

# Rotary NEWS

INDIA  
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## A ‘thank you’ hug

Not only pictures but gestures also speak louder than words. As the Mahabs 21 Zone Institute of RI Director A S Venkatesh drew to a close, he chose to give the Institute chair, past governor (RI District 3000) M Muruganandam, a warm hug in lieu of words of gratitude.

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## On the cover

A cultural performance at the Mahabs 21 institute.

Picture: Hemant Kumar



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## Fitting farewell to PRID Sushil Gupta

The cover page of the December issue resonated the voice of lakhs of Rotarians as PRID Sushil Gupta was an inspirational leader whose contribution has immensely strengthened Rotary. The article by Past RI President Kalyan Banerjee has subtly pointed out the great stalwart's legacy.

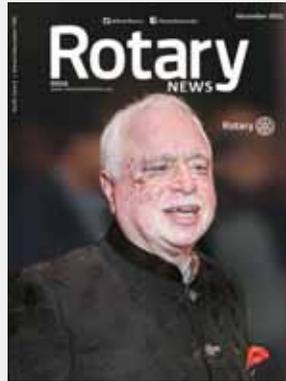
The article on the milkman of India, Verghese Kurien, is a gold standard in describing a wonderful personality who chose the path less driven to help the poorest of poor of this country.

The write-up on Indus Peace Park has focused on fostering peace and unity among people of the world. Rotary knows no boundaries and it would be one of its major achievements if it can promote cordial relations between India and Pakistan.

The career counselling camp of RID 3090 has shown what the selfless service done by Rotarians can do to shape the future of the young.

Environment, the seventh area of focus, needs more attention than ever in these dicey times of climate change. Bamboo cultivation and putting up Miyawaki forests, as detailed in the article *RID 3181 shows the way in bamboo cultivation*, can bring about a world of changes that can enhance conservation of nature. We must remember that without nature, we don't exist.

I was deeply moved reading the report on RI President Mehta inducting Achyuta Samanta, a renowned social worker, as a Rotarian. Art auctions to fund menstrual health awareness is a novel idea and more such attributes are need-



ed if our country has to improve the plight of millions of women. The article *Heart surgery done on Nigerian child in Mumbai* truly embodies the Rotary principle of serving humanity, cutting across the globe. The idea of PDG Dr Narendra Nath Dutta, RID 3240, to set up a hospital in rural Assam has made countless youth realise their aspirations to become doctors.

'Not all Rotary is the same' by Insa Folster gives us the flavour of Rotary's diversity.

'Meet your Governors' column is motivating and a lesson for all Rotarians. The plans of DGs are focused in an exemplary manner which brings about fresh energy to all Rotarians and provides a learning opportunity.

Altogether, I found the December issue spectacular; it serves the purpose of ushering in the new year with mind-blowing ideas and exchanges. Congrats to Editor Rasheeda Bhagat and her team.

Dr Jayasekharan VP  
RC Payyanur — D 3204

In a fitting tribute to a real Rotary stalwart, the December issue of our magazine carries on its cover

the photo of PRID Sushil Gupta. The obit article by PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and the picture pages on Gupta are all commendable. It was sad to read about the demise of PRIP Cliff Dochterman, whose memory will remain with us forever. RI President's message on good health is apt; the Editor's note talks about the noble qualities and character of PRID Gupta; RID Mahesh Kotbagi explains well the importance of DisCons; while RID AS Venkatesh lays stress on protecting our environment. Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty rightly says that even small amounts to TRF make a huge difference.

The article *Remembering India's milkman: Verghese Kurien* is worth reading and his quotes are meaningful and funny and the piece *Dada, My grandfather* by Siddharth Sheth was interesting.

Other articles on the Indo-Pak Peace Park; 100 handpumps at a Delhi slum; heart surgery on a Nigerian child; and solar lamps in Koomati village, are all exemplary and show the Rotary's commitment to humanity. Club Hop is useful in showing pictures of club activities. As a whole, the December edition is excellent. I wish the RNT team a happy new year.

Philip Mulappone MT  
RC Trivandrum  
Suburban — D 3211

The December issue, as usual, is rich in content. The Editor's note titled *Remembering Sushil Gupta* and the obit by PRIP Banerjee are real tributes to the departed Rotary leader. We have lost a great human being and his

loss is irreparable for his family, business world and Rotary. Let his soul rest in peace.

There was impressive coverage on service projects such as RC Calcutta Yuvis's construction of 1,000 toilets; RC Delhi South Central's donation of 100 hand-pumps in a slum; RC Salem Central's project of solar lamps that light up tribal lives; RC Madurai Star's Rotary houses for 49 visually-impaired people in a village; and correcting the clubfoot of 800 children in Malda by RC Mango City.

All these projects prove to the world that Rotarians are always compassionate, react instantly when people around are in need and organise projects in pursuit of excellence. For them service is the greatest expression of care.

*R Srinivasan, RC Madurai  
Midtown — D 3000*

The editorial by Rasheeda Bhagat and the lead article by PRIP Kalyan Banerjee on late PRID Gupta were inspiring and in limited words, so much has been spoken about a man who was truly tall by all means. India and the world will surely miss him.

President Mehta's statement that your actions today can help extend the lives of others is touching. The project of distributing smart vision spectacles for the visually-challenged in Hubli is in sync with embracing technology since the glasses provide smart vision. If each district in the country starts to promote such innovative projects, then the impact on the community could be much deeper.

The story on India's milkman is another inspiration. The coverage and the experiences shared are amazing and talk so much about the man who lived life on his own terms but for those who didn't have a voice. Verghese Kurien is really a true leader.

*Vivek Khandelwal  
RC Deonar — D 3141*

RI President Mehta has rightly emphasised on good health in his message. Covid has taught us many lessons on how to prevent diseases. Rotarians have almost eradicated polio from the world by hard work. But Mehta wants us to take up more healthcare projects and change more lives.

During his meeting with PM Narendra Modi, Mehta assured that India will become fully literate by 2025. Over the past few months, all Rotarians in India are working tirelessly to fulfil this ambition of our beloved leader.

Late PRID Sushil Gupta was a remarkable Rotarian with great qualities of heart and mind. He was a multifaceted personality, a man of simplicity and humility, apart from being a successful hotelier. Editor

Rasheeda has nicely put in words the attributes of Gupta who will be missed by the entire Rotary family.

*S Muniandi  
RC Dindigul Fort — D 3000*

The cover photo of PRID Sushil Gupta was fantastic. RI President Shekhar Mehta's message *For Rotary, good health is a human right* was excellent.

Editor's note *Remembering Sushil Gupta* was poignant, while the message from Trustee Vahanvaty: *Little drops make an ocean* was superb. The article *RC Calcutta Yuvis constructs 1,000 toilets* for poor people was an eyeopener.

Congrats to PRID Bharat Pandya for getting selected as TRF Trustee for 2022-26.

*Daniel Chittilappilly  
RC Kaloor — D 3201*

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# Use your vocation to change lives



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

Greetings, dear changemakers of Rotary,

One of Rotary's founding principles was to use your vocation — whether as a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or another profession — to do good in the world. As we attempt to overcome and recover from the pandemic, this principle is vital in retraining people who have lost their jobs. In response, the Rotary E-Club of Tamar Hong Kong organised seminars for young people, with the aim of preparing them for the changing world of work.

This type of training must happen on a large scale. According to the United Nations, global unemployment is expected to exceed 200 million people in 2022. Women and youths are likely to be disproportionately affected.

This is why I've placed such a strong emphasis this year on projects that empower girls, and I've been delighted to see some of these projects in action. Of course, access to education and the path to employment can be blocked by a lack of water and sanitation infrastructure.

A project in Pune, India, focuses on providing girls and women with an affordable, reusable sanitary pad. The project provides employment for production and distribution of the pads, and it will reduce the pollution caused by the disposal of

12.3 billion sanitary napkins in the country annually, many of which end up in India's landfills.

Others have used vocational service to advance the empowerment of women. The Rotary Club of Poona, India, conducted workshops to teach martial arts to young women for self-defence against the threat of abuse or human trafficking.

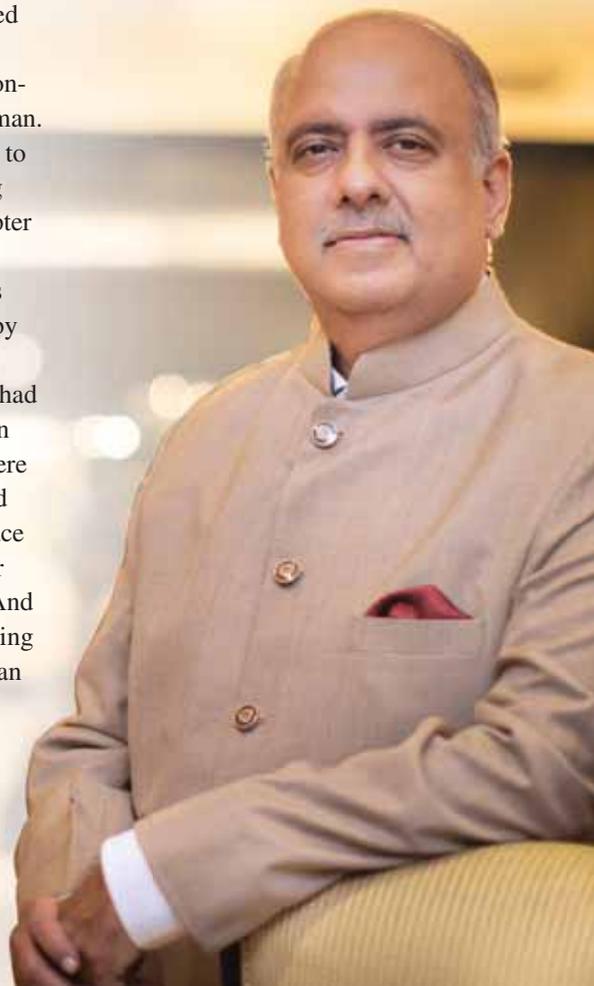
I've also been fortunate to use my vocation to do good through Rotary. The Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 devastated the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which are part of my district. Thousands of homes were destroyed, and many areas lost electricity and running water. On my visit to Little Andaman Island, the builder in me immediately wanted to build homes for the homeless islanders there. We decided to construct 500 homes in Little Andaman.

On the last of my seven trips to the island, I could see something glimmering below as my helicopter was about to land. I realised that what I was seeing were the roofs of new homes. I was overjoyed by the sight, and soon a realisation dawned upon me. As a builder I had built many beautiful buildings. In comparison, these 500 homes were the most ordinary buildings I had ever built, and they were in a place I likely will never visit again, for people I will never meet again. And yet the satisfaction I had in handing over these houses was greater than

from anything I had previously built. Probably because for once I was using my vocation to *Serve to Change Lives*.

You, too, may have had opportunities to use your vocation to *Serve to Change Lives*. I welcome your stories of performing vocational service through Rotary. Also, I want to close by congratulating every club that has engaged with the *Each One, Bring One* initiative, which asks every member to introduce one person to Rotary. Increasing our membership gives people from all walks of life the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills in transformational service.

**Shekhar Mehta**  
President, Rotary International





## A zone institute in challenging times

Pulling off a zone institute in India, always a gala, colourful and power-packed event, none like anywhere else in the world, as every RI president who has attended one of our zone institutes has never tired of saying, is itself a challenge. That convener RI Director AS Venkatesh and his chair, PDG M Muruganandam, managed one during the Covid pandemic, without any major glitches, with many senior leaders, led by RI President Shekhar Mehta himself, making it physically to the enchanting temple city of Mahabalipuram, is a commendable feat. The very opportunity to travel to a beach city, about 60km from Chennai, and stay in sprawling, lush green resorts with access to the cool waters of the Bay of Bengal during the balmy, mild winter days — that's all winter that we in Chennai get — must have been a boon to the 700-plus delegates who made it to Mahabs 21. As Venkatesh explained, with one wave after another of the coronavirus compelling a series of lockdowns, till the very end, the organising committee members were on tenterhooks asking each other — will it happen or not!

Add to this the North East monsoon inundating the city and suburbs through unprecedented rain spells, flooding several parts, he was left answering calls from one anxious participant after another; is it happening; do we need to cancel our travel plans; how will you manage such a big crowd, and so on. "Well, I had faith in Muruga and his team, and the almighty, and in the end, everything turned out well," said the

relieved convener, at the closing session, and invited the delegates to enjoy the traditional *elai sappadu* (meal served on a banana leaf). I quickly cancelled my plan to dash back home, a little weary of hotel food for three days, and sat down, with my vegetarian colleague Jaishree for a veg meal, even though the deep-fried fresh seer fish, stacked in heaps on the table at the other side of the hall, was really tempting!

But I didn't regret my decision, and returned home, for a well-earned siesta on a Sunday afternoon. How well Venkatesh, Vinita (his shock absorber in the preceding few weeks, as he lovingly admitted), Muruganandam, and the rest of the institute committee members, must have slept that night, can only be imagined.

As we step into the new year, let's do that with hope and optimism that we have seen the worst of the coronavirus and henceforth the dark clouds of fear, uncertainty and grief as we mourned our loved ones, dissolve away, ushering in a dawn filled with happiness and cheer, hope and resolve. Resolve that we, who were able to ward off the dangers and worst consequences of this virus, thanks to the privileged position we enjoy, will spare a thought for the less fortunate, and share a tiny portion of our privileges with them. If anything, the pandemic has taught us how transient our life is, and how suddenly everything can end.

On that sombre note and hoping for a Covid-free 2022, we in Rotary News Trust extend to you season's greetings and wish you a great year ahead.

Rasheeda Bhagat

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# Director

## Elections in Rotary — boon or bane

A prominent industrial socialite once asked me: ‘Why do you have elections in Rotary? After all you are a social service organisation and elections only create divisions and negative mindset.’ I proudly replied that we Rotarians believe in democracy and our elections are friendly referendums where candidates understand that they are volunteering for pro bono service assignments and winning/losing does not affect their social credibility or self-esteem. Rotarians true to their service ethos are above negativity.

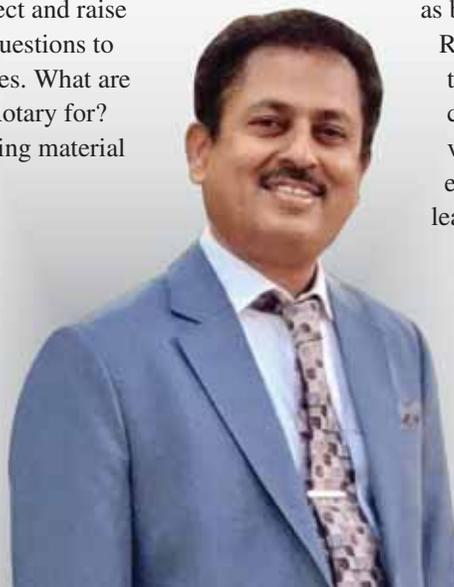
I am not so sure anymore. Recent electoral upheavals in various zonal districts, and a plethora of complaints the process generated, have severely shaken our confidence in the purported ethical behaviour of senior Rotarians. We need to introspect and raise many questions to ourselves. What are we in Rotary for? For giving material

and mental succour to challenged communities or just winning elections? Do we practise what we preach?

The recent turn of events in our zones tells us it is time for the alarm bells to start ringing. Where are we heading? Are we to become like divided political parties in complete contradiction of core Rotary values which foster unity in diversity and beckon us to recognise our inner soul qualities of being intrinsically fulfilled, blessed by abundance and contentment and to share with the less fortunate around us?

There seem to be more questions than answers. A wake up call is around the corner.

Let us debate, discuss and propose solutions and firmly resolve to evolve mechanisms leading to elections in an ambience of knowing that we, as blessed and fulfilled Rotarians, do not need to win all elections at a cost which destroys our volunteer moorings and effective diverse collective leadership.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mahesh'.

**Dr Mahesh Kotbagi**  
RI Director, 2021–23

# Speak

## Let's create history

We are at the mid-point of this Rotary year. While we look back at the last six months with gratefulness that the pandemic showed some signs of letting up, the next six months offer us an opportunity to make some dreams real. Membership in Rotary is an opportunity. Fellowship and service are the two main arms of our organisation. While membership is primarily an internal metric, service to the community is our external face. Many of us join for the fellowship and networking opportunities. However, we grow to appreciate the positives of engaging ourselves in meaningful service projects.

Most districts in our zones will have their district conferences in the next few weeks. It will certainly give us an opportunity to network and make friends. The conference will also give us the opportunity to learn from one another, know more about our organisation and most importantly to realise the power of collective charity. We can all do our bit. Soon we will realise that these little drops have made an ocean — an ocean of possibilities.

Most of us are justifiably proud of our association with the eradication of polio, an impossible dream when it was conceived over 35 years ago. This has largely been due to the tireless efforts of several Rotarians of the past and their selfless contributions to The Rotary Foundation. While we can be



proud of that, it is an undeniable fact that a majority of the Rotarians today may have had little or no role in it personally.

We may not have been a major part of our history. However, we can play a big part in creating history. We can think of big ideas, plan, contribute and execute the same.

The contributions of Rotarians around the world selflessly to TRF make it possible for us to execute substantial and significant projects. I urge all Rotarians to ask themselves if they have played a role in that. If not, there is no better time than now to do so. Let us not let go an opportunity to contribute to TRF and become a true stakeholder. An optimist says a glass is half full, a pessimist says it's half empty, a Rotarian says, "I have an opportunity to add to it and make it full".

**AS Venkatesh**  
RI Director, 2021–23

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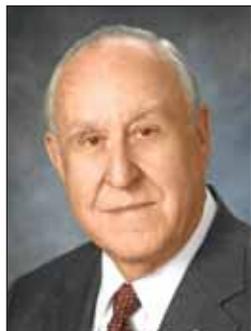
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## The value of partnerships



**W**e all came into Rotary because we wanted to join with others in service and make a difference. Similarly, when Rotary teams up with like-minded organisations to work toward our shared goals, there is nothing that we can't accomplish. Partnerships amplify our impact.

Leading through partnerships is nothing new for Rotary: We helped spearhead the formation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Later, when the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation joined the cause, we gained a long-term fundraising and technical partner in the fight against polio. Through our partnership and the 2-to-1 fundraising match agreement with the Gates Foundation, Rotary generates \$150 million annually to end polio. We are proud that they are a part of the effort to end this disease.

Many people may not know that our work with the Gates Foundation and our other partners doesn't end with polio but includes other disease-prevention efforts. TRF has joined with the Gates Foundation and World Vision US to co-fund a Rotary member-led programme to help eliminate malaria in Zambia. Based on past partnership and future collaboration around this effort, each co-funder is contributing \$2 million for the Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia programme, the first recipient of The Rotary Foundation's Programmes of Scale grant.

This level of impact can also be seen in collaborations across our other areas of focus. Rotary partners with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on major initiatives at a national scale. The Rotary-USAID WASH partnership has helped communities and governments in countries such as Uganda and Ghana provide safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, impacting hundreds of thousands of lives. We are also teaming up with USAID to help fight Covid-19 and its long-term financial and social impact in Italy. Meanwhile, the Hearts of Europe programme, which is funded jointly by USAID and Rotary, assists communities in Eastern Europe through global grants.

Proving our value as a trusted partner often spurs multiple mutual projects. Through the Power of Nutrition initiative, we are partnering with our polio eradication partner UNICEF and the Eleanor Crook Foundation to tackle undernutrition during early childhood. The Rotary Foundation is far too great to keep to ourselves. Let's make sure to let the Foundation's light shine bright. In doing so, we will find new partners, gain new supporters, and increase the good we're all doing in the world.

**John F Germ**  
Foundation Trustee Chair

## Houston in the bag

Miyoki Walker



**W**hen you come to Houston for the 2022 Rotary International Convention June 4-8, you might want to bring an extra suitcase. The city is famed for its shopping — and it has something for everyone, from luxury fashion stores to charming local gems.

At the Galleria in Uptown Houston, you'll find hundreds of stores spread over an astounding 2.4 million square feet. It is the largest shopping centre in Houston and among the largest in the country. Tourists and locals alike come for stores such as Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Chanel, Gap, H&M, and Saks Fifth Avenue.

The River Oaks Shopping Centre is one of Houston's oldest and most stylish centres. Dating to 1937, it's known best for its Art Deco buildings, its open-air concept, its award-winning movie theatre, and its blend of vintage and contemporary aesthetics — not to mention its 70-plus stores and restaurants, all adding up to an impressively elevated experience.

Houston's fashionable Uptown Park is home to a few dozen charming, hip and homegrown shops. With unique offerings that include a cigar shop, a café whose décor evokes space exploration, and a jewellery store featuring local and international artisans, this shopping centre is a favourite destination for many Houstonians. And when the shopping is over and all you want to do is eat, there is also a good assortment of restaurants, ranging from authentic French-Mediterranean cuisine to sushi to Mexican street food.

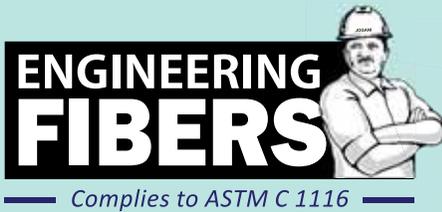
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# Finally, a meet & greet Institute at Mahabs

Rasheeda Bhagat

**W**hat a wonderful sight it is to see nearly 700 people in this auditorium. It has been months now and all of us were itching to meet and greet each other... we have been zoomed out, zooming from one online meet to another. It is great to meet so many old friends, make new ones and chat with them over coffee,” said RI President Shekhar Mehta at the inaugural session of the zone Institute Mahabs 21.

Thanking RI director AS Venkatesh and institute chair PDG M Muruganandam for putting together an in-person institute for over 700 people at Mamallapuram on the outskirts of Chennai, he said: “We can imagine what a challenging task it must have been to put together this meeting during a pandemic. But zone institutes are great fun; you

meet people, share thoughts, learn a lot from them, understand challenges and how people overcome them, and listen to wonderful speakers.”

Looking back at over five months of his tenure at the helm of RI, Mehta said: “It’s been an outstanding journey, where we have seen lots of ups and downs... it was a delight for Rashi and me that finally on Aug 15, our Independence Day, we were at Evanston and had the great honour of seeing the *tiranga* (Indian tricolour) fluttering on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor at the RI headquarters in Evanston. Wherever we went we could see the Indian flag.”

