

Rotary news

India

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Rotary
District 3212



Project Kalam



*“Dreams convert into thoughts
and thoughts convert into actions.”*

APJ Abdul Kalam

STEP 2 SUCCESS

Size: 50 (Min) to 500 (Max) | **Duration:** 02.00 Hours | **Medium of Training:** Tamil & English
Audience: Government, Government Aided and Private School students

A Career guidance Program for School Students studying from 9th to 12th Standard

OBJECTIVE

Empowering Students to gain essential knowledge, insights, skills, and hands-on experience needed to discover and explore various career pathways aligned with their interests and passions to take career decision.



Outcome for 9th & 10th Students:

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Outcome for 11th & 12th Students:

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How to choose the best course?
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LEKHA 06-Sep-24 / Rotary-IEW

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RID 3233 takes special children to Tirupati

Rotary 

A publication of Rotary
Global Media Network

Rotary News gets a WOW look

The latest edition of *Rotary News* is a well-designed magazine combining excellent aesthetic features with functional design elements which are both visually appealing and easy to read. The choice of fonts is providing clarity and distinction between different types of content. The choice of colours complement the content and brand identity. The design elements throughout the magazine are creating a cohesive look.

In essence, the newer version of the magazine is engaging and easy to navigate.

Shekhar Mehta, Past RI President

WOW is the expression that came to mind when I saw the refreshing new look of *Rotary News* (August issue) The cover, with the usual photograph replaced by a brightly coloured illustration of two children planting a tree, is very attractive. My wife thought I had bought some storybook for our grandchildren until she read the title. The new fonts for headlines and pullout quotes along with the newly designed background made me read every article. Obviously, a lot of thought has gone into the new layout for Club Matters and Project Vignettes.

It is interesting to read about innovative projects such as the Donkey Library, introducing children to



nature, *Shops on Wheels* and *Pedal Power* that showcase how Rotarians care for the community. Preeti Mehra has proved herself a champion of environment by penning a great article on gardens. Kudos to the editorial team; your devotion have brought about a refreshing transformation to *Rotary News*.

K Ravindrakumar, RC Karur — D 3000

Change is constant in all spheres of life. The RNT team has done it at an appropriate time. Hearty congratulations to Editor Rasheeda Bhagat and her dedicated and hard working team for the change. The new design, fonts and layout are really attractive. I spent 90 minutes at a stretch to go through the content, page-by-page, with a lot of interest. I'm sure other Rotarians feel the same. That you plan to keep innovating is welcome news.

R Srinivasan, RC Bangalore JP Nagar — D 3191

The layout changes you have made in the magazine are really amazing. On seeing the new look magazine, I felt happy about the new mix of colours, change in the fonts of headlines and pull out quotes etc. These have made the magazine attractive and interesting. Thanks to the entire team for giving a new look *Rotary News*.

Giriraj Kayal, RC Shri Madhopur Sunrise — D 3056

Great editorial

The August editorial, *The language of grief...*, is absolutely brilliant. Thank you for the great piece.

*PDG Sam Movva, RC Vijayawada
Midtown — D 3020*

I am a Rotarian of over 15 years from Rotary Bangalore West. I compliment you for the excellent content in *Rotary News* and more than that, your editorials and articles. You have a naturally fluent way of writing. It is such a gift!

*N Krishnamurthy
RC Bangalore West — D 3192*

I have not seen such a heart-touching cover page as in the Aug issue during my 10 years in Rotary. The Editor's note and RI director's message are profound, lifting the value of the magazine to another level. Really praiseworthy.

*Milan Kumar Agarwala
RC Angul Royal — D 3262*

Child farmers, pink autos

RC Gandhinagar's novel project in farming has benefited 60,000 children. They learn about the relationship between agriculture and environment, farm animals and different crop patterns. Parents buy farm produce at

reasonable prices and the farmers benefit as brokers are eliminated. An ideal project.

*VRT Dorairaja
RC Tiruchirapalli — D 3000*

Sometime ago I saw a pink auto in Chennai with the Rotary emblem. I now learn from *Rotary News* that it is a Rotary project to empower women.

Project Pink Auto is a wonderful initiative by RID 3233; 100 pink autos were given to empower women and give them financial freedom.

*N Jagatheesan
RC Eluru — D 3020*

Just received my monthly copy of *Rotary News*, and found that the magazine has a surprisingly new look. I loved it. The animated cover page is just too good. As I turned the pages, the colours were all smiling... lovely and colourful. The content and coverage, as always, is great.

*Pranita Alurkar
RC Nigdi Pune — D 3131*

Congratulations for the new look of the magazine which is very attractive. The cover story on child farmers is very interesting as the need of hour is to educate our children about farming. They don't have even the slightest knowledge in this field. RC Gandhinagar has done a wonderful project.

*O P Khadiya, RC Jaipur
Kohinoor — D 3056*

Delighted to see the unique cover of the August issue, illustrating a farming session for children. The new look of the magazine is certainly more attractive. RI President

I found the feature *The playmaker* on RI President Stephanie Urchick very interesting. Different club projects with their accompanying photos embrace the thoughts and ideas of Rotarians. From 2025–26 there will be no presidential theme, but I feel a theme whets the hunger of Rotarian.

*Soumitra Chakraborty
RC Calcutta Universe — D 3291*

The profile of RI President Stephenie and the Editor's note, *Heatwaves, cool waters, green shoots*, were interesting. TRF chair Mark Maloney and trustee Bharat Pandya's messages were superb.

Stephanie Urchick has talked about the need for clubs to get the opinion of members before making changes in their functioning. The editorial is touching with references to grieving relatives during Covid times. RID Raju Subramanian has dwelt on creating hope in communities, while TRF chair Mark Maloney urges us to give to TRF to create a better world. It is a novel idea to train children in farming; this initiative is commendable.

The articles on Donkey Libraries in Ethiopia, pink autos, sustainable livelihood for mentally disturbed women and awards in PDG Rekha Shetty's memory, are all interesting. Club matters in the new format is beautiful. As a whole the August issue is superb, and the team deserves congratulations.

*Philip Mulappone MT
RC Trivandrum
Suburban — D 3211*

RI director Raju Subramanian urges Rotarians to embark on new activities by building new collaborations. This is welcome. With 'Magic of Rotary' being the new theme, it will really enthuse Rotarians. But the RID's suggestion to invite committed new Rotarians is not being followed.

*Niranjana Kar
RC Bhubaneswar — D 3262*

What a pleasant sight it was to see *Rotary News* at Hotel Presidency, Kochi. The owner must be a Rotarian!

*Jaideep Malaviya
RC Pune Camp — D 3131*

I read with interest the June edit titled *When the privileged wreak havoc* and your comments on our current social system when a boy, not an adult, committed three crimes — drunk driving illegally an uber luxury car, Porsche, resulting in the killing of two persons. The most striking point was the grant of bail by the Juvenile Justice Board, Pune, within hours of the crime.

This only shows that our juvenile justice law is outdated and not in conformity with the time. Very rightly it is noted at the end of the editorial that Rotary has a social responsibility to intensify its efforts to spread awareness amongst parents to protect their children from alcohol and substance abuse.

*Abhay Kishore Sandwar
RC Dhanbad Mid Town — D 3250*

The picture pages with write-up on RI Convention in Singapore turn the spotlight on peace, women's empowerment, mental health.

*Daniel Chittilappilly
RC Kaloor — D 3201*

On the cover: *Project Sakhi*, an initiative of RC Bharuch, RID 3060, aims to transform the lives of sex workers in the city.

We welcome your feedback

Write to the Editor:

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Mail your project details,

along with hi-res photos, to

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Messages on your club/district

projects, information and links on

zoom meetings/webinar should be

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WHATSAPP MESSAGES

WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.



RI President Stephanie Urchick's grandmother's house in Slovakia.



The meaning of family

The *Magic of Rotary* is belonging, and it's a feeling that can appear when you least expect it.

Earlier this year, I was in Slovakia serving as a president's representative during a six-week trip through Europe. When I wrote to Katarina Cechova, governor of District 2240 at the time, I mentioned that my grandmother Veronica Zilka grew up in a small village in the area before settling in the US.

It wasn't long before Cechova tracked down my grandmother's village, Jakubova Vol'a. She even organised a visit for me, where I received an unforgettable Slovakian welcome.

When I entered the community centre of Jakubova Vol'a, a small crowd of people dressed in traditional Slovakian clothing greeted me. They sang with beautiful and powerful Central European voices that reminded me of my grandmother.

A lot of families play cards or games when they get together. When I was young, my father would pick up his accordion and lead my family in song. My grandmother would sing along with her impressive voice.

When I walked into the community centre and heard traditional music from my childhood — when I saw a woman play the accordion the way my dad played — I suddenly felt like a little girl sitting at my grandmother's house in Monessen, Pennsylvania. I burst into tears of joy at the memories.

But the magic didn't stop there. District Governor Cechova really outdid herself. A local genealogist

worked with a videographer to make a short film about my grandmother. We watched the video together in the community centre.

When the video ended, I turned around and saw a man standing in the back of the room. I quickly learned that this stranger, Frantisek Zilka, was my second cousin. His grandmother and mine had been sisters. I felt like I had been struck by lightning.

I visited my newfound cousin's home, which happens to be the home where my grandmother was born. There, he shared old photographs I had never seen of my dad, my uncle and my grandmother.

Since then, I can't stop thinking about my family of Rotary. When I refer to you as my family, I'm not just being kind. I really think of everyone in Rotary as my family. But I never would have imagined that my Rotary family would introduce me to long-lost personal family.

Sitting in that community centre listening to traditional Slovakian music from my childhood filled me with joy and a profound sense of belonging. I am so grateful to District Governor Cechova and everyone who helped create that magical experience.

As members of Rotary, we have a unique opportunity to share the same magic with each other and with the world. I encourage you to consider how you can help spread that magic and ensure other members of your club — other members of our Rotary family — feel like they truly belong.

Stephanie A Urchick
President, Rotary International



DEI comes into focus again

The horrendous rape and murder of a 31-year-old trainee doctor at the RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata has once again put the spotlight on the unsafe environment for women in today's India. Her father's account of how he had to wait at the hospital for three hours before his daughter's body, wrapped in only a bedsheet, was handed over to him, is gut wrenching. The autopsy found clear evidence of sexual assault and strangulation. For the misogynists who always point the accusing finger at the woman when a rape occurs... why was she out so late in the night, why was she dressed like that and such gibberish, the question needs to be asked: If a trainee doctor who had gone to the seminar hall to rest during her 36-hour-long shift is not safe in a state-run hospital, then what hope of safety is there for the more vulnerable girls/women in India? A positive fallout of this gruesome crime is women of Kolkata coming out in huge numbers to reclaim their space and ask some very tough questions to the state headed by a woman chief minister. The investigation is on, but the spontaneous eruption of anguish and outrage in Kolkata is a pointer that young women are fighting back.

While hoping for the harshest punishment to the perpetrator of this crime, and a fair investigation into the allegations of sexual harassment of women in the Malayalam film industry, the triumph and heartbreak of another woman, who came out on the streets to demand justice and punishment to a powerful man for sexually harassing her and other women wrestlers, come into focus. Instead of justice, Vinesh Phogat, and other protesting wrestlers, got thrashing, in full public view, from police personnel for their

courageous battle against sexual harassment. Yet she continued, and finally made it to the Paris Olympics, swelling our hearts with collective joy and pride by winning the semifinals. As a billion-plus Indians dreamt of her bagging our only gold medal in Paris, came the heartbreaking news of her disqualification from the Olympics itself, for failing the weigh-in test by a measly 100gm in the 50kg category. The very logical question of why she couldn't get at least a silver medal for winning the semifinal fair and square was answered by the Court of Arbitration for Sports which dismissed her appeal. According to the rules, "a wrestler must not only be eligible at the beginning of a competition but must also remain eligible for the whole of the competition, that is, from entry to the finals."

Whatever the verdict, medal or no medal, in our eyes, particularly Indian women who know how the systems in our country are loaded against the "second sex", Vinesh has emerged a champion. She took on an entire establishment fought against powerful people, did not get justice and yet persisted with her dream to reach the peak of excellence at the Paris Olympics. This is no mean achievement. She will continue to be a hero for all Indian women, particularly those, who suffer sexual innuendos, harassment, and molestation in their work environment. Vinesh needs to be cheered by Rotarians who really believe in the DEI mantra.


Rasheeda Bhagat

Sangkoo Yun chosen 2026–27 RI President



Sangkoo Yun, a member of RC Sae Hanyang, Seoul, Korea, has been chosen by the Nominating Committee as RI president for 2026–27. He will be officially declared the president-nominee on September 15 if no other candidates challenge him.

Yun received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Syracuse University School of Architecture in the US and an honorary doctoral degree from The University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He is the founder and CEO of Dongsuh Corp, which engineers and markets architectural material, and the president of Youngan Corp,

which operates in real estate and financial investment. He is involved in many civic organisations and has a special interest in the preservation of cultural heritage.

A Rotary member since 1987, when he was a charter member of RC Sae Hanyang, Yun has served RI as a director, trustee, committee member and chair, and RI learning facilitator. He served for eight years as co-chair of the Keep Mongolia Green Project, implemented by the Korean members of Rotary.

Yun received TRF's Distinguished Service Award in 2021–22. He was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II, awarded the Friendship Medal by the president of Mongolia, and recognised for distinguished service by the president and prime minister of Korea. He is a veteran of the Republic of Korea Army and an emeritus elder at Andong Presbyterian Church.

Yun and his spouse, Eunsun, are Rotary Foundation Benefactors, Major Donors and members of the Arch Klumph Society, the Paul Harris Society and the Bequest Society. They have two children.

Source: rotary.org



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Director speak

Shaping the future with literacy

As September unfolds, Rotary International embraces the significance of the Basic Education and Literacy Month. This month serves as a beacon, guiding us in our shared mission to empower individuals through the transformative power of education.

Education, in its truest form, is the foundation upon which we build a future of promise and potential. It is more than just an academic pursuit — it is the key to unlocking opportunities, breaking the chains of poverty and fostering innovation. Rotary's commitment to education is unwavering, as we believe that every individual, regardless of their circumstances, deserves the right to learn and grow.

This month, our focus sharpens on bridging the gaps that hinder access to quality education. Among the most pressing challenges is the need to address educational disparities, particularly those based on gender. We must work tirelessly to ensure that every child, whether boy or girl, has an equal opportunity to learn. By doing so, we lay the groundwork for a society that values equity and inclusivity, where everyone has the chance to succeed.

However, our dedication to education must extend beyond the classroom and beyond childhood. The staggering reality

is that over 775 million adults worldwide are illiterate, representing 17 per cent of the global population. This statistic compels us to widen our focus to include adult literacy. By providing adults with the tools to read and write, we empower them to fully participate in society, enhance their livelihoods, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. A literate adult population is not only a sign of individual progress but also a catalyst for collective growth and development.

As we embrace this month of focus, we are reminded of the words of Malala Yousafzai: "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world." These words capture the essence of Rotary's mission to drive change through education. By investing in both children and adults, we invest in the future — one that promises brighter tomorrow for all.

Let September be a time of renewed commitment and action. Together, let us champion the cause of education, ensuring that every person has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. In doing so, we not only change individual lives but also build stronger, more resilient communities and a more prosperous world.

Anirudha Roychowdhury

RI Director, 2023–25

Message from
TRF Trustee
Chair



A legacy for future generations

The great use of a life,” wrote American philosopher William James in 1900, “is to spend it for something that outlasts it.”

Some leave a legacy through family and friendships, others through faith or principles, and still others through their professions. The Rotary Foundation offers another powerful option.

As a believer in the power of passing down a legacy through The Rotary Foundation Endowment, I was humbled that my wife, Gay, and I were able recently to help others in Rotary leave their legacy.

Our district (6860 in northern Alabama) had never organised a fundraising dinner focused on the Foundation’s Endowment before, but we knew it was time. We called it a legacy dinner, emphasising giving’s long-term impact.

Progress was slow at first, and there were sceptics who doubted we could raise \$1 million, our initial goal. However, we remained optimistic, setting a date for Feb 23 2024, Rotary’s anniversary.

During this campaign, committee members travelled throughout northern Alabama, meeting with small groups in fireside chats about contributing to the Endowment. Then, significant gifts began coming in. One Rotarian made a \$25,000 commitment, handing over a cheque for \$10,000. Soon, other members followed suit, and we had more than \$200,000 in gifts and commitments.

We still had far to go but if there is one thing I know about Rotary, it is this: If you present the opportunity to members, they will respond. Topping off the district’s generosity were two surprises. One was a bequest commitment of \$500,000, and then another of \$560,000.

By the end of the campaign, our committee had exceeded our greatest expectations: We had raised \$2,729,863.14 for the Endowment, nearly triple our goal. The impact of those gifts will create a legacy that will keep on giving forever.

No single club or district alone will achieve our goal of fortifying The Rotary Foundation Endowment to \$2.025 billion by 2025. Not all of us can give \$25,000 now or as part of an estate plan. But I also know many of us can.

Please help us reach that Endowment goal and in doing so leave behind a legacy and further the work of future generations of Rotary members by visiting rotary.org/legacy. On behalf of the Foundation trustees, I am grateful for your Rotary legacy.

Mark Daniel Maloney
TRF Trustee Chair

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Magazine

Message from TRF Trustee



Well done, India!

The Rotary Foundation is the backbone of Rotary, the shining jewel in Rotary's crown. It allows us to put our service, thoughts and ideas into action.

Rotarians of our zones have shown that they are committed and fully supportive of the Foundation. In 2023–24 India was Number 2 in the world with a contribution of nearly \$32 million to TRF. Five districts contributed over \$2 million each and 10 districts contributed over \$1 million each. What is more, an Indian district — RID 3141 — was the Number 1 contributor and four districts were among the top 10 worldwide. That is truly remarkable. Compliments to the 2023–24 district governors, district and regional TRF teams of our zones for this great effort.

The trustees of The Rotary Foundation have set an ambitious fundraising goal of \$500 million for 2024–25. As a team, all of us will work together and achieve this goal.

The TRF priorities for 2024–25 are:

- Support End Polio Now by contributing to your district's PolioPlus Society — help your district achieve a minimum of 50 members or grow the PolioPlus Society by 20 per cent by the end of 2024–25.
- Become a Paul Harris Society member by donating \$1,000 to the Annual Fund every year and encourage others to join too.
- Lead by example: When each Rotarian gives to TRF it strengthens our ability to touch lives and transform communities.
- All Rotary clubs must contribute to the Annual Fund. Increase the number of donors by 20 per cent.
- Focus and leverage CSR India grants
- Always keep an eye on stewardship of TRF funds
- As a team let us reach our Endowment goal of \$2.025 billion by 2025. By increasing our endowment, we can ensure that Rotary does good in the world well beyond our lifetime.

