



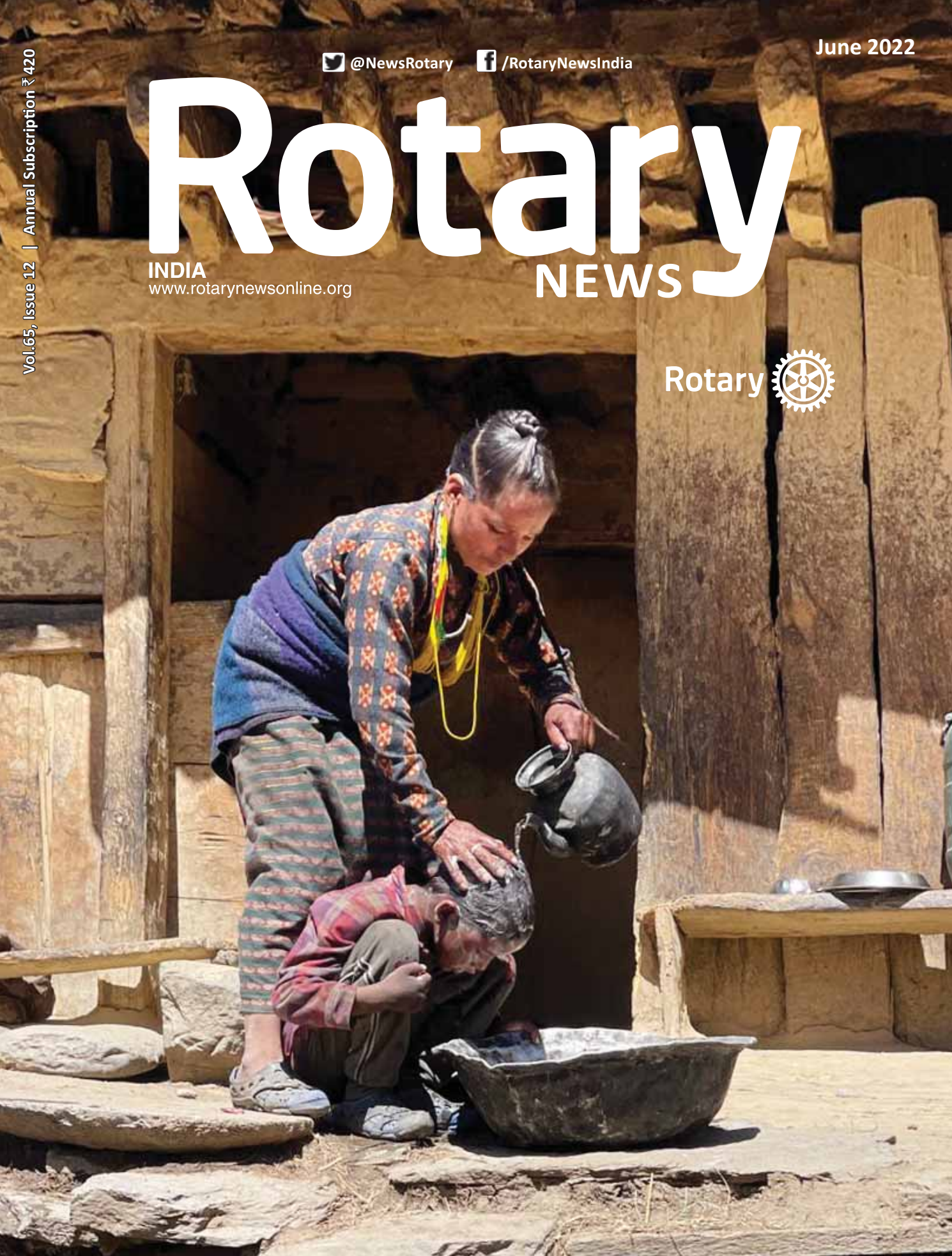
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On the cover: A woman in Pere village, Nepal, bathes her child, once a rare luxury, but now routine, thanks to Rotary which has brought water in this water-starved village.



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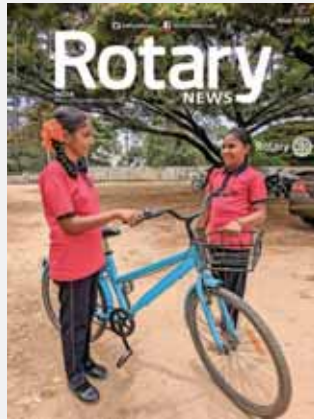
The power of Rotary News

I recently read the May issue and carried it with me on my flight as reading material. My co-passenger asked me what this publication was about, and I proudly gifted him the copy, along with my visiting card.

Rotary News has many interesting columns besides Rotary project information and this material adds lot of value. The May issue has a detailed article on Talat Mahmood, the legendary singer. Such articles are a refreshing change, while we are reading about service projects done by Rotarians. I personally feel that *Rotary News* should cover more news about corporate support to Rotary projects.

This will enable us to keep a copy of our magazine in corporate libraries, waiting rooms or reception areas, and many non-Rotarians will read it and get interested about Rotary. This will enhance the public image of Rotary. The best news is that my co-passenger called me later and will join Rotary in July. Such is the power of *Rotary News*.

Deepak Shikarpur
RC Pune-Shivajinagar — D 3131



The May issue is an excellent and engrossing edition with the most readable content. Two articles were really good; one by Jaishree about projects done by my club and the second by Sanjay Danait on his wild life experience, accompanied by a rare photo shoot of a langur hunt. The magazine has indeed become a coveted and a prized possession, never to be missed. Under the editorship of Rasheeda, *Rotary News* is reaching greater heights.

Anil Latey, RC Poona
Downtown — D 3131

The April issue is both different and interesting as it is filled with mega projects of Rotary clubs and districts, unlike the previous ones which devote 60–70 per cent of pages to high-level meetings and events. The *Inside* page says it all. Hope this trend will continue to encourage clubs and districts to do more useful projects.

Gopalakrishnan Natarajan
RC Rajapalayam Kings City — D 3212

A single Bangalore club shows the way

The cover story was an eye opener. RC Bangalore Lakeside has done an unbelievable 200 projects this year covering all the focus areas of Rotary. The credit goes to club president Kashinath Prabhu and his team. Such articles will motivate Rotarians of other clubs too.

T D Bhatia, RC Delhi
Mayur Vihar — D 3012

The cover photo of school girls with bicycles gifted by RC

Bangalore Lakeside tells a lot about their transformation. Glad to read that the final presidential conference will focus on world peace. The Editor's note explains well the economic crisis in Sri Lanka and the excellent projects done by RC Bangalore Lakeside. RID Mahesh Kotbagi describes the perils of wars and RID A S Venkatesh has rightly dwelt on strategic planning by clubs.

Foundation Trustee chair John F Germ's message points to Rotary

making the world a better place. Other articles like *Put on your dancing shoe* by Rajendra Saboo, the health column, *Project Vignettes*, the feature on Talat Mahmood, are interesting. Photos are colourful and vivid. Congrats to Team Rotary News.

Philip Mulappone MT
RC Trivandrum
Suburban — D 3211

Kashinath Prabhu, president, RC Bangalore Lakeside, deserves our appreciation for his marvellous work in executing

200 projects worth ₹1.5 crore. His foresighted approach with the support of corporates and involvement of other clubs has brought him laurels. These need to be emulated by other clubs. Let's wish him a bright future in his Rotary journey. Rotary has initiated a well-planned exercise to mitigate the losses and sufferings of the people of Ukraine. Let's pray for the restoration of peace and normalcy in Ukraine.

S Mohan, RC Madurai
West — D 3000

The cover page was delightful as it showed the empowerment of school girls. Such projects are truly life-changing. PDG Raju Subramanian being vice-chairman at the COL is a matter of honour for our club. I welcome RID AS Venkatesh's views on the need for planning by clubs. The cover story on RC Bangalore Lakeside was an inspiration. Reading the article by PRIP Rajendra Saboo brought a smile on my face.

Thank you for publishing the incredible work done by RC Deonar over the last 25 years.

Vivek Khandelwal
RC Deonar — D 3141

The April issue has a refreshing change with a write-up on Rotary Annets who have taken up a water conservation project. RCs Madras Midcity and Chennai Metrozone need to be applauded for motivating the Annets, and encouraging their family members to support Rotary. It is always a proud moment for a Rotarian if his family supports his activity. Such articles should have contact email ID and phone numbers. As usual TCA Srinivasan Raghavan's LBW article on sound pollution is interesting to read.

Aadesh Sikchi, RC Navi
Mumbai — D 3142

Thanks to Editor Rasheeda Bhagat for her inspirational cover story *Pune Rotarians gift a home for homeless children* which put the spotlight on the selfless efforts of Renu Gavaskar and Rotarians of RC Pune Laxmi Road. They are doing good in the world and also fulfilling the purpose of this year's Rotary theme... *Serve to Change Lives*. The new home will build the future of poor children through education and vocational training. It will also protect them from social evils like drug peddling and child trafficking. RID Mahesh Kotbagi's visit to the project would have motivated them.

Naveen Garg
RC Sunam — D 3090

Let us internalise RI President Shekhar Mehta's message to protect our environment. It is our duty to design projects aimed at conserving and protecting our environment from further destruction, and also sensitise the public on the issue.

R Thayumanavan
RC Cuddalore
Midtown — D 2981

Showcasing Rotary

In the April issue, RI President Shekhar Mehta has appreciated the efforts of Rotary clubs to increase membership. He wants us to take projects that will

showcase our intent to the public, and create a good public image for Rotary.

The editor has vividly explained the sufferings of Ukrainian people in the ongoing war. She has also pointed to the recent wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan which have led to tragic consequences. Hats off to DG Pankaj Shah for honouring Rotarians who have completed 25 years of service in Rotary. In the cover story, social activist Renu Gavaskar has detailed the perils of early marriage of girls. Her anecdote about a girl who told her that people give her only clothes which made her feel like a wastepaper basket is quite revealing.

S Muniandi, RC Dindigul
Fort — D3000

Heartrending story on Ukraine

As a former DRR, nearly half a century ago in 1974 of the then RID

321 comprising parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Sri Lanka, I read with pride in my heart the inspiring story of DRR Iryna Bushmina from war-torn Ukraine.

Her narration was detailed, refulgent and heartening. What else could these hapless teenagers do under tragic situation, amidst aerial bombardments and tanks advancing around them? Nevertheless, they do their squirrel's share to alleviate the misery caused by this needless war due to greedy politicians.

Finding asylum in an alien land for those fleeing from their country at the homes of Rotarians is really amazing as it extols the true idealism of Rotary. We are proud of you Iryna. In spirit we are with you. Let your hands be strengthened with what Rotary does in your area.

Tomi Eapen
RC Alleppey — D 3211

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Showcasing Rotary at the highest level

Greetings, dear changemakers of Rotary,

What a year it has been for Rotary.

You have lived up to every challenge, including to *grow more, do more*, and Rotary has grown in a way that we haven't in many years. This year saw life-changing new projects across all areas of focus, as we took up important work at the highest level — with UNICEF, the Commonwealth, and global leaders. Our efforts opened opportunities to empower girls, improve the environment, and advance literacy and health.

I want to thank each of you for your proactive service.

I also want to thank the wonderful Rotary staff for ensuring that we can work with care for our fellow human beings, with peace in our hearts.

Personally, this has been an extremely enriching year for Rashi and me. We've met with thousands of Rotarians and been inspired by their great work around the world. We were also able to showcase Rotary's work at the highest level, meeting with heads of state, leaders and bureaucrats, and offering to work with them to show that Rotary cares and brings peace in this world. With our swan song, Rashi and I wish you the very best as you *Serve to Change Lives*.

Shekhar Mehta

Shekhar Mehta

President, Rotary International





Challenging times we live in

Can you imagine the sheer helplessness, humiliation and desperation of a human being, in this day and age, who cannot have a bath even once a year? Impossible, you might say, or think. But as the cover story of this issue reveals, the entire population of a village called Pere in our Rotary zone, Nepal, situated at 11,000ft above sea level, suffered this ignominy, till Rotary came into their lives.

In March 2022, Rotary Club of Mahabouddha, RID 3292, Kathmandu, did almost the impossible in this village of 1,363 people, by bringing piped water supply to all the 236 homes. But up in the mountains, aren't water springs commonly available, you might well ask. A legitimate question; the answer is Pere village has a river running through it, but thanks to the elevation, it is frozen round the year and of little use to the villagers. For their drinking, cooking and minimal washing needs, the village women had to climb up and walk a distance of 2km to fetch barely two or three pots a day from a mountain spring. With Rotarians not only bringing piped water supply to their homes, through a global grant project done in partnership with a club from Switzerland, but also building toilets in their homes, the people can now regularly bathe, wash their clothes, cultivate their land and grow and consume crops other than just roots. The children have returned to school, and one child asked the question: 'After school, what further can I study?'

This is the kind of hope Rotary offers to the hopeless... making it possible to dream of a future beyond poverty and destitution.

But while this Kathmandu club deserves our applause for doing this transformational project valued at \$196,000, the worsening crisis in Sri Lanka continues to distress. As the country descends into much deeper chaos, and young Sri Lankans decided to teach their corrupt politicians a lesson, the tiny island-nation's Rotarians and Rotaractors, led by past president KR Ravindran, took out a solidarity march in Colombo to demand accountability and a corruption-free regime to pull the country out of the morass it has sunk into. As the hostilities, violence and bloodshed in Ukraine continue, and inflation raises its ugly head in our own country, with loss of jobs and spiralling prices of essential commodities sending underprivileged and lower middle class Indians into stressful times, our world gives us little cause for cheer.

Until you look at the transformational service projects being done by Rotarians. Pere village in Nepal is only one example. As RI President Shekhar Mehta points out in an interview published in this issue, the most satisfying aspect of his year at the helm of Rotary was seeing amazing projects aimed at the empowerment of girls... be it in Egypt, Nigeria or his home town of Kolkata, as of course the rest of India.

When girls and women are truly empowered, they can change the face of India or any other country in the world. All that they need is just a helping hand... and some wind beneath their wings!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Rasheeda Bhagat'.

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Magical conferences

As Rotary moves towards greater diversity, equity and inclusion in its membership profile, an immediate challenge emerges. Assimilation of myriad personalities, their insights and thoughts, into a potent collective to give a deeper impetus to our vision. These new ideas help us do sustainable service projects that leave a lasting impact on the lives of challenged world communities we serve. This process enriches our lives.

Our world today demands greater knowledge of emerging new technologies to offer more comfort, convenience and entertainment. Through improvements in digital technologies to artificial intelligence we see a faster rate of disruption and change in organising our work and home life, and do better service projects for greater success. RI has adapted a hybrid culture of virtual and physical meetings. From mere entertainment and recreation, Rotary conventions and summits are quickly turning into platforms where Rotarians from different backgrounds pool their specialised knowledge and experience to create unique community service projects.

On a personal front, for Rotarians attending these meets, there are opportunities to create lasting spiritual relationships, while getting cutting edge social and economic ideas beyond what we encounter in our routine life. At a cursory level we are inundated with

media-beamed, opinionated information, lacking in-depth meaningful knowledge in contrast to relevant information from experts we meet at Rotary conferences, gaining new insight. Rotary events expose you to cutting edge insights from experts in their work fields and offer wholesome traditional and contemporary music and dance entertainment. An experience to cherish and share with your close ones. As you age, these memories will become sharper, filling you with nostalgia that will allow you to live and relive the good times again and again.

At the soul level, the nourishment and excitement generated at the conventions/summits expand our mental horizons, free us from limiting self-beliefs and open the inner doors of happiness, bliss and joy. They permeate into our being and increase our confidence and energy to form partnerships with Rotarians and others, as we integrate and accept diversity as a strength to move forward dynamically to achieve our Rotary service goals.

I urge every Rotarian and partner to attend Rotary presidential and literacy summits and conventions to experience the magic of our organisation and enjoy the unique fellowship they offer.

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

Dr Mahesh Kotbagi
RI Director, 2021–23

Speak

Member engagement — our guiding mantra

This is the time of the year when several members, more so in our region, decide on the worthiness of continuing their membership in Rotary. Needless to say, a strong and growing membership is a prerequisite for a robust and a vibrant club.

Not just members, but loyal constituents that actively engage in events and opportunities, will allow the club to develop a culture and ensure the success of its services and project initiatives.

The onus is on senior members of the club to include the newer members in conversations, engage them in activities and make them feel wanted and relevant in the broader scheme of things of the club.

Everyone has a reason for joining Rotary and all of those reasons are acceptable. It could be for service, fellowship, friendship, self-development, etc. Over a period, this reason keeps changing as one evolves in the organisation. However, the key factor to remember is that nobody is there without a reason. The more opportunities the club offers to its members to engage in activities that addresses their individual needs, the stronger would be the bond between the member and the club.

The gains of member retention are something of a long game but the rewards of patience are great and extremely satisfying. In addition, a robust membership retention strategy can lead to an increase in new member acquisition as well.



Strong member retention rates and a high level of member engagement allow you to build a reputation of excellence. While current members will espouse the club's programmes and projects passionately, prospective members will be drawn in by the public image that you would have automatically nurtured.

The best brand ambassadors for our organisation are the ones who are already in. A natural corollary to this is that those who leave make poor brand ambassadors. Let this be the guiding mantra. Engagement of members in the club's activities doesn't happen by chance. It is the result of a thought-out strategy, conscious decisions and sincere implementation. I urge every one of you to play your part in this. We need to sow the seeds today if we want the fruits tomorrow.

A bird in hand is worth two in the bush!

AS Venkatesh
RI Director, 2021-23

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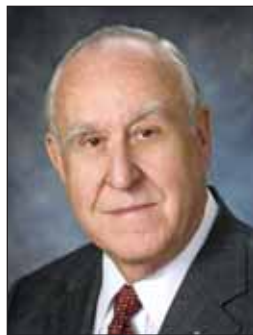
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There's no time like the present



"Time can be an ally or an enemy," author Zig Ziglar once wrote. "What it becomes depends entirely upon you, your goals, and your determination to use every available minute." Every June, as we wind down another year in Rotary, I ask myself if we have used the past 365 days well. To answer, let's look at what we have accomplished.

Cases in the remaining wild polio endemic countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, are at their lowest level in history. Challenges to global eradication remain and our work is not yet finished, but we are making encouraging progress, which wouldn't be possible without your support.

Rotary needs to raise \$50 million each year for polio eradication, and doing so during a pandemic is no easy task. But Rotary clubs adapt quickly. When in-person events weren't possible, many clubs successfully raised funds online.

We hit another memorable mark during Giving Tuesday in November, when The Rotary Foundation got a boost by raising \$1.2 million. We reached out to more current and prospective donors than ever before — almost 500,000 members across 40 countries. Some of our most engaged clubs were located in the Bahamas, India, Singapore, Taiwan and the United States. We thank all of those members who made Giving Tuesday a success.

Due to travel restrictions this year, Rotary representatives couldn't visit potential host universities as part of our ongoing effort to establish our next Rotary Peace Center in the Middle East or North Africa. But nothing stands in the way of our pursuit of peace; plans are still on for the Rotary Presidential Conference in Houston, June 3–4, which will focus on peace, and I look forward to being there.

This year, Rotary made another contribution in our commitment to peace, approving more than 1,000 global, district, and disaster response grants to fulfill the needs of thousands around the world. For until hungry people are fed, families have access to clean water, and children everywhere are educated, we won't truly have peace in the world.

We have used our time well this year, but our work is never complete. We always need and welcome more Rotary and Rotaract members who bring their hands, minds and gifts so that Rotary-led Foundation projects will create lasting change for those who need it most. As we approach July 1, let us heed Ziglar's words, remembering that how we spend the next 365 days largely depends on us and our determination to reach our goals. So let us do the best we can with the time we have been given, today. And let us begin again, every day.

John F. Germ
Foundation Trustee Chair

Strive for that extra mile to achieve goals



As the Rotary year 2021–22 comes to a close and as district governors and club presidents strive to meet last mile demands and promises, I am reminded of Dylan Thomas's famous refrain: "Do not go gently into that good night." In a manner of speaking, it is about one's last innings and an exhortation to go out in a blaze of glory. It is akin to scoring a century in one's last Test match. For the record, Greg Chappell, Azharuddin and Alistair Cook are some of the few who have done it.

June 30 is also when President Shekhar Mehta's term ends and so will my four-year term as TRF trustee. As I write this, we have less than six weeks to go before the curtain comes down on this year. It is my earnest belief that everyone will strive for that extra mile to deliver on the Foundation targets. I promise that I, too, will walk that extra mile.

We have been through tough times together, pandemic and otherwise, and it appears that we are out of the tunnel and into the light. Working together has helped and we have achieved much through teamwork. But we cannot rest on our laurels. For the past few years India has been second in worldwide TRF contributions. However, last year South Korea pipped us to the second spot. Can we regain it this year? I believe that we can if we reach our all-India target of \$30 million. And that, my friends, is my humble request: Let's do that extra bit for our Foundation.

It has been a pleasure addressing you through the pages of this magazine but it is now time to say goodbye. However, goodbyes are sad and I'd much rather be upbeat because every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.