Recalling his mantra “grow more, do more”, Mehta said “as I go around the world, I find this phrase has become very popular,

along with ‘each one, bring one’, perhaps even more popular than the theme itself, but I am happy that across the world Rotarians are working to grow more and do more. But this audience can give a lesson to the rest of the world about growing more and doing more.”

Having always been inspired by Bernard Shaw’s famous words ‘You see things; and you say Why? But I dream things that never were; and I say ‘Why not?’, when it came to “growth in Rotary, I said why not a 1.3 million membership? Many people would have laughed at that, but by now I have learnt in Rotary that when people laugh at me, I am on the right path.”

Mehta said that this region was leading the world in membership



Institute Convener RID AS Venkatesh, along with Vinita, lights the lamp in the presence of (from L) Sumathi, Institute Chair M Muruganandam, Amita, RID Mahesh Kotbagi, RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi.

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Look at the 400-bed hospital PDG Sagadhevan built in just 45 days in Erode. There are so many Covid stories that many of you have created... the work that we do is just outstanding.

RI President **Shekhar Mehta**

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growth. "In the last 10 years, the average membership growth here has been around 4,000 a year; but in the first 5 ½ months of the Rotary year you have already done what it would normally take four years;

you are 16,000 members plus. I am sure by year end we will add 20,000 extra members."

Along with addition, retention was of course important, but then obviously those who brought in more members would also like to retain them by engaging them in various activities of Rotary.

He was happy to note that as Rotary grew more across the world "we are able to do more. And it is this region that writes the story of "do more". Whether it is TRF projects and programmes or giving more to the Foundation, or service activities, there is no other place in the world in Rotary where so much work happens than these zones put together; India, Sri Lanka, Nepal; these are the jewels in the crown



Sridhar Bharathy

## Snapshot of Rotary's work in India

Giving a quick sample of the service done by Rotary in India over the last 10 years, RI President Shekhar Mehta said:

- We have done over 2 million eye surgeries at over 50 eye hospitals that we have established in India
- Over 20,000 life-changing and life-saving paediatric heart surgeries on children
- Set up more than 30 blood banks.
- Given away 25,000 shelter kits every time a disaster takes place in India
- Set up over 20,000 rural toilets in an amazing contribution to Swachh Bharat
- More than 25,000 schools given E-learning programmes
- Over 70,000 teachers given training under the TEACH programme
- 50,000 children were sent back to schools.
- Made a commitment to then HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar a few years back to set up in 5 years 5,000 libraries; completed in 3½ years.
- Over 3,000 Happy Schools done.

## Inshah Allah... for a polio-free Pakistan

**R**I President Shekhar Mehta said that often when he talks about the need for Rotary to get involved in nation-building in India and give the GoI a helping hand, many people are sceptical, “but I have been inspired only by our polio programme. We have played a major role in a health programme of the world.” Eradicating polio in more than 125 countries... “the only other disease apart from small pox, is a major feat. Trustee Aziz Memon keeps telling me that 45 more

days and probably we would have seen the last case in Pakistan (where no cases have been reported till now this year). Fingers crossed, Inshah Allah Aziz, on that day I will be with you.”

When Rotarians take up a challenge, anything is possible, because that is the power that we have; 160,000 in this region. The Indian PM would be very happy to get 150,000 people of this calibre unleash their power for the task of nation-building,” he added.



of Rotary. What outstanding work happens here.” (See box).

**M**ehta said that many years ago, while watching a programme on NDTV with Coca Cola and Sachin Tendulkar in a ‘support my school’ full day telethon, “I was amazed and wished that someday Rotary would have a programme like that. A few years later I got an invitation from NDTV for a similar programme and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and I went to their studio. Saurav Ganguly and Ranveer Singh were there. Later I learnt that while Coke and Sachin had done over several years 600 schools, that one single year Rotarians in India did 1,300 Happy Schools. That is the

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This audience from our region can give a lesson to the rest of the world about growing more and doing more.

RI President **Shekhar Mehta**

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networking power of Rotary in this region.”

When the pandemic hit, Rotary was already working on the literacy programme and the plan was to go to 25 states in six years, but the PM made an announcement on giving E-learning to all children at home. “I wrote to the PM, got a response in just five days and in the next 45 days

we signed a MoU with the GoI and today the largest content shown to 100-million plus children in India is that developed by RILM, beamed on 12 different E-vidya channels of the government; after every episode it says presented by RILM.”

Hundreds of millions of children will grow up hearing the name of Rotary, said Mehta. “We gave them more than 2,000 episodes, and if it were a serial, it would run for 10 years all. All the content was prepared in six months.”

On adult literacy too Rotary has made a commitment to the government and we will meet this goal through partnerships with organisations such as the Brahmakumaris,



Gayatri Parivar, and seven different universities across India with which Rotary has forged a partnership. “All of this can happen when you have big dreams.”

In water too, “we have just signed an MoU to set up 200 check dams with Amla Ruia (a social activist known for her work in water harvesting) in Mumbai, where Rotarians will only have to give 20 per cent of the funding; 80 per cent will be put up by them. RID 3011 DG Anup Mittal has already got funding for 150 check dams through a GG.”

Mehta then complimented PDG Sagadhevan for building, during Covid, a grand and sprawling 400-bed hospital over an area of 70,000 sq ft

in Erode in just 45 days, raising ₹20 crore for the project.

**T**here are so many Covid stories that many of you have created... the work that we do is just outstanding. Two months back we wanted to work on diabetes and in just one day all of you came together to do a check-up for one million people, and one lakh people who didn’t know they had diabetes were identified. DGs, hats off to you.”

The *Vision Spring* project is aimed to give one lakh spectacles to children with defective vision and 250 clubs

in India have already signed up for it. “When I met PM Narendra Modi, he said go and serve the world. For India, if you can, please work for the nutrition of women and girls. I’m happy to share that we are on the verge of signing an MoU with UNICEF on the *Anaemia Mukh Bharat* programme of GoI and UNICEF.” It will start with a pilot in UP for 10,000 girls.

The RI president added that he had represented Rotary at the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow and “committed on behalf of Rotary to put up mangroves in 10 countries, including India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria and Seychelles.” Empowering girls had caught the imagination of the entire world and projects to do so are

happening everywhere. In India, so many clubs including his home club of Kolkata Mahanagar was implementing the *Veerangana* project, which trained girls in self defence. “We’ve all agreed that 10 per cent of the GGs we do, will be in other countries,” he added.

**A**ddressing the inaugural session, institute convener Venkatesh spelt out the challenges of putting together an institute during a pandemic such as the one we are facing now. “There was so much of

uncertainty, apprehension, fear and so many doubts, in both the delegates and the organising committee members if this would actually happen.”

Add to this the unprecedented rains and flooding in Chennai and the challenges of holding a huge event for some 700 participants in resorts with huge open spaces such as at the official venues chosen, and the uncertainty only grew. “But I trusted my chair Muruga and the institute team, and the almighty, without whose blessings we couldn’t have met here in person.”

Several organising committee meets had to be held only online; “these were the travails we went through. But finally, it was all worth



Sridhar Bharathy

Institute Chair Muruganandam and his spouse Sumathi lead the Rotary leaders in a procession to the institute inaugural.

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There was so much uncertainty, apprehension, and doubts, in both the delegates and the organising committee members if this Institute would happen. But Muruga and his team made it happen.

RI Director **AS Venkatesh**

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it, when I see the huge number of people who have come, the smiles, and greetings in person... when I see all that and meet friends across the region, I feel it was worth all that anxiety.”

Venkatesh admitted that he had indeed taken a big risk; “supposing we could not hold the institute in person, who would bear the loss was the big question. The clear answer was that RI wouldn’t do that!”

He explained that the beautiful city of Mahabalipuram, a 1,300-year-old port city, was chosen, “because all of us take great pride in the legacy of Rotary. I say jokingly at all forums that even today we are basking in the legacy of PolioPlus... and the eradication of polio from so many countries. So let’s all look forward to fun and laughter, meeting and greeting which we haven’t been able to do for so long. But let’s observe all the Covid protocol, rededicate ourselves to what Rotary has always stood for, change our lives and that of those around us wherever we can.”

Institute chair PDG M Muruganandam (RID 3000) detailed the meticulous planning the entire institute team did, “not wanting to compromise on anything when it came to giving all of you a wonderful time and experience. In a very short



Rasheeda Bhagat

**From L:** RI President Mehta, TN Health Minister Ma Subramanian, Convener Venkatesh and PRIP K R Ravindran.

span of just 100 days, we've tried to put together the best we could. Please enjoy your time here."

Mehta presented the Covid Warrior Award to TN Health minister Ma Subramanian in the presence of RI's Covid Task Force chair PRIP

KR Ravindran, Venkatesh and Muruganandam. The minister recalled Rotary's active participation in the medical camps conducted in 155 divisions of Chennai in 2006 when he was the Mayor. "We went into the *Limca Book of Records* for the record

number of medical camps then," he said. He thanked the Rotarians for the various Covid relief activities and Covid care centres they set up across the country and acknowledged Rotary's role in polio eradication in India and across the world. ■



## An affordable medical centre in Mumbai

### Team Rotary News



**F**or the past 12 years, RC Bombay Sea Face, RID 3141, is running a multi-care medical centre at the Mangaldas Banganga Centre in Walkeshwar, south Mumbai, catering to the healthcare needs of poor families.

The centre offers diagnostic care for general health, physiotherapy, gynaecology, dental, eye disorders and nutrition at concessional rates. Over the years, it has become so popular in the neighbourhood that more than 1,000 patients a month are being treated and looked after by a team of dedicated doctors, said Bharat Merchant, vice-president of the club.

Every month, at least five cataract operations are sponsored by the club at the Dr Kulin Kothari's eye clinic. Eye, dental and osteoporosis camps are organised regularly at the centre which is being run as a self-sustaining model by a team of three Rotarians and Anns. ■



# Kapil Dev bowls over Rotarians with his charisma

V Muthukumaran

**F**irst, you have to be happy within to spread happiness and joy all-around. “Love yourself and you will start loving others. Feel the charity within you so that you can share happiness, money and time with the less fortunate ones in the world,” said former India cricket captain Kapil Dev Nikhanj, while receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award from Rotary at the zone institute, Mahabs 21, in Chennai.

In a spontaneous chat with RI Director AS Venkatesh, the Haryana

Hurricane said, “when you call it a ‘lifetime achievement award’ does it mean that everything is over and there is nothing more for me to do now? With your love and affection, I want to do much more in life. After retirement from cricket, I understood that life is more than just sports.”

Praising Rotary’s service activities for the disadvantaged in the community, he said his own charity Khushi is ‘distributing happiness’ among people and “I am fortunate, and humbled that god has given me the opportunity to fulfil my passion. When my daughter asked me what I

wanted her to become, I told her that it is impossible for her to carry the same passion with which I played, so she should do what she wanted in life,” he recalled. The parents’ job is to guide their children in a mature way so that they can achieve what they wish for in life, he said.



From L: Sumathi, Institute Chair PDG M Muruganandam, Advisor PDG Abirami Ramanathan, Rashi, RI President Shekhar Mehta, cricket legend Kapil Dev, Institute Convener RID AS Venkatesh and Vinita.

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**With your love and affection, I want to do much more in life. After retirement from cricket, I understood that life is more than just sports.**

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Venkatesh asked Kapil what went through his mind on two memorable moments at the 1983 World Cup cricket — when India was down at 17 for 5 against Zimbabwe, and Kapil came out and smashed 175 not out, to take the team to a stunning victory; and the second innings of the finals after the team scored a modest 183 total. “The team is your family and having been raised in a joint family, I looked after my team’s interest. God has created for everyone certain days where nothing goes wrong. Those were my days, I enjoyed them.” As a family,

Rotary can move mountains in their journey forward, he opined.

### Movie ‘83’: Fingers crossed

Like others, Kapil is looking forward to the Kabir Khan-directed Hindi film 83, a biopic, starring Ranveer Singh as the cricketer and slated for a Dec 24 release. “I have not seen the movie. We, including Sunil Gavaskar and Srikanth, have presented our side of the action at the 1983 World Cup finals. But I am keeping my fingers crossed. Ranveer came to my house and placed three cameras in front of me

for a couple of days.” Initially, the player was a bit hesitant, but later on felt okay as Ranveer, the protagonist, was modelled on him.

After retirement from cricket, Kapil took to golf “as I will be playing with only a few people around me. Mom advised me not to do anything in life other than sports for ‘you don’t know anything else’.”

### A style icon

Is it a conscious attempt by Kapil to change his appearance every few years like sporting long hair or wearing a turban like a sardar, asked Venkatesh. “Small, little changes are beautiful as

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**Rotarians are spending so much time and money for others in the world. I am ready to endorse Rotary’s literacy campaign and will go miles to do that work.**

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long as they don’t hurt your wife. Also, I want people to talk about me,” he quipped. At the Q&A session, the query “How do you manage stress playing at the highest level” got the heartwarming response: “Representing your country is not pressure, but pleasure. You play for fun, following your passion... that is my life.”

Complimenting Rotarians for the great service they were rendering, Kapil Dev urged them to keep-up the good work. Rotarians are spending so much time and money for others in the world.” Replying to another query, he said, “I am ready to endorse Rotary’s literacy campaign and will go miles to do that work.” Venkatesh announced that three heart surgeries for children will be sponsored by Rotary in honour of Kapil Dev’s presence at the institute. ■



Kiran Zehra



# Addressing challenges in Rotary

Rasheeda Bhagat

It was quite a candid and peppery Q & A session that past RI director and incoming TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya handled expertly at the zone Institute Mahabs 21. It was promoted as a session where questions could be asked candidly, and the panel was expected to respond with equal openness. Pandya said most of the questions pertained to interference in elections, pressure being brought on district and club leaders from senior leadership in India and RI to meet goals, and so on.

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It hurts when people spread fake news. It is very easy for someone to pick up and throw a stone without knowing what the facts are. This is not good and we need to introspect on. It tarnishes the image of India in RI, when letters come without any basis.

RI President **Shekhar Mehta**

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While avoiding the questions being asked merely to raise a controversy, at the same time “I have tried not to sweep everything under the carpet to say everything is fine with Rotary.”

The panelists were past RI President KR Ravindran, and past directors Manoj Desai and C Basker. The question of the day was addressed to Ravindran: “I don’t know if I should even be asking it, but you can choose to answer or ignore it. The question is: We hear people calling you anti-India; you are seen doing things which seem to be anti-India.”

Pandya declined to answer Ravindran’s query on the identity of the questioner, saying it was signed but he was keeping all names out. Nonetheless saying firmly that he needed to answer it, Ravindran said he knew of no Sri Lankans in the hall or

for that matter in his country who were anti-India. His own father came from India; his grandfather was a judge in Coimbatore and he had family in India. “I am an OCI cardholder, I own a business in Coimbatore and have a pretty large share of the Indian teabag packaging market. If you use teabags in India, the packaging probably came from me and so why would I be anti-India? That would be stupid.”

But, he added, part of this perception might have come because he was often asked by the RI Board to investigate complaints of financial misdeeds both at TRF and district levels. This is how I work; “we don’t look into any anonymous complaint or one not accompanied by *prima facie* evidence of financial irregularities. I pick three PDGs at random from the Rotary directory from different parts

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nabalipuram

**From L:** Trustee-elect Bharat Pandya, PRIP K R Ravindran, PRID Manoj Desai and PRID C Basker.



of India — one an accountant, another a professional and a third a businessman. RISAO arranges their visit to the district/club at their own expense and without enjoying the DGs' hospitality." They investigate and pass their findings to him, which he passes onto the Board with recommendations. The Board may then choose to take punitive action, or not.

As RI president — Manoj Desai was on his Board — "we removed a serving DG from both India and Japan". While he was "immediately dubbed anti-India", senior leaders in Japan assured the Board that if the removed DG went to court as he had threatened, they would foot the legal fees.

Another time, the Board delisted both an Indian and a Russian district, The Russians did not say he was

anti-Russian. When he was director the Board dechartered some 35–40 clubs in Pakistan as they were fictitious and created for elections. He was not called anti-Pakistan.

The past president concluded by saying, "Yesterday, listening to President Shekhar's intro I felt very proud of what he has achieved, and it struck me that several positions held by him were appointments I had made! If I was anti-India, I wouldn't have done that! And I did it not because he was an Indian but because he was competent and a professional who could do the job. I also supported him by defusing some individuals on the Board and staff when he started RILM. So I don't understand this anti-India question. If you have the name of this person, please tell him I can't be bullied and I can't be bribed!"

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I run a business in Coimbatore and have a pretty large share of the Indian teabag packaging market. If you use teabags in India, you probably give me business. So why would I be anti-India? That would be stupid.

Past RI President **KR Ravindran**

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(The next day, addressing the concluding session President Mehta graciously acknowledged PRIP Ravindran's role in his Rotary leadership journey. "For Rashi and I, it's been an outstanding journey. If I am here today, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants, two of whom are present today. Thank you, Ravi for your friendship. You've always stood by me. Yes, if I was the Strategic Planning Committee chair, on the Hamburg Convention planning committee, and when you sent me to negotiate the taking over of Shelter Box, it was all because of you. Thank you for doing that. Thank you (PRID) Basker for all the fellowship we enjoyed, all the discussions we have, (RIDs) Mahesh and Venky for the great support you give me on the RI Board.")

**A** question which PRID Desai was asked to answer pertained to "too much focus being placed on membership without any thought on new innovations or new futuristic ideas about where Rotary should be going."

Desai said one of the main components of the Strategic Plan was to "support and strengthen clubs. We are static for the last 20 years in membership; something needs to be



done and hence membership is our internal topmost priority.” The other two focus areas were TRF giving and public image. “We know that our TRF GGs have increased and because of the work we do, our public image has also improved. But membership is our priority, if we don’t put stress on it, we will become an extinct species.”

**N**ext Pandya addressed a question to PRID Basker on hanky-panky involved in executing GGs, and how sometimes funds are taken from beneficiaries and palmed off as club funds. During his tenure as director, he had set up a committee; so what was its outcome?

Basker responded that India was one of the largest recipients of GGs; “as RI director I found that sometimes the DGs are very enthusiastic in doing global grants and drive the clubs to do them without understanding community needs and observing TRF

rules laid down for such grants.” He also found that some clubs which don’t have the funds to apply for a GG, take money from the beneficiary and give it to TRF in the club’s name, and when the grant comes the money is donated in the club’s name.

“Some of these clubs did not know such practices were simply unacceptable to the trustees. We also found that some equipment given to hospitals through GG funds was lying unused for several years, and we received complaints from whistleblowers. Yesterday President Shekhar mentioned our people write to trustees complaining about non-utilisation or misappropriation of funds and this creates a very bad image of India. So during 2017, I discussed with then RI President Ian Riseley, Trustee Chair Paul Netzels and our own trustee Sushil Gupta and KR Ravindran, and set up a panel inviting eligible PDGs who could be deputed to oversee the grants and travel at no cost to TRF. I think this panel still exists. In India, such an oversight panel is absolutely necessary

to internally monitor what the clubs are doing, how the money is being spent and reaching the beneficiaries and making a difference.”

**T**he next question was posed to Ravindran on the major challenges in our zones “which are otherwise doing good work”, and how these can be tackled to take “Rotary forward in a spirit of harmony and cooperation.”

Ravindran responded: “President Shekhar addressed this comprehensively yesterday; in many ways we are on top of the world and other countries or zones can’t compete with us in the quality of the service that we give, in our membership, the kind of projects and programmes we do, the sheer number of the people we serve... not only India, but also Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and all the countries in this region. On membership, the numbers speak for themselves, so there too we are on top of the world.”



**From L:** Institute Chair M Muruganandam, DGN V R Muthu, PDG K Rajagopalan, PRID Pandya, PRIP Ravindran, PDG Sameer Hariani, PRIDs Desai and Basker, PDG John Daniel and Institute convener RID A S Venkatesh.

the image of India in RI, it is when letters come there without any basis whatsoever. That is the only time that we have to hang down our heads in shame (*sharam se sar jhuk jata hei*), for no fault of ours. This is one thing we need to take care of. But that apart, what fills our hearts with joy is the amazing work that is happening in our zones.”

**A**sksed about the e-voting pilot that he had introduced, and concern expressed that “DGs, DGEs and even PDGs, sometimes for the sake of awards and other considerations, force the presidents to vote in front of them,” PRID Desai said that this was introduced during his tenure as the Board was getting many complains of manipulation. Once e-voting was introduced the complaints had diminished and even disappeared. “But the ingenuity of our people has proven over time that even e-voting can be beaten. I’ve heard that those who run institutions or computer centres, vote from different computers. It was effective when introduced, but then people have found ways to beat the system.”

Intervening, President Mehta said, “This is a very important point and as

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*I am a surgeon and believe in the healing touch; it is very important that at this time when Rotary in our zones is poised to take off vertically, we apply the healing touch to whatever issues we are facing.*

Past RI Director **Bharat Pandya**

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But “the area we have problems is elections. I’ve tried very hard to stop it; it didn’t work. This causes us embarrassment at the Board; people write to the Board and I suppose they don’t have a choice.” Earlier, this region had major issues with the Foundation and financial irregularities, but that has been settled by and large. “The only issue we have now which gives us a black mark is elections. My view is that when it comes to districts, PDGs should stay out; candidates might do a bit of their own electioneering, but it never reaches big heights if governors stay out. At zone elections, past directors and other big chiefs should stay out. If you just leave it to the candidates, and others just watch over the process, this might

be brought down to a large extent. If we get these two right, we really have no peers in Rotary.”

**W**hile addressing the inaugural session the previous day, President Mehta had enumerated the amazing service Rotary does in our region, listing out the specifics. But, he had added, “it only hurts at times when people start spreading fake news even in Rotary. It is very easy for someone to pick up and throw a stone without trying to find out what the facts are. This is the only aspect we need to introspect on. It is not a good thing, if there is one thing that tarnishes

Manoj explained rightly, every time we bring in a new method, over a period of time we also find a method to beat that one! What was earlier being seen as a wonderful mechanism... I remember Ravindran introduced it, and Manoj brought it as a pilot and it was effective. But now I see and hear it is being rampantly misused. The DGs have to deal with it, and if it is becoming a bigger menace, it is better we take a relook at it and stop the e-voting pilot. Maybe the directors can find a way.”

When Pandya said the maximum questions were against this e-voting with voting at the district conference being preferred, Mehta said: “I agree with that.”