Each one of you and those within your family of Rotary can work to achieve the dreams you, and all Rotary members, have for our community and the world. And our Rotary Foundation can make that happen.

Together let us keep doing good in the world. That is the *Magic of Rotary* and TRF.

Bharat Pandya

TRF Trustee

When Rotarians became *sakhis* of sex workers

Rasheeda Bhagat



When past president of the Rotary Club of Bharuch, RID 3060, Rizwana Zamindar set out on her ambitious goal of bringing both dignity and financial independence through a socially accepted vocation to a group of sex workers in the cities of Bharuch and Ankleshwar, she was driven by a single mantra. That was “how do we create hope through the magic of Rotary to ensure a life of dignity and respect for all women, for after all this is the basic right of every human being.”

She and her fellow club members set out to launch the project titled ‘Sakhi’, which was targeted “for

women who are lost somewhere in the dark alleys of society.” Their sole objective was to pull out women who had taken to the flesh trade out of sheer desperation because they had no other options, and who were open to leaving their infamous profession if they were given any other viable option which could help meet their basic needs.

Supported by her husband Talkin, who is also a past president of the club, and has extended financial support to much of her community service work in Rotary, and the Development Support Team, Rizwana set about with great determination and steadfastness to reach out to those women who were willing

to talk to her, and build their trust in her sincerity to help them.

“My team and I worked diligently to meet the female sex workers several times in small and large groups across the Bharuch and Ankleshwar region. We even provided transportation assistance by paying for their rickshaw trips, and engaged with brothel owners and brokers to examine the possibility of those wishing to leave being allowed to do so,” she recalls. Above all, Rizwana is proud that they were able to meet with success and break through the barrier of non-communication social activists normally encounter in such cases “mainly because our team built up a non-judgmental environment



RC Bharuch IPP Rizwana Zamindar, PP Talkin Zamindar, RC Chikhli River Front PP Hassan Mayet, RC Bharuch Narmada Nagari PP Dhruv Raja and president Maunesh Patel at the launch of *Project Sakhi* for sex workers.

“Women are either tricked or sweet talked into this work. Others ended up in brothels due to extreme poverty; they often sell their bodies to run their homes, feed their children and pay school fees.”

for them by organising psychiatric counselling sessions for them by Dr Sajid Day, a well-known psychiatrist in the city.”

Gradually, the women opened up about their struggles and concerns as sex workers. Health camps were also organised to assess their medical needs and extend assistance if required. More important, the Rotarians helped these women to get access to some of the facilities available to them under welfare schemes of the government which are hardly known to them. The *Sakhi* project got a boost when it got support from the Bharuch district administration.

Talking to *Rotary News* about the issues that cropped up and the

reasons that were enumerated by the sex workers for embracing this work, in a heart-to-heart chat with the Rotarians, Rizwana says, “I have always believed that every woman deserves to live with dignity and respect. But around us, we find so many women who also do work to earn a living, but their work is considered disrespectful, or taboo. Does anybody even spare any time to think about how or why they landed up doing this work?”

So what did she find to be the reasons, I ask her. “We found that many women end up in the sex trade because either they were tricked or sweet talked and human trafficked into this work. Others ended up in

brothels due to extreme poverty; they have been selling their bodies to run their homes, feed their children and pay their school fees. Others were migrants and didn't know what else to do."

Working on this project for almost a year, the Rotarians found that the women here were as young as 18, and some rather elderly too. They also learnt that different kinds of compulsions and obligations suck these women into the flesh trade, but one thing was certain. "They are in constant fear of which client will behave in which manner with them. And yet every day, they end up at the designated pick-up spots."

Rizwana recalls that when she and her team first started "meeting the women for this project, they

were initially very scared of us, and hesitant even to talk, but slowly we won their confidence, and gradually they shed their fear and inhibition and started sharing their stories, their concern about the future, their fears. Some young women said they wanted to study and get a decent job, but the financial conditions in their families were such that they weren't able to pay their college fees."

One of the sex workers told her that as they were struggling to remain in college and complete their education, "some of our friends said that by doing this we can earn more money and we thought why not try it. Initially I thought if I do this work for an hour or two and earn ₹500 to ₹1,000 what is wrong with this income. Initially I thought like

that, but then realised that this was not the right way to make a living and decided to leave. I want to tell everybody, added that woman, that anybody can enter this profession, it is very easy to get in, but once you get in, it is very difficult to leave, for several reasons, including one's own personal compulsions."

After such close interactions with the sex workers, who were ready to come out, Rizwana and her team were even more determined that their project would rehabilitate the women who were willing to leave and ensure them dignified employment. "But we also told them to keep their expectations reasonable, and said that after leaving this work, maybe you'll earn less, and might have to make some adjustments in



A tailoring class in progress.

Through Sakhi and the magic of Rotary, we want to create hope and ensure a life of dignity and respect for all women. For after all, this is the basic right of every human being.

Rizwana Zamindar
past president, RC Bharuch



your lifestyle... eating, drinking, dressing etc because the money you now earn will not be the same, but it will give you both dignity and peace of mind," she added.

Gradually trust was built between both the groups, and following adequate counselling sessions, the Rotarians offered the women many options to earn a decent living and they chose tailoring as a viable option. A well-structured sewing and tailoring course was planned for a batch of women, and the first milestone was reached with the successful completion of the first sewing course for a batch of 10, at the Rotary Club of Bharuch Narmada Nagri's women empowerment centre. Credit for the successful training sessions went to club president Yuvrajsinh and past president Dhruv Raja.

But one key challenge remained — finding funds for the sewing machines

for this trained batch of women. When they tried to get CSR funding, the Rotarians found that “while business companies appreciated the initiative’s importance, directly associating with the rehabilitation of these women is still considered taboo by some.” Fortunately, the Rotary Club of Chikli Riverfront and the Alipore Social Welfare Trust came forward to provide good quality sewing machines, thanks to the efforts of assistant governor Hassan Mayat and NGOs associated with him. They collectively sponsored all the machines.

Says a visually delighted Rizwana, “This is just the start of an important transformation. The *Sakhi* project represents the power of compassion, perseverance and the fundamental belief that every person deserves an opportunity for a dignified life. Their journey of empowerment with dignity has begun. When we saw the smiles on the faces of the first batch of trained women after they were given their gleaming new sewing machines, that was our reward!” ■



Restoring hope at Haridwar

Jaishree



A team of doctors from Interplast-Germany with a burn survivor at one of the corrective surgery camps in Haridwar.

“

The project has given new life to over 1,000 people who were suffering from burn injuries.



Rajiv Bhalla, past president of RC Ranipur, RID 3080, expresses immense joy and pride as he reflects on a programme which “began by chance and has given new life to over 1,000 people who were suffering from burn injuries.” Since 2008, the club has been organising an annual camp to treat the physical and mental scars of burn survivors.

“It all began when our past president Sanjeev Mehta met Dr Hajo, head of Interplast-Germany, during a sightseeing trip in Rishikesh.” Their conversation led to a discussion about the two organisations — Rotary and Interplast, a non-profit that does plastic surgeries in developing countries. Dr Hajo expressed his desire to expand Interplast’s reach to more people in India, but “found navigating the government mechanism challenging. At our next club meeting we discussed this further as we were excited to work with Interplast.” A government hospital in Haridwar agreed to let them use its OPD ward and operation theatre.

Since then, the club has been organising a special camp for 15 days after Diwali every year, where a team of 10–12 doctors comprising anaesthesiologists, trauma care, plastic and general surgeons from Interplast perform reconstructive surgeries for burn/acid

attack survivors. “Around 70–80 people are treated at each camp. Some may require multiple surgeries and multiple visits depending on the severity of the trauma,” explains Bhalla. The doctors perform 150–200 surgeries at each camp but do not charge anything for their services. “They fly down from Germany at their cost. We absorb their accommodation and travel expenses from Delhi to Haridwar,” he says. The next camp is scheduled in November. Mehta is the chair of this annual project which is into 16th year now.

During the first two days the medical team examines and shortlists individuals for corrective surgery and their treatment is scheduled subsequently. Local doctors are also involved to ensure post-operative care which lasts about two weeks. The German doctors are consulted on video calls in case of any emergency during the post operative period. Psychological counselling is included as part of the treatment. “Rotary Anns also assist in the project. They help in translating communication between the patients’ caretakers and the German doctors, and in dressing surgical wounds,” he says.

Children and adults from across the state, and from Nepal, Bihar and UP sign up for the camp. “During the initial years we publicised the camp through posters and banners, but now

it is so well-known that people are well aware of the schedule which is around October-end or early November,” says Bhalla, a third generation Rotarian since 1987 when the club was chartered. He is the son of PDG Prem Bhalla; his grandfather Banwari Lal Bhalla was the charter president of RC Haridwar and mother, charter president of Inner Wheel Club of Haridwar.

The surgery camp “is an integral part of my life. It makes me feel warm and peaceful when I think of the many lives it has changed,” says Rajiv Bhalla as he recounts how it changed a teenager’s course of life. “Anubha was a victim of an acid attack after she had complained to her school



headmaster about a group of boys who were harassing her in school. She has been a regular at our camp for five years now. The doctors have done wonders to her disfigured face year after year. They have reconstructed her eyelids, ears, nose and mouth; today Anubha is lot more confident in facing the world and dreams of becoming a teacher.”

Another success story is that of Sapna from Saharanpur, who after a year of marriage, met with a fire accident while cooking. Her chin and hands got fused with her torso, and her face was disfigured due to post-burn contractures. “A depressed and disheveled Sapna was brought to the camp by her husband four years ago. The doctors performed corrective surgeries on her hand and chin. We rejoiced when we later heard that she had conceived.”

The club, with its 40 Rotarians,

bears the camp’s annual cost of ₹25–30 lakh. This includes transportation, accommodation and food for the patients and their caretakers, and hospital consumables. The club handles extensive preparations including permissions from the Uttarakhand government and the medical team’s visa formalities. “We get them temporary employment visas as they are not permitted to work with tourist visa. The doctors have to be registered with the National Medical Commission where their credentials must be submitted each year.”

Bhalla shares a heartwarming story of Interplast’s contribution of ₹17 lakh to the club for Covid relief activities. “In March 2020, the German doctors had organised funds for their trip to India for the annual camp. But when Covid struck and travel was paused, they generously donated their savings to our club for Covid relief work.”

RC Ranipur will soon be launching a ₹1-crore mobile mammography project with global grant support to screen women in Uttarakhand for breast cancer. ■



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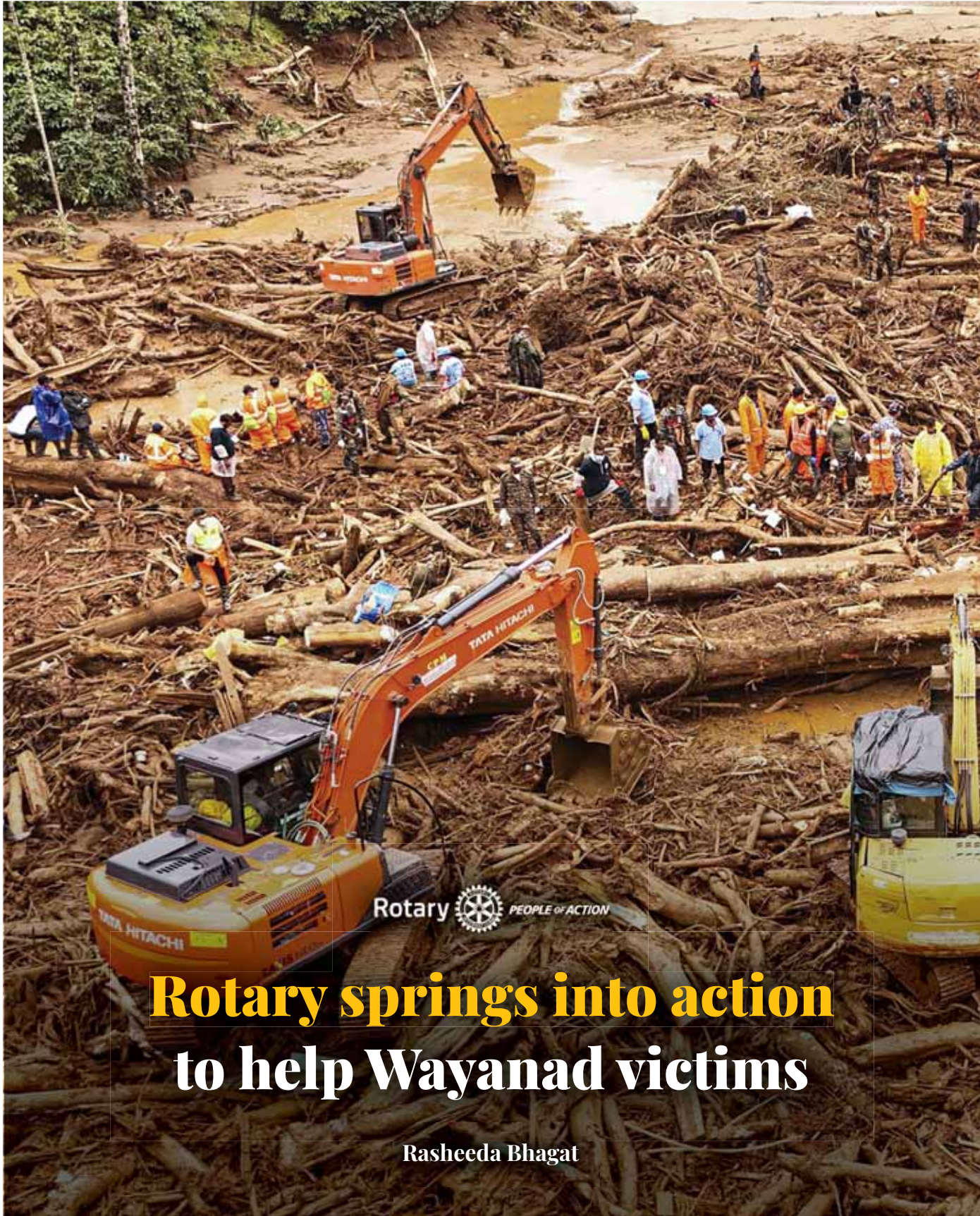
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Rotary  PEOPLE OF ACTION

Rotary springs into action to help Wayanad victims

Rasheeda Bhagat



Source: PTI



Above: RID 3204 DG Santhosh Sreedhar inaugurates an eye and ENT camp of RC Sulthan Bathery Central at a relief camp in Meppadi village.

Left: Relief work being done by members of RC Sulthan Bathery Central.



On July 30, two villages in the Wayanad district of Kerala — Chooralmala and Mundakkai — virtually disappeared overnight, hit by devastating landslides triggered by torrential rains. In the popular tourist destination Wayanad, these two villages were particularly known for their scenic landscape and waterfalls. In what has been popularly known as God’s Own Country, this natural disaster, man-made in some part, is one in a series that have overwhelmed this state in the last several years. The Wayanad tragedy is the worst natural disaster Kerala has seen since the 2018 floods.

While over 430 persons were killed in this tragedy, over 130 were reported missing and a massive rescue operation was jointly launched to find possible survivors by the Indian Army, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Fire and Rescue Services, Forest and Wildlife authorities, and the police, along with hundreds of volunteers. Several hundred stranded people in the surrounding forest area and slushy locations were rescued and over 10,000 landed up in relief camps.

It was time for Rotarians from the immediate region, RID 3204, the rest of Kerala, and beyond the state, to respond. “This was tragedy at an unprecedented level; human bodies and body parts were washed out in the

Origin of the landslide

A report in *The Hindu* identified the origin of the landslide in the valley above Punchirimattom, near the Mundakkai region. “According to the satellite imagery released by ISRO’s National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), the “crown of the landslide” or the origin is above 1,550m above sea level and the approximate size of the main scarp is 86,000sqm — roughly equivalent to 12 football fields,” said the report.

The NRSC report said that torrential rains in the region triggered a massive debris flow, which intensified the landslide. The devastation was severe, with entire villages flattened. Other post-disaster studies also found human activities chiefly responsible for increased and more intensive landslides. Add to this excessive and continuous rain, and it was a disaster waiting to happen. The landslides occurred on July 30, but since June-end there was almost continuous rainfall in the region, with only short breaks.

The Met department noted that days before this massive landslide, Mundakkai had received 572mm of rainfall in 48 hours, of which 200mm was recorded in the first 24 hours and a colossal 372mm in the next 24 hours. ■

Chaliyar River about 25–30km away from the disaster site. The belongings, savings, and entire homes of hundreds of people were buried along with their dreams in this nightmare,” says K P Ravindranath, a member of RC Sulthan Bathery, one of the five clubs in Wayanad.

The multiple landslides damaged 1,555 houses, 209 shops, two schools, three bridges were washed away, 136 community buildings were damaged and 626 hectares of farm land was destroyed. This is the worst landslides in the history of Kerala, the financial loss is estimated to be around ₹1,200 crore, according to the Kerala government.

But however grave these numbers might be, they cannot even come close to the shock, misery, suffering and pain of the people, who lost not only every material thing they possessed but also several loved ones. Malayalam channels showed several videos of the first response teams, comprising forest and police personnel, that had reached ground zero, after getting calls from the local residents alarmed by the marching elephants which had strayed away from their habitat. Animals always know better, don’t they?

The members of these first response teams interviewed by the media said they “will never forget the horror and magnitude of the tragedy they witnessed at the site. One of the policemen on duty said he will hear in his head for a long time the screams of people as huge boulders, trees and water came gushing down, washing away everything. He admitted that they did what they could but for the most part had to helplessly watch many people being washed away as an avalanche of mud, boulders and trees came crashing down.

A host of CCTV visuals recovered from a couple of shops in the area beamed into lakhs of homes the horror and intensity of the massive calamity suffered by the people of Wayanad. The visuals showed flood water gushing into closed shops destroying the shutters and concrete walls in the blink of an eye. The visuals aired by Malayalam channels from CCTV cameras at the shops in Chooralmala, one of the hamlets completely destroyed in the disaster, were beyond human imagination. Boulders, trees, animal



5 Rotary clubs in Wayanad provided relief material such as medicines, bedsheets, tarpaulin, etc. RID 3204 DG Santhosh Sreedhar has promised Rotary's help for rehabilitation to the tune of ₹2 crore.

carcasses... all of them could be seen crashing into these shops thanks to the fury of the gushing waters.

Ravindranath adds that Wayanad is often referred as the Kashmir of Kerala or a Green Paradise, "being blessed with magnificent waterfalls, streams, caves, majestic blue mountains, green valleys and wildlife. With moderately pleasant climate throughout the year, it is a tourist's paradise. It is estimated that there are more than 5,000 tourist resorts and homestays in Wayanad within a

2,131sqkm area, apart from several hotels and eateries."

