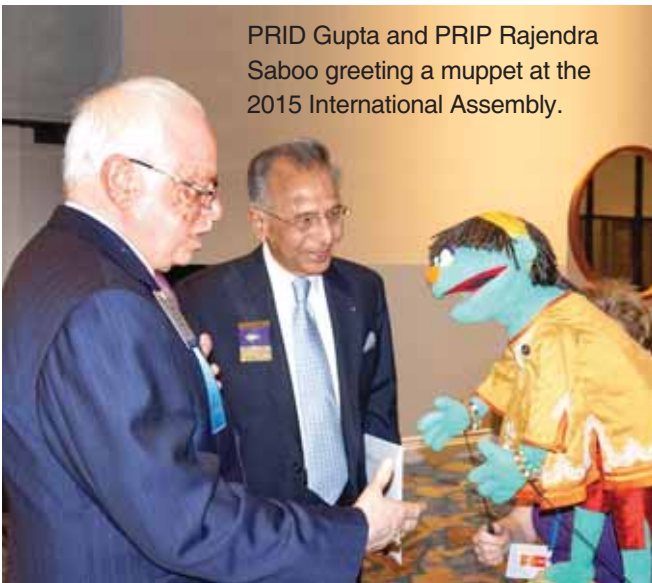
PRID Gupta and
Vinita with PRIP
Gary Huang and
Corinna.



With PRIP Kalyan Banerjee.



With PRIP K R Ravindran and Vanathy.



PRID Gupta and PRIP Rajendra Saboo greeting a muppet at the 2015 International Assembly.

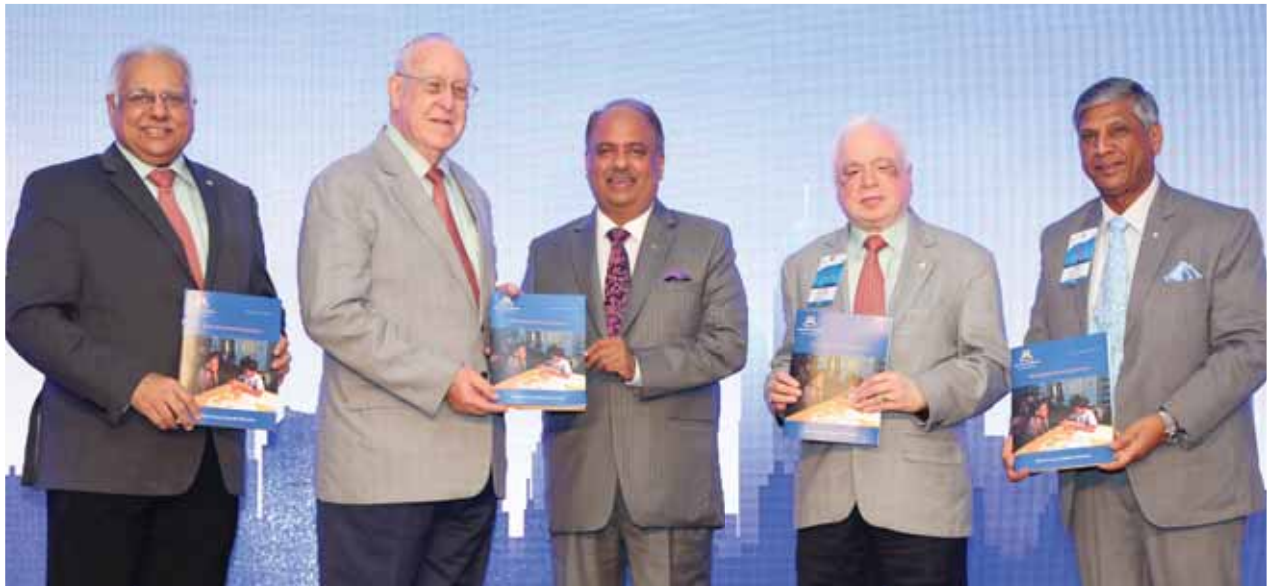


With PRID PT Prabhakar.



PRID Gupta dancing with Sonal Sanghvi at the 2019 International Assembly.

Clockwise: PRID Gupta, PRIP Banerjee and PDG Ashok Gupta inaugurating a check dam in Rajasthan. • **From R:** PRIPs Saboo, Banerjee, TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty, PRIDs Manoj Desai and C Basker felicitate PRID Gupta and Vinita in Delhi on his appointment as RI President Nominee. • **From L:** INPPC chairman Deepak Kapur, PRIP Banerjee, Pakistan PolioPlus Committee chairman Aziz Memon, PRID Gupta and PRIP Saboo. • PRID Gupta with PRIDs Pandya, C Basker, TRF Trustee Vahanvaty and PRID Kamal Sanghvi. • **From L:** PRID Desai, PRIP John Germ, RI President Shekhar Mehta, PRIDs Gupta and Das at the Dubai Zone Institute.





On top: PRIDs Gupta, YP Das, Ashok Mahajan, and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and Binota in discussion with the then CM of Delhi Sheila Dikshit.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat,
and special arrangement

Designed by Krishna Pratheesh S

Remembering India's milkman

Vergheese Kurien

Rasheeda Bhagat

As we celebrate the birth centenary of India's legendary milkman Vergheese Kurien, born on Nov 26, 1921, the mind goes back to the two delightfully long interviews I did with him in 1998 and 1999 at his office at the Amul headquarters in Anand, Gujarat, for *The Hindu Businessline*, where I was working then. I was dazzled by his sparkling wit and great sense of humour, his passion and zeal, and the ability to brush off the power he wielded as the undisputed milkman of India, who first took on the Parsi Polson and then multinationals like Nestlé.

But the man who could be extremely rude to politicians and bureaucrats — his pet peeve was the IAS tribe, and he fought tooth and nail for long years to prevent an IAS officer succeeding him as NDDB (National Dairy Development Board) chairman — was extremely gentle, friendly and accessible to farmers.

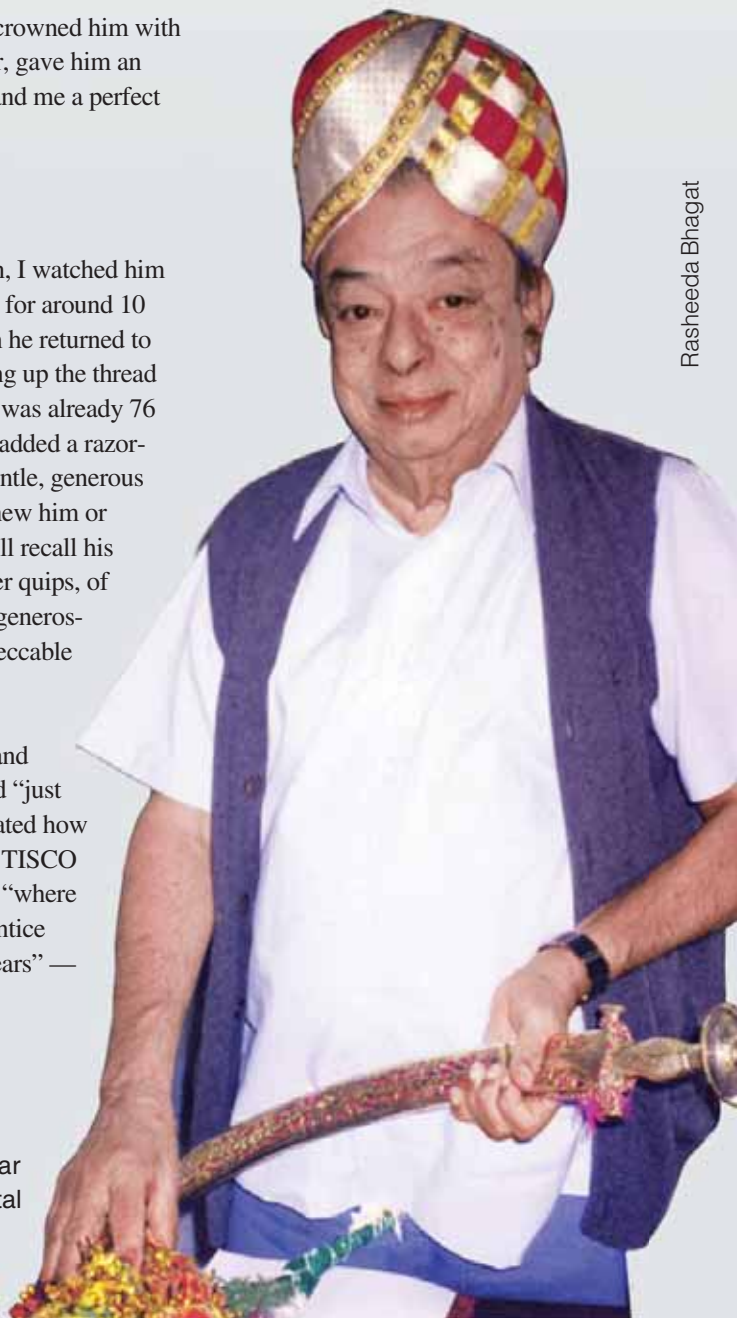
My interview in 1998 was held just after he had won a long-drawn battle with the GoI over his successor at Amul... but more of that later. As we chatted, he allowed into his room a large group of farmers, with a polite "I hope you don't mind; they have come from a long distance to greet me and they will have to return to their villages today itself." To these farmers from a milk cooperative, he was nothing less than god; after trying to

touch his feet, they crowned him with a colourful headgear, gave him an ornamental sword, and me a perfect photo opportunity.

In total admiration, I watched him bantering with them for around 10 minutes, after which he returned to the interview, picking up the thread effortlessly. And he was already 76 then! In my mind, I added a razor-sharp brain to his gentle, generous heart. Those who knew him or worked with him will recall his sharp wit and sharper quips, of course, but also his generosity of spirit and impeccable integrity.

He loved telling the story of his life and I met him when he'd "just lost" his job! He related how he found his stint in TISCO (now Tata Steel) — "where I was the best apprentice Tata had in many years" —

Vergheese Kurien adorned with a colourful headgear and an ornamental sword by visiting farmers.



Rasheeda Bhagat

stifling “after they found out that my uncle (John Mathai) was the big boss there. I told my uncle I had to leave; if I go to the club all the pretty girls come to me. My supervisor keeps asking me if I am free for dinner!”

So he left, on a GoI scholarship, to study dairy engineering in Pittsburgh. Was it easy to get the scholarship, I asked him. His response had me in splits!

“Oh yes; the Chief Justice of India was the chairman of the selection committee, and asked me, ‘What is pasteurisation?’ I said ‘something to do with milk’. He said: ‘Right, you are selected’. This was because no other engineer knew what pasteurisation was, and there was then no pasteurisation plant in India. I said: ‘Please, can’t you give me something like metallurgy?’ But he said, ‘this or nothing else’.”

But Kurien had his “revenge, and cheated the GoI by doing my Masters in metallurgy and nuclear physics. By that time, one of the underground explosions had taken place and my ambition was to become a nuclear engineer.” But fate had other plans for him; “luckily for Dr Abdul Kalam, the undersecretary didn’t like my green hat and yellow trousers and packed me off to a dump called Anand, near Bombay, as a Class I gazetted officer on ₹350 salary, to see cows!” His protest that he was getting

Flying buffaloes to Thailand

Kurien’s story-narrating skills were phenomenal. And he related the craziest of stories with a deadpan expression. Around the time I met him, there was a lot of buzz around NDDB’s plan to gift 50 buffaloes to the king of Thailand to commemorate 50 years of his reign. Naturally the newspapers were full of speculation over how they would be transported to Thailand. Would Kurien’s successor, Amrita Patel, really accompany the buffaloes dressed in the colourful garb of a *bharwad* (shepherdess), as was being written, I asked her. She demurred and said: “Yes, Dr Kurien said he would give me a lot of silver jewellery to wear which I could keep. So I agreed.”

On the mode of transport, she had first decided to ship them, but couldn’t find a

ship. So she called the Air India MD to charter a flight and he said: “My god, you’re flying buffaloes! They will cost a hell of a lot”. But as Kurien had made the commitment, there was no other option.

Added Kurien with a straight face: “I suppose you know they travel only first class? Air India is worried about the smell in the aircraft, but they don’t know we won’t be feeding them much or giving them anything to drink, and will sedate them. Otherwise, if two of them start fighting, they can wreck the plane.”

When I commented on the price tag, he said: “I hope you know the profits of the Board. After hiding ₹50 crore, it is ₹117 crore. And I don’t pay any tax. It is under the Act. Of course, I wrote the Act.”

His greatest fear was that the babus were just waiting to get control over the NDDB, which was sitting on a neat pile of money... the figure given by him then was ₹300 crore.

double in TISCO came to nought; he was under contract.

Here are the facts — shorn of Kurien’s quips and wisecracks. The US-educated engineer found the Gandhian Tribhuvandas Patel struggling to run a decrepit dairy against an established MNC player.

Finding this a challenge he couldn’t resist, Kurien helped him stabilise that dairy, gradually building in the processed milk cooperatives and empowering the lowly milk farmers.

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, impressed by the Amul model, requested him to replicate it across India. The young Kurien dictated his own terms to the PM — the headquarters of the proposed Dairy

Kurien quotes

Meeting the King of

Thailand: When the king said he wanted to meet me, the Indian ambassador to Thailand said, 'Many of our visiting ministers ask for an appointment with the king and I have never succeeded in getting one. So what is so special about you?' So I said: 'Cows! What else?'

Ticking off an MNC chief on NDDB JV with Sri Lanka:

I told him I don't go to Delhi to meet an MNC chief; I go there to do my work. So he came here and said, 'What will happen to us?' I said that doesn't concern me. It is about time the white man understood that all Indians are not for sale. There will be a few who cannot be bought and they will defend India's business interest.

Helping Pakistan improve its milk yield:

They wanted to become self-sufficient. I said, 'You have liberalised, globalised and eaten up

all your cows. You have no brains. I am a Christian and don't have any sentiment for the cow, but I will not agree to good cows being eaten up.'

Amrita Patel's best qualification to be NDDB chairman:

The best qualification madam, is to be groomed by Dr Kurien.

Farmers: The farmer has no bargaining power; he has to sell milk at whatever price is given. That is why the cooperative model... command over procurement, processing and marketing of his produce, is the only solution. The dairy should belong to him. That is why Sardar Patel said: 'Polson ne kaadhi muko' (Throw out Polson).

Exporting milk to Pakistan:

Why not? If I can send milk from Delhi to Calcutta, Can't I send it from Delhi to Lahore. All that is required is to bribe one guard!

the secretary (of the department) will go to the minister and say: 'I have bad news, Kurien is dead. I have prepared a telegram but, meanwhile, I will hold additional charge.' That will be the beginning of the end; the invasion of the IAS."

The babus returned the compliment, hated his guts and were full of tales about how Kurien held GoI to ransom. A former commerce secretary once told me a story about how King Birendra of Nepal had requested the GoI for a few tonnes of ghee. "Even though it was a government-to-government request, bureaucrats in Delhi had to move

The man who could be extremely rude to politicians and bureaucrats, was extremely gentle, friendly and accessible to farmers.

Board will be in Anand, away from bureaucratic interference of Delhi. The terms were accepted! The rest is history!

Contempt for babus

Kurien fought a long and hard battle with the GoI to ensure that his successor at the NDDB was not an IAS officer, as his greatest fear was that

the babus were just waiting to get control over the NDDB, which was sitting on a neat pile of money... the figure given by him then was ₹300 crore. When I met him, his protégé, Amrita Patel, had been named his successor, and he was pleased as punch.

Otherwise, he said, "supposing, as I am talking to you, I drop dead,

**HE BROUGHT
ANAND TO
MILLIONS OF
FARMERS...**



heaven and earth to get the permission of the Ghee Czar of India to send the consignment,” he had frowned!

Kurien’s take, of course, was that he had zealously guarded the cooperative movement and the milk bodies, “that rightly belong to the Indian dairy farmers”, from being hijacked by the babus. So allergic was he to this fraternity that he refused to release funds from the NDDB to the Kerala Federation “because it is headed by an IAS officer.”

I had interviewed him in the first week of December after Amrita Patel had been appointed his successor; he had been NDDB chairman for 33 years. He received me cheerfully and said: “I have all the time in the world; you see I’ve just lost my job.” In the next breath, he added: “Every time I open my mouth, I land in trouble, but that’s okay!”

My first question was on the battle he had just won; with a guffaw

Kurien replied, “If the Government of India had, in its wisdom, chosen an IAS officer to succeed me, do you think he would have been allowed to step into the Amul campus? The Patels would have said we have a Patel (Amrita, the daughter of former Finance Minister HM Patel) and we want Patel raj. The chairman of Amul came to me and said: ‘*Sala kaun hei woh IAS officer? Hum log usko dekh lege!*’ (Who the hell is that IAS officer; we will take care of him.)” I told them all this is not required, that would be the last resort.”

He was all praise for Amrita’s management capability, competence and integrity, which was of utmost importance; “you see we have a lot of money, and money attracts thieves,” he said.

I did interview her later the same day, and she was very respectful while talking about her mentor, but made it clear, even then, that her managerial style was very different from Kurien’s. Perhaps, that was the reason the two of them started

Luckily for Dr Abdul Kalam, the undersecretary didn’t like my green hat and yellow trousers and packed me off to a dump called Anand as a Class I gazetted officer on ₹350 salary, to see cows.

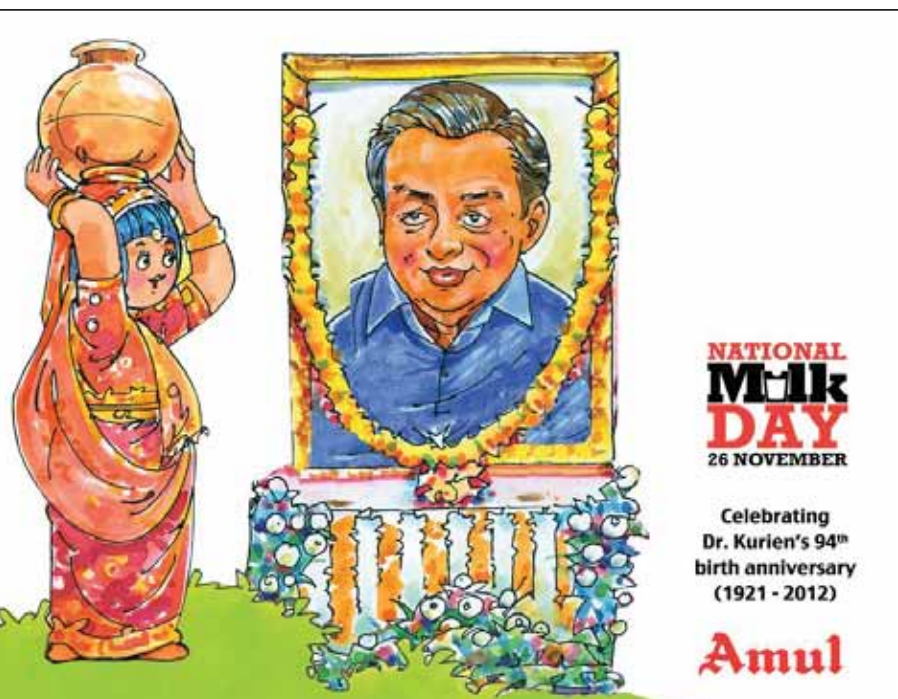
sparring after a while, sometimes very publicly.

Unfortunately, there was a shadow over Kurien’s later years; we all know that the best of top honchos overstay their welcome in institutions they have founded and nurtured, as Kurien did with Amul and the NDDB. When he was asked to step down in 2006 as the chairman of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, on grounds of “no confidence” his heartbreaking comment was: “Do I deserve this kind of treatment?” He passed away in 2012.

But what nobody can take away from him is what he did to the Indian farmer. In his darkest hours and when he was under attack, he said he had always got his “strength and support from the Indian farmer. It has been my good fortune to work with, and for, the Indian farmer,” he said.

Revolutionising the way milk is procured and marketed in India, getting those who produce this precious commodity their due, and succeeding against all odds will always remain Kurien’s legacy.