With my best wishes and regards,

Gulam A. Vahanvaty
Trustee, The Rotary Foundation

District Wise TRF Contributions as on April 2022

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contributions	EREY Donors (in numbers)	EREY %
India							
2981	103,435	1,730	15,000	227,859	348,025	176	3.3
2982	46,199	6,360	2,500	3,449	58,507	214	6.6
3000	28,644	1,446	0	47,376	77,466	28	0.6
3011	27,608	10,044	0	306,762	344,415	44	1.0
3012	25,495	18,504	68,712	474,855	587,566	79	2.1
3020	81,009	35,966	37,997	4,620	159,592	219	5.2
3030	101,735	1,831	63,185	15,704	182,454	197	4.2
3040	34,828	284	0	78,494	113,607	9	0.4
3053	15,447	1,911	27	140,610	157,995	61	2.2
3054	14,629	3,194	0	244,969	262,792	36	0.5
3060	128,815	10,306	833	159,157	299,111	1,763	36.6
3070	40,317	127	0	27,601	68,045	214	6.9
3080	74,862	7,565	15,784	15,842	114,053	226	7.1
3090	46,035	2,379	29,000	0	77,414	190	9.1
3100	45,679	100	0	2,537	48,316	94	4.3
3110	31,338	68	1,014	32,817	65,237	125	3.6
3120	67,844	1,000	0	0	68,844	316	9.3
3131	436,326	36,005	59,000	944,031	1,475,362	2,068	44.1
3132	29,219	3,554	5,000	12,029	49,803	57	1.7
3141	440,425	8,500	137,532	1,620,564	2,207,021	1,146	19.4
3142	363,133	6,564	20,998	269,547	660,242	871	25.7
3150	97,620	44,343	141,000	118,109	401,072	734	18.6
3160	136,015	4,673	17,264	0	157,952	63	2.6
3170	111,205	16,555	1,714	197,871	327,346	492	8.4
3181	65,459	5,442	203	116	71,219	354	10.8
3182	56,657	9,508	4,000	29,715	99,880	244	7.8
3190	306,545	36,230	30,411	311,644	684,830	1,380	22.4
3201	132,261	65,706	0	344,678	542,646	518	9.1
3203	50,599	18,638	7,086	335,269	411,592	185	4.6
3204	35,125	6,423	0	1,036	42,584	67	3.5
3211	50,681	724	0	18,999	70,403	117	2.6
3212	90,032	2,590	1,036	9,811	103,469	126	2.5
3231	23,678	11,691	9,867	8,738	53,974	157	4.6
3232	120,457	97,702	125,052	1,249,913	1,593,124	234	3.3
3240	127,765	12,581	0	77,864	218,210	553	16.9
3250	30,640	3,576	1,036	19,532	54,784	387	10.6
3261	9,636	1,713	300	189,528	201,177	25	0.9
3262	22,849	3,658	0	0	26,508	75	2.0
3291	150,664	4,636	35,604	22,785	213,689	381	10.1
India Total	3,800,912	503,828	831,154	7,564,432	12,700,325	14,225	9.1
3220 Sri Lanka	87,061	24,336	2,010	1,000	114,407	245	10.8
3271 Pakistan	6,275	5,431	0	20,905	32,610	10	0.5
3272 Pakistan	16,857	11,158	0	2,117	30,132	14	0.8
3281 Bangladesh	85,988	69,087	26,118	390,221	571,414	177	2.2
3282 Bangladesh	39,494	19,916	1,000	40,044	100,454	122	3.3
3292 Nepal	141,571	19,130	51,321	128,588	340,609	831	14.3
South Asia Total	4,178,157	652,885	911,603	8,147,307	13,889,951	15,624	8.7

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

Source: RI South Asia Office.

A Nepal Rotary club does a transformational project

Rasheeda Bhagat

Can you imagine human beings who cannot have a bath even once a year simply because they do not have the luxury of water available to do so? Nor can they wash their clothes. Appalling, isn't it? But the 1,363 people of an entire village in Nepal, called Pere, situated at an altitude of 11,000ft above sea level, faced exactly this plight, till Rotary came into their lives.

In March 2022, Rotary Club of Mahabouddha, RID 3292, in Kathmandu did almost the

impossible in this village, by bringing piped water supply to all the 236 homes, and really transformed the villagers' lives. But to be able to have water in their homes, to regularly bathe, wash their clothes, cultivate their land and grow and consume crops, rather than just roots, have given the villagers more than dignity... it has given them hope, and dream of a much better future.

So and so, when PDG Ganesh Bhat from RI District 3170, a TRF cadre of technical advisors for South Asia, was recently sent to Pere village to assess and evaluate the Rotary global grant project valued at \$196,000, a young lad asked him about the possibility of pursuing education beyond Class 10.

Children who rarely went beyond their homes have now started to go to the village school, after taking a bath and neatly dressed in clean, washed clothes. When the young boy asked the Rotarian "how to study beyond Class 10", the teacher

standing close by observed: "The very fact that he is asking such a question shows that Rotary has given them hope, hope of a better future." For till then, all that the boy could think of was studying up to Class 10.

Before diving into details about this unique project which has worked on almost all the focus areas of Rotary — WinS, literacy, water and sanitation, health and hygiene, enhancing livelihoods — to find out more about Pere village, which can be reached from Kathmandu only after two domestic flights and a rickety 4-hour drive on a

When we chose this village, several members expressed doubts saying this place is so difficult to reach, how will you monitor and execute the work.

Devraj Ghimire
Project contact



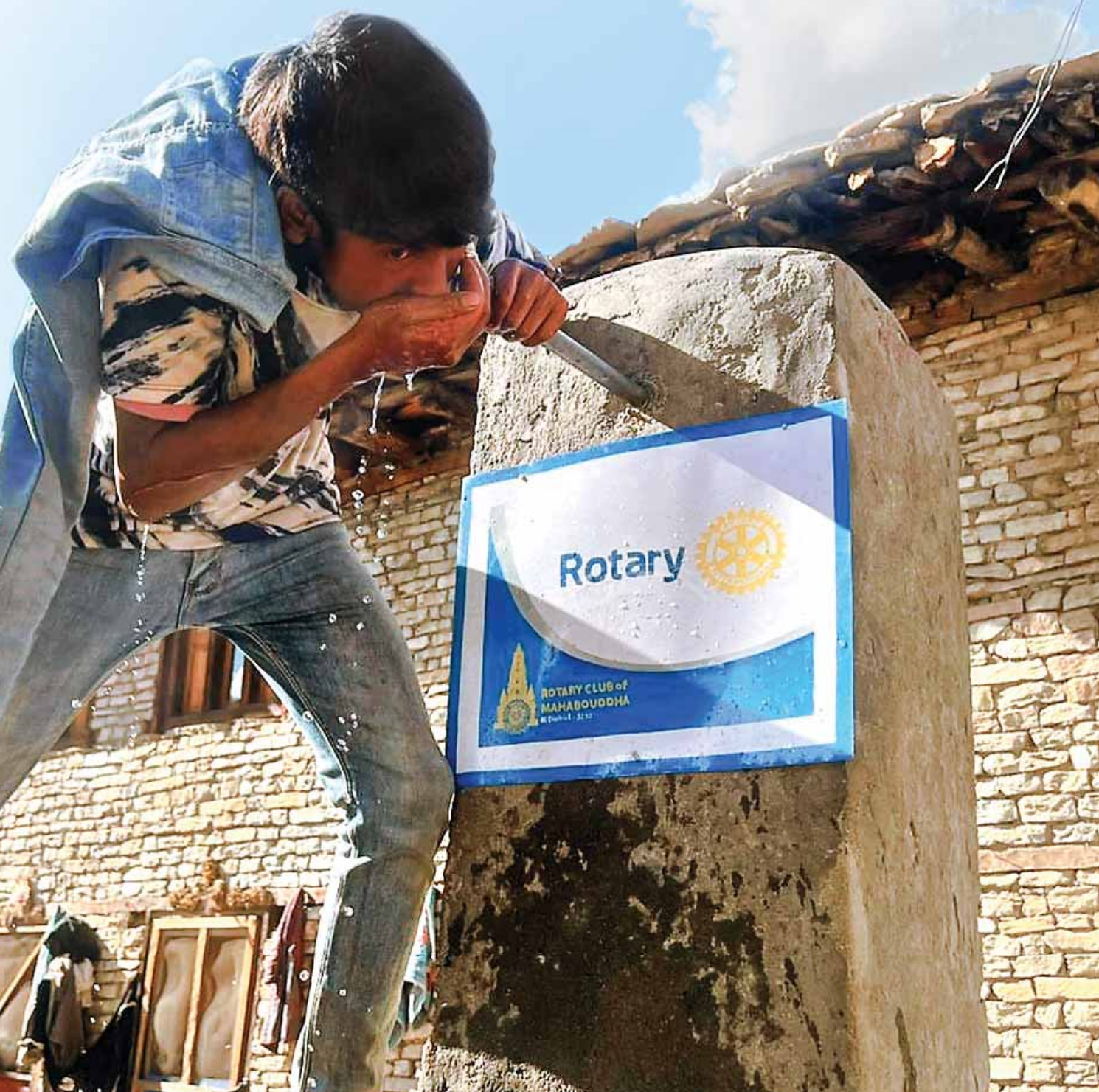
dangerously narrow road, *Rotary News* reached out to former president of RC Mahabouddha, Devraj Ghimire, who has worked very hard on this project.

Asked why his club had chosen this remote village which is so difficult to access, he said: "In our District 3292, the terrain

is hilly and places are difficult to reach. So most of the Rotary clubs here choose projects in villages which are close by. Our club, with 42 members, is a very active and dynamic club, but when we chose this village, several members expressed doubts saying this place is so difficult to

reach, how will you monitor and execute the work."

The background of how this Kathmandu club got a Rotary club in Switzerland as an international





PDG Bhat with past president Devraj Ghimire (L) at the construction site of the water tank.

partner for this global grant of \$196,000, is an absorbing story of how remote connections materialise, when good things are meant to happen. “We have a friend in Switzerland, Alex Zahnd, who was a visiting professor of Kathmandu University. He had taught in a technical college in Jumla many years ago. But we kept in touch with him and would call him to our club meetings as a speaker when he was in Nepal,” says Ghimire.

Prof Zahnd was very friendly with these Rotarians

The villagers didn’t have water even to clean themselves after defecating in the fields.

and it was he who had told them about Pere village and how those villagers desperately needed help. After the professor returned to Switzerland, RC Mahabouddha’s Rotarians reached out to him seeking his help in connecting them to a Rotary club in Switzerland whose members would be willing to partner with them in doing a transformational project in Pere.

In the meanwhile, they also tried to get a partner in the US and Australia. But the Swiss partnership came through. About 3–4 years ago, after Prof Zahnd had told the club members about the plight of the villagers of Pere, “we had gone there with some food and clothes and seen the pathetic conditions under which they lived. We had then decided that if we want to really do a service project to change the life of a





TRF Cadre member PDG Ganesh Bhat inspecting the project site in the village.

community, this was the village where we should do it,” says Ghimire.

RITS Nepal, a non-profit organisation with expertise in water and hygiene-related projects, was the perfect fit as a partner as “they have experience in executing such projects, and they’ve already done a small hydro power project in a nearby district, and are also doing a greenhouse project in the neighbouring villages.”

The Rotarians found that the villagers’ biggest difficulty was to get water for drinking, cooking and washing. Even though there is a river flowing through the village, thanks to its location at 11,000ft above sea level, it remains frozen through the year.

Had you come here earlier, we wouldn’t even be able to talk to you, needing to stand at least 15–20 metres away from you, because you wouldn’t have been able to bear the stench.

**As told by a villager
to PDG Bhat**

There is a water spring situated in the hills at a height of 200 metres, which is about 2km away from the village, and from here the villagers were bringing barely 3–4 pots of water for their daily household use. Open defecation was the norm, and water scarcity was so severe that the villagers didn’t have water even to clean themselves after defecating in the



Women filling their pots from a water outlet provided by the club near their homes.

fields. Small wonder that they hadn't even heard of a toilet, or what it is used for. With such appalling hygiene and paucity of safe drinking water, disease was rampant in the village.

But then as the project work began in this village two years ago, the Rotary magic started unravelling. In March 2022, when PDG Bhat, a Rotary cadre member, reached the village after a harrowingly long travel — two flights from Kathmandu and then a 4-hour drive on a dangerously narrow road, “where most of the

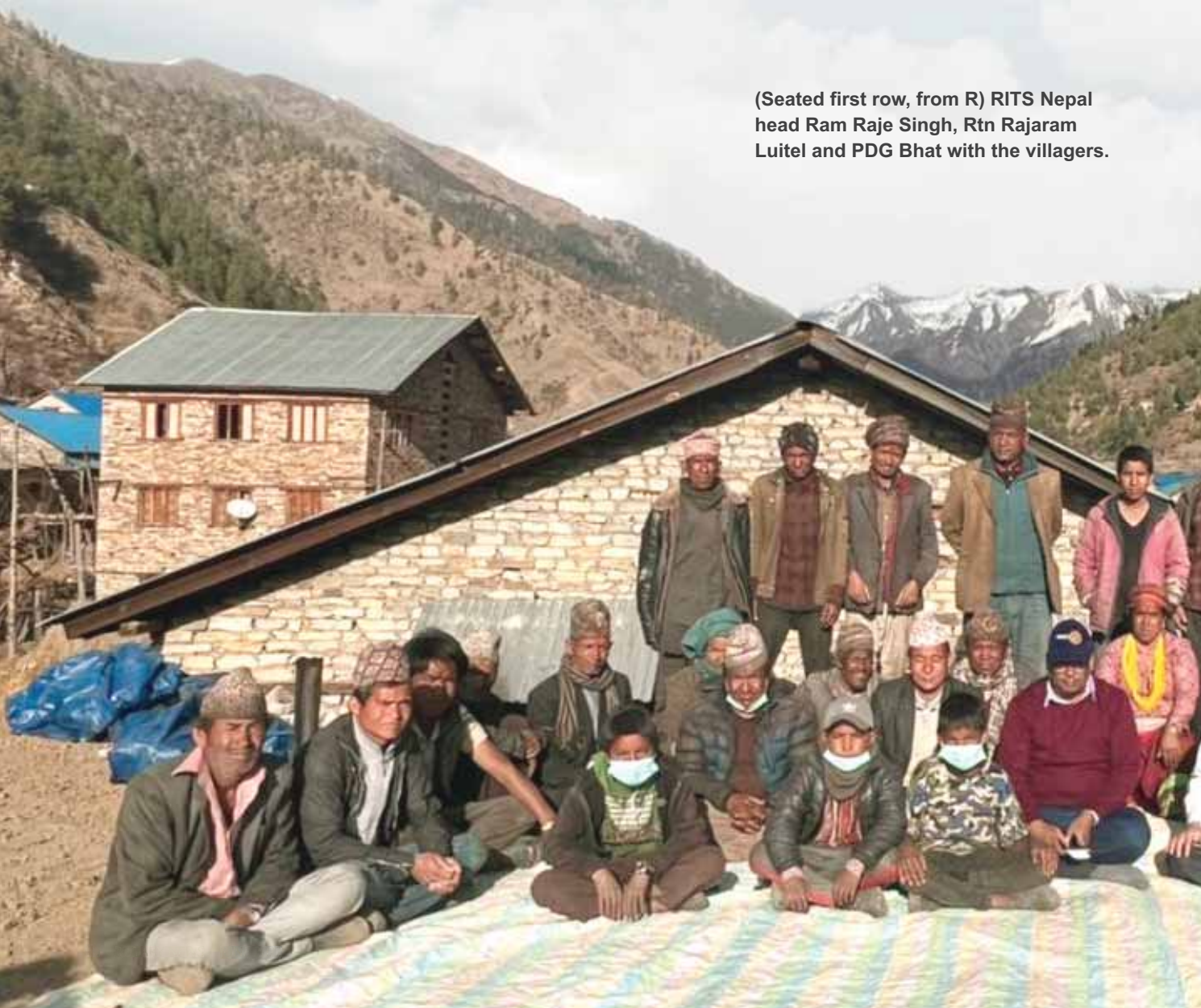
Thanks to this project, the villagers now have clean, filtered drinking water, and are regularly using toilets, and there is absolutely no open defecation.

Ganesh Bhat
member, TRF Cadre of
Technical Advisors

time Vidya, my wife, and I were so terrified that we kept our eyes closed, as our jeep bumped every few minutes,” — it was a group of happy villagers who greeted him.

The first thing one of the leaders told him was that “had you come here earlier, we wouldn't even be able to talk to you, needing to stand at least 15–20 metres away from you, because you wouldn't have been able to bear the stench. But now, thanks to clean water available in our homes, we are able to take regular

(Seated first row, from R) RITS Nepal head Ram Raje Singh, Rtn Rajaram Luitel and PDG Bhat with the villagers.



baths, and wash our clothes,” recalls Bhat.

Describing this as one of the “10 best and most effective Rotary projects ever done anywhere in the world,” Bhat, a structural engineer, said thanks to this project “the villagers now have clean, filtered drinking water, and are regularly using toilets, and this includes small children, so there is absolutely no open defecation,

and they now live under clean and hygienic conditions. I saw a water tap in front of each house, toilets near their homes, and a water filter inside every house.”

With water now available for farming — the villagers have to take permission from the local village leaders and pay a small fee for water drawn for farming — they have now started growing vegetables and fruits on their own land. Earlier, they consumed mostly potatoes and other roots. The deserted village school has sprung back to life, as children

have returned to school, and slowly the literacy levels will improve.

Bhat who is preparing an evaluation report for TRF regarding the manner in which the global grant money was used, is all praise for the quality of the civil engineering and other work done by Nepal RITS.

To fetch water to this village, this project tapped the spring from which the villagers were bringing pots of water to their homes. Near the spring, a small water tank with adequate filters and a capacity to store 1,500 litres of water was constructed. About 50 metres away, a larger tank (12,000 litres capacity) was constructed and the two were connected. The larger tank can take care of the villagers’ water needs for two days. Both the tanks are made from RCC. From the larger tank a pipeline running over the frozen river was taken right up to the village and water connections given to each home... really, and in all senses of the word a dream come true for the villagers.

Also, **236 toilets** have been built which means one toilet for

We are now building for them solar water bath cabins; separate for men and women.

Devraj Ghimire





Women in Pere village learn to wash their hands.

power system is being put in place for these cabins,” says Ghimire.

PDG Bhat says that during his visit, when he held a community meeting to find out how this project has changed their lives, “the women told me that earlier the men never went out for work, and the children too stayed at home as nobody went to school. Most of the people were sick all the time due to the unhygienic conditions in which they lived, the poor quality water they consumed, etc. But now, for the last six months, they have been getting clean, filtered drinking water, their health has improved and farming has once again begun.”

With water now being available, the farming practices have gone one notch higher. Compared

each home (the population of the village is **1,363**), and this for residents who “did not even know what a toilet looks like or is used for.” Once the villagers started washing and bathing, and had sufficient clean water for drinking and cooking, the project planners decided to go one step further. “We are now building for them solar water bath cabins; separate for men and women. The solar

236 toilets have been built, and this for residents who did not even know what a toilet looks like or is used for.





PDG Bhat on the job
at a project site.

to only roots and tubers that the villagers were consuming for dearth of water to grow anything else, the villagers are now growing both fruits and vegetables, by using water with the village council's permission and paying a token fee for it.

Even after putting up the solar bath cabins, this GG will have a balance of **Nepalese ₹42 lakh** “and I have suggested that the water pipeline, which has been put above and across the frozen river, with a width of over 150 metres, should be supported by

intermediate stone pillars, and covered properly from the top,” says Bhat. He says that if the pipeline is not supported properly, the pipes may crack after some time.

He stayed in the village to evaluate this project for four days. The inspection and examination done by this structural engineer was so thorough that he got the odd “toilet excavated to check the depth, what kind and quality of construction material they have used, whether it is safe and according to prescribed specifications,” he adds.

That a lot of thought and detail has gone into the project can be gauged from the fact that the villagers have been

trained how to use and clean the toilets; how to wash their hands with soap; how to brush their teeth with toothpaste and brush. A couple of people have been trained on how to repair or replace the pipeline in case of any cracks, how to replace the taps, and given important knowhow on how to have twin pits in the toilets so that when one fills up the other can be used, while the first one is dried and cleaned.

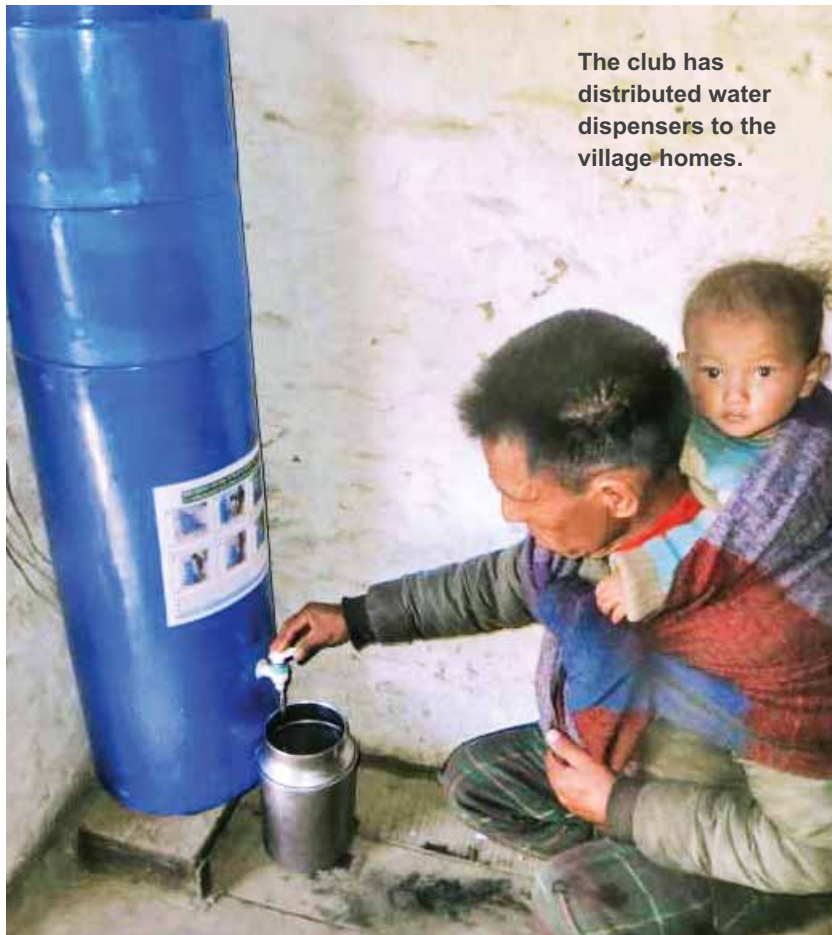
The water filters for drinking water, given to each home have been designed by RITS Nepal, and have three different layers of sand through which the

PDG Bhat interacting with a woman.



water is filtered before it dispenses through the tap. The villagers have also been taught how to clean the sand filters and replace them every three months, so that they continue to get clean drinking water.