The region experiences heavy rainfall during the monsoon season (July to September) and has many ecologically sensitive areas, especially on the eastern side of the ghats, which are prone to landslides. During the monsoon each year, people living in these areas live in constant fear. In August 2019, Puthumala, a tea estate village near Meppadi was wiped out

by a huge landslide. This year too, the heavy rainfall had made some families shift to safer locales just a couple of days earlier, he says.

Both Mundakkai and Chooralmala are beautiful, small villages located in Meppadi panchayat in North Kerala, known for its hilly terrain and agricultural land. They house agri families, with many people working on the tea plantations. Common crops include coffee, tea, pepper, and various spices.

Since July this year, Wayanad has been receiving continuous rainfall and Mundakkai, a tea estate village, received 572mm rainfall in the 48 hours leading to the unfortunate day. Three terrible and devastating landslides hit

Mundakkai and Chooralmala villages in the early hours of July 30, destroying the entire villages, burying houses and buildings along with the residents under mud. One of the survivors told him: "It was raining throughout the day and we were afraid, but as we have lived here for several years, we thought nothing unusual would happen. But around midnight we heard a blast, and within minutes, mud along with water started pouring into our house. Luckily, we immediately moved to a safer area. Very soon, the entire house was under mud and water."

Once relief work was started by the district administration with the help of local volunteers, police, Fire and Rescue Service of Kerala, and later the Indian Army, Rotarians from all five clubs in Wayanad — Rotary Kalpetta, Kabani Valley Mananthavady, Pepper Town Pulpally, Sulthan Bathery Central and Sulthan Bathery — rushed to the relief camps and provided essential relief items, as entry to the disaster site was restricted. A joint meeting of all five Rotary clubs was held and it was decided to do what Rotary does best during natural disasters: provide immediate and long-term relief.

Giving details of the work done by these clubs, T Jayachandran, secretary, RC Sulthan Bathery Central, said the members of RCs Nilambur and Mulkam rolled up their sleeves and helped recover dead bodies from the Chaliyar river and provided assistance in wrapping them up and transported them to Wayanad. Rotary Sulthan Bathery Central conducted an eye and ENT camp for the survivors at the relief camp at Meppadi on two successive days in the first week of August. Over 170 people were screened and 140 spectacles were given. RID 3204



Members of RC Sulthan Bathery Central all set to visit the disaster relief camp at Meppadi village.

DG Santhosh Sreedhar presided over the event where medicines were also distributed. DGE Bijosh Manuel visited the camp on both days.

All the clubs in Wayanad provided immediately required relief material such as gloves, masks, medicines, bedsheets, tarpaulin, sanitary napkins, buckets etc in the relief camps. Rotary Kalpetta, along with Rotary Manjeri and Cyber City, and RMB, Kozhikode, provided the much-needed bio-toilets and portable toilets in the relief camps.

I managed to get permission from the authorities to visit the site, being a Rotarian. Around 5,000 volunteers were still working to remove the mud and recover human bodies and their belongings. There was an eerie silence and the shock was palpable as nobody was talking. The faces were frozen, and some of them were hoping against hope to meet their missing ones, if not alive, to at least get their remains,” says Bharath Das, past president of RC Manjeri.

The two beautiful hamlets — Vellarimala and Chooralmala — were separated by the river and mud as the bridge collapsed and was wiped off by the water. The military forces built a Bailey’s Bridge to connect the two places. Relief material and essential goods, such as water, sanitation



The region experiences heavy rainfall during the monsoon season and has many ecologically sensitive areas, especially on the eastern side of the ghats, which are prone to landslides.

material, vegetables, clothes etc started flowing to Meppadi. All the godowns were full in no time, and counselling centres started functioning.

The Rotary Club of Manjeri sprang into action. A team of Rotarians went to Nilambur, where the dead bodies were recovered, and essential items like water, biscuits and fruit juice were given to the volunteers working day and night. This project was sponsored by club member Khalid Puthussery. “It was brought to our notice that bio-toilets were required at the rehabilitation centre. We transported two bio-toilets to the SKMJ School, Kalpetta, where a majority of the people are housed,” he adds.

“Our club members met the district collector Meghasree and committed to provide LPG cooking gas connection to 150 people, along with a stove with two burners. The project cost of around ₹10 lakh was sponsored by a Rotarian from the club, C Abdul Kareem, who is an Indian Oil gas dealer at Kondotty.

DG Sreedhar, along with PDG VG Nayanar, DGE Bijosh Manuel, other district officers and the presidents of the five Wayanad clubs, later visited the disaster area, and held a meeting with the Kerala ministers — revenue minister K Rajan, forest minister AK Saseendran, PWD minister

PA Mohammed Rias and SC/ST welfare minister OR Kelu — who are overseeing relief operations and assured an assistance from Rotary for relief and rehabilitation work, to the tune of around ₹2 crore. They also visited district collector Meghasree who appreciated the work being done by Rotary for the disaster victims.

Other Rotary clubs and organisations that helped include Rotary Nagercoil (RID 3212) and Rotary Tirupur Kumaran (RID 3203), which rushed clothes and other essential items. Rotary Punalur Riverside (RID 3211) provided enzyme-based cleaning material, and Rotay Manjeri promised to provide 150 LPG connections to the victims; 150 Shelter Kits were received from Rotary Bombay, India Humanity Foundation and Rotary Calcutta Mahanagar, which have been distributed, said DG Sreedhar.

He added, “A bank account in the name The Rotary Kalpetta Charitable Trust — Wayanad Disaster Relief Fund has been opened with ICICI Bank, Kalpetta branch, the account no is: 075705002020, IFSC: ICIC0000757, to mobilise funds for the rehabilitation of the victims. I appeal to all clubs and philanthropists to contribute to this fund to help us fulfil our promise to the state administration.

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New friends, old friends

The *Rotary* magazine labelled the 1953 convention in Paris “an exciting adventure in friendship.” That description fits every convention before and since. At the Rotary International Convention in Calgary, June 21–25, jump wholeheartedly into your chance to renew old friendships and find “instant friends” among strangers, as one Rotaractor puts it. Those friendships are among the top reasons members give for why they go to the convention.

Consider a few reflections from over the years on convention friends:

“You don’t need an introduction to talk to anyone at the convention, so go ahead and make new friends.”

“A new best friend awaits your arrival, and I can promise it because it’s happened to me often over the years.”

“Where else but the Rotary convention could you make new



friends from Brazil, Taiwan and Kenya?”

Who couldn’t use a friend these days when adults report fewer close friends and more loneliness? Rotary encourages members to support each other’s

mental well-being, but even in 1914, a magazine article said that valued convention friends “smooth the rugged path of life.”

At the core, Rotary’s good works emanate from friendships, new or old. Founder Paul Harris was looking for true friends, not just acquaintances, when he started Rotary. Past President Frank Devlyn addressed the topic in a 2001 convention speech in San Antonio: “We make new friends because that is the basis for everything we do.” You’ll find those people at the convention in Canada. Years later, there will be a good chance you’re still connected.

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Rotary uses AI-aided device to screen rural women for breast cancer

Rasheeda Bhagat

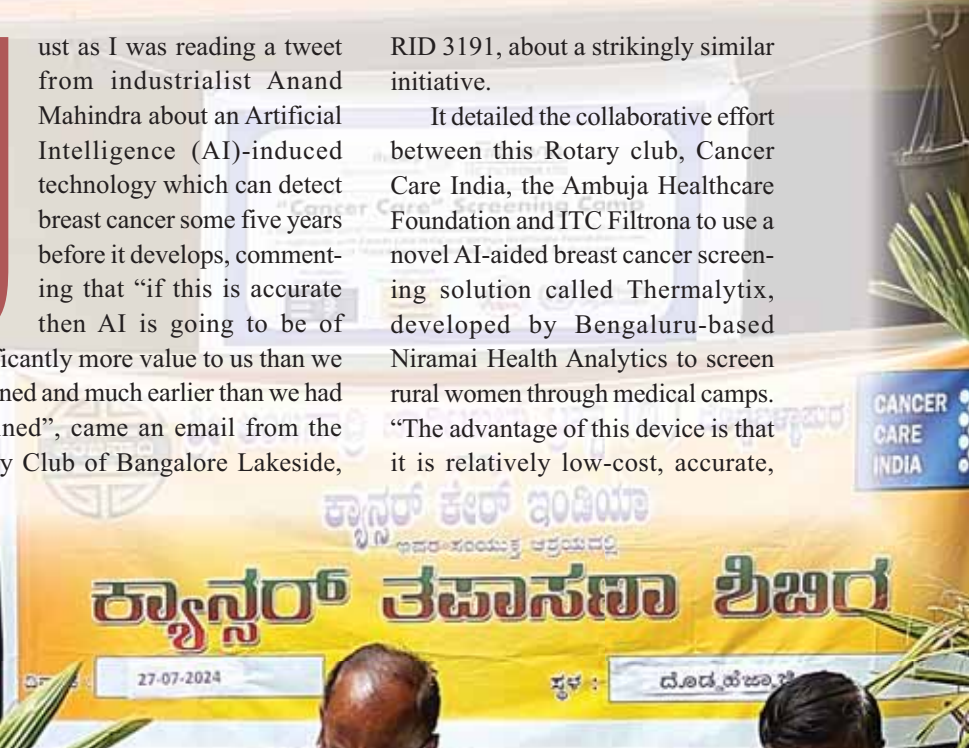


Cancer Care India founder Dr R Indira explaining about the AI-aided breast cancer screening device. Also seen (from L) Ambuja Healthcare Foundation director Satyanarayan Lakshman, Rtn Azhar Khan, Kalavati from ITC Filtrona and Keshav Murthy from Anjanadri Charitable Trust, Doddaballapura.

Just as I was reading a tweet from industrialist Anand Mahindra about an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-induced technology which can detect breast cancer some five years before it develops, commenting that “if this is accurate then AI is going to be of significantly more value to us than we imagined and much earlier than we had imagined”, came an email from the Rotary Club of Bangalore Lakeside,

RID 3191, about a strikingly similar initiative.

It detailed the collaborative effort between this Rotary club, Cancer Care India, the Ambuja Healthcare Foundation and ITC Filtrona to use a novel AI-aided breast cancer screening solution called Thermaltyx, developed by Bengaluru-based Niramai Health Analytics to screen rural women through medical camps. “The advantage of this device is that it is relatively low-cost, accurate,



Biggest cancer killer in women

The credit for developing this easy to use and relatively low-cost cancer screening device goes to Dr Geetha Manjunath, founder and CEO of the Bengaluru-based Niramai Health Analytics. Addressing a session of the UN General Assembly in September 2023, she described herself as a computer scientist, with a PhD in AI, who has now turned a social entrepreneur. “We have pioneered a new way of detecting breast cancer using AI and radiation-free thermal scans. Breast cancer is the largest cancer killer in women today, being the topmost cancer in women in 159 countries and the second largest in others. Over 680,000 women die every year due to this cancer in India and other developing countries, where



Dr Geetha Manjunath, founder and CEO, Niramai Health Analytics

portable, and protects the privacy of the patient,” said the note.

The club has undertaken this cancer care programme thanks to CSR funds totalling about ₹12 lakh which will enable the screening of some 1,000 women in various camps to be held in rural areas. “The biggest advantage of this device is that it is portable, and simple to operate so that not only paramedics but also other technicians can

be trained to use it. The other advantage is that the woman has complete privacy; she doesn’t have to remove her clothes and she is not touched by anybody while the screening is done,” says former president of the club and the district CSR director Kashinath Prabhu, who is overseeing this project.

Thanking their partner ITC Filtrona for providing the CSR funding, he explained that the club decided

to use this device for screening women in rural areas as it can be operated at any place where electricity is available and smart phones work. “This computer aided diagnostic engine is powered by AI; the solution uses a high-resolution thermal sensing device and a cloud hosted analytics solution for analysing the thermal images for reliable, early and accurate breast cancer screening,” he added.



District CSR director Kashinath Prabhu (fourth from L), Lakshman, Azhar, Kalavati, club president Abhilasha Pandit and Dr Geetha Manjunath with health and ASHA workers.

breast cancer has a 50 per cent mortality rate, which means that every alternate woman detected with breast cancer is dying. Which is a pity because this is completely curable and nobody needs to die from it.”

The high mortality rate, Dr Geetha explained to the UN delegates, was because of late detection. “In countries such as India, we are unable to provide comprehensive screening and detection with technologies such as mammography, ultrasound etc because of the cost factor and skills needed for performing the imaging and shortage of experts to interpret these images. Hand examination is the standard method of doing population screening for breast cancer today. Such an examination

can only detect a 2 or 3cm lesion, by which time it is too late as the cancer has already reached Stage 2 or 3, and the result is a 50 per cent mortality rate.”

The technocrat told the assembled leaders that as this was a global problem it needed to be taken seriously, and gave them details about the new AI-aided technique developed in her lab “which comes at a fraction of the cost (of traditional screening methods) and requires minimal skills to operate. The device is portable so it can be taken out to remote areas to screen women for this dreaded disease, to detect it early and at stage zero. The test is radiation free and done in complete privacy, where nobody sees her or touches her when she is not wearing any clothes.”

Dr Geetha said the screening done by her device is clinically validated and has been done in many countries, showing “excellent results, with over 120,000 women benefiting from it. This is just one example of how innovations using AI can benefit society. In this forum, I urge the ministers, policymakers and representatives of countries to please consider making a countrywide policy on cancer screening and detecting early cancer, particularly breast cancer because it is the top killer in women. After all women form the central core of the family, when the woman is sick, the whole family is in turmoil, if she is healthy, family is happy. I also urge you to support more women entrepreneurs,” she concluded.

The inaugural screening camp was held on July 27 at a government school in Doddaballapura, Bengaluru Rural district, Karnataka. Here, with help from partners, that included a local NGO which helped identify the women for screening, PHC Asha workers, and its corporate partners, and Dr R Indira, founder of Cancer Care India, who explained the way this screening works, screening was done for the identified women.

Club president Abhilasha Pandit said this project aims to conduct a series of cancer awareness and screening camps for rural women from poor and backward families. These camps will be held at the village community centres, primary health centres or government schools. Prabhu added that in the first phase of this project, “we aim



to screen over 1,000 women from in and around Bengaluru. Post screening, if some symptoms or abnormalities are found, we will connect the women for the next level of follow-up consultation or treatment with our partner hospitals

such as Kidwai Hospital or HCG Hospital, Bengaluru, which treat the underprivileged.”

Those who show some danger signals but do not have the cancer yet will be counselled on dietary



“

This is just one example of how innovations using AI can benefit society. I urge the ministers, policymakers, and representatives of countries at the UN to please make countrywide policy on breast cancer screening.

Dr Geetha Manjunath

regulation, lifestyles changes, and above all regular medical examination so that the problem, when it comes, can be tackled immediately.

On how he chose this project, Prabhu said he keeps looking out for new ideas, and once he had identified cancer care as a project, he applied for CSR funds which was originally for oral cancer as there is a lot of tobacco chewing prevalent in rural areas, but finally breast cancer screening was chosen. With the funds they have now, 1,000 rural women can be screened using this device — each screening costs ₹250, and takes about 15–20 minutes. Including counselling about 30 minutes are spent on each woman. Every day 50 women can be screened in these camps. On the accuracy of the diagnosis, he says results have been published in peer medical journals and the product is commercially available also in the UAE, Turkey, Sweden, Bulgaria, Kenya etc.

Depending on the success of this first phase, he is hopeful that more CSR funding will come in from the same and other companies. The club has ambitious plans to also take up screening for oral cancer and cervical cancer, he added.

The most heartening part of this project is that rural women will get the benefit of a new AI-aided technology for a critical healthcare need such as screening for breast cancer.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

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Enhancing eyecare in Mauritius

Kiran Zehra

In June 2024, the Rotary Club of Thane, RID 3142, and RC Phoenix Mauritius, RID 9220, organised a medical camp in Mauritius to screen and treat people suffering from vitreoretinal disorders — a group of eye conditions affecting the retina and vitreous, leading to severe vision impairment or blindness if left untreated.

A five-day medical camp was organised at the Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital in Moka, Mauritius. Anand Kale, the then president of RC Thane, accompanied two ophthalmologists from India who screened 120 people and performed 40 surgeries at the island



A surgery in progress at the medical camp in Mauritius.



IPP of RC Thane Anand Kale (L), Dr AK Karan and Dr Sweta Patro (fourth from L) with ophthalmologists from Mauritius.

country. The initiative also aimed to train the medical professionals at the hospital. “We wanted to empower the local doctors with advanced skills and knowledge,” says Ajay Kelkar, past president of RC Thane.

The connection between the two clubs goes back to 2017 when Kale attended a meeting at RC Phoenix while on a business trip to Mauritius. “Whenever he was in Mauritius, he would attend our club meeting and we were happy to host him,” says Chandru Hassamal, a member of RC Phoenix Mauritius. In 2017, the club supported RC Thane by donating \$3,000 to help

build a check dam, marking the start of their collaborative efforts.

The next year RC Phoenix members visited India to meet the doctors and learn about squint eye surgery for underprivileged children. They also contributed \$2,500 for constructing a toilet block in a girls school in Thane. Subsequently RC Thane sponsored two ophthalmologists, Atul Seth and Siddharth Kesarwani, to Mauritius where they screened 160 children with squint eye disorder and performed corrective surgeries on 50 children. The following year, another 50 children were treated. *(read the squint eye story*

at - <https://rotarynewsonline.org/treating-squint-eye-in-mauritius/>)

The project was paused due to the Covid pandemic. As the need for squint eye surgeries decreased, the clubs shifted focus to vitreoretinal disorders. “We have advanced infrastructure at the Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital, but lacked a vitreoretinal expert,” says Hassamal. The two ophthalmologists from India, Karan AK and Sweta Patro, provided workshops and hands-on training to equip local doctors with skills to manage complex retinal surgeries.

The project cost approximately ₹85 lakh. ■

TB testing equipment for TN hospitals

Team Rotary News

With focus on screening and testing patients for tuberculosis, RC Rasipuram, RID 2982, has donated a molecular testing machine to the Government Hospital, a fluorescent microscope to GH, Namakkal, and a microscope each to 10 primary health centres in and around Rasipuram to enhance the TB testing facilities through a global grant project worth ₹27.4 lakh. Rasipuram is a town in the revenue district of Namakkal in Tamil Nadu.

RC Cornette-Furquim Castro, RID 4630, Brazil was the global partner. As the National TB Elimination Programme mandates the supply of nutritional diet consisting of pulses, eggs, cooking oil etc to boost the immunity of patients under treatment, “we have



IPDG S Raghavan with Namakkal district collector S Uma at the inauguration of the TB testing facilities. Project chairman NP Ramaswamy is on the left.

arranged for the monthly supply of pulses worth ₹600 to 20 TB patients for six months, costing ₹72,000,” said NP Ramaswamy, project chairman.