**B**asker was quizzed about district accounts, DGs not submitting them on time and the need for punishment of the offenders. He said while President Mehta and past president Ravindran, who were present, could discuss this, “my personal opinion is that in India we must scrap the collection of district dues for the simple reason that RI funds the DGs’ travel and other expenses. And all the events — PETS, conference, seminars — are self-funded. So

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A major point of the Strategic Plan was to support and strengthen clubs. We are static for the last 20 years in membership; something needs to be done and hence membership is our internal topmost priority. If we don’t grow, we will become an extinct entity.

Past RI Director **Manoj Desai**

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where is the need to collect a hefty amount from each Rotarian again? They accumulate a large sum of money and there is no financial discipline.” The district finance committee doesn’t work, many governors don’t present and get approved the budget at the district assembly. “We all know that the governors are so busy, and finally when the year is over and they look at the accounts they find many flaws. I advise the DGEs that please don’t collect any money. If you don’t, then you aren’t answerable. My humble opinion — avoid collection of district dues.”

In an intervention, RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi said that a bylaw provision is that “accounts for any funds collected in the name of the district, the DG’s allocation and the district grants, have to be circulated in the stipulated time to the district clubs. Even when the panel members were directors, and such things were brought to their notice, no action was taken against those districts and DGs, whose accounts were not passed, were still given assignments at the institute, zone and even RI level.”

**T**aking on a question on “the reason I joined Rotary was to do service and for fellowship”, but now there was too much pressure from the top on many goals, so and so that “Rotary is getting redefined,” Basker said, “This is a very valid question. We are volunteers and each of us has our own profession; we are not retired people nor are we employees of this organisation. I always told my DGs that Rotary lives in the clubs and unless the president and the club’s office bearers enjoy Rotary, there will be no life in the club.” In pursuit of awards and recognitions

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We are volunteers and each of us has our own profession; we are not retired people nor are we employees of this organisation. I always told my DGs that Rotary lives in the clubs and unless the president and the club’s office bearers enjoy Rotary, there will be no life in the club.

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“too much load is being put on the clubs to perform... and often PETS become like a corporate’s sales target — with questions on how many members you’ll bring, how much TRF money will you collect, etc. I find today that instead of the bottom-top approach, we are taking the top-bottom approach. We have to ensure that the clubs look at and address local community needs, so that the public image of Rotary grows and we get people to voluntarily join Rotary. But different layers of leadership, especially in India, give out different priorities and targets and everything percolates down to the club level. Sometimes we ruthlessly drive the DGs, club presidents and the fun part of Rotary goes missing. This has to be discussed, changed and we should build a lot of happiness in Rotary activities.”

In his concluding remarks Pandya said: “Yesterday Shekhar said there is an undercurrent of stress and tension because of various issues, but it is important to resolve these issues at the earliest. I am a surgeon and believe in the healing touch; it is very important that at this time when Rotary in our zones is poised to take off vertically, we apply the healing touch to whatever issues we are facing.”

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat



ROTARY DISTRICT 3231  
ZONE V



RTN. SHEKAR MEHTA  
R.I. PRESIDENT



RTN. A S VENKATESH  
R.I. DIRECTOR



RTN. Dr. MAHESH KOTBAGI  
R.I. DIRECTOR



RTN. GULAM VAHANVATY  
TRF TRUSTEE



RTN. CHANDRA BOB  
DISTRICT 3231 TRAINER



District 3231 has donated to Polio fund, **USD 25000** from the DDF which was matched by world fund and Bill & Melinda Gates which approximately is **₹ 83,25,000.**



## KURUNGAADU PLANTATION DRIVE

1.2 crore seeds were sowed



District 3231 has made a world record by placing **9020 notebooks** over the text, which was recorded in three famous book of records.



RTN. NANDHINI NIRMAL  
DISTRICT FIRST LADY

ANNET. W N NETHRA

RTN. W M NIRMAL RAGHAVAN  
DISTRICT GOVERNOR



DISTRICT 3231 CONFERENCE 21 - 22

MARCH  
**5&6**  
2022

CONFLUENCE  
CONVENTION  
CENTER  
MAHABALIPURAM



# Lessons in leadership for DGEs

Jaishree

One year after your tenure you will be a past governor but will continue to preside over events in your district. If you want to leave footprints on the sands of time then consider this year as the most crucial part of your life,” said RI President Shekhar Mehta addressing the governors-elect at the GETS seminar at the Mahabs institute.

“There’s nothing like being home, at the institute of our own zones,” he remarked, having attended virtual or in-person institutes around the world, the latest being Japan’s virtual one at 5am! He complimented GETS chair PDG Gowri Rajan (RID 3220, Sri Lanka) for being the first woman to chair a GETS session in 40 years.

His mantra to the incoming governors: dream big and have a positive attitude. “As leaders you should soar the highest. This one year is very special for you all as you will be inspiring thousands of people around you

to change the lives of millions of people,” he said. Recalling the dream of Rotarians 40 years ago to eradicate polio from the world, he said, “It takes a lot of courage, belief and determination to act on such a massive programme. People may laugh at your audacity to have big dreams. But they will have the last laugh when you march towards that goal, taking your team along with you.”

Urging the incoming leaders to have a positive attitude Mehta said, “This is a voluntary organisation. You joined Rotary out of your own free will. Having done that, it is not right to say that this is not possible, I cannot do this etc. A volunteer is someone who says yes, we can, and we will,” he reiterated.

He said one of his dreams as governor was to build 500 houses for the poor and “I conveyed this to my presidents. In a month’s time a club president brought a corporate who

was ready to donate land. The club signed an MoU and got the land. We had applied for a 3H-grant that normally takes two years to be approved. But on June 24, six days before the end of my tenure, it got approved for ₹1.5 crore. And we built 300 houses that year. Likewise, after seven trips to the tsunami-affected Andaman and Nicobar Islands we built 500 houses. It cost ₹3 crore and we began the project without any bank balance. That is the power of a positive outlook and believing in your dreams.”

Mehta asked the DGEs to set clear goals and shared his trainer’s advice to him as a DGE. “He said that a governor’s job is to lubricate the egos of the club presidents. The same goes for the club president. He just has to pat a club member on his shoulder and say, ‘Good job. Well done.’ It will work wonders.”

Emphasising on his pet concept, ‘Each one, bring one’, he said, “Ask



your friends to be Rotarians. Ask your partners to invite their friends to Rotary.”

The RI President’s pep talk to the DGEs included contribution to TRF and doing bigger, bolder service projects. “We have a role to play in the nation-building process. Our programmes and scale are unmatched. In India we have 1.7 lakh Rotarians. Even our government does not have so many people of this calibre at their highest level. Make yourself so strong that the chief minister should come and ask, what is it, Rotary, that we can do together?” he said.

Mehta said the TRF contributions from zones 4,5,6 and 7 which include five countries — India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan — is outstanding and urged the DGEs to maintain the tempo. “America gives 10 times the money that we give to

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**Make yourself so strong  
that the chief minister  
should come and ask, what  
is it, Rotary, that we can do  
together?**

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the Foundation. If India gives \$20 million, the US gives \$200 million. But the purchase parity of an Indian rupee is 22.5 LCU (Local Currency Unit) per dollar. Which means every dollar paid is equivalent to 22 times the Indian rupee. So if the \$20 million is multiplied by 22.5, then we are giving much more than the US,” he explained.

Mehta advised the district leaders to include Rotaractors in their district committees and treat them with respect. “Our resources, experience and wisdom combined with their youthfulness, energy, enthusiasm and technology will make a winning combination to take Rotary forward.”

### **Faster, higher and stronger**

Institute convener RID A S Venkatesh referred to the Olympics motto — *citius, altius, fortius* (faster, higher and stronger), to give the adrenaline push to the DGEs. “It does not mean that you must compete against someone. Each district is unique in its own way — your DNA, resources, membership profile, geographical location, every aspect is different. A district like 3240 has nine states, whereas closer home, one district — 3232 comprises one city — Chennai. So they cannot be compared. The competition should be with yourself. It is all about doing better than what you ever thought you could, and doing it all together.”



DGEs Pubudu De Zoysa (RID 3220) and Dr Jayagowri Hadigal (RID 3182).

Referring to an elephant carving on stone, typical of Mahabalipuram sculpture, he said, “remove whatever is not relevant for an elephant from the stone and you get the elephant.” The DGEs will have to remove unnecessary thoughts so that “you can focus on what is required. To move faster, higher and stronger, you need to off-load the irrelevant thoughts.”

Venkatesh stressed on promoting diversity, equity and inclusion at club level. “You must appreciate and acknowledge the role of your partners in your journey as district leaders. Your year as governor will be enhanced and more productive and meaningful if you choose to include your partner. I can tell you from experience that the kind of feedback they can give you, nobody else can. Vinita has always given me honest, sincere feedback when I served as governor and subsequently in various other roles,” he added.

### Rotary — a symphony

Rotary leaders do not fit into any of the conventional forms of leadership, “instead we are all voluntary leaders. We do it from our heart,” said institute co-convener RID Mahesh Kotbagi.

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**You walk the talk. Instead of making DEI a lip service you have truly marked the value of diversity and given the tiny island of Sri Lanka an opportunity.**

**PDG Gowri Rajan to RID Venkatesh**

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Vinita Venkatesh and GETS Chair PDG Gowri Rajan.

Based on leadership qualities he compared the leaders to different types of musical instruments — woodwind, brass, string and percussion. “As you complement each other you create a symphony. Ultimately, it is the teamwork that counts,” he said.

Institute chair PDG Muruganandam, quoting a couplet of Tamil poet Avvaiyar: *Katradhu kai alavu; kallaadhadu ulagalavu* (what one knows is only a fistful; the unknown is the size of the world), urged the DGEs to be receptive to learning all through their year. Love your responsibility, learn wherever possible, live your destiny and serve your district to make your year a memorable one, was his message to them.

Gowri pointed out that when the world was going through the Covid

crisis, Rotary, with its cutting-edge projects and new ways to meet, stayed relevant to the changing circumstances. “Thus a new leadership style was born and those who have been agile have been the survivors. You will be a special team as you will be serving under Rotary’s first woman president — Jennifer Jones.” Thanking Venkatesh for choosing her as GETS chair, she said, “You walk the talk. Instead of making DEI a lip service you have truly marked the value of diversity and given the tiny island of Sri Lanka an opportunity.”

RID Bharat Pandya, the general trainer, introduced the GETS trainers for membership, Foundation giving and service projects.

Pictures by Jaishree



# DEI principles must for Rotary to grow

Kiran Zehra

Rotarians must strive to build a world in which diversity is celebrated with people across religion, culture, national boundaries and socioeconomic status, to enrich humanity, said Trustee-elect and PRID Bharat Pandya. Speaking at the DEI session at the Mahabs 21 institute, he urged the incoming governors to “understand each element in the Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI) principle of Rotary to take it forward in the coming years.”

The first step, he said, is to realise that diversity is not just “setting an agenda or paying lip service to bringing in a certain percentage of women into Rotary or adding more Rotaractors. DGEs must be aware of the diversity within the district and across age groups, and the context of how DEI would play out for individuals in their clubs, district and zone,” he said.

Trustee-elect and  
PRID Bharat Pandya



DEI is crucial for the success of the *Grow Rotary* initiative. “The idea is to help you to think strategically on membership so that the *Each one, bring one* initiative is truly effective.” Club programmes and projects must have space for DEI principles to grow. “We have our own biases, but we have to learn to be more empathetic and open-minded. Try to work with people whose backgrounds and perspectives are different from yours, and learn from Rotary leaders with diverse leadership styles.”

Sometimes equity is confused with equality, he said. “Equity is the process of ensuring that every process and programme at the club, district and zonal level is impartial,

fair and provides equal possible outcomes for every member in the club.” Members must feel a sense of belonging to the club and “as leaders you have to ensure every Rotarian feels comfortable and supported.”

On the issue of Rotary’s zero tolerance towards harassment, Pandya gave a presentation on “the escalation process to ensure that a member complaining about a certain issue must not face retaliation of any sort. You have to act with integrity and be fair in every situation,” he said.

The DEI principle must be included in the district training programme and DGEs can log in to [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) for sourcing resource material and more information on this subject, said RI Director A S Venkatesh. “If you want speakers or trainers, Director Mahesh and I can arrange that for you. Don’t be afraid to ask questions about DEI. All of us are learning here.”

Encouraging the DGEs to listen and learn from the Rotary leaders, GETS chair PDG Gowri Rajan said “Rotary will make history when its first woman president (Jennifer Jones) will take office in July next year and you will be part of this historical team. While you will be part of an epoch-making year, always remember to be humble and keep your feet on the ground.” ■



# TRF

# Dazzlers

Text and pictures by  
Rasheeda Bhagat

From R: RI President  
Shekhar Mehta, Institute  
Convener RID AS Venkatesh,  
Samina and TRF Trustee  
Chair Representative  
Trustee Aziz Memon at the  
TRF Dinner.

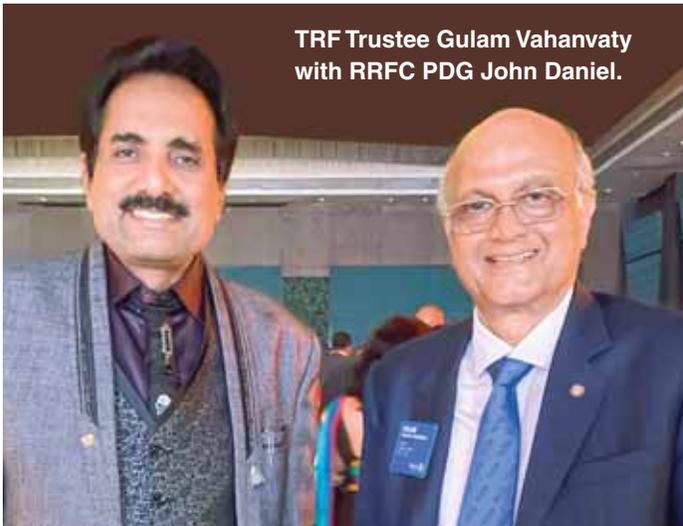


V Muthukumar

EMGA PDG JB Kamdar  
and Institute Chair PDG  
M Muruganandam.



TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty  
with RRFC PDG John Daniel.



RI President Mehta, Trustees Vahanvaty and  
Memon with the AKS members.



This year at the zone institute Mahabs 21, the TRF dinner titled Arch Kumph Society Celebration was confined to recognising and honouring AKS members, both from the Chair's Circle and the Trustees Circle.

The AKS members entered the hall in a procession. They included PDG Suresh Jain (RC Delhi South East, RI District 3011) and his late wife Usha; PDGs Vinay and Rashmi Kulkarni (RC Pune Parvati, RID 3131), along with Suresh Kumar and Kiran Poddar (RC Jaipur Mid Town, RID 3052). All the three couples belong to the Chair's circle, with their TRF contributions crossing \$500,000.

The other new AKS inductees, all belonging to the Trustees circle, are V R Muthu and Malarvizhi from RC Virudhunagar, RID 3212 ; V Bhaskar Ram and Suchitra, RC Rajahmundry River City, RID 3020; M Ambalavanan and Geetharani, RC Madras Mid-town, RID 3232; Natanasabapathy Sundaravadelu and Murugambal, RC Coimbatore, RID 3201; S V Veeramani and Radha, RC Adyar, RID 3232; Nitin Ratilal Mehta and Harsha, RC Bombay Airport, RID 3141; Nikunj Jhaveri and Kanan, RC Queen's Necklace, RID 3141; Santiago Martin, RC Coimbatore Central, and Leema Rose, RC Coimbatore Aakruthi, RID 3201.

Thanking the generous donors, and raising a toast to the new entrants to the AKS club, RI President Shekhar Mehta said their money to the TRF helped in giving eyesight to people, mending hearts, saving lives, and improving the living conditions of the less fortunate around the world. "Both TRF and mankind is richer because of people like you. Thank you for your generosity, your compassion and love for humanity."

In 2020-21, once again, our zones have emerged No 2 in TRF giving with a total of \$23.6 million, with India alone contributing \$22.4 million. RI District 3141, led by Sunnil Mehra, emerged the topmost district in the world with a contribution of \$3.5 million. Mehra and his team were recognised at the TRF dinner ceremony.

EMGA JB Kamdar, also an AKS member along with wife Marlene (Chair's circle), welcomed the gathering, Convener and RI Director AS Venkatesh, RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, TRF Trustee Chair representative Trustee Aziz Memon and TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty greeted and thanked the AKS members.

Current year's Major Donors and EMGAs Deepak Gupta, JB Kamdar, Suresh Hari and Dr Pramod were all recognised.



**Above from left:** TRF Trustee Memon and Samina, and RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi and Amita; TRF Trustee-elect Bharat Pandya and Madhavi with DG Gaurish Dhond; **From L:** TRF Trustee Vahanvaty, RID Venkatesh, Trustee Memon, RI President Mehta and RID Kotbagi.

**Right:** RI President Mehta, PRID Pandya, Trustees Memon and Vahanvaty with RID 3141 PDGs Sunnil Mehra, TN Subramanian, DGE Sandip Agarwalla and AKS members of the district.





**From left:** Institute Convener Venkatesh interacting with its Chair Muruganandam and his spouse Sumathi; (From L) PRID Manoj Desai, Sharmishtha, Sumathi, PDG Muruganandam and Meera, spouse of PDG John Daniel; (From L) DGE K Babumon and spouse Beena with Vinita Venkatesh.



# Lighter Moments

Rasheeda Bhagat



Institute convener RID A S Venkatesh and Vinita. PRID P T Prabhakar, PDG John Daniel and Nalini Prabhakar are seated behind.

## A shock absorber called Vinita

Planning a zone institute during an unprecedented pandemic such as was inflicted on the entire world by the minuscule coronavirus is indeed a daunting task. RI Director A S Venkatesh had to grapple with this huge challenge for over 18 months, wondering all the time if he and the event chair, PDG M Muruganandam, would be able to pull off an in-person institute at Mahabalipuram. In his welcome address, Venky, as he is popularly known in the Rotary world, said he “started thinking of an institute when I was declared director nominee, but little did I know that the next institute after Indore (of PRID Bharat Pandya) would be mine. There was nothing in between to watch and learn from.”

There was “so much of uncertainty, apprehension, fear... so many doubts, not only among the delegates but members of the organising committee as well, if this would happen.” First Lockdown 1 and 2 happened, and then came the

terrifying Covid second wave which left India reeling. He doubted if any institute organising committee had been forced to hold so many meetings online. “We saw the venue for the first time about 22 months ago and visited it the second time only two months ago, as it was practically under lockdown for most of the time in between,” he said.

“And to compound matters, just about 11 days ago, Chennai had unprecedented rains. The city was flooded; I got at least 40 calls wanting to know if the institute was going to

happen. Well, I trusted my team and the almighty. And he has been kind; without his blessings we couldn’t all have met here.”

These were the travails “we went through but finally, seeing over 700 of you at this meeting I realise that it was all worth the anxiety that chair Muruga and I went through.”

But, admitted Venky, with a smile, though he presented a picture of calm and confidence to his entire team, he was under tremendous pressure and tension, “and all of that was absorbed wonderfully by Vinita (his wife). She has been a wonderful shock absorber all along, and I am really grateful to her for that!”

## The endearing Kapil Dev

Cricket legend Kapil Dev virtually took over the stage, the auditorium and the audience at his session at the institute. Totally enjoying the spotlight on him, when quizzed by RI Director Venkatesh about frequently changing his look through different hairstyles such as a pony tail, or

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Change is interesting.  
Sometimes my wife says  
‘you look horrible’ but  
that’s ok. You can’t eat the  
same food every day.

Cricketer Kapil Dev

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sporting the Sardarji look through a turban, he said, “change is interesting. Sometimes my wife says ‘you look horrible’ but that’s ok. You can’t eat the same food every day.”

Turning to Vinita Venkatesh, he then joked that maybe she should try changing her husband’s look!

When asked about his famous knock of 175 (not out) against Zimbabwe and the pressures he must have faced while playing in important tournaments, he said playing cricket made him happy and did not give him stress. And when a batsman goes on to the field during challenging times, he is only thinking of “how to take care of your family, and your team is your family. And I am always ready to do anything for my country.”

Also, forget getting stressed on the field, “I do not even understand the word ‘depression’. Perhaps that’s because I live in a joint family and in a joint family you can’t get depressed. Only when you live alone and have nobody to talk to, you may feel depressed.”

Cricket legend Kapil Dev with RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi.



TRF Trustee Aziz Memon and Samina. PRID Bharat Pandya and Madhavi are also seen.

Freely mingling with the audience, exchanging hugs, greetings and smiles, and making it clear that he had all the time in the world to spend with the dotting audience, Kapil Dev threw the institute schedule timing for a toss, but then nobody was complaining as he turned out to be an entertainer par excellence!

### An MMM club

All the senior leaders at the Mahabs Institute, including RI President Shekhar Mehta, went gaga over the institute chair PDG M Muruganandam involving the 30-odd members from his office to help out with the planning, organisation and execution of Mahabs 21. When it was his turn to give his closing remarks TRF Trustee Chair John Germ’s representative to the institute, Trustee Aziz Memon, said it was heartening to see so many of the personal staff of the PDG, known in the Rotary world as MMM, helping him to put together the institute. In fact, as he had an entire Rotary club in his backyard; “I suggest you form a MMM Rotary Club with these people.”

Memon, who regaled the audience with the innumerable instances his name was changed in India to ‘Menon’, said that he had accepted the inevitable and when people said he had misspelt his name when he signed in as ‘Memon’, “I quietly change it to Menon, to make things simpler!”

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat



# Mahabs moments



RI President  
Shekhar Mehta  
and Rashi.



K Vishwanathan

PRID Manoj Desai and Sharmishtha

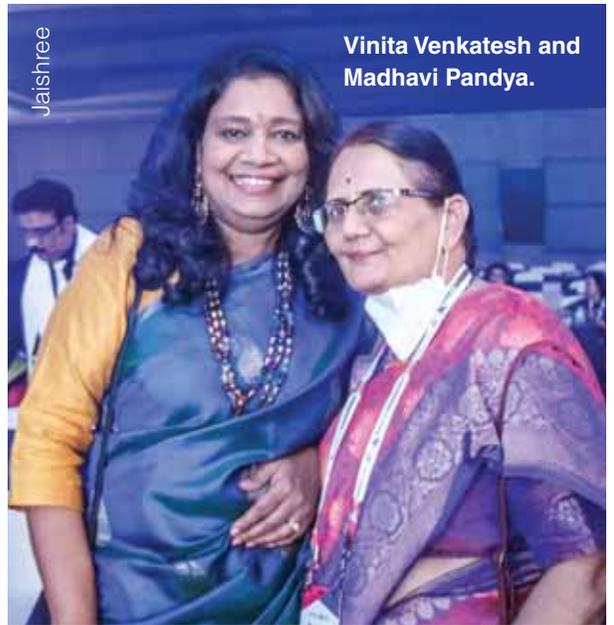


PRIP KR Ravindran  
with PRID C Basker  
and Mala.