Next comes the sustainability part. During his visit, a Rotary Community Corps was also set up for the village and the president and secretary selected.



The club has distributed water dispensers to the village homes.

This RCC will be monitored and guided by the Rotary team from RC Mahabouddha. Ghimire, who works as the chief administrative officer in a college in Kathmandu, adds that his club is determined to make this project sustainable, and in December “along with some experts, we will do some research to find out what kind of difference this project has made in the lives of the villagers and how sustainable it is.” The club has raised and set aside some money to ensure that the facilities provided are maintained properly, and repair work done periodically.

Even after this project is completed, he and his team from this 42-member club in Kathmandu

will continue “working with that community to bring a meaningful and everlasting change. We also want to plant many trees in that village,” he adds. The chairman of the village council wants a vocational training course for the villagers and has sought the Rotarians’ help for a course.

For Bhat, the young boys’ words will be difficult to forget; “he asked me: Sir, can you help us find a way to pursue further education after Class 10. This shows that Rotary has given him and others hope of a better tomorrow.”

Designed by
Krishnapratheesh S

Overwhelmed by girl empowerment projects: **Shekhar Mehta**

Rasheeda Bhagat

RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi in Nigerian costume.

As Shekhar Mehta winds up his year as RI President, *Rotary News* caught up with him for his impressions and memories of the year in an interview done in April 2022.

Excerpts:

How has been your year so far?

I couldn't have asked for anything more; we have visited over 30 countries...

What did you enjoy the most during these visits?

Meeting hundreds and thousands of Rotarians across the world; first, thousands on zoom and then hundreds in person. There is of course nothing like meeting Rotarians in person. You can talk to them, understand their issues. They want to take pictures with you. The RI president is perhaps the most photographed person in the world.





With Singapore President Halimah Yacob.

Is the craze for taking pictures as bad elsewhere as it is in India?

The degree may vary but everybody wants a picture with the RI president! And you can't say no, because I realise that 25 years ago, when I was 35, when the president came to India, I wouldn't have had the courage to go up to him to ask for a picture. So why should I be pricey?

Seeing the projects was outstanding, especially those pertaining to empowering girls. There wasn't a single place that I visited where they did not take me to a project to empower girls. It was really wonderful. I can never forget that hall in Nigeria where I saw hundreds and hundreds of girls stitching sanitary pads. Rashi sat down to sew with them. Then there was the project for skill development and training of girls in computers and other job-related skills.

In Kolkata, in my own district, my own club (RC Calcutta Mahanagar) was doing the project titled *Veerangana*, where they have trained more than 5,000 girls. And when my club presented it, the Kolkata police picked

up a few girls and said we will train them further and give them jobs.

In Egypt, on International Women's Day, they showed me so many outstanding projects pertaining to empowering girls. And mind you these were women Rotarians working to empower girls. By the way, Egypt has one of the highest women's membership in the Rotary world. They first showed us a place where they were making dolls. They presented us two stuffed dolls which were replicas of Rashi and I. The quality was so good that my first reaction

There wasn't a single place that I visited where they did not take me to a project to empower girls.

was that they should be selling them at Harrods!

Then they talked about hygiene, creating awareness for girls; they took me to a kind of projects fair with 20-plus booths, all of them manned by women, and where women were demonstrating their talent.

In Singapore, had a very meaningful meeting with President Halimah Yacob and discussed issues ranging from mental health to empowering girls. She was so happy to partner with Rotary for such projects.

So, do you think finally women are getting traction in Rotary, both in service projects as well as membership?

Oh yes, through membership too. Growth has been there. Yesterday I was discussing membership growth with the district governors, and they have two sets of figures; the total growth and the number of women among the new members.

How well has the membership mantra worked out?

I am very happy, we started at 1.16 million. Today we are at 1.2 million; 38,000 new members have been added through the year. We still have the two most potent months left when there is heavy growth because of new clubs being added. The staff tell me these are the best months when the highest number of new clubs are formed and I too am not taking my foot off the pedal. The growth rate has been outstanding. India has been the shining star... the North star as it were as far as membership is concerned. They have till now, added this year 18,000 net members, I am sure the net growth will be 20,000 by the year end. Which means that in one year we would have achieved what we normally do in five years. Our growth over the last 10 years has been 40,000. This year we'll

add 20,000 net members against the normal 4,000.

What about membership growth in other parts of the world?

When I visited (South) Korea, they said we've already added over 6,000 members and we want to cross 10,000. Their goal was 17,000 but now they have reduced it to 10,000. Africa is doing the same, as well as Brazil, every zone is growing, except for one. On the Rotaract front too, the growth has been good.

That means the developing countries are doing much better in membership growth?

Yes, and that is because they can showcase the work that Rotarians do in these communities. It is also an aspirational thing... a very strong feeling, because people think 'wow, I

am going to be a part of Rotary.' Add to this the opportunities for service, which are greater in our parts of the world. Here Rotarians do a lot of work and the local community and government agencies recognise that work.

Do you think this momentum will continue with RIPE Jennifer Jones and subsequent RI presidents?

Whether the mantra *each one bring one* is there or not, *grow more do more* is there or not, people have now realised that it is possible to have positive growth. And *each one bring one* has worked. In India 65 per cent of the growth has been thanks to *each one bring one*.

You and Rashi are both vegetarians; any interesting anecdotes regarding availability of vegetarian food during your extensive travel?

The very first place we went to was Cameroon. I had not expected vegetarian food to be available. We always carry some food with us, snacks and dehydrated packets that you get in domestic flights. But amazingly enough, we didn't have to use a single packet because the Rotarians take such good care. The chairman of the institute ensured that all the table had fixed meals and a trolley came around for us with Indian vegetarian food, and the menu was different every day! She got in touch with an Indian friend who advised her what to offer us.

Interestingly, we got to savour really good vegetarian food and we had one of the best pizzas during the Rose Parade in the US. Food, fortunately, was not a problem at all, because Rotarians across the world took great care ... they went out of the way to ensure this. For the last presidential conference in Venice, on all the days I was there, everybody on my table had to eat only vegetarian food.

So they didn't serve any meat on the table?

No.

But I've seen that you don't mind meat being served on your table for other non-vegetarians.

Yes, I don't mind at all, but this shows the respect and thoughtfulness of Rotarians. And they would find out before my arrival what I liked and there would be so much of Diet Coke wherever I went.

Interestingly, we had very good quality Indian vegetarian food in the best restaurant in Bahrain! We were in Sao Paulo and they took us to an Indian restaurant being run by a Gujarati couple, Lucky and Hansa...



While visiting Poland, Mehta consoles a war-affected Rotarian from Ukraine.



Mehta and Rashi with TRF Trustee Aziz Memon (R) and DG Ashok Karapetyan (second from L), RID 2452, at the Dubai Expo.

the food was great. So vegetarian food was no problem. And the food at the latest meet — the CoL — was excellent. I organised many receptions for the RI Board, one for the Trustees and others, and every time we offered Indian food, and they loved it.

In the remaining time you have, what is going to be your focus; anything remains undone?

Focus continues to be on membership; we've got new members, now we will have to retain all the additional members, and not let them slip out. If we can ensure this, it will be a huge victory. That is one, keep adding, grow more clubs and try hard they don't leave and even if someone is leaving, try and convince them to stay back. Coming to the 'do more' part, keep doing all that you have been doing to empower girls and women.

How was life in Evanston? At home you are used to so much domestic help, but in the US, you have to do all the work yourself! How big a challenge was that?

(Smiles) Well, during the last leg, Rashi wasn't with me; this was the only time Rashi didn't go with me

because after the Board meet and the CoL, we both had to come to India for the Hyderabad presidential conference. So, for first time in my life, I had to make breakfast for myself.

What did you make? Don't tell me you had cornflakes!

Not much; I made cold coffee and toast with some avocado spread. It was the first time that I operated a washing machine. I didn't know what to do. Even now I have not used a dishwasher. These were new

experiences and opportunity for new learning and I was ready to learn. Rashi, whenever she was there, liked to cook. We would buy our grocery and she would cook. But we really didn't stay in Evanston for too many days. For the first year we weren't there, and the first year involves staying in Evanston, planning and discussing your year with the staff, meeting and inspiring people.

Looking back, if you had this opportunity all over again, is there



The Mehtas visit a sanitary napkins making project in Nigeria.

one thing you'd do differently or more passionately?

(Shakes his head). No, I would do exactly what I've done. I am very happy with the results, the biggest bonus which I had not expected was my meetings with the various heads of state. That was absolutely unique as well as the fact that in every country we went, to meet the president or the prime minister, we had something to offer on behalf of Rotary. That was absolutely great. For example, when I met the president of Albania, the first thing he said was 'Tell me your excellency...' which was very interesting... he calls me excellency!

But that's because an RI president is almost like the head of a state... a kind of country or community of 1.2 million people!

Let me give you some interesting data. If you google countries with population and you stop at 1.2 million, which is now what our membership is, you'll find 40 per cent of the countries have less population than Rotary!

You got so much respect and attention wherever you went; of course as RI president, but do you think it was also because you're an Indian, because I believe Indians are generally liked and India is getting new respect around the world!

(Shakes his head) No, it's mainly Rotary. But I am so happy that before I left, I met Prime Minister Narendra Modi. That was an excellent meeting and I didn't expect it to last so long. His opening statement was very informal and cordial and one of the best compliments I got from him was when he said: *Shekharji jaiye, desh videsh ki seva kijiye, aur ho sakey to desh mei poshan ka kaam kijiye* (Go and serve the world, and if you can, work on the issue of better nutrition for our people). That the

prime minister wants Rotary to work on something was really wonderful to note.

When I met the president of Albania, he asked what is it that my country can do for your organisation, and by the time we finished, he shook my hand and said thank you so much for agreeing to do so much for my country!

What kind of promises did you make on behalf of Rotary, and how will you ensure they are followed up?

Each of these promises we made, building a hospital here and a blood bank there and promise of so many heart surgeries... they are all being followed up rigorously. The first set of children from Uganda have already

come to India. At Seychelles I promised we'd do 50 paediatric heart surgeries. Next day I posted it in governors' group and I got an immediate response...
Ramesh Meher





In South Korea, Mehta and Rashi pose with Rotarian scuba divers who haul debris out of the ocean.

of RI District 3030 said we'll do all of them. They also wanted nurses and asked can you ensure their training for palliative care. When I was in London, I asked the Rotarians is this something you can do and they said we want to do it.

Things are getting done; at the Copenhagen climate meet, at one roundtable meet, we said we will set up mangroves in seven countries. After that I visited Bahrain and Mauritius, which were not in that list. But they too needed mangroves and we

are helping them too; 10 countries in all. In another three months, the work will begin in these countries.

For me, every promise has to lead to action.

How exhausting was your year? Everybody knows you sleep very little, but even then, this would have been another level.

It's a backbreaking job but I wasn't tired for one moment; we've been travelling from country to country, city to city, taking flights at odd hours,

sometimes managing sleep only for 2–3 hours at a stretch, but touch wood, I'm not tired one bit. And best of all, Rashi matched me step by step. She went to almost every project... just missing maybe two or four.

Will it be a relief to get back home?

While I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of my job, I am looking forward to July 1, to return home, not to rest, but to start the work we have promised. With each step you take, you learn so much, the vision becomes broader, thinking becomes bigger, your horizon expands. So I am waiting to come back and begin the work.

Jennifer Jones is going to be the first woman RI president; what strengths do you think she will bring to the job?

She is full of ideas and a very warm person and that's what Rotarians need. When she goes anywhere, she will go down from the podium, meet and greet everyone... Rotarians want that, they don't want you to be in an ivory tower. She will do well. ■



RC Sambalpur gifts the city a mother & child hospital

Jaishree

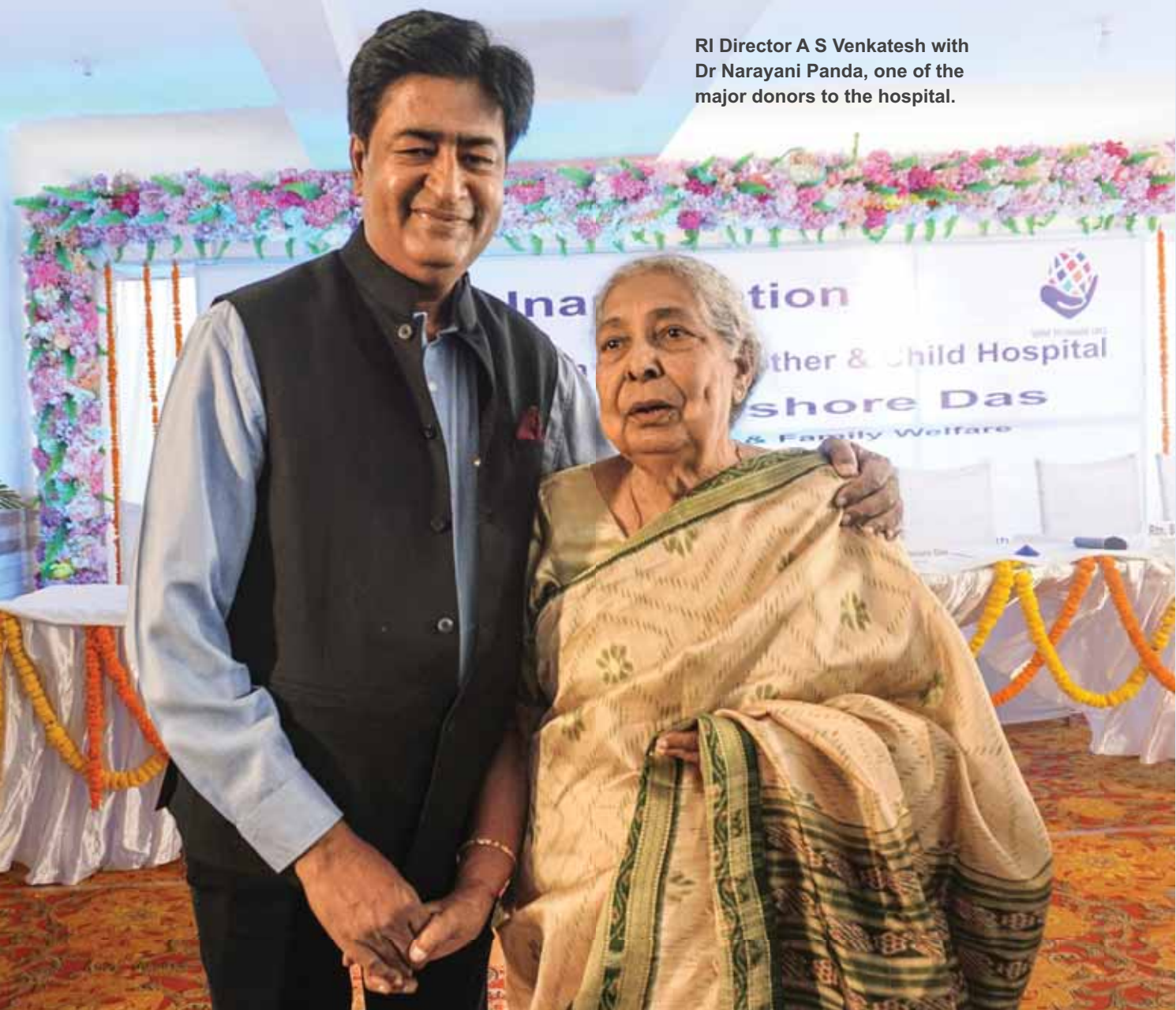
April 27 was a special day for the members of RC Sambalpur, RID 3261, when their 11-year-long dream — the S N Rotary Mother and Child Care Hospital — was inaugurated by Odisha

health minister Naba Kishore Das in the presence of RI Director AS Venkatesh and DG Sunil Phatak.

The four-storey hospital was completed this year after facing several challenges which were overcome by the

never-say-die attitude and generosity of the club members. Venkatesh made a special note of this when he honoured the donors at a special programme the previous evening. “It shows the power of collective charity. The power of one

RI Director A S Venkatesh with Dr Narayani Panda, one of the major donors to the hospital.



person is just one person but when 10 of us join together it is not 10, but it is 100. Rotary elevates your ability to contribute to society by leveraging the power of collective charity which is greater than the sum of its parts,” he observed. The construction cost of the hospital is ₹5 crore.

Congratulating club member PDG Dr Ashok Singh who, as DG in 2012, had mooted the idea of setting up the hospital though the club lacked the resources, he said, “Richness is not measured by one’s wealth or net worth, rather it is defined by what comes from one’s heart. What good is your wealth when it is not going to benefit the less privileged? I congratulate all of you for all that you have given — money, time, energy and knowledge — towards making this memorable building. Although you may not see the beneficiaries, their blessings and good wishes will certainly reach you.” He urged the club to include a geriatric ward in the hospital. “Aging population is increasing and geriatric care is the need of the hour,” he added.



From L: DGND Akhil Mishra, DG Sunil Phatak, Jatindar Singh, past president, RC Sambalpur City, RI Director Venkatesh, Dr Narayani Panda and PDG Subhash Sahu.

Genesis

“Today it is a Rotary moment for all of us. Eleven years ago, when as DGE I was asked at a press meet what I will do for Sambalpur, I announced that maybe I will build a hospital. It is god’s work and he sent several angels to help us complete his work,” said PDG Dr Singh.

Recollecting the early days, he added, “When I floated the idea in my club and hesitantly asked if anyone can donate land for the hospital, pat came the assurance from Dr Raseswari Panigrahi who gave her land without a second thought.” She is a former MLA and head of Gynaecology at VIMSAR, Sambalpur. “Soon after that I had 16 angels who contributed ₹1 lakh each.”

But this was not sufficient to make the club’s dream a reality. The architect quoted ₹5.5 crore as construction cost and ₹2.5 lakh as his fee. Singh then got in touch with a Rotary club in Switzerland (RID 1980) that had earlier partnered with RC Berhampur and a global grant partnership was struck based on the previous working relationship. But as GG does not allow funding of construction work, the club members scouted for funds from various sources for the building. Money started coming in and a trust was formed with the 16 donors as founder trustees and Raseswari as its chairperson.

Dr Singh laid the foundation stone for the hospital in June 2013 and the core building was completed in less than two years. But due to further cash crunch the project was put on hold until



PDG Ashok Singh with club members Dr Narayani Panda (L) and Dr Raseswari Panigrahi.



DG Phatak lights the lamp in the presence of (from R) Anil Kumar Singh, head, Jindal Steel Works (Sambalpur), RI Director Venkatesh, club president Bikram Senapati, Odisha health minister Naba Kishore Das, Dr Raseswari Panigrahi and Dr Narayani Panda.

help came in the form of club member Dr Narayani Panda, a gynaecologist, who has contributed ₹85 lakh so far.

Both Raseswari and Narayani are the oldest women members, having joined the club in the early 1990s when women in Rotary were a rarity. “They are the true architects and backbone of my club,” said Singh. In addition to the land, Raseswari had contributed

₹10 lakh for the hospital. At least 15 members of her family have also provided financial support.

“Rotary in Odisha is vibrant. We have been working hard to give a shape to this hospital and today it boasts of best medical care for underprivileged women in the surrounding areas,” said Raseswari; 85-year-old Narayani wants “to see a baby born in this hospital.”

The hospital project has attracted generous contributions from Rotarians and past governors of other Rotary districts, and even a Lions member! Many of the donors are Singh’s school/college mates or childhood friends. “These people had blind faith in me, my club and the project. Their individual financial support varies from ₹5,000 to ₹30 lakh,” he smiles.

The hospital will provide free medical care to women and children and is the only hospital in the vicinity with advanced facilities. It is self-contained with a maternity and a paediatric ward, a sophisticated OT, an NICU and labs. Within a week of its inauguration

patients have started flocking in and “they are happy with the diagnosis and facilities.”

Health minister Naba Kishore Das, commending the facility, said, “it is a boon for the people of Sambalpur and western Odisha.” He urged club president Bikram Senapati to include it in the government’s Swastha Kalyan Yojana scheme so that more people will benefit. Singh requested the minister to allot land for the club to set up an old age home and a hospice in the neighbouring town, Jharsuguda or anywhere in the state.

Every contribution, big or small, has been important for the success of this project, said DG Phatak. He is happy with the hat-trick, for, three global grant projects — the hospital, a mobile eye clinic of RC Rourkela Queens, and a WinS project at a gurukul done by RC Sambalpur Central — were inaugurated during the director’s maiden visit to the district.

What good is your wealth when
it is not going to benefit the
less privileged? I congratulate
all of you for all that you have
given towards making this
memorable building.

A S Venkatesh
RI Director

Pictures by Jaishree

Dakoju auctions Benz for ₹42 lakh, donates ₹50 lakh to TRF

Rasheeda Bhagat



Ravishankar Dakoju with
PDG Dr Sameer Hariani.

When ace donor to TRF, Ravishankar Dakoju, now a member of RC Bangalore, committed to donate ₹100 crore to TRF, he had also announced soon thereafter that he would auction his Mercedes Benz car, then barely a year old, and donate the amount to the Foundation. Neither he nor his wife Paola was using the car, which had done a mileage of less than 3,000km.