The TB screening machine was launched at the hospital by Namakkal district collector S Uma. IPDG S Raghavan, PDG P Saravanan, DRFC S Lokanathan, district grants chair Babu Kandasamy, project chairman Ramaswamy and club president P Srinivasan were present at the event. ■

Handholding a village towards “a better tomorrow”

Rasheeda Bhagat

Vadachi Wadi is a small village with a population of hardly 40 families, comprising some 385 people, barely 13km from Aurangabad. Most of the families depend on farming for income and while the smaller farmers have landholding of 2–3 acres, the larger ones own land plots of 5–6 acres and most of them grow jowar, bajra, cotton, corn, pulses and vegetables.

For the last few years the Rotary Club of Aurangabad, RI District 3132, has adopted this village in a bid to bring around transformative lifestyle changes in the village with focus on children’s education, improving livelihoods, and above all introducing means of income generation for the women in the village.

The Rotarians adopted this village a few years ago to drive impactful community projects under the Rotary Parivartan Gram initiative. “We wanted to address the villagers’ needs and create sustainable solutions in education, farming and especially to enhance women’s income by either teaching them new skills or upgrading existing ones,” says immediate past president of the club Sarita Satish Lonikar.

With focus on girls’ education, the club began to beautify the village primary school by repairing and painting the building and providing separate toilets for girls and boys. It invited IPDG Swati Herkel to distribute 10 bicycles to

girls, who had to walk a distance of 8km to the secondary school. Eight more bicycles, each costing ₹5,000, are going to be given to girl students soon.

Next, the project focused on supporting “local entrepreneurship



IPDG Swati Herkel (fourth from L) and IPP of RC Aurangabad Sarita Satish Lonikar after gifting bicycles to school-going girls in Vadachi Wadi village.

and self-employment of women through various initiatives as part of a broader mission to promote social change and improve livelihoods. To bring about economic empowerment of women and encourage entrepreneurship, the members organised Montessori training for six women who were interested, and of these three have been employed,” says Poonam Deodas, assistant governor, RID 3132.

Six of the village women were each given an *atta chakki* (flour mill), and now they are getting a regular income through the production of red chilli powder, turmeric powder, other Indian spices as



also grinding foodgrains. A sewing machine was donated to the women who were trained to make cloth bags, small purses and pouches, with the club members helping to market what was produced by the women, including powdered spices, pickles, pappads etc.

Next, the farmers were trained in organic farming with experts organised to address and guide them. Fruit trees were planted in some farms and there is a plan to plant some 500 bamboo trees in the village this year. The total amount spent on this project so far is around ₹3 lakh.

One of the beneficiaries, Savita, said, “I am so thankful to the Rotary club and its president Saritaji for giving me and six other women an *atta chakki* machine, and training us how to handle it for different kinds of grinding. Now, by doing this work, we can earn about ₹200 to ₹300 daily.”

Says a very happy club president Sarita, “Engaging in these initiatives



The village school before and after renovation by the club.



has been incredibly rewarding. Some of our members visit this village once a month, and seeing the smiles on the faces of the children, the gratitude of the women and the elderly, and the overall improvement in quality of life fills us with immense pride and joy.”

On future plans, she says the club is keen to encourage the education of girls and towards “this goal, we want to set up a scholarship for girls’ higher education. We also want to introduce digital classrooms and e-learning resources.”

She adds that healthcare services will also be taken up by holding regular health camps for medical check-up and vaccination. Skill development of women and youth will continue as also the planting of trees and educating and motivating the farmers to opt for organic farming.

“We are optimistic that all these components of the project will create a ripple effect of positive change and usher in a better tomorrow for the villagers,” smiles Poonam. ■

An egg bank in Imphal

Team Rotary News



Club president Saratchandra Singh Phijam (third from L) and club members handing over the eggs to the administration staff of Punya Children Home for Girls.

RC Imphal, RID 3240, has been running the *Rotary Egg Bank Project* since 2021. This initiative provides 1,890 eggs to Chanura Leikol Children Home for Girls and Punya Children Home for Girls in Imphal, Manipur, ensuring that all 114 girls at these homes receive four eggs each every week.

Club president Saratchandra Singh Phijam explains, “This project provides a consistent source

of nutritious food for the children, improving their overall diet and contributing to their well-being.” The initiative is funded through donations from club members.

To mark National Doctors’ Day, over 200 people benefited from a medical camp organised by the club, in association with the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS). The club planted 170 saplings in Babina Multi Speciality Hospital in Imphal East. ■

A smile restored

Team Rotary News



IPDG T R Vijayakumar (L), District director Gokulraj, RC Coimbatore Monarks IPP Dr Vikas Gupta and secretary D Sudhakar with Nivedha (R) and her father after her treatment.

Nivedha (27) is a happy woman now; her face has undergone a remarkable transformation, thanks to a corrective dental surgery sponsored by RC Coimbatore Monarks, RID 3201.

Two years ago, she was introduced to the club's IPP Dr Vikas Gupta as a listless, malnourished, underweight woman with a chronic maxillary atrophy; her upper jawbone (maxillary bones) had eroded to the point where her teeth seemed to hang precariously from her gums, unsupported and fragile. Nivedha's mother informed the doctor that she could hardly eat, and survived on liquids. Her cheeks and lips were

sunken and she would not step out of the house for fear of being ridiculed for her looks, and had no friends. Gupta prescribed surgical treatments called 'Quad zygoma' followed by 'all-on-4' dental rehabilitation, with a total price tag of ₹9 lakh. The parents could not afford the treatment.

The Rotarians stepped in with a *Dil Se Ghazal Nite* to raise funds. The event brought in 84 donors and the support of five generous corporates — Tulsi Vatika, Repose, Shakti RO, Impel and Dr Gupta's own firm, Dental Care Professionals. Each contributed ₹50,000, and the club members

pitched in as well. Though the total funds fell short of the treatment's full cost, he decided to move forward. Ganga Hospitals offered their space and Gupta, with his team of dentists, performed the reconstructive surgery on Nivedha, providing her with temporary dental implants.

"She is now brimming with confidence, has gained weight and looks healthy. Her face has regained its natural shape, and she no longer fears the mirror," smiles the doctor. Nivedha is attending job interviews with newfound assurance, and her marriage alliance has been fixed. "She will receive her permanent teeth in a year," he says.

This year, the club under the leadership of CN Sharavana, launched a year-long WinS project to install handwash stations, dispensers and liquid handwash in government schools lacking the facility. A programme to train government school students in soft skills was also inaugurated. ■



Club president CN Sharavana (centre) with students after a soft skill training session.

RI seeks solar heroes

Rasheeda Bhagat

Rotary International, in its quest for environmental protection and sustainability of the earth's resources, has launched a drive to encourage the transition from traditional to renewable energy sources to combat climate change and ensure a sustainable future for the present and future generations.

Towards this end RI's Environment Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG) has launched a Million Solar Panels Challenge (MSPC) initiative, in which Rotarians are urged to put up one million solar panels. "When completed, this will save 7.5 million tons of carbon emission. We know that already several Rotary clubs across the

world have undertaken solar energy projects, but we do not know the extent of this work done by Rotarians. Hence clubs which have done projects using solar panels and Rotarians who are using solar panels at their business establishments or homes are requested to log in details of the solar panels they have put up," says Jaideep Malaviya, Director, Renewable Energy, ESRAG, South Asia.

India has made rapid strides in the use of renewable energy, particularly solar energy and currently, globally it ranks third in generating solar power, after China and the US. India generated 113 billion units (BU) of solar power in 2023 compared to Japan's 110 BU. As plenty of sunlight is

available in our tropical climate, the idea of switching over, even if partially, to solar energy is not new in our country.

Malaviya says that many Rotarians in South Asia have already deployed solar panels and appealed to all the Rotarians who had done so — either in club projects, their homes or offices, or through CSR funded initiatives — to log onto www.rotarysolarinitiative.com, and fill in their details in the simple, user-friendly form available there. A QR code is also available to directly access the form. The basic information required is the capacity of the solar energy system installed, number of panels, name and number of the club and RI district and an email id.



Nitty-gritty of the solar challenge

Typically, how solar power generation and storage works is that the power you generate through your solar panels on your roof or campus, is fed into the government's power grid, which is adjusted against your consumption. If you use more, the net difference is billed to you, and hence the term net metering.

Besides this, ESRAG's South Asia Renewable Energy director Jaideep Malaviya explains that there are large solar farms/parks that the Indian government is encouraging. After China, and US, India is now the third highest

producer of solar power, "and a number of Rotarians have invested in solar farms, some of which are big enough to generate 100mw."

There are three ways in which a Rotarian can become a solar hero:

- * Install solar panels in your home or business.
- * Install solar panels for others – family/friends, in individual, club or district capacity.
- * Donate to Rotarian solar partners who can deploy solar power for those less fortunate.

Project ideas include setting up solar panels on top of school rooftops, electric vehicle charging

points, agriculture pumping, community drinking water, water filtration, tailoring units, *chakkis* (grain milling), cold storage for milk, vegetables and fruits and storing vaccines.

Maintaining that this initiative meets all the core values of Rotary's Four Way Test, Malaviya says, "above all, it will be certainly fair and beneficial to all. Every solar panel installed is a step towards a brighter, healthier planet for everyone. With every watt of solar power, we're not just saving money; we're investing in a livable world for future generations."

This initiative is crucial as it empowers Rotarians to combat climate change, reduce energy costs and collectively offset millions of tonnes of Co2 emissions, thus leading the way to a sustainable future, he says. Appealing to Rotarians in this region to "accept this challenge and put in their highest possible contribution to this initiative to save Planet Earth", he said that till now details of nearly 25,000 panels put up in South Asia have been collated. "A Rotarian from

Salem, S Devarajan of Sambandan Spinning Mills, has made India proud by logging in 10,000 solar panels, which is the highest number of panels from a single Rotarian in the MSPC."

He is optimistic that this 'challenge' will slowly catch up in India and the rest of south Asia. "My goal is to reach all the Rotarians. For example, in my city of Pune, when we started this campaign three years ago, a few Rotarians put up 10kw solar power capacity in their office or factory

rooftops... 10kw needs about 25 panels. But it spread rather fast and thereafter many Rotarians started putting up solar panels in their homes and office establishments."

Underlining the point that using solar power is commercially viable and prudent, he says there is a huge opportunity in using solar energy in operating the pumping systems in agriculture, both in small and large farms. "Instead of diesel, our farmers can, and should, use solar energy as fuel. And they can benefit from the government programme known as the Kusum Solar Panel Yojana, under which farmers get a subsidy upto 60 per cent for setting up solar energy systems.

"This call to action is not just a challenge; it's an opportunity. Rotary's fight against polio stands as a monumental achievement in global health. Let's make history again; this time let us take up this challenge and become a solar hero and help bring carbon emission levels to Zero," he adds. ■



15 kWp (50 panels) on rooftop of Rtn Anil Newale as part of ESRAG fulfilment



From L: PRIDs Mahesh Kotbagi and Manoj Desai, RID Anirudha Roychowdhury, PRIP Shekhar Mehta, RIDE M Muruganandam, Sumathi, Uma, RIDE K P Nagesh, PRIP K R Ravindran, RID Raju Subramanian, PRID C Basker, Neelavathi and PDG P Gopalakrishnan at a felicitation event in Trichy.

Incoming directors felicitated

**Jaishree &
V Muthukumaran**

In Nagesh we have a winner — 1,725 new members, 52 new clubs, 160 Rotaract clubs and a contribution of \$2.2 million to TRF — incredible,” said PRIP K R Ravindran, addressing a meet organised by RIDs 3191 and 3192 to felicitate incoming RI directors KP Nagesh and M Muruganandam in Bengaluru. He was recalling RIDE Nagesh’s record-making feat as DG of RID 3190 in 2015–16. Ravindran was the RI president during that year when the district topped the world in membership and TRF-giving.

With a blend of wisdom and encouragement, Ravindran shared insight from his own journey, providing a roadmap for the new directors. “You are both capable of being great ambassadors for India on the RI Board and on behalf of the Board to the world. If you want to make this country proud, perform well there. Asia holds a crucial place in Rotary’s landscape, contributing 40 per cent of membership and half of the top districts in TRF-giving,” he said.



sessions. Nagesh convinced us otherwise and indeed it was a showstopper. At every hurdle that came our way during the planning of the event, he would say, ‘Don’t worry. We will sort it out.’ His words gave me and the team confidence.” He urged the two incoming leaders to uphold Rotary’s ethos and ethics and “always observe financial transparency and integrity. Only that will sustain the future of Rotary in our country.”

RID Anirudha Roychowdhury praised Nagesh for navigating complex challenges with exceptional results. “He will set high standards and drive the team to soar high,” he said. TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya, in a video message, encouraged the new directors to justify the great opportunity they had been given, and work for a better Rotary.

Recalling a conversation with his mentor PRIP Rajendra Saboo, Ravindran said, “When I was nominated as RI director, I was concerned about representing a small country. Raja told me, ‘You won’t be judged by where you came from. Your country will be judged by what you do on the Board.’ This is the responsibility you both now carry.”

Leading, he added, was different from being a leader. “A leader may hold the highest rank, but leading is when others follow willingly, not because they have to, but because they *want to*. You’ll face grey areas, and no matter which path you choose, you’ll draw criticism. Praise is fleeting; respect is lasting. Nobody cares about your convictions, history or credentials. What matters is what you do now.”

Learn to disagree in an agreeable manner, he said, relating a situation where as RI director, he had to impose a three-year ban on a district for RI appointments. Despite facing severe criticism, he maintained the importance of relationships, recounting how a conversation over lunch resolved the

issue. “Sometimes you may have to take a tough stand on an issue, but it shouldn’t interfere with personal relationships,” he advised.

RI Director Raju Subramanian shared fond memories of working with Nagesh, highlighting his unwavering support as chair of the Bengaluru Rotary Institute. “There was never a ‘no’ from him. For all the requests we made during the event, his reply was always *Ho jayega*.” Recalling the sit-down South Indian style lunch at the institute, he said, “Trustee Bharat and I were concerned about that lunch and whether it would eat into the institute

P RIP Shekhar Mehta, offering his felicitations to the incoming directors,



said, “When people are happy that you are leading them, that is your goodwill and the dividend you have earned. The two of you make a potent combination representing us at the highest level. We expect great things to happen under your leadership.”

PRID C Basker recalled his association with Nagesh as DG when he was Rotary Coordinator for Zone 5. “Nagesh set himself goals which others thought impossible. He created a new membership strategy — divide to grow, and grow to divide,” which led to bifurcation of districts. He also praised the energy,

**RI Director Elect
Nagesh and Uma.**



resourcefulness and ambition of both the incoming directors. “Under their leadership we will see tremendous reforms which will make the Rotary world look at us,” he said. PRID Manoj Desai, who served as RI director during the time when Nagesh and Muruganandam were district governors, expressed pride in seeing them take on their new roles. PRID Mahesh Kotbagi urged the incoming directors to “prioritise regionalisation to allow us to grow more.”

In his address Muruganandam pledged his support to Nagesh and stressed the importance of member retention alongside growth. “Members who leave Rotary should be seen as a threat to Rotary’s public image.” He gave a peek into one of the ‘12-point’ programmes designed by the two incoming leaders — the 1:2:3 formula. “For every Rotarian inducted we must ensure we bring in 2 Rotaractors and 3 Interactors. We can then see our Rotary Wheel roll for the next 5–6 decades,” he said.

Nagesh, in his reponse, thanked the senior leaders, Rtn Jayakumar “who introduced Rotary to me 30 years ago” and his mentor PDG Yogananda who “moulded me as a good Rotarian. We are missing him. He will be in my heart forever.” He outlined his plans for membership growth and TRF giving. “As DG I planned 52 new clubs in 52 weeks. Now as director I aim to charter 365 clubs

in a year and increase TRF contribution to \$100 million, and double the current CSR contributions. We will build on the legacy of our senior leaders,” he said.

A heartwarming video from Nagesh’s family concluded the event, with his son, daughter and wife expressing their admiration and support. “Rotary has truly benefited our family and we are grateful. The architect of our house, the doctor for our dogs, the trustee of my college, the landlord of my office space and the auditor — everybody is a Rotarian. Pa, you are a great inspiration,” his son Tejus said. His daughter Nidhi added, “I am honoured to be his daughter. His wisdom has shaped me in countless ways.” His wife Uma expressed confidence in Nagesh’s ability to meet the new challenges ahead.

Felicitations at Trichy

Speaking at a meet in Trichy to felicitate RIDE Muruganandam, PRIP Ravindran said that leadership is all about courage to uphold the right, “staying true to one’s values and integrity instead of bowing to popular or majority opinions.” As RI director, “you will be running the business of Rotary, managing our zones in the ‘business’ of health, literacy, livelihoods, and doing miracles that change lives.” Focus on the task ahead, fly forward, don’t look back and let the past baggage come in the way, he urged the incoming directors Muruganandam and Nagesh.

Success is all about how you carry yourself in a highly responsible position. Every opportunity and position come with an obligation, responsibility and a duty to perform, Ravindran pointed out, and added, “apart from the milestones you have planned in membership, Foundation-giving and service

projects, “encourage your governors, make clubs effective and productive, enhance value for members, impact communities, and bring down the administrative cost.” Citing his experience as RI Board’s treasurer, when the then RI president wanted him to collect funds from clubs to fund the visit of around 500 DGs to the RI convention, with which “I disagreed politely,” he told the RIDEs to “be prepared for hard decisions and challenges ahead” at the board deliberations.

RID Roychowdhury recalled his return flight journey from the US with Muruganandam a few years ago when he had a “long, intense chat with him. I was so impressed by his thought process and felt that one day he would lead Rotary India, which has come true now.” Muruganandam would work silently, but efficiently, on many big-ticket projects as



RIDE Nagesh and Uma being felicitated in Bengaluru. Also seen (from L): Sumathi, RIDE Muruganandam, PRIP Ravindran and DG N S Mahadeva Prasad.

RI Director Elect M Muruganandam and Sumathi.



DG (2016–17), he said, and “as a Rotaractor he was active in the PolioPlus drive earning kudos from the district collector.” A vocational centre set up by him during his Rotaract stint is still active, noted the RID.

RI director Subramanian said that the presence of Nagesh and Muruganandam in the RI Board from 2025–27 will showcase India’s resilience and leadership in taking Rotary forward to greater dimensions. Have big dreams, plans, goals, and rely on teamwork to excel, said PRIP Shekhar Mehta, adding, “I had goosebumps listening to their 10-point charter of action. These two leaders are capable of leaving a rich legacy behind as they are focused and not afraid of failure.” Recalling the eight Guinness Records that Muruganandam had set as governor, PRID Basker added a note of caution, saying that “we are becoming district-centric, rather than focusing on clubs which are the real pillars of Rotary.” RI directors must encourage and empower Rotary clubs in India to address issues of membership, he said.