Jaishree

From L: Sujata, Instiute Vice-chair R Madhav Chandran, Institute Chair M Muruganandam and Sumathi.

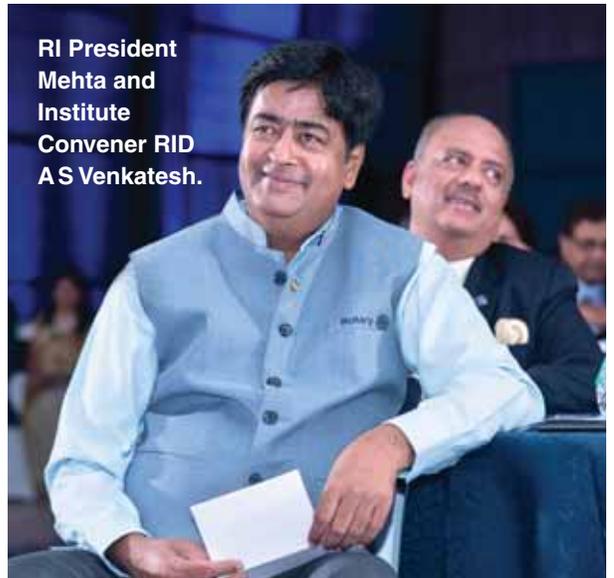


Jaishree

Vinita Venkatesh and Madhavi Pandya.



Vinita Venkatesh and Amita Kotbagi.



RI President Mehta and Institute Convener RID A S Venkatesh.



Jaishree

Spouses of DGEs get ready to promote the Vizag Institute.



Clockwise from above: A performance by a dance troupe from Atma Foundation of Kalakshetra.

A section of DGEs.

(From L) RIDs Mahesh Kotbagi, Venkatesh and Trustee Aziz Memon.

RI Director Kotbagi, PDG Ch Kishore Kumar, Shoba Kishore and Amita.

PDG Rashmi Vinay Kulkarni (RID 3131) with a line-up of zonal TRF awards won by the district.

Rashi, RI President Mehta and PRIP Ravindran.

Rotary leaders on their way to the institute inaugural.





Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat and Sridhar Bharathy  
Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



# Rotaractors air their thoughts on policy changes

Jaishree

Come July, Rotaractors will start paying to RI annual membership dues — \$5 for institution-based and \$8 for community-based Rotaract clubs. The 2019 CoL’s landmark decision to ‘Elevate Rotaract’ also included eliminating upper age limit for Rotaractors and involving them in district committees.

At the Mahabs 21 institute, World Rotaract Committee chair Ravi Vadlamani moderated a special session with Rotaract representatives — RI’s Rotaract Interact Committee member PDRR Ramkumar Raju, RSA MDIO president PDRR Arti Goswami, its vice-president PDRR Naveen Sena and SEARIC MDIO president PDRR Kaushal Sahu — to

discuss how Rotaractors view these changes.

The decision to collect membership dues had a mixed response. “For community-based clubs, it is not an issue. But it will be a challenge for college-based clubs,” said Raju. Referring to clubs with large membership such as RAC Ethiraj College in Chennai with 6,000 members and RAC R V College in Bengaluru, he said, “We have clubs with membership in 1,000s and don’t want to lose them.” Vadlamani responded: “It is the price of just one pizza. For the value and transformation that Rotaract gives, this is a small price.”

Echoing his thoughts, Sena said, “it might not burn a hole in

the pocket of Rotaractors who have settled down with a career. If they understand the benefits their membership brings, they will be ready to pay.” He pointed out that 50 Rotaractors have been invited to participate in the next International Assembly where Rotary will be offering them training in leadership. “Anything given free will not be valued,” said Sahu.

The Rotaract delegates were however unified in opposing the elimination of upper age limit. “People would want to stay on and pay lesser dues in Rotaract rather than pay a hefty fee as a Rotarian. In fact I know some Rotarians who have become Rotaractors! The



Sridhar Bharathy

PDRRs Ramkumar Raju, Arti Goswami, Kaushal Sahu and Naveen Sena with PDRR Sujith Kumar (centre).



Rasheeda Bhagat

RI President Shekhar Mehta gives Paul Harris Certificate to PDRR Rtn Naveen Sena in the presence of (from L) World Rotaract Committee Chair Ravi Vadlamani, Institute Convener RID A S Venkatesh, Institute Chair PDG M Muruganandam, PDRR Rtn Ramkumar Raju, DGN (RID 3232) Ravi Raman and PDRR Arti Goswami.

decision throws open much confusion,” commented Sena.

Talking about the Rotary-Rotaract synergy, he said that Rotaractors are a huge pool of youngsters who are good in creativity, energy, vision, technology and “they have their finger on the current trends. We will support Rotary in achieving its mission. In TEACH, or polio awareness, you will

need volunteers in huge numbers. Rotaractors will be ready to do the job. Include us in your planning and district committees and together we can accomplish great things. If Rotary is filled with experienced people, Rotaract is fuelled with energy.”

The benefits are mutual, said Raju. “Rotarians such as my DG CR Raju have nurtured me to become what I am today. If Rotaractors can use the support offered by Rotarians they can go places,” he said, and recalled his convention experience when he was DRR. “Speaking to 40,000 elite Rotarians in the plenary session at the Sydney convention was a dream come true.” He also recalled the *My Flag My India* event that had 50,000 Rotaractors and Rotarians coming together to form the world’s largest human flag and create a record in Chennai. “Rotarians have always been there and taken us forward. It all depends on how Rotarians see Rotaractors — as people with potential or as ‘just Rotaractors’.”

Referring to Vadlamani, institute chair M Muruganandam and counsellor Y Kumanan, all past DRRs, he said, “This shows how Rotaract has developed leadership qualities in these Rotary leaders.”

Arti lamented the smaller membership of women Rotaractors. “It is only 30 per cent. We must focus on installing Rotaract in women’s colleges, give them leadership responsibilities and implement projects directed at women’s welfare such as menstrual hygiene and cancer screening.”

Vadlamani suggested that Rotary, like Rotaract, should recognise 10 large projects at the Houston convention. He urged the delegates to motivate Rotaractors to become dual members and increase membership of both Rotary and Rotaract. RI has set goals to increase the number of registered Rotaractors to one million by 2029 and RI President Shekhar Mehta wants the Rotaract membership to grow from 200,000 to 300,000 by 2022. ■

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**We must install Rotaract in women’s colleges, give them leadership responsibilities and implement projects directed at women’s welfare such as menstrual hygiene and cancer screening.**

**PDRR Arti Goswami**

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Rtn Shekhar Mehta  
RI President



Rtn Ramesh Meher  
District Governor

# GLIMPSES OF DISTRICT 3030



SERVE TO  
CHANGE LIVES



## Blanket distribution to prisoners

One afternoon, District pleader Adv. Ketan Dhake was seated with District Legal Aid Service Authority Secretary Judge A A Shaikh to discuss a project in Jalgaon Central Jail as per the Supreme Court directive. They reached out to club president Umang Mehta of Rotary Club of Jalgaon Gold City to collaborate for the project.

Both of them were impressed with the project taken up and progress made by Rotary Jalgaon Gold City. The initial project was to provide counselling for the Under Trial Prisoners (UTP) lodged in the jail. However, following a discussion, the club felt the need for providing blankets to the inmates to protect against the winter cold. And so the project took shape.

The honorary guests Judge Shaikh and District Government pleader Advocate Ketan Dhake along with Umang Mehta were showed the barracks where they interacted with the inmates. Prior to providing the counselling, they wanted to understand whether the UTPs understood their rights while in jail. Surprisingly, 20 per cent of them were not aware of the concept of bail.

During the counselling session led by Judge Shaikh, Advocate Ketan Dhake and Rtn Umang Mehta they educated 200-300 inmates about their rights, medical assistance available and answered their questions.

The blankets that were distributed to all inmates was sponsored by Rahul Jain, a member of Rotary Club of Jalgaon Gold City. The project chairman Rtn. Rahul Kotecha, Prakhar Mehta, Rahul Kothari, Anand Gandhi and law students from the Maniyar college were present.

This project was a first-of-its-kind and was an impactful and successful event.

## From mental illness to mental wellness

The District Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives (DAGMHI) in Rotary District 3030, India, is the first chapter of the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives. RAGMHI was formed in 2015. DAGMHI's Board was formed in May 2021 but it has been working since May 2020, when COVID-19 struck the world. The pandemic saw the rise of mental health problems like never before.

DAGMHI shares the vision and mission of RAGMHI, as it promotes mental health and emotional wellbeing in society by generating awareness, removing stigma, and spreading the

understanding that mental illness is treatable and preventable. Since last 19 months it has conducted 50 webinars for children, parents, Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors and school students, on different topics. It has conducted poster, slogan and video making competitions. It acts as a resource base for all clubs of the district and other districts too. It has encouraged and guided clubs to form mental health committees and work towards awareness.

It launched a 4-page monthly online newsletter — *Mind Matters* — in April 2021 which is shared with Rotary clubs across the globe.

	Advisor Rtn. Dr. Rita Aggarwal District Chair, RAG MHL, RC Nagpur		President Rtn. Dr. Aabha Pimprikar RC Nasik Grapecity		Vice president Rtn. Ann. Dr. Kalpana Date RC Nagpur
	Secretary Rtn. Dr. Pratishtha Mayee RC Nagpur Downtown		Treasurer Rtn. Divyansh Shah RC Amalner	<i>Directors</i>	
	Rtn. Dr. Shantala Bhoje RC Nagpur Vision		Rtn. Ad. Suraj Chaudhari RC Jalgaon West		Rtn. Murali Raghavan RC Deolali
	Rtn. Kirti Chande RC Hiral Chandrapur		Rtn. Dr. Smrita Hantodkar RC Amravati		Rtn. Pankaj Agrawa RC Achalpur



Rtn Shekhar Mehta  
RI President



Rtn Ramesh Meher  
District Governor

# GLIMPSES OF DISTRICT 3030



SERVE TO  
CHANGE LIVES



## A hospice for terminally ill patients in Amravati

Shreemati Late Saraswatidevi Premchand Harwani Memorial Rotary Midtown Sukhant Palliative Care Center at the Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh Memorial Medical College is a project of Rotary Club of Amravati Midtown, RID 3030, Club ID 15486, implemented with strong giving culture and a generous approach to the local society.

### Our Mission

To provide care and support to terminally ill patients right from the day of diagnosis to the end of life stage and bereavement. This shall be accomplished by providing

- Medical and nursing care of palliative nature
- Psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual support, and counselling through indoor, day-care and home-based palliative care services with the help of a vibrant generous approach and strong giving culture.

### Our Vision

- People battling lifetime diseases and suffering from unbearable distress, pain and other symptoms must live a dignified life till their last breath

- The elderly suffering fourth stage distress and leading dependent life must live a dignified life till their last breath
- No close relative of terminally ill patients and old age persons leading dependent life should suffer from mental and physical stress of caring for their loved ones.

### Services offered at Rotary Midtown Sukhant Palliative Care Center

- **Until death:** Palliative care for terminally ill patients until death
- **Short stay:** Terminally ill patients are also admitted for a short stay particularly when the caretakers have to leave home for some important work
- **Daycare:** Family members can drop their patient in the morning hours and take them back in the late evening hours.
- **Home-based palliative care:** Not every terminally ill patient is admitted to a palliative care centre, but for many patients medical, nursing, counselling facilities have to be delivered directly at their doorsteps. This is called home-based palliative care. In the second phase of this project, Sukhant Home-based Palliative Care Service will be started.

### Facilities available at Rotary Midtown Sukhant Palliative Care Center

- 20-bed hospital with cubical arrangement for patients and caregivers, with all modern facilities
- Air cooled space with proper cross-ventilation
- Round-the-clock service of trained nurses and other healthcare workers, availability of doctors from time to time
- Centralised oxygen supply system and advanced firefighter system
- Dietary guidance and psychological counselling facilities
- Videoconferencing facilities for patients to communicate with relatives
- Beautiful garden attached to the ward for spending some time in pleasant environment and for prayer
- In addition to qualified healthcare workers, services of well-trained volunteer caregivers will be available.

Rotary Midtown Sukhant Palliative Care Center management team remains grateful to all donors, all members of Rotary Club of Amravati Midtown, management of Shree Shivaji Education Society, Dean and Director of Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh Memorial Medical College and particularly PDG Kishor Kedia, RID 3030, for encouraging, guiding and for all the support extended from time to time.

# He lifted Rotary to **Himalayan heights**

## Rajendra Saboo

I met Cliff Dochterman in May 1979 at the Rotary International Assembly. This was the beginning of a long, long journey of friendship. He was district governor in 1968–69 and I became one in 1976–77. But he never talked of his seniority and we moved closely in our Rotary service. I was RI director in 1981–83 and RI President in 1991–92. He followed directorship in 1983–85 and presidency in 1992–93. I respected him as a person who personified wit and wisdom.

Cliff was an educationist, who went on to become executive vice-president of the University of Pacific. The president of the University was Stan McCaffrey who became RI President, in the first year of my directorship. He brought Cliff into Rotary leadership as chairman of the New Horizons Committee. Following successful polio vaccination in the Philippines, the committee recommended to the RI directors that the whole world's children be vaccinated by Rotary's centenary in 2005. The board had taken the effective forward step. 3-H (Health, Hunger and Humanity) was a corporate programme which was vehemently opposed by some past top leaders at the 1983 Council on Legislation. I was on the board and Cliff was director-elect. He was authorised to defend the board's action. The opposition was defeated thunderously.

Usha and I became close friends of Cliff and his wife Dorothy in 1979 at Boca Raton and at all international events we were together. Dorothy always made people happy and Cliff did so even more. She suffered cancer which took her life in 1987. Cliff confided in me that Dorothy's one wish

which would not be realised was Cliff becoming RI President. He added that when God meets Dorothy, he would ask what did you do in the world, and she would reply that she made people happy. When Cliff was nominated as RI president I told him that happiness will be in his theme and so it was. His theme was "Real happiness is helping others".

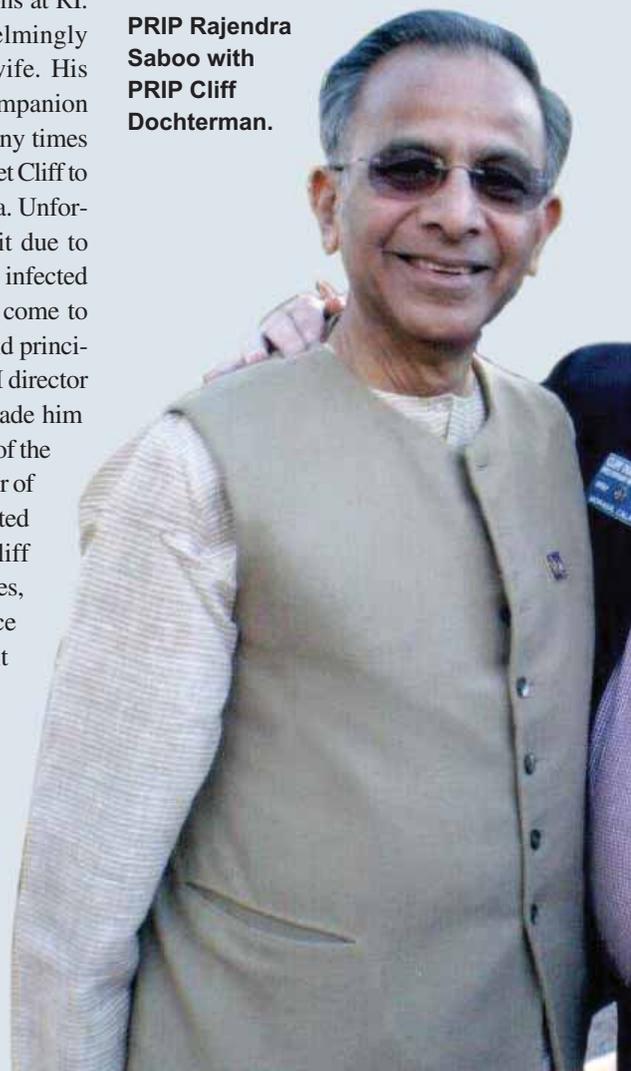
When I was RI president-elect, Cliff got nominated as RI president to be my successor and I was overjoyed knowing that on my board Cliff would bring the fountain of wisdom. Cliff put his name at the last minute as he was rejected for senior positions at RI. He was nominated overwhelmingly despite his having lost his wife. His daughter Claudia was his companion when and where required. Many times he travelled alone. I wanted to get Cliff to our institute which was at Agra. Unfortunately, he could not make it due to sudden surgery required by an infected gallbladder. However, he did come to India next year as president and principally to Bangalore, home of RI director Panduranga Setty and Cliff made him chair of Executive Committee of the board. He came to India as chair of TRF and significantly he visited the CoL in Delhi in 1998. Cliff came to India two or three times, once for the institute and once for a polio eradication event when he became TRF chair. By then Mary Elena, who he married in 1994, became his life partner.

Cliff had joined RC Berkeley in 1958 and then shifted to RC Stockton in 1971. Finally he joined

RC Moraga and remained there until the end. Mary Elena also joined RC Moraga and became its president.

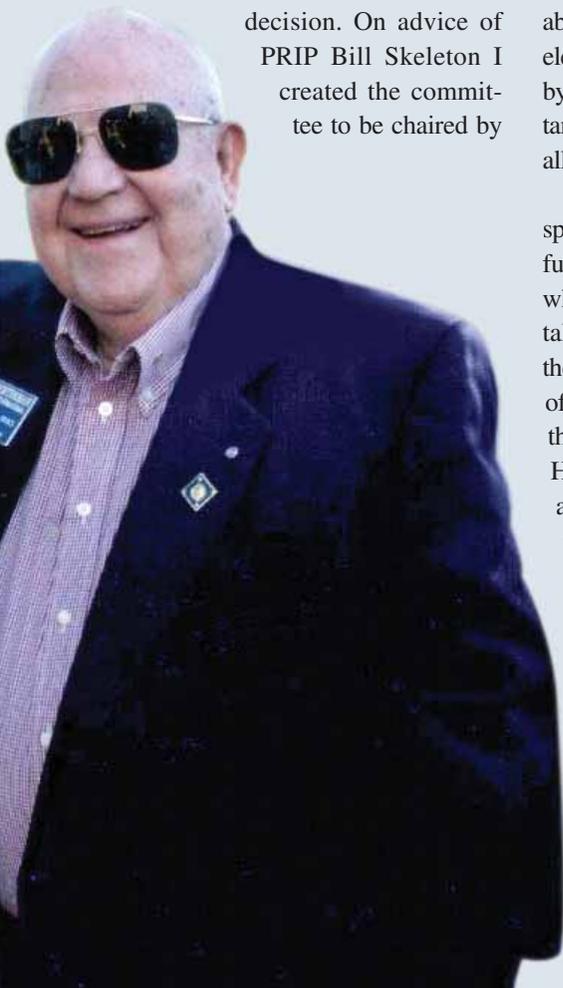
Cliff deeply appreciated my putting him on the International Assembly of 1992 and he gave one-third of discussion leaders, which I did not have. That was the beginning of the process that remains till now... the IA is fully under the control of the incoming RI president. Even in board meetings he would support me and we would resolve any sensitive issues between us. One issue, an administrative one, was that I felt

**PRIP Rajendra Saboo with PRIP Cliff Dochterman.**



the secretary of the president-elect should move with him when he became president. This is how it is done now. However, Ann Fleming, who was very talented, was my secretary as president-elect, but was not willing to continue as my secretary when I became the president. She approached Cliff saying so, and he approached me and I agreed. He could have done so on his own but he considered it a protocol and did not want to offend me.

Around March-April 1995 Luis Giay was RI president-elect and I was trustee chair-elect. To introduce a new programme to commemorate Paul Harris's 50<sup>th</sup> death anniversary, I came up with the idea of advanced education for peace and resolution of conflicts. Luis agreed and I put the proposal before the April trustee meeting, courtesy of then TRF chair Paulo Costa. I got the approval to go ahead and the next meeting, when I would be chair, I could take the final decision. On advice of PRIP Bill Skeleton I created the committee to be chaired by



Cliff and two other Rotary leaders, who were educationists. Cliff could take it up well and at the next meeting of the trustees it was approved and endorsed by RI President Giay and his board. The programme was announced at the Glasgow Convention and at a subgroup meeting attended by almost 400 Rotarians chaired by Cliff. It got affirmative response. Thereafter, Cliff, I and Luis took the programme further.

Cliff brought out a booklet *ABCs of Rotary*. It became most popular and every new Rotarian or potential Rotary member would get this book. Cliff was an author having written many books or prompted the books. He had a vision and also did hands-on service as he used to go to Mexico or Panama as a volunteer. He was an ardent scout, and knew all about the discipline of scouts. He was also a person of tremendous thinking, humorous and quick-witted. I remember when he was in the Melbourne convention as president there was a choir of about 150 young students under 12. The electricity failed for a few minutes and by the time it came back, Cliff's spontaneous remark was "Oh now they have all grown up".

Cliff had many stories in his speeches and some of them were very funny. I mentioned to Cliff that those who are listening your speeches, are taking notes and he told me: "Raja, they were not thinking of the message of my speech but they were only noting the jokes I have in my presentation." He had that sensitivity. He was born a person with wit and he inherited it from his mother. His mother used to be on the television advertisements of Kellogg's and she had to eat the cereal. I met Cliff's mother and complimented her that she gave the skill of humour to Cliff and appreciated the TV advertisement. She chuckled and said that she had to eat the cereal several times if the rehearsal was not correct.

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**Even in board meetings Cliff would support me and we would resolve any sensitive issues between us.**

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I've complimented Cliff about his outstanding addresses and orientation, and many times mentioned about his being an orator of a special level. And he responded that I was also a good speaker. He was humble and he always would think of respecting the other person. His masterpiece on leadership is as a conductor of the orchestra. This became a repeated programme at the International Assemblies and the incoming district governors would give Cliff a standing ovation before he started this presentation and of course after he completed it.