Can you believe that milk was a scarce commodity in Bombay in 1970? The next time you step into an Indian supermarket and look at the variety of milk and milk products on offer, do send up a cheerful ‘hello’ to the centenarian in heaven. He will surely wave back! ■



Dada, My grandfather

Siddharth Sheth

I was a mischievous child growing up. I often found myself in the master-in-charge or the principal's office in all the schools I attended, whether it was for climbing up onto the classroom roof to escape classes, flinging books out of the window to see how far they would fly; the list is never-ending. My mother would be exasperated but Dada found them amusing.

On the rare occasion that Dada accompanied my mother to school to rescue me, the principals would be shocked to know that I was the grandson of "the" man pioneering the cooperative movement and ushering India as the world's milk Mecca! Dada would often endearingly call me *mandan* in Malayalam, meaning silly fellow. His philosophy was simple, "One should never break a child's spirit."

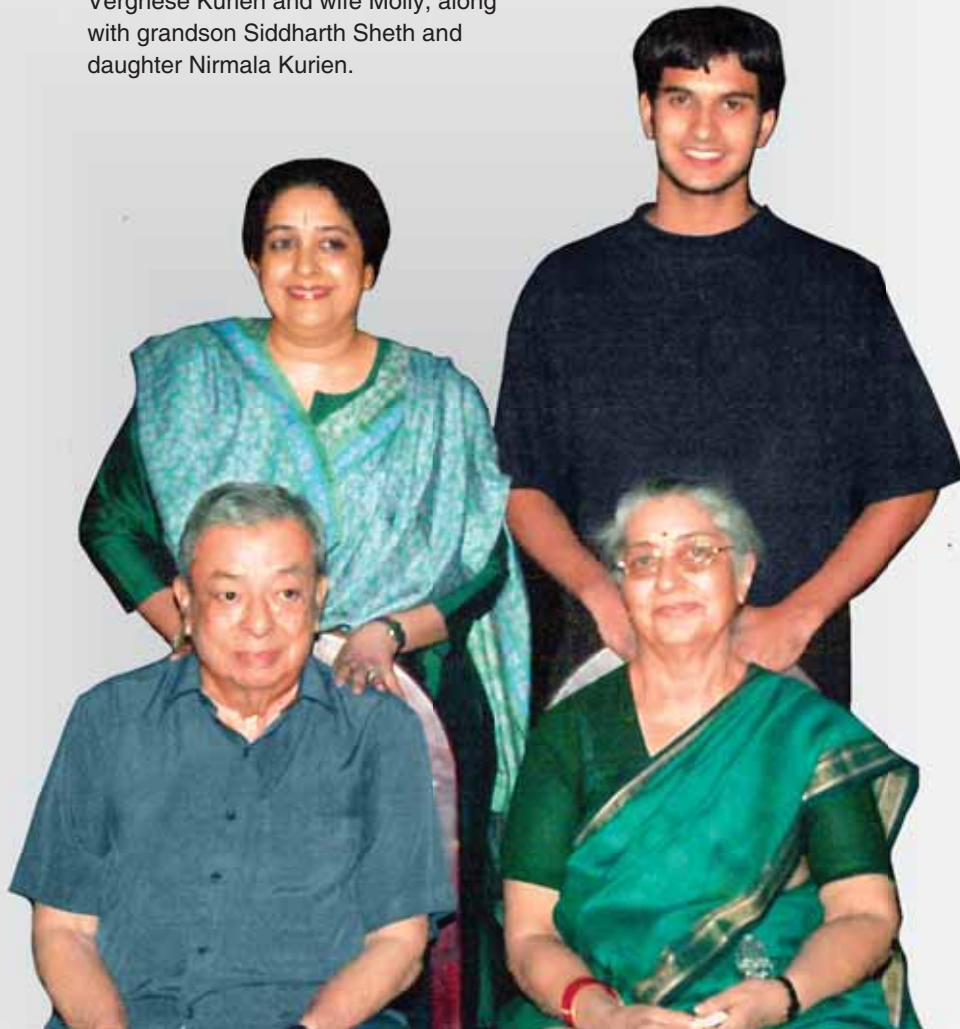
My grandparents would visit my mother and I in Chennai whenever possible, which was pretty often. Usually on the weekends. Their go-to hotel was the Taj Coromandel; Dada would ask me to bring a couple of my friends for an afternoon swim in the pool, followed by a snack. My friends loved chatting with my grandparents as also the high tea. Dada would sit on the edge of the pool watching us like a hawk, trumpeting instructions, "kick this way", etc. My grandmother would be giggling. I supposed at my bad

technique. Only much later she told me that Dada did not know how to swim! Neither did he like water at all.

My friends and I were eternally cycling as it was our newfound skill at 8. One early morning as there was

no traffic, we managed to navigate the main roads to reach the hotel near our home where my grandparents were staying. The doorman rang my grandfather to inform him; within minutes Dada was down and rushed through the lobby to everyone's surprise, to the porch in his dressing gown, hauling us up the stairs to the room. Dada was furious with us for not informing anyone of our adventure and also forbade us never to take our cycles out of the house compound. Once he had cooled down, he treated us to a sumptuous breakfast. He was impressed by our expedition but kept a stern face in front of my grandmother.

Verghese Kurien and wife Molly, along with grandson Siddharth Sheth and daughter Nirmala Kurien.



The quintessential milkman of India

Nirmala Kurien

Armed with an MSc in US, Verghese Kurien started his working life soon after India gained independence. The noblest task in those days was to contribute towards building India of our dreams... a nation where people would be free from hunger and poverty. A nation that would eventually be counted among the foremost nations. He never intended to serve the nation's farmers but a series of events put him at Anand, Gujarat. He chose to work for a fledgling cooperative instead of pursuing a career in metallurgy or nuclear physics.

'Father of the White Revolution' and the 'Milkman of India', Kurien was a social entrepreneur whose "billion-litre idea", Operation Flood, made

dairying India's largest self-sustaining industry.

In 1964, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri visited Anand, spent a night in a village and talked to farmers about their cooperative. On returning to Delhi, he requested Kurien to set up the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). Kurien pioneered the Anand model of dairy cooperatives and replicated it nationwide, where no milk from a farmer was refused. He believed in empowering the farmers, never doubted their ability to work hard and produce more if there was a market. For the small, marginal and landless farmers, dairying is not only a source of nutrition, but also a source of supplementary income and security. Much of the work involved in milk

production, be it feeding, day-to-day management, health care etc were traditionally handled by women, comprising half the population.

This had a far-reaching impact on the cause of empowering women. As the world was reeling under the impact of Covid, job avenues decreased, the income from such milk production activities became critical for many families, and enhanced the important role women played in their families.

Kurien's legacy through the higher consumption of milk in India is an increase in average height of an Indian just in one generation. Thousands of dairy cooperatives and millions of members experienced grassroots democracy and he empowered millions of rural Indians!

Once I had to go out for lunch and as my mother was out, I asked Dada for some money and he gave me a ₹50 note from his wallet. I asked for more as I had three other friends. He gingerly fished out three crisp ₹100 notes from a secret hideout in his wallet and handed them out very reluctantly. When I returned after a few hours and returned the money, he asked if I had eaten lunch. I happily told him that my three friends, all girls had treated me. He was horrified, and said that I should always pay for meals

I remember him standing up to greet a woman, be it a friend or a close relative.

He was a chivalrous and thorough gentleman and never forgot his old-fashioned manners right to the very end.

and not allow girls to pay bills. I tried, unsuccessfully, to explain to him about gender equity, but totally unconvinced, he said that I should respect, cherish and treat women with great regard.

I remember him standing up to greet a woman, be it a friend or a close relative. He was a chivalrous and thorough gentleman and never forgot his old-fashioned manners right to the very end!

Nirmala is Verghese Kurien's daughter and Siddharth is his grandson

Rotary's collective power can help in nation-building

Jaishree

You have the collective power to effect bigger changes at the national level. If Rotary districts or clubs can come together they can make impactful projects that will benefit the entire nation. We must do 10 per cent of the government's work in every field, as our networking ability is our power," said RI President Shekhar Mehta, speaking at a felicitation meet hosted by RC Hospet, RID 3160. "If all of us around the world had not united for polio, we would not have come this far in our eradication effort. Today polio eradication and Rotary are synonymous," he added.

Accompanied by RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, he visited various

service projects of the host club, the home club of DG V Thirupathi Naidu.

Complimenting the club members for the enthusiasm with which they were serving the community, Mehta said, "I always say grow more and do more. You have already shown that. You are growing more and doing more in terms of Foundation contribution, membership and service projects." He inaugurated a haemophilia van and laid the foundation stone for a Rotary Blood Bank to be set up by the club. A dialysis centre, a school and a vocational training centre are some of the club's longstanding projects.

The RI president presented charter certificates to six new Rotary clubs including an all-women's club with

40 members, and a new-gen club with children of Rotarians as members. DG Naidu's son Chaitanya is its charter president. He presented to Mehta his maiden contribution of \$10,000 to TRF. Ten Rotarians, including Naidu's daughter Soumya, became Major Donors at the event with their contribution of \$10,000 each to TRF and there were many more Paul Harris Fellows, the youngest being Naidu's grandson. Two Rotarians — DG Naidu and DGE Vommina Satish Babu — have committed to become AKS members. The district has performed well so far in membership in response to Mehta's EOBO (Each One Bring One) call.

"Don't think that your club is small; you are part of a great

RI President Shekhar Mehta lays the foundation for the blood bank in the presence of Rotaract Committee co-chair Ravi Vadlamani, RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, Ameeta, DG V Thirupathi Naidu and DPPC Ashwini Kotambri.





From L: RC Hospet president KS Rajesh, DLCC Srinivas, DG Naidu, RI President Mehta, RI Director Kotbagi, Ameeta and Nirmala Naidu at the launch of Project Vidya Setu to distribute guides to students.

organisation. Your contribution matters. Remember 35,000 presidents are moving mountains around the world through Rotary. Take pride in the organisation,” he said.

Continuing on the lines of doing bigger projects, he highlighted the e-learning programme developed by RILM for the GoI. “Today crores of children are learning from our online course on the PM’s e-vidya channels. The lessons are played for half an hour every day. We helped the country change the system of learning for children. This is how we play a role

in nation-building. I have promised our prime minister that by 2025 we will make India totally literate. Until then, I will not sleep nor will I let you sleep. I do not take these as projects and programmes; I consider them as the work for our country.”

Next on his agenda is to take care of nutrition for women. “During a discussion Prime Minister Narendra Modi requested Rotary to help with women’s nutrition. We are ready to launch a big and comprehensive programme soon.”

Appreciating the club’s dialysis facility, RID Kotbagi said that it will help save thousands of lives. “I understand how much a healthcare institution will be valued in rural and semi-urban localities. Years ago, I lost my uncle for want of a ventilator at a hospital in Chikodi near Belgaum. He suffered a cardiac arrest and the hospital was not equipped to handle the emergency then. Now the town has developed well,” he recalled.

He thanked the zone leaders — Rotary coordinator Ravi Dhotre, Assistant RC Rajyalakshmi Vadlamani, RRFC Lakkaraju Satyanarain, DRFC Madhuprasad Kuruvadi and ARPIC

Chinnapa Reddy, for the district’s overall achievements.

The district, in association with Vijayavani Publications, launched the *Vidya Setu* project through which 50,000 science and English guides worth ₹25 lakh will be distributed to rural students of Classes 10 and 12. A blood bank and an ICU ambulance are also in the pipeline, said Naidu, and added that the district plans to donate 2,500 computers to government-aided colleges with support from Cognizant Technologies, and another 15,000 computers for all other schools and colleges with the support of Infosys to facilitate digital literacy for students.

Rotaract Committee co-chair Ravi Vadlamani urged every Rotary club to sponsor two Rotaract clubs. “In Telangana we have signed an MoU with the government to promote Rotaract clubs in all colleges just like NCC and NSS,” he said. He congratulated DRR Sumantika for adding 15 new Rotaract clubs.

DGs Dr Omprakash B Motipawale (3132), K Prabhakar (3150) and M Rama Rao (3020) attended the event. RC Hospet president Rajesh gave the vote of thanks. ■

I have promised our prime minister that by 2025 we will make India totally literate. Until then, I will not sleep nor will I let you sleep.

Shekhar Mehta
RI President



Rotarians on a quest for an Indo-Pak Peace Park

Rasheeda Bhagat

In the fourth week of October, barriers came tumbling down between India and Pakistan when members of six Rotary clubs, three from India — RCs Kashipur Corbett, Kashipur and Aligarh — and three from Pakistan — RCs Lahore Garrison, Karachi Garden and Bhubhar Chakwal — organised a zoom fellowship meet to foster peace between the two neighbours.

“There were over 170 participants in this meeting of both minds and hearts,” said Anil Ghai, from RC Kashipur Corbett, one of the coordinators of this meet. This meeting was one of the first of several such meetings to be organised by the Indus Peace Park Society (IPPS) which was conceived in 2015 and has 18 directors from countries such as the US, Canada, UK, Africa, India and Pakistan. “We comprise Rotarians with a passion for peace, and through Rotary clubs, are looking for more such Rotarians to join us,” he adds.

The forum is headed by PDG Kees van der Pol, RC Nakusp, RID 5080, Canada, and the whole idea was conceived by him when he led a friendship exchange programme to Pakistan in Feb 2015. Addressing the meet, he said he was a school headmaster and had discovered “extraordinary opportunities in Rotary to develop friendships across the world to do good.”

He said that Rotary fellowship “over those six years has expanded my family to include brothers and sisters in both Pakistan and India. We’ve been told that creating an oasis of peace on the border between the two countries will never happen and we will never get the two governments of India and Pakistan to agree to give land for this park. But we’ve also been told that what we’re trying to achieve is a breath of fresh air in a region poisoned by mistrust and antagonism. We’ve been told that it is time someone or some group takes on this challenge and people also said they wish this had been dreamt of decades ago.”

PDG Pol added that he was also the director in another international peace park — the Waterton-Glacier

International Peace Park on the US and Canada border, which was established in 1932 by dedicated Rotarians, who lobbied hard with the governments of the two countries to turn this dream into a reality. “This was almost 90 years ago, and every year since then Rotarians celebrate this through a fellowship assembly. There are three other cross-border parks along the 8,900km border.

Addressing the webinar, RID 3110 DG Mukesh Singhal hoped that this meeting would make some progress in reducing “the bitterness between our two countries”. Vested

PDG Kees van der Pol





From L: IPPS vice-president Mohammed Ayyaz, DGE Pawan Agarwal (RID 3110), PDG Tony Sharma (RID 1130, UK) and IPPS director Rajeev Sabharwal.

interests, particularly the arms lobby and arms dealers across the world, do not want peace anywhere in the world, as their motive is business and profit. But Rotarians, if they will it, can work towards convincing the governments of both the countries that development and *rozi-roti* issues should take priority. “Let us bring smiles on the faces of people,” he added. Let Rotarians ensure that not politics, but only service matters.

“The discussion concentrated on the common cultural DNA heritage that the people of both the countries share, and which resonates from the great Indus civilisation that epitomised a peaceful society with no hierarchy and with people who displayed skillful mastery over water management. They specialised in the playful production of small intricate ornate toys utilising precious stones and metal craft work,” said Ghai.

At the meeting, one of the participating Rotarians expressed the

optimism that Rotary can forge a path for peace and bring the people together in a similar manner that had facilitated the formation of the United Nations. One of the core strengths that Rotary had displayed to the world was its “spirit and perseverance shown in the battle to eradicate polio,” he said.

Another participant pointed out: “As our compass is ‘Service above self’ and our main tool is the Four-Way Test, without fear or favour we will try to end over 70 years of stagnation in Indo-Pak relations and heal the wounds of Partition by building an ‘oasis of peace’ on the border, called the Indus Peace Park.”

PDG Shehzad Ahmed from RC Lahore Garrison, RID 3272, gave a presentation describing the background and vision of this peace park project, which these passionate

Rotarians describe as the “eighth wonder of the world.”

“Our dream is to have two iconic eco parks facing each other, one in India and the other in Pakistan. The objective is to restore the harmony that was lost during the Partition. Our story started when PDG Pol, who was then DGN and now president of the Peace Society, visited Pakistan in 2015. He wanted to witness the change of guards ceremony at the Wagah/Attari border but due to the prevalent situation then and security concerns, he couldn’t do so.”

But he stayed on in Pakistan, and visited several polio immunisation camps. He first mooted the idea that just like the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park on the US and Canada border, which symbolised the long existing peace between those two countries, “we could have a similar peace park between India and Pakistan. Ideally it should extend over 500 acres so that we could have

a memorial, peace centre, eco-friendly facilities, etc.”

Ahmed added that the ideal place would have been the Amritsar-Lahore border but as it's a densely populated and commercial area, it would be very difficult to get so much land there. The other possibility is the Kartarpur corridor which is not so heavily populated. “We dream of a peace park where people, not only from our two countries but all over the world, should be able to freely move around, children can play and free interaction between people is possible.”

DGE from RID 3110 Pawan Agarwal and Mohammed Ayyaz, vice-president of the forum, from RC London, PDG Akhtar Alavi and PDG Faiza Qamar, both from Pakistan, addressed the webinar.

Participating in a panel discussion, PDG Alavi said that during his Rotary journey of over 40 years he had travelled several times to India,

Features of a Peace Park

- An oasis of serenity where people can celebrate humanity
- A place where people are free to share culture, food, music dance, art, architecture, tradition and sports, with others
- Where educational opportunities are available in a garden setting
- Scholars and peace fellows from the two countries, with their classmates from across the world, can work and learn together to encourage the entire world to live in peace and harmony.

where he had “loads of friends”, and also the privilege of knowing both past RI Presidents from India Rajendra Saboo and Kalyan Banerjee. “This is an excellent project and as Nelson Mandela said, nothing is impossible, and where there is a will, there is a way, and if we have enough conviction in ourselves, we can do it.”

Ghai, a director of IPPS, adds that the Rotarians are hoping that the governments of both the countries will donate land so that such a peace park can become a reality soon.

He has a personal reason for promotion of Indo-Pak peace; his father came to India from Chakwal, about 72km from Islamabad, also the home town of former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, during the Partition. “My wife’s family also comes from Multan and we visited Pakistan in 1996 and strongly believe there should be peace between the two countries,” he smiles. ■

Rotary & Partners

RC Calcutta Yuvis constructs 1,000 toilets

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Calcutta Yuvis, RID 3291, has sponsored construction of toilets in 1,001 homes across villages in North and South 24 Paraganas and Hooghly districts in a span of three years, under their flagship project *Suchita*. “We spent over

₹1 crore and travelled a total 14,000km to visit the project sites in these three years,” says Sanjay Pasari, past president of the club. RSH Global, Kredent Foundations and Inner Wheel Club of Calcutta Metro Maidan extended financial support for the project. ■





Rtn. SHEKHAR MEHTA
RI PRESIDENT



Rtn. A. S. VENKATESH
RI DIRECTOR



Rtn. D. MAHESH KOTBADI
RI DIRECTOR



Rtn. GULAM VAHANVANTI
TRF TRUSTEE

Rotary



SERVE TO
CHANGE LIVES

RID 2981

ZONE V



Rtn. POO. AMANI
ROTARY DISTRICT TRAINER



1000 + NEW MEMBERS
INDUCTED



Adopt a Village

132 VILLAGES ADOPTED
ONE VILLAGE BY ONE CLUB EACH



**PROJECT
Orange**
a ray of sight

AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS & VISION CENTRE
TO BE STARTED ACROSS THE DISTRICT

elite
DISTRICT 2981

5200 PROJECTS UPLOADED
IN ROTARY INDIA APP



MAMMOGRAPHY BUS TO BE DEDICATED TO
THE STATE OF TAMILNADU & PONDICHERRY



Rtn. AKS. S. BALAJI
DISTRICT GOVERNOR

Rtn. JEYASHREE BALAJI
DISTRICT FIRST LADY



DG.S.BALAJI HAS CONTRIBUTED
AND BECOME DISTRICT FIRST AKS MEMBER

Rotary 
ALABANAI
ஆலாபனை
DISTRICT CONFERENCE 2981
JANUARY 7,8,9 - 2022
CONFLUENCE HALL, MAHABALIPURAM

Mobile : +91 - 98424 32271 | E-mail : dgbalaji2122@gmail.com

Rotary leaders visit RID 3170

Team Rotary News

RI President Shekhar Mehta and RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi were on a two-day visit to Kolhapur and Dharwad, much to the delight of the Rotarians there. “It is the first time a serving RI president has visited Kolhapur,” said Ajay Menon, district secretary (Annual Giving), RID 3170. The two Rotary leaders were given a rousing reception with great fanfare.