The growth of RI districts and clubs in Tamil Nadu (Zone 5) is fantastic, thanks to multifaceted leaders like Muruganandam who excels in diverse enterprises, said PRID Kotbagi. Humility and the ability to burn midnight oil to achieve big are his hallmarks, said PRID Manoj Desai. TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya and PRID Kamal Sanghvi offered felicitations through video links.

In his speech RIDE Nagesh said, “we understand that our position comes with a lot of responsibility.” Expressing his gratitude to his parents, wife Sumathi and children, Muruganandam said he was influenced by three Rotarians in his formative years in Rotary — Samuel Christdoss, Rotary-Rotaract advisor; PDGs T Valliappan and PSD Chandrasekaran. Having joined Rotary as a 16-year-old Rotaractor, he was the charter president of RC BHEL City Tiruchirapalli, one of the youngest governors of his time, and his mantra is ‘Say yes to Rotary’. His theme for his tenure as director is ‘Keep going’.



RIDE Muruganandam and Sumathi with PRIP Shekhar Mehta.

Urging the Rotarians to give importance to Rotaract, he said, “74 per cent Rotary clubs have not sponsored a Rotaract club, 79 per cent are doing nothing for Interact, and 80 per cent have not sponsored an RCC.” Muruganandam said a Rotary India Leadership Conclave will be held in Chennai in August 2025, and the zone institute will be held in Sri Lanka.

Earlier, PRID Basker, DG R Raja Govindasamy, IPDG R Anandtha Jothi, DGE J Karthik, DGN R Subramani and leaders from RIDs 2981, 2982, 3203, 3212 and 3233 greeted Muruganandam and Sumathi at a felicitation meet in Madurai which was hosted by his home club RC BHEL City Tiruchirapalli.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



RI Director Raju Subramanian hands over a laptop sponsored by Maithili Nadkarni (third from R) and her spouse Rahul (fifth from L) to visually-challenged Tanish Kinalkar. Club president Tanvi Attreya Sawant is seen second from right.



Two acts of kindness

Team Rotary News

with his physical handicap, managed to score a very impressive 84 per cent in his Class 10 Board exam.

When he expressed his desire to go in for higher education and it was found that he badly required a laptop to aid his education, club member Maithili Nadkarni and her spouse Rahul came forward to fund a laptop costing nearly ₹28,000.

In another act of kindness, when three young children — Shruti, Sakshi and Samarth Madkaikar — were left orphaned and without much hope for their future, club member Jayesh Raikar stepped forward to sponsor the children's education for one year. He announced a donation of ₹1.2 lakh, so that ₹10,000 is now available every month to pay for the children's fees and other related expenses. ■

That compassion comes in several forms and through little acts of kindness and generosity showed by individuals was proved by some members of the Rotary Club of Panaji Riviera, RI District 3170, in July.

The installation day of the club brought a ray of hope to a visually-challenged youngster, Tanish Kinalkar, who, despite having to battle



Club member Jayesh Raikar with siblings Sakshi, Samarth and Shruti.

Creating leaders in water education

Kalpana Khound

The Rotary Foundation and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education have partnered to award scholarships to water and sanitation professionals. The scholarships are intended to develop solutions to the world's water and sanitation challenges in developing countries and are awarded to young and mid-career professionals from around the world to study for a Master's degree in Water and Sustainable Development at IHE Delft, Netherlands. Since 2012, TRF has awarded over 165 scholarships to 96 students from 31 countries with a total value of over \$5 million.

It was during the pandemic that a young professional, Sajib Manash Mahanta, from Guwahati, Assam, with an MSc in Environmental Studies and Resource Management from TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi, expressed his desire to join this prestigious course. An online interview was organised with RID 3240's DG and other district officials, and he was approved as the district's candidate nominated by our club, RC Dibrugarh. A global grant which followed with the generous support of TRF and Rotary Districts 1600 and 3240, not only allowed him to join

IHE but also gave him the opportunity to be part of a larger network in the water sector.

Sajib was drawn to the study of water services, firmly believing that access to water is one of the most critical issues facing the world today. It was in the picturesque city of Delft in the Netherlands that he embarked on a transformative academic journey in 2021 which he successfully completed two years later.

At the initial stage of the scholarship, the focus was on acquainting the students with the life and culture of the Netherlands as well as the Rotary family they came in touch with. Students of the course participate in fund-raising events for these scholarships

at IHE Delft itself, or during district events held in any of the Rotary districts in the Netherlands or nearby countries. Upon arriving at IHE Delft, Sajib met Rotary host counsellors Niek Jonkman and Titia, who became like family to him. They provided him with a home far away from his home in India. He accompanied Jonkman to many Rotary events and shared his journey from India to IHE, along with his work in water governance.

PDG Bas Hendriksen took him to many Rotary meetings in the



2021–23 class of MSc Water Management and Governance of IHE Delft Institute for Water Education.



PDG Kalpana Khound (second from R) with TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney and his wife Gay at the RI Convention in Singapore.

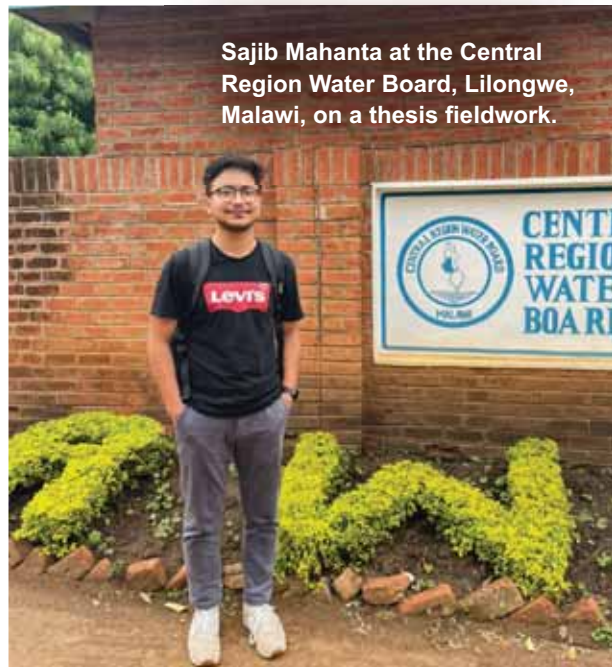
Netherlands as that of RCs Rijswijk, Voorburg and Granvenhage Oost, as well as the clubs in Belgium. His MSc thesis focused on mutuality in water operator partnerships, exploring the collaboration between Vitens Evides International, a water operator in the Netherlands, and water boards in Malawi, South-East Africa. Through his research, he found that mutuality played a significant role in the effectiveness and success of partnerships, but it lacked a clear, linear assessment

process. To gain deeper insight, Sajib conducted research in Malawi, residing there for two months, collecting data and conducting interviews. This experience enriched his thesis and provided a profound understanding of the challenges of water access in the country. It also enabled him to forge lifelong friendships with the local people in Malawi.

Sajib is grateful to the professors at IHE Delft, particularly Dr Klaas Schwartz, for their unwavering



The FINISH Mondial programme has facilitated the construction of 1.5 million toilets, providing improved sanitation to 8 million individuals across Asia, Africa and South America.



Sajib Mahanta at the Central Region Water Board, Lilongwe, Malawi, on a thesis fieldwork.



Mahanta in Thiruvarur, Tamil Nadu, on a fieldwork for WASTE NL, Netherlands.

support and belief in his research endeavour. The experience at the institution has not only shaped his academic pursuits but also broadened his horizon, fostering a sense of responsibility towards addressing global water challenges.

Following his graduation, he embarked on a fulfilling journey with WASTE NL, an NGO headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands. At WASTE NL, his responsibilities revolved around the monitoring and evaluation of programmes, along with leading impact assessment and other research initiatives. Presently, he is involved in the FINISH Mondial programme, an ambitious endeavour striving to create a world where every individual has access to safely managed sanitation and is financially empowered. Since its inception in 2009, this programme has



Since 2012, TRF has awarded over 165 scholarships to 96 students from 31 countries with a total value of over \$5 million.

been a beacon of hope with remarkable achievements. To date, it has facilitated the construction of an impressive 1.5 million toilets, extending the benefits of improved sanitation to a staggering eight million individuals across Asia, Africa and South America. Moreover, these efforts have translated into the creation of 16 million workdays, with a significant focus on the construction sector, thereby fostering economic growth and empowerment.

Drawing upon the wealth of knowledge and expertise nurtured in the Netherlands, Sajib has embarked on field studies in India, where he strives to translate the programme's successes into tangible outcomes. These field studies serve as crucial platforms for implementing innovative solutions and strategies tailored to the unique challenges faced by communities in India. Additionally, his professional journey has taken him to diverse corners of the globe, including field visits to Kenya. These experiences have provided invaluable insight, enriched his understanding of local context, and reinforced his commitment to bringing about positive change on a global scale.

The young Rotary alumnus looks forward to contributing to the water management domain and making a positive impact on those who do not have good access to this invaluable resource. The knowledge gained, friendships forged, and the guidance and care received from the Rotarians of the Netherlands will forever remain etched in his heart, inspiring him to move ahead with determination and compassion in pursuit of a better world.

As a Rotarian, I am grateful for the opportunity to make the young water professional's dream a reality through our wonderful scholarship programme at IHE Delft Netherlands.

The writer is a past district governor of RID 3240

More information at <https://www.un-ihe.org/education/master-programmes/rotary-scholarships-water-and-sanitation-professionals>

Project vignettes

Team Rotary News

A dialysis project

RC Kottayam East, RID 3211, along with RC McKinney, Texas, RID 5810, provided an ambulance and kidney dialysis equipment worth \$118,450 to two hospitals in the city. Over 40 underprivileged people are benefitting from the facilities.

Wheelchair distribution

RC Guwahati Luit, RID 3240, supported by Rotary Guwahati Luit Trust, distributed wheelchairs to 50 physically-challenged individuals.



A dialysis project
Members of RID 5810 on their recent visit to the project.

Wheelchair distribution

Club members with beneficiaries.



A rehabilitation park
IPDG R Muthiah Pillai, along with club members, at the Mayopathy Institute.

A rehabilitation park

RC Tinnevely, RID 3212, in partnership with RC Lexington After Hours, RID 6740, USA, and TRF, has set up a rehabilitation park named Sakhtiman Park at the Mayopathy Institute, Tirunelveli, for children with muscular dystrophy. Physiotherapy machines were also given to the institute. The project cost ₹64.18 lakh.

Thalassemia care

Club members at the 'joy zone' in DY Patil Hospital.



Thalassemia care

RC Navi Mumbai, RID 3141, created a Joy Zone at the DY Patil Hospital, Navi Mumbai, to make the blood filtration process a fun experience for the 35 children who visit the hospital regularly for treatment for Thalassemia disorder. ■



90 years of RC Bangalore

V Muthukumar

Fellowship and service mingle seamlessly at RC Bangalore, RID 3192, as its 300-plus members enjoy doing mega projects that infuse bonhomie in the club which is celebrating its 90th year. Chartered in July 1934, the second oldest Rotary club in South India is the country's fourth largest in membership and has built mammoth

structures to deliver medical, educational and community services over the decades.

Since inception, this marquee club in Bengaluru has done several projects worth ₹58 crore, touching over 40 lakh lives in and around the city, and produced 17 district governors. The late PRID Panduranga Setty, an educationist and institute-builder, was from this

club. He mentored many service-minded Rotarians from Karnataka since 1959. "When I faced a crisis in my Rotary life to choose the right club to chase my abnormally huge and impactful projects, I was welcomed into the club by Setty. They embraced me with so much camaraderie and love that I felt at home. RCB is not just another Rotary club, it is an institution by itself, a Bahubali of sorts," says DGN Ravishankar Dakoju, popular in the Rotary world as the ₹100 crore-donor to TRF from India.

Iconic projects

Set up in 1984 through a 3-H and other matching grants of \$100,000, the Rotary Bangalore TTK Blood Bank has state-of-the-art equipment for collecting, processing and distributing 40,000 units of blood and components to major hospitals each year. "We have tied up with DKMS,



Joyful students at the club's 50th Happy School at Kanegowdanahalli in Bengaluru Rural district.

Germany, for stem cell registry, immunohaematology, tissue banking and stem cell transplantation. So far, we have incurred an expenditure of ₹15 crore at the blood bank," says Ranga Rao VS, past president of the club. The running cost of the facility is met

through monthly revenue, CSR grants and support from TTK Group.

A 35-year-old high school, Rotary Bangalore Vidyalaya, has 550 children from primary level to Class 10 with around 30 teachers. School uniforms, shoes, books, bags and midday meals are given free at this Rotary school which is being upgraded into higher secondary level (Classes 11, 12). "We will construct two new blocks (₹1 crore) to accommodate the new classes at this school, which is our pride and joy," says Gowri Oza, club president.

Over the last few years, the club has built 40 greenfield schools in partnership with the city corporation, BBMP, and they cater to some 48,000 children. "While the land was given by the civic authority in well-identified zones, we built the schools, each at ₹45 lakh and offering education till Class 7," she explains.

In the last 5-6 years, the club has done 128 Happy Schools, each project costing ₹3.5 lakh, under the TEACH initiative of Rotary. "Apart from upgrading toilet blocks for girls and boys, we have given benches, desks, play equipment, taken up building repairs, installed RO water plants and handwash stations," she explains.

To provide a cosy ambience to children from deprived families, the club has refurbished 81 anganwadis with new kitchens, toilets, benches, desks, and carried out minor building repairs at a total cost of ₹2.2 lakh per centre, says Ranga Rao. Happy Anganwadis has so far benefited 15,000 children. "We have also given *Nali Kali* (fun learning) tables and chairs at anganwadis that will bring joy to young ones," smiles Gowri.

Healthcare projects

On the medical front, 156 primary health centres (PHCs) were given a wide range of equipment and supplies from appliances like fridge,



RCB is

not just another Rotary club, it is an institution by itself, a Bahubali of sorts.

Ravishankar Dakoju
District Governor Nominee



Members of RC Bangalore with club president Gowri Oza on Independence Day at the Rotary House of Friendship. **Sitting (from L):** DGN Ravishankar Dakoju, MC Dinesh and secretary Sohil Shah.

vacuum cleaner, washing machine to medical utilities such as oxygen cylinders, hospital beds, surgery lights, nebulisers, ECG machines, digital stethoscope, BP apparatus, suction pump and autoclaves; and admin facilities such as laptop, UPS etc. “Each PHC was donated utilities and medical devices worth ₹2 lakh that will benefit over 20 lakh patients a year,” he adds. In a joint initiative with SELCO and Schneider Electric the club will install solar panels for 24x7 power supply to the maternity wards at 100 PHCs in villages, spending ₹3.5 lakh at each centre.

With growing cases of kidney ailments in the IT capital of India, “we have donated 50 dialysis machines (₹8.5 lakh per unit) to hospitals and PHCs, all of them funded through CSR grants and club donations,” says Gowri. Around a decade back, 27 dialysis machines were installed at the Rajarajeshwari Hospital, Kengeri,

“ My life has changed dramatically with the fellowship and bonding we have in this Rotary club.

Gowri Oza
president, RC Bangalore

where “800 patients get the benefit at affordable cost each month.” Around 1,000 patients are diagnosed each month at the Rotary Muthappa Attavar Memorial Hospital at Channasandhra which is supported by the club and Rajarajeshwari Hospital. Under a global grant, the club plans to do 100 heart surgeries, of which 60 have been completed so far. “We offer a subsidy of ₹56,000 for each surgery to deserving patients,” says Rao

One of the largest burns ward in South India was set up at the Queen Victoria Hospital with 26 beds.

Palar river rejuvenation

A team of green warriors is planting 50,000 saplings over 400 acres in and around Kaiwara, a small town in the Chikkaballapur district, where the Palar river originates at its upper basin. “We have spruced up the rural infrastructure in six villages by upgrading schools, anganwadis, PHCs, libraries and put up high mast lights,” he explains. The Palar restoration project has cost ₹2.2 crore so far.

A skill development centre (SDC) called ‘Home of Hope for the Homeless’ offers training in lathe machines, carpentry, tailoring and plant nursery for 800 inmates, mostly destitute men and women in the last stages of their life. The club has partnered with Collins Aerospace in building the SDC which is run and managed by Auto Raja, a social worker and influencer.



Club president Gowri, headmistress T Sudha and Brig (retd) BG Jagadish, along with the NCC batch and teachers, on Independence Day at Rotary Bangalore Vidyalaya.

Scholarships

More than 200 scholarships are given every year with the Visala Hayagriv Scholarships for girl students at the school level and the Rotary Menda Educational Scholarships — 175 students benefited each year — being the most popular among them.

Zenith and Azim Premji Foundations sponsor B Ed scholarships for 100 poor students each year. So far, 400 teachers have been trained at a finishing school run by Azim Premji Foundation under this programme at a cost of ₹43 lakh per year. Smart Vision glasses (₹45,000), part funded by CSR partners, were given to 184 visually-impaired persons to help them lead a normal life with the AI software and audio-facial recognition tools embedded in the special glasses.

In partnership with the city corporation and other NGOs, the club has taken up an anti-rabies drive and awareness campaign at a cost of ₹28 lakh. Vultures play a key role in sustaining the ecosystem, but this high-flying kite has dwindled to just 10,000 in India due to misuse of diclofenac chemicals on live-stock. “We create awareness in the rural areas on the need to avoid this chemical in treating livestock as the carcass kills the vultures when they consume it,” says Rao.

Rotary House of Friendship

Rao recalls that the club bought a plot of land for ₹50,000 from a private enterprise in 1960, and “it took us seven years to construct our own building, which has a House of Friendship on the covered terrace that can accommodate 200 people for fellowship and dinner.”

For die-hard Rotarians like NS Srinivasa Murthy, an AKS member, “we have got addicted to Rotary Bangalore where fellowship is at its



New play equipment for children at a Happy School at Gollahalli in Bengaluru Rural district.

best. I joined the club two decades ago, and what a turnaround it has brought in my attitude towards service,” he says, all excitement. Agreeing with him, Dakoju adds, “A member of Rotary Bangalore does not need any other social organisation, as everything is inbuilt here.”

A recipient of student scholarship at the age of 13 from the club, visually-impaired with partial hearing loss, Chandana C is president of RC Abilities, a club for differently-abled

sponsored by Rotary Bangalore. “The first scholarship I got from my parent club helped me to pursue higher education and now I am employed in Ernst and Young. Besides, I have won many corporate awards. I learnt about this special club from a Rotarian, and joined in it immediately.”