“But then the Covid pandemic hit us all, and I wasn’t able to put the car through an auction, and the value of the car was also coming down,” he told *Rotary News*.

Asked why he was not using the car, Dakoju said, “After my donation to TRF, I had a better

vision for and purpose in life, and I found all such luxuries to be actually a nuisance. I found that to use the Benz, I’d have to take a watchman along with me, as many a time people try to pull out the Benz emblem, or scratch it, and security for the car was a huge issue. Nobody bothered about what vehicle I travelled in — any Uber car, auto or Maruti 800 — only recognising me for the kind of work I had done. And it was only giving 5 to 6km a litre.”

To my surprised look, he responds, “Yes, I am a *kanjoos*, I buy most things second hand. I also found that my wife wasn’t using it either. Once she asked me angrily: ‘why aren’t you using the car; what’s the point in just

keeping it like that. So I felt I was blocking a part of my wealth, which could be put to better use.”

Once he had taken the decision, the rest should have been easy, but for the pandemic. As the value of the unused car was falling, Dakoju sought the help of PRID Panduranga Setty, a member and mentor of RC Bangalore, and “he helped me auction the car.”

The car fetched a price of ₹42 lakh; the philanthropist characteristically added an additional ₹8 lakh, and has donated the amount of ₹50 lakh to TRF. “I have given this money on the condition that the Foundation should use it only for environment, our latest area of focus,” he added. ■



Past RI President K R Ravindran (third from R) and Vanathy (second from L) participating in the solidarity walk. PDG Gowri Rajan is on the right.

Sri Lanka's Rotarians demand good governance

Rasheeda Bhagat



Rotarians, their families and Rotaractors of Sri Lanka, RI District 3220, took out a procession in Colombo recently in the crisis-ridden island nation to demand good and corruption free governance from the country's politicians. Addressing a press conference, in which past RI president KR Ravindran participated, the Rotarians also called upon the state, private and public sectors to be accountable and transparent. They shared details of what Rotary has done to alleviate the suffering of the people during the present crisis.

The conference was addressed by Ravindran, DG Aruni Malalasekera, Dr Rohantha Athukorala (district advisor-Public Image), DG-elect Pubudu De Zoysa, and other leaders. After the press conference, the Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interactors began their solidarity walk. "We have a stake in Sri Lanka, we have spent billions of rupees in service projects to improve the lives of our people," Ravindran told the reporters.

He said that laws have to be brought in where those engaged in corruption, be they parliamentarians, corporate leaders or ordinary citizens, would be sentenced to life imprisonment and their assets confiscated. Spelling out the essence of the Rotary 4-Way Test, he said, "We Rotarians want good governance in the country. We are looking for governance where the government is dishing out truth, is fair to all concerned, will promote goodwill amongst communities, which is ethical and beneficial to all. We want governments which can give us freedom of expression, freedom from want, freedom to pray to whatever god we wish and freedom from fear."

Responding to queries that Rotary is an apolitical organisation and that the Rotarians walking in solidarity could be seen as going against the principles



of Rotary, NR Gajendran, chairman-College of Governors, said Rotary's philosophy is peace, goodwill and world understanding. "Can you have peace if you don't have food, medicine or diesel or petrol to travel? This country is our home, this is our life and livelihood. We are standing up for the humanitarian aspect of this crisis. This is not politics. We are standing up for our rights and showing solidarity."

Dr Athukorala expressed concern that poverty levels would rise due to the current crisis. Quoting from recent research, he said it showed that 5.8 million people in Sri Lanka are almost close to poverty levels, and it was the duty of Rotarians to stand up and do something about such humanitarian crises.

Rotary to the rescue

DGE Pubudu gave details of how Rotary was helping out the distressed people across the island nation. "We have been able to procure medicines needed through our international Rotary network. We get the urgently required

list of medicines from the government and are able to procure them through Rotary clubs overseas." Dr Athukorala said that Rotary was planning to give jobs to 2,000 recent graduates and also bring in 500 scholarships from overseas worth ₹2 billion. "We are working closely with the government on programmes to facilitate the development of soft skills in the youth so that we can prevent brain drain," he said.

"We are losing hope for future"

The 9,000-odd Rotaractors of the island nation of Sri Lanka are closely observing the development in their country and many of them took an active role in the solidarity march. Talking about the contribution of Rotaract to the country, DRR Akila Wijetunga said, "Rotaract always makes an effort to better the lives of others and give them hope. But at this point, we are losing hope for our own future. This is the time for us to stand up and raise our voices seeking justice for our future. This is why we thought we would join this walk for solidarity with Rotary." ■

Hurts to see Ukraine bleed

Rajendra Saboo

The Ukraine war is devastatingly painful and endless, wrecking cities and lives. I have visited Kiev twice, once immediately after the Berlin Wall fell and again when the country was rapidly developing. I feel pained because of the connect with Ukraine and its people.

On May 8, 1992, as the president of Rotary International, my wife and I reached Kiev to formally introduce Rotary. Since there was no air connection, we travelled on a ship accompanied by some US Rotarians who had sponsored the first club in Ukraine. We stayed on the ship.

The next day at the Kiev palace gala banquet, I presented the charter of the new Rotary Club of Kiev to president Vladimir Kulik, in the presence of District Governor Aarne Valikangas from Finland and the founding members, including John Hewko, now general secretary of Rotary International. Also present was John's father Lubomyr Hewko, who had helped establish the club. Rotary clubs from the UK and Canada supported various service projects supplying medical equipment to Ukraine's hospitals, assisting victims of the Chernobyl disaster and volunteering doctors

for eye, dental and ENT surgeries. In 1996, the Rotary Club of Kyiv organised immunisation of 4 million children to make the country polio-free.

With Ukraine's independence, the name changed from Kiev to Kyiv. Legend states that three brothers — Kyi, Shchek and Khoryv — established the city. Kyiv took its name from the eldest brother Kyi.

Twenty years after our first visit, I was in Kyiv in 2012, for a Rotary conference as the chief guest.

We visited many projects. One continues to be a constant in my memory, the Children's Cardiac

I feel pained because of the connect with Ukraine and its people. Watching the ruins of their progress, my heart bleeds.



PRIP Rajendra Saboo and Usha (seated, left) with Rotarians in Ukraine in 1992. RI General Secretary John Hewko and his wife Margarita are seen standing on the extreme right, and his father Rtn Lubomyr Hewko is seen standing fourth from right.

Centre, managed by Rotarian Illya M Yemetz as its director. The centre's highlight was the world's first open-heart surgery using antilog umbilical cord blood and also the first simultaneous open-heart and liver tumour surgery, and then Ukraine's first neonatal Ross II operation. Not only the health sector, but also technology, communications, computers and industrial manufacturing were advancing.

The conference was held in the Kyiv Doll Theatre and the evening was on a motorboat to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Rotary Club of Kyiv. It was enjoyable witnessing the progress over two decades as 46 Rotary clubs have been added.

Rotary International has collected millions of dollars to help the victims of this senseless war.

I close with thoughts of a beautiful Ukraine and its people. Watching the ruins of their progress, my heart

bleeds. The great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko says: 'In Ukraine, my own land; A fair land and wide.' And from his *My Testament*: 'And in the great new family; The family of

the free; With softly spoken, kindly word; Remember also me.'

The writer is a past RI president

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Rotary facilitates dialysis for 300 patients

Team Rotary News

RC Mira Road, RID 3141, launched the 'A dialysis a day' health service, in association with the Bhakti Vedanta Hospital, in February commemorating Rotary's 117th anniversary. The club has committed dialysis procedures for 300 patients and cataract

surgeries for 35 patients with support from Fab-tech, a metal construction company.

Project chairman Deepak Chawla helped in identifying the patients for dialysis and cataract surgery, and club member Sanjiv Gandhi brought in the CSR partner. ■



Rtn. W.M. Nirmal Raghavan
District Governor 2021 - 22

Rotary



GLIMPSES OF

"Ezhuchi" District Conference



RID A S Venkatesh & PDG Sv.Rm Abirami Ramanathan
as Chief Guests and PDG Rajani Mukerji &
Ballari Mukerji as RI President Representative

"Chithirai Kondatam"
Tamil cultural Fest



Biggest gathering of the year , nearly 4000
Rotarians along with their family members
participated in the Tamil culture Fest.

Educating Rotarians



Conducted RLI for more than
300 Rotarians in current year

Vergalukku Vandhanam



Recognition of Rotarians for their
25 years of Rotary service



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

DISTRICT 3231

Woman Empowerment



Various women empowerment programs were conducted and honoured empowered women of the society

Go Green Initiative



Plantation and Bamboo Seeds Sowing by all the clubs

Rotary Institute "MAHABS 2021"



Honoured as Venue Chairman by RI President Shekhar Mehta at the Rotary Institute

Plastic Free Awareness Rally



Conducted Plastic Free Awareness Program along with District Collector and Superintendent of police at Ranipet revenue district

Breast prosthesis for cancer survivors

Kiran Zehra

She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2019 and “struggled with the shock that one of my breasts would be removed. I wasn’t thinking about the pain as much as I was thinking about the embarrassment... my body was never going to

look normal again,” says Dipmala Chipode, a 29-year-old breast cancer survivor from Nashik, Maharashtra. Post-surgery her doctor asked her if she would want to try a knitted knocker, a handmade breast prosthesis for women who have undergone mastectomy,

lumpectomy, and radiation. “I said yes immediately!”

RC Nasik Grapecity, RID 3030, in association with RC Akola, is making available these breast prostheses at 12 cancer hospitals in Nashik and Akola. “When it comes to breast cancer the rehabilitation is inchoate,” says Dr Aabha Pimprikar, a club member. As a clinical research coordinator at Curie Manavata Cancer Centre, Nashik, “I see the sad plight of these women. My research led me to understand that not only do they go through unimaginable pain but also silently suffer the stress of ‘not being able to look like a woman’ post-surgery. Not only does the surgery leave a scar but the trauma lasts for life.”

Members of the Saaisha India Foundation making the knitted knockers.





From R: Dr Aabha Pimprikar, DGN Asha Venugopal, club secretary Jayant Khairnar, club president Anil Deshmukh, DGE Dr Anand Jhunjunwala, club member Dr Shailesh Bondarde and treasurer Rajan Pillai promoting the breast cancer prosthesis.

Post mastectomy, women go through pain and suffer the stress of not looking feminine.

The trauma lasts for life.

Dr Aabha Pimprikar
member, RC Nasik Grapecity

Coming from poor, rural backgrounds these women cannot afford silicone prostheses. “It takes about a year for a surgical scar to heal completely. But to create an illusion of a full breast immediately after surgery, some women stuff handkerchiefs, paper, or cotton in their bra,” says Aabha and adds that post-surgery this may lead to infection.

“After undergoing this surgery, it is humiliating to be made fun of or treated like an

outcast because people think we are cursed,” says Dipmala adding that she did not want to talk to anybody about it because “I did not want to be laughed at.” All thanks to the knitted knockers she feels “confident and I’m able to attend weddings and religious celebrations wearing a sari and a blouse.”

When compared to the traditional breast prosthetics, the knitted knockers are soft and comfortable and can be worn within two months of surgery, says Aabha. “They can give a woman her figure back and at the same time make her feel confident and whole again.”

The clubs have partnered with Saaisha India Foundation, a Mumbai-based NGO, to source prostheses that are made by avid and experienced crocheters and knitters. The NGO is registered with *Knittedknockers.org* of the US and the knockers are made from patterns specified by them but designed to local needs.

In the initial phase of the project, close to 10 pairs of knockers were distributed in two major cancer hospitals in Nashik. The positive response from the patients and the support from the hospitals, got the clubs to think of scaling up the project. It was later undertaken as an RID 3030 project and clubs across the district have so far distributed 6,000 knockers.

Users have confirmed that besides being soft and eco-friendly, the prosthetic has provided them comfort, and confidence and helped improve their posture, says Aabha. “When we started, we had a very small number in mind and never thought it would become a district-level project. Now we get frequent calls from hospitals requesting some more knockers,” she smiles.

The project was inaugurated by DGE Dr Anand Jhunjunwala in the presence of DGN Asha Venugopal, who is advocating this project throughout the district. ■

RID 3291 DisCon

Team Rotary News

RI District 3291 has conducted 2,500 self-defence workshops under Project *Virangana* which may be showcased at a global level for other clubs to replicate, said RI President Shekhar Mehta addressing the two-day district conference titled *Adhibeshan* in Kolkata. He praised DG Prabir Chatterjee for his “outstanding work in changing the lives of people”.

Stating his vision to make India 100 per cent literate by 2027, Mehta said, “if we all work together, nothing is impossible.

Once no one thought that polio could be eradicated from the world, but Rotary took it as a challenge and now polio is almost extinct.” Rotarians have a bigger role than the government to make India literate, he said and recalled that an MoU was signed with the Central government for broadcasting e-learning through its regional language channels.

Also, heart surgery will be done on 100 children from Uganda by Mumbai clubs. He urged Rotarians to contribute generously to the Foundation.

In his speech, RIPR Mario Cesar Martins De Camargo from Brazil (RID 4420) said Rotarians in India are doing great work with “their boots on the ground,” and noted that DG Chatterjee has initiated a number of projects across all the focus areas of Rotary. “Rotary is growing fast in India,” he observed.

Rotary Day of Service

Giving the major highlights of the district projects, DG Chatterjee said all the clubs showcase their mega events and programmes at the Rotary Day of Service which RID 3291 holds every month. “Virangana sessions are also being organised for all Rotarians of the district. Project *Hariyali* has planted around two lakh saplings in and around Kolkata; over 1,000 units of blood was collected in blood donation camps; 5,000 school bags have been distributed so far; and blankets and footwear were given to women at rehabilitation homes,” he said. In a joint project with RID 3240, a school was inaugurated for less privileged students and another one is under construction in which 1,000 girl students will be given free boarding, he added.

“So far, the district clubs have sponsored 29,000 eye surgeries and are holding awareness camps for HIV-positive children, paediatric cancer and thalassaemia patients; 200 toilets were built in villages; and heart surgeries are being done free of cost for poor children in the district. “A foundation was laid by Mehta for a 650-bed multi-specialty Rotary Techno India Hospital in Kolkata which was a proud moment for our Rotarians.” In a first-of-its-kind, wellness cards were



RI President Shekhar Mehta with RIPR Mario Cesar Martins De Camargo (fifth from L), his wife Denis and DG Prabir Chatterjee (second from L).



Former Lt Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi being felicitated by DG Chatterjee in the presence of (from L) PDG Rajani Mukerji, RIPR De Camargo, PDG Ravi Sehgal and Rubena Chatterjee.

given to all Rotarians, Rotaractors and their families to avail medical services at discounts.

President Mehta flagged off polio awareness rallies at the conference. Earlier, PDGs, club presidents, Rotaractors and Interactors welcomed the Rotary president, accompanied

by RIPR De Camargo and his spouse Denis; RIDN Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury and his spouse Shipra; and DG Chatterjee and his spouse Rubena.

Discon sessions

During the two-day conclave, a number of interesting sessions and

discussions were held. PDG Gurjeet Singh Sekhon, RID 3070, led the session on membership growth and retention; former IPS officer Rina Mitra spoke on women's empowerment; Rtn Utpal Chatterjee gave a talk on vocational service; and Rotaractors presented a video on youth service.

Former IAF officer Toolika Rani shared her experience of climbing Mount Everest. Dr Debasish Das, RID 3240, dwelt on the importance of giving to TRF; Dr Rajib Handique focused on peacebuilding; PDG Uttam Ganguly chaired a session on polio eradication; and Rotary's public image session was moderated by PDG Deepak Shikarpur, RID 3131. Former Lt Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi was felicitated with the Nari Shakti Puraskar Award. The entire programme was anchored by Dr Arabinda Ray and Poulami Neogi. Conference chair Hariram Garg welcomed the delegates.■



Computers donated to rural schools near Chennai

Giving a boost to digital education, RC Mahindra Industrial City, RID 3231, donated computers to three government schools in the rural belt, and has undertaken to train students in soft skills. Over 1,000 students would benefit at the government school in Kattankolathur; Panchayat Union Primary School, Thimmavaram in Chengalpet; and Panchayat Union Middle School, Pandithapattu at Tiruvannamalai.

The students were excited to type their names in the computer," said R Karthick, club trainer.■





Rtn Shekhar Mehta
RI President



Rtn Ramesh Meher
District Governor

Jeevan a historical confer

Dear DG Rameshji,

It gives me great pleasure to have been the RIPR to your honoured District Conference on board the cruise ship from May 7–9, 2022. Mamta and me are happy with the prompt attention bestowed on us and the impeccable arrangements at the conference on board the ship. I was very touched with your gesture to host us for dinner in Mumbai on Friday evening, despite your preoccupation and long drive from Nashik.

The specially composed melody, *Jeevan Jashna hai*, played at the inaugural session of the conference vibed well with the occasion. The sessions were conducted flawlessly and crisply with zero time lag or wastage. Through your speech we came to know important and relevant facts about the achievements of your district. My compliments for the milestones achieved in membership growth and TRF contributions. Most apt to the name *Jeevan Jashna*, the session was held in a joyful, warm and celebratory spirit. I have not seen any conference held in such an atmosphere before.

The next morning we began early with a CoG meet and the discussions and interaction were useful and impressive. It was a privilege for me to meet each and every past leader, who were truly PDGs — Pearls, Diamonds, and Gems — of Rotary. It was also wonderful to see the future leadership of DGE Anand Jhunjhunwala, DGN Asha Venugopal and DGND Rajinder Khurana absolutely ready to lead and continue the work of Rotary. My best wishes to them.

The conference had a galaxy of star speakers on a variety of subjects. Dr Prajakta Kolapkar and Dr Abhijeet Sonavne mesmerised us with their immense dedication of service to underprivileged. Dr Hitendra Mahajan of your own district was an inspiration. The popularity of Dhananjay Deshpande who spoke on cybercrime was evident at the conference; he was holding mini sessions at several tables long after the official session was over. And of course the ultimate crown in the jewel was Rakesh Bedi, the popular film actor. With his humour, wit and charm, he was immensely loved by all. The closing poems and lines from him were truly memorable. A special mention of the evening fellowships on both days — a fantastic display of Rotary bonding and celebration and the joy of being together. DG Rameshji, the District Conference was not

just an official function, it was your dream, fulfilled with lot of effort despite trials and problems at every step. You could achieve an attendance of 748, which few could have expected. Many congratulations, this was a pioneering step from you, probably the first time a District Conference was held on a cruise ship. My appreciations to Shardaji, Neha, Conference chair PP Suresh Shinde, Conference secretary Seema Pachhade, district secretary PP Vijay Tijare, host club president Pradeep Pachhade and the others who gave us so much love, respect and care. Our aides PP Virendra and Rachana Patrikar were simply outstanding in their constant assistance and care throughout. We will forever cherish the beautiful memories of *Jeevan Jashna* and of our bonding with RI district 3030.

I hope that our relationship will build with new opportunities for service and fellowship.

With warm regards

Ajay Agarwal

Past District Governor, RID 3291



Jashna ence of RID 3030



DG Ramesh ji and Sharda,

It was an honour for us to represent RI President Shekhar Mehta and the First Lady Rashi. Hope we did justice to our given assignment. Rotary is a unique organisation. Along with service opportunity, it paves the way for its members to meet new people. We too forged some long lasting association with many of you, while attending your District Conference, "Jeevan Jashna". For me it turned out as a real "Jashna", where I interacted with many remarkable and accomplished people. The unique experience of attending a conference on a cruise was a first for me. It all began with marching with the CoGs and I noticed that minute details were well taken care of, most importantly the time! The proceedings moved smartly and as per the time allotted. I loved the theme song of your district. It has beautiful lyrics and is melodious too. I am happy that I could spend time with many Rotarians and it was a great pleasure to share views with them on Rotary and otherwise. The clubs are doing immensely well and the club leaders are highly motivated and committed to Rotary's ideals. The food, fellowship, accommodation, entertainment — all of it were so

good. Ramesh ji, I came to know of a different side of you, when you became emotional. I was equally impressed by your humility and I also noticed your personal involvement in everything. You were present at the time of boarding and also disembarkation. You even joined your members during fellowship and shook a leg with them. Sharda, you proved to be a great support to Ramesh ji. I saw you guiding the MCs as well, to make sure that all goes well. You beautifully shouldered the responsibilities of your partner, and allowed him to give his 100% as DG. The credit for this successful event goes to you too. Please convey my warm regards to all PDGs and their partners, incoming DGs and First ladies, conference chairman and his team for taking good care of me. I never felt alone or otherwise. Virendra and Rachna, our aides were with us like a shadow and were a big help. The staff of the cruise were cordial too. All in all, I was happy that I could be a part of this adventurous event. I enjoyed every bit of it and can rate this conference as A++!!

With my best wishes to both of you,

Mamta Agarwal



President Mehta strikes a nostalgic note at Hyderabad conference

Rasheeda Bhagat

Thanks to the incredible work done by you, Rotarians, our membership (in this zone) has increased by a net 19,213, which is equivalent to the total growth Rotary in India has had over the last five years. And we have two more months left before the year ends. The total membership in South Asia stands at 184,000, just 16,000 short of the magic mark of 200,000."

With these gung-ho words, RI President Shekhar Mehta set the tone of the inaugural session at the RI presidential conference in Hyderabad. Congratulating the governors for this tremendous feat, he said an addition

of 20,000 new members to the Rotary family would mean an additional contribution of a whopping ₹11.25 crore or \$1.5 million to the Rotary exchequer every year, year after year." Add to this a contribution from our region of nearly ₹22 crore or \$3 million to TRF. And the growth of Rotaract in South Asia too is nothing short of miraculous; till today, for this year, the figure is 23,000 Rotaractors."