Usha and I became very close to Mary Elena and Cliff. Mary Elena became part and parcel of Cliff and his personality including knowledge of Rotary.

As the years rolled by, Cliff had a problem and could not stand for too long, and when Mary Elena passed away from cancer, the double jeopardy broke Cliff. He always avoided coming to International Assembly after that. The last one I remember is the 2018 IA.

We corresponded frequently and Cliff talked about the passing away of Mat Caparas, Frank Devlyn and Luis Giay. And when he passed away on Nov 23, I felt that he was a person who lived his life to the full. He was an author, orator, philosopher, visionary and indeed with his talent he lifted Rotary to Himalayan heights.

*The writer is past RI president*



# TRF Star Performers (2020–21)

Trophy	Zone 4	Zone 5
Highest Contribution to Annual Fund	Sunnil Mehra (3141)	Jose Madhavassery (3201)
Highest Contribution to Endowment Fund	Sunnil Mehra (3141)	S Muthu Palaniappan (3232)
Highest Contribution to Polio Fund	Sunnil Mehra (3141)	PNB Murugadoss (3212)
Highest Per Capita APF Contribution to TRF	Sunnil Mehra (3141)	Ajith Weerasinghe (3220)
Highest Total Contribution to TRF	Sunnil Mehra (3141)	S Muthu Palaniappan (3232)
Highest Donor Participation	Sunnil Mehra (3141)	Jose Madhavassery (3201)
Highest Club Participation	Dr Sandeep Kadam (3142)	S Muthu Palaniappan (3232) Ajith Weerasinghe (3220)

ALL INDIA TROPHIES	RI District
Nitish Laharry Trophy for All India Highest Total Contribution to TRF	3141
Binota and Kalyan Banerjee Trophy for All India Highest Endowment Fund Contribution	3141
Usha and Raja Saboo Trophy for All India Highest Annual Fund Contribution to TRF	3141
Highest All India Polio Fund Contribution to TRF	3020
District with highest number of new AKS members	3141



RI President Shekhar Mehta and Trustee Aziz Memon present an award to RID 3170 PDG Sangram Patil and spouse Utkarsha; **From L:** Trustee-elect PRID Bharat Pandya, RID 3240 PDG Subhasish Chatterjee, RI President Mehta, Trustee Memon, DGN Nilesh Agarwal, PDG Debashish Das and DGE Dr Kushanava Pabi.



RID 3131 PDG Rashmi Kulkarni with (from L) RRFCL Lakkaraju Satyanarain, PDG Dr Girish Gune, Vinay Kulkarni, Trustee Memon and President Mehta.



# — Zones 4, 5, 6 and 7

Trophy	Zone 6	Zone 7
Highest Contribution to Annual Fund	Rajib Pokhrel (3292)	Sangram Vishnu Patil (3170)
Highest Contribution to Endowment Fund	Sudip Mukherjee (3291)	Nagendra Prasad (3190)
Highest Contribution to Polio Fund	Subhasish Chatterjee (3240)	M Satish Babu (3020)
Highest Per Capita APF Contribution to TRF	Subhasish Chatterjee (3240)	Rashmi Vinay Kulkarni (3131)
Highest Total Contribution to TRF	Rajib Pokhrel (3292)	Rashmi Vinay Kulkarni (3131)
Highest Donor Participation	Rajib Pokhrel (3292)	M Ranganath Bhat (3181) N V Hanmanth Reddy (3150)
Highest Club Participation	Subhasish Chatterjee (3240)	Rajarama B Bhat (3182) Rashmi Vinay Kulkarni (3131)



RID 3232 PDG S Muthu Palaniappan receives award from Trustee-elect Pandya in the presence of (from L) PDG E K Sagadhevan, DGE Dr N Nandakumar, RRFCC John Daniel, President Mehta, PDG Babu Peram, Trustee Memon, PDGs V Raja Seenivasan, I S A K Nazar, AKS members S V Veeramani and Radha, PDG Rekha Shetty, DGN Ravi Raman and AKS members M Ambalavanan and Geetharani.

Below: RID 3291 PDG Sudip Mukherjee receives the award from President Mehta in the presence of (from L) RRFCC Basu Dev Golyan, PDG Shyamashree Sen, PRID Pandya, Trustee Memon, PDGs Anirudha Roy Chowdhury, Angsuman Bandyopadhyay and Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty; **From L:** Institute Convener RID AS Venkatesh, Trustee Memon, RID 3060 PDG Prashant Jani, his spouse Hita, President Mehta and RID Mahesh Kotbagi.





# Discharge CoL duty with care & caution

V Muthukumaran

After being a district governor, the most important task of Rotarians is to discharge the responsibility of a CoL representative at the Rotary's parliament in Chicago. Apart from projecting a good image of their districts and zones, they will be shaping up the future of Rotary, said Trustee-elect and PRID Bharat Pandya.

Speaking at the CoL seminar at the Mahabs 21 institute in Chennai, he urged the PDGs to do thorough homework by going through all the enactments in the binders as "the CoL offers great hope and opportunity to take Rotary forward, grow it bigger and make it a more responsible, agile, nimble and transparent entity." The delegates have to study RI's constitution manual, enactments (proposed legislations) and CoL procedures to reshape Rotary.

Giving a peek into history, Pandya said, "CoL was started in 1933 as part of the plenary session of an RI convention; officially recognised as Rotary's parliament in 1972; became an independent body in 1977, holding council every three years; and from 2001, all councils are held at the RI headquarters in Chicago."

At the CoL "you will feel the buzz in the air with an electric atmosphere at the sessions, learn, unlearn and relearn with active participation in the adoption of new enactments and amendments," he said. When the then RI President Barry Rassin (2018-19) introduced the resolution of elevating Rotaract as equal partners in Rotary on the first day of CoL 2019, "it was defeated resoundingly. But next day, there was a discussion at the RI Board and the motion was adopted with a thumping majority on the last day."

## Prepare well

In the next four months, the CoL members have to study the enactments, decide on which ones to support or oppose, prepare for an impactful three-minute speech at the lectern by consulting Rotary leaders, said Pandya. "You have to decide when to speak as time is critical. Remember that you are representing your district, zone and your impact through enactments or amendments will take Rotary forward," he said.

RID A S Venkatesh said, "a huge responsibility rests on the CoL reps as they discuss, debate and vote on the enactments, amendments and resolutions. Read the draft enactments, discuss them and apply your mind on which way to vote at the CoL." As on date, there are 93 enactments, some of them very significant ones at the advisory board of the

**From L:** Trustee-elect Bharat Pandya, PDGs Mukesh Arneja, Jawahar Vadlamani and PRID Dr Manoj Desai.



CoL, which if adopted will “shake-up Rotary.” Venkatesh urged the delegates to make full use of this institute session chaired by Rotary CoL vice-chair PDG TN Subramanian as “he will give a hands-on feeling of what you can expect at the CoL.”

### Don't canvas for votes

During a panel discussion chaired by Pandya, PDG Jawahar Vadlamani said canvassing for votes or asking support for an enactment is a strict ‘no’ at the CoL. Even a letter of appeal or handbill seeking support can be circulated only with the permission of the CoL chair at the hall. “Your speech must not be an extempore, but prepared well, and it is better to read it slowly and clearly from a typed or written script as nearly 50 per cent of audience will be from non-English speaking countries,” he said.

CoL representatives must attend all sessions, collect the programme

booklets and guideline kits to understand the nuances of the legislative body of Rotary, said Vadlamani. “It is not mandatory for delegates to vote on all enactments. But once you have studied all the proposed legislations, you are expected to vote for or against any of them.”

But what is the point in going to Chicago if you are going to abstain from voting on most resolutions, asked PRID Dr Manoj Desai. Stating that there is competition between RI directors across regions to get their enactments passed, he said, “after coming back, you can report to your DGs and circulate booklets to inform the clubs about the CoL resolutions.”

Make effective use of green, red and yellow flags during the voting process, said PDG Mukesh Arneja. “Be sure of what you want to do at the CoL sessions, take all the enactments in binders or an iPad;

and make a clear, effective speech for or against the resolution to make an impact.” One can make a Point of Order to seek clarity on enactments by raising the yellow card (or flag).

Only those enactments that get 20 per cent of voting will be heard at the CoL for consideration; and those which get 80 per cent votes will get passed, said PDG Subramanian. “Around 30 per cent of CoL members don't speak at all. But when you move an enactment, point of order or amendment, make it noteworthy and impactful,” he said. Take extra care over the wording of your resolutions and weigh the impact they would have on the Rotary worldwide, “instead of being myopic to serve the interests of just your district or zone.” Around 60 PDGs participated at the session co-chaired by PDG Sharat Jain.

Picture by V Muthukumaran



## The importance of district training

### Team Rotary News

District training must trickle down to the club-level for the effective functioning of Rotary and DTs (district trainers) are chosen by their DGs so that “they can be their friends, philosophers and guides during their tenure,” said PRID Bharat Pandya.

Addressing the inaugural session of the DT seminar at the Mahab 21 institute, he said, “Rotarians share the same values but unfortunately

there is often a fall-out between the DTs and their governors on the issue of hogging the limelight.”

A DT will be remembered long in the district for “his good job if the DG has done his job well.” “If your district is doing great projects, programmes, then kudos to you. Bring your expertise and experience to your governor and his team.”

Every district must have district training committees for chalking out

and conducting year-long training sessions for clubs. “We need more break-out sessions at PETS and other training programmes at the district-level. There is a need for passing uniform information and training process across the zones.”

RID A S Venkatesh said the DTs “must come up with the training models. We have master trainers here, so make the best use of them.” Though Rotary believes in continuity, “Rotarians in our

zones believe in different forms of continuity. Be empathetic to the needs and suggestions of incoming governors. Think of the larger organisation, instead of short-term goals or personal agenda. And let Rotary be the winner in all the decisions you take in consultation with the governor.” Around 30 DTs (out of 41 in zones 4, 5, 6 and 7) were present at the day-long institute seminar chaired by PDG R Reghunath. ■



# Governors share best practices

Jaishree



Jaishree

District governors with RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi.

With a growth of 4,000 members a month so far this year we are doing much better than the past ten years when it used to be an annual net growth of 4,000 members,” said RI President Shekhar Mehta, addressing the DGs at their mid-year review session. The four zones have together added 15,553 new members between July and December, in true spirit of his EOBO concept.

But Mehta was unhappy that 400 Rotary clubs in India have not paid their dues even past the deadline. “Sack the assistant governors in charge of these clubs. It is a shame if an AG cannot look after 2–3 clubs. It was heart-wrenching when RI pointed out that 400 clubs from India are defaulters,” he said, and added that the AGs in charge of such clubs should not be considered for any district recognition.

Mehta was filling in for RI’s membership committee chair PRID Kamal Sanghvi who was mourning the loss of his mother. The session was

participative with governors sharing best practices on membership growth, TRF contribution, roping in CSR participation and doing community-oriented service projects.

Mehta urged the governors to promote Rotary Days of Service and projects directed at empowering girls in their districts, and ensure that the programmes are promptly uploaded in the Rotary Showcase website. “Only then your district will be considered for recognition.”

Success stories shared at the session included forming a club in Jodhpur with officers of a branch of HDFC bank as members on a suggestion from RID 3053 DG Sanjay Malviya. RID 3262 DG Santanu Kumar Pani related how he helped form an e-club with NRIs working in the Middle East. “It gives them an opportunity to get together to do service projects in our country,” he said. Mehta suggested the forming of corporate Rotary clubs as CSR participation in Rotary projects

is commendable, and Rotary clubs in gated communities.

“Nothing will be as significant as getting a landmark figure in membership this year. Adding 40,000 members in a 10-year span does not justify our potential. For a country with a population of 1.3 billion we can do much more than a 1.7 lakh membership,” said institute convener RID AS Venkatesh.

He spotlighted RC Madras Capital City which had a membership of 94 past Round Tablers. The club is soon chartering another Rotary club with 60 past Round Tablers. Inviting past Rotaractors, children of Rotarians and encouraging dual membership of Rotaractors were other suggestions he gave for membership growth.

RID Mahesh Kotbagi, who chaired the session, announced bifurcation of districts 3190, 3054 and 3170.

Rotaract Committee chair Ravi Vadlamani and TRF Trustee Aziz Memon also spoke. ■



# Rotary made me a better person: PDRR Sujith Kumar

**Kiran Zehra**

**R**otary gave an opportunity for PDRR Sujith Kumar, RID 3232, to evolve as a better person, thanks to its leadership sessions and other programmes. The founder of Maastram Foundation, an NGO that provides education to poor students, recalled his year as a Rotaract club president when he collected food grains for a Rotary project.

Having collected more grain than anticipated, he was asked by the club president to visit a leprosy home where the collected grains had to be given. Jolted by the plight of the inmates of the special home, he said, "I wanted to run away from there." The life-changing moment for him came when at a traffic signal a leprosy patient with "no fingers came running to my father's scooter and raised his hands to bless me. He told my father that he had raised a good



Institute Chair M Muruganandam (R) and PDG KP Nagesh felicitate PDRR Sujith Kumar.

child." That was when he realised that through Rotaract and Rotary he could change lives.

His foundation has helped around 1,500 underprivileged students to get admission in various colleges. Educational institutes are partnering with the foundation to provide not just free admission, but also waive tuition fees, transportation charges, hostel fees and food expenses. They also take care of expenses of books and stationery for students.

Sharing the picture of visually-impaired K Suguna, who has BA and B Ed degrees, once selling candy on a railway station, Kumar said she

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*The life-changing moment came when at a traffic signal a leprosy patient with no fingers came running to his father's scooter and raised his hands to bless him. He told his father that he had raised a good child.*

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along with her husband, also visually challenged, were jobless, but they had to support their children. A member of Kumar's team spotted them at the station selling candy, while their son and daughter were doing their homework. The foundation helped Suguna meet Nirmala Krishnan, principal of Mahindra World School, Chennai. Unaware that she was attending an interview, she answered all the questions; but the only problem was that she could not speak in English. But she was ready to learn the language.

Today Suguna works as a Tamil teacher at the Mahindra World School and is doing her PhD in Tamil at Satyabhama University, Chennai. She is also a motivational speaker. After the end of his presentation, the PDRR said, "I have met so many people like Suguna and was able to transform their lives because of the values Rotary instilled in me." Rotary trained him to be different in his approach to life. "When you see Rotarians in action, we develop empathy and the art of giving selflessly," he said. ■



# Pakistan hopes to be polio-free by year-end

V Muthukumar

Pakistan has not reported any new polio cases in 320 days of the year and “we are keeping our fingers crossed for the next 45 days. RI President Shekhar Mehta has assured us that he will declare the country polio-free if there are no cases for the entire year,” said TRF Trustee Aziz Memon from RID 3271, Pakistan, representing Foundation chair John Germ at the Mahabs Institute. “But surveillance is critical to prevent the resurfacing of wild poliovirus after a short time. Though Nigeria was declared polio-free, the cases cropped up after a gap of 18 months.”

Addressing the TRF seminar he said, “we have to be on our toes as our neighbour Afghanistan, with whom we share a 2,400km porous border, has recorded two cases so far and our Waziristan province is vulnerable to polio infections from across the border, as people with families on both sides of the border exchange frequent visits.”

The Pakistan government is taking extra care to check if people across the Afghan border are immunised against polio before letting them in, he said. “While OPV (oral polio vaccine) is given two times, IPV (inactivated polio vaccine) is given once at birth. Till the virus is wiped out from the environment and water samples, we have to continue with our vaccination efforts.”

Memon recalled his recent meeting with Pakistan PM Imran Khan who chairs the National Task Force



TRF Trustee and Pakistan National PolioPlus Committee Chair Aziz Memon

on Polio Eradication and said he is in touch with all the four CMs of the provinces to ensure focus on the PolioPlus programmes.

## Afghanistan woes

During his interaction with Afghanistan health minister Dr Qalandar Ebad, he learnt that there was no shortage of vaccine in that country, “but the logistics are inadequate as hospitals and dispensaries are closed. And there are no nurses or doctors to provide medical services.” Memon said the world has to help Afghanistan to tide over its healthcare crisis first, if it wants to get rid of polio completely.

When Covid struck without any warning about its scale and magnitude,

“the Rotary Foundation was prepared for the challenge. It gave Covid grants of \$46 million for clubs across the world to fight the pandemic; the cold chain facilities for polio were diverted to fight Covid; Rotarians distributed food packets and grocery bags; and we reached out to daily wage earners who lost their livelihood.”

As against the target of \$410 million, TRF collected \$441 million in 2020–21, thanks to India’s contribution of \$23 million. “The current year target (\$410 million) will also be crossed as India will achieve its goal of \$30 million,” he said. DDFs are being depleted at a fast pace with great demand for global grants, hence Rotarians and clubs must donate liberally to the Annual Fund, he urged.

V Muthukumar

With a grand vision of building an Endowment purse of \$2.025 billion by 2025, Rotarians have to donate more so that TRF can reach out to do more good in the world, he added.

Before joining Rotary, recalled RI director A S Venkatesh, he was paying the school fees of poor girls and children. “But after I became a Rotarian, I started thinking of building a school or classroom, and even setting up a clinic or opening a hospital. Because of the Foundation, we are able to enhance our vision of doing good. We have to take pride in what TRF, the charity arm of Rotary, does in making the world a better place to live in,” he said.

RRFC John Daniel, zone 5, said Rotarians are global citizens and the

**TRF in 2020–21**

- District grants — 467; funding \$31.1 million
- Disaster response grants — 55; funding \$3.1 million
- Global grants — 2,066; funding \$143 million
- The Foundation has raised and invested over \$5.5 billion for projects and community programmes around the world.
- An endowment purse of \$2.025 billion will be created by 2025 which will enable Rotary to take up grander projects in scale and impact.

Foundation is their all-religion temple. He cited the *Bhagwad Gita*, *Quran* and *Bible* to point out, “god is within each one of us. As Rotarians we transform the prayers into action. The world needs Rotary now more than ever as

the sick and poor are waiting for us to wipe their tears.” Rotarians need to give liberally to TRF to strengthen the Foundation on which Rotary will grow stronger, taller as the largest service organisation in the world, he said. ■



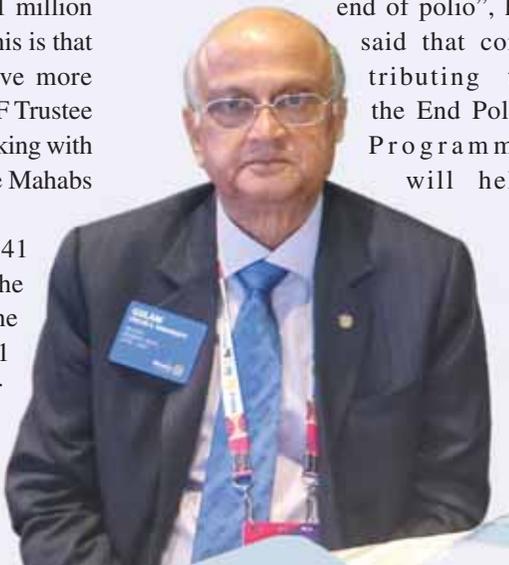
## Be liberal in TRF giving for a better world

### Team Rotary News

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, district governors across the globe worked through virtual sessions to raise \$441 million last year. “The lesson from this is that Rotarians are willing to give more during tough times,” said TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty at the ‘Working with TRF’ session for DGEs at the Mahabs 21 institute.

Congratulating RID 3141 for surpassing the rest of the districts in giving to TRF, he said “not only is RID 3141 on top of the list but six other districts (3131, 3232, 3190, 3201, 3060 and 3011) are in the top 50 giving RI districts.” Using a term from his favourite sport polo, Vahanvaty said, “India is No

2, after the US, by a short head in giving.” Reminding the DGEs that “we could witness the beginning of the end of polio”, he



TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty

said that contributing to the End Polio Programme will help

eradicate the disease from the earth. “Today, polio exists in only two countries and we are on the path to a polio-free world. So do give generously to our Annual and Polio Funds.”

Vahanvaty thanked the “selfless gesture” of Rotarians who are donating for a better world, and were the reason for a consistent 4-star rating for TRF by Charity Navigator. TRF funded community projects, sometimes in partnership with other stakeholders such as the WHO, UNICEF, the Centers for Disease Control, US, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “During any moment in a day, thousands of Rotarians volunteer their time and effort to ensure that all contributions given to TRF are spent wisely and on quality Rotary projects that are changing countless lives,” he added. ■



# Next Rotary Institute in **Vizag**

Team Rotary News



Vizag Institute Convener RID Mahesh Kotbagi, Amita, Chair PDG Ch Kishore Kumar (last row, left), his spouse Shoba (centre) and committee members promote the institute, dancing to a Telugu number.

Feeling dazed after the fun and excitement at the Mahabs 21 Institute? Then recharge your batteries for more such merriment at Visakha Vista 22, the upcoming zone institute at the port city of Vizag, from Dec 9–11, filled with all the razzmatazz you will never forget, said RID Mahesh Kotbagi, announcing the next institute to be chaired by PDG Ch Kishore Kumar. “We chose Vizag as the city is less exposed to Rotarians, but is rich in heritage and has many places of interest to explore and learn,” he said.

In his presentation, PDG Kumar and spouse Shoba invited Rotarians to the commercial capital of Andhra Pradesh to explore its famous temples, scenic beaches, one-of-its-kind submarine and aircraft museums, and a former Dutch colony (Bheemunipatnam), a scenic village attracting tourists, near the port city. “Vizag with a population of 2.5 million is the largest city in Andhra and a Smart City with many industries such as oil drilling, steel

and chemical plants. Even during the Covid pandemic, the city airport handled 30 flights and 10,000 passengers a day,” he explained.

The Golden Quadrilateral highways connect all the six major metros in the country and “one can reach either Kolkata or Chennai in both directions

with ease as Vizag offers great road connectivity,” he said. Recently, 62 navies of the world took part in a major event hosted by the Eastern Naval Command that operates from here. The port city is a great holiday getaway with scenic beaches and a thriving hospitality sector with hotels offering a host of services for tourists. For the religious, Simhachalam and Annaram temples are an attraction; while the Araku Valley with its undulating hills, ravines and gorges dotted with tribal settlements takes us to another world. “We will have a number of fun sessions along with opportunities to learn together and network,” said Shoba.