Gowri Oza joined the club 26 years ago, “after being in the Round Table (Ladies Circle) for 12 years. My life has changed dramatically with the fellowship and bonding we have in this Rotary club,” she smiles. Giving a peek into their work ethic, Rao says, “our programmes and events are planned three months in advance. We also rope in our Rotaractors and Inner Wheel members to our projects that boost our public image.”

With two AKS members and 10 Major Donors, the club with 330 members has given around \$12 million to TRF till now. The 100 per cent PHF club has sponsored 34 Rotary, four Rotaract and 11 Interact clubs. Rotaract Club of Bangalore is the one of the oldest in India, formed 56 years ago and has done many impactful projects.



We have got addicted to Rotary Bangalore where fellowship is at its best. I joined the club two decades ago, and what a turnaround it has brought in my attitude towards service.

NS Srinivasa Murthy
AKS member

Designed by Krishna Pratheesh S

District Wise TRF Contribution

Annual Fund (AF) includes SHARE, AoF and World Fund.
PolioPlus excludes Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Source: RI South Asia Office

As on July, 2024

District Number		Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution
2981		91,254	2,335	29,777	48,101	171,467
2982		78,602	2,171	32,160	64,429	177,362
3000		272,496	55,048	53,760	1,024,105	1,405,409
3011		253,520	35,898	52,080	1,721,151	2,062,649
3012		111,174	544	0	444,544	556,263
3020		153,971	190,803	160,214	535,670	1,040,657
3030		219,895	31,911	13,609	262,015	527,430
3040		16,144	1,200	100	122,183	139,627
3053		106,572	1,934	10,000	86,705	205,211
3055		159,351	5,702	60,727	9,728	235,509
3056		126,817	886	50,000	40,400	218,102
3060		378,455	11,100	86,639	638,308	1,114,503
3070		42,740	751	0	24	43,516
3080		176,828	29,133	49,125	100,180	355,265
3090		107,453	2,830	26,000	192,807	329,089
3100		128,793	7,212	25,301	80,550	241,857
3110		19,809	1,030	0	109,179	130,018
3120		73,665	631	16,684	10,342	101,322
3131		912,836	23,651	262,244	1,847,427	3,046,157
3132		202,902	8,259	10,000	128,705	349,866
3141		757,132	87,636	144,121	3,127,937	4,116,826
3142		432,731	121,545	25,985	196,835	777,096
3150		102,484	32,825	161,423	161,836	458,569
3160		88,668	2,572	0	3,432	94,672
3170		410,238	51,962	27,102	231,608	720,910
3181		310,815	3,682	31,000	1,581	347,078
3182		104,322	5,687	25,624	67,557	203,189
3191		160,729	16,190	60,976	765,403	1,003,298
3192		170,812	21,746	421,687	500,581	1,114,825
3201		356,009	85,764	50,784	1,682,028	2,174,585
3203		92,970	45,055	12,348	32,672	183,045
3204		71,769	4,628	0	34,292	110,689
3211		228,905	5,086	27,325	138,443	399,759
3212		243,334	65,164	52,602	129,400	490,501
3231		9,273	10,240	5,314	28,392	53,218
3232		113,585	31,875	55,973	2,533,263	2,734,697
3240		232,417	17,470	34,000	478,338	762,225
3250		86,036	11,554	26	103,684	201,300
3261		215,226	15,630	25,181	70,214	326,251
3262		82,836	8,741	16,078	93,350	201,005
3291		294,376	10,958	169,311	59,549	534,193
3220	Sri Lanka	106,758	14,130	34,953	9,766	165,607
3271	Pakistan	15,857	87,578	0	93,141	196,576
*3272	Pakistan	4,342	385	0	25	4,752
*3281	Bangladesh	80,569	2,105	3,000	264,728	350,403
*3282	Bangladesh	90,726	4,982	1,000	9,116	105,824
3292	Nepal	185,298	44,142	19,999	470,312	719,752
63	(former 3272)	16,036	1,288	0	0	17,324
64	(former 3281)	31,517	5,479	2,000	0	38,996
65	(former 3282)	4,945	321	0	9,000	14,266

* Undistricted

From RI South Asia

Million dollar districts from South Asia and their worldwide rank in Total Giving

Zone	District	Total TRF Contribution	Worldwide Rank	Rank in South Asia
4	3141	\$4,116,626	1	1
7	3131	\$3,051,157	4	2
5	3232	\$2,734,456	6	3
5	3201	\$2,174,585	11	4
4	3011	\$2,062,649	13	5
5	3000	\$1,405,409	26	6
7	3192	\$1,114,825	44	7
4	3060	\$1,113,794	45	8
7	3020	\$1,040,657	52	9
7	3191	\$1,003,298	56	10

Top districts from South Asia in Annual Fund giving and the corresponding worldwide rank

Zone	District	Annual Fund Total	Worldwide Rank in Annual Fund giving	Rank in South Asia in Annual Fund giving
7	3131	\$917,836	15	1
4	3141	\$756,932	24	2
4	3142	\$432,731	75	3
7	3170	\$405,550	84	4
4	3060	\$378,455	100	5

Fundraising highlights from South Asia for Rotary year 2023–24

- India achieved its highest-ever contribution to TRF, totaling \$31.8 million, and maintained its position as the second largest contributor worldwide.
- RID 3141 ranks world #1 ranking with a total TRF contribution of \$4.1 million.
- For the first time, five districts from India surpassed the \$2 million mark, while ten districts crossed the \$1 million threshold (please see the table).
- There were a total of 29 new AKS members (including level changes) from South Asia, with 27 AKS members from India.
- Overall 75 per cent of clubs contributed to TRF; 11 districts — 3055, 3141, 3142, 2982, 3220, 3100, 3240, 3020, 3131, 3132 and 3182 — achieved the status of 100% giving clubs.
- South Asia recorded its highest ever donor percentage at 37 per cent, with RID 3292 leading at 95 per cent donor participation, followed by RIDs 3060 and 3181 at 69 per cent donor participation.
- A total of 614 new Major Donors (including level changes) has been added to the list from South Asia, bringing the cumulative total to over 7,000 Major Donors in the region.
- The elite Paul Harris Society membership from South Asia welcomed 362 new members, increasing the count to 2,064.

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Meet



Chetan Desai
IT consulting
RC Borivli
RID 3141

Your

Governors

V Muthukumaran

Making clubs irresistible

His vision is to make clubs “vibrant and irresistible so that they can build on the magic of Rotary.” Chetan Desai aims to add 700 new members and charter 12 new clubs, taking the total to 6,700-plus and over 130 respectively by June 2025.

Project Vibrant Anganwadis will transform 436 child care centres at the tribal hamlets in Jawahar, Makhada areas, 100km from Mumbai, touching the lives of over 26,000 children. “The ₹6 crore-project, funded by both CSR and global grants, will train *sevikas* (teachers) and revamp the anganwadi facilities,” he says.

Around 1 lakh women will be screened for breast cancer through a painless, zero-radiation technology; 2,000 paediatric heart surgeries are planned; 1,000 government school teachers will be trained and 200 old age homes will be provided with essentials. He urged clubs to make use of CSR-India grants so that they are recognised “as TRF contributions.” For TRF-giving, he aims to collect \$7 million, “In the first 25 days, eight Rotarians have pledged to become AKS members,” he smiles. Having joined Rotary in 2003, it is Service above Self that “keeps me ticking in Rotary,” he adds.



S Vikramdatta
Education
 RC Deralakatte
 RID 3181



Yagyansis Mohapatra
Outdoor media
 RC Bhubaneswar Toshal
 RID 3262



M Rajanbabu
Construction
 RC Tiruvannamalai
 RID 3231

Medical help for elderly

A former chief technical officer at the Indian Navy, Vikramdatta enjoys doing community work. “After being in the navy for 15 years and travelling to many countries, I was drawn to Rotary in 2010, as its community service, fellowship and discipline attracted me,” he recalls. He is confident of inducting 300 new members, and chartering six new clubs taking the total number to around 4,000 and 95 respectively by June-end next year.

His pet project, *Sandhya Surakhsha* (protection for elders), is providing medicines, recliner beds, mobility aids and western toilets to at least 1,000 elderly patients facing terminal illness, mostly in rural areas. “We are holding cervical cancer awareness sessions in 450 educational institutions. If the vaccine price comes down, then we will have vaccination camps too,” he says. RC Sullia will donate medical equipment (GG: ₹50 lakh) to a physiotherapy centre for special children; while RC Puttur will conduct mammography camps (GG: ₹35 lakh) jointly with a government hospital.

For TRF-giving, his target is \$400,000. “We are continuing with nine big projects from last year,” he says.

Carts for poor vendors

Service to mankind is service to god, is the life philosophy of Mohapatra. Aiming for a net membership growth of 250 which will take the headcount to over 4,250, “I will also charter at least 15 new clubs that will add to the current strength of 117 clubs,” he says.

The district will apply for 10–15 global grants during the year. He inaugurated a dialysis centre (GG: ₹60 lakh) at the Meenakshi Hospital, Berhampur. Through CSR fund of ₹20 lakh, “around 80 clubs are distributing vending carts to over 300 retailers who belong to BPL families under *Project Swabalambi* (self-reliance).” Shortly, a pathology centre will be set up at the Government Hospital, Balasore, through a GG worth ₹25 lakh.

Around 50 health check-up camps will be conducted across the rural belts of Odisha. For the Foundation, he aims to collect \$250,000. He joined Rotary in 2008, “to further expand my service activity. PRIP Rajendra Saboo is my role model in Rotary,” he adds.

Training district leaders

Mission Excellence is the district theme chosen by Rajanbabu, for “our focus is on training club presidents and district office-bearers so that they are well-equipped to handle their responsibilities and perform their duties.”

Rotarians who introduce new members will be recognised. The DG wants to induct 1,000 new members and charter 10 new clubs, which will push up the total to 4,500-plus and 104 respectively. “Our target is to construct 20 toilet blocks for government schools and install 50 handwash stations, for which we will be either applying for a global grant or tap CSR funds,” he explains. Each club will plant saplings on all 365 days under *Project Dhinam Dhinam Thittam* (daily plan), and create Miyawaki forests in urban areas.

Around 100 medical camps will be held; “three clubs have shown interest to set up dialysis centres through GGs.” At least 10 GG projects (₹50–60 lakh) are under drafting stage. He aims to collect \$700,00 for TRF. “Foundation projects motivate me to be active since 2005 when I joined Rotary,” he adds.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

club matters

RID 2981



RID 3012



RID 3030



RID 3060

RC Nagapattinam Wings – RID 2981

An amount of ₹25,000 was given to daily wage labourer Venkatesh (44) for medical treatment of his injured leg after his family contacted the club for help.

RC Sonepat Midtown – RID 3012

White canes with sensors were donated to 40 visually-impaired persons near Delhi border, Kundli and Sonepat for them to navigate their way.



RID 3020

RC Rajamundry River City – RID 3020

Over 500 persons were treated at a six-day acupressure camp inaugurated by PDG Bhaskar Ram and past president Kasi Visweswara Rao. Three therapists gave free treatment to patients.

RC Amravati – RID 3030

Among 137 seropositive women registered for the Pap smear test camp for cervical cancer, over 100 were tested, six found positive at the Dr Punjabrao Deshmukh Memorial Medical College. RC Burhanpur was the co-partner.

RC Wadhwan Metro – RID 3060

Food and buttermilk were distributed to hundreds of people under *Project Annapurna*, a weekly project in the first month of Rotary year.

RID 3070



RID 3120



RID 3080



RID 3132

RC Jalandhar South – RID 3070

A toilet block (₹90,000) was built at Bridh Ashram, an old age home, in Budhiana village, thanks to CSR funding from Kapsons Foundation.

RC Prayagraj Platinum – RID 3120

Around 5,000 cloth bags with Rotary Wheel were distributed to roadside fruit, vegetable vendors on World Plastic Bag Free Day (June 3). City mayor Umesh Chandra Kesarwani was the chief guest.

RC Nahan Sirmour Hills – RID 3080

Sweaters and socks were distributed to students at the Government Primary School, Purbion village at Nahan taluk in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh.



RID 3110

RC Agra – RID 3110

Around 300 prisoners and children benefited from a health camp at the Agra District Jail in which medicines, eye and ear drops, syrups, dental creams and spectacles were distributed.

RC Pandharpur – RID 3132

Big paper bags were distributed to pilgrims visiting Pandharpur on Ashadi Vari, the last day of the pilgrimage to Lord Vithoba, to avoid littering around the place. Over 1,000 food packets were also provided.

RID 3233 takes special children to Tirupati

Team Rotary News

Rotarians and children after
Lord Balaji darshan at Tirupati.



Right: RI Director Anirudha Roychowdhury interacting with children at the railway station in Chennai.



More than 1,000 differently-abled children from Chennai were taken to Tirupati in a chartered train for a special darshan of Lord Balaji by RID 3233 under *Project Sri Balaji Darshan with God's Children*.

Flagging off the special train to Tirupati, RI director Anirudha Roychowdhury complimented project chairman Pankaj Kankaria and his team who were guided by district governor Mahaveer Chand Bothra, and said, “the event of this magnitude was made possible, thanks to the team effort of RID 3233.”

Tamil Nadu minister PK Sekar Babu was the chief guest at the flag off





From R: PDGs Tarachand Dugar, N Nandakumar, ISAK Nazar, Babu Peram, S Muthupalaniappan, G Chandramohan and R Srinivasan.



DG Mahaveer Bothra serving lunch to the children.



early morning at the Central Railway Station, Chennai. He was accompanied by Southern Railway divisional manager Vishwanath Eerya and other officials. At the Renigunta Railway Station, the children were welcomed by Andhra Pradesh minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Tirupati MLA Arani Srinivasulu, TTD executive officer Shyamala Rao and other state officials.

“The children were taken to Tirumala by 36 AP state government buses and had good darshan of Lord Balaji at around noon which was possible due to the arrangements made by the Local Advisory Committee president Sekar Reddy and other Rotarians who coordinated with the LAC,” said DG Bothra.

Arusuva Catering from Chennai provided three sumptuous meals to the children. They were also given a smart handbag, a t-shirt with Rotary emblem and a Lord Balaji image, mineral water and biscuits, and a writing pad with pen. Rotarians and doctors travelled with the children to ensure their well-being throughout the journey.

RID 3233 donated ₹1.51 lakh to TTD for *annadhanam* (mass feeding). “The train journey with special children to Tirupati will linger in our hearts and mind for time to come,” added DG Bothra.



Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Olympic spirit

Jason Keyser

A perennial Olympics volunteer finds togetherness at the Games and in Rotary.



Ernie Peterson, Rotary Club of Deland (Breakfast), Florida.

As a child in the 1950s, Ernie Peterson remembers watching the Olympics on TV. “I sat there absolutely fascinated and thought, ‘You know, it would be nice to attend one day.’” This summer in Paris, Peterson attended his sixth Olympic Games as a volunteer. He’s part of a select group of devotees who volunteer at the Games over and over to do everything from taking tickets to helping spectators find their seats.

Since 2002, Peterson, a retired property appraiser from DeLand, Florida, has helped at the Games in Salt Lake City, Torino, Vancouver, Sochi, and Rio, mostly as a media assistant accompanying athletes to post-event interviews. He’s met gold medallists including skier Lindsey Vonn, swimmer Michael Phelps and snowboarder Shaun White, marveling at “their focus, their intensity.”

One of his most memorable moments, though, was seeing two skiers in Sochi, Russia, embrace their mothers after downhill runs, one finishing with a gold medal and the other coming in fourth or fifth, their parents equally proud. “You could not tell from the reaction of the parent which one won gold,” he says. “It was just incredibly moving.”

This year, Peterson has what might be his sweetest gig yet: working the opening ceremony and at the outdoor beach volleyball matches beside the Eiffel Tower. Another bit of luck — when he couldn’t find a place to stay, a fellow Rotarian offered to host him. And this isn’t the first time; he’s stayed with Rotarians at other Olympics and, in return, has hosted them in Florida.

The Olympics and Rotary, Peterson says, have a lot in common: cultural exchange, internationality, and a “desire to do something good for the world.”

©Rotary

Lessons from history we refuse to learn



An old book on China shocks readers into noticing how power plays out.



Sandhya Rao

The English historian, Lord Acton, said in a letter to Bishop Creighton of the Church of England in 1887 in the context of writing history: ‘I cannot accept your canon that we are to judge Pope and King unlike other men, with a favourable presumption that they did no wrong. If there is any presumption it is the other way against holders of power, increasing as the power increases. Historic responsibility has to make up for the want of legal responsibility. Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.’

Historical records reveal how absolute power makes for authoritarianism. Civilisations come and go, monarchies rule and crumble, governments exceed their remit and are ousted, leaders are ejected from groups, communities, villages, towns, cities, nations, regions for

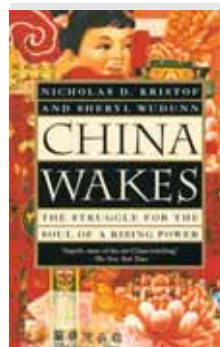
what the people perceive as wrongful actions and unfair practices. Our recent history swells with such examples that usher in change, be it the songs of the beat generation, pro-democratic efforts by the dock workers of Poland, the emergence of an Arab Spring, farmers’ protests against black laws, and, most recently, students’ ire in Bangladesh. The key lies in the hands of the people.

All these thoughts have come to mind as I’ve been reading a massive tome called *China Wakes: The Struggle for the Soul of a Rising Power*. It’s an old book, first published in 1994, by journalists Nicholas D Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. They were the first married couple to win a Pulitzer for journalism when, in 1990, they were recognised for their reporting on the pro-democracy students’ movement and the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. The book is based on their study and understanding of China at a time it was growing to become the economic power it is today; simultaneously, it reads like a chiller-thriller as it details the rule of a totalitarian

state encompassing rampant corruption, abuse of power, oppression of the voiceless, subjugation of the peasantry... . The authors have written alternate chapters, with Sheryl Wudunn, American of Chinese origin, giving her perspective an extra, personal dimension.

Reading the book also reminded me of the April 2022 Wordsworld column titled ‘Fifty Years of Bangladesh’ which featured a fiction trilogy by Tahmima Anam; a book based on the spontaneous visit to Dhaka by three students of IIM-Calcutta following the liberation of Bangladesh; and Salil Tripathi’s presciently titled *The Colonel Who Would Not Repent: The Bangladesh War and Its Unquiet Legacy*. To quote from it: ‘The title ... refers to Lt Col Farooq Rahman who, on August 15, 1975, “led the Bengal Lancers, the army’s tank unit under his command, to disarm the *Rokkhi Bahini*, a paramilitary force loyal to Sheikh Mujib” and then led a team of officers and soldiers on a killing spree to finish off Sheikh Mujib and his family. Only two daughters, one of them the recently ousted prime minister

Sheikh Hasina, escaped because they were abroad at the time.’ Well, once again Sheikh Hasina has fled Bangladesh and many of us have seen visuals of Bongo Bondhu Mujibur Rahman’s statue being toppled, in all likelihood due to mob frenzy. Maybe



this is a good time to read this book in order to at least partially understand not just what's happening in Bangladesh, but the region as a whole.