In Kolhapur, Mehta and Kotbagi visited the district’s significant Rotary projects — the

dialysis centre at the Civil Hospital, the Rotary Samaj Seva Kendra, Shahu Blood Bank, a rehabilitation centre for the hearing and speech-impaired, a diabetic care centre, and a physio and a hydrotherapy centre — which were all established with the support of various global grants.

Mehta was presented with a scroll of honour and a citation from the Maharashtra government by the deputy state minister for home affairs Rtn Satej Patil in recognition of Rotary’s valuable service in the

state during the Covid pandemic. DG Gaurish Dhond hosted the RI Presidential Dinner to felicitate the generous contribution of the district’s Rotarians to TRF. Mehta and Kotbagi felicitated PDG Vinaykumar Pai Raikar; Kishor Lulla, member of RC Sangli, and PDG Dilip Salgaokar for completing their AKS commitment. Kishor’s son Amit Lulla, member of Rotary E-club of Belgaum, pledged to become an AKS member. Twelve other Rotarians including DG Dhond and Assistant Governor Sachin Zanwar were recognised for

RI President Shekhar Mehta and RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi being received by Rotarians and Rotaractors of RID 3170.



Rtn Kishor Lulla hands over a cheque to President Mehta to complete his AKS commitment in the presence of (from L) Amit Lulla, PDG Vinay Raikar, DG Gaurish and Pratima Dhond, and district secretary Ajay Menon.



their various levels of Major Donor contribution to TRF. Both the leaders addressed a gathering of 225 delegates at the event.

In Dharwad they participated in the 80th year celebrations of RC Dharwad. Three Major Donors — Taradevi Wali, Pallavi Deshpande

and Binoy Momoya — were felicitated by Mehta and Kotbagi.

DGN Nasir Borsadwala was the RI President's Aide. ■

Career counselling camp for Interactors of RID 3090

Kiran Zehra



District Interact chair Manik Raj Singla with Interactors at a career counselling camp.

Interactors and students from Classes 7–12 got an opportunity recently to listen to entrepreneurs, artists and leaders from various fields, interact with career coaches and learn about Rotary's peace fellowships, RCC, RYLA, youth exchange and New Generations Service Exchange programmes. This they did at the career counselling camps organised by RID 3090 District Interact chair Manik Raj Singla. The district has added 50 new Interact clubs under his leadership and the career counselling initiative trains and provides career guidance for close to 200 Interactors every weekend. "Apart from Rotary knowledge, we also offer them information on careers of their choice, colleges, courses offered in other

countries, scholarships and competitive exams," says Singla.

This year he wants to introduce Interact in semi-rural regions "to help students understand how they can make a difference in their community through Rotary while building a strong career."

Nitin Kumar from Interact Club of Veer Haqiqat School, Patiala, wants to be an intelligence officer for the Indian Army. "I was asked how I would be able to achieve my dream but had no idea." In a one-to-one session, he was told about the various courses he should take up to "fulfil my goal. My dream wasn't just dismissed as a joke, I was told it is achievable. It boosted my confidence and gave me a sense of direction."

On weekends the Interactors are encouraged to solve psychometric and aptitude tests conducted in their school. Apart from this, Singla is organising counselling sessions for the parents of these Interactors. He stresses that it is important to involve the parents "in the Interact initiative. Only parents can provide the support a child needs to reach his/her full potential. Through our Parents Guidance Programme, we help them understand that not all children are good at academics. Parents should help their child choose a career according to the his/her aptitude, interest and skill."

"We have never included parents in a career guidance programme till date. This is a great idea," says Sarla Bhatnagar, the principal of Veer Haqiqat School. ■

RID 3181 leads the way in promoting bamboo cultivation

Jaishree

Rotary's seventh area of focus is even more pronounced now as, at the recently concluded COP26 UN Climate Change Conference at Glasgow, RI President Shekhar Mehta highlighted Rotary's efforts in protecting the environment. He hinted at mangrove restoration to become one of the key threads of Rotary's environment focus.

Back home, RI District 3181 has provided 1,275 kg of bamboo seeds to Rotary clubs across India, Nepal and the Maldives. "One kilo contains about 80,000 seeds. So that is equivalent to 10 crore seeds," says DG A R Ravindra Bhat. It all began when C R Hanumanth, chairman, District committee for Supporting Environment, noticed the flowering of the Indian thorny bamboo, and contacted the Karnataka Forest department to mobilise bamboo seeds in large numbers through a tribal population

residing in the Chamaraajanagar district which is surrounded by stretches of dense forests. The seeds were collected, dried and packed in airtight bags. The district bought these bags at ₹350 a kg.

DG Bhat mobilised Rotary clubs in the district to promote bamboo plantations in their regions. Over 865 kg of seeds were distributed across the district. RC Gonikoppal led by president Neetha Kavaremma raised funds and gave 250 kg seeds to the Nagerhole Tiger Reserve and Hanumanth's home club, RC Mysore West gave 200 kg to the Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

"Even if we assume 10 per cent rate of survival, we will get 45-50 lakh saplings in a year. This is one way how we can promote greenery and protect our environment," says Hanumanth. This is a wonder grass with multiple benefits. It helps in carbon sequestration. Much

loved by elephants, plentiful supply of bamboo would entice them to stay on in the forests rather than venture into agricultural fields. The shoots, which can be harvested from the sixth year, provide alternative source of income for rural households.

Hanumanth made a video on bamboo seed planting with guidance from PDG Ajay Gupta (RID 3141) who is associated with an NGO, Friends of Environment, and screened it online for 450 Rotarians and members of ESRAG (Environment Sustainability Rotary Action Group). "Soon we were inundated with orders from across the country."

He is confident that if clubs maintain the momentum of bamboo dibbling and sapling planting, "in the next four years Rotary India can lead in giving an effective climate solution." ■

DG A R Ravindra Bhat handing over bamboo seed bags to the forest ranger at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in the presence of the district chairman for the Supporting Environment committee C R Hanumanth (to the DG's left), AG S R Swamy and RC Mysore West president Dr B Chandra.



Prez Mehta puts Rotary pin on a humanitarian

Team Rotary News

During his visit to Bhubaneswar, (RID 3262), RI President Shekhar Mehta was conferred an honorary doctorate by educationist Achyuta Samanta, founder, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology. Mehta will be the global ambassador for the Art of Giving, a humanitarian movement led by Samanta with the aim to spread peace and happiness in the world. This NGO is present in more than 100 countries, involved in community activities to forge peace and happiness among the people.

Also, the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences provides free schooling, lodging and boarding to around 30,000 poor children from Kindergarten to higher education in RID 3262. In his address, Mehta talked about the beauty of giving and how education



Above: RI President Shekhar Mehta honours Achyuta Samanta, founder, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, and Social Sciences, with a Rotary pin in the presence of DG Santanu Kumar Pani (third from R).

would usher in total literacy, eradicate poverty and hunger in the country.

Mehta inducted Samanta into Rotary by putting a Rotary lapel pin on him. The renowned social worker, also an MP, has received many civilian honours from different countries for his mission to eradicate global hunger and poverty through free education through his Art of Giving movement. Mehta noted that the educationist has all the attributes of an ideal Rotarian and “Rotary is proud to have Samanta as its member.” The event was attended by DG Santanu Kumar Pani, PDGs and senior Rotarians from RID 3262, besides academicians from both the institutes.

(Read about Samanta’s work in the October 2014 issue of *Rotary News* — Their Smiles tell the story <https://rotarynewsonline.org/their-smiles-tell-the-story/>) ■



100 handpumps make life easier at a Delhi slum

V Muthukumaran



A villager using a handpump installed by RC Delhi South Central to draw water.

Life took a happy turn for 45-year-old Maya Devi, her friends and their families at the Yamuna Khaddar slum colony in East Delhi after 100 handpumps were installed in the area by RC Delhi South Central, RID 3011, thanks to the initiative of club president Rajnish Mittal. Now they don't need to go far to fetch potable water, or wash clothes and clean cooking vessels. "I came to know about the sufferings of people at this huge slum tenement spread over 5-6sqkm along the banks of the Yamuna River from ex-mayor and local councillor Bipin Bihari Singh. He requested me to do something to lessen the hardships of these families," recalls Mittal.

Around 3,000 families (10,000 beneficiaries) live at the Khaddar slum nestled between the Akshardham temple and the Delhi-Noida Direct Flyway, but without basic amenities like potable water, electricity and proper roads. "They depend entirely on water tankers that visit the colony once in a while. Due to poor hygiene, it is really difficult for outsiders to get out of their car and move around this stinking area. We decided to install handpumps to solve the water woes of the residents."

But to their dismay, even after digging 30feet, the water was found to be muddy and not fit for consumption. "Hence we had to go down 50feet to get water that was safe and clean for drinking and other needs," says Mittal. Project *Jal* (water) costing ₹13 lakh (approx) with each handpump costing around ₹12,000–15,000 was funded through

The residents of the Yamuna Khaddar colony depend entirely on water tankers that visit the colony once in a while. We decided to install handpumps to solve their water woes.



Club president Rajnish Mittal (fourth from L), DGs Anup Mittal and Ajay Madan (RID 3080), district secretary Vivek Jain and AKS member Mukesh Aggarwal at the launch of Project Jal.

member contributions. Day labourer Ram Prasad (35) beamed with joy as he can now enjoy a shower under the handpump after a hard day's work.

It has now become routine for family members to queue up in front of the manual pumps to fetch water for their drinking and household needs. "We have created a stoneplatform to wash clothes and clean utensils around the pumps," he says. As water is available 24x7 at the pumps,

this precious resource is no more a scarcity at Khaddar colony.

The person residing near the handpump will be responsible for its maintenance.

During the virtual inauguration of handpumps, DG Anup Mittal lauded the club for providing a permanent solution to water scarcity in the slum colony. DG Ajay Madan, RID 3080, was also present at the inaugural.

Solar lamps

Now the club is working on installing solar streetlights in the colony as there is no electricity here. "This will be completed before June 30," assures the club president. The club with 69 members is known for implementing mega water projects such as 35 check dams in Rajasthan, besides WinS programmes at 15 governments girls schools in Delhi, over the last 4-5 years. ■



PRID Bharat Pandya elected TRF Trustee for 2022-26

PRID Dr Bharat Pandya has been elected by the RI Board of Directors to serve as a trustee of The Rotary Foundation for four

years from July 2022 to Jun 2026.

He served as Rotary International Director during 2019-21, and was its treasurer for 2020-21. ■

Art auctions to fund menstrual health awareness projects

Jaishree

Three out of ten paintings of Rtn B Dakshayani were sold at an exhibition in Kingston, UK, and she donated one of her paintings to the Rotary Passport Club of RID 1130, UK, on a request

from its president Sujay Paul. “He is a dynamic Rotarian from Mizoram and is very popular in London. He will be auctioning the painting and will use the proceeds for a service project through the club,” says Daksha, a Rotarian for 21 years with RC Meenambakkam, RID 3232, and a beneficiary of Rotary’s Youth Exchange programme 30 years ago.

Presently she is the director for Fundraising for the Rotary Action Group for Menstrual

Health and Hygiene (RAG-MHH) which was formed last year with Sharmila Nagarajan of RC Tower Heights, London, as its president, Vidhya Srinu (RC Chennai Temple City) as vice-president and Denise Kilschan (RC Ibiza, Spain) as its secretary.

The group is open to Rotarians across the world and aims to spread awareness among developed nations

about ‘period poverty’. “In countries like the US, UK and Europe, people are surprised to learn that there are women in several countries who cannot afford sanitary napkins. As a result, in some villages in India, women are forced into



isolation on the outskirts during their menstrual cycle,” says Daksha. “Our RAG is keen to give ease and comfort to all women across the world and wants to educate them about menstrual hygiene and availability of various options such as cloth pads and menstrual cups. We are working on extending these conversations with men as well so that better understanding may lead to healthier relationships. We need funds to help adolescent girls and young women with MHH resources,” she adds.

B Dakshayani, Director - Fundraising, Sharmila Natarajan, President, RAG - Menstrual Health and Hygiene; and PDG Tony Sharma, RID 1130, at the exhibition in Kingston, UK.



In countries like the US, UK and Europe, people are surprised to learn that there are women in several countries who cannot afford sanitary napkins.

As director for fundraising, she came up with the idea of an exhibition of her paintings to raise funds for the RAG. “I thought I will dig into my own talent,” says Daksha who, having done her masters in fine arts, earned her interdisciplinary doctorate in labour and history of fine arts. She had then presented a proposal to the government for a museum dedicated to the contributions made by indentured labourers who migrated from India to lay railroads in South Africa in the 1860s. “I went to Johannesburg and Durban and traced five generations of a diaspora family. They were not even aware of the origin of their great grandfathers.”

After a 15-year stint as manufacturer and exporter of BCG vaccines, Daksha decided to slow down thanks to



the Covid lockdown, and pursue what she loved the most, “along with Rotary, which is drawing and painting.”

In June this year she organised a virtual exhibition of paintings to raise funds for Polio. The event was titled ‘Directors’ Cut’ as it was presided over by PRIDs Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi, and RIDs AS Venkatesh and Mahesh

Kotbagi. Along with her paintings, the work of four other reputed artists were included. “We sold six paintings. PRID Kamal Sanghvi and Dr Ameeta Kotbagi bought a painting each. We found that people were ready to buy our paintings as a contribution for a cause, and not just because they were art lovers or investors in art,” says Daksha. The event helped to raise



₹3.46 lakh for the Polio Fund.

When she discussed this concept with RAG-MHH president Sharmila, she suggested a trial round for her club, RC

Tower Hamlets, of which she is the president.

Daksha exhibited ten of her paintings on oil canvas depicting scenes of coastal India at a gallery in Kingston, UK, and

also on a virtual platform. Three paintings were sold for £3,000, and 20 per cent of the proceeds was donated to the club to execute MHH-related projects. One painting was donated to the Rotary Passport Club for auction. The exhibition is open till Nov 30 on the virtual platform and two more paintings were sold there, says Daksha.

Another exhibition is planned in June next year, and “this time it is to raise funds for our RAG. We have about 100 artworks, contributed by reputed and lesser-known artists, in our repertoire. This way we are also promoting

their creations while we raise funds for our cause. These artists will contribute a percentage of their sale proceeds to the RAG,” she says.

A fallout from these exhibitions was the formation of the Fellowship of Visual Art Loving Rotarians in RID 3232. “It was inaugurated recently at DGN Ravi Raman’s office and we have about 12 members so far. There might be more Rotarians who pursue painting as a hobby and we want to bring them all together and encourage those who want to donate their artwork for charity events,” smiles Daksha. ■

Doing good with TRF help

A mobile mammography clinic in Jalandhar

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Jalandhar West, RID 3070, recently launched a cancer screening van to visit villages regularly across the district and screen women for breast and cervical cancer. The van, equipped with mammography and pap smear testing devices, was bought through a

global grant supported by TRF and RC Sudbury Sunrisers, Canada.

The van, with two doctors, a nurse and a technician, will hold camps in villages for a week or a month depending on the demand. Cervical cancer vaccines will also be provided to young girls at these camps, said



PDG Dr SPS Grover, who along with the club’s past president Kuldeep Singh, were instrumental in giving shape to the project. The cancer screening camps will be planned in consultation with the village heads, medical

and school authorities, added Grover. Cancer patients will be referred to Rotary-supported hospitals for further treatment.

The mobile unit will be maintained by Dr KSG memorial Charitable Trust. ■

RI Prez inaugurates RC Jubilee Hills Learning Centre

Team Rotary News

The Sarath Gopal Rotary Club of Jubilee Hills Learning Centre in Hyderabad was inaugurated by RI President Shekhar Mehta in October. The centre came into being thanks to the passion and generosity of two members of RC Jubilee Hills — Sarath Gopal, who donated 1,800 sqft of prime land for the building, and Penchala Reddy, a new member

sponsored by past president Raam Prasad, who took care of the building cost through a donation of ₹50 lakh.

Prasad also roped in sponsors for tiling, sanitary ware and painting, all costing ₹20 lakhs and along with Rtn Raman Reddy oversaw the construction.

Mehta inaugurated the centre in the presence of RI District 3150 DG

Prabhakar, club president Suresh Gupta, other senior Rotary leaders, and Rotaractors. PDG Sam Patibandla said this centre has been set up with the objective to provide skills for developing entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth and women through relevant skill development courses. Apart from communication, information and transformation, spoken English and soft skills, as well as vocational skills like accountancy with Tally, housekeeping and front office managing skills, financial literacy and other courses based on industry requirements will also be offered. “RCJH hopes that this centre

would become the go-to place for quality manpower backed by the ideals of Rotary, which will be taught here,” said club president Gupta.

The centre, which had soft-launched its programmes in September 2020, has already reached about 1,500 beneficiaries through a hybrid model of virtual and face-to-face classes due to pandemic challenges. Some beneficiaries of the Tally programme have already been placed in internships and employment. Physical classes in the centre will begin from January 2022, he added.

Inaugurating the facility, a three-storied building with training halls of about 1,000 sqft each, and roof-top dining area, the RI President said, “These are the temples of service through which we make an impact in the lives of hundreds of people.” He went on to narrate the story of Sanchita, whose education he and spouse Rashi had supported through Udaan, a charitable foundation that funds education. He said that the life of the entire family had changed as they are now able to earn adequately to lead a comfortable life.

Mehta added that he looked forward to hearing similar stories emerging from this centre, and was extremely happy that it had plans to specially conduct women-oriented courses. ■



RI President Shekhar Mehta inaugurates the learning centre in the presence of PDGs V Jawahar, Sam Patibandla, Ratna Prabhakar Anne and Rtn Raam Prasad.

Heart surgery done on Nigerian child in Mumbai

V Muthukumaran

With DG Rajendra Agarwal, RID 3141, declaring 100 heart surgeries on foreign children as one of his thrust areas in this Rotary year (2021–22), RCs Mumbai Divas and Bombay Queen City, home club of the governor, sponsored the surgery on a Nigerian child in July.

Three-year-old Emma landed in Mumbai airport with her mother Lucy Obazwe from Nigeria with a serious heart condition on July 22. She was immediately admitted to Bai Jerbai Wadia Hospital under the care

of Dr Vishwa Panda. After keeping her in the isolation ward for 48 hours due to Covid protocol and following multiple tests, surgery was done. The child was discharged on July 30. After two 2D echo tests showed everything normal, doctors gave the nod for her to travel back to Nigeria.

District avenue chair (international child surgeries) Leena Shah organised a virtual farewell meet for the Nigerian child and her mother with DG Agarwal as the chief guest. DG Andy Eyone Uwejeayan and AG Ibimina Amachree, RID 9125, Nigeria, along

with Dr Vishwa Panda and other doctors addressed the virtual meet. RC Mumbai Divas president Vidhi Gupta and RC Bombay Queen City president Anup Gupta also spoke on the occasion. Summing up her experience, Lucy said, “it seems like a dream that I will be going back with my healthy baby.” In a way, she had encapsulated the joy such noble projects give to Rotarians at RID 3141, said Rtn Virendra Widge, principal aide to the governor.

DG Agarwal is passionate about child heart surgeries which save young children from poor families from imminent death, he said. “Till date, he has helped 2,500 poor children with free surgeries either through personal funding or facilitating sponsorships.” RI President Shekhar Mehta has given RID 3141 the target of performing 100 heart surgeries on foreign children. The DG has accepted this challenge which will “prove that while in the

From Left: AG Deepa Goenka, DG Rajendra Agarwal, Lucy Obazwe with her child Emma, Rtn Summan Agrawal and district avenue chair (international surgeries) Leena Shah.



DG Rajendra Agarwal has helped 2,500 poor children with free surgeries either through personal funding or facilitating sponsorships.

past we were getting funding help from other countries, we now have the capability to help patients across the world,” said Widge. It may be recalled that Baby Emmanuella from Nigeria was the first foreign child to get his heart operated with help from RID 3141 in November 2020.