Congratulating the conference convener and past director Kamal Sanghvi and conference chair PDG Ravi Vadlamani for pulling off "a spectacular event with a participation of 3,000 Rotarians, which makes it the second

biggest event in the Rotary world this year"... the biggest will of course be the RI convention in Houston, he added that the work done by the Rotarians of South Asia is "matchless".

"All these new members will help us do more and grow more. The work we have done over the years is outstanding and unparalleled. I do not exaggerate when I say Rotary in India is the Kohinoor in the crown of Rotary International. Just consider the numbers.... in the last 10 years we've done 20,000 heart surgeries, 200,000 eye surgeries, constructed over 100 hospitals across India, and we run over 50 blood banks. And we have done surgeries



for over 7,000 polio-affected children, conducted scores of medical camps and treated lakhs of people.”

Mehta added that when it came to combating the Covid pandemic, Rotarians of India were in the forefront. “Our fight against Covid has been exemplary with a contribution of ₹105 crore to the PM Cares Fund and projects double that amount on the ground. Thousands of oxygen concentrators and a few thousand hospital beds were donated and some amazing stories of service to people across India were created. Our work in disaster management through shelter kits is path-breaking; we have served over 70,000 disaster victims in the last 20 disasters in India.”

Indian Rotarians’ work in other areas of focus has been as impressive too. “RILM has become a name to reckon with both in the corridors of



RI President Mehta, Rashi, Sonal and Conference convener PRID Sanghvi.

power as well as service. Millions of children benefit everyday through our e-content broadcast through the PM’s e-Vidya and other channels. Our initiative in empowering girls has been innovative and impactful and I credit the governors for this work. The water and sanitation work has also been enormous and thousands of check dams, rejuvenation of water bodies, thousands of WinS programmes in schools, all tell the story of dedication of Rotarians in South Asia.”

The crowing glory, the RI president added, was that despite the eradication of polio from India in 2011 and being certified polio free in 2014,

“we relentlessly contribute to the polio eradication programmes.”

The generosity of Rotarians has ensured that India has been the second largest contributor to TRF for several years. “If *Grow More, Do More* is to be seen at its best, it is here. This presidential conference is a celebration of *Service Above Self* and work in seven areas of focus.”

Mehta said Rotary instills in people the desire to change lives and it is here that “I got the mantra of my life — *Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy in this world.*” But service was not his mission when he joined Rotary at the age of 25; “Just married to the love of my life Rashi, life was on a roll, I was leading a happy family life, blissfully unaware of the issues the others were facing.” It was only when he got involved with his Rotary club did he start understanding the meaning of the word ‘service’, caring



Left: RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi, along with RIDs Virpi Honkala, A S Venkatesh, Conference convener PRID Kamal Sanghvi and chair Ravi Vadlamani, honouring a Rotary India Hero Award recipient Maya Vishwakarma. Also seen (from left): Rajyalakshmi Vadlamani, Dr Amita Kotbagi, TRF Trustee Aziz Memon and PDG Dr Zameer Pasha (extreme R).

for others, sharing with others. “Going from village after village, I realised we make such a big fuss over little things which are only a dream for these people living just 50km from our homes.”

Striking a poignant note, the RI president said: “We often wonder how high the ceiling in our homes should be, but when Rashi and I visited homes in several villages, we couldn’t even stand straight in those huts. We didn’t like getting into a shower without hot running water, whereas these people had no toilets in their homes. We wonder whether our water is boiled or filtered; they drank water from the pond where they and their buffaloes bathed together. Rashi and I often discussed how big the campus should be in our children’s school, but the village children’s school often functioned under a tree. Soon I realised that there were two worlds; mine was a comfortable one, and just 50km away, comfort was just a dream. And in between lay my Rotary club which was trying to serve to change lives.”

Rotary also gave him leadership opportunities. Spelling out in detail the path of service he had taken in Rotary, Mehta said, “I became a club president at 29, district governor at 39, RI director at 49 and RI president at 59. But I always believed that leadership is service and not a position. Each milestone in leadership gave me opportunities for bigger projects and my horizon expanded constantly.”

The crux of this was to find solutions for problems; “the bigger the problem the greater the challenge and satisfaction of helping the community and the country. We set up some crazy goals 10 years back, such as 5,000 heart surgeries. I am happy to share we’ve done 20,000 instead of 5,000. We wanted to set up 50 eye hospitals,



Above: Rashi Mehta and Sonal Sanghvi with students who received Tablets.

I don’t know how many we did set up, but I was involved in setting up 19.”

Among the other achievements of Rotary in this zone was setting up the shelter kit programme “which has become a premium disaster management programme in India.”

In making India literate “we might have started with baby steps but we have taken giant leaps. As the size of the projects became bigger, so did the horizon of my work; the programmes became bigger and it became a complete circle of service.”

Along the way, hundreds of “DGs, PDGs, and thousands of Rotarians joined to make the projects bigger to change more lives. This buoyed my confidence to go ahead and I started meeting heads of state and designing large projects, which were not just national but international as well.”

When he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, “as I was departing, he said: ‘Go and serve the world; in India, please work on the nutrition of

women.’ Here was the PM of the country, having faith in the work of Rotary.”

This year had been a gamechanger year for Rashi and him; “we have already visited over 30 countries, covered more than a few lakh km, every third day we were in a new country, losing track of the day, week, and even the month, as we travelled. It’s a back-breaking job but also one of the best jobs on the planet. The joy of meeting thousands of diverse people in every part of the world, getting their love, affection, respect, seeing service at its best, gives greater pride and inspires me to do even more.”

As they traversed through different nations and met over 25 heads of state and senior officials, “I offered to do service projects for them on behalf of Rotary. In Uganda, I offered the president that we will be happy to do heart surgery for 10 Ugandan children. The first children are today (April 29) in Mumbai in RID 3141.”

When he met the president of Seychelles, he promised to do 50 free



heart operations for 50 of their children. “I didn’t know who would do it; I just had to put one message in the official group of DGs, many hands were raised and finally all the 50 surgeries will be done in Nagpur, RID 3030. We also offered to set up eye hospitals, blood banks, toilets etc. Every opportunity I got, I tried to convert it into action for service.”

At the Glasgow climate summit, he was fortunate to lead a roundtable discussion, and there “I committed that Rotary would work on setting up mangroves in 12 countries; work has started in many countries, including our own.”

All the world leaders
acknowledged and praised the
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complimenting each one of you.

Shekhar Mehta
RI President

Mehta said that once “firm resolve and commitment are displayed, even the high and mighty will want to work with you.” He met Prince Charles in London and “he showed keen interest in working with Rotary in India for empowering girls. The president of Kenya was so happy when I offered on behalf of Rotary to set up eye hospitals in Kenya. Each of these world leaders acknowledged and praised the work of Rotary; I was just the face in front of them, they were complimenting each one of you.”

The RI president concluded by saying that though he was very lucky to get the opportunity to serve so many communities through Rotary, “but as exciting a journey it has been, I will be happy to be back with all of you on July 1, because there is so much more work that needs to be done here.”

Addressing the inaugural session, conference convener and past RI Director Kamal Sanghvi said every generation has its own share of doomsday pandits, and this time too lots of warnings were sounded about the pandemic doing its worst. “And yet, we are all here for this wonderful event. Humanity keeps surviving and growing in consciousness because we Rotarians sincerely believe we can make the world a better place because the past is history, tomorrow is a mystery but today is a gift. And we believe our future will be better than the past.”

To ensure this, “we Rotarians will have to become catalysts for a much better future. Life is constantly evolving, changing. Something is dying, something is being born... to protect yourself from the dangers of tomorrow is to miss the beauty that is existing now.” Maintaining that the Covid pandemic had its own set of positives, Sanghvi said, “for the last two years, while fighting with

the invisible, we have all started making so many positive changes to our lives, which we had ignored for a long time. This pandemic has finally filled in so many gaps in our lives... particularly in relationships. Nature is healing, and got time to breathe because of minimum movement of human beings and vehicles. We saw flamingos in Bombay, and the Himalayas were seen from Jalandhar in Punjab. Delhi started having crisp blue skies. Nature reflects man; if we love the world, the world gives back three times that love. That’s why Rotary has survived and thrived for 100 years, but it has to keep changing... evolving. Change is always good, it invigorates, excites, keeps us on our toes.”

But the fact remained that “change or the idea of it makes you feel unsafe, insecure and even unsure. But now is the time to embrace that which is difficult. Let us together bring about a change. Today the needs are numerous and more diverse.” To make the world a more equitable place, “we Rotarians have to tighten our belts and make the steep mountain climb.”

“Let us greet the new Rotary year with a sense of joyful anticipation. You have the power to create the coming year as you choose... unleash your imagination and choose the most exciting work and dedicate this conference to knowledge and service.”

Welcoming the delegates, conference chair PDG Ravi Vadlamani said following the “clarion call given by our world leader, RI President Shekhar Mehta, to do good in the world and *Serve to Change Lives*, we have done 10 projects (details in another article) of scale to celebrate this presidential conference.” Thanking the entire team involved in the projects, he said all of them were “large, sustainable projects which demonstrate the magic and power of Rotary.”

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Projects to commemorate the Hyderabad Presidential Conference

Rasheeda Bhagat

To celebrate the presidential conference in Hyderabad, 10 mega, sustainable projects including distribution of 500 bicycles, 500 classroom furniture, 500 sewing machines and 100 group handwash stations were launched by RI President Shekhar Mehta.

iCare- Empowering Girls- Everyone can change a life

In pursuance of RI President Shekhar Mehta's clarion call to empower girls/ women, Rotary Club of Hyderabad Deccan, partnered by RCs Lake District Moinabad, Secunderabad, Global

Champions and Hyderabad North, along with many other Rotary clubs, launched a mega project to help thousands of girls and women realise their dreams. The project named *iCare*, also involves Rotaractors.

Under this mega project, 500 bicycles were given to both school girls to empower them to reach their schools without any difficulty, and women anganwadi workers to help them reach their workplace without hassles.

Under the same project, 500 women were trained in sewing and given sewing machines so that they could make a livelihood by working from their own homes.

RILM partners with BYJU's

The Rotary India Literacy Mission has announced a partnership with BYJU's that provides personalised and interactive learning solutions to children, under which the latter will provide free educational content (Classes 4–12) to underprivileged children as part of a social initiative programme named **Education for All**. RILM has sponsored tablets provided by BYJU's, and eventually BYJU's will provide licences to beneficiaries free of cost to use these tablets. This outreach will touch the lives of underprivileged children across India and give a new start to a child's education.

This collaboration and technology will bridge the gap widened by the Covid pandemic between urban and rural children, and reach quality education to even those children living in the remote parts of India.

RILM and BYJU's will also jointly launch the crowdfunding platform Ketto and seek donations for the devices to be loaded with BYJU's e-learning content for underprivileged students.

Give hope, give a hand

For those born with an upper limb deformity, or who have lost an arm due to an accident, RI District 3150 is providing LN-4, a mechanical prosthetic hand.

These hands are imported from the US and are provided at no cost to beneficiaries from weaker sections of the community. The LN-4 distribution camp was conducted in April at the Malla Reddy University, Hyderabad,

RI President Shekhar Mehta interacts with a young recipient of a Rotary bicycle under the Project *iCare*.





President Mehta, RID Mahesh Kotbagi, RID A S Venkatesh, Conference Chair Ravi Vadlamani in front of the mammography van sponsored by RC Ameerpet. PDG Ramesh Vangala is seen second from right.

spread on a 100-acre campus. The Telangana government extended its support with the State Road Transport Corporation providing free transport to the beneficiaries at key points in the city. Over 700 recipients benefitted.

Project Pink Ribbon

Rotary Club of Ameerpet, Hyderabad, and RI District 3150 will focus on cancer prevention, especially in women, through the launch of community awareness programmes to combat cancer. Women will be trained about the risk factors, breast self-examination, and screening programmes for breast, cervical and oral cancer will be conducted.

Done in collaboration with the Malla Reddy Cancer Institute (MRCI),

the awareness and screening camps will be done in both urban and rural areas, benefitting about 25,000 women a year.

Subsequent treatment and major surgeries, radiotherapy or other follow up can be arranged by the support of the government under the Aarogyasri scheme which offers free treatment to the underprivileged in both government and private hospitals.

Van of Vision

From 2001 RC Guntur and other Rotary clubs in Hyderabad are regularly involved in avoidable blindness projects through eye camps for cataract surgeries. This long experience and interaction with thousands of patients convinced the Rotarians about the

urgent need for a mobile ophthalmic clinic. And a bus was converted into such a van, with different kinds of eyecare services offered. This van will serve the people of Guntur, Prakasam, Nellore and Telangana districts.

Rotary cardiac screening ambulance

Kadapa is considered the second poorest district in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. In partnership with the Suvarna Bharathi Charitable Trust, RC Kadapa launched a cardiac screening ambulance service, and underprivileged people with cardiac problems will be screened by qualified medical teams of the NGO. This global grant has as foreign partner Rotary clubs in Atlanta, RI District 6920.

Blood collection ambulance

The Puttur Rotary Campco Blood Bank was set up in 1998, and since then it has donated free blood to needy people in the region. Covid put a halt to blood collection camps, necessitating a blood collection ambulance which was organised by RC Puttur through a global grant with Finland clubs as foreign partners. This GG was facilitated by RI Director Virpi Honkala, who attended the Hyderabad conference.

Guru Nanak Medical Centre

For affordable pre and post-hospitalisation diagnostics and consultation, the Guru Nanak Medical Centre, a short walk away from the busy Secunderabad Railway Station, was refurbished and modernised to include sophisticated X-ray, ultrasonography, pathology and haematology labs. The polyclinic offers consultation in orthopaedics, physiotherapy, OBG, general medicine, dentistry and ENT.

The diagnostic charges are barely one-fourth of the prevalent commercial price, and the consultation fees nominal. Initially about 300 patients will be served everyday. RC Hyderabad Deccan, RID 3150, and RC Naperville, RID 6450, have partnered in this global grant project to set up this centre to provide the ambience and facilities of a corporate hospital at affordable rates. The

Ten mega projects including
distribution of 500 bicycles,
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RI President Shekhar Mehta.



President Mehta and Rashmi with Conference Chair Vadlamani and PDG J Abraham at the 500 sewing machines distribution project.

project adjoins a 15-bed dialysis centre set up by the same partners in 2016 and expanded this year. This dialysis centre has completed over 100,000 procedures, costing only ₹300 a session.

A Rotary Dialysis Centre in Guntur

Guntur, with a population of 5.4 million people, has only 148 dialysis machines, many of them in a state of disuse. The lack of adequate dialysis facility makes the service both rare and expensive. RC Hyderabad Deccan, with their successful experience of establishing dialysis centres, decided to set up a dialysis centre in the city, supported by RC Guntur and the Indian Red Cross Society. The result: a state-of-the-art 6,000 sqft, 12-bed facility. Named the Dr Chigurupati Nageswara Rao Rotary Dialysis Centre, it has been set up at the centrally located St Joseph's General Hospital. This centre will provide both affordable and free dialysis to the needy in a sustainable manner. The capacity will be doubled as the need increases; initially it will provide about 1,000 dialysis sessions in a month.

Healing Hearts

Congenital heart disease (CHD) has emerged as the most common birth

defect in India with over 240,000 children being born with such defect every year. Due to lack of timely detection and treatment, mainly due to affordability issues, CHD is a major cause of child mortality in our country; 25 per cent of children do not survive to see even their first birthday.

Project *Healing Hearts* aims to treat 2025 children from economically backward families suffering from CHD, by the year 2025, in partnership with Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Centres for Child Heart Care. A global grant with the participation of RC Guntur (RID 3150) as the host club, RC Fort Wayne (RID 6540), USA, as international partner and TRF, will fund surgery of 75 children at the hospital in Raipur in June.

Free wheelchair distribution

Rotary India Humanity Foundation will distribute free wheelchairs; 10,000 of these will be donated by the Cao Zhong Zhi Foundation to help the disabled from poor families. Preference will be given to nursing homes for the underprivileged and orphanages, institutions for the differently-abled, daycare centres and non-profit medical institutions. ■

Project Vignettes

Team Rotary News

RID 3142 releases special cancellation stamp



TRF Trustee Chair John Germ accepts the cancellation envelope from PDG Ashes Ganguly.

TRF Trustee Chair John Germ accepted a special Envelope and Cancellation released to commemorate the rural sanitation project Right-To-Go of RC Thane Hills, RID 3142. PDG Dr Ashes Ganguly presented the stamp to him at the CoL in Chicago, US.

Jacob John conferred Service Above Self Award



The RI Board of Directors recently conferred the Service Above Self Award on Dr T Jacob John, member of RC Vellore, RID 3231. He had served on the Polio 2005 Committee in 1984 and the PolioPlus Committee in 1985–87. From 1986–88 he served as a PolioPlus volunteer, travelling to Somalia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Cameroun and Sri Lanka.

Nigerian child gets gift of life



DG Rajendra Agarwal (second from R) with the Nigerian child and mother at the hospital.

Baby Queen Esther, a Nigerian child was successfully treated for paediatric heart disorder at the Bai Jerbai Wadia Hospital for Children, Mumbai. RC Mumbai Western Elite, RID 3141, sponsored the surgery. The child and mother returned home safely.

Houses for the poor



DG Gaurish Dhond (back row, L) with the club members and the new owners of the Rotary house.

Under Project House to Homeless, RC Bicholim, RID 3170, constructed houses for two families. The new homes were handed over to the beneficiaries by DG Gaurish Dhond on Rotary Day.

Colourful moments from **RI Prez Conference**



RI President Shekhar Mehta, Rashi, Conference Convener PRID Kamal Sanghvi and Sonal.



From L: RI Director Dr Mahesh Kotbagi, Sonal, Dr Amita, Rashi and Chandni (President Mehta and Rashi's daughter).



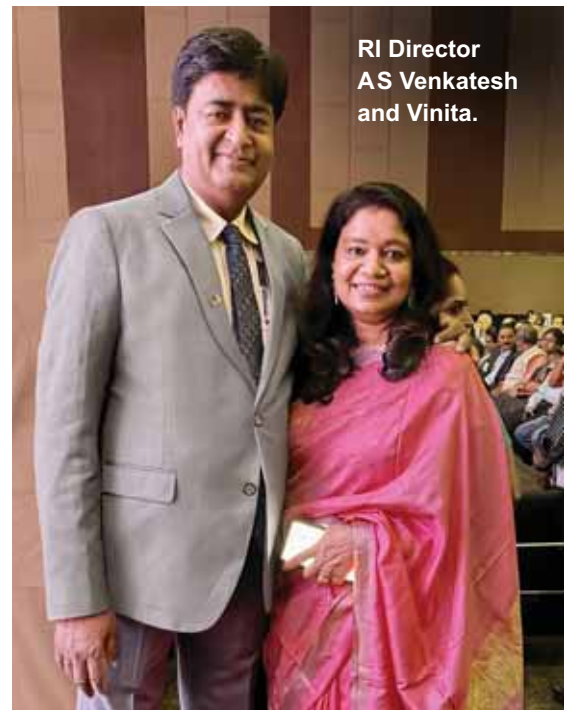
in Hyderabad



President Mehta and Rashi at a bicycles distribution project where 500 cycles were given to girl students and anganwadi workers.



PRID Sanghvi and Sonal with delegates at the inter-faith service.



RI Director
AS Venkatesh
and Vinita.



Clockwise from above: Kuchipudi dance recital at the inter-faith service • Dharavi Reloaded — a junk percussion band from the Mumbai slums. • A dance by the Naadyog Gurukul team. • RI Director Virpi Honkala and her spouse Matti. • TRF Trustees Geeta Manek, Aziz Memon and RID 3262 DGN Jayashree Mohanty. • Sonal Sanghvi and Dr Amita Kotbagi. • RI President Mehta with Member of Parliament Sashi Tharoor. • Conference Chair PDG Ravi Vadlamani and PDG Rajyalakshmi Vadlamani.





Jaishree



Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Rotary India honours unsung heroes

Jaishree

Five social activists were given Rotary India Hero Awards for their exceptional service to humanity at the RI Presidential Conference in Hyderabad. “Inspiration to serve the less privileged must come from within. The more you see the other side of life you will learn to appreciate your life,” said RI Director Dr Mahesh Kotbagi, hosting the session. He recalled how he got inspired to reach out to people after meeting a wheelchair-bound little girl Puja at a Rotary camp in a village. Having been carried to the toilet all her life, “all she wanted

was to go to the toilet walking.” Following a Rotary-sponsored corrective surgery, Puja was on her feet and she “was ecstatic to be able to realise her dream. This struck a chord in me.” When Puja was discharged from the hospital, she gave Kotbagi a chocolate which he considers “the most expensive and cherished fee I’ve got as a doctor,” he said.

The recipients include Maya Vishwakarma for her work in enabling menstrual hygiene and women’s empowerment in the tribal areas of MP. While on a short

visit from San Francisco where she was working, to her native village Mehraagaon in MP, Maya was aghast to see the sorry state of women there. She decided to stay back and eight years ago, founded the Sukarma Foundation that focuses on menstrual hygiene for girls, and women’s empowerment through computer education and tailoring. The Foundation makes low-cost sanitary napkins and provides medical care to the population in remote villages through its Telemedicine Primary Healthcare Centre.

Wheelchair-bound Kanubhai Hasmukh Tailor champions the cause of the disabled in Gujarat through his Disable Welfare Trust which provides education, rehabilitation and vocational training. “If you come across a disabled person or if someone requires a corrective surgery or any kind of treatment, direct them to my centre and I will take good care of them,” he said.