Expecting only to engage with interesting or curious aspects of China's contemporary history, I launched into *China Wakes* with a laidback attitude. However, I quickly sat up upon encountering numerous points at which I could draw parallels with what had happened or is happening in and around our geographical ambit. It underlined in no uncertain terms that history repeats itself in the way human beings act, both as individuals and as collectives, in various contexts and combinations, with relation to power and absolute power. This seems to apply equally to both sides of the coin.

I urge you to draw your own conclusions based on a sampling of excerpts from the book.

This passage is from page 54 (in my copy): 'A few months before the games began, we noticed construction along the side of Stadium Road. Weeks later the construction began to take shape, and we noticed a flat cement wall, like a stage set ... More weeks passed, and the wall was painted gray, with white lines to make it look as if it were made of bricks. The houses were now completely hidden, and from the street the set resembled the brick wall of a large, stately residence...'

On page 169, you read the following, about officially arranged visits: '...with time it became clear to us that the authorities do not just manipulate

the truth. They lie. ... Those who never visited China reported far more accurately than those who visited the country. Most of the critical reporting ... stands up fairly well to the test of time. But travelers to China wrote gushy pieces about how happy the Chinese were with the communes, and these portraits now come across as naïve and ridiculous.'

A few pages later (175): 'The party extracts funds from the peasants and subsidizes city dwellers, largely because of fear that disgruntled urban workers might take to the streets to protest. This is a common third world phenomenon. In Europe and North America, governments subsidize farmers and pay them not to produce, or else pay them above-market prices for corn, milk, and wheat. In developing countries like China, governments are worried about urban unrest, so they pay farmers below-market prices for their cotton, cocoa, and rice, ensuring that city dwellers can eat their fill cheaply.'

About the conspiracy of silence, read what it says on pages 244-245: 'What was behind this culture of silence in China? Why did no one protest against the regime? ... Most leading intellectuals publicly supported what they privately denounced. ... a share of the blame also must be laid at the



Nicholas D Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, authors of *China wakes*.

feet of the ordinary citizens ... In the West, we have the luxury of being able to say publicly what we think. We scarcely understand the concept of being forced into repulsive compromises. But in China, everyone makes these compromises and the question is simply where to draw the line.'

China Wakes looks at different facets of the nation's story, both positive and negative, thus giving the reader a logical analysis of how it has become the world's economic front-runner alongside its many actions that are questionable on the human rights front. The authors offer an interesting explanation for its economic successes: 'China's economic boom seems to have been a chemical reaction of sorts. The first ingredient was the Confucian heritage that emphasized education and savings. Then came the Maoist revolution that unified the country, broke the entrenched interests, divided up the land, and supplied financial and human capital. Third were the quasi-capitalist policies of Deng Xiaoping. None of these factors was enough by itself; in combination they have been explosive.'

Somewhere towards the end of the book, the authors write: 'Heraclitus, the ancient Greek philosopher, said that you can never step into the same river twice. The water flows, so the river is always different. ... We arrived in one China in 1988, and we left a very different China in late 1993. It was richer, healthier, and more self-confident ... Jailers still torture political prisoners, but now the family members complain and sometimes hold press conferences.'

The columnist is a children's writer and senior journalist

“What was behind this culture of silence in China? Why did no one protest against the regime? Most leading intellectuals publicly supported what they privately denounced... blame also must be laid at the feet of the ordinary citizens.

RC Sangli gets a new admin block

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Sangli, RID 3170, marked the completion of its platinum jubilee year, with DG Nasir Borsadwala and industrialist Vishwas Chitale inaugurating a new administrative block and a renovated swimming pool at a total cost of ₹1.25 crore. “The entire cost was met through member donations. Under the leadership of club president Salil Limaye (2023–24), we have done many noteworthy projects for the community during the milestone year,” said Bipin Shevade, past president.

Formed in December 1948, the club has made a mark in Sangli, a district headquarters of Maharashtra and known for its booming spice trade. Here are some of the facilities installed and centres built by the club over the decades:

Remand Home (1952)

In 1952 Rajabhau Desai, a charter member, rented a house to accommodate homeless, orphaned children, thus becoming a foster parent to them. “Later on, funds were mobilised by Rotarians and now it is a sprawling building over 2.5 acre-campus sheltering 200-plus orphaned children,” said the past president.

Way back in 1960, to mark the 71st birthday of former Maharaja of Sangli, Chintamanrao Patwardan, the Rotarians mobilised ₹1.11 lakh, and with an equal contribution from the former king, a commerce college was set up through the Deccan Education Society. Inaugurated by India’s then vice-president S Radhakrishnan, the Chintamanrao College of Commerce is now a centre of excellence offering UG and PG courses.

Moved by the plight of farmers in Taradgaon village in Satara district due to perennial water scarcity, the Chafalkar brothers, active members of the club, led a lift irrigation project under a cooperative society which supplied water from the Neera River. This Nitish Lahiri irrigation project (1962) got the Service Above Self Award from Rotary, and “we also set

up a cement pipe factory to cater to the irrigation needs of local farmers.”

For the treatment of cancer patients, a deep x-ray unit for Cobalt therapy was installed at the Civil Hospital, with members donating over ₹10,000 in 1970. A special institute, Rambhau Bhide Deaf and Mute School, was established at Miraj, a small town in Sangli district, in 1972, and the Dr Shirgaonkar Blood Bank was set



TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya presents a sewing machine to a girl as part of the club’s platinum jubilee celebrations. DGE Arun Bhandare (third from R), PDGs Ravikiran Kulkarni (fourth from L) and Arwade Sanatkumar Vasudeo (second from R) are also in the picture.



The MA Paranjpe Health Club at the Rotary Complex.

up in Sangli in 1974. The club's past president Y M Paranjpe helped in setting up the Tarabai Paranjpe Eye Bank Trust and Research Foundation in 1975.

Rotary Complex

On completion of 25 years of its charter, in 1974 a Rotary Silver Jubilee Trust was formed which decided to have its own Rotary Complex, a multi-purpose campus with a community hall, sports facilities, swimming pool and a scenic garden. The Sangli Municipality donated 3.5 acre-space near the Civil Hospital, and a mega Rotary Complex came up in 1983 at a cost of ₹75 lakh. "The swimming pool with modern filtration plant at the complex helps train many youngsters for national competitions," said Shevade. The garden and surrounding landscape boast of over 1,500 trees.

Many community projects gathered pace since the mid-1980s such as a crematorium at Kawathe Ekand village; Dr MA Paranjpe Health Club at the Rotary Complex; Yoga Hall where differently-abled children gather for

educative sessions; Community Hall built at a cost of ₹6.5 lakh where club meetings are held; a lush green lawn sponsored by late Mahesh Shah (₹5 lakh) where social functions are held, generating monthly income for the club; jogging track, part sponsored by the family members of past president PG Purohit (₹1.25 lakh) and remaining from the members and the Silver Jubilee Trust; Jaipur Foot Centre (Ushamohani Vikalang Punarvasan Kendra) in 2001 with contributions from Mohanichandra Desai (₹2.5 lakh), other members and the Silver Jubilee Trust.

In 1997 the club hosted a mega trade fair exhibiting products of over 140 traders, business houses, artisans and entrepreneurs.

Golden jubilee project

During the golden jubilee year (1998–99), low-cost houses were constructed for underprivileged families at Sawali village under a matching grant (MG) at a total cost of ₹25 lakh. RCs Singapore, Kuching Central (Malaysia), Raffles City (Singapore), Novi (Michigan, US), Nairobi and TRF were the matching partners.

A water ATM, set up in association with the Babasaheb Chitale Memorial

Trust (of Bhilawadi Miraj Ceramica) at the Rotary Complex, provides 20 litre-water at ₹5.

The club set up a Rotary Skin Bank through a GG in 2018; Solar lights worth ₹40 lakh were installed at Jalihal village with an MG from RC Sweden; while smaller MGs helped provide computers to schools, set up drinking water booths and rainwater harvesting, and perform cataract surgeries. Through GGs, 11 Happy Schools were completed, a neonatal ICU was set up at the Vivekananda Hospital, classroom facilities were upgraded at the Bhilawadi Shikshan Sanstha and equipment to treat Covid were procured.

HPV vaccination

In a two-year drive (2022–24), the club vaccinated 1,000 girls against cervical cancer through a global grant in partnership with RC Omaha Marni (Nebraska, US) at a total cost of ₹31 lakh. PDGs Sanat Kumar Arwade, late Kishore Magdum and Ravikiran Kulkarni are from this Sangli club. Sponsored by RC Kolhapur, the Sangli club has 154 members, a growth of 11 times since its charter was presented in February 1949. ■

Independence Day fervour on Kazakh peak

Team Rotary News

For 87 Rotarians from RIDs 3100 and 3141, led by RID 3100 DGN Payal Gaur, it was a double celebration of 78th Independence Day and

Rotary fellowship at Shymbulak, the largest ski resort in Central Asia, in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The Indian tricolour was hoisted at the breathtaking landscape. The event was testament to the spirit of Rotary's global camaraderie. The Indian Rotarians were joined by Kazakh nationals "who celebrated our Independence Day by waving our tricolour and greeting us," recalls Payal. ■



Membership Summary

Source: RI South Asia Office

As on August 1, 2024

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	138	5,814	5.66	54	68	32	254
2982	91	3,845	5.44	26	328	88	187
3000	148	6,152	11.95	60	643	230	217
3011	138	5,179	30.97	61	1,125	196	41
3012	162	4,003	24.06	52	599	103	61
3020	84	4,939	8.16	32	626	114	351
3030	100	5,561	16.13	50	767	486	387
3040	98	2,321	14.26	32	506	55	214
3053	73	3,063	16.06	23	321	39	131
3055	82	3,310	12.63	42	650	52	379
3056	86	3,695	25.25	18	140	98	201
3060	102	4,960	15.58	48	1,800	70	146
3070	115	3,024	15.08	31	193	55	63
3080	109	4,241	12.97	53	1,351	168	127
3090	133	2,678	6.76	19	345	354	173
3100	114	2,203	10.67	13	57	35	151
3110	135	3,621	11.52	13	65	59	112
3120	89	3,667	15.82	36	399	28	56
3131	141	5,326	35.13	104	1,938	275	175
3132	96	3,757	14.08	25	293	108	217
3141	118	6,076	27.49	106	1,881	184	244
3142	113	3,835	22.37	51	1,478	115	99
3150	108	3,900	12.51	79	1,228	113	130
3160	79	2,512	9.83	24	103	95	82
3170	144	6,404	14.83	82	981	176	182
3181	89	3,621	10.80	37	364	89	122
3182	85	3,625	10.59	45	206	96	104
3191	93	3,108	18.28	63	1,535	136	36
3192	89	3,475	21.21	45	1,101	147	40
3201	169	6,521	9.66	94	1,369	104	95
3203	97	4,964	7.13	27	395	124	39
3204	81	2,611	7.85	18	80	14	13
3211	161	5,133	8.71	7	52	23	135
3212	122	4,514	10.48	78	390	205	153
3231	94	3,459	7.26	25	120	39	417
3233	86	2,797	16.95	39	1,016	46	63
3234	95	3,665	23.87	49	1,369	82	41
3240	99	3,480	16.49	34	520	47	243
3250	109	4,195	21.48	29	392	58	192
3261	108	3,463	25.04	17	90	26	45
3262	115	3,822	15.83	80	737	645	287
3291	141	3,710	26.85	NA	NA	83	762
India Total	4,629	170,249		1,821	27,621	5,292	7,167
3220	70	1,946	16.91	73	2,947	136	77
3271	108	1,413	20.17	101	404	275	28
0063 (3272)	85	1,132	21.02	47	293	23	49
0064 (3281)	283	5,838	18.09	190	1,016	118	214
0065 (3282)	148	2,961	9.32	166	1,132	24	47
3292	159	5,427	19.29	141	4,107	114	138
S Asia Total	5,482	188,966	15.98	2,539	37,520	5,982	7,720



Hobbies that don't tax the earth

Preeti Mehra

Some pursuits you can enjoy while treading gently on nature.

Google co-founder Larry Page once said, “You never lose a dream, it just incubates as a hobby,” and that’s exactly what happens to people who pursue a sustainable lifestyle. Just like their lives, their hobbies are also inspired by a desire not to harm the planet, to do things in their free time that do not tax the earth nor leave a carbon footprint. You could call it the art of engaging with the finer, subtler and sometimes mundane side without feeling guilty.

This is not for people who indulge in energy guzzling hobbies such as motor sport or computer games. One fervently hopes they will choose more earth-friendly ways to spend their leisure time. Would it not be better if they pursue a harmless and yet inspiring ‘green’ hobby?

What motivated me to write this article are three people I have known closely for years. They spend their weekends pursuing hobbies that often take them off the beaten track into a world that is vibrant, colourful and in perfect harmony with nature. To escape into this magical world, they do not seek the services of a travel agent or a tourist guide. All they do is to go to the neighbourhood park or green spaces in their city and begin exploring.

K, a neighbour of mine in Delhi loves to go bird watching. Armed with a pair of binoculars and his camera, he sets off early morning on his bicycle with a snack and lemonade in his backpack.

He cycles to one of the parks a few kilometres from his home in South Delhi or to the Okhla bird sanctuary and spends hours observing his avian friends, taking occasional notes in his diary. He does not claim to be a Salim Ali but has learnt a thing or two about birds.

He simultaneously indulges in his other hobby which goes hand-in-hand

with birdwatching — photography. His pictures of birds in flight, avians of the same feather flocking together, and images of the landscape and the changing hues of the sky as the sun comes into its own on a foggy Delhi morning leave family and friends breathless.

“When I spend time with nature, I forget about all my worldly cares.



I forget about my busy life and find a sense of peace. It is very comforting,” he says. Very often, during the pleasant winter months it is only hunger pangs that make him pack up and cycle home for a well-deserved lunch.

The next on his to-do list is to learn drone photography, so that he can photograph nature without disturbing it in any way. “I will not even leave my footprints behind,” he says.

Another friend has a very different pursuit, but her objective is the same — spend her free hours engaging with her creativity and crafting artifacts out of waste. Yes, she has taken to sewing the last few years and collects waste cloth from friends and family and makes the most attractive cushions, runners, aprons, whatever she believes she can repurpose. She then announces

a garage sale once every few months and forwards the proceeds she collects to a charity. “I find this upcycling exercise such a calming hobby, to just sit and sew discarded cloth into unique designs that are chosen by people to adorn their homes. They cost little but give me so much pleasure to make, sell and be able to make a difference to someone’s life,” she says.

Her creations are so popular in her colony, that people collect old scraps of cloth, torn dupattas, brocade borders, old buttons and embroidered pieces to give to her and love seeing what she will create out of them. Some of them buy back what she produces, all for a good cause.

Then there is A, who spends her weekends and leisure time on her terrace. She has shaded a part of it and

grows all the herbs that you could wish to use in your kitchen. She has a good variety of them and all her friends know where to go when they need a particular leaf. She has a curry leaf plant, the leaves of which lend aroma for the perfect *sambar*; mint (*pu dhina*) leaves for various chutneys and cooling drinks in summer; carom (*ajwain*) is great in soups and dishes and good for digestion; and of course, her *tulsi* (holy basil) plants stand out as she has several in large terracotta pots.

In fact, A’s hobby gathers even more momentum in winter as she grows *palak* (spinach) in a few pots, and believe it or not, it grows in such abundance that all of us, her friends, benefit greatly from her green thumb and green hobby.

In the last few years, she has become even more aware of the environment and has started composting her own manure. For this she has requested her friends and neighbours to save their organic food and plant waste and pass it on to her for her home composting pit. Slowly, but surely, she has mastered the art of composting and has even shared her expertise with the Resident Welfare Association of her colony, so that they can pursue a community composting activity. “My hobby has almost become a passion now. It is so fulfilling to see so many households compost their organic waste as a collective activity and try to grow some plants and herbs to green their environs. Hobbies start in a small way but can grow slowly and make a big difference to your life and to the planet,” she says.

My three friends are not exceptions to the rule. Hobbies can play a role in each of our lives. Besides, if we do find a quiet way of enjoying ourselves while bringing about a small change in a world that is crying for sustainable intervention, we would have done our bit.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



Mind your Ps and Qs

A Rotary alphabet soup SOS

If you've been part of the Rotary family for any amount of time, you've probably had a taste of the organisation's alphabet soup. Rotary loves its acronyms and abbreviations — a glossary for staff includes 118 of them! They can be helpful by eliminating longer words, reducing verbal clutter, and saving readers time. But acronyms can be confusing and unwelcoming to those less familiar with the Rotary lingo, so use them wisely and think twice before using them with the public.

Are you an acronyms ace?
Take our quiz and find out.

1

If the RIP* was RIPE last year, what will they be next year?