With Mumbai boasting world class hospitals, and having over 110 clubs and 6,000-plus members, most of them high networth individuals, “we are capable of taking the lead in cardiac surgeries to save the lives

of poor children from across the globe.” DG Agarwal has drawn up plans to do at least 50 heart surgeries on African children in the next seven months. “Lucy and her child were given a rousing reception at

the Nigerian airport by Rotarians, making it a special moment for the mother,” said Agarwal. He praised the district team led by its avenue chair Leena in making this surgery project a success. ■



Baby girl Emma and her mother Lucy Obazwe back in Nigeria after the surgery.

RC Deonar gifts tabs to schoolchildren

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Deonar, RID 3141, recently gifted 8-inch tabs to 10 teachers and 105 students studying in Class 7 at the Subhaschandra Bose Vidyamandir located amidst a slum colony in Mumbai. “We will be replacing the tabs after three years considering

the life span of the gadgets,” said project head Rohan D’Souza who, along with club president Sudhir Mehta, is driving the project with the concept of ‘Each One, Give One’. Savex Technologies has sponsored the cost of the tabs and Kotak Education Foundation will train the



students and teachers on the usage.

The club has been associated with the school for the last eight years and has donated various amenities under the Happy Schools project. “Our children are smart,

but they do not have the necessary resources to compete with the convent kids. These tabs and the training will give an opportunity to the bright students to shine and be successful,” said school principal Kale. ■

Solar lamps light up Koomati tribals' lives

V Muthukumaran

When forest ranger Manikandan briefed RC Salem Central (RID 2982) past president Sureshkumar about the plight of Koomati tribals in Valparai taluk, the club members did not have any clue about the daily hardships faced by this primitive community living at the Anamalai Tiger Reserve, a protected habitat for wild animals and endangered species. "Soon, we received a letter

from the ranger detailing the pitiable conditions of 36 tribal families living in Koomati settlement at the tiger reserve. The government has not provided power supply or concrete houses to them as they live in a protected wildlife zone," says PDG R Vasu, ARRFC.

Following the letter, a four-member fact-finding team led by Vasu visited the tribal hamlet, 65km from Pollachi. "We interacted with them to

shortlist their basic needs and know what can be done to make their life easier. Power supply and houses are prohibited in this wildlife habitat. Hence, we decided to install solar streetlights and solar lamps in their mud huts," recalls Vasu. After the survey team went back, the club gave shape to its tribal upliftment project by working on the details.

A 2,000-litre water tank was installed and pipelines were laid



PDG R Vasu gives a bag of essentials to a tribal woman in the presence of (from L) district secretary Rajesh, DG K Sundaralingam and club president Tamil Mohan.

from the high mountains to draw water and provide the last mile connectivity to tribal huts so that they can have running water from the storage tank. “With 20 solar street-lights and a solar lamp at each hut, now they have adequate lighting and need no longer fear being attacked by tigers and other wild animals. These lights have removed darkness from their life,” smiles Vasu. But the tribals have to walk 12km to either Valparai or Topslip, a part of Anamalai mountain range and a wildlife sanctuary, to earn their livelihood by doing menial jobs. “There is no possibility of road transport as it is a dense forest with strict law enforcement.”

DG K Sundaralingam, along with 10 Rotarians including club president Tamil Mohan, secretary Rajesh, Vasu, PPs K Rajendran and Sureshkumar, visited Koomati and donated a range of essentials including 100 raincoats, two cooking vessels to each family, sleeping mats, bedsheets, grocery bags worth ₹1,000 each, and 100 vegetable seed packets. “We will be taking up minor repairs of the huts soon. But we can’t provide houses which are banned in this location,” says Vasu. The tribal upliftment project costing ₹3.5 lakh will be replicated in 16 more places with the support of RID 3203, at an estimated cost of ₹45 lakh. “The funding will be a mix of global grant and member contributions. We will

complete this entire project before the next Rotary year.”

Thanksgiving Day

All the 36 families sported happy faces and were beaming with joy at a thanksgiving meet hosted by the beneficiaries. “Now there is no darkness in our daily life. Our hut is clean, there is running water and we sleep on good mats,” said Mani (60), tribal chief. But their hardships are far from over. Each tribal gets a daily wage of ₹200 for three months a year and free rations from the government. “But their basic needs are not yet met and they continue to lead a very primitive life,” adds Vasu. ■

RC Hubli Vidyanagar, RID 3170, inspired by the Project *Drishti* of Rotary Club of Madras East (RCME), RID 3232, launched the project ‘The Eye Story’, under which the club donated Smart Vision Glasses (SVS) designed by Smart Health Global, a Bengaluru-based IT company, to 16 visually-impaired students. “RCME helped us get in touch with the manufacturers and guided us through the process. Each device costs ₹25,000. VRL Logistics, Hubli, is partnering with us as part of their CSR venture,” says club president, Mahima Mohit.

She hosted a zoom conference for the clubs in her district to interact with the CEO of Smart Health Global, Ramu Muthangi. “Many clubs

want to take up this project and DG Gaurish Dhond has placed an enquiry for bulk supply,” she added.

Elated by the feedback, RCME club president M Srinivasa Rao says, “we are glad that our project has become a catalyst to

change the lives of the visually-impaired. I got lot of enquiries after the project was published in *Rotary News*.” ■

Smart vision spectacles for the visually-challenged in Hubli

Team Rotary News



DG Gaurish Dhond participates in the spectacles distribution to the visually-challenged, along with club president Mahima Mohit (third from L).

American good Samaritans help rural India with medical equipment

Team Rotary News



The BiPAP-CPAP machines being handed over to the Mayiladuthurai GH through RC Mayiladuthurai Pride.



During the Covid pandemic, the Rotary Club of Silicon Valley for Global Impact and Indian Covid SOS, a voluntary organisation in the US comprising scientists, clinicians, engineers, policy makers, etc, came together to collect money and send medical equipment known as BiPAP/CPAP, a kind of a simple ventilator, for use by primary health centres in remote and rural parts of India.

RID 2981 IPDG Balaji Babu explained that each of these machines costs around ₹70,000 and comes in two parts, which are detachable. This machine is also a kind of non-invasive,

and a more basic form of a ventilator, and has been donated by the Rotarians and other philanthropists in the US, with the objective of bringing relief to patients in remote and rural PHCs, which lack adequate medical equipment.

According to information available on the Net, BiPAP is primarily used to treat heart, lung and neurological disorders that require structured airway support during sleep. Both CPAP and BiPAP machines are available with a range of accessories. "It was decided to give these machines to rural areas where they are required not only for Covid-related but

other ailments as well, particularly suffered by children,” says Balaji.

It’s an ongoing project and already 126 machines have been received and donated to rural areas. He adds that PDG Ramesh Hariharan, from RC Silicon Valley Global Impact, who had earlier worked with him for doing a project in Karaikal, and hails from Palakkad in Kerala, got in touch with him through a zoom meeting. He had coordinated the raising of funds,

This medical equipment has been donated by the Rotarians and other philanthropists in the US, with the objective of bringing relief to patients in remote and rural PHCs in India, which lack adequate facilities.

getting the machines and sending them to India, through a joint initiative titled Volunteers from United States of America and India (VUAI). While some machines have been given to rural areas near Chandigarh, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, three machines have been given to GH, Mayiladuthrai, Tamil Nadu, in July 2021, and others have been given to several remote PHCs in RID 2981, including the hilly areas close to Kodaikanal, Ootacamund, etc. ■

A training programme on global grant for Literacy

Kiran Zehra



To educate Rotarians on how to get approval for global grant for basic education and literacy (BEL) projects, the Rotary Action Group – BEL of RID 3232 conducted a month-long online training programme, *Project Vidyarthi – Local and Global*. “Many Rotarians think

that literacy projects are about buying notebooks, stationery, or classroom furniture. But there is so much more to literacy. You could teach through yoga or by singing. Vidyarthi will help Rotarians access resources from across the world to understand and plan holistic literacy projects” says Vasanthi

Ranganathan, who audits BEL projects as a cadre member. She cited RC Johannesburg, RID 9400, that had implemented a GG project on nutrition to increase cognitive ability in students. “While the scalability and outcome of the project matter, Rotarians must also understand how their project will be monitored and evaluated.”

Open to Rotarians and non-Rotarians, the 30-day and 90 hours programme included sessions on various BEL projects that highlighted their key features through dance, music, relationships, communication, religion and values which helped to design wholesome learning initiatives.

The online programme raised ₹7,700 through the sale of Vidyarthi mugs, a special memento, which will be displayed at the literacy projects of RCs Chennai, Mambalam and Ambattur. DG J Sridhar announced a Vidyarthi Endowment fund of \$25,000 to be used for literacy projects in the district. The event had 115 speakers and all the 60 sessions were uploaded on YouTube.

In his message, RI President Shekhar Mehta said that such training programmes should be held frequently, and not just in September (BEL month) as this will help Rotarians and clubs to understand and plan literacy projects holistically. ■

A medical college for aspiring doctors in NE India

**Deepali Borthakur
and Shilpi Sudha Goswami**

Hope lies in dreams, he believed and with a spectacular dream, he created one of the best private state universities in northeastern India: the Assam down town University (AdtU). This is Rtn Dr Narendra Nath Dutta, a past district governor from RID 3240, founder-chancellor of AdtU and CMD of the Downtown Hospital. Coming from a small village, he achieved academic brilliance, getting an MBBS from Guwahati Medical College and

post-graduation (ENT) from AIIMS, New Delhi. He went for higher studies in microsurgery in the UK.

After 14 years of teaching in GMCH, he resigned from there and started the down town hospital, the first NABH-accredited hospital in northeast India where 27 retired medical college teachers worked as consultants in the initial stage, giving a big thrust to the hospital.

He joined Rotary in 1974 and served as district governor in 1995–96.

He received the Distinguished Service Award in 2013–14. He visited Kenya as a Rotary volunteer microsurgeon under an RI programme and stayed there for a month. He also brought a Rotary volunteer, Ecard Muller from South Africa to study the erosion problem in Majuli — the largest river island in the world, and presented a report. He and his wife Bandana are members of RC Guwahati.

He established the AdtU in 2010. Although there are various courses and programmes, the strength of this varsity is its Department of Nursing, Paramedical and MBA in Health Care.

The university enrolls 240 students in various nursing programmes every year with 100 per cent placement. There are 19 paramedical courses with doctors as part of the faculty updating the students with the latest in this medical field.

Set up on an 80-acre land spread over the foothills on the banks of Bhramaputra river, at Panikhaiti, 16km away from Guwahati, the AdtU is one of the top medical institutions in the northeast offering students a unique blend of professional and academic excellence. The green campus is dotted with 10,000 trees of rare varieties including 1,000 orchids, 100 neem trees, 100 coconut, areca nut, walnut trees, ginger, haldi, lemon garden and many more.

The university has a solar power plant, rainwater harvesting system in four blocks and a 5,000-seat-amphitheatre hosts various techno events, competitions, DJ Nights, and special performances. The AdtU has always encouraged the involvement of women in varsity affairs.

During her visit Union minister for women and child development Smriti Irani was pleasantly surprised to note that women faculty and students outnumbered men, and they outshine their counterparts in academics.



PDG Narendra Nath Dutta gives a functional literacy completion certificate to an adult learner at a programme organised by RC Guwahati.



University students provide sanitary napkins to women.

The five hostels accommodate 600 girls and 300 boys. Facilities like indoor swimming pool, basketball ground,

four badminton courts, yoga centre, gymnasium and football ground etc are available for students and faculties.

The AdtU is doing adult literacy programmes in association with RC Guwahati, in six surrounding villages under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan. The students organise life skill, physical and mental health workshops for the villagers..

Each year over 2,500 students get enrolled in the varsity and till date, 2,000 have passed out of both UG and PG medical courses at the AdtU. I invite Rotarians to come and visit our campus. The dream of PDG Narendra Nath Dutta to build an eco-friendly university has helped the common people in Assam and other far-flung areas to realise their dream of becoming doctors and paramedics through quality education at the AdtU.

The writers teach English at the Assam down town University

2022 Houston Convention

Unconventional Houston

Miyoki Walker



While visiting Houston for the 2022 RI Convention June 4–8, set aside some time to discover what makes the city unique — one might even say quirky.

Houston has been called the art car capital of the

world. No idea what that means? Check out the Art Car Museum, which showcases factory-made cars that have been elaborately transformed into creative pieces. This museum gives space to a type of subversive art that has historically

been excluded from fine art institutions, while shedding light on the places where the personal, political and cultural meet. It's also a lot of fun.

To see an extreme example of one person's vision come to life, visit the Orange Show in Houston's East End. Inspired by his love for oranges and good nutrition, postal worker Jeff McKissack's 3,000-square-foot handmade attraction features colourful structures, including a pond, stage, museum, wishing well and gift shop. It has been called one of the most significant folk art installations in the United States.

Another notable Houston oddity is the famous Beer Can House. In 1968, railroad worker John Milkovich began a project that combined his creativity with his profound affinity for beer. He decorated his home's exterior with flattened beer cans to create a stunning, functional work of art. Ripley's *Believe It or Not!* estimates that the house incorporates more than 50,000 beer cans, which have been turned into curtains, walls, whirligigs, and more. Now that's what we call inventive recycling.

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

Rotary houses for sightless families in Madurai

V Muthukumaran

For the 49 visually-impaired families at Sakkimangalam village near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, Rtn SL Setumadava is god in human form. This good Samaritan from RC Madurai Star, RID 3000, has been providing all the basic necessities and utilities for the deprived families, whose breadwinners

or all the members are sightless. “They came with an unusual request for residential houses in 2004; though an uphill task, I took it up as a challenge,” recalls Setumadava, the primary contact of Low-cost Shelter project. Till then, they were living in thatched houses and were exposed to external dangers.

He made several visits to the district collectorate for two years taking up the cause of these “marginalised families living on the edge of society which turns a blind eye to these sightless families,” he says. Free *pattas* (land title) were handed over to the beneficiaries in August 2006 by the then

TN rural development minister MK Stalin, now CM, much to the relief of Setumadava and his team.

A daunting task

But then the real challenge has just begun. With the mobilisation of resources and funds, they were able to complete 30 houses costing ₹63 lakh



Tamilnadu minister for commercial taxes P Moorthy hands over the house key to a beneficiary in the presence of Madurai district collector Aneesh Sekhar (R), club president L Srinivasan (3rd from L) and project coordinator SL Setumadava (2nd from L).

in four phases from May 2009 to Dec 2016. The club sought the help of PDG P Gopalakrishnan from Karur to expedite the construction of remaining houses “as it is getting delayed for various reasons. With his guidance, we got a global grant of \$120,000 (approx 87 lakh) that helped us to build another 15 houses at the project site,” explains Setumadava. Rotary Club of The Hills-Kellyville, RID 9685, Australia, is their global partner. All the 15 houses were bigger in size compared to the 30 houses built earlier as “the Australian PDG was very particular that

visually-impaired couples must get a separate room,” he smiles.

Two houses share a common wall in these low-cost shelters which have carpet areas of 185–240 sqft. “So far, we had spent ₹1.5 crore for 15 houses. We will take up the construction of remaining four houses.” TN minister P Moorthy was surprised that “Rotary has done a job that is primarily the responsibility of the government.” He volunteered to donate ₹5 lakh for the construction of one of the remaining houses. District collector Aneesh Sekhar assured that roads, water and power connections will be

given to the new houses at the earliest.

PDGs S Gopal, DRFC and PDG A Purushothaman felicitated the project team. One of the beneficiaries, Thai Poosam (60) was emotional while receiving the house key. “But for *Ayyah* (Sir in Tamil, with due respect to Setumadava), we would not have got this beautiful house, which is beyond our ability. He is our father,” he says. Christened Rotary Bright Homes, the low-cost houses have truly brought ‘light’ in the life of the visually-impaired families at this Madurai village. ■

Nashik expo facilitates microcredit

Team Rotary News

A three-day exhibition titled *Rotary Goda Haat* was organised to empower women from underprivileged families and tribal communities by RC Nasik Godavari, RID 3030, through microcredit.

The purpose of the expo was to display and sell products made by women from lower income families. “Also, the event gave confidence to them to face the market conditions and manage their business professionally,” said Rajesh Singhal, club president. All the 30 stalls displayed a range of homemade products such as spices, eatables, pooja items, women’s accessories, clothes, a rice variety grown by tribals, handmade envelopes, files, eco-friendly sanitary napkins and carry bags. “While some stalls were let out free of cost, rest were given with small charges to raise microcredit funds for 100 women,” he said.

The club’s microcredit initiative has already reached out to 40



DG Ramesh Meher and DGN Asha Venugopal (to the left of DG Meher) at one of the stalls at the expo.

women in three months, and it will further benefit 60 others in the coming months. The expo attracted 4,000 people and most of the visitors bought material from the stalls which spread

happiness on the faces of beneficiaries. DG Ramesh Meher and DGN Asha Venugopal were felicitated by project leaders Dr Meenal Palod and Surekha Mahale. ■

GPS art to create Polio awareness

Kiran Zehra

Members of RC Guindy, RID 3232, in association with the Cycling Fellowship of Rotarians from Chennai, rode 16km across Chennai to create a GPS imprint with the message End Polio Now. GPS art involves recording the location with Global Positioning System (GPS) while cycling, walking, riding a bike or driving a car, and drawing pictures or messages on the tracks. The GPS Art Project was flagged off by DG J Sridhar.

Using the Strava app a route was created to complete the GPS art. Twenty-five cyclists rode in a single file for 12 hours to attempt an entry into the *India Book of Records* which is now in the evaluation stage. Naresh Kumar KN, the lead cyclist and a club



Below: Cyclists at the finishing point.



member says, “The city of Chennai was our canvas, our movements, the paint, and our cycles made the brush strokes perfectly.” It may not be art in the conventional sense “but we rode the 16km to trace the GPS paths and sketch out End Polio Now.”

The most challenging part, he points out, was the planning. “Unlike cities like San Francisco where the streets are planned block by block, Chennai does not have grids and sectors that are convenient for cyclists.” After 20 hours of planning and ensuring that it did not hit a dead-end, the route was finalised. “Riding in one’s home city has a certain magic,” he says. “You discover different places, and areas you’d never had the chance to see.”

Another challenge was the weather. “It was a rainy day, but the enthusiasm the cyclists, both Rotarians and non-Rotarians, showed was great,” says Kumar. ■

Correcting clubfoot in Malda

Jaishree



Dr Debajyoti Das with his young patients and their mothers.

Eight hundred-odd children in Malda can walk normally and enjoy better social life, thanks to Dr Debajyoti Das, a member of RC Mango City Malda, RID 3240. Das is an orthopaedic surgeon and has been passionate about treating children with clubfoot ever since he started practising in the 1980s. Clubfoot is a congenital disorder where one or both feet are twisted downward and inward, making them look like golf clubs. “In earlier days people hesitated to treat this congenital disorder owing to superstitious beliefs, religious myths and illiteracy, and the children grew up into physically-challenged adults. This condition can easily be corrected if treated early,” he says.

Even as he was treating some children, “which required a lot of convincing the family”, he thought that it would be easier if he could

get some support for advocacy and “that’s how I joined Rotary in 2011.” Since then, the club has been regularly organising 4–5 clubfoot detection and treatment camps every year and he began treating children in his clinic without consultation charges. The club sponsors the consumables required including splints. “The procedure is expensive and a burden on cash-strapped families. So they consider it a boon when my club helps them give their children dignity,” says Das. Special awareness programmes on club foot correction are included during PolioPlus National Immunisation Days to encourage parents to bring their child for treatment.

The correction process is lengthy and extends to 3–5 years. It involves applying a toe-to-groin PoP cast on the leg with clubfoot

after gently manipulating the ligaments and tendons. After a few weeks splints are put in place to slowly bring the feet to position and to prevent relapse. As the child grows, the foot/feet also grow and the splints need replacement every three months, for up to four years, depending on the severity. “It is always better to start treatment when the child is as young as even a week-old as the bones will be flexible. For children beyond one year of age, surgery may have to be done under general anaesthesia. Local anaesthesia cannot be used as the child is too small to remain still,” says Das. Once the correction is done, these children can walk normally.

Follow up is done meticulously to ensure that the splints are changed in time, and special camps are organised to take care of the details. ■

Not all Rotary is the same

Insa Fölster

Rotarians worldwide are united under the umbrella of Rotary International. But what is the subtle difference?

Rotarians from seven regions of the world talk about what Rotary culture means to them locally.