On his birthday on May 17, Tailor will be laying the foundation stone for an exclusive old age home for the disabled in Bharuch. “I value this award more than the Padma Shri that I received from the Indian government. Only people chosen by the Almighty become Rotarians, no ordinary person can become one. You are all blessed to be serving humanity,” he said.

Founder of the Sparsha Trust R Gopinath was honoured for providing education to 1,000 orphaned or abandoned children in Bengaluru. “I started my work 10 years ago in a cowshed with a donation of ₹5,000 from the Inner Wheel Club of Bangalore. Now the trust is worth ₹50 crore and I thank you all for your belief and support,” he said. He is planning to start a holistic institute that will take care of children right from birth to 18, supporting them with physical and mental healthcare.”

Chewang Norphel is a civil engineer from Ladakh, who has built 15 artificial glaciers, earning him the nickname Iceman. Recounting his journey, he said that years back he noticed that a small stream had frozen under the shade of a group of poplar trees, though it flowed freely elsewhere in his yard. He realised the

RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashmi, along with (from L) RID A S Venkatesh and Vinita, TRF Trustee Aziz Memon, Rajyalakshmi Vadlamani, RID Virpi Honkala, Dr Amita Kotbagi, TRF Trustee Geeta Manek, Matti Honkala, Vaithianathan, Tasleel Mohammed, PDG Rajendra Rai, Conference Convenor PRID Kamal Sanghvi, Sonal, RID Mahesh Kotbagi, Conference Chair Ravi Vadlamani and PDG Zameer Pasha, with the award winners (seated, from L) Shyam Sunder Paliwal, R Gopinath, Kanubhai Hasmukh Tailor, Chewang Norphel and Maya Vishwakarma.

reason for this phenomenon: the flowing water was moving too quickly to freeze, while the sluggish trickle of water beneath the trees was slow enough to freeze. Based on this, he created artificial glaciers by diverting a river into a valley, slowing the flow by constructing checks. Artificial glaciers increase the ground water recharge, rejuvenating the spring and providing water for irrigation. He constructed them at lower elevations, so that they melt earlier, extending the farming cycle. Norphel’s largest glacier supplies water to 700 people at the Phuktsey village.

Shyam Sunder Paliwal won the award for his work in water conservation and protecting the girl child. In 2006, Paliwal, a former sarpanch of Piplantri village in Rajasthan, lost his daughter Kiran. In her memory, he initiated a campaign where the villagers plant 111 saplings every time a girl child is born and the community nurtures these trees. Over four lakh trees have been planted under his guidance. He has also constructed check dams on nearby hills. These initiatives have helped recharge the groundwater level significantly in this village which was once an arid landscape ravaged by marble mining.

He also launched the ‘Kiran Nidhi Yojana’ in which the panchayat opens a bank account with an initial sum of ₹21,000 in the name of the girl child. The parents have to sign an affidavit affirming that they will not practice female foeticide or marry the daughter before she is 18, and will educate her.

PDG Rajendra Rai anchored the session. Each award carried a cash prize of ₹1 lakh which was sponsored by PDG Zameer Pasha (RID 3000), Vaithianathan (2981), Tasleel Mohammed, Somasundaram and Velupathy (3190).

Picture by Jaishree



MoUs add strength to Rotary's literacy initiatives

Jaishree

To realise the full potential and benefits of economic development, we have to unlock the full potential of our human resources. "That can't happen if we choose not to empower 50 per cent of our population. Our nation's future depends on how well we empower the women in our families and skill them to be part of the mainstream."

With these words RI Director A S Venkatesh presented a session on literacy at the Rotary presidential conference in Hyderabad. Highlighting Rotary India Literacy Mission's (RILM) role in addressing illiteracy in the country, he referred to the 2011 Census that puts India's literacy at 74

per cent. "This means 26 per cent of our population (33 crore, of around 130 crore people) was illiterate. We've not yet got the 2021 Census. But I can safely say that we would have certainly made substantial progress now, thanks to the relentless efforts of RILM."

Complimenting RI President Shekhar Mehta for the huge success of RILM, Venkatesh said, "For the past decade he has been spending sleepless nights to design and formulate each vertical of TEACH that addresses all aspects of education. In the years to come, our efforts will certainly pay off and we will soon see a fully literate India."

Complimenting Venkatesh's active role in RILM's development, Mehta said, "When I started the programme, he was my sounding board, receiving all the crazy ideas that came to my mind."

Gung-ho about the nationwide reach of RILM's e-learning vertical, the RI president informed the delegates that 2,500 episodes of educational content developed by RILM are now being beamed on the Prime Minister's e-Vidya channel. "That is equivalent to 10 years of a television serial telecast 30 minutes every day, five days a week. This e-learning content will flash RILM's name on the TV screen, making this an effective public image exercise for Rotary. Every day 10 crore children are attending classes on this channel."

In Hyderabad RILM inked five MoUs at the conference.

An agreement signed with the DL Shah Trust, Mumbai, will bring in ₹1.2 crore to RILM for its e-learning programme. RILM chair Kamal Sanghvi spoke about the genesis of this agreement. When schools were closed following Covid, 25 crore government school children nation-wide were stuck at home. NCERT contacted President Mehta to address the issue through RILM to sustain the children's interest in learning. RILM developed the largest e-learning programme in just five months. "Now that Covid is behind us, various state governments are signing up for the e-learning programme with RILM to implement uniform education for children in all states and villages.



Adult learners Tai and her daughter-in-law Jothi with their coordinator Durga (standing).



From L: RILM Chair PRID Kamal Sanghvi, PDG Vijay Jalan, Trustees Baldev Arora and KK Nohria of the DL Shah Trust, RI President Shekhar Mehta and RILM COO Biswajit Ghosh.

That's when we got in touch with the DL Shah Trust through PDG Vijay Jalan. The MoU will provide financial and knowledge support to help RILM develop the modules in various languages."

One of the trustees KK Nohria presented a cheque of ₹50 lakh to Sanghvi at the conference. About 286 e-learning modules for class 11 (English) and class 12 (Science stream) will be launched soon, he said.

Adult literacy

An interaction with 65-year-old Tai and her daughter-in-law Jothi highlighted how they have benefitted from RILM's adult literacy programme. Both of them work as domestic help. "I have

never in my lifetime sat and had a decent conversation, let alone, sit here on a stage and talking with so many of you learned people. My legs are shivering but I feel so good, and I enjoy this confidence only because of you 'Rotarywalon' who are helping me get educated," said Tai. "I am happy to attend classes with my three *bahus* and do the homework sitting along with my grandchildren." Jothi vowed "to educate both my son and daughter so that they have a bright future. And I will work hard and do whatever it takes to provide them good education."

RILM signed an MoU with TCS represented by its CSR head Sunil Joseph for financial and functional

literacy for adults and another agreement was signed with Operation Eyesight Universal, a Canadian organisation, for eyesight screening in school students. Rotary India has initiated a project to provide spectacles free of cost to 1 lakh students across the country, said Sanghvi.

Tablets for students

Under an MoU with Kartikeya Sharma, founder, ITV Group and the head of the edu-tech platform First in Class, one lakh children of armed force, police and paramilitary personnel across the country, who died in the service of the nation, will receive mobile Tablets loaded with audio-visual content in 12 languages. Rajya Sabha MP, PDG Vivek Tankha helped in forging the partnership. An app, a joint effort of NCERT, First in Class and RILM, is being developed for vocational training too, said Sanghvi.

An MoU was signed with CRY represented by its CEO Puja Marwaha for Asha Kiran programme. PDG Rajalakshmi Vadlamani signed an MoU with Rtn Veerabhadra Rao Reddy who will send 2,000 school dropouts in Vishakapatnam back to school under project Asha Kiran through his NGO Samida.



RILM Chair Sanghvi and Kartikeya Sharma, founder, ITV Network, after signing an MoU in the presence of RI Director AS Venkatesh and Aishwarya Sharma.

Pictures by Jaishree

RID 3190 does mega, sustainable

V Muthukumaran

It is time for Rotary to play an active role in nation-building. The organisation is present in more countries than the United Nations and its cumulative projects and high net worth members make it the most suitable to take up developmental metrics like literacy, sanitation, nutrition and healthcare, said RI President Shekhar Mehta at a TRF dinner hosted by RID 3190 with the support of RC Bangalore Midtown.

Recalling his meeting with PM Narendra Modi, Mehta said the latter had requested Rotary to work for the nutrition of women and children in India. Wherever he went — around 30 countries — in the last nine months, “everyone appreciated the role of Rotary in polio eradication.”

Rotary has now taken up the challenge to make India 100 per cent literate, “but the country has over 20 crore adult illiterates which needs to be tackled with new programmes. The Union government has formulated the New Education Policy based on discussion with Rotary which is delivering e-learning content to Classes 1-12 through 12 PM’s e-Vidya TV channels for 10 crore children each day.” Following the success of RILM’s e-learning module, many states including Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Gujarat are eager to sign MoUs with Rotary for airing regional versions of these lessons.

Mehta urged clubs to upload their service projects on rotaryindia.org, to “showcase Rotary India as a model to the rest of the world.”

He urged Rotarians to take “great pride as you are doing god’s work on the earth. Dream big as we are also in the nation-building process.”

Membership challenge

In his address at the luncheon meet with 100 club presidents and their spouses the following day, he said 4,000 clubs across India have inducted around 20,000 new members in the last 10 months which is equal to the net growth of the last five years. By June-end, Rotary membership in India will cross 50,000, for the first time in six years, he noted.

Sharing his experience of visiting global projects, he said, “in (South) Korea, Rashi and me were amazed by the automated strawberry farming being done by elderly people. But as

RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi, along with DG Fazal Mahmood and Sabiha, share dais with the AKS members from RI District 3190.



projects

they have very little needs, the entire proceeds were given to poor families; we met 24 Rotarian scuba divers who, along with others, dive into the ocean several times through the day to clear the ocean bed of debris. We saw around 40 tonnes of garbage dumped on the site.”

In Nigeria, a huge hall was packed with 3,000 women involved in the making of reusable sanitary pads and “they were all well aware of menstrual hygiene. But men should also start talking about MHM.” He urged DG Fazal Mahmood to induct 250 new members by the year end to win the platinum citation of the RI President’s Membership Challenge. Mahmood has won the platinum award under the Paul Harris Challenge by adding 225 members across 160 clubs in Jan-Feb this

year. So far, 800 new members and 13 new clubs were added by RID 3190 with 32 per cent growth in youth members and 18 per cent increase in women Rotarians.

Speaking at the TRF dinner, DG Mahmood said the clubs have done some “excellent projects undeterred by the Covid pandemic. The support of the corporates helped us to scale up our projects to a different level.”

Diverse projects are being implemented such as *Hosa Belaku*—adoption of 35 slums to improve livelihoods with emphasis on girls’ empowerment; *Sahayoga* has forged 130 partnerships between two city clubs and a semi-urban or rural club to implement basic education and literacy projects with a district grant of \$1,000 for the rural clubs; *Gramalakshmi* has helped form 13 women’s SHGs over the last three years; and *Sukh Sandhya* for providing healthcare to elderly in 45 old age homes through two mobile medical units staffed with doctors and nurses.

Project *Zero Hunger* has delivered 48,000kg of rice and over 100,000

The support of the corporates helped us to scale up our projects to a different level.

Fazal Mahmood

District Governor, RID 3190

food packets, besides ration, to families; *Kamadhenu* has donated 20 high-yielding milch cows to women, 80 more bovines will be given; and *Girls on Wheels* is gifting 1,000 tubeless bicycles to rural school girls. “We have given thousands of artificial limbs, calipers, crutches and wheelchairs to amputees at special camps. Under the leadership of PDG K S Nagendra, we will set up five foster homes for girls in which at least 50 inmates will be accommodated this Rotary year,” the DG explained.

While Project *Drishti* creates awareness on avoidable blindness, *Pink Express* has conducted 24 breast cancer detection camps touching 1,800 lives and Project *Warmth* has distributed 10,000 blankets to roadside, homeless families. “We have constructed four check dams through a global grant of ₹80 lakh at Pavagada taluk in Tumkur district and an MoU was signed with Kshamata Foundation, an NGO, to identify 800-1,000 women and train them as entrepreneurs,” said Mahmood. Over 19,000 units of blood was collected and the blood donation camps will continue.

Transforming lives

Welcoming 250 Rotarians and a dozen Rotaractors, co-host RC Bangalore Midtown president T Srikanth Bhagavat said this 45-year-old club is



focused on doing mega projects across healthcare, literacy and environment. “We have done ₹4 crore worth of projects touching 3.75 lakh lives so far this year. Two free dispensaries treat over 50,000 patients a year. So far, a million patients have benefited from the Rotary clinics since 2005,” he said. An awareness programme on the massive work done by the Rotary Ashirwad Skin Bank at the Victoria Hospital will be taken up shortly.

Medical equipment and neonatal ICUs worth crores of rupees were set up at the HBS, BGS Gleneagles, Rangadorai Hospitals, Kidwai Institute of Oncology, and S R Chandrasekhar Institute of Speech and Hearing; 21-year-old Maanasi clinic at Mugalur village offers mental healthcare and its second unit was set up at the HSIS dispensary recently, both offering treatment to 3,695 women suffering from psychiatric illness.

The club has planted 100,000 saplings; created six urban forests in the city; rejuvenated a 42-acre Mugalur lake (₹1.2 crore) with funding from the Hinduja group and a 7-acre biodiversity park was created. Project Haaluday serves fresh milk to 1,000 children every day; scholarships were given to 984 students, 600 of them girls, to continue their education and 1,500 science lab kits were donated to government schools. “We will revamp 75 government schools in a joint programme, Campus 2 Community, that has 5,000 volunteers.” Project *Happy Halli* aims at integrated development of 100 villages over the next 10 years. This year, Shivanahalli village, Anekal taluk, Bangalore rural district, is being transformed with an upgraded school, a telemedicine facility, water storage sump and vocational centre at a total cost of ₹1 crore.

Irfaan Razack, past president of the club and CMD, Prestige group, suggested permanent secretariats for



President Mehta and NIMHANS director Dr Pratima Murthy display the MoU signed with RC Bangalore Midtown for a brain health initiative. Standing (from L): Dr Suvarna Alladi, project chair Seema Sibbal, Dr Girish Rao, club president Srikanth Bhagavat, DG Mahmood and club secretary Namrataa Bhatia.

Rotary districts to ensure continuity of service projects and hassle-free stewardship of district and global grant funds. “We know that TRF spends just 3 per cent of the donations and other earnings on administrative costs in an efficient manner for global projects in healthcare, education, polio and world peace. Rotary clubs put together make a big difference to the world through small incremental changes in their communities,” He said, urging Rotarians to ‘be the change’ with the help of Foundation grants.

Rtn Ramesh Bulchandani, project chair, *eMaanasi*, at the launch of this software platform created at a cost of ₹80 lakh by the club, said the records and proceedings at the mental health clinic, Maanasi, Mugalur village, had been digitised which will help psychiatrists to replicate this project across the world.

F R Singhvi, project mentor, CSR website, unveiled by Mehta, said

the search engine optimised portal (rotary3190csr.org) will showcase Rotary projects to attract corporate-partnerships. The district’s CSR Committee led by Rtns Naveen Kolavara and Jayanta Tewari has designed the portal at a cost of ₹2 lakh.

District Environment director Ramesh Shivanna said the Rotary Carbon App (₹20 lakh), launched by Mehta, will help quantify reduction of carbon emission by Rotarians on a daily basis through a monitoring software and “help us make effective lifestyle choices to usher in a green environment.” Recently, 10 e-autos were presented to women through CSR funding to reduce GHG emissions.

Mehta felicitated 13 AKS members and some of the 426 Major Donors of RID 3190. For Rotary year 21–22, Rtns Rakesh Sharma, Singhvi and Vimal Kedia took the pledge to become AKS members. ■

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Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 36,614

Rotaract clubs : 11,238

Interact clubs : 17,442

RCCs : 12,115

Rotary members : 1,162,763

Rotaract members: 184,745

Interact members : 401,166

As on May 18, 2022

Membership Summary

As on May 1, 2022

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	135	6,316	8.49	56	53	239
2982	77	3,493	7.10	47	98	73
3000	132	5,456	9.31	97	291	214
3011	121	4,761	27.01	75	119	36
3012	149	4,064	24.73	66	81	61
3020	79	5,001	7.56	33	168	350
3030	98	5,353	15.52	126	322	365
3040	108	2,707	14.11	57	82	181
3053	75	3,055	18.20	35	50	126
3054	172	7,227	20.06	106	189	566
3060	105	5,231	15.41	64	77	150
3070	123	3,417	16.04	47	43	59
3080	103	4,586	14.61	142	161	116
3090	92	2,424	6.44	43	83	124
3100	101	2,315	11.66	13	27	146
3110	142	3,878	12.09	14	18	106
3120	90	3,742	16.70	64	34	55
3131	141	5,717	24.19	120	242	141
3132	87	3,639	11.13	34	125	167
3141	112	6,443	27.39	141	187	103
3142	100	3,801	21.20	83	147	83
3150	113	4,552	12.96	140	143	118
3160	79	2,783	9.56	29	20	82
3170	143	6,625	15.65	94	255	173
3181	86	3,486	8.98	35	196	116
3182	86	3,539	9.58	44	128	104
3190	162	6,960	19.45	194	218	72
3201	155	6,180	10.15	123	103	80
3203	93	4,815	8.14	74	234	37
3204	65	2,257	9.17	23	31	13
3211	153	5,201	8.59	7	25	133
3212	131	4,981	11.70	82	205	153
3231	94	3,580	8.18	32	82	419
3232	166	8,140	18.48	125	222	96
3240	104	3,632	16.35	63	409	219
3250	104	3,937	20.52	64	73	185
3261	91	3,380	19.11	15	24	44
3262	129	4,310	14.73	75	101	146
3291	165	4,403	24.19	136	98	665
India Total	4,461	175,387		2,818	5,164	6,316
3220	72	2,285	16.06	90	138	75
3271	119	2,447	17.53	117	185	25
3272	161	1,878	17.57	70	22	47
3281	306	7,628	17.84	274	152	207
3282	182	3,837	11.08	202	49	47
3292	155	6,081	18.06	174	135	127
S Asia Total	5,456	199,543		3,745	5,845	6,844

Source: RI South Asia Office

RC Pune Heritage hosts a chess championship for the blind

Kiran Zehra

Soundarya Kumar Pradhan and his brother Prachurya taught chess lessons to students from across the world in different batches during the Covid lockdown. It also helped Soundarya “prepare and win the national chess championship for the visually challenged,” organised by the All-India Chess Federation for Blind (AICFB) and RC Pune Heritage, RID 3131. He was one of the 55 players from 12 states to take part in the championship with a prize money of ₹1.5 lakh.

The Pradhan brothers, born with a rare eye disorder called Leber

Congenital Amaurosis (LCA), are chess prodigies, having learned the game on their own. Soundarya has three international medals to his credit — World Junior Silver, Asian Para Games Silver, and Asian Games Bronze. He is doing B Tech in Computer Science at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Jamshedpur. “I feel proud that I have won this tournament and will be representing India at a championship in Macedonia organised by the International Braille Chess Association (IBCA),” he says, brimming with joy.

The idea of hosting this unique event took its roots, when Dr Charudatta Jadhav, president of the AICFB “requested me to organise this event. Sensing this as a great opportunity to do social work, I immediately said yes and was confident that my club members would be excited to be part of it,” says Vinayak Pethe, president, RC Pune Heritage.

With Sava Herbals, an ayurvedic medicine manufacturer from Pune, as its CSR partner, the club hosted the championship at the PYC Hindu Gymkhana in April and provided

DG Pankaj Shah makes a move in the chess championship hosted by RC Pune Heritage.



accommodation for players and coaches at a subsidised cost. For technical help, the club approached Chess Grand Master and Dronacharya awardee Raghunandan Gokhale, and national Chess coach and Shiv Chhatrapati awardee Chandrasekhar Gokhale. The championship was conducted on a Swiss league basis (a non-eliminating tournament format), with two rounds of four hours each.

Apart from the top five players who will represent India at the world team championship in Macedonia, the top three from the 'totally blind' category and the top three from the 'partially blind' men's category will represent India at the Asian para games to be held in China in October 2022. The top two from the women's and the junior category will qualify for the IBCA championship in France in August 2022.



This event, says Pethe, is a national-level tournament, recognised by the world chess body, FIDE. "It is a great achievement that our club was able to organise this in less than a month. There were 55

participants, who were all winners from different parts of India. It wasn't a beginner-level programme, needed a lot of planning and preparation, special infrastructure and equipment, and special care." ■

Two veteran Rotarians honoured for their long stint in Rotary

Team Rotary News



Rtn R Narasimhan being honoured by PDG ISAK Nazar in the presence of RC Chennai K K Nagar president Alagu Subramani (R) and club secretary R Balaji (L). Rtn KS Jayaraman is seated on the left.

RC Chennai KK Nagar, RID 3232, honoured two veteran Rotarians — KS Jayaraman and R Narasimhan — for completing 50 years in Rotary.

Both of them started their Rotary journey as members of RC Mettur, RID 2982. Jayaraman, who is now a member of RC Madras South, has been instrumental in starting 16 new clubs in Dharmapuri and Hosur, and had promoted solar energy projects. He played a key role in the formation of RC Chennai KK Nagar in 2003. He has completed 57 years in Rotary.

Narasimhan, a charter member of RC Chennai KK Nagar, is involved in road safety activities and has been responsible for setting up a power loom project in Thiruvannamalai, near Chennai. He has completed 53 years in Rotary.