RI President Shekhar Mehta released the Visakha Vista logo, launched its website and URL to facilitate online registration. Clad in traditional *veshti* (dhoti), *angavastram* and pleated sarees, the members of the organising committee led by Kotbagi and Kishore Kumar danced to a hit Telugu number.

Picture by K Vishwanathan

## Visakha Vista 22 Committee

RI President Shekhar Mehta  
(Advisor)

RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi  
(Convener)

RI Director AS Venkatesh  
(Co-Convener)

PDG Ch Kishore Kumar  
(Chairman)

PRID Kamal Sanghvi  
(Counsellor)

PDG Ravi Vadlamani  
(Counsellor)



# DGE spouses' training session

Kiran Zehra

**B**eauty with brains is a rare find but I am glad to see an entire room of beautiful ladies who have undoubtedly used their mind, heart and soul to support their partners to make them who they are today. But the journey has just started and as a Rotarian's spouse you have a lot more to do," said Vinita, spouse of RID AS Venkatesh, at the spouses session at the Mahabs 21 institute.

She asked them not to miss any opportunity to meet their counterparts from around the world. "This is once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get to know the culture and traditions of diverse people," said Amita, spouse of RID Mahesh Kotbagi. "Rotary opens opportunities for you. Make sure you participate in all the IA events in Orlando, US." The spouses of DGEs were engaged in a day-long interaction and activities to understand the presidential theme and priorities, their role, and how they could add value to their district conference using the lessons learnt at the International Assembly (IA). "A strong positive

self-image is the best preparation for the IA," said Vidya, spouse of PDG TN Subramanian, RID 3141. She urged them to read the DGE's Partner Notebook that "gives information and details about all the things you have to know about the IA." For those who find it difficult to interact in English, "nothing is embarrassing about it. Get help from someone in your team who understands and can interact in English." The purpose of the IA, Vidya stressed, was "to impart knowledge and skills to support your spouse." She also shared some valuable tips on travelling light, grooming and etiquette.

It is better to carry simple gifts to exchange at the spouses' counter at the IA. "Discuss with the current DGs' spouses in your district to get a better idea," she said. Apart from it being an "excellent opportunity" to meet and interact with the 540 DGEs and their spouses from across 170 countries, "you will have a great chance to talk to them about your district projects. So, carry a brochure. Sometimes these

chance meetings could turn into a good opportunity for global grants," said Sharmishtha, spouse of PRID Manoj Desai. "You are lucky that you have a training programme and can learn. So, make use of the opportunity," she said.

Madhavi, wife of RID Bharat Pandya, said "you will need ten hands to participate proactively in all your district activities while taking care of your health and well-being." She recalled her experience as a DGN spouse "when I was given charge of food packaging for volunteers at a polio vaccination drive in a slum. I went around ensuring that every child got a dose while the spouses did their job gracefully." She asked the spouses to read about different RI and TRF programmes.

Raji, wife of PDG Ravi Vadlamani; Roopa, wife of PDG Sameer Hariani; Anu Narang, wife of PDG Sandeep Narang; and Meera, wife of PDG John Daniel also gave valuable tips to the partners on etiquette, cultural norms and traditions, planning and developing communication skills. ■

**Spouses of DGEs with resource persons Vinita Venkatesh, Sharmishtha Desai, Madhavi Pandya and Amita Kotbagi.**



# RC Madras North to the rescue of Chennai flood victims

Rasheeda Bhagat

In December, when Chennai city was devastated by unprecedented monsoon rains, and thousands of families were displaced, with many people losing their livelihoods, Rotarians from different parts of the country and outside India contributed generously to provide necessary support such as food and dry ration supplies and other relief measures to the affected

families, says PDG G Olivannan.

He says only on one day in November, Chennai city recorded the highest ever rainfall for a single day in 100 years, and this resulted in several low-lying areas getting submerged in water. The most affected and devastated were the poor and the marginalised living in these areas.

He said as the Tamil Nadu government reached

out to NGOs for help, “the RC Madras North Charitable Trust sprung into action and just within a week, our club mobilised a sum of about ₹10 lakh to help those less fortunate around us.” This happened when one of his publications was released by Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin. “As we came out of his room, some of the government officers reached out to me and said that the

government is dealing with a grim situation in providing relief for the flood-affected in Chennai and sought our help as a voluntary organisation,” said Olivannan.

As he got into his car, he got a call from the local MLA asking Rotary to partner with the government in providing flood-relief material to the affected citizens. “As RI President Shekhar Mehta keeps saying, now both the central and state governments are asking Rotary for help and support in community service and we are always ready to partner with the government,” he adds.

To begin with 5,000 food packets were distributed to people who had no means to support themselves. Subsequently 1,700 ration kits comprising rice, wheat, rava, sugar, oil, tea etc, were distributed at eight different locations. “The total value of the project came to around ₹10 lakh, the money we had collected. Apart from Rotarians, many non-Rotarians also contributed substantially and helped Rotarians to undertake this project.”



PDG G Olivannan distributing flood relief material in the presence of RC Madras North president John Frederick.

As always, club members not only personally supervised the nitty-gritty of the project, but themselves visited the water-logged areas to distribute the relief material to ensure that a wide number of deserving beneficiaries get the ration kits. Club president John Frederick, secretary Julian, Rotarians Shabeer, Banumurthy, Duraipandian, Venkatesh, Joseph, Mary Amudha, Jayaprakash, Kumar Rajendran and others were present at various distribution points and personally handed over the kits.

Three volunteers Vikram, Hemavathy and Ashok who have been relentlessly working for their local communities during such natural

disasters, helped Rotary North to identify the beneficiaries. The two sitting MLAs Paranthaman and Dr Ezhilan (who is also a Rotarian and Foundation alumni) sought the support of Rotary to reach out to the deserving people in their respective constituencies.

Olivannan added that the project not only delivered timely help to the badly affected needy people but helped enormously to boost the public image of Rotary as the Rotarians' voluntary work got good traction in the local media. Asked about any further help for the flood victims, he said now the situation was much better. "But we do have some money left and are always ready

to help if the government wants a partnership."

### **₹150 crore project during Covid**

RC Madras North was also the club that played a phenomenal role during the worst part of the Covid pandemic, and when the entire country was reeling under oxygen shortage, particularly during the second wave, it distributed oxygen concentrators and cylinders worth ₹150 crore to government and trust hospitals across the country.

Giving details, Olivannan said that there is an organisation called ACT registered in India which helps during disaster management and crisis and its donations come from all over the world. As India

faced acute shortage of oxygen cylinders during Covid, "they were able to procure oxygen concentrators and cylinders worth ₹150 crore," but did not have the wherewithal to identify the beneficiaries and reach this equipment to them. "One of their key persons in the US is a close friend of my (immediate past) club president and when he contacted him, the president reached out to me, and as they wanted to reach the equipment to hospitals across India. I talked to RI President Mehta, and the logistics were worked out. Of the oxygen concentrators and cylinders distributed, equipment worth ₹23 crore came to Tamil Nadu," he added. ■

## **A medical camp for tribals near Pune**

### **Team Rotary News**

**R**C Pune Sports City, RID 3131, organised a medical checkup and treatment camp at Tav, a remote village on the banks of the backwaters of the Panshet Dam near Pune. Club members Dr Madhav Kankawale and Dr Rajesh Pawar led the camp that helped screen and treat 180 tribal people. The screening included mammography and Pap smear tests besides all other routine



check-ups. Spectacles sponsored by club member Brij Sethi were provided to 80 people with vision defects and 21 villagers with cataract were treated a week after the camp. "Almost all the

people were found to have vitamin deficiency and 80 people were anaemic. So we distributed multi-vitamin tonics and tablets too," said club president Kiran Rao. ■



### Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs	:	37,049
Rotaract clubs	:	10,778
Interact clubs	:	16,872
RCCs	:	11,917
Rotary members	:	1,201,314
Rotaract members	:	232,273
Interact members	:	388,102

*As on December 16, 2021*

### Membership Summary

As on December 1, 2021

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	132	6,152	7.53	46	52	238
2982	76	3,563	7.33	47	98	73
3000	137	5,455	9.09	92	259	213
3011	125	4,654	26.99	72	118	36
3012	137	4,135	26.96	65	77	61
3020	77	4,772	7.33	30	166	350
3030	96	5,162	15.19	118	245	359
3040	102	2,604	14.52	54	81	196
3053	71	2,831	18.47	34	49	118
3054	184	7,469	20.34	104	177	563
3060	110	5,165	15.00	62	71	146
3070	124	3,305	15.67	46	36	59
3080	98	4,161	13.31	136	159	115
3090	90	2,313	5.58	39	72	123
3100	106	2,395	11.15	10	21	146
3110	137	3,739	11.53	14	17	106
3120	90	3,671	16.34	62	32	55
3131	140	5,566	23.75	109	232	131
3132	90	3,618	10.95	31	122	166
3141	117	6,463	26.95	137	184	102
3142	102	3,798	20.88	79	143	80
3150	115	4,311	13.55	76	138	118
3160	78	2,640	8.79	29	20	82
3170	139	6,335	14.87	83	241	169
3181	87	3,510	8.80	33	194	115
3182	85	3,500	9.54	42	124	104
3190	161	6,752	18.45	159	206	70
3201	153	6,022	9.45	105	93	66
3203	93	4,796	7.96	74	233	36
3204	62	2,071	6.37	21	24	13
3211	146	4,870	7.82	7	24	133
3212	143	5,284	12.87	75	204	153
3231	99	3,760	8.46	28	81	419
3232	154	7,562	17.32	116	212	99
3240	102	3,576	15.94	62	405	216
3250	108	4,017	19.89	63	73	185
3261	92	3,237	18.13	15	24	44
3262	123	4,137	14.58	69	73	101
3291	168	4,272	23.08	133	95	647
<b>India Total</b>	<b>4,449</b>	<b>171,643</b>		<b>2,577</b>	<b>4,875</b>	<b>6,206</b>
3220	76	2,391	16.39	88	131	75
3271	130	2,253	17.53	92	185	25
3272	161	1,961	17.13	70	22	47
3281	311	8,413	18.28	264	148	208
3282	179	3,991	11.55	197	47	47
3292	153	6,062	17.30	169	129	128
<b>S Asia Total</b>	<b>5,459</b>	<b>196,714</b>		<b>3,457</b>	<b>5,537</b>	<b>6,736</b>

Source: RI South Asia Office

# RC Dharwad turns 80

Kiran Zehra

I am happy to see that your club is working on projects that are close to my heart. My focus is on empowering girls and ensuring they have access to education, resources, services, and opportunities so that they have the tools they need to thrive. I am happy to be a part of this meaningful celebration,” said RI President Shekhar Mehta, participating in the 80<sup>th</sup> charter celebrations of RC Dharwad, RID 3170, along with RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi. Mehta interacted with 26 girls whose education are to be sponsored by the club as part of their milestone year commemoration. The club will pay the school fees, and provide uniforms, school bags, shoes and stationery kits to these girls until they finish higher secondary education, said club president Vijaykumar Kattimani.

Kotbagi inducted five new members to the 60-member strong club and felicitated the Major Donors and others who made generous donations to TRF.

Kattimani donated an acre of land for the construction of a new campus for the Paul Harris Memorial Rotary English



RI President Shekhar Mehta interacts with school students in Dharwad in the presence of DG Gaurish Dhond, RID Mahesh Kotbagi, Amita, club president Vijaykumar Kattimani and PDG Ravi Deshpande.

Medium School run by the club since 1982. It has 492 students now. The club will also be transforming the Government Higher Primary School into a Happy School during the year.

Thanking the club president for his “timely and valuable gift of land,” PDG Ravi Deshpande, chairman of the Paul Harris Memorial School said, “We started this school with a hope to provide quality education to underprivileged children and make them stand at par with private school students. Today our school with state-of-the-art classrooms, qualified teaching and non-teaching staff, and

other facilities is one of the best schools in Dharwad with admissions open to everyone. You cannot tell a poor student from the rest of the students and we are proud of this achievement.”

DG Gaurish Dhond lauded the club for its various humanitarian projects.

RC Dharwad, sponsored by RC Bangalore in 1940, is the first club to be chartered in RID 3170, and the second in Karnataka. It has sponsored 11 Rotary, 12 Interact clubs and one Probus club so far. Some of its noteworthy projects include setting up a patient’s ward, neonatal ICU, and drinking water

storage tank facility at the Civil Hospital, Dharwad; upgrading the maternity ward at the corporation hospital; expanding infrastructure in crematoriums in and around Dharwad; providing an X-ray machine for the Lourdes Hospital; and providing borewells, drinking water facilities, furniture and computers to schools; The club plans to set up a breastfeeding centre at a bus terminus in the town.

Immediate past president AC Tahshildar was the chairman of the event and PDG Dr Rajan Deshpande and PDG Ravi N Deshpande were the conveners. ■

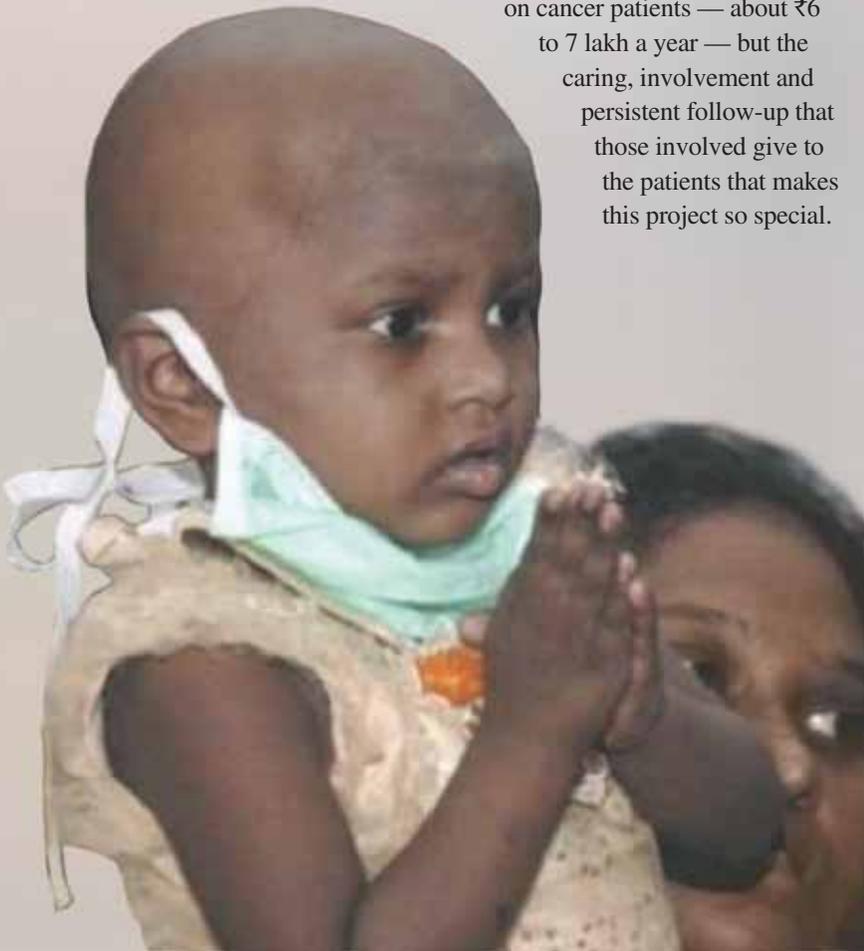
# Combating cancer with a humane touch

Rasheeda Bhagat

**H**e is almost in tears when I ask him to describe his personal involvement in the Rotary Cancer Research Foundation run by his club, Rotary Club of Madras Midtown, RID 3232. This is a signature project of the club that had seen close involvement of the club's stalwarts such as the late

Habibullah Badsha and Kailashmal Dugar, who was president in 1995 when the project was started. The same year Dr CS Ramachandran, also a member of the club, was the district governor.

Its present managing trustee Shankar Duraiswamy, while giving me details about the project takes pains to explain that it's not so much the money that this foundation spends on cancer patients — about ₹6 to 7 lakh a year — but the caring, involvement and persistent follow-up that those involved give to the patients that makes this project so special.



He explains that the foundation was “started with the objective of giving financial help to poor people afflicted with cancer to undergo treatment. It was decided that those patients who opt to go for high-cost treatment will not be helped by us. We will help only those who choose low-cost treatment options, government hospitals and the Cancer Institute, Adyar, Chennai, and that too only to the extent possible,” he says.

In the 1990s, the cost of medical treatment was comparatively low, and the ceiling for each patient was ₹50,000 for chemotherapy and ₹1 lakh for surgery, a substantial sum in those days. The treatment was done mostly at the Cancer Institute. “The foundation was mostly funded by our club members; PP Badshah was very active and through his contacts collected a lot of the funding. This foundation mostly had non-Rotarians as trustees; one of the first trustees was Dr PC Reddy, chairman of Apollo Hospitals. While six trustees were from RC Madras Midtown, other five were non-Rotarians. Till he passed away in 2017, Habibullah Badshah was the managing trustee, the post now occupied by Duraiswamy.

Though initially this cancer foundation provided only funds for medical treatment, gradually it

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It's not the money that this foundation spends on cancer patients but the caring, involvement and persistent follow-up that those involved give to the patients that makes this project so special.

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Rotary has the strength and commitment to do this on a large scale as you can take it to every part of India after the initial trial programme.

**Dr V Shanta**

Late Director  
Cancer Institute, Chennai

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started providing post-treatment nutrition and other support as well. Till date it has touched the lives of and helped around 700 cancer patients.

Duraiswamy, who was earlier a Rotarian in Indonesia and Malaysia, joined RC Madras Midtown in 2013, and he and his wife, who had worked on similar projects outside India, got involved in the foundation's work.

I ask him to give me an anecdote which illustrates how more than the money, the personal involvement and caring of the trustees and other Rotarians sets this facility apart from other medical organisations.

**A**lmost choking on his words, he relates the case of Syed, a 17-year-old youth who had fourth stage, terminal bone cancer. "The doctors treating him said we have done our utmost to help him, now only the powers above can help further. Syed came from a poor family, and had lost his father. I met him in 2018, and he had been under

## An angel called Dr Shanta

Shankar Duraiswamy has no words to describe the kind of care and passionate involvement the late director of the Cancer Institute in Chennai, Dr V Shanta, displayed for cancer patients. A chance meeting with the administrator of the children ward of the Cancer Institute, where most of the children came from rural areas and places outside Chennai, made him determined to help these children. "We found here children happily running around, as they seldom understand the impact of cancer ravaging their little bodies. But their caretakers, mostly mothers and grandmothers, would be moving around with concern and worry." To engage the children is a big task and the Rotarians decided to do something beyond giving financial assistance. Ann Lalitha, from RC Madras Midtown, is passionate about arts and crafts and she engaged the children twice every week in lessons in drawing and crafts like Origami, with the Rotarians providing the books and other material.

In 2018, "we got an invite from Dr Shanta to meet her. A simple and smiling lady, she appreciated the work we did for the children, which included providing post-treatment food supplements and medicines when needed. When I explained to her our work, she suggested that we should conduct screening for children suffering from leukaemia and explained to us that if detected

early, the chances of cure in such children is 100 per cent," explains Duraiswamy.

This Rotarian will never forget Dr Shanta's kind words for Rotary. "She said Rotary is one organisation which has the strength and commitment to do this on a large scale as you can take it to every part of India after the initial trial programme. She had been talking to foundations run by big corporates including Infosys, but she said 'I prefer Rotary compared to anybody else, because I know you will do it as a trial and if successful will take it around the country. I have seen Rotary's work in polio eradication and would strongly urge you to take up the challenge for cancer screening too.'" In 2020 she passed away, but the foundation is committed to keeping the promise it gave her.

On future plans, Duraiswamy says the trustees now want to concentrate more on screening for cancer, especially for children, because if we catch them early, the chances of complete cure are much better. "We are working with an NGO Penn Nalam (which translates to women's wellness), which has a screening bus with a mammography machine. Now our own Rotary district (3232) is coming up with a bus, our DGE Dr Nandakumar is working on that project and our club is going to partner in it, as detection through screening has to be followed up with treatment."

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The mother-in-law was convinced that if strangers knowing her health status could do this, cancer could not be a contagious disease. Thus, the mother and her child were literally reunited.

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treatment for cancer for four years.” The administrator of the cancer ward which had been treating the young lad called Duraiswamy, who runs a business in manufacturing organic bio fertilisers, and said: “Uncle, his treatment is complete and there is nothing more we can do, but can you help him through some counselling? By that time I had started counselling. He came on a motorcycle to meet me, and was so cheerful and full of beans that I was simply floored. He said I am having pain but I am managing.”

He told the Rotarian that his father had passed away six months earlier and his sister was going to be married the following year; “I want to earn something and give the money to her. Can you find me some kind of work? He was very good at languages. So I said I will get you a tablet, and teach you how to use it for the work I will assign you. You can work from home, and I will pay you ₹10,000 every month. He was very happy.” Duraiswamy visited the youngster’s home, met his mother and sister and promised to return the next week. After a week the administrator thanked him for making the cancer survivor so happy, but unfortunately, within two weeks Syed’s health took a turn for the worse and he passed away. Controlling his tears the Rotarian adds: “But I am happy I made him

happy, and our cancer foundation helped in doing that.”

Last year his mother invited him for Syed’s sister’s marriage and even sent him a picture of the child born to her after a year.

### Special connections

He is most happy about the kind of connections this work allows him to make, and helps to get rid of grave misconceptions about cancer, including the one where people think cancer is contagious. A case he remembers is about 4-year-old Dhaniya, whose mother was suffering from cancer of the lungs. “The mother-in-law was preventing the child from playing with the mother. And the husband was unable to do anything about it.” Duraiswamy took a psychologist with him, visited the family and they freely interacted with the cancer patient. The mother-in-law was convinced that if strangers knowing her health status could do this, cancer could not be a contagious disease. Thus, the mother and her child were literally reunited.