The new face of Rotary 'Down Under'

Rotary in Australia is like the country itself — big and diverse. Australia is the world's most successful multicultural society. Nearly half of today's population was either born overseas or has at least one foreign-born parent. Most Australian Rotary clubs have also enthusiastically adopted RI's policies on diversity, equality and inclusion, and welcome the many diverse people into their communities.

While Australia's oldest clubs, celebrating their 100th anniversary this year, might still be considered elitist — affluent and sticking to traditional lunch meetings with a traditional format — clubs from small rural towns to coastal communities gather in a variety of different forms.

As part of the centenary of Rotary in Australia and New Zealand members of the Gold Coast Passport Rotary Club organised a walk to spread awareness about domestic violence.



In Queensland's capital, Brisbane, RC Woolloongabba is the first RC in the world to sponsor a Pride club in support of the state's LGBTIQ community. For several years, the club has supported LGBTIQ organisations such as the Queensland Council for LGBTI Health and Open Doors Youth Service. Last year, the club members formed the first Rotaract Pride Club — a first for RI.

District 9640 is the top performing district in membership growth and retention in Zone 8 and has redefined the boundaries of club development. Then DG Andy Rajapakse and his team chartered five new Rotary clubs, two Rotary satellite clubs, three Rotaract clubs, one Interact club and one Rotex club. "We added a record 383 new members to our 58 Rotary clubs

in 365 days," he said, adding that 63 per cent of them were women and 24 per cent were under 40. "The Gold Coast Passport Rotary Club and the Gold Coast Corporate Rotary Club are among the best innovations in the district."

Nationally, in celebration of Rotary's 100th anniversary 'down under' (Australia, New Zealand and Southwest Pacific), clubs and districts from across the zone have joined together to support Rotary-100downunder, *Rotary gives every child a future*.

The project celebrates 100 years of service and, in partnership with UNICEF, will vaccinate 100,000 children in nine South Pacific Island countries against rotavirus, pneumococcal disease and cervical cancer over three years. Both organisations will work with local governments to develop and implement immunisation programmes that administer the vaccines.

Although there are many centenary projects across the zone this year, *Rotary gives every child a future* is the project that involves all of Australasia and shows that Rotary remains strong in today's world.

*Meagan Martin
(Gold Coast Passport Rotary Club)
has been editor of Rotary Down
Under since 2019*



Service as a way of life

If Rotary's motto is 'Unity in Diversity', what better example could there be than Rotary in a country as diverse as India? In a country with 22 major languages and several thousand dialects, Rotary's language remains one — that of selfless service.

Rotary Club of Queen's Necklace is a club in India's financial capital, Mumbai. Members come from a wide cross-section of professions and

**RC Woolloongabba is
the first RC in the world
to sponsor a Pride club
in support of the state's
LGBTIQ community.**

businesses. There are a healthy number of women in the 181-member club. And ages range from 40 to 70. Efforts are constantly being made to attract younger members.

Social initiatives and the community form the culture that binds the club. With generous donations from members, the club is able to undertake very large projects. A typical fundraising appeal on Whatsapp collects pledges of \$50,000 within a few hours. Last year, during the first wave of the pandemic, the club carried out a project worth almost \$2 million to distribute 10 million meals to the hungry and homeless severely affected due to the long lockdown of the country. Half of these funds were donated by members, their families and friends. Members are passionate about helping the local community in the areas of education, the underprivileged, subsidised health facilities for the poor, and improving living conditions for the rural population.

Camaraderie is a very important feature. Members came together every month for two meetings and at least one community event before the pandemic. All Indian festivals, and there are several, are usually celebrated with great joy each year. During Diwali the entire club comes together for a gala night. Due to the ongoing pandemic, no physical meetings are held, but zoom meetings are well-attended to listen to speakers from around the world. Members have also held virtual events, such as an illusion show, a

talent show and workshops. Indians are big foodies. So every month, delicious food baskets made their way to the homes of all members.

Sneha Pathak, member of RC Queen's Necklace, Mumbai



One in 300 Norwegians a Rotarian

Six years before former chancellor and Hapag boss Wilhelm Cuno founded RC Hamburg, the first Rotary club in the German Empire, the first club in Scandinavia had already been founded on October 13, 1921. Olaf M Oleson, a Norwegian-American senator from Idaho and a member of RC Fort Dodge, had attended the RI convention in Edinburgh in June 1921, then visited the country of his birth and told his nephew there about Rotary. Ola Five, a captain in the Royal Guard, gathered eight friends and with them formed

RC Kristiania. In 1924, like the city, the club changed its name and has since been called Oslo Rotary Klubb. Honorary members include Crown Prince Haakon Magnus, and his father King Harald V is honorary governor of Norway's seven Rotary districts. The Oslo Rotary Klubb has not only founded 19 clubs in Norway, it also stood godfather with the København Rotary Klubb at the cradle of the Stockholm Rotary Klubb. Today, Norway is one of the strongholds of Rotary, with 335 clubs and around 14,000 members — one in 300 Norwegians is a Rotarian.

The clubs open their meetings with a 'gladmelding', a personal glad tidings. Meanwhile, a member goes from table to table selling raffle tickets; the winner wins a wine, the winning ticket is drawn by the speaker of the day. Proceeds benefit the club's treasury. A member comments on a current topic in a three-minute talk, before a

cold 'lunsj' is served at lunch meetings and a warm 'middag' in the evening.

Thanks to the excellent digital infrastructure, the clubs implement a variety of web-based initiatives. One of them is the 'digital melting pot'; in regular network meetings, the clubs coordinate existing and planned projects with each other on a regional and national level, pooling resources and thus increasing the benefits of Rotarian project work. RC Færder focuses on academic youth: It offers free membership to its returning exchange students. Bjørn Rismyhr (RC Karmøy-Vest) had his Mercedes fitted with the vanity plate 'Rotary'. "Rotary, is that a dance club?" was one of the questions he heard. "Whatever people ask, it's a good opportunity to introduce Rotary," Rismyhr says.

Kai-Axel Aanderud (RC Hamburg-Deichtor) is the son of a Norwegian



David King, a past president of RC Colchester from Essex, England, hands over Easter eggs — a pandemic distance away — to Sarah Raven-Lloyd of the Rainbow Trust, a charity that supports families of seriously ill children.



Members of RC Queen's Necklace, Mumbai, distributed food packages to rural women during the pandemic.

father and a German mother. He won Uranienborg Rotary Klubb (Oslo) as a partner club of his RC Hamburg-Deichtor



Inequality and many needs

There are three districts (9350, 9370 and 9400) that span South Africa and geographically include six neighbouring countries, Angola, Botswana, the Kingdom of Eswatini, Lesotho, Southern Mozambique and Namibia. Attending a city club can be very different from attending a rural club. Members of city clubs have traditionally been industry executives and more formal. Rural clubs have historically attracted mostly medium and small business members who are very social and less formal. However, both forms of clubs are constantly changing as they strive for diversity and gender equality. Women were

not admitted to Rotary until 1991, but now the region boasts of a 32 per cent women-Rotarian membership.

Most clubs in Southern Africa are based on the historic, traditional club model. The concept and flexibility of e-clubs and satellite clubs are slowly gaining traction.

There is so much inequality and poverty, and so the needs are plenty. I can safely say that all seven focus areas are very relevant to Southern Africa. If I were forced to prioritise the needs, I would list the following areas in order of importance: water and sanitation, malnutrition and early childhood development, economic opportunity, peace and conflict prevention. The region is very receptive to inter-country committee agreements. To date, there are good relationships with districts in Germany, Canada, India and the UK. These relationships are established not only for projects

but also for friendship exchanges, youth exchanges, cultural exchanges, conferences or webinars.

Grant Daly is past governor of District 9400



Much less traditional than in Germany



In the past, Great Britain has always behaved like an unruly teenager — proud, but stubborn and very independent. After all, we are an island nation, only 20 miles from mainland Europe at its narrowest point. Yet in the context of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, the nations of England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are five countries and two very different islands in terms of their characteristics and cultures. Yet we are all connected by the common bond of Rotary. There are about 40,000

Rotarians in Great Britain and Ireland, reflecting a steady decline in membership in recent decades. Of those, 22 per cent are women, and the average age is 71. But these are not typical times. Covid-19 has changed the shape and nature of Rotary worldwide. With clubs meeting online, fundraising opportunities are extremely limited.

Some 12.4 million Britons volunteered in their communities during the pandemic, joined by tens of thousands in the Republic of Ireland. The post-pandemic challenge will be to welcome these future Rotarians into our clubs now that they have a taste for volunteering.

Over the past 16 months, Rotary clubs have been working in their communities to help the needy and isolated shop for and pick up medicine. They have supported food banks that exist in unbearable conditions due to rising unemployment. Clubs have worked together in teams to provide personal protective equipment such as gowns and face masks

for frontline workers — many of whom are Rotarians themselves.

This desire to volunteer and get involved in the community was evident last May when Rotary was at the forefront of the UK Volunteer Expo, a two-day digital showcase of achievement. More than 5,500 people registered for the Expo — 40 percent of them Rotarians — and learned how the whole nature and shape of volunteering is changing. The message of the Volunteer Expo was that we need to make volunteering more relevant to the next generation by providing opportunities that are compatible for younger people with their busy work lives. We need to be more flexible, and that includes the way we do Rotary.

Rotary in these islands is much less traditional than in Germany. This flexibility has led to the development of satellite clubs, passport clubs, and clubs that no longer meet formally for dinner, but perhaps at a café on Sunday morning with children in tow.

Dave King (RC of Gosport in Hampshire, England) has been editor of the Rotary magazine for Great Britain and Ireland for four years. He has been a Rotarian since 2010 and has been a member of several clubs



Tradition-conscious and always on time

Rotary Japan has 88,310 members in 2,237 clubs in 34 districts (April 2021). Of these, 6,265 members are women, about seven per cent. The reason for the low number may be that there are few woman leaders in Japan. Japanese Rotarians tend to be executives or managers. The average age is 60. And once they join Rotary, few leave. Many have a long Rotary history.



Many clubs hold a regular one-hour meeting where they have lunch and listen to a table talk. And typically Japanese, members are always very punctual! They consider fellowship important, so they sometimes hold evening meetings where they have more time.

In general, Japanese members are good at keeping traditions, but they are not good at changing or they are satisfied with the current situation. They understand the need to increase membership, but it is more important for them to include someone who understands the philosophy and fellowship of Rotary than to just increase membership.

RC Yokohama (about 200 members) holds regular meetings at a prestigious hotel. Before Covid-19, members met at the round table and enjoyed a meal at the hotel. Now they hold their meetings school style to avoid infection and without a meal. Box lunches are distributed after the regular meeting.

One of the projects we are doing in Japan is the Yoneyama Memorial Scholarship. Yoneyama is the name of the person who introduced Rotary to Japan. This project is funded by all Japanese Rotarians and awards scholarships to 900 foreign students studying in Japan each year. The goal is to develop excellent international





A child being given polio drops by Rotarians in Brazil.

students who will play an active role in the international community in the future and form a bridge between their home countries and Japan. To date, we have supported approximately 22,000 students from 129 countries and territories around the world. For regional reasons, most of them are Asian students, but 44 German students have also been supported so far.

*Kyoko Nozaki
has been editor of the Japanese
Rotary magazine Rotary no Tomo
since 2016*



Lone leader in polio initiatives

The history of Rotary in Brazil began in 1923 with the founding of RC Rio de Janeiro. Today, there are 2,426 Rotary clubs and 51,945 Rotarians in the country of 31 Rotary districts. Since then, Brazil has hosted three RI conventions: in Rio de Janeiro (1948) and São Paulo (1981 and 2015).

RI has had three Brazilian presidents: Armando de Arruda Pereira (1940/41), Ernesto Imbassahy de Mello (1975/76), and Paulo Viriato Corrêa da Costa (1990/91), whose *Preserve Planet Earth* programme inspired the creation of the new Foundation focus on the environment.

Reflecting Brazil's territorial expanse and diverse economic, social and cultural characteristics, the country's clubs have a wide variety of profiles: business people, freelancers, teachers and retirees.

Membership is increasingly growing with the number of women, who now make up about 30 per cent of Brazilian Rotarians. One of the hallmarks of Rotary in Brazil is its youth clubs, with 754 Rotaract clubs and 649 Interact clubs, which have 9,029 and 16,120 members, respectively.

The Rotary family in Brazil is developing important initiatives that help Brazilian communities overcome the stark social inequalities that still

characterise the country. Many of these projects, including those funded through global grants, focus on disease prevention and treatment.

The fight against polio is a special chapter in this story. Since the 1980s, Rotary has been a partner with the Brazilian Ministry of Health in the fight against polio. Past donations have included funds to purchase vaccines. The last polio case in Brazil occurred in 1989, but Rotarians continue to volunteer at the annual National Immunisation Days. This commitment is reflected in World Polio Days (WPD), hosted by RI. Since 2016, Brazil has led the global ranking of WPD initiatives.

Nuno Virgílio Neto (honorary member, RC Rio de Janeiro) is a journalist and editor of Rotary Brasil magazine since 2016

(Reproduced from
Rotary Magazin, Germany)

On a culinary trail of Indian regional food

Sharmila Chand

Diners are lapping up local flavours and regional tastes and chefs are embracing the trend as Indian regional dishes find a pride of place in the menus of popular fine-dining restaurants. Savouring traditional dishes of various regions of the country is a celebration of culture, history and heritage. Enjoy an array of flavours from Kashmir to Awadh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Rampur as chefs share their recipes for easy cooking at home.

Nalli Nihari



Rajesh Wadhwa
Executive chef
Taj Palace, New Delhi

This rich indulgent preparation finds its origins in Shahjahanabad, which we call Old Delhi today and was developed during the reign of the Mughals. The dish is central to the cuisines of Bhopal, Awadh and Hyderabad and our recipe is a classic version with luscious velvety texture and is best enjoyed with *khameeri* roti or any steaming hot naan.

Ingredients

- ◆ 1 kg goat shanks
- ◆ 1.5–2 lt mutton stock
- ◆ 150 ml mustard oil
- ◆ 3 gm cloves
- ◆ 3 gm green cardamom
- ◆ 2 nos bay leaf
- ◆ 5 gm cinnamon
- ◆ 150 gm sliced onion
- ◆ 40 gm ginger paste
- ◆ 40 gm garlic paste
- ◆ 10 gm red chilli powder
- ◆ 20 gm yellow chilli powder
- ◆ 20 gm turmeric powder
- ◆ 50 gm coriander powder
- ◆ 150 gm yoghurt

- ◆ 50 gm roasted gram flour
- ◆ 20 gm garam masala powder
- ◆ salt to taste
- ◆ saffron few strands
- ◆ fresh coriander leaves and ginger juliennes to garnish

Method

- In a heavy-bottomed pan, heat mustard oil. Add the whole spices and allow them to crackle. Add the sliced onions and cook until golden brown. Add the ginger and garlic pastes. Sauté well. Add goat shanks along with red chilli powder, yellow chilli powder, turmeric, coriander powder, beaten yogurt and sauté well.
- Now add mutton stock and simmer on slow heat till the shanks are tender. In a separate pan, heat ghee, add roasted gram flour and sauté till aromatic and light golden in colour. Add this mixture to the prepared shanks and adjust the consistency of the gravy till nice and creamy. Adjust seasoning. Finish with garam masala and saffron. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and ginger juliennes. Serve hot.

Macchi Koliwada

Swapnadeep Mukherjee
Executive chef, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa

Macchi Koliwada is one of the most iconic dishes of Mumbai. The dish was originated by Punjabi migrants from the town Hazara (Pakistan) who settled with the Koli community of

Maharashtra. Hence you find this very similar to North Indian famous dish 'Macchi Amritsari'. This recipe is quick, easy to make, flavourful with lots of scope for experimentation.

Ingredients

- ◆ 150 gm basa fillet
- ◆ 50 gm besan
- ◆ 30 gm rice flour
- ◆ 5 gm chilli paste
- ◆ 2 gm ajwain seeds
- ◆ 10 gm curd
- ◆ 5 gm degimirch
- ◆ 5 gm cumin powder
- ◆ 5 gm garam masala
- ◆ 5 gm turmeric powder
- ◆ 2 gm fennel seeds
- ◆ 1 pc lemon
- ◆ 10 gm ginger garlic paste
- ◆ 2 gm salt
- ◆ 500 ml oil to fry

Method

- ✱ Cut the basa fillet into eight equal sized dices. Marinate the fish with all the spices and curd except besan. Keep aside for 30 minutes. Take another bowl and put besan into it. Pour water to make a batter. Pour oil into a pan for deep fry. Put the marinated fish into the batter and mix well. Deep fry the fish dices until golden brown. Serve with mint chutney and slice of lemon.



Aloo Gosht

Osama Jalali

Chef, The Mughal Plate By Jalalis

Ingredients

- ◆ 1 kg mutton
- ◆ 500 gm potato
- ◆ 200 gm oil/ghee
- ◆ 5 gm turmeric
- ◆ 10 gm red chili powder
- ◆ 15 gm coriander powder
- ◆ 200 gm brown fried onion
- ◆ 200 gm yoghurt
- ◆ 8 nos cloves
- ◆ 5 gm garam masala
- ◆ 10 gm garlic paste
- ◆ 1 ltr water
- ◆ salt to taste



Method

- ✱ Heat ghee/oil in a *lagan*, now add cloves and meat. Sautee it for 2 minutes, then add ginger garlic paste. Leave it for 2 to 3 minutes. Now add turmeric and red chilli powder, coriander powder and salt according to taste. Sautee it for 5 to 10 minutes and add water and cover it. Leave it for half an hour so that the meat gets tender. Now add potatoes, brown onions and yoghurt. Add some more water and leave for 15 minutes till the potatoes are cooked. Add the gram masala on top and it is ready to be served. Garnish with fresh coriander.

Ker Sangri



Raj Kumar

Executive chef, Holiday Inn Jaipur City Centre

A delightful indigenous dish of Rajasthan, Ker Sangri is a traditional, spicy sabzi made with ker berry and sangri beans, cooked with common ingredients like red chilies, carom seeds, and a couple of spice powders. The addition of raisins brings out the best in the recipe, as it enhances the flavour of all the spicy ingredients while also providing sweet respites in every spoonful.

Ingredients

- ◆ 75 gm sangri
- ◆ 50 gm ker
- ◆ 70 ml mustard oil
- ◆ 5 gm cumin seeds
- ◆ 2 gm mustard seeds
- ◆ 2 gm red chilli powder
- ◆ 3 gm turmeric powder
- ◆ 10 gm coriander powder
- ◆ salt to taste
- ◆ 50 gm curd
- ◆ 10 gm dry mango powder
- ◆ 10 ml lemon juice
- ◆ 25 gm green coriander leaves

Method

- ✱ Soak ker and sangri overnight with a little salt and turmeric powder.

- Boil soaked ker-sangri and drain the water and keep aside.
- Make a smooth batter with beaten curd, turmeric, coriander, red chilli and salt in a bowl.
- Heat oil in a pan, add cumin seeds and mustard seeds, when they begin to crackle add whole dry red chilli then and the curd mixture and cook for 15 mins.
- Add ker and sangri to the above mixture and cook for another 10 mins. Add lemon juice and dry mango powder.
- Garnish with chopped coriander and serve hot.

Kashmiri Phirni

Karan Bansal

Senior sous chef

Chor Bizarre, Bikaner House

Ingredients

(serves 10 small bowls)

- ◆ 80 gm thick grained suji
- ◆ 1 ltr full cream milk
- ◆ 80 gm sugar
- ◆ 0.25 gm saffron
- ◆ 80 gm cashews
- ◆ 100 gm condensed milk
- ◆ 20 gm chopped almonds
- ◆ 5 gm cardamom powder

Method

- Clean and soak suji and cashews separately in water.

- Soak saffron in some warm milk. Heat milk for a while continuously stirring it to avoid burning at the base. Add soaked suji and cashews after the milk starts to boil. Keep stirring. Add the soaked saffron and sprinkle cardamom powder.
- Add sugar to the milk when it comes to boil and stir it. Add condensed milk, mix well and reduce it to pouring consistency.

Remove from heat. Transfer it into small earthenware bowls and let it cool. Garnish with saffron and chopped almonds. Serve it cold.



The writer is a lifestyle journalist and author.