At the club's 19th charter night celebration both the Rotarians were honoured for their service by PDG ISAK Nazar. ■

Speak out to break taboos: Jack Sim

V Muthukumaran

If you have fun and purpose in life, there will be boundless energy to collaborate with others and you will find time to make the world a better place to live in with proper sanitation and hygiene facilities, said Jack Sim, founder, World Toilet Organisation (WTO). Addressing around 100 Rotarians world over through a virtual meet of RC Madras, RID 3232, as guest speaker, Mr Toilet, as he is fondly called, said, “Since 2001 we have conducted 19 World Toilet Summits, broke social taboos on toilets, transformed mindsets and helped 2.4 billion people gain access to sanitation and hygiene facilities.”

Jack Sim, founder,
World Toilet
Organisation

The problem with the world is that we are obsessed with this ‘masculine approach’ as we all want to be leaders, rather than forge collaborations. “We should have a feminine approach just like a mother caring for her family. Mother Nature facilitates the entire ecosystem of forests with its flora and fauna in which everyone is an active stakeholder. There are no winners or losers here, and there is perfect harmony in the world,” explained Jack. So, let us first depart from the winners versus losers mentality to forge ‘effective partnerships’ to end poverty in the world, he said.

A litany of taboos

Rotary founder Paul Harris set up a public toilet as the NGO’s maiden project in Chicago in 1905 and is one of the heroes of sanitation. “In the last 20 years, I have to adopt unorthodox methods to communicate and break social taboos associated with toilets. One such is humour, for if you make people laugh, they will be drawn to you and listen to what you say.” Listing out the taboos that rankled mankind over the centuries — slavery, apartheid, leprosy, women’s liberation, sex revolution, LGBT, #MeToo Movement, Black Lives Matter and toilets — Jack says, “every time you break a long-held taboo, good things happen and we progress.” But we should break the shackles and talk about these social issues.

His initiative, WTO, has to lobby hard with the top CEOs, government bodies and the UN General Assembly for adopting the World Toilet Day which falls on Nov 19. Finally, the UNGA declared in 2013 that Toilet Day will be observed as an UN official day with 193 countries supporting the motion. Praising the efforts of PM Narendra Modi in the *Swachh Bharat* movement, Jack said six World Toilet Colleges across India have trained 7,500 toilet cleaners on the efficient use of modern sewage equipment over the last four years. “WTO is purely a volunteer-driven organisation. There is scientific method in our madness.”

In a recorded video, PDG Ron Denham, chairman emeritus, WASHRAG, said lack of sanitation and hygiene has led to an average GDP loss of 6 per cent in India so far and attention on this is “very critical for the country’s growth.” At present, 230 million

WHO, UNICEF study (2019–20)

- Over half of global population, or 4.2 billion people, lack access to safe sanitation
- At least 2 billion people don't have safe drinking water
- Around 297,000 children under 5 — more than 800 every day — die annually from diarrhoeal diseases due to poor sanitation, poor hygiene or unsafe drinking water
- Many girls miss out on education because they have no access to clean and safe toilets
- One of UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) is to have universal access to adequate and equitable sanitation and end of open defecation by 2030
- For every \$1 invested in basic sanitation, the return is \$2.5. In rural areas, the average return is more than \$5 including saved medical costs and increased productivity, cites a *Hutton et al 2015* study.

A two-day exhibition was held in April as part of Toilet Festival where the latest toilet technologies were displayed. The club, along with two NGOs, is collaborating with the Chennai Corporation to launch a Kukkoos App which has mapped all public toilets in the city. Residents can report the condition of their nearest toilets through this App.

The club is emphasising the scaling up of sanitation projects by involving the government. The thrust will be on behaviour change and sustainability of toilet projects. A sanitation professional will be sponsored by the club for a PG programme at the Delft University, the Netherlands, to create a few qualified people in this focus area. The success in making 11 villages open defecation free through a behaviour change programme for the communities “has drawn the attention of RI and is the subject of a case study at IIM-Ahmedabad,” he said.

“We have built 1,600 community toilets and are offering sustainable sanitation facilities wherever we can by tying up with stakeholders,” said Mohan Raman, club president.

Bas Hendriksen from RC s-Gravenhage-Noord, the Netherlands, RID 1600, said his club is offering scholarship worth \$50,000 to study a one-year masters course on water and sanitation at the Delft University. President-elect Jayshree Sridhar, president-nominee Ravi Sundaresan and past-president NK Gopinath addressed the meeting.

TRF Trustee PDG Geeta Manek from Kenya; PRID Bob Scott, US; PDGs Ganesh Subramanyam, RC Merthyr Tydfil, Wales; Mukesh Malhotra, RC Houston, London; and Rotarians from the US, UK, Belgium, Denmark, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Guatemala and Sri Lanka participated in the virtual meet. ■

lack access to proper sanitation; 38 million suffer from waterborne and related diseases; and 140,000 children die annually in India, while 300 million women don't have access to toilets. In the last 4–5 years, 105 million toilets were constructed in India, and 72 per cent of population was given access to sanitation. “But 55 per cent who have got access to toilets, still practise open defecation and infections are rampant due to poor handwashing habits,” said Denham.

Every time you break a long-held taboo, good things happen and we progress.

Rotary clubs in India have taken up 150,000 WASH projects, implemented 500 WinS programmes and built over 500 community toilets, he noted. “Creating social awareness, ushering in behaviour change, motivating communities to adopt best sanitation practices, capacity building through training people, and offering financial incentives are challenges for Rotary in India,” he explained.

WASH fund

RID 3232 WASHRAG ambassador and past president SN Srikanth announced that the club as a token gesture is donating \$1,000 to TRF for increasing its spend on WASH projects across the world. “In the coming years, we will urge more clubs and Rotarians to contribute to TRF so that the Foundation increases its annual grants for sanitation projects from the present \$20 million to \$100 million,” he said.

RC Bangalore to green dried Palar bed

V Muthukumaran

In a major river restoration project, RC Bangalore, RID 3190, has teamed up with the Art of Living Foundation (AOLF) of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to execute aerial reforestation of around 2,000 hectares of land. This area is along the dried river banks of the Upper Palar river basin that starts from Kolar and reaches Chithoor in Andhra Pradesh via Kaiwara taluk of Chikkaballapur district of Karnataka.

As part of the first phase of this pilot project “we have already planted 40,000 saplings, improved the livelihood of 5,000 people in six villages in Kaiwara by revamping schools, upgrading PHCs, setting up toilet blocks, bus shelters, drinking water facilities and streetlights, among others, at a cost of ₹1 crore,” says R Girish, president, RC Bangalore. The AOLF has conceptualised, planned and is implementing the river restoration project in both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The Rotary Environment Foundation (REF), the brainchild of AKS

donor Ravishankar Dakoju, is taking up the aerial disbursal of 32 crore organic seed balls weighing over one tonne, through a Cessna aircraft during the monsoon from June-October 2022 as part of the phase-I work. He had set aside ₹40 lakh for the current year, and in the coming years the earnings from his Endowment Fund created through TRF will be spent along with CSR donations.

The Upper Palar river basin is spread over 2,873 sqkm across eight taluks in the three revenue districts of Kolar, Chikkaballapur and Bengaluru Rural. This area comprises 108 mini watersheds; 2,041 tanks and a network stream of 4,870km. “The budget estimate is ₹5–7 crore over five years and so far, we have already spent ₹2.5 crore. The entire funding is done by our club and AOLF; while REF is part of our executing team,” says Girish.

At the formal launch of the aerial reforestation project, PDG Suresh Hari and Ravishankar explained to

RI President Shekhar Mehta that with the support of Aerialworks Aero company, seed balls of different tree species will be disbursed from a small plane “which is a proven mechanism and very successful compared to using drones which don’t have the capacity to lift heavy payloads to the required height and then fly as per requirements before dropping the seed balls.”

Through the restoration of the Upper Palar river basin, Rotary aims to achieve carbon sequestration (storing of carbon gases in reservoirs like forests and rivers), improved water quality, ushering in biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Many villagers get employed in the implementation of this environment project. The rainfed Palar river originates from Kolar district (15 per cent), flows into Andhra Pradesh (27 per cent) and meanders its way through Tamil Nadu (58 per cent) before reaching the Bay of Bengal. ■



RI President Shekhar Mehta at the launch of aerial reforestation, along with (from L) PDG S Suresh Hari, Rtms Ravishankar Dakoju, Neil Michael Joseph, A Thirumurugan, DG Fazal Mahmood, RC Bangalore Orchards president Srividya Mohan, RC Bangalore president R Girish, Rtms Krishna Mohan and V G Kiran Kumar.

From RI South Asia Office desk

Foundation recognitions

By honouring Rotarians and clubs that give, we celebrate the impact their generosity makes in the world. For every donor, The Rotary Foundation has a way to help you say “Thank you”. Visit the ‘Donor Recognition’ webpage on Rotary.org for the various forms of individual and club recognitions.

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- Kindly re-check your PAN before clicking on “submit” to ensure correct PAN on your 80-G receipt
- For all online contributions, 80G receipt will be generated only in the name of remitter whose *My Rotary* login has been used for making the contributions.

2021–22 Top 5 districts in Total Giving from South Asia (interim April update)

District 2021–22	Total contribution (\$)
3141	2,181,479
3232	1,570,236
3131	1,381,029
3190	682,778
3142	650,217

2022 Convention

Get connected



Whether or not you plan to be in Houston this month, you will want to know what’s happening at the 2022 Rotary International Convention. Fortunately, there are several ways to stay informed about the event from beginning to end.

For in-person attendees, the Rotary Events app

is essential for navigating the convention. With it, you can plan your daily schedule, learn about featured speakers and download session handouts. You can also connect with other Rotary members, share photos, rate sessions, and send feedback to convention organisers. Find it in your app store

by searching for “Rotary Events”.

If you can’t make it to Houston, you can still experience the convention from home. Each day’s general session and selected breakout sessions can be watched via livestream. For access, register through the convention site: convention.rotary.org.

Whether you’re on site or watching from home, social media is another great way to follow along. Follow Rotary’s accounts on Twitter ([@rotary](https://twitter.com/rotary)) and Instagram ([@rotaryinternational](https://www.instagram.com/rotaryinternational)) for frequent convention updates, and find more information on

Rotary’s Facebook page (facebook.com/rotary). Use [#Rotary22](https://twitter.com/rotary22) to share your own social media posts about the convention and to see what your fellow Rotary members are saying.

While you’re in the convention spirit, it’s not too early to start thinking about next year’s event. Between June 4 and 8, visit the convention site to register for the 2023 convention in Melbourne, Australia, at a special rate of \$425 — the largest discount that will be offered.

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.



Let us choose eco-friendly cooking

Preeti Mehra

The medium and the method can make the difference.



These days organic food and sustainable food packaging are the focus of much attention. However, what is often overlooked is how we prepare what we eat. Needless to say, if the cooking itself is not planet-friendly, we would be falling short in our effort to switch to an environmentally responsible lifestyle.

So how do we 'green' our cooking?

Let's start with the kind of energy we use to cook, and how much of it we consume. Typically, most of us in

urban India use LPG, which comes in a cylinder or PNG that comes as piped gas into our kitchens. Both serve the same purpose, but the less of either that we consume, the better it would be for the planet. Several of us also use electric cooking aids like an induction stove, oven, a microwave, kettle or a rice cooker. These too consume energy more often than not generated from fossil fuels, as do our refrigerators, air conditioners, coolers, fans, geysers and heaters. Once again, the less we use of

this energy source, the better for the environment.

So, the first rule in the kitchen is to be aware of how much energy is being consumed for cooking and to minimise it with a variety of tweaks and tricks. For green cooking a simple step like cutting vegetables or meats into small pieces before putting them on the fire can go a long way. The smaller the pieces, the faster they will heat and cook, thus making you spend less energy and time on cooking the dish.

Be attentive to your cooking. This will not only ensure that you do not overcook but will also save energy. Most vegetables, chicken and fish release water while cooking. So sprinkle water gently and close the lid while the cooking is on. This will enable retention of the heat to allow slow cooking. In fact, this is a great method if you are calorie conscious and keen on experimenting with minimum oil or oil-free cooking.





Indians save energy by soaking their legumes overnight and using the pressure cooker to speed up the cooking process. But using a solar cooker for cooking, especially if you have access to a garden or a balcony in the current hot months could make you a green cooking champ.

I recall going to a family friend's house in Yol, close to Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. While we basked in the evening sun sipping tea, we were treated to a gorgeous cake baked in the solar cooker at the edge of the lawn. This was years ago when solar powered cooking was not even a talking

point as it is now. I marvelled at the ingenuity of the lady of the house who told me she never fails to impress guests with dishes cooked in the sun.

The solar cooker works on the best renewable energy we have — the sun. It can be useful for simple, everyday one-dish meals. It has its plusses and minuses just like all other methods of cooking. Let's list the advantages first: There is no fuel required at all. The solar cooker is built with the mechanism to convert the sun's rays into heat energy that is used for cooking. Once you invest in it and cook at least one meal a day when the sun is shining, you could be saving fuel and money in the long run.

The disadvantage is obvious — no sun, no cooking. So, a solar cooker can best be seen as an energy saving alternative to your LPG or PNG connection when the sun is benevolent. A traditional gas stove is essential when you have to cook in a hurry.

Green cooking also needs a bit of out-of-the-box thinking as well as planning. Working couples who are strapped for time will benefit by thinking of more than one meal when they begin to cook. For instance, when preparing dishes such as rajma, sambhar, dal, channa, lobia, chicken or fish, cook twice the amount at one go. The moment the dish cools, transfer half of it into an airtight container and place it in the freezer.

On a day when there is no time or inclination to cook, take it out, leave it to thaw and presto, there is a good homemade dish that can go with boiled rice and a quick sautéed vegetable. Through this practice you save energy as it was cooked in bulk. You also save on time, toil, and expense on ordering from a restaurant. Not to forget the

packaging that comes with the food order, which generates extra garbage.

The way you use the refrigerator also reflects on how environmentally responsible you are. Never place food hot in the fridge, wait for it to cool or else your refrigerator will have to work harder and consume more energy. Also, make it a point to periodically check if the rubber seal in the fridge is intact and insulation is at its optimum in order to save energy. Though these actions may seem small, they are important when it comes to reducing your carbon footprint.

The material you use while cooking also adds up. If you need to use aluminium foil for baking or packing, try to get the recycled variety. The less plastic covering you use the better. Reusable refrigerator bags keep vegetables crisp and your shelves plastic-free.

The rules are the same for a green meal, it does not matter if you are a vegetarian, a vegan or a meat-eater. Food causes 20–30 per cent of all global greenhouse gas emissions, though meats cause higher emissions than plant-based foods. But all meats do not have the same impact. The *Climatarian.com* website would be best to refer to if you are looking for further information on this.

However, it is best to make plant-based foods as the main focus of your meal. The cereal and the meat can be the side dishes that are lesser in quantity. And if the vegetables can be sourced locally from farmers and the meats be free-range, you would have helped in doing both — reducing greenhouse gas emissions and greening your diet.

The type of cooking vessels used also have a big role to play in green cooking. But I will delve into that next time.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues



From exhaustion to well-being

Bharat & Shalan Savur

Prem and Nishi have been complaining about exhaustion, their energy levels are so low, it's an effort to smile. But, for two of the most hospitable, sociable persons you could meet, they say they've turned downright intolerant. Friends are not so welcome anymore, their jokes seem puerile, their bragging grates, even their well-meaning queries feel hypocritical. It goes with the territory, doesn't it? When we are bone-tired, we tend to snap at others. We want to say, 'Oh, leave me alone, go home!' But this could be due to a whole lot of events.

According to psychologists, we undergo three primary phases in our response to deep stress:

Phase 1. To deal with the anxiety and tension, the body secretes adrenalin and cortisol, hormones that quicken heart rate, elevate blood pressure and make our breathing rapid. At this stage, we could be a little inattentive due to our preoccupations and... one little loose tile on the pavement can make us fall on our face and end up with bruises. Tip: During this accident-prone stage, be alert. Wear close-toed shoes

instead of slippers. Don't drive, hail a cab. Have a multivitamin tablet daily.

Phase 2. Gradually, the acute body reaction subsides and we enter a phase of defensive resistance. Our body gets into a state of readiness to deal with the situation. This phase helps us to be enormously productive where we become dynamos of efficiency. It gives us the energy surge to achieve, move forward swiftly or inch by inch. There's clarity.

Phase 3. Here is where we have to really tread with care. Patience wears thin. Unknowingly, we try to hold on to our optimism. However, when things take longer than expected, the Phase 2 state of aroused readiness continues until stress turns to distress. We are so tightly wound up that we simply cannot unwind. Even if the work gets done, it almost feels like too little, too late. And chronic exhaustion sets in. Everything feels like a herculean effort now. Irritation growls just below the surface. Appetite is virtually non-existent.

But this is not the time to worry about your lack of appetite, that you don't want to go for your regular

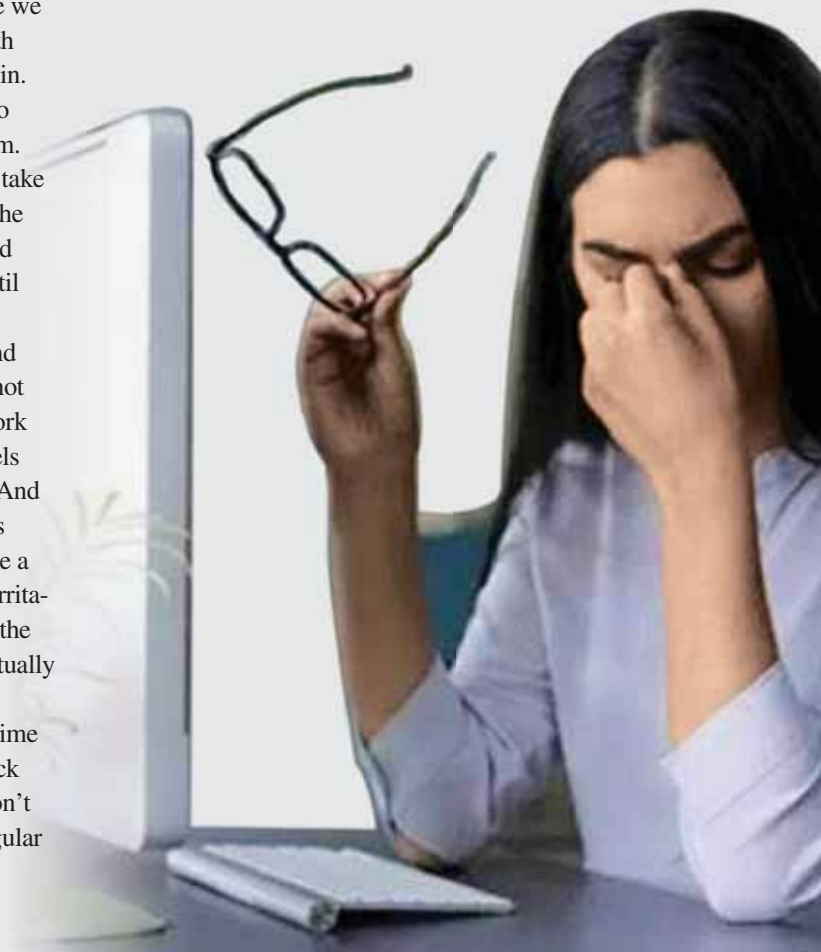
walk, you can't remember your old routine... Timely tip: Don't add worry to exhaustion. And if you snap at somebody, don't add guilt to your tiredness. Treat yourself with the concern, care and kindness you would show a friend going through a rough patch.

Be supportive to yourself.

According to Kristin Neff, an expert in educational psychology, 75 per cent of people who are quick to help others, score low when it comes to being

supportive of their own needs. Don't bother about being a better host, parent, grandparent, etc. Kick off those tendencies and do things that please you. This is the time to reclaim your lost autonomy.

Take 10 more days off from work. Get yourself a foot, head-and-shoulders massage. Order a few meals from your favourite joint. Watch a comedy. Wear soft, loose clothes to lounge around in. Lie in your bathtub chin-deep in warm, fragrant water. Don't



answer the telephone if you don't want to.

Sit with your favourite person – you. Dr Yogesh Mohan describes in an article how he helped an 'emotionally exhausted, depressed' patient. The good doctor made him sit and pay attention to his body. 'Do you feel your body touching the cushion of the chair, your feet touching the floor... Just feel the sensations in different parts of your body.' The effect was magical. By paying attention, the patient was able to slow down his breathing and found himself 'going within.' Dr Mohan said, 'There is nothing to do, just be there.' And he stayed there in the doing-nothing space for 15 minutes. Apparently, the session ended with the patient smiling through his

tears and repeating, 'I have never felt such happiness. I feel so happy...so happy.'

The fact is: we have no clear choices when it comes to dealing with externals — red tape, lawyers, dealers or government officers. But we have, as Dr Mohan points out, 'the choice to breathe and control the rhythm of your own breath, a choice no one can take away from us.' And when we exercise that choice, we begin to feel an inner cohesiveness, a feeling of at last being in control of our life.

Step back. Embark on a course where there is no politics, pandemic or endemic talk, no religion, racial issues or wars. You are no Atlas having to carry the world and its woes on your shoulders. You are a wonderful, loving human being who just needs to get back his or her bearings. It's a temporary strategic retreat, dabbling your

fingers in still backwaters, until you are ready for the world. When I went into this strategic retreat, I felt I'd shed some attitude, some hang up and my spirit was inches taller. Please try it.

Watch out for the pearls among the pebbles. Good things happen to people who

watch out for good stuff. You may have heard the fable of the two swans — one was deft in picking up pearls from a heap of pebbles; the other was adept at sipping the milk from a mix of milk and water. Be a swan. When we hold the pearls up at eye-level and think and talk constantly about sweet success, little joys like being hugged by our kids and grandkids, meeting good people, of kindness and time given and received, of diligence that ultimately bore fruit, we see that the credit side of our life's ledger far outweighs the debit side. It keeps exhaustion at arm's length.