**D**uraiswamy is all praise for two institutions that provide cancer care in Chennai. One of the best hospitals for cancer is the

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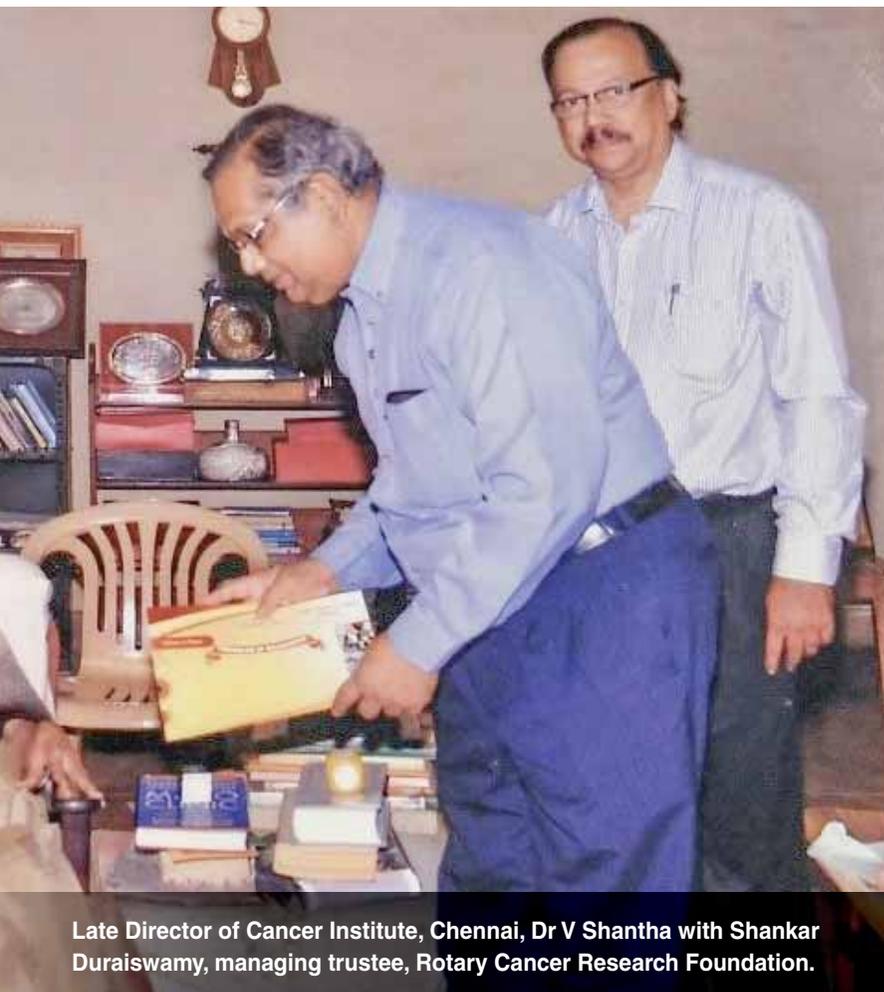
The patient needed medicines worth ₹2,000 a day. Royapettah Hospital helped us reach the manufacturers, we talked to them and are able to get the medicines at ₹8,000 a month.

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Government Royapettah General Hospital which has a dedicated cancer block “with such caring health professionals... I would rate it as one of the best cancer treatment facilities in India. Dr Subbiah is the head; in any private health centre, he can easily earn several lakhs of rupees a month. We send a lot of people there for treatment which is of course free, but we provide food and counselling and even medicines, when required and work very closely with those undergoing treatment there.”

Giving an example of how proactive the Royapettah Hospital staff are in helping cancer patients, he says that recently a cancer case



Late Director of Cancer Institute, Chennai, Dr V Shantha with Shankar Duraiswamy, managing trustee, Rotary Cancer Research Foundation.

was referred to them through RC Thanjavur Cosmos. The patient did not have a job and needed medicines worth ₹2,000 a day. The club also could not support him; Royapettah Hospital helped us reach the manufacturers, we talked to them and are able to get the medicines at ₹8,000 a month. The patient, who lives in Thanjavur, is Jennifer: she also needed help with her children's education, and we helped with that as well."

Next Jennifer requested the foundation to get her a job; "she said if you find me a job and I start earning, I can pay ₹8,000 for my medicine and you can help somebody

else. So that is the way goodness spreads." The Rotarians helped her get a job as a collection agent for a microfinance company and she is doing well.

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The project is now facing a financial crisis; it has a corpus of ₹48 lakh but with interest rates coming down, the trustees are struggling for funds, as the donations in the last two years have dropped.

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If you find me a job and I start earning, I can pay ₹8,000 for my medicine and you can help somebody else.

**Jennifer, a patient**

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**W**hat I like most about this project is not so much the money that the Rotarians give, but the caring, affection, handholding and giving confidence to cancer patients to stand on their own feet through counselling, boosting self-esteem, and spending time with them because after dealing with a malady like cancer people are both petrified and also depressed.

"This is a signature project of our club and several of our club members are involved and help out, and yet is independent of a particular year's club's leadership," says Duraiswamy. It also works on other Rotary clubs referring patients. "When a patient is referred by a club we ask them how much will you give, and match that amount to help the cancer patient."

But the project is now facing a financial crisis; it has a corpus of ₹48 lakh but with interest rates coming down, the trustees are struggling for funds, as the donations in the last two years have dropped.

He appeals to Rotarians and other philanthropists to join the cancer foundation's scheme called patron donors, under which the donors need to give only ₹25,000 a year for 12 years. Already 12 people have signed up, but more are required. ■



Barnwal's name on the radio inspired paan shop owner Ganga Prasad Magadhiya and electronics shop owner Nandlal Sinha to similarly mail a large number of song requests. The growing fame of these three led to the emergence of a song-request fad among the people of the town. Young listeners from the town would compete among themselves to send out the most song requests. Subsequently, other towns also started competing with Jhumari Telaiya by sending out a large number of song requests. In the



1980s, a radio listeners' club was formed in the town.

I cherish the memory of listening to some of the most famous songs of all time based on classical music songs like *Man tarpat Hari darshan ko aaj*, *Poocho na kaise maine rayn bitayi*, *Jyoti kalash chhalke*, *Manmohana bade jhoote*, *Madhuban me Radhika nache re*, or *Zindagi bhar nahin bhulegi yeh barsaat ki raat*, each one a blockbuster — but

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I have in mind little gems that have stood the test of time, gems that I would probably never have come across but for *Vividh Bharati*.

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also other melodies that did not quite hit the jackpot in box office terms, yet touched a chord with a whole generation of listeners.

I have in mind little gems that have stood the test of time, gems that I would probably never have come across but for *Vividh Bharati*. Of course, *O sajana* of *Parakh* belongs to the first category of all-time favourites, but the other Lata Mangeshkar beauty from the same film, *Mila hai kisika jhumka*, is a typical Salil Chaudhuri charmer, whose first acquaintance I owe to some anonymous listener from Ajmer or Sriganganagar.

*Jaoon kahan bata ae dil* from *Chhoti Bahen* is a subtly poignant Mukesh-Shanker Jaikishen composition whose music director I for long erroneously believed to be Sardar Malik, the creator of the haunting Mukesh melodies *Saranga teri yaad mein* and *Haan deevana hun main*,





was unaffected if touchingly naïve, with at least one moment of delicious nonchalance when the poet swaggers away on hearing a wandering mendicant sing praise of the incomparable Ghalib, though he does not recognise him:

*Hai aur bhi duniya men  
sukhanvar bahut acchey  
Kahten hain ke Ghalib ka  
hai andazen bayan aur*  
(There are doubtless many  
good poets in this world  
But Ghalib has a unique  
style all his own, they say)

An extreme case of a complete ham getting to ‘sing’ some of the greatest songs in Hindi cinema was Pradeep Kumar, the star of movies featuring some unforgettable melodies by music director Roshan, with *Man re tu kahe na dheer dhare* from *Chitraklekha*, my personal favourite among that composer’s delightfully original numbers based on classical ragas.




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The trend started in the early 1950s, when mica businessman Rameshwar Prasad Barnwal started mailing 20 to 25 song requests to Radio Ceylon daily.

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While Naushad’s were probably the creations I most frequently heard on these wonderful broadcasts on *Vividh Bharati* — not to mention *Jai Mala* for India’s jawans, and the Urdu programme of Akashvani relayed at 3pm or so — Sachin Dev Burman was never far behind, while Madan Mohan, C Ramachandra, Jaidev, Roshan, Chitragupt, Ghulam Mohammed, Ravi, and Shanker-Jaikishen kept you in constant supply of delightful compositions, each composer affixing his trademark touch to his songs.

And Khayyam! Was there ever a more completely original music director? Particularly engaging was his use of Punjabi

folk, Pahadi dhun and ghazals. It was thanks to *Vividh Bharati* that I first heard that priceless Rafi-Suman Kalyanpur duet *Thehariye hosh men aa loon* that Khayyam composed for the film *Mohabbat isko kahten hain*. His Pahadi delights included Lata Mangeshkar’s *Baharon mera jeevan bhi savaaro* from *Akhari Khat* and his wife Jagjit Kaur’s *Tum apna ranj-o-gham* from *Shagun*, not to mention the title song from *Kabhi Kabhi*, sung by Mukesh.

Thank you, the *rasikas* of Jhumritalaiya, for your exquisite taste in film music and diehard devotion to the cause of making great Hindi songs available to millions of Indian listeners for decades — until, at first, television swamped us, and later, Youtube and technology came to bring us our *farmaish* at a mouse click or a mere mobile phone swipe.

*The writer is an author and former editor of Sruti magazine.*

Designed by  
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RC Aligarh City, RID 3110

## A mega training programme for teachers

In a major initiative, his district has entered into an MoU with the RILM and Tech Mahindra to train 6,150 teachers from government schools. “The training will help the beneficiaries to upgrade their teaching skills to benefit students. So far, we have given 500 Nation Builder Awards to teachers from parts of Uttarakhand and UP and more such awards are in the offing,” says Mukesh Singhal. The district clubs will be implementing 30 Happy Schools through a mix of GGs, district grants and member contributions.

He plans to add 1,000 new members to take the total to 4,400-plus Rotarians by this Rotary yearend. “I have already inducted 280 new Rotarians till now. We will add 10 new clubs to take the total number to 150.” A GG application for about ₹57 lakh is under process for installing a Phaco machine for cataract surgeries at the Rotary Hospital, Firozabad. He is planning a series of medical camps across the district for around 50,000 out-patients. For TRF giving, his target is \$200,000.

Back in 2000, “I was forced to join Rotary by my friend Pankaj Agarwal, a former Rotarian. But after witnessing a mega polio camp, my mindset changed and I began to get involved in community projects,” says Singhal. In his personal capacity, he has conducted 40 polio immunisation camps with the support of the CMO, Aligarh. But he has one concern. “We are adding new members at great speed without checking their credentials, but have to take care there is no dilution in the quality of Rotarians.”



**Samar Raj Garg**  
Auto ancillary, RC Greater Lucknow, RID 3120

## Empowering girls, adult literacy are his thrust areas

One sure way to increase Rotary’s membership is to strengthen business networking and boost fellowship among Rotarians, says Samar Garg. After becoming a Rotaractor in 1989, he was inspired by his father, Rtn Sajjan Kumar Garg and joined Rotary in 1998. “My father shaped my ideas and attitudes.”

He plans to add 500 new Rotarians taking district membership to around 3,900 by the year-end. Six new clubs have been already formed and four more are being chartered, taking the total to 94. He is aiming to form 10 new Rotaract clubs and add 100-plus Rotaractors to take the total to 600-plus by June-end. “But it will be difficult to retain new Rotaractors as they have to pay annual dues from next year: \$5 per head for institution-based clubs and \$8 per head for community clubs,” he says.

So far, 100 workshops on self-defence techniques for girls have been organised by the clubs. “We are working on a GG for donating bicycles to schoolgirls in rural areas. Empowering girls and adult literacy are our focus areas for which we are doing a number of projects,” says Garg. The district has conducted over 50 workshops for adult learners in slum colonies by tying up with NGOs and college students in eastern and western UP. “Fifty more adult literacy sessions will be held in the coming months.” The target for TRF giving is \$200,000. Another priority area is preventive healthcare and 15 general health camps were held in rural and urban clusters. Another 35 such camps are planned.

# Governors

V Muthukumar



**Dr Mayuresh Warke**  
Surgeon, RC Ambarnath, RID 3142

## Great scope for Rotary's growth

Rotary is poised for explosive growth in RID 3142 (Thane and Navi Mumbai) in terms of membership, projects and TRF giving, says Dr Mayuresh Warke. "He is confident of a net membership growth of 1,000, taking the total number to over 4,300 by June-end."

To support PKC Hospital, Navi Mumbai, in its charitable work, three dialysis machines (₹21 lakh) were donated, funded by a corporate and two Rotarians from RC New Bombay Seaside. Three more dialysis machines will be added at the Shree Mahavir Jain Hospital, Thane, which has six units. An artificial foot (Jaipur foot) and caliper camp at the Rotary Divyang Centre saw around 50 beneficiaries getting a life of dignity. The centre hosts limb fitment camps regularly.

A Rotary Health Centre costing ₹10 lakh set up at Dombivli is offering dental, eye check-up and general healthcare. An Otoacoustic Emission unit (₹12–13 lakh) to detect hearing disabilities was installed at the Shahpur GH. For the last 20 years, the district is holding special camps for musculoskeletal deformity surgeries. "We have done 5,000 corrective surgeries till now, but Covid prevented this initiative. However, a mega camp at Sastur village in Osmanabad district will be held in Feb-March," he says. His target for TRF giving is \$500,000. Warke joined Rotary in 2000 inspired by former Rotarian Sunil Kavathe. "My role model is late Rtn Dr Joy Patankar who influenced me a lot." He is a recipient of the Service Above Self Award from RI President Ron Burton.



**Pratim Banerjee**  
Industrial management  
RC Jamshedpur West, RID 3250

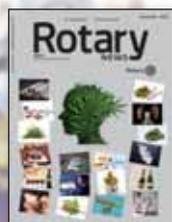
## Focus on Happy Schools, PPH

Happy Schools and Project Positive Health (PPH) camps are the most favourite projects of clubs in Bihar and Jharkhand comprising this district. "At least 250 PPH camps have been done so far, while 60–70 Happy Schools projects are in various stages of implementation. The latter is funded by member contributions," says Pratim Banerjee. He has added so far 400 new members, and is aiming to induct another 400, taking the district membership to 4,800-plus by June 30. "Six new clubs have been formed, we will add 4–5, and take the total to 112 clubs in the next few months." A blood bank (GG: ₹85–90 lakh) was set up at the Mahavir Vaatsalya Aspatal, Patna, recently.

Two dialysis centres will be set up at private nursing homes in Biharsharif and Muzaffarpur through global grants. In an ambitious project, safe drinking water facility will be set up at government schools, public health centres, public spaces such as railway stations, bus stands and community halls through district funds. "I have directed the clubs to take up at least one or two drinking water project this year. The project involves a storage tank with filtration devices to provide clean drinking water," he explains.

His target for TRF giving is \$300,000. Inspired by his school friend Rtn Rajiv Talwal, he joined Rotary in 2006. "My Rotary ideology was shaped by late Rtn Kanwal Midha from whom I learnt many valuable things in life." Banerjee has tweaked RI President Mehta's pet slogan *Do more, Grow more* into *Do more, Give more* to motivate Rotarians.

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## District Wise TRF Contributions as on November 2021

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contributions
<b>India</b>					
2981	71,727	1,044	0	151,814	224,585
2982	27,143	5,633	0	2,449	35,225
3000	3,630	11	0	3,311	6,951
3011	7,622	3,672	0	81,879	93,174
3012	19,993	3,811	25,041	228,613	277,458
3020	33,551	5,955	22,596	4,620	66,721
3030	18,732	267	22,027	10,067	51,093
3040	28,779	250	0	21,361	50,391
3053	3,052	311	27	0	3,390
3054	2,902	816	0	189,811	193,529
3060	38,082	1,201	0	74,982	114,264
3070	8,495	0	0	27,600	36,095
3080	7,966	4,086	0	6,018	18,070
3090	13,766	0	28,000	0	41,766
3100	17,320	0	0	2,484	19,803
3110	7,719	355	0	0	8,074
3120	46,899	1,000	0	0	47,899
3131	233,688	28,444	5,000	303,613	570,744
3132	20,340	1,169	5,000	9,619	36,129
3141	232,851	4,073	64,865	283,381	585,170
3142	195,484	1,654	8,145	24	205,307
3150	22,646	7,138	15,000	43,120	87,905
3160	17,803	2,387	17,264	0	37,454
3170	29,324	9,553	1,710	30,007	70,593
3181	9,627	4,031	0	0	13,658
3182	14,273	6,033	0	5,232	25,538
3190	108,993	11,888	30,411	0	151,291
3201	45,508	54,401	0	204,222	304,130
3203	16,333	16,223	6,086	145,938	184,579
3204	2,191	422	0	1,036	3,649
3211	14,880	280	0	15,463	30,623
3212	13,428	1,575	1,036	588	16,627
3231	7,811	7,679	0	2,851	18,341
3232	40,144	51,564	31,601	234,855	358,164
3240	33,750	11,373	0	63,379	108,502
3250	9,132	2,737	1,036	15,118	28,023
3261	4,415	304	0	30,854	35,573
3262	2,812	431	0	0	3,242
3291	69,309	1,751	11,171	10,936	93,166
<b>India Total</b>	<b>1,502,120</b>	<b>253,519</b>	<b>296,014</b>	<b>2,205,243</b>	<b>4,256,896</b>
3220	Sri Lanka	34,911	6,393	1,510	43,814
3271	Pakistan	3,342	316	0	9,648
3272	Pakistan	16,732	10,623	0	29,472
3281	Bangladesh	33,333	4,121	13,000	148,347
3282	Bangladesh	25,608	4,506	1,000	31,615
3292	Nepal	49,285	5,698	0	137,330
<b>South Asia Total</b>	<b>1,665,330</b>	<b>285,175</b>	<b>311,524</b>	<b>2,395,091</b>	<b>4,657,121</b>
<b>World Total</b>	<b>45,290,466</b>	<b>11,056,190</b>	<b>19,773,816</b>	<b>7,477,848</b>	<b>83,598,320</b>

Annual Fund (AF) includes SHARE, Areas of Focus, World Fund and Disaster Response.  
Source: RI South Asia Office.

# RI President meets District 3232 club presidents

## Team Rotary News



Grabbing the opportunity provided by the Mahabs 21 zone institute, RID 3232 DG J Sridhar hosted an event to enable his club presidents to meet RI President Shekhar Mehta in Chennai. The event was attended by RI director A S Venkatesh, TRF Trustee Aziz Memon, PDGs, the “changemaker” presidents and their spouses.

“Despite a long day of over 13 hours of back-to-back visits to projects and clubs across District

3232, President Shekhar delivered an inspirational address to make the event a grand and memorable evening. The District Annettes Council presented a splendid invocation dance curated specially for the RI president,” said Sridhar.

The DG, who is recovering from a surgery after a recent fall, welcomed the gathering, DGN Ravi Raman and DGND NS Saravanan participated.

DG Sridhar announced that he had created a

sustainable proactive process for RID 3232 to set up a comprehensive disaster management process in Chennai under the chairmanship of Rtn Haricharan. A disaster management manual was released by President Mehta, who urged the presidents to make full use of their leadership positions to grow Rotary and do meaningful and big service projects.

District counsellor PDG Abirami Ramanathan

presented a report on the impact of the Kuilkuppam village project by RC Madras Central along with over 40 clubs of RID 3232, which is creating a huge impact on the members of the Irular tribe — snake charmers — who have been displaced after a recent policy change.

The project transforms lives by giving tribals access to quality shelter, better education for their children and livelihood opportunities.

DRFC Ambalavanan presented a cheque to President Mehta for \$30,000 for the RI President Shekar Mehta and Rashi Mehta Endowment Fund, and thanked the Rotarians who had contributed. PDG JB Kamdar introduced the man of the moment — RI President Shekhar Mehta. District RYLA chair Vidya Ragu was the master of ceremonies and district secretary R Ravi Shankar delivered a vote of thanks. ■



# Green Resolutions for New Year

Preeti Mehra



**T**he new year has just begun! And it is just the right time to draw up resolutions for 2022. Let us resolve to do our bit to keep the planet green. If each of us stick to our commitment, then collectively we could make a significant difference. In India it is the top 20 per cent of well-to-do households that generate the highest carbon emissions. A study by the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature last year revealed that high expenditure households produce seven times more emissions in comparison to low-expenditure households, defined as those who spend roughly less than ₹150 a day.

So, what are the promises to keep? First and foremost, resolve to follow the five 'R's to the maximum extent possible. This means recycle, reuse, repurpose, repair what is yours or belongs to your home. And refuse to get tempted into buying or storing things you don't really need. This will reduce your expenses as well.

So how do you go about putting the five 'Rs' into practice? Here are a few suggestions or tips:

Recycling can be a bit of a bother. But if you determinedly take ten minutes of your time every day to

segregate what you plan to throw away into aluminum, cardboard, paper, plastic, and glass, you will be doing the waste collector a big favour. It will also help the discarded items to go for recycling instead of landing up in the ever-growing piles in environmentally dangerous landfills.

Resolve not to discard what could be used by others. This would translate into giving away clothes to those who want them; paints, buntings, beads, one-side blank paper etc to a school or an activity group of young children who would use it creatively for their art or school projects. The easiest way is to start a second-hand corner in an empty spot in the colony and ask everyone to pitch in with what they plan to throw away. Leave it for people to freely pick up what they need. What's left can be periodically taken away by the *raddi-wallah* (waste collector).

Promise yourself not to accept a plastic bag while shopping. Resolve not to leave home without a reusable bag when you go to the market. There are many made of recycled material which fold small enough to fit into a pocket. An earth-friendly bag can also be kept permanently in the car or by the front door always handy to help you reduce use of plastic bags.



If you are the reading kind, decide to borrow or look for second-hand books, instead of buying new ones. Better still, join a neighbourhood library.

A pledge regarding water usage is very much in order. A firm refusal to buy bottled water is an important first step. Instead carry a reusable water bottle. To decrease your water footprint even further minimise water usage when bathing, washing hands, and always close the tap when brushing your teeth. You can, of course, make the biggest contribution to saving water by setting up a rainwater harvesting system at home or in the community that you live in.

There are many promises to keep when it comes to food. You must resolve to eat more locally grown seasonal fruits, vegetables and whole grains. It would be a healthy practice to avoid packaged processed foods. They are not only high on sugar, salt and preservatives but also contribute in a big way to lifestyle diseases. Instead, opt for locally grown organic foods which are free of pesticides and require less fossil fuel to be transported to the markets from distant places. Besides, you will be supporting small enterprises which help provide income and employment.

There is also another dimension to food that goes beyond consumption. Make a pledge to segregate kitchen waste to be used for composting. If you can compost yourself and transform it into nutrient-rich soil for your plants or garden, so much the better. You can also gift compost to friends who are unable to make some of their own. Developing a herbal corner is a good idea. You could pick fresh tulsi, basil, lemon grass, aloe vera from there. Some friends I know even grow spinach, green chillies and tomatoes in their balconies.