Rotary sends girls back to school in Dharwad

Team Rotary News

The adoption of schools by Rotary clubs in RID 3170, especially in the Dharwad region, and providing them with basic amenities such as handwash facility, gender-segregated toilet and giving training to children on personal hygiene will help students to fight the Covid pandemic, said PDG Ganesh G Bhat, member of the Wins National Committee.

Addressing an event to mark International Day of the Girl Child in which

10 girl students who had quit schools due to various reasons were adopted by RCs Dharwad Central and Dharwad Heritage, he sought the help of corporates through their CSR funding to send children back to school. Rotary clubs had provided the amenities and other classroom facilities to government schools which enabled them to reopen despite the pandemic, said Major Siddalingayya, commissioner, Public Education Department of Karnataka government.



Group handwash units with soap, gender-based hygienic toilets, running water and MHM sessions being done by clubs have encouraged parents to send their wards to schools without hesitation, he noted. Psychiatrist Dr Anand Pandurangi said Rotary has played a key role in changing the

mindset of children and parents as schools have reopened with a large number of students attending classes. RC Dharwad Central president Dr Anand Tavargeri, secretary Nagraj, RC Dharwad Heritage president Dr Vani Irkal, secretary Dr Mahabal Shetty and event chair Anand Nayak were present. ■



Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 36,994
 Rotaract clubs : 10,707
 Interact clubs : 16,795
 RCCs : 11,875
 Rotary members : 1,201,654
 Rotaract members: 230,701
 Interact members : 386,285

As on November 17, 2021

Membership Summary

As on November 1, 2021

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	132	6165	7.53	44	52	236
2982	76	3564	7.27	47	98	73
3000	137	5423	9.13	90	259	213
3011	125	4666	26.88	71	118	36
3012	132	4071	27.09	65	76	61
3020	77	4756	7.30	30	166	350
3030	96	5140	15.14	116	243	363
3040	102	2619	14.55	54	81	196
3053	69	2784	18.03	33	49	118
3054	184	7428	20.36	103	177	563
3060	110	5184	14.95	62	70	147
3070	124	3308	15.63	42	35	59
3080	98	4157	13.30	135	158	115
3090	90	2310	5.63	38	64	123
3100	105	2373	11.21	10	21	146
3110	134	3683	11.02	14	17	106
3120	90	3605	16.56	62	31	55
3131	140	5539	23.74	108	229	131
3132	90	3616	10.92	31	122	166
3141	117	6418	27.13	137	182	102
3142	104	3769	20.75	79	137	80
3150	115	4293	13.60	75	135	118
3160	78	2652	8.82	27	20	82
3170	138	6308	14.90	83	239	171
3181	87	3485	8.78	33	194	115
3182	85	3479	9.60	42	124	104
3190	160	6765	18.34	156	202	70
3201	153	6009	9.42	103	89	63
3203	92	4760	7.94	73	233	36
3204	62	2059	6.41	19	23	13
3211	145	4834	7.86	7	24	134
3212	143	5278	12.86	74	204	153
3231	98	3729	8.64	28	81	419
3232	152	7478	17.05	114	212	99
3240	102	3563	15.89	61	405	216
3250	107	4018	19.91	63	73	185
3261	92	3217	18.28	14	23	44
3262	123	4154	14.42	68	72	89
3291	168	4173	23.27	133	95	647
India Total	4,432	170,832		2,544	4,833	6,197
3220	76	2396	16.36	87	131	75
3271	130	2217	17.41	91	185	25
3272	161	1963	17.07	70	22	47
3281	308	8329	18.50	264	147	209
3282	175	3957	11.80	196	47	47
3292	153	6053	17.26	168	128	129
S Asia Total	5,435	195,747		3,420	5,493	6,729

Source: RI South Asia Office



Rajendra Agarwal

Textiles

RC Bombay Queen City, RID 3141

Rotary clubs flourish in Mumbai's housing societies

Three years ago, RC Mumbai Lower Parel was formed in a Mumbai housing society. It set a trend in forming new clubs and driving membership. "Forming Rotary clubs in high-rise buildings, gated communities (GCs) and housing societies was initiated by me to increase membership, and this has become a craze," says Rajendra Agarwal. He shares this "success formula" of forming vibrant clubs with district governors whenever possible. "Members of such clubs don't have to step out of their gated premises, or travel a long distance for weekly meetings; and can hold events and programmes there," he beams.

Agarwal plans to add 10 new clubs and 1,000-plus new members taking, their respective numbers to 127 and over 7,000 in the district. In Rotaract, 1,500 new members and 20 new clubs are planned through weekend events/programmes. Over the last five years, Agarwal has coordinated around 3,000 paediatric heart surgeries on children, and plans 1,500 this year. Each surgery costs around ₹1 lakh, and this is a GG project. Through a mix of GG and member contributions, 25 lakh fruit-bearing saplings will be donated to farmers in Palghar. Over 20,000 cataract surgeries at special camps; fitting of 1,000 Jaipur limbs; and 20,000 bottles of blood are on the cards.

His TRF target is \$3 million. Agarwal was introduced to Rotary by Rtn Ajay Goel in 1992. Later on, "I was inspired by PDGs Dr Bal Inamdar and Shrirang Prabhu to climb the ladder of Rotary hierarchy."

Meet your



Col Mahendra Mishra

Ex-Army officer

RC Bhopal Hills, RID 3040

Rotaract gets a booster shot

A self-motivated Rotarian, this former Army colonel wanted to join a social service organisation "after I retired from the Army in Feb 2009, when one of my colleagues introduced me to Rotary. From then on it has been an exciting journey." Comprising 23 revenue districts of western MP and two regions of Gujarat, Mishra is giving a big push to Rotaract membership.

"So far, 13 new Rotaract clubs have been formed, five awaiting charter; and this will push up membership to over 2,500 Rotaractors, a 300 per cent growth." By next June the target for Rotaract is 3040, and for Rotary 3040 from the present 2,649. During the charter presentation for RAC Oriental Indore Navalakha, 646 Rotaractors were inducted. "Many of the newly-installed clubs have more than 100 Rotaractors."

Five dialysis centres, attached to government and charitable hospitals, are being planned (GG: \$175,000). Two ICU on Wheels, a mobile cardiac unit, in Gujarat and Jhabua town, MP, with a GG of \$40,000 and 10-15 Happy Schools with CSR funding are being planned. Health check-up, eye-screening, dental and diabetes camps are being held through the year. "We will be holding around 850 medical camps catering to rural families." His target for TRF giving is around \$250,000.

"The challenge of retention is being tackled at all levels, from the top to the club-level. The RI leadership is also supervising the growth of membership in India and club presidents are taking care of this issue," he says.

Governors

V Muthukumaran



Rajiv Singhal

Income tax consultant
RC Saket Meerut, RID 3100

“Let us maintain the elite nature of Rotary”

As an elite NGO, “Rotary needs to preserve its class and formulate policies to attract quality membership. In recent years, clubs have grown by adapting to rapid changes. The focus must be on inducting new members with intellectual capacity and right attitude to steer our clubs,” says Rajiv Singhal. He plans to charter six new clubs, of which two have been formed, taking the strength to 112 by June next year. Another 300 new members will take the figure to 2,600-plus, he says.

He is aiming to form at least 10 new Rotaract clubs. For the first time, his district will be taking up child heart surgeries in a big way. “I am targeting at least 50 surgeries for children and these will be sponsored by me (about ₹50 lakh) through private agencies,” says Singhal. Ten Happy Schools will be done at government schools through member contributions.

Another mega project is “gender-specific toilets (50 blocks) in schools which will be funded through a mix of GG (\$32,000) and member donations. We have already done 20 such toilet blocks, and the rest will be completed this year.” Singhal has set a target of \$41,000 for TRF giving. His father, late Rtn JD Singhal inspired him to join Rotary in 1996. “I became a charter president of RC Saket Meerut. My father is my role model.” Rotary clubs across the NCR, western UP and Uttarakhand have shown “promising growth in the last few years. We need to sustain this ‘special class’ structure and not dilute it. Rotary is for special people,” he says.



Dr Upinder Singh Ghai

Surgeon, RC Jalandhar City, RID 3070

A mega Rahat camp at Srinagar in pipeline

Education of rural children and environment issues are the priority areas for Dr Upinder Singh Ghai, a laparoscopic surgeon, who is doing at least 4–5 free surgeries each month on patients referred by Rotarians. “I joined Rotary by chance in 1996 when a doctor friend took me to a dinner meeting of clubs. There I met some interesting people. What started as a fellowship turned into service for the community,” says Ghai.

He plans to induct 500 new members, charter 10 new clubs taking their strength to 3,900 and 135 respectively during his tenure. A 3-day RYLA in Manali was attended by 230 Rotaractors including 20 from Nepal. Recently, over 100 women Rotaractors were inducted at the chartering of RAC Sant Singh Sukha Singh College of Commerce for Women, sponsored by RC Amritsar Central. “My target is to add 250–300 new Rotaractors,” says Ghai. Due to terror strikes and bad weather in Srinagar, a 10-day Rahat medical camp in November was postponed. “PDG Rajiv Pradhan is coordinating with RIDs 3141 and 3142 to hold the Rahat camp next year. It will have over 50,000 patients at the OPDs, and perform over 500 surgeries,” he says.

He aims to start three dialysis centres (GG: \$35,000–\$40,000 each) at private hospitals. “Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi is the younger brother of PDG Manmohan Singh, RID 3080, and we are working with the state government to take up at least 10 Happy Schools.” His target for TRF giving is \$200,000. His clubs mark all religious festivals by distributing saplings at gurudwaras and temples.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



Guilt-free gifting

Preeti Mehra

This Xmas-New Year spreads good cheer with eco-friendly presents.

After a punishing pandemic, things seem to be looking up at the end of the year. If the third wave does not hit us severely, the Christmas-New Year is likely to be a season to celebrate. Traditionally too the year-end has always been a time to communicate with friends and relatives, spread good cheer, exchange gifts and herald in hope for the coming year.

Shopping for appropriate gifts becomes a December preoccupation. And if you are committed to living in the green zone then sustainable gifting is an essential component of the obligation. So, in this issue I bring to you a plethora of green gifting ideas that can be presented without an iota of feeling guilty about polluting the planet.

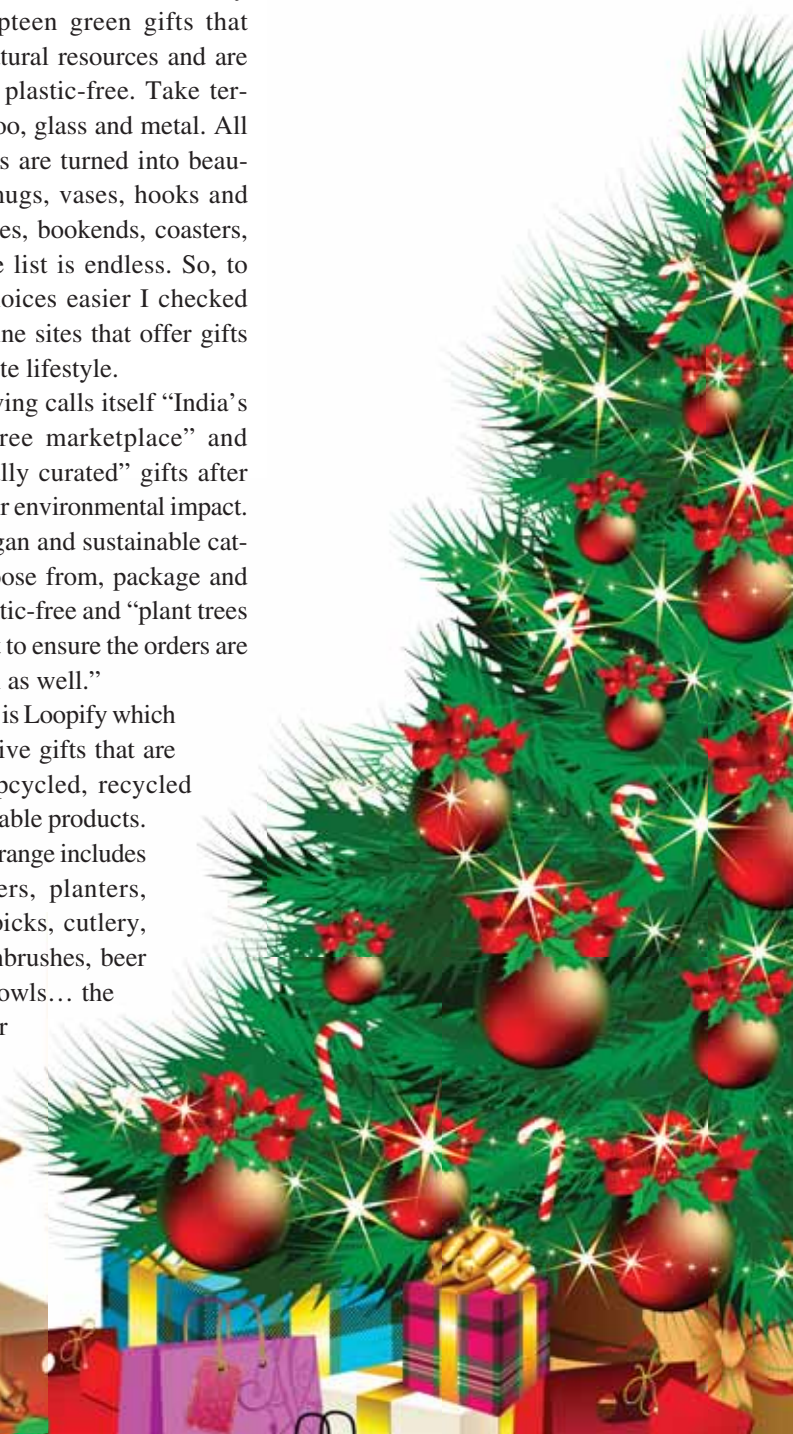
Environment-friendly gifting means minimising the use of resources and being open to gifts that have gone through the process of recycling or upcycling. And the choice does not stop with just the gift, its wrapping too needs to be a non-degradable option.

Let's start with the gifts. Though my personal choice for a gift — be it an adult or a child — is a book,

many may not feel the same. Today there are umpteen green gifts that come from natural resources and are chemical and plastic-free. Take terracotta, bamboo, glass and metal. All these materials are turned into beautiful bowls, mugs, vases, hooks and hangers, chimes, bookends, coasters, planters... the list is endless. So, to make your choices easier I checked out a few online sites that offer gifts for a zero-waste lifestyle.

Brown Living calls itself "India's first plastic-free marketplace" and offers "specially curated" gifts after evaluating their environmental impact. They have vegan and sustainable categories to choose from, package and ship them plastic-free and "plant trees from the profit to ensure the orders are carbon neutral as well."

Then there is Loopify which offers innovative gifts that are made from upcycled, recycled and biodegradable products. Their bamboo range includes desk organisers, planters, straws, toothpicks, cutlery, coasters, toothbrushes, beer mugs, salad bowls... the works. Their



products from upcycled cork include coasters, wallets, passport sleeves, even yoga mats. Similarly, they offer gifting ideas in glass and metal, making you feel totally spoilt for choice.

Green Feels is another online store that offers gifts in the stationery, clothing, accessories segments and specific products for the kitchen, bathroom, and the home in general. You could also go in for plants. Many people love being gifted a plant, the succulent variety are especially popular as they can be kept indoors and do not need as much care as other plants. Hanging pots are also appreciated and these can be

bought from neighbourhood gardening shops, which will take you one step further into encouraging a micro entrepreneur. This time during

Diwali an enterprising youngster made candles from throwaway coconut shells. She scooped the coconut out neatly and filled the shell with wax, making it a perfect eco-friendly gift for her parents.

These days shopping online for plants is also a rage and there are many eco stores on the world-wide web that you can order from. But the point I am trying to make is that there is no dearth of options that will help you to stay away from non-biodegradable material. That is if you are serious about making a small, but important, contribution to saving the planet.

It is the same with packing gifts as well. I remember a friend who would always bring my son's birthday gift tied with string and packed in newspaper which her daughter had coloured with crayons. She managed to do three things — inculcate a sense of recycling in the children, keep her little one busy with a creative activity, and not buy that shiny wrapping paper which almost always has a plastic coating that is not noticeable to the naked eye.

Apart from using paper or cardboard that is hundred per cent recyclable for packing a gift, there are other green packing alternatives as well. If the gift needs a hard material for packaging, you could reuse a tin or use metal or aluminium — both are recyclable products.

Glass too is a recyclable product and can be used freely for personal gifting. It makes perfect sense to reuse a handsome glass bottle and fill it with homemade

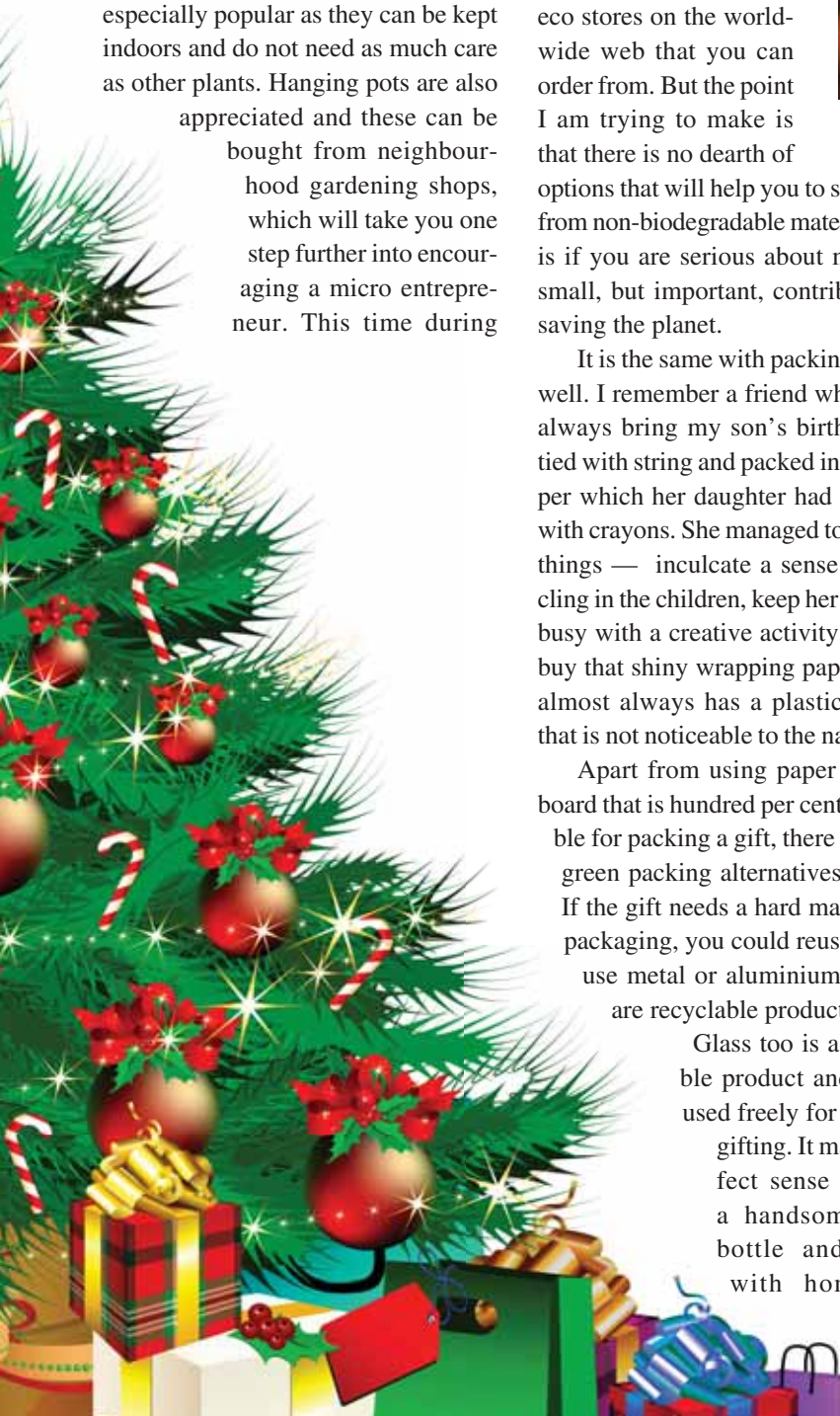
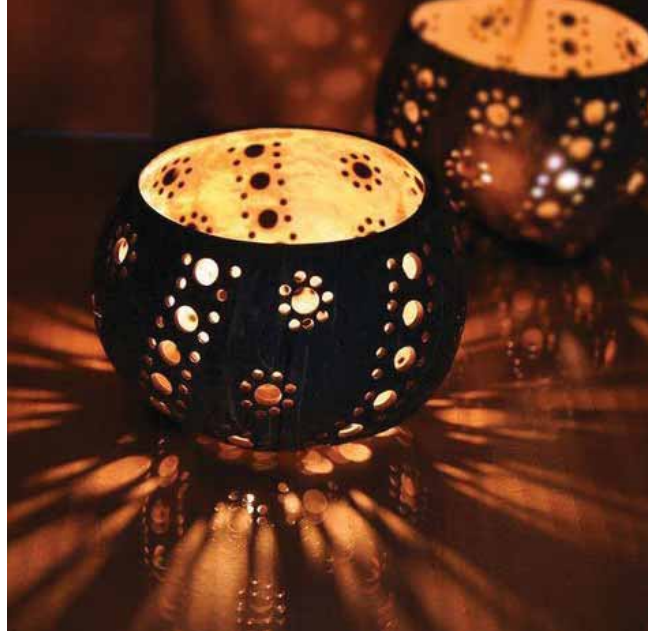
pickle, jam or chocolate fudge. Or show your love and concern by stuffing it with super healthy sunflower and melon seeds.