Reserve your best hours for your thing. We all have our best hours when we are more alert, extra productive, even-minded. And how do most of us spend those lovely hours? Paying bills, looking through email, browsing the net and looking after household needs. Change that around. Get immersed in your interests. It's like you set your own exclusive personal 'seal of Solomon on all things under the sun' (GK Chesterton). The satisfaction makes everything else more manageable.

Unitasking is the way to go. As life gets more complex, become simpler. You shouldn't be subjected to the 'I am swamped' syndrome. So, forget

multitasking. Do one task at a time, at your pace. Be like the centipede who, when asked how she walks with such dignity when she has 100 legs to manage, replied cheerfully, 'One step at a time!'. Chill!

Finally, some time-tested tips that always work:

- * Drink warm water daily before your morning coffee or tea. It hydrates and peps up a tired body.
- * Get some sun. it's the original organic vaccine.
- * Sport anti-blue light glasses while on the computer, mobile or watching TV; and anti-UV amber sunglasses outdoors. They keep the floaters away and the cooled eyes never grow tired.
- * Get your oxytocin fix by doing something kind or sharing something with another.
- * As you feel more normal, start a daily walk/swim. It gets the blood circulation going and banishes the last vestiges of blues and intolerance. When you are ready, your friends will be back in your life. Friends understand.

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



Wordsworld

Reading being human



Sandhya Rao

A doctor and a railwayman offer perspectives on their personal and professional lives, with a fairytale romance thrown in that transcends cultural barriers.

While mindless debates over national language, loud-speakers and uniforms distract and raise temperatures in an already overheated environment, the only sensible thing to do appears to be to soak in the fine thoughts of fine minds. In books, of course. Kavery Nambisan is known for her solid works of fiction (some, as Kavery Bhatt). Egged on by her publisher, she recently released her first nonfiction work, *A Luxury Called Health*, in which she draws upon her vast experience as a doctor to tell the story of medicine and medical practice in

India, no holds barred. Deepak Sapra, the blurb tells us, was an officer in the Indian Railway Service who now writes on places and people. In *The Boy Who Loved Trains*, he tells an insider's story of Indian Railways, no holds barred.

The title of Kavery Nambisan's book resonates, the tagline intrigues: 'a doctor's journey through the art, the science and the trickery of medicine'. Less than halfway through the book which is part memoir and part rumination on the philosophy of medicine and the practice of healthcare based both on personal experience and academic research, up pops this paragraph: 'Caring is as old as human existence. The single most comforting sensation is that of touch — an inbuilt force of survival. The prehensile hand, the sensorial palm and the exquisitely designed digits enhance the emotional impact of touch. The crow furls its wings over the just hatched fledgling; the mongrel licks away pain when her willful pup snags a paw on a barbed wire; a mother-elephant soothes with her trunk. Humans are capable of helping any suffering being, even when not bound by love or loyalty. This ability to empathize sets us apart as a species. The other trait that is exclusively ours is hate. We'll stick with empathy.'

This one paragraph sums up the entire book in which the author's voice shines through, sometimes uncertain, sometimes unequivocal, but always observing, reflecting, analysing, empathising. She makes you see:

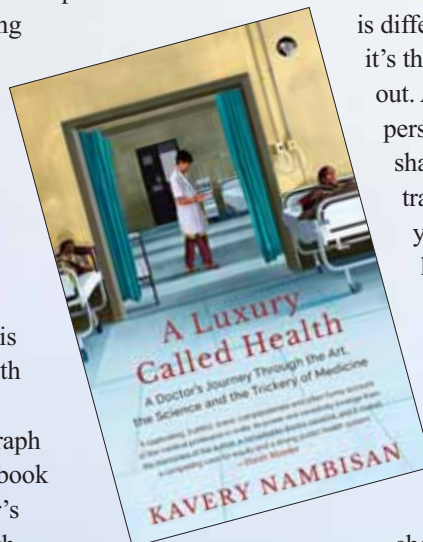
Humans are capable of
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hospitals and humans working in hospitals, systems in and out of place, in swanky cities, in small towns, in the guns-dominated streets of Bihar, in a UK hospital and a small clinic in Kodagu... About every place and person, Kavery Nambisan writes fearlessly and with clarity, in prose that makes reading the book an unput-downable experience. We read about teaching and learning, the agony of decision-making, professional and personal loss, reaching the unreachable, overkill with treatments. Sometimes the simplest solutions are the best, she argues, even as she sets out a practical approach to the current pandemic.

Deepak Sapra's journey is different, but here too, it's the people who stand out. As the author in the persona of Jeet Arora shares his love of trains with the reader, you tag along with him at the Indian Railways Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (IRIMEE) in Jamalpur, Bihar. You puff up your

chest like the trainees

as they are treated like sahibs by their attendants, whether it is a meal being laid out for them at a table on the station platform or being updated



on the latest situation. For me, it was serendipitous that Arora was attached to Eastern Railway because names like Durgapur, Raniganj, Asansol, Coalfield Express recalled my own childhood in Bihar and Bengal.

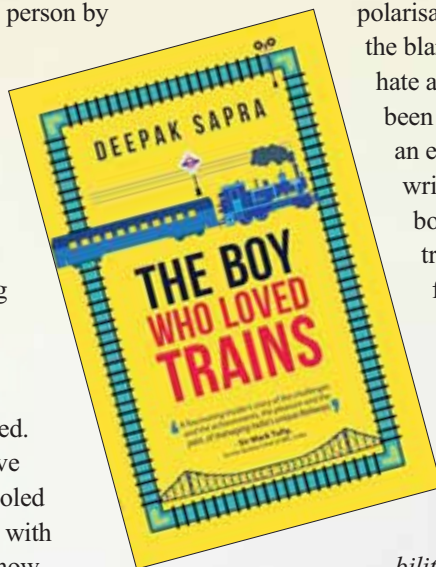
But the journey is not all and always rosy, and there are many lessons in store for a young railway officer. Luckily, our Arora is a good learner. To offer an example: as he and the Carriage and Wagon Foreman, Karim, rush to the site of derailment of the Shatabdi Express near Durgapur, Arora wonders at the latter's composure; he himself is quaking with fear. Karim then tells him about his experience at Bhopal station on the night of the gas leak from the Union Carbide plant on December 3, 1984: 'I can still visualize Dastagir sahib, the station master on duty, running up and down the platform, asking the driver of the Bombay-Gorakhpur Express to start his train and move it out of Bhopal, even though it was 30 minutes before its scheduled departure. ... it was a decision which perhaps saved thousands of lives.' And although Dastagir collapsed after the effort, '...perhaps out of sheer will power, he regained his composure to run back to his office. He sent across messages to stop all train traffic coming into Bhopal, from all directions.' At the station, people were collapsing like flies. 'I was lucky to survive,' Karim tells Arora. That one night removed all faintness from his heart.

Karim's words give Arora courage and when they arrive at the derailment site they find that the Sr DME of Danapur Division, Nandan Kumar, who had been travelling on the train, has taken charge and is organising rescue efforts. Again, Arora is inspired by what he sees: 'He... painstakingly went through articles of the individuals who had succumbed

to get contact details for identification and arranged to keep their luggage safe in a makeshift tent which was put up. One by one, person by person, bag by bag, suitcase by suitcase, he went about this job for the next 48 hours — without sleeping for a moment... surviving on cups of tea that the team provided. When the relative arrived, he consoled and empathized with them.' All we know as passengers is that an accident has taken place, so many dead and wounded, we assign blame, but rarely do we know about, let alone see, what's happening behind the news coverage. Of course, Arora displays courage of another kind, the foolhardy kind, to jump on to a running train as it chugs past the platform at a particular station just to catch a few moments with his lady love; he jumps off it as it exits the other sloping end!

The romance of trains quite naturally tickled taste for more romance reading. Besides, what better escape

All we know as passengers is that an accident has taken place, so many dead and wounded, we assign blame, but rarely do we know about, what's happening behind the news coverage.



from the grimness of a messed-up economy, a still-raging pandemic, growing unemployment, the polarisation of society, and the blanket of resentment, hate and insecurity that's been thrown over India. In an earlier column, I had written about the first book of Sonali Dev's trilogy about a migrant family settled in California. This time, upon my friend's recommendation — never mind the second, read the third — I ordered *Incense and Sensibility* which spotlights the

story of Yash Raje who is running for governor of California. Apparently, the title was suggested by Sonali Dev's 13-year-old when she gave him a gist of the story and mentioned that Yash's love interest was a yoga instructor called India. Her son knew only too well what a Jane Austen fan his mother was!

I said it before and I'll say it again, one of the most interesting things about Sonali Dev's novels is her multicultural approach. In *Incense and Sensibility*, India is one of three children adopted by their mother. She is from Thailand, sister China is from Nigeria, and brother Siddharth is from India (we don't meet him in the flesh though, maybe there will be a novel about him...). Besides, all three have had cleft palate surgeries, but this information is by the way. The point is made, though. It's soppy but fun.

Now, I have a new stash that includes.... But no, wait for it! Meanwhile, stay physically, mentally and emotionally cool. Live and let live.

The columnist is a children's writer and senior journalist

RC Thiruvaiyaru — D 2981



Ninety-three of the 170 patients screened at an eye camp organised by the club were selected for surgery at the Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore.

RC Delhi Mayur Vihar — RID 3012



A health camp was organised jointly with Shree Krishna Hospital. Mammography and cervical cancer tests were also done for women.

RC Tiruchy Stars — RID 3000



An awareness campaign against noise pollution was conducted in three schools with students taking out a rally. A banner was also put up at a vantage point.

RC Vizianagaram — RID 3020



DG Ramarao was the chief guest at the day-long Interact conference with 120 Interactors participating in it. PDGs Chayadevi, R K Jain, MV Prasad and Rajgopal Reddy spoke at the conference.

RC Delhi — RID 3011



DG Anup Mittal inaugurated a physiotherapy centre, part funded by a global grant. It will cater to 250–300 patients a month.

RC Nagpur Fort — RID 3030



A drinking water station was inaugurated at the Civil Lines area. Club president Vaishali Barai and secretary Jayant Warankar, were present at the venue.

RC Jodhpur — RID 3053



Financial assistance were given to students at the Rotary School and Adarsh Vidya Mandir in partnership with the Canadian World Education Foundation. Since 2012–13 ₹75–80 lakh have been distributed.

RI District 3090



Two LED TVs were installed at the Arya Kanya Senior Secondary School, Patiala, through a CSR grant. DG Parveen Jindal and district secretary Rajiv Mittal were present.

RC Ahmedabad South — RID 3054



Hundred differently-abled people and eight adult players took part in a state-level Para Chess and Carrom Championship hosted jointly with RC Ahmedabad Divyam, Darshu Care Public Charitable Trust and others.

RC Saket Meerut — RID 3100



DG Rajiv Singhal inaugurated a toilet block at the RG Degree College, Meerut, to enhance the basic hygiene among girls. DGN Ashok Gupta and PDG Sangeeta Kumar were present.

RC Goraya — RID 3070



DG Dr U S Ghai presided over a felicitation programme organised by the club for government school students who had excelled in academic, sports and extracurricular activities.

RC Kushinagar — RID 3120



Around 200 ration bags were distributed to less privileged families at two localities in Kushinagar, in association with RC Gorakhpur Midtown.

RC Pune Cantonment — RID 3131



E-learning kits worth ₹1.1 lakh were distributed to three government schools in Bhortaluk of Pune in partnership with a donor.

RC Ambarnath Smart City — RID 3142



Fifty students from RA Podar Medical College took part in a seven-day RYLA. This was a joint project with other clubs in Ambarnath and Badlapur.

RC Ahmednagar Priyadarshini — RID 3132



Books across genres including children's books were gifted to the Ahmednagar district library, one of the oldest libraries in Maharashtra set up in 1838.

RC Hubli — RID 3170



'Save water' posters were put up at hospitals, hotels, schools and colleges by Hubli clubs to create awareness about judicious use of water.

RI District 3141



DG Rajendra Agarwal flagged off a walkathon to create awareness about organ donation. Project advisor Harminder Singh Patheja and Avenue chair Sonal Somaiya were present.

RC Central Mysore — RID 3181



DG AR Ravindra Bhat inaugurated a computer lab at the Maharani's College, Mysuru. Past president Rakesh Kumar Rastogi sponsored 80 computers worth ₹80,000.

RC Bangalore Brigades — RID 3190



A counselling session on oral, cervical and breast cancer was held for 190 women under-trials at the Central Jail. Rtn Abha Saxena organised the camp with the help of Jain administration.

RC Jamshedpur Steel City — RID 3250



Around 50 stray dogs were vaccinated against rabies at the Tatanagar Railway station in association with the Stray Army Charitable Trust and the Medivet Pet Clinic.

RC Sivakasi — RID 3212



DG Jacintha Dharma flagged off a mobile eye clinic for screening diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma diseases in the presence of IPDG PNB Murugadoss and DGE VR Muthu.

RC Rajdhani Bhubaneswar — RID 3262



Quality time was spent with differently-abled children at the Mom's Belief Blooming Minds, a clinic for special children, on World Autism Awareness Day.

RC Madras Southwest — RID 3232



Reusable sanitary pads were distributed to 100 girls at the Sri Mangichand Bhandari Jain HS School, T Nagar, by Ann Deepa Vaitheeswaran and Rtn Dr Manju Kulkarni.

RC Calcutta — RID 3291



A water filtration plant was set up at the Sundarbans Ramakrishna Mission, Kakdwip, in partnership with Tata Chemicals, to benefit 600 families.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

Tambrahms dissolve into multilingual diaspora



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

Recently, I got involved in an animated discussion on what a modern Indian middle class family is like. Indians are used to living in large families. My own extended family has around 200 members. I know barely a third of them and that is only because they all live in Delhi where I too live. Not all are from South India though. There are many from the other states as well. Obviously they have entered the extended family via marriage. So far, however, there are only two or three from any of the several religions of the world. Everyone else is a Hindu. Some are practising Hindus and others are mostly non-practising. Practising means they observe all the little occasions of Hinduism and the rituals associated with them. The non-practising ones observe only the major festivals. The former are a solemnly religious lot. The latter tend to prefer the cultural rather than the religious and ritualistic aspects. No one gets in the way of the others, except perhaps an occasional shrug of non-comprehension. It's live and let live. The one thing we don't talk about in the family is caste.

There was a time, just about 40 years ago when the Tamil Brahmins, or Tambrahms, dominated our family. That's no longer the case. Doubtless, they are in a majority. But it's not an overwhelming one. There are now plenty of others from different states. One problem that this creates

is language. Most members of the family are trilingual. Everyone speaks English, of course, but most also speak Tamil. Sometimes when a non-Tamil member is present, and unconsciously the conversation becomes in Tamil, we quickly translate and revert to English. Hindi is also used but not as much as English. Ethnic jokes fall flat on the non-Tamils. But as the Punjabis say, "kee karaan?"

Now a new element has crept in. Many family members live abroad. My son, for example, lives in the French part of Switzerland. His son, who is not yet two years old, speaks only French. He greets us with a *bon jour* and bids goodbye with an *au revoir*. He calls butterflies *pappillon* and bicycles *vello*. My wife and I will have to learn French if we want to have a meaningful relationship with him. His parents

**My two-year-old grandson
speaks only French. My
wife and I will have to learn
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meaningful relationship
with him.**

are trying quite valiantly to teach him Hindi, which he will learn I am sure. But Tamil? Perish the thought. He will follow it but it's most unlikely that he will speak it. Even my sons, who were born in Delhi and have lived here all their lives, can barely speak Tamil. Thanks, however, to their four grandparents, they follow it perfectly. And let me confess: I can't read or write Tamil either. My mother taught it to my siblings but, as in other things, I proved knowledge-proof. The loss is entirely mine. But I can speak Punjabi and follow it completely. Thanks to the Bengali professors at the Delhi School of Economics, I can also follow Bengali.

While on the subject of languages I must mention that my wife recently retired as a professor of Korean at JNU. My brother, who was a diplomat, is completely fluent in Chinese. My brother-in-law is good at German. My niece teaches French. Her mother is a Kashmiri whose two children don't speak Kashmiri. We have a Gujarati speaker and many Telugu speakers, too. There is one Maharashtrian, an American and an Englishman, too. Finally I would be remiss in omitting my closest cousins. Their mother was from Allahabad, now Prayagraj.

I think all this is true of thousands of Indian families. It's a new sociological reality which no one has begun to examine on a systematic basis. It's high time it was. ■

RI District 3131

milestones of 2021–22

DG Pankaj Shah has taken several initiatives to enhance the district administration and the DG office. Transparency in operations and decision-making has been the hallmark of the year for District 3131. DG Shah invited applications from members from across the district to serve in various district posts and selected the teams accordingly. Every club is represented in the district committees which also include at least one Rotaract member. He also took the initiative to obtain ISO:9001 certification for the DG office. RID 3131 is probably the first district in the world to obtain an ISO certification, thanks to DG Shah. An 80G certification is also obtained for the District Welfare account enabling people to donate generously and avail tax exemption.

1. Membership development

11 new clubs and 10 satellite clubs are formed. 1,076 new members have been added. Over 80% clubs have shown



positive growth. RC Scon Pro is the first corporate Rotary club in the district.

2. **Peace conference** — International Rotary Peace Conference was organised by RC Chinchwad Pune and RID 3131 on Sept 18–19, 2021. It had 751 participants from 37 countries. The keynote address by RI President Shekhar Mehta and guidance by RI Director Dr Mahesh Kotbagi and DG Shah made the event memorable. Speakers from across the world addressed the conference. Hon vice-chancellor of Savitribai Phule Pune University Nitin Karmalkar and Pietro Uzochukwu Macleo, past president of RCAbuja Wuse II,

RID 9125, Nigeria, were honoured with International Peace Awards for their monumental work in education, and peacebuilding and conflict prevention respectively.

3. **Virtual RYE** — District 3131 was the pioneer in creating the new concept of virtual youth exchange when physical exchange was not possible due to the Covid pandemic. 170 students participated in virtual exchange this year.
4. **Virtual NGSE** — Rotary District 3131 and Rotary District 3420 (Indonesia) conducted the world's first virtual group internship NGSE programme for 2021–22.

RID 3420 offered internships in Human Resources for 2 candidates



(6 weeks) and Architecture and Interior designing for 4 candidates (8 weeks). RID 3131 offered internships in Business Communication for 4 candidates (6 weeks) and Indian culture for 5 candidates (8 weeks).

5. The district's Rotaract won the 'Best-disciplined Rotaract District Award' at Rotasia. The district has chartered 23 Rotaract clubs with 833 new members this year. This includes a club of differently-abled members and a Rotaract club with 350+ members at MIT Pune. 25 new Interact clubs were also formed. The district team won the third place in the RI President's Challenge for Rotaractors.
6. All the Rotary clubs in the district had contributed to TRF



by the 114th day of the Rotary year 2021–22. Four Rotarians have pledged to become AKS members. Total foundation giving is at \$15,71,545 and APF is \$458,443.

7. RC Goregaon executed the first environment global grant project worth \$96,450 by setting up a solar farm with 121 kWp capacity, sufficient to operate water pumps that supply water to 15,000 people at

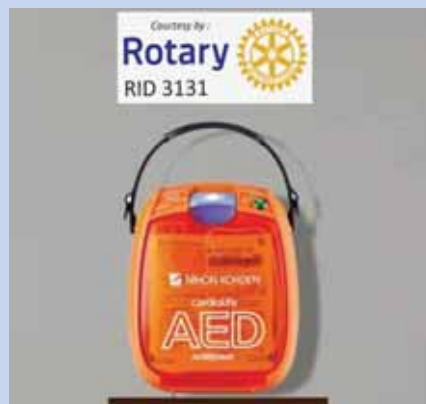


Goregaon town in Raigad district, Maharashtra. This translates to an annual reduction of 350 tons of CO₂ emission. The district has done 45 global grants and 17 CSR grants this year.

8. RID 3131 signed an MoU with SCERT Maharashtra for *Project e-Vidya*. Through this project the audio content of Science and Math NCERT videos will be translated into Marathi and relayed through the state television and the Diksha app to benefit lakhs of students.
9. *Project Asmita* worth \$200,000 was simultaneously carried out at 100 locations by 34 clubs in 5 districts, benefitting 20,000 girls. Objectives of the project include promoting menstrual hygiene and sanitary pad usage; gynaecological guidance and busting the myth around menstruation; fighting domestic sexual abuse; creating awareness on social media bullying, legal rights & government help available; building mental & physical strength; and career guidance.
10. **Water & Sanitation projects** Global grants worth ₹1.2 crore and CSR grants worth ₹1 crore with the participation of 26 Rotary clubs will benefit over one lakh people from across 41 villages in Maharashtra.



GLIMPSES OF RID 3131 ROTARY YEAR 2021-22



RI District 3131 has signed an MoU with Pune Metro for providing essential facilities at the Metro stations. This is a significant Public Image project for the District.



DG Pankaj Shah was invited to be a speaker at the Presidential Conference in Hyderabad to talk about the District's work in Literacy.



RIPP Sharmila Bhatt



Lt. General Dr. Madhuri Kanitkar



Dr. Anand Deshpande



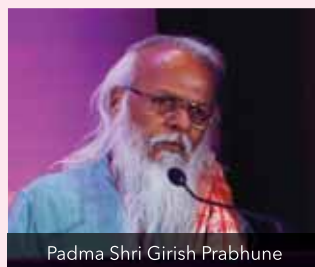
Ruma Devi



Dr. Bhavesh Bhatia



Padma Shri Bhawana Somaaya



Padma Shri Girish Prabhune



Subhash Ghai



ADVT.