If you want to make a big change to the environment and yourself, resolve to walk short distances or cycle if it is possible. Avoid taking your car when you can easily walk the distance. The way you travel directly impacts the air quality of your city or town.

You may wonder why these resolutions are important? They are because India happens to be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases and accounts for 2.46 billion metric tonnes of carbon emissions. The average carbon footprint of each person in India is estimated at 0.56 tonne per year. The per capita for the poor is 0.19 tonne while for the rich it is an unenviable 1.32 tonne per head. According to the data analysis agency, *Indiaspend*, food and electricity account for majority of emissions across socioeconomic groups. Among affluent households, high emissions also come from private transport, durables and non-cereal food items.

So, at the end of the day, it is for all of us to make a difference. The privileged can set an example by consciously reducing their carbon footprint. That would indeed be a great beginning.

A very happy and greener New Year!

*The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues*

# Two Rotarians make RC Vapi proud

## Team Rotary News



Rtn Rajju Shroff receiving Padma Bhushan Award from President of India Ram Nath Kovind.

President of India Ram Nath Kovind presented Rajju Shroff, a member of RC Vapi, RID 3060, with the Padma Bhushan Award for his contribution to trade and industry. Shroff is the founder of United Phosphorus Limited (UPL), and he, along with his spouse Sandra, was

instrumental in establishing the first English medium school in Vapi, a chemical engineering college in Ankleshwar, a nursing school and a hospital in Vapi.

Kanu Mohanlal Desai, another member of RC Vapi, has been recently inducted in Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel's cabinet as a minister for finance, energy and petrochemicals. He serves as the director of corporate affairs with UPL and is a trustee of the Rotary Charitable Trust in Vapi. ■



Gujarat Finance Minister Kanu Mohanlal Desai

## From RI South Asia Office desk

### Expected timelines for shipping Recognitions from RISAO

It takes 3–4 weeks for processing and shipping of Paul Harris Fellow recognitions. In case of any special recognition of donor in Foundation Seminar or in district function, your request should reach us at least 15 days before the event. Major Donor recognition is processed at the RI Hq once we update engraving instructions and it takes 5–6 weeks' time to reach our office. Major Donor recognition is processed only on request. To download **Major Donor Recognition** request form click on link: [http://www.highroadsolution.com/file\\_uploader2/files/majordonor\\_recognition\\_form.docx](http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/majordonor_recognition_form.docx).

### Online contribution — points to remember

- **Debit card option** - While making online contribution through [www.Rotary.org](http://www.Rotary.org) or [www.rotary-foundationindia.org](http://www.rotary-foundationindia.org), along with credit card, members can also use **debit card** to make payment, using

the same link which says 'Credit Card'.

- **For online contribution**, use *My Rotary* login or your official email address to avoid duplicate ID generation and receive timely credit of your contribution.
- **Contribution from non-Rotarians** - When online contribution is made by a non-Rotarian from your club/district, request them to share the online confirmation number along with club details with RI South Asia Office at [risao@rotary.org](mailto:risao@rotary.org).

### Mandatory requirements for INR contributions to Rotary Foundation (India)

- ❖ Effective April 1, 2020, PAN must be provided for all contributions made online/offline towards RF(I), irrespective of value or the donor's intention to claim tax exemption under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961.

- ❖ Contribution credit and related 80G receipt can only be generated in the name of the remitter.
- ❖ For contribution made from self-owned/family-run Company/Trust account, donors must share the corporate/trust letter made on their letterhead mentioning their relationship with the entity and stating that the contribution be treated as their personal contribution.

### District Grants

District grant applications are due by **May 15**. All approved district grants must be paid by **May 31, 2022** or else the submitted or approved district grants will be cancelled.

District grant funds are not paid until previous open district grant is completely closed. Sign in to the Grant Center to see your application and check its status. District grant applications and reports are reviewed by South Asia Office staff. Please contact Roy John ([roy.john@rotary.org](mailto:roy.john@rotary.org)) at 011-42250146. ■

# Prosthetic limb fitment camp in Kolkata

## Kiran Zehra

RC Calcutta Chowringhee, RID 3291, organised an artificial limb fitment camp under the project *Uthe Sabke Kadam* (Feet for all). The mega camp, a global grant project, was held in partnership with four RI districts from Finland — RIDs 1385,1390,1410 and 1430; RC Calcutta Mayfair and Young Indians, a youth wing of the CII, at the Mahavir Seva Sadan, Kolkata.

DG Prabir Chatterjee inaugurated the camp in the presence of club president Vikram Tantia and Rotarians from RID 3291. “The project aims to rehabilitate amputees from the low-income group by fitting them with prosthetics, and providing vocational training and helping them to get livelihood support. In this way, the beneficiaries will re-engage in life activities,” says Tantia. The club is also focusing on disabled women and school-going children. “We ensured that 50 per cent of our beneficiaries were women and children.” When a woman is enabled, “she will take care of the entire family and if disabled children are given tools for

mobility, the idea of dropping out of school vanishes from their mind,” he says.

### Over 1,200 beneficiaries

Smiling with hope, 30-year-old Raju Khan, a beneficiary, says, “I can now go back to work at the local bakery and afford to send my children to school. I have been jobless since I lost my legs in a train accident in 2017.” Over 1,270 amputees were fitted with prosthetic legs at this camp. Volunteers from Mahavir Seva Sadan took care of the technical process of the limb fitment. “We were pleased to see the beneficiaries trying to walk and jog at the camp. The Jaipur foot will also help them take care of their daily chores,” says Tantia.

Vishnu Dhandhanian, past president of RC Belur, helped the project team to understand the nuances of a global grant and “put us in touch with the international partners. Erkki Pasanen of RC Leppavirta, RID 1430,

the global contact for this project, was instrumental in motivating Finnish clubs to join as partners in the limb fitment camp,” he adds. ■



DG Prabir Chatterjee (fifth from L) with club president Vikram Tantia (second from L), Rtn Vishnu Dhandhanian, PDGs Brojo Gopal Kundu and Shyamashree Sen at the inauguration of the limb fitment camp.

# Collaborative living

## Bharat and Shalan Savur

**T**here is something warm and magical about the word ‘collaborative’ — it holds the beauty of inter-being, heartwarming, kind, caring, wanting another’s happiness, being supportive. When I came across this wonderful parable, the word ‘collaborative’ sprang to my mind.

A large-hearted gentleman decided to spread goodwill and set off on his journey on foot. He walked all morning, enjoying the scenery, and reached a village in the afternoon. He knocked on the first door and asked the woman who opened it for something to eat. ‘I’m sorry,’ she said ruefully. ‘But I have no food in the house.’ It struck him that she did look gaunt and impoverished. And an idea came to him...

‘That’s all right,’ he said gently. ‘I have these special cubes in my pocket and if you will just put the cubes in a pot of boiling water, perhaps, we could share the most delicious soup in the world between us!’ A light sprang in her eyes. And she put a large pot of water on the fire. As it was warming up, he told his hostess, ‘Perhaps you could invite a few friends to enjoy this splendid soup with us!’ Quite overcome by his generosity, the woman ran out and told her neighbour about the special cubes and invited her over.

Word spread and the villagers assembled to watch as the traveller tasted the boiling water. ‘Mmm!’ he exclaimed. ‘It only needs some potatoes.’ ‘I have some,’ said one villager, hurrying out, and returned with a vessel full of nicely cubed potatoes. The traveller took them and gratefully added them to the pot. Enthused, another

villager got sliced onions, another got diced carrots, another brought a tureen of fresh, shelled green peas, a senior gave milk and cinnamon, another contributed salt and pepper. All were accepted with courtly grace and added gratefully to the boiling water.

After a while, the traveller tasted a drop and a smile of satisfaction crossed his face. ‘It’s ready!’ he exclaimed. ‘Everybody get a bowl and spoon and some bread if you like and taste this most wondrous meal! Come, let us feast and enjoy each other’s company!’ The villagers got their bowls and spoons and loaves of bread. They all ate and drank their fill, talking, laughing, enjoying the meal, revelling in one another’s company... And the traveller smiled. He too felt good at having so many friends. ‘It’s amazing!’ he thought, ‘But it appears to me that there are no strangers in this world!’

### Enhanced living

If you can look with a sense of fellowship into another’s eyes, you see an instant kindling and connection light up there like a flash of recognition. It’s as magical as the traveller’s special cubes. Even if we don’t know it, we are into collaborative living.

Anything we do for another is collaborative living. And anything we do for another with kindness and care is enhanced collaborative living. The act of living collaboration is not like a loaf of bread. If I share half a loaf with you, I have less to offer to others; whereas collaborative living is: I receive and offer wholesomeness and so do you and so does the next person and so on. Wholesomeness spreads

and multiplies and gets better as each one spontaneously adds their bit of kindness and caring to it just like the traveller’s soup.

### A healing team

That’s why it delighted me deeply to know that Dr Peter Van Houten practices collaborative medicine in his clinic — here, practitioners from multiple fields whether they be dentists, behaviour therapists, medical specialists, nurses, etc all work together as a healing team. If a patient has physical and mental problems, he or she accesses the desired treatments easily and the high-quality medical follow-through thereafter helps the patient not only to be cured but also healed.

The beautiful thing is that Dr Houten has added a deeper dimension to this wonderful medical collaborative



practice. It goes beyond being merely clinical. The medical staff builds a bond of friendship and respect with each patient. The patient is not 'told' to take the medicine or to stop a habit, but through the caring and explaining and patience of the medical team, understands and collaborates in getting well!

Dr Houten says, 'Because patients feel respected and heard, they often come up with a strategy that I also feel is the right one to take! Together, we come up with solutions in which the patient feels he or she is participating and using their own initiative.'

When communication and harmony are the watchwords, a passive sick bed turns into a humming communion of wellness. There's trust and a feeling of being heard and seen as an individual. It's a beautiful, mature medical approach — to tune into and share a patient's world that has gone topsy-turvy and help right it.

Interestingly, Dr Deepak Chopra had an awakening — if I may call it that — as a medical student when he gamely enrolled in a research experiment. Under the influence of LSD, a

psychedelic drug, the group was asked to view a poster of Mother Teresa — the kindest, most loving person on Earth. 'I've never felt such deep empathy and compassion as I felt then,' says Dr Chopra. 'I was crying. I just wanted to leave medical school and become a volunteer for Mother Teresa.'

The experiment had such a profound influence on him that now, 50 years later, his Chopra Foundation is collaborating with Mind Med, a clinical stage psychedelic medicine biotech company, to create awareness of using psychedelic medicines to treat mental illnesses such as depression and addiction as also to erase stigmas on mental illness and suicide. His wisdom is amazing. 'Science should not be influenced by stigma or personal opinion,' he says. Another gem: 'Medicine is not about just treating people, it's about healing suffering.'

### **Five health-makers**

Health needs a collaborative approach at our individual level too — physical activity which promotes fitness, diet, sleep, thoughts and emotions, mastering calmness. The most beneficial exercise is the one you do voluntarily. 'They've chosen wisely who've found it,' says Mark Sisson. 'It doesn't matter what it looks like, or what it involves, as long as you're doing your thing.'

Eat foods that your body finds easy to digest. It's neither good health nor good sense to feel heavy, sleepy, lethargic, to bloat and burp constantly, to throw up or be constipated. Respecting your body's comfort is treating yourself kindly and gently. The best foods are the ones you've grown up on but with less or zero fat added to them.

On this track of fitness and health, please understand the vital importance of thoughts. Dr Soumitra makes a startling observation. 'Schizophrenia is primarily a thought disorder that affects mood; depression is a mood disorder

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**If you can look with a sense of fellowship into another's eyes, you see an instant kindling and connection light up there like a flash of recognition.**

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that affects thinking,' he says. Please watch your thoughts. Read and absorb great sayings and make them part of your thinking culture by writing them in a journal. Chant any word, sound, mantra or prayer that feels right — the chant cancels the thought even as the thought cancels the chanted word and what ensues is utter peace. The mind needs to experience peace and inner space every day.

Give your mind a vision to hold on to instead of cynicism, suspicion, judgment, moodiness. 'A vision is not just a picture of what could be, it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more,' says Rosabeth Moss Kanter. When Rick was diagnosed with AIDS, he called on the vision of not only his guru, he envisioned that he was washing away the world's sufferings as he washed his breakfast dishes; when he went out, sunshine became the healing light of 'a hundred thousand suns' entering his body.

In these ways, we court and collaborate with good health. It's about being simple, and joining our loving energies to everything we think and do. It's a sustainable, ever-healing, synergetic partnership with life.

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



## RC Aduthurai — RID 2981



DG S Balaji inaugurated a blood donation camp and tree plantation drive at Amma-chathiram village. Over 80 people donated blood. The club also hosted a public event at Thirubhuvanam.

## RC Pilkhua City — RID 3012



Fourteen children suffering from tuberculosis were adopted by the club. They were given nutritious food packets by club president Sudhir Goyal and will be taken care of till the disease is cured.

## RC Villupuram Central — RID 2982



Transport was arranged for 200 nurses involved in vaccination camps organised by the municipality. This project costing ₹70,000 helped 30,000 people to get inoculated.

## RC Vuyyuru — RID 3020



Vuyyuru panchayat president Vallabhaneni Satyanarayana handed over push carts worth ₹75,000 donated by the club to street vendors, mostly women.

## RC Karur — RID 3000



Tables worth ₹30,000 were donated to the Government Girls HS Secondary School at Aranganathanpettai village for the use of class teachers. The faculty thanked the club for the gesture.

## RC Begowal — RID 3070



Blankets and ration bags were given to 36 families at different areas of Begowal in the presence of club president Malkiat Singh Lubana and club members.

## RC Sunam — RID 3090



Over 160 people were screened at a heart check-up camp. Blood sugar, ECG tests were also conducted by a team from Hero DMC Heart Institute, Ludhiana.

## RC Lucknow — RID 3120



Woollen clothes were given to students at a slum school, Phulwari Pathshala, in the presence of IPDG K K Srivastava and club members. The students thanked them for the gift.

## RC Moradabad Brasscity Stars — RID 3100



A 4.5km walkathon, *Dil ki baat*, was flagged off by district magistrate Shailendra Singh and PDG Rajeew Rastogi. The event also had street plays on women's empowerment and Rotary's public image.

## Rotary E-club Pune Diamond — RID 3131



Club members visited the Juvenile Remand Home, Yerwada, and interacted with the inmates. A talk on career options was arranged for them.

## RC Agra Grace — RID 3110



Forty children, 25 elderly and over 100 women benefited from a medical camp held at the ISKCON temple, Pathauli. RC Taj City and Ujala Cygnus Rainbow Hospital were joint partners.

## RC New Bombay Seaside — RID 3142



Ventilators, Bipap machines and PPE kits, gloves and other consumables worth ₹20 lakh were given to NMMC-Covid Hospital. A sanitary pad vending machine and pad disposal unit were donated to a government school.

## RC Nellore — RID 3160



School books, plates, tumblers and stationery sponsored by Rtn K V Subrahmanyam, were donated to students at the Government Primary School, Bhuranpur, at Nellore district.

## RC Channapatna — RID 3190



A road safety awareness campaign was held at the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway. Around five lakh handbills were distributed to commuters and motorists.

## RC Bailhongal — RID 3170



A health check-up camp was organised for malnourished children and medicines were distributed to some of them.

## RC Cochin Beachside — RID 3201



Prizes were given to the winners of Tagore Library Quiz contest and top scorers of board exams. Club president Shiyas K Hasim gave the prizes.

## RC Kundapura — RID 3182



Around 200 children were treated for malnutrition at a special camp organised with the help of taluk health department. The project cost ₹1 lakh.

## RC Srivilliputtur Friends — RID 3212



Under its Project 30, 30 club members will donate at least ₹1,000 daily either in cash or kind to an underprivileged person, student, elderly or differently-abled. This will continue through the Rotary year.

## RC Tirupattur — RID 3231



A mega dental camp was conducted at the Government Higher Secondary School, Kunichi, in which 200 students were screened for oral disorders. Toothpastes and brushes were also distributed.

## RC Sambalpur West — RID 3261



Winter blankets were distributed to homeless families and destitute in the remote areas of Sakhipara, in partnership with the Parmeswari Bai Memorial Trust, Sambalpur.

## RC Anna Nagar Madras — RID 3232



Club president Renu Sawlani donated \$9,498 to TRF towards its global grant dialysis project to DRFC M Ambalavanan during the Foundation Nite event.

## RC Cuttack Golden Star — RID 3262



A cyclothon was organised with the help of Rotaractors and the Awaaken Cancer Care Trust to create awareness on breast cancer. IPDG Saumya Ranjan Mishra flagged off the rally.

## RC Gangtok — RID 3240



A yoga camp was organised for students at the Advanced Technical Training Centre, Burdang in East Sikkim, in association with Sarva, a yoga training centre.

## RC Calcutta Jadavpur — RID 3291



A coaching school for students of Classes 1–10 was inaugurated by DG Prabir Chatterjee at Daronda in Santiniketan. An adult literacy class will be held for the maids too.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

# Where humans and animals coexist



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

Over the nearly 71 years I have been alive on this planet, I have spent, like many others, quite long periods of time in other countries. And you know what, India is the only country, with the possible exception of Pakistan and Bangladesh which I have not visited, where humans and animals share space so amicably. Monkeys. Rats. Cows. Pigs. Dogs. Cats. Birds. Camels. Cockroaches. Elephants. Snakes. Mongooses. You name them. We coexist in a visible way, everywhere. On the streets. In our homes. In the jungles. In the gardens. Just everywhere. We are surrounded by animals. They are ubiquitous. They are ever-present. As the phrase in Sanskrit goes, *yatra, tatra, sarvatra*. Here, there, everywhere. It is truly extraordinary.

I remember an incident from 1985. An English friend had requested me to help a British TV crew which was in India to shoot something, I forget what now. They turned up in my office, which in those days was the Indian Express. As we sat drinking tea, I heard a familiar sound, the tinkle of the bell on an elephant's neck. So I asked the Brits casually if they wanted to see an elephant. Not today, one of them replied. We can go to the zoo tomorrow. So I asked them to follow me to the window and in a few seconds the elephant walked by, bell tolling. I can never forget the look on the Brits' faces. They were totally flabbergasted.

Another time I was travelling on the Bombay-Delhi Rajdhani. On the berth opposite me a foreigner, an East Asian, was working on his laptop. Suddenly a huge rat dropped on his keyboard from the ceiling. It was a priceless moment. In fact we suddenly had a whole lot of rats running around and there was nothing to be done about it. I don't think anyone slept that night.

Then there was the time when a friend came back to the office, after having left for the day yelling and cursing. It was around 7pm on a winter's evening and dark outside. We calmed her down and asked her what had happened. "A cat. I found a bloody cat on the driver's seat." She

had sat down on it. It seems she had left the window half open as usual to keep the car ventilated. The cat had got in for the warmth.

I too have had two similar encounters. Once a cow chased me just as I started off on my mobike. It had been eyeing me angrily as I kicked the bike and as it started, it suddenly lunged at me. I took off but in my panic forgot to turn on the fuel tap. The bike started to sputter and it was just in the nick of time that I managed to turn the tap on and the vehicle shot forward. I still shudder to think what might have happened that day. The unkindest cut was some women and children laughing their guts out at me. I don't know which one was more humiliating — the unamused cow or the entertained humans.

The second encounter was equally frightening. I was speeding down an empty but wet road one afternoon at 100kmph when I felt a hot burning on my throat. The pain was so intense that I thought I had been shot. I somehow managed to pull up on the side and just collapsed on the road. It took a minute or so for the pain to subside and several more for me to regain my composure. Finally I got back on the bike and drove slowly home and went to the mirror. There was nothing to be seen except a red blotch — with a tiny white thing at the centre. And guess what it turned out to be. I had been stung by a wasp! ■

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country, where humans  
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We are surrounded  
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# In Brief



## Coal mine turns into a park

Norway is turning the country's last Arctic coal mine in the Svalbard archipelago near the North Pole into a 3,000-sq km natural

park called Van Mijenfjorden National Park. With 20 million birds' nests and about 3,000 polar bears using its sea ice as hunting ground, Svalbard is a region of ecological importance in the North Pole. The new park will extend the ecological boundary to help the region return to its pristine green state.



## Solar probe grazes sun's atmosphere

NASA's spacecraft Parker Solar Probe flew through the sun's upper

atmosphere, called the corona, becoming the first ever to do so. Launched in 2018, the probe is providing insight into the sun's evolution and its impact on our solar system. Using seven venus flybys over seven years, it will gradually shrink its orbit around the sun, coming as close as 6.16 million-km to it. The probe has so far discovered that striking magnetic zig-zag structures in the solar wind, called switchbacks, originate on the solar surface.



## An Olympic medal helps a sick child

Maria Andrejczyk, who won a silver in javelin at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, has auctioned her medal at \$125,000 to help raise funds for an

eight-month-old boy, Miloszek Malysa, who was born with a serious heart defect. The winning bid came from Polish supermarket chain Zabka, which later told Andrejczyk to keep her medal.



## Queen says she is still young

An England magazine presented Queen Elizabeth II with the Oldie of the Year Award. The 95-year-old monarch declined the award saying she does not meet the criteria. Sending a message to the magazine, she said "You are as old

as you feel." With best wishes to the organisers, she said, "hope you will find a more worthy recipient."



## US scholarship for farmer's daughter

Swega Swaminathan, daughter of a farmer from Kasipalayam village in Erode, Tamil Nadu, has received a full scholarship of ₹3 crore to pursue a bachelor's degree in Chicago University. This first-generation student was trained by the Dexterity Global Group, a platform to connect underprivileged students from remote Indian towns and villages with global educational institutes, where she enrolled in its leadership and career development programmes.

Compiled by Kiran Zehra; Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



## RI Zone 7

RID 3020 , 3131 , 3132 , 3150 ,  
3160 , 3170 , 3181 , 3182 , 3190

**LEADING GLOBALLY  
IN MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**



**Rotary Coordinator: Ravee Dhotre**

**Assistant Rotary Coordinators:**

- |                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1. Sangram Patil</b>        | <b>2. Sriram Murty</b>  |
| <b>3. Rajalaxmi Vadalamani</b> | <b>4. M M Chengappa</b> |

**RI President Shekhar Mehta**

**TOGETHER WE STRIVE FOR MORE**