Cloth and jute too are great alternatives for packing. The neighbourhood tailor can turn leftover or discarded material into the most attractive gifting bags. Once a year when you clean out your cupboard, pile up unwanted material or clothes and simply use your imagination to turn them into bags of all shapes and sizes. They make nice money-gifting envelopes as well.

The idea is to be innovative and committed to eco-friendly gifting. Sustainable gifting has another dimension as well. Apart from minimising the use of resources, using natural, biodegradable, recycled, upcycled materials, it means paying attention to those who live on the planet. This necessarily means giving back to the world, supporting local artisans, believing in an equitable distribution of resources, paying all workers fairly, and making the most positive impact on planet earth.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues

Designed by N Krishnamurthy





Wordsworld

Not simply courage, conviction too



Sandhya Rao

**Malala Yousafzai proves
William Wordsworth right:
child is the father of man.**

We have all heard the phrase: ‘out of the mouths of babes’. This was one reason I had not picked up Malala Yousafzai’s book, *I Am Malala*, all these years. Yes, she had lived through a terrible experience — being shot at by Taliban terrorists — at age 15 with tremendous courage and had come through it all to become a role model especially for young people and women. Ever since, she had been in the news and had been seen to have met influential people and received international honours, including the Nobel Prize when she was

just 16. But... but, she was just a kid! I couldn’t have been proved more wrong.

Recently, I watched a programme on YouTube showing Malala addressing the Canadian parliament after being conferred honorary citizenship of that country. It was old news, but I was blown away. By her simplicity, composure, humour, restrained oratory, powerful message and, more than anything else, her spirit of forgiveness. At this time of the season, when people of different faiths celebrate peace, goodwill, enlightenment

and devotion, it seemed as though the universe were leading me to her. That’s how I started reading *I Am Malala*, which she has co-authored with journalist Christina Lamb, whose book, *Farewell Kabul*, was featured in this column a couple of months ago.

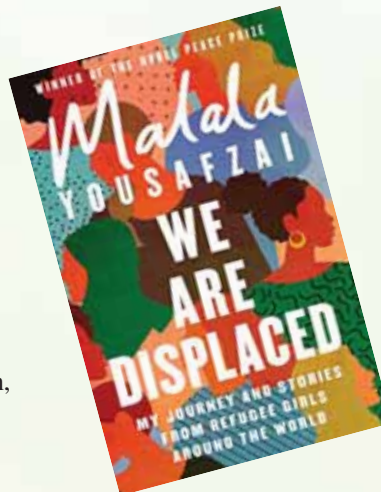
What an education the book is, full of insightful observations that sweep away dust in the mind. It talks about the history of the region, the Swat Valley that straddles both Pakistan and Afghanistan; the people and their beliefs and practices; the growth of the Taliban; social conditions and conditioning, the lack of education and basic facilities; mystical mountains, clear skies and running water, and sometimes piles of garbage; the efforts to educate children, especially girls; growing up in a loving environment in a society rigid with rules; a father who defies stereotypes and

a daughter who follows suit, yet who are both very much products of their circumstances; the love for reading; being a girl; speaking up and dressing up; politics and holding political views; the generosity and support of strangers...

No wonder the book was declared nonfiction book of the year when it was published.

Christina Lamb, as we already know, comes with firsthand knowledge of the region. Malala, we realise, is extraordinary. And although a lot of the background information is clearly the work of the journalist, it is Malala’s voice we hear. You see that she wasn’t just some random kid who got in the way of the Taliban. Even before she turned 13, she was politically aware, speaking publicly in support of the importance of educating girls and questioning injustices in society. In this, she was deeply influenced by her father, Ziauddin, who took the lead in the community and beyond in opposing social injustices and speaking out against the violence perpetrated by the Taliban.

As you read, you get a strange but distinct feeling as if Malala was ‘chosen’ to be at the receiving end of bullets shot at her pointblank by two men who stopped the van bringing her and

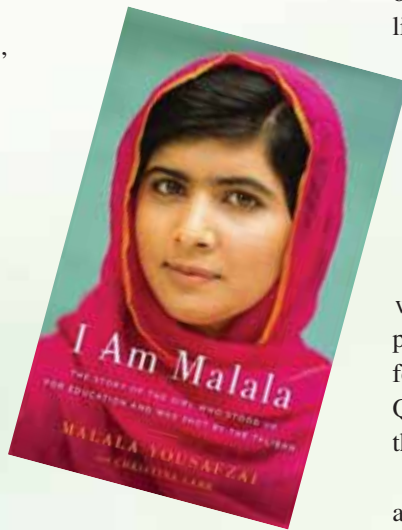


other children back home from school on October 9, 2012. ‘Who is Malala?’ they asked and when she identified herself, they fired three shots. Malala slumped forward; two other girls were also hurt but their wounds were less grievous.

While all these and the story of how Malala was flown on the private plane of a Saudi royal for treatment in the UK and her gradual recovery read almost like fiction, it’s the painting with words of the larger canvas that is riveting.

You are compelled to pay attention as, for instance, you read: ‘Children in the refugee camps were even given school textbooks produced by an American university which taught basic arithmetic through fighting. They had examples like, “If out of 10 Russian infidels, 5 are killed by one Muslim, 5 would be left” or “15 bullets – 10 bullets = 5 bullets”.’

A simple paragraph like the following resonates with us but it also tells a troubling story: ‘It was school that kept us going in those dark days. When I was in the street it felt as though every man I passed might be a *talib*. We hid our school bags and our books in our shawls. My father always said that the most beautiful thing in a village in the



morning is the sight of a child in a school uniform, but now we were afraid to wear them.’

Despair seeps through simple words: ‘People had lived by the river in Swat for 3,000 years and had always seen it as our lifeline, not a threat, and our valley as a haven from the outside world. Now we had become “the valley of sorrows”, said my cousin Sultan Rome. First the earthquake, then the Taliban, then the military operation and now, just as we were starting to rebuild, devastating floods arrived to wash all our work away. People were desperately worried that the Taliban would take advantage of the chaos and return to the valley.’

And a few lines later, you see Malala reaching right for the fundamentals: ‘While all this suffering was going on, while people were losing their loved

ones, their homes and their livelihoods, our president,

Asif Zardari, was on holiday at a chateau in France.

“I am confused, *Aba*... What’s stopping each and every politician from doing good things? Why would they not want our people to be safe, to have food and electricity?” Questions that echo around the world.

It’s been some years and Malala is now a young woman. But she continues speaking up and asking questions, and has used her prize money to set up a fund to help children, especially girls and women. This prompted me to read, along with *I Am Malala*, a book in which she shares stories from refugee girls around the world, called *We Are Displaced*. Noting that according to statistics from the UNHCR more than 44,000 people a day are forced to flee their homes, Malala urges us, among other things, to ‘be kind to a new student who has been displaced and

It’s not just conflict
or poverty that
creates refugees;
it’s government
policies and people’s
attitudes too.

is starting over... Know that empathy is key.’ And we in India know too well that it’s not just conflict or poverty that creates refugees; it’s government policies and people’s attitudes too.

Malala was 16 when she was invited to speak at the United Nations: ‘I did not write the speech only with UN delegates in mind; I wrote it for every person around the world who could make a difference. I wanted to reach all people living in poverty, those children forced to work and those who suffer from terrorism or lack of education. I called on the world’s leaders to provide free education to every child in the world. “One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.”’

Zaynab, who fled war in Yemen and eventually settled in the US, met Malala after a screening of the film *He Named Me Malala*. She says she felt she was meeting a movie star. ‘But then,’ she says, ‘she sat down and started asking us questions, and I realized, *She is just like us.*’

If a girl, just like us, can touch so many lives and make us think about the need for change, what better purpose can books serve?

The columnist is a children’s writer and senior journalist.

Jena – Germany’s City of Glass

Purushottam Chakraborty

Jena is a small city with a magnificent past in the former East Germany, being a traditional centre for literary get-togethers, scientific research and philosophical contemplation. I readily accepted an invitation from the Department of Optics, Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, while working at the celebrated Padova University, Italy, as an ICTP Fellow in 1994. As my research there was basically on ‘nonlinear optics’, I wished to visit the city of Goethe and Schiller, famous for scientific exploration in optic glasses and now a city of affluent centres of academic research in united Germany. Padova University is one of the oldest universities of Europe and like Jena, it has

a long tradition and great skill in the manufacture and working of glass.

It is believed that glass was first manufactured by ancient Egyptians about 4,000 years ago but the scientific exploration of glass is quite young and closely connected with Jena. Fraunhofer, Goethe, Zeiss and Schiller are famous names in this field.

On March 28, 1829, Goethe wrote to Johann Wolfgang Döbereiner, a renowned German chemist and a professor of chemistry at the University of Jena, “It would be most important to find the relationship between the refraction and dispersion of light in glass... and I should be pleased to contribute a modest funding.” Professor Döbereiner is best known for work that prefigured the periodic law

of chemical elements and for inventing the first lighter, which was known as the Döbereiner’s lamp. The main episode in the history of optical glass as a practical product is based on the pioneering research conducted by the persons from Jena — the chemist Otto Schott, physicist Ernst Abbe and technician Carl Zeiss. The three closely worked together at the “Zeiss Works” of Jena, the first enterprise in Germany and probably in the world for manufacturing high-precision optical instruments. Surprisingly, the glorious past of this great city of Goethe and Schiller, which has a rich tradition in German literature, seems

Volkshaus, one of the first free educational institutions in Germany.



to have been forgotten. Probably its prolonged period of isolation from the then West Germany and the rest of the world cut it off from public memory.

Jena is connected by the Munich-Berlin rail track of the German railway. I boarded the train from the Munich Central Station, a place for a short wait and of course, a can of German beer, which did not predict that the train journey would be so historically enlightening and educative. The Munich-Berlin railway track was laid in 1874. According to my co-passengers, the portion of the rail track under West Germany was maintained very well, which was obvious but that under East Germany, it was neither renovated nor maintained enough to withstand the pressure of fast trains. The disparity between these two parts of Germany was apparently present in spite of a bigger flow of economic prosperity from the West to the East, most visible in funding to the universities of the Eastern part of Germany. For instance, the researchers who were involved with the Optics Department of Friedrich Schiller University at Jena completed their masters' degree from different universities of Western Germany — Heidelberg, Hamburg, Munich, Gottingen, Frankfurt, etc. Obviously, the lack of funds at their own universities in Western part of Germany made them travel to Jena.

The Jena University has given six Nobel Prize winners, the most recent being Herbert Kroemer who won the Nobel Prize for physics in 2000.



Though lenses were known for thousands of years in the form of water-filled glass bottles used as burning glasses, the first use of convex-shaped glass lenses as eye-glasses was made by the end of 13th century by Alessandro della Spina of Pisa and independently by Salvino D'Armati of Florence. I felt honoured to receive this invitation from Jena as it came from the Optics department with which Professor Ernst Abbe, the father of modern optics, was associated. The university was established in 1558 and is counted among the ten best universities in Germany. It has given six Nobel Prize winners, the most recent being Herbert Kroemer who won the Nobel Prize for physics in 2000. It was renamed after the poet Friedrich Schiller who was a professor of philosophy when Jena attracted some of the most influential minds at the turn of the 19th century.

Jena lies in a hilly landscape in the east of Thuringia province, within the wide valley of the river Saale. Due to its rocky landscape, varied substrate and mixed forests, it is known for the wide variety of wild orchids. The economy of the city is based on the high-technology industry and

research. The optical and precision industry is the leading branch to date, while software engineering, other digital businesses and biotechnology are of growing importance.

I reached Jena at 11pm, with the temperature being 10 deg C below zero, and stayed in the city for a month.

Walking through the snow-covered roads, I came across the 400-foot high university tower, the most prominent landmark in Jena. Another important building was "Volkshaus", which was one of the first free educational institutions in Germany. It was built with funds from the Carl Zeiss Foundation and opened in 1903. From June 1922 to October 1924, the Volkshaus-Jena housed the first exhibition of optical devices. In 1846 Zeiss opened a workshop in Jena for producing microscopes and other optical instruments.

At the beginning of 20th century, Jena was thriving as a result of the overwhelming success of Zeiss' works. It was the biggest industrial centre of Germany where an excellent coordination of science and engineering took place by thousands of scientists, skilled engineers and

researchers working together. At the university a new era of intellectual breakthrough took place.

Surprisingly, this small town magnificently located between numerous hills which extend over 10km on both banks of the Saale River, was repeatedly attacked by enemies causing terrible devastation to the villages and towns. The warring factions often marched through Jena because of its central geographical location. Sometimes, Jena was overrun by Swedish troops. The famous Jena battle which took place on October 14, 1806, between French troops under Napoleon Bonaparte and Prussian

Army regiment ended in the devastating defeat of the Prussian troops and their allies. The French continued to occupy Jena and subjected it to severe plundering even after

the battle of October 14. Thousands of French soldiers rampaged through the town, rushed their way into houses and forced the townsfolk to hand over the provisions and valuables. In 1813, Germany became free from the French occupation.

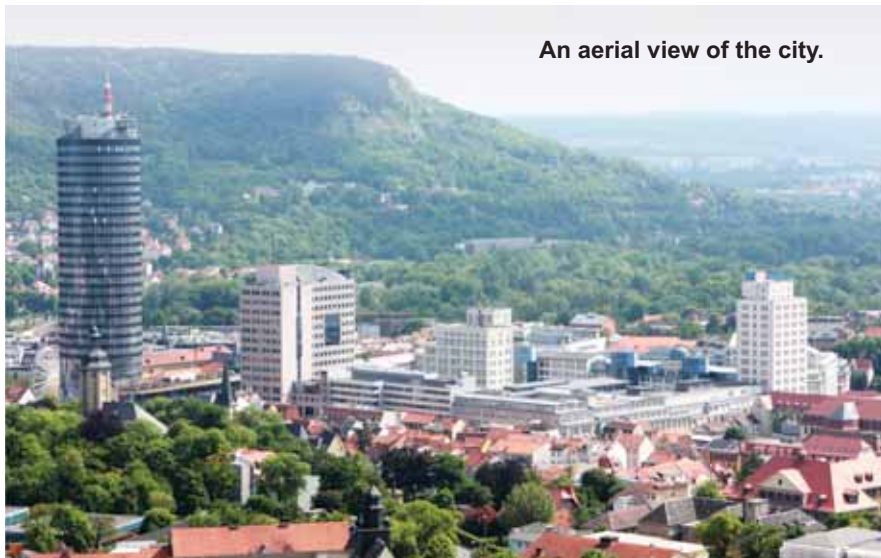
Jena was destroyed during the final phase of World War II. In February and March 1945, bombing attacks caused great damage to the city. In July 1945, the city became a part of the Soviet Union. The most shocking incident for the people of Jena was the demolition of the beautiful squares and historical buildings of the old town of Jena. In 1972, for reasons of prestige, the 120-metre high “Zeiss Research Tower” was built. That tower is now a property of the Jena University and known as the “Jena University Tower”.

The Optical Museum at Carl Zeiss Platz 12 is

fascinating. It was opened in the 1920s. Here the historical developments of the microscope, telescope and optics for medical technology are shown through various displays arranged chronologically. Instruments for long-distance viewing of the earth, geodesic devices and photographic lenses are all on display. The Zeiss planetarium of Jena is probably the oldest planetarium on earth. It was opened to the public in 1926 as the first planetarium in the world. In it, heavenly bodies are projected on to an artificial sky, creating a fascinating impression of space and time for the observers. Today there are more than 40 Zeiss museums all over the world, but the oldest one in Jena still remains a masterpiece.

*The writer is member of
RC Calcutta North
Suburban, RID 3291*

An aerial view of the city.



Jena University Tower



A birthday celebration



DGE Dr Anand Jhunjhunwala being weighed against notebooks.

RC Khamgaon, RID 3030, celebrated DGE Dr Anand Jhunjhunwala's birthday by doing a *Tula Daan*, a ritual of donating food grains or jaggery equal to

the donor's body weight. Seventy-three kgs of notebooks, equal to the weight of the DGE, were given to students of two rural schools near Khamgaon.

Cervical cancer vaccination



RC Meerut Umang, RID 3100, facilitated cervical cancer vaccination for 65 girl students of the Vardhman Academy in the town at a camp flagged off by DGN Ashok Gupta. The club aims to vaccinate 500 girls in the next three years, said club president Ashok Singhal. Club member Pankaj Jain has agreed to sponsor the vaccine for 25 girls, said project coordinator Sameer Agrawal.

Helping people walk



Little Nityananda Talukdar with his parents.

A prosthetic limb fitment camp organised by RC Guwahati Metro, RID 3240, helped 25 physically-challenged people to walk. Two-year-old Nityananda Talukdar was the youngest beneficiary. The camp costing ₹1 lakh was funded by Tanuja, sister of club president Vikash Bajaj, and her husband Sandeep Sethia.

Cancer detection van in Alipore



Rotarians, along with PDG Prashant Jani, at the launch of the cancer screening van.

RC Chikli Riverfront, RID 3060, under a global grant and in association with 29 other Rotary clubs, and NGOs, recently dedicated a cancer detection van to the Alipore Social Welfare Trust Hospital to

help in screening people for cancer. Rtn Harshad Patel and Indiraben from the US were the major contributors. The vehicle has a unique feature of expanding its space to six feet in length.



RID 3012 celebrates Rotary Day

For its second Rotary Day, RID 3012 organised a mega drawing competition organised by 80 Rotary clubs in 67 places like schools, housing societies and colonies in Delhi, Ghaziabad and other places. It attracted entries from around 15,000 children, of which 10,000 kids participated in person and the remaining 5,000 appeared online. ■

Into dynamic peace

Bharat and Shalan Savur

It's very good, very healing to have a mental detox; it's just that many of us don't know how to go about it. Besides, if you are already mentally exhausted, even the mere idea of a detox feels tiring and you want to ignore it. You want to be left alone and rightly so. Recently, my sister Shobha told me, "Sometimes, the best feeling in the world is to just sit by myself, relax and talk to nobody." I concur with her sentiment.

Mental exhaustion is self-imprisoning. It means either the mind is overwhelmed or extremely underwhelmed, overstretched to breaking point or abysmally low. And the most helpful thing you can do for it is to take time off for a leisurely do-nothing-think-nothing vacation. In short, let the mind be.

It needs to be given unconditional space and left alone. Sogyal Rinpoche compares it to pouring a handful of sand onto a flat surface where each grain settles on its own accord. You allow it the freedom to relax so that the tiredness which is actually a tight bundle of thoughts and emotions naturally loosens and eases.

Rest in spaciousness. Rest in this lovely mental ease. Just sit quietly, body loose, speech absent, mind peaceful... absolutely no effort, only a deep sweet relaxation. No words. Nothing... It is being in one's natural spaciousness. When we feel we need nothing, have everything, when we are not concerned with what others think about us or how something is going to turn out, we are in spaciousness. It's like giving away a small manicured

lawn in our backyard and discovering a huge, endless spread of Nature's lush, green forests and fields all around.