- A PRIP
- B compost

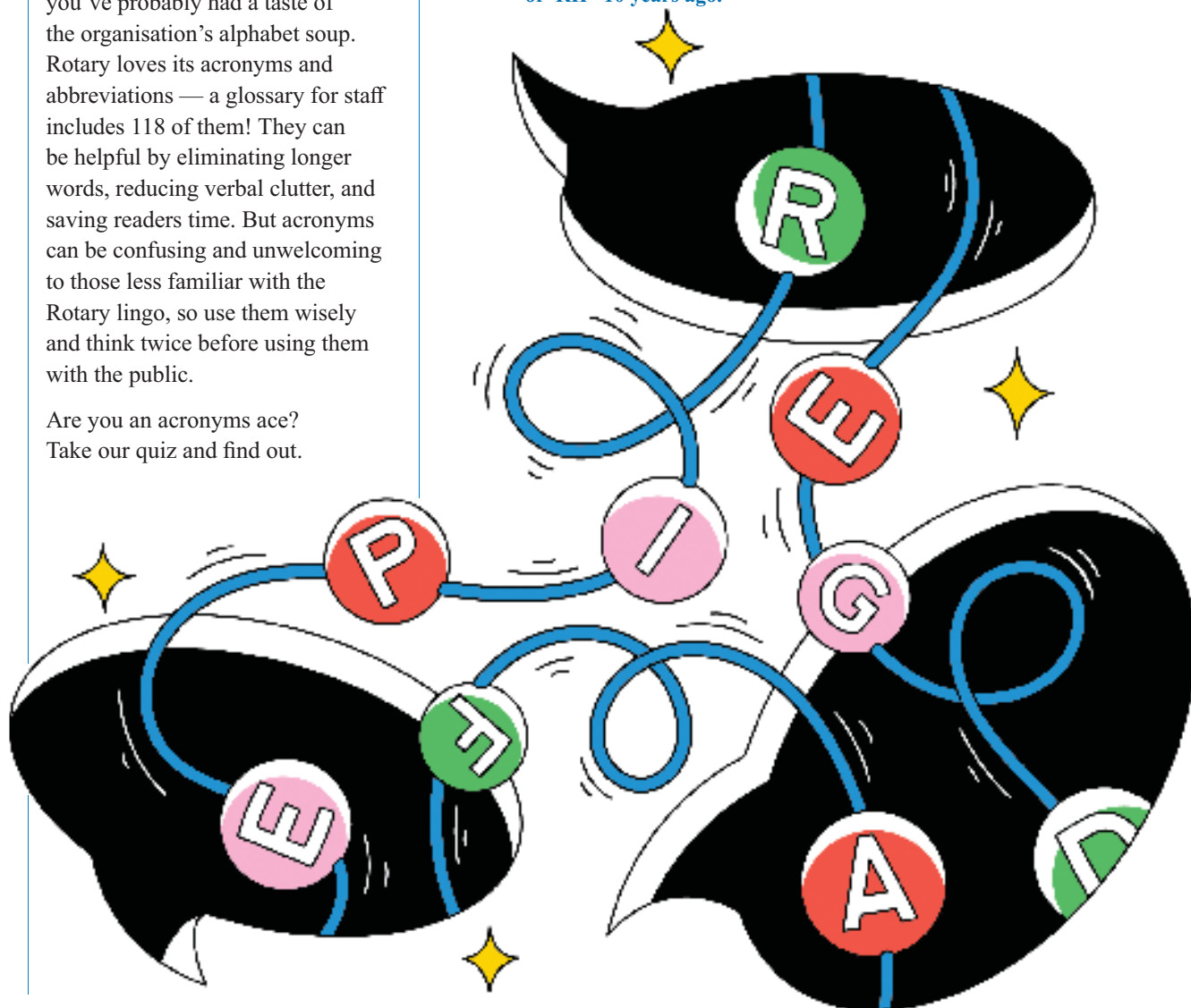
*An acronym recently retired by Rotary.
Rest in peace, RIP.

P S: *Rotary News* discontinued the usage of 'RIP' 10 years ago.

2

Where are you likely to find a DGE?

- A GETS
- B GELS
- C IA
- D the hotel bar



3

Which of the following acronyms is not related to The Rotary Foundation?

- A PPP
- B MD
- C AF
- D FOMO

4

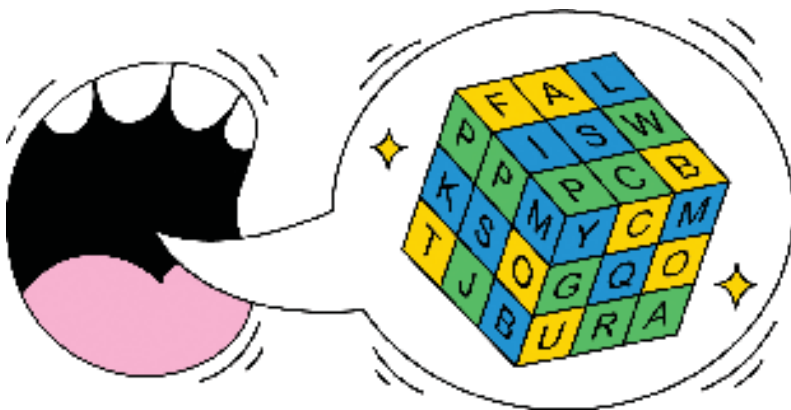
GPS stands for:

- A Global Positioning System
- B Global Polio Sector
- C Global Philanthropy Seminar
- D Giant Panda Species

5

An RC, DMC and RRFC bump into their DGN at the airport and wonder if she is going to the CoL. Which city is she travelling to?

- A Huh?
- B Calgary
- C Chicago
- D This trip has nothing to do with Rotary — let her take a vacation already!



Rotary lingo dos and don'ts



DO

remember who your audience is when deciding if an acronym is appropriate



DON'T

overuse acronyms or abbreviations



DO

use the shorter version of a term instead of the acronym (for example, use "governor" instead of DG)



DON'T

use an acronym for a term mentioned only a few times in your text



DO

provide the full phrase at first reference with the abbreviation in parentheses



DON'T

include periods, except for "U.S."

ANSWER KEY

1: A The Rotary International president was Rotary International president-elect last year and will be past Rotary International president next year.

2: B and C The governors-elect learning seminar is the new name for what was formerly known as the governors-elect training seminar. Additional sessions for incoming

governors take place at the International Assembly. (Though you might find some at the hotel bar too!)

3: D Fear of missing out. The others are PolioPlus Partners, Major Donor, and Annual Fund.

4: C Global Philanthropy Seminar

5: D District governors-nominee are not

eligible to represent their district at the Council on Legislation, which is held in Chicago every three years. Representatives must have served a full term as district governor at the time of their election. (The other abbreviations stand for Rotary coordinator, district membership chair and regional Rotary Foundation coordinator.)

Walk your way to good health

Bharat & Shalan Savur

a

At some stage in almost everybody's life, comes a time when she feels insecure. Though the sun in her life is at its zenith, she is more conscious of the twilight over the horizon.

Age and your consequent response to it — if negative — is more a crossover than a cross road. It is the junction where a person perceives that there was more fun, more meaning, more life in the travelling than in the arriving. A destination that decides that the green grass underfoot is not as green as the vision that his youth once painted. When he was looking from the other side of the success fence. That age, stage, anxious attitude creep up slowly. And snowballs swiftly. Stress naturally kickstarts what we now know as the fight-or-flight response. When we encounter a threat, blood pressure and

heart rate climb, muscles tense and our body concentrates blood sugar to enable it to react quickly. Problems like forgetfulness, fatigue and troubled sleep can be early warning signals of stress advancing.

Many ill patients share the same symptoms, and doctors and laymen alike cannot be sure whether forgetfulness, fatigue and troubled sleep are due to stress or chronic. Besides, most physicians are not trained or equipped to deal with stress, points out Alyse Bendell, a clinical researcher specialising in how stress affects digestive health at Chicago Medicine, USA.

All the same, whether initial stress is a cause or condition of mental illness is not really the issue. For, in any case, it is prolonged stress that makes it grave in the long run. Hence, a timely

step, namely walk, saves nine. As the two feet-tested studies given below establish:

Frank Hu, MD, PhD, published his survey in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* after studying the walking paces of 70,000 female nurses aged between 40 and 70. Those who walked at a moderate pace on most days of the week for at least 30 minutes reduced their risk of the most common stroke around 20 per cent. Those who walked at a brisk or very brisk pace brought it down to a double: around 40 per cent.

Similarly, a study performed by Dr Michelle Holmes of Brighton Women's Hospital, Boston, tracked the health and exercise habits of 3,000 breast cancer patients for 18 years. She found that women patients diagnosed with breast cancer who walked for 3 to 5 hours a week were 50 per cent more likely to survive compared to inactive women.

Today, let us focus on the brain, or mind, that drives the body. The left side is the executing side of our brain and is most often the driving power of our reflexive actions based mainly on the unconscious or subconscious. The far less utilised right side of the brain is the creative, reflective one. It comes

The study found women patients diagnosed with breast cancer who walked for 3–5 hours a week were 50 per cent more likely to survive compared to inactive women.

into its own in rare cases and expresses itself only when we create conditions that give ourselves and the right brain exclusive, elusive time and space.

Red-eyed tourism

We have all read that travel broadens the mind. Sure, it does but does it also grant you mental space and psychological time to recharge the body's batteries? If travel is only measured in miles crossed (not smiles) the frequent-flyer would win hands down. I've known many such travellers. I would put them in the tourist bucket. With one eye on the clock, and the other on his tourist coach. This to me, is 'red-eyed' tourism.

A helter-skelter scrambled schedule assembled to package as many tourist spots as possible in a short time is fun to run for sprinters and those 'me-toos' who brag that they've seen 'all that was there to be seen.' This kind of schedule skims the surface of tourist spots akin to viewing an epic film in fast-forward mode. A blur of monuments in a blink. And if you planned this vacation to escape stress, you've jumped from the frying pan into the fire. You may require another holiday again to de-stress from this one.

The de-stress vacation

As you get older and wiser, travel becomes more immersive. "The pace changes and you want to slow down and travel at your own pace," says Meenakshi Menon who is planning to launch a mobile application — GenS — to address the needs of the over-60 demographic beyond healthcare, focusing on combating loneliness and encouraging personal growth. Drive in the slow lane — the avenue to arrive at your venue. And add a different dimension to your destination: absorption. I would suggest a walkabout or a cycle to get a feel of the place. The ancient traveller walked and soaked

**Don't feel like a walk?
Don't force it. Just take a few steps forward and focus on your breath. Take two steps for every exhalation and two for every inhalation.**

in the ambience. He embraced almost everything that touched him. And became at home with his environment, its people, its culture.

Don't feel like a walk? Don't force it. Just take a few steps forward and focus on your breath. Take two steps for every exhalation and two for every inhalation. If you experience difficulty on focusing, tell yourself you are walking to get fresh air. Whenever you feel your mind wandering — you'll be shocked how often it does — continue your breathing pattern and repeat to yourself that you are walking to get fresh air. This works wonders in your walk. Continue this practice for the next 20 to 60 minutes. As your breathing fuels your walking momentum, your left brain — the reflex-actioned conditioned side that supervises the body's movements switches off. And the creative, seldom utilised right brain that is creatively inclined kicks in. This right side mulls over the problem and presents the solution.

Some of the world's greatest-ever thinkers, philosophers, poets, scientists... have thought on their feet.

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

club matters



RID 3142



RID 3191



RID 3170



RID 3201

RC Thane Royales – RID 3142

Notebooks and textbooks were distributed to 280 students at the Vidya Vikas Mandal Vidyalaya, Andheri West, in a joint project with RC Lokhandwala. Satish Kothare and his friends arranged the funds.

RC Karwar Seaside – RID 3170

Rosemary saplings were distributed to club members and those who had nurtured healthy plants will get special prizes at the end of the year from club president Anu Jayaprakash Pillai.



RID 3182

RC Manipal Town – RID 3182

During the installation of club president Manoj Nagasampige, past president Ganesh Nayak donated ₹3 lakh to a family for constructing their house near Udupi.

RC Bangalore Prime – RID 3191

DG Satish Madhavan distributed school kits to around 290 students (₹1 lakh) at the Rani Sarala Devi HS School, Jayanagar, along with actor Ramesh Aravind and club president Harish V S.

RC Cochin Beach Side – RID 3201

Groceries worth ₹20,000 were donated to inmates at Mariyalayam, a palliative care centre at Panangad. They were also served breakfast.

RID 3203



RID 3250



RID 3211



RID 3291

RC Pollachi Royalz – RID 3203

T-shirts and sweaters (₹80,000) were donated to 300 tribal people and forest rangers at four tribal settlements.

RC Anchal – RID 3211

Stainless steel lunch plates (₹25,000) were donated to 200 children at the MGLP School, Manalil Yeroor village in Kollam district.



RID 3212

RC Sivakasi Diamonds – RID 3212

IPDG Muthiah Pillai donated sewing machines (₹1.1 lakh) to eight women entrepreneurs, thanks to CSR funds from Standard Fireworks, Sivakasi.

RC Jamshedpur West – RID 3250

SSP Kishore Kaushal (Singbhum East), PDG Pratim Banerjee and DSP (traffic) Sanjay Singh jointly flagged off a bike rally on road safety. Local police, Kolhan Petroleum Dealers Association, Tata Steel and Rotaractors were co-partners.

RC Calcutta Kankurgachi – RID 3291

A bus stand was inaugurated at Indus Bankura colony in memory of past president Sumita Lodh. It displays RI's service projects boosting public image.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

Smearing paint, spreading joy

Team Rotary News

Members of RAC Sriganganagar Visionaries, RID 3090, offered gentle guidance and encouragement to a group of children sitting in front of a canvas about to begin a painting. Club secretary Nandini Arora says, “We explained how each colour can be a mood, a feeling, or a story. One member pointed to a swirl of blue and asked, ‘What does this colour make you feel?’ and a child with a bright, toothy grin replied, ‘It’s like the sky, and it makes me feel calm!’”

This was part of an event titled *Colours of Happiness* hosted by the club at a local gurudwara in Sriganganagar, Rajasthan, for 40 children from various orphanages.

A five-metre-long canvas and vibrant acrylic paints were provided,

“allowing the children to express their creativity and paint their thoughts freely. Some children, brimming with confidence, eagerly began smearing paint across the canvas. Others, initially shy, hesitated, but we encouraged them to join in, creating colourful handprints across the canvas. We explained to them the therapeutic benefits of art and how creativity can ease stress and bring happiness,” says Nandini. To add to the excitement, fun games were organised, and gifts were distributed, making their day even more special. .

Later, the Rotaractors gathered the children for a group photograph in front of the canvas. “They were busy pointing out the sections they had painted, each one proud to show off her work. So much so, we had to wait for them to finish before they could pose for the picture,” she smiles. ■



A Rotaractor helps a child to paint.





Immigration blues

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

LBW



Life can be full of surprises and some of these can even turn out to be very pleasant ones. Last month at Geneva airport when I handed over my passport to the immigration officer, he started speaking in fluent Hindi. When I asked him how come, he said he had spent many years in *Hindustan*. From his accent I could say he was from Afghanistan. But I didn't ask because that would have been rude. His friendliness was in stark contrast to the usually grim ways of immigration officials. It reflects the unfriendly immigration policies of all governments.

For instance, when I landed back in Delhi the man at the immigration counter asked me for my boarding card. I said I had forgotten it on the plane. Then I asked him why he needed it. He said he had to check the flight number. I told him the name of the airline that had just touched down. We could check from that, I said. He looked very taken back and said he needed to see the card. I then told him the flight number and that he had to let me in — into my own country. I had one of those airline chocolate bars in my pocket and I nearly gave it to him. After all, he was only a little older than my elder son and probably been on duty for 12 hours. I found out later that he was required to take down the flight number. No other country I have visited had this requirement. But they have other ways of intimidating you.

All in all I have never come across an immigration officer who is not grim. Even the man mentioned earlier who spoke Hindi might have been so friendly only because he was checking my passport on the way out. What's there to check if you are leaving? But most countries do it anyway.

Then there are the British. Oh, the British! They are in a completely different class altogether. They want you to take a transit visa even if you are connecting to another flight. This has been a requirement for 20 years or so. In 2006, my wife, son and I were not allowed to board a British Airways flight from Delhi because we didn't have this transit visa. No one had told us we needed one. We were merely passing through Heathrow to another flight to Paris where my brother was posted. And you know what? I was told this transit visa was required only from some people, but not from them too if they had a valid US visa. Basically, you have to pay the British government for the privilege of using a toilet at Heathrow. And it's a lot of money it collects. So we decided never to visit Britain again.

But this year, a niece who has taken British citizenship persuaded us to visit. Since we love her dearly we said ok, and paid an arm and leg to get the two visas, including Schengen. That, I thought, should be enough. But I was wrong. At check-in at Geneva, our documents had to be "verified". Without that verification we wouldn't get a boarding card. It's a tedious process mainly because those doing the verification don't use any modern technology. They are also pretty incompetent. They take down everything by hand very slowly. It's completely unnecessary and designed to harass people from some countries. It is racism but the British will never admit it. Naturally.

I once asked an Indian foreign service officer why we didn't retaliate via the excuse of reciprocity. Guess what the guy said. *Atithi devo bhava*. ■

LIVE AT KOCHI

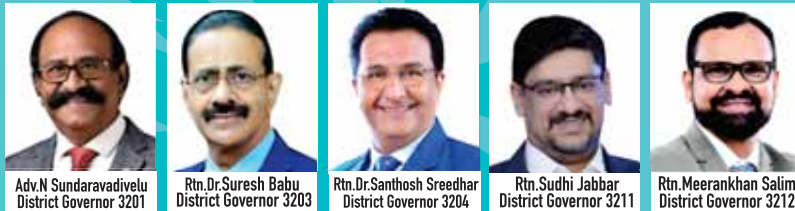
MARK MALONEY

ROTARY FOUNDATION TRUSTEE CHAIR

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 2019-20



24TH SEPTEMBER AT 05:00 PM
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REGISTER NOW



More Info:
Rtn.Susheel Aswani
Registration Chair
+91 93888 33800

*REGISTRATION CHARGES

Till 15 September

INR 2500

From 16 to 21 September

INR 2750

From 22 September

INR 3000

*includes dinner

JOINTLY ORGANISED BY ROTARY DISTRICTS 3201 | 3203 | 3204 | 3211 | 3212



Rotary
District 3212



DREDGING



The mission of 'Dredging'
To improve the sustainability of the Ponds in villages around Virudhunagar.

In modern days, the expansion of villages and towns are inevitable. Due to the modernisation and new construction activities, all the streams leading to the ponds are blocked due to the disposal of the construction debris. All the villagers are distressed to this unexpected assault on their livelihood and existence.

Dredging is the removal of sediments and debris from the bottom of water bodies.

Benefits of dredging the ponds:

Channelizes the flow of water into the waterbodies. • Removes unwanted nutrients from the sediment, thereby improving water quality. • Prevents the development of harmful algae blooms, which are toxic to humans and pets. • Increases waterbody volume and depth, reviving the agriculture and cattle-rearing activities, which consequently uplifts the economic well-being of the villagers.

With persistent and determined efforts, the following five water bodies have so far been rejuvenated and they are receiving input of rainwater through the streams that have been opened up:

Name of the tank	Village	Area of the tank	Storage Capacity	No.of Beneficiaries	Cost of the Dredging
Villipathiri Kanmai	Villipathiri	1.4 Acres	0.75 Million cft	5000	Rs. 1.2 lakhs
Aranmanai Kanmai	Pandian Nagar	1.8 Acres	1.19 Million cft	3500	Rs. 1.5 lakhs
Solai kavundan patti Kanmai	Solai kavundan patti	1.2 Acres	0.63 Million cft	4000	Rs. 0.8 lakhs
Raja Oorani	Rosalpatti	2.2 Acres	1.16 Million cft	3000	Rs. 1.8 lakhs
Kadambankulam	Soolakarai	2.34 Acres	1.34 Million cft	7000	Rs. 2.0 lakhs

This is a progressing project and Rotary Club of Virudhunagar is determined to take up the dredging of all the water bodies in and around Virudhunagar and also monitor the upscaling of water bodies.



Rtn. MAPR Krishnamoorthy
Rotary Project Chairman

IDHAYAM
PROMISE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Rotary Club of Virudhunagar
Lions club of Virudhunagar
JCI Virudhunagar Happy