Spaciousness goes deeper — it means there is no limit to staying in this ease. It cannot be seen in terms of minutes or hours. When time loosens its grasp on your thinking, you are in eternity. Robert Fulghum expresses it perfectly when he says, 'Peace is not something you wish for, it's something you make, something you are, something you give away.' Mental peace is not passive as many believe, it is dynamic, it opens wide your perception where you see the world in all its brilliance.

Peace is dynamic. Recently, I read a true-life anecdote that occurred 110 years ago when an elderly gentleman called Venkatarama Iyer stayed with the sagely Ramana Maharshi in the famous Arunachala caves. So ecstatically powerful was the radiant peace emanating from Ramana that a transported Iyer danced in joy around the sage and spontaneously wrote five hymns on his guru. These hymns are still sung today.

When a mind is cleansed of its pressures, the effect can be a serene peace or a thrillingly electric jolt of energy. And if you're vigilant, you can keep the mind clean and joyous all the time — either by remembering the peace experience so that your mind instantly shifts to this known altered state or by pausing to breathe slowly several times to centre the mind in the present moment away from the situational distress it may be getting scattered in. As Eckhart Tolle always

exhorts, 'Discern between life and a life situation.' Let the mind, through the body, breathe in a living moment rather than waste its energy on a situation.

The routine that revs. The body is a great ally of the mind. A few days ago, I was feeling a little tired, my legs were hurting and I even considered skipping my exercise routine. And then, Dr BM Hegde pops up on YouTube and says, 'What do you do when you come home physically and mentally exhausted? You lie down! Never lie down! Go for a long walk and see how you feel!' I then pedalled for an hour



on an armchair cycle, next picked up dumbbells for the upper-body exercises, and then on to the yoga mat for the mandatory abdominal crunches et al. And I was brimming over and glowing with well-being and goodwill like a Christmas anthem. Exercises release pent-up frustration, relax tight muscles and, release feel-good endorphins and return you renewed and buoyant to yourself. If you feel good, you are bound to be good to all.

Be human. Please take the time daily to contemplate the kind of energy you bring to situations, to people's lives, to the world. Are you creating harmony or tumult? In this high-technology world, remember robots can be efficient, computers can be speedy, but only humans can be harmonious and creative and, yes, vulnerable. Be human, be harmonious. Be such a wonderful human being that you'll

love your own company and be an empathetic blessing to others.

Deepak Chopra gently leads us through what he terms as the 'creative intelligence of the future.' He urges, 'Share love and empathy,' explaining, 'Stress, not Covid, is the number one pandemic. When you feel what others feel, the neural network reorganises so you feel love. Love heals.' He states, 'Nature looks after health. You introduce a little intention to remain healthy... and as the Bible says, "Ask and you shall receive."' It's quieting the mind and putting your intention into the Universal Mind and it comes back to you as fulfillment.'

Vulnerability is not a toxin, imperfections are not toxins. So, don't fret on them, instead, see them in a clear perspective. Vulnerability brings down our barriers and builds bridges — human to human. As Victoria Pratt puts it, 'People think vulnerability will make you weak, but it does the opposite. It shows you're strong enough to care.' Imperfections bring in new direction or fresh inputs — wrongly-timed notes have created new kinds of music, for example. Imperfections even gave the world the wonderful Japanese *wabi-sabi* way — seeing beauty in imperfection.

In that context, don't get so deep into perfection that your mind drowns in rage, regret, guilt. Don't put in so many more hours of work just to finish with or complete something — it's far wiser to stop when you're on top, end the day like a new beginning rather than as a dead duck. Brain drain, mind strain are not worth it. Tomorrow beckons, today says 'Enough'.

Learn from the night. Get off the work desk and go into the night. Use the gift of night to shed all worries, all preoccupations. Sleep to the smooth, gliding, guiding Yoga Nidra meditation. Rest in the quiet offered by the

Be willing to say 'I don't know.' On hearing these three liberating words, the mind rests. It's exhausting to pretend you know it all.

night... the peace where so many sweet solutions and inspirational answers are woven. Then, wake up to the smile of the skies. Now, you can get back to your work desk.

Some tips that tap out tiredness:

- * Help others. Helping boosts endorphins. Be an endorphinist.
- * Enjoy beauty. Give and receive compliments with grace.
- * If somebody pushes your buttons, practise observing rather than reacting. Self-control increases self-worth and that's gold.
- * Accept that there are things you cannot change. Then the mind can train its intelligence on the things you can change.
- * Be willing to say 'I don't know.' On hearing these three liberating words, the mind rests. It's exhausting to pretend you know it all.

Finally, some practical wisdom from Edith Armstrong: 'I keep the telephone of my mind open to peace, harmony, health, love and abundance. Then, whenever doubt, anxiety, or fear try to call me, they keep getting a busy signal — and soon they'll forget my number.'

The writers are authors of Fitness for Life and Simply Spiritual – You Are Naturally Divine and teachers of the Fitness for Life programme.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

From RI South Asia Office desk

National Immunisation Day (NID) in 2022

The next NID is planned on Jan 23, 2022, using bivalent Oral Polio Vaccine (bOPV) and will target to cover all children aged 0–5 years. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has proposed inauguration on Jan 22, 2022, by the President of India. The preparedness in terms of updated micro plans, IEC campaigns etc should be planned well in advance following all Covid protocols.

Paul Harris Society

The Paul Harris Society (PHS) recognises individuals who notify The Rotary Foundation their intent to contribute \$1,000 or more each Rotary year to the Annual Fund, PolioPlus Fund, or an approved global grant. PHS contributions count towards Rotary Foundation Sustaining Member (Annual Fund contributions only), Paul Harris Fellow, Multiple Paul Harris Fellow, and Major Donor and club recognition banners. Recognition consists of a chevron-style pin and certificate provided by the district PHS

coordinator. For more information visit the webpage or read the Paul Harris Society brochure.

How are society members recognised for their contribution?

New society members are presented with a certificate and chevron at a district or club event. PHS coordinators themselves visit the club or district to honour new members or entrusts another Rotary officer to do so.

Ways to expand PHS within your club/district

- Show how Foundation contributions are transformed into high-impact, sustainable solutions to the pressing needs around the world
- Explain the importance of the society through club and district presentations
- Encourage members to join online by visiting Paul Harris Society page on *Rotary.org* or by signing in the PHS form
- Use Foundation reports to identify prospective members and invite

them to join during one-to-one meetings

- Plan recognition events for PHS members or recognise them during other suitable events.

Foundation recognition points

- Foundation recognition points are awarded to donors who contribute to TRF through the Annual Fund or PolioPlus, or who contribute to sponsorship of a Foundation grant
- Donors receive one recognition point for every US dollar contributed to these funds. Contributions to the Endowment Fund are not eligible
- Donors can transfer Foundation recognition points to others to help them qualify as a Paul Harris Fellow or Multiple Paul Harris Fellow
- A minimum of 100 Foundation recognition points must be transferred at a time, and donor must complete and sign the Recognition and Transfer Request form

- The points may not be transferred from individuals to a club or district.

Club and district leaders can view the online Club Recognition Summary, which includes the recognition amount, recognition points, current Paul Harris Fellow level, and date that level was achieved through *My Rotary* login.

Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi Mehta Endowed Fund

An Endowment Fund titled Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi Mehta Endowed Fund was initiated and formally launched on Nov 9 by all 4 EMGAs from Zones 4,5,6 and 7 in honour of RI President Mehta. The initiative was supported by Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty and RI Directors A S Venkatesh and Dr Mahesh Kotbagi who motivated the Rotary leaders to achieve the fund raising target of \$1 million towards the endowment as set by EMGAs. ■

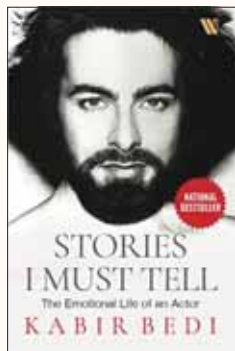
On the racks

Stories I must tell

Author : **Kabir Bedi**

Publisher : **Westland**

Pages : **319; ₹256**



From the first magical encounter with The Beatles as a student in Delhi to working as an interviewer for All India Radio to ventures in Italy and Europe, this book is a collection of anecdotes from Bedi's life. It will take readers through the highs and lows of his professional and personal life, his relationships, including marriage and divorce. From being a sinister husband in *Khoon*

Bhari Maang to playing the charming Prince Omar in *The Bold and the Beautiful*, he shares an interesting account of his exciting stints in film, television and theatre across India, Europe and Hollywood. He poignantly writes about his battle to save his schizophrenic son who later committed suicide. He also tells the fascinating love story of his Indian father, a philosopher in Europe, and his British-born mother, the world's highest-ranked Buddhist nun.

Know your Rotary

Author : **N Bhaskaran Pillai**

Pages : **447; ₹399**



The book has detailed information on all Rotary aspects ranging from how it was started, themes of various leaders, RYLA, conventions, awards, COL, TRF and more. It is a guide and has reference material for both Rotarians and non-Rotarians. The author has also mentioned important events in the history of Rotary (year-wise) in this book, spelt out the abbreviations

of Rotary terms, and listed the chronological growth of Rotary, Rotary zones and Rotary fellowships groups for networking. The book covers all avenues of services, district and club responsibilities, regional magazines, International Assemblies, women in Rotary, Rotary in UN and more.

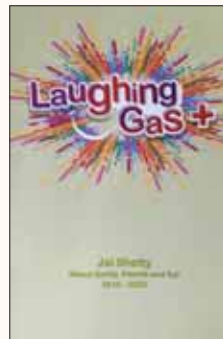
Laughing Gas

Author : **Jai Shetty**

Publisher : **Minds Power**

Publication

Pages : **180; ₹300**



Based on the real-life experience of the author this book is a gentle reminder that life is full of laughter and one must laugh not just to be happy but healthy too. From Indian cinema to yoga, the author

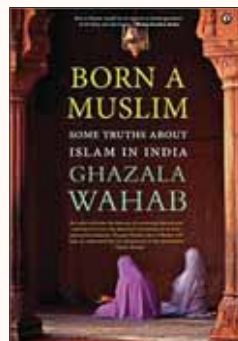
shares hilarious anecdotes and some special moments of his life. Written in a casual style the book includes plenty of Rotary experience, as well as poems by his wife PDG Rekha Shetty, a couple of caricatures and sketches.

Born a Muslim

Author : **Ghazala Wahab**

Publisher : **Aleph Book Company**

Pages : **408; ₹710**



This book gives an overview of the lives of Muslims post-Partition in India. The author talks about how female genital mutilation, veil, segregation, lack of

education, divorce and inheritance have made Muslim women powerless and insists that this is not a result of faith, but selective use of religious texts by the clergy. She narrates stories of Muslims hiding their identity, and reverting to Hinduism to prove their secular credentials. The author talks about how "Saudi Wahabbism is making Indian Islam primitive."

Compiled by Kiran Zehra

RC Bhuvanagiri — RID 2981



Hearing aids and white canes for the visually-impaired were given to around 50 beneficiaries at a special camp for the differently-abled people. The project cost ₹2.50 lakh.

RC Faridabad Sanskriti — RID 3011



Over 300 children were screened at an eye testing camp held at the Shraddha Mandir Public School in Greater Faridabad. As many as 57 students were found to have weak eyesight.

RC Salem Evergreen — RID 2982



District Governor K Sundaralingam inaugurated a toilet block (₹3 lakh) at the Government Girls HSS School, Jarikondalampatty village.

RC Ghaziabad North — RID 3012



RI President Shekhar Mehta visited the Vardan Hospital where the club had earlier installed a CT scan machine. He appreciated the then club president Manoj Aggarwal who had undertaken this initiative.

RC Gudalur Garden City — RID 3000



Theni district collector KV Muralidharan inaugurated a 26,000 sqft Miyawaki forest having 2,800 saplings at a PHC in Gudalur in the presence of DG R Jeyakkan.

RC Nagpur Metro — RID 3030



Around 8,000 masks were distributed among the public and police officials. IPP Ambarish Akre donated 2,000 masks.

RC Tarapur — RID 3060



The club members planted 115 saplings on the farm of Rtn Raju Vaghela in Tarapur. Plantation camps are one of the focus areas of the club this year.

RC Meerut — RID 3100



Project *Hausely Ki Udaan*, which aims to empower poor children, was launched online during which club president Tripti Mittal interacted with 125 students.

RC Ludhiana Greater — RID 3070



An Interact orientation meet was held at the Government Secondary School, Jawadi, in which Rtns Param Saini and MS Aulakh spoke on Rotary and the Four-Way Tests.

RC Palia Kalan — RID 3120



A vaccination selfie booth was installed at the Government Hospital to motivate people to get inoculated against Covid. The club honoured Dr Ajit Singh, Ankit Dixit and superintendent Harendra Varun.

RC Uklana Mandi — RID 3090



Tricycles were donated to 21 physically-challenged people in the presence of DG Parveen Jindal, PDGs Prem Aggarwal, Rajeev Garg and AG Harkiran Singh. The project cost ₹1.8 lakh.

RC Koregaon Park — RID 3131



Around 150 reusable sanitary pads were distributed at the Vidya Vikas Mandir School at Andgaon village, a tribal hamlet. Lady members educated the girl students on menstrual hygiene.

RC Aurangabad — RID 3132



Cows were donated to rain-hit tribal families in Thakarwadi village near Aurangabad. Club president Milind Sewalikar assured the beneficiaries they will be provided with high grain diet.

RC Hubli East — RID 3170



Five hundred school-children took part in a polio awareness rally conducted in association with the Interact Club of Rotary School Bengeri, Hubballi.

RC Bombay Juhu Beach — RID 3141



Under its 9-year-old *Freedom for Girls* Project, the club has distributed 21 lakh sanitary pads, installed vending machines and napkin incinerators at colleges and rural areas.

RC Hassan Royal — RID 3182



Over 200 girls were present at a women's empowerment event that dwelt on the Pocso Act. District judge Ravikanth was the chief guest and club president Manu SR was present.

RC Gudur — RID 3160



PDG Surendra Bommireddy inaugurated an RWH unit sponsored by Rtn Sridhar Reddy Bandi in memory of his late father at the GSR Municipal High School.

RC Bangalore Brigades — RID 3190



A computer lab was inaugurated at the Subhash Chandra Bose Rural High School in Nangali village. Well-equipped with Wi-Fi connectivity, the facility will also cater to adult learners.

RC Tangasseri — RID 3211



Several play equipment were donated to the Saint Antony's LP School, Vaady, in Kollam, Kerala, in the presence of DG K Sreenivasan.

RC Madras Chenna Patna — RID 3232



DGN Ravi Raman felicitated six teachers with Best Teacher Awards in the presence of District vocational service chairman S N Balasubramanian.

RC Tirunelveli Town — RID 3212



A karate camp was held at the Sri Venkateswara School in partnership with the GMS Academy. Club president L Sankaramurthy gave Nunchaku and Bo sticks to all participants.

RC Rourkela Queens — RID 3261



A toilet and handwash unit were inaugurated at the Kalyani Ray Mahavidyalaya school by DG Sunil Pathak. DSG Akhil Mishra, AG Vikas Golchha and advisor Ajay Agrawal were present.

RC Vaniyambadi — RID 3231



A polio awareness rally was taken from the Rotary building to the bus terminus. Rotarians highlighted Rotary's role in polio eradication from most parts of the world.

RC Geetanjali Kolkata — RID 3291



The club joined hands with Rotaractors to celebrate Senior Citizens Day and Raksha Bandhan at Seva, a home for aged women. Gift bags were distributed.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

Of bureaucracy, and airports

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan



Last month my wife and I had to go to Bengaluru to sign a document that could have been signed electronically. After all, we had uploaded all the required documents that the state government needed. But such are the ways of bureaucracies that they can, and often do, do you a good turn with one hand and undo it with the other. So off we went and spent a small fortune just to sign because, said the bureaucracy, you must come in person, never mind digitisation and all that. Thus far with technology and no further. It was annoying but after the long and enforced Covid break, welcome, too. A quiet request to a senior member of the state bureaucracy ensured that we were treated like VIPs and the whole business of “sign here please, and there, thank you very much” was over in 20 minutes. They even gave us a cup of coffee each.

It was all so smooth that we could have gone in the morning and come back the same day. But it became five days because we went over on a weekend so that we could visit the many relatives and a couple of friends. So although I might sound as I am complaining, on the whole it was an enjoyable five days, not least because of the hotel we stayed in on MG Road.

What was not enjoyable, however, was the airport experience, both in Delhi on the way out, and in Bengaluru on the way back. The

reason: extreme crowds. In fact, the lines were so long that we nearly missed the outbound flight. We had forgotten to web check-in and our names were not showing up on the computer. It took the very nice check-in guy 25 minutes to sort it out by which time the line behind us was a mile long. But for us it was the line at the security that mattered and that was much longer — so long indeed that the airline sent an escort with us to take us through the business class line — which was absolutely empty. Not a soul.

But nothing is so simple in India. The policeman there refused to let us through. So my wife pulled the senior citizen card. It was only then that he took pity and let us through. We nearly had to run to the gate which was around 700 metres away. Huffing and puffing we collapsed on the seats in gratitude. When we caught our breath and looked around we saw there was hardly anyone there. “The

The airline had changed the gate, but because of short staffing due to Covid, not announced it. As nasty tricks go, it was a nice touch.

flight seems empty,” said my wife and promptly pulled out her phone for her usual rest and recreation. I was gazing idly at the departures board when suddenly I saw something that made me leap up, yelling at my wife “chalo, chalo”. She, poor thing, was so surprised that she did something she rarely ever does — listen to me. The airline had changed the gate, you see, but because of short staffing due to Covid, not announced it. As nasty tricks go, it was a nice touch.

Anyway we hastened over to the new gate and managed to board — sitting eight rows apart in middle seats. Our cup of joy was running over. I will not bore you with the details of our return flight. Suffice it to say that it was nearly the same. But there is always a positive side to everything because when I narrated our saga to a friend, I learnt an entirely new phrase. “Aah” she said, “revenge tourism”. I asked her what that meant. It’s the people’s revenge, she said, for not being allowed to travel for so long.

So, folks, go ahead and take your revenge but make sure you reach the airport four hours in advance and, yes, don’t forget to web check in — and keep checking to see if they have changed the gate. Because that’s what they did on our return which meant an hour long wait before the new gate became operational. Cooped up in the plane after landing for 27 minutes and waiting for suitcases for 45. ■

In Brief



Padma Shri for Rotarian doctor

Dr Krishna Mohan Pathi, past president of RC Berhampur, RID 3262, has been conferred with the Padma Shri Award for his service to the tribal community in Ganjam

district of Odisha. Pathi has been treating tribals for over 30 years and runs a charitable organisation, Bharadwaj Gurukul Ashram, which provides free healthcare to the tribals.



Rotarian gets cabinet berth

Dr Mahesh Joshi, member of RC Jaipur Round Town, RID 3054, has been inducted as minister in the Rajasthan cabinet. He will take charge of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) looking after water and sanitation which is also a key focus area of Rotary.



Malala gets married

Youth icon and a champion of girls' education, Malala Yousafzai grabbed headlines recently when she announced her

marriage to Asger Malik, an entrepreneur and general manager of the Pakistan Cricket Board. Malala took to Instagram and Twitter to share intimate, colourful pictures of her wedding ceremony that took place at her home in Birmingham, England. Netizens went into a frenzy when she shared another glimpse of her husband Asger Malik kissing her hand.



Pregnant cows on a chopper ride

To help 12 pregnant or injured cows descend from their summer pastures in the mountains to Urnerboden valley in Switzerland, for the annual cow parade, the farmers airlifted the bovines down the mountain, roughly 6,400-feet above sea level,

one at a time, through a helicopter. Each year around 1,000 cows travel from higher ground in the Swiss Alps to the valley for the gala parade.



1,500-year-old winery unearthed

Archaeologists from Israel Antiquities Authority have stumbled upon the world's largest known Byzantine-era winery in central Israel. The find includes a complex web of five winepresses about 2,400 sqft each; four warehouses where the wine was aged; kilns where the clay wine jugs were fired; and thousands of pieces from broken jugs. The winery is said to have produced half-a-million gallons of wine a year.

Compiled by Kiran Zehra; Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

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