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A fitting tribute to Swaminathan

Congratulations for the comprehensive article on India's tallest agricultural scientist and one of the architects of food security in this part of the world. However, you missed a salient point. As honorary member of RC Madras East, he spearheaded a number of initiatives like water expo, biomass show, Green Earth seminar-cum-expo and Food Security expo, the last being a one-week event inaugurated by the then PM Deva Gowda. The club is giving MS Swaminathan Environment Protection Award every year on his birthday since 1995.

P E Ramakrishnan, RC Madras East — D 3232

Converting a gift of 100kg dwarf wheat seeds given by Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug to over 100 million tonnes of wheat, thus making India self-sufficient in food is testament of a great humanitarian in Swaminathan. He applied plant



genetics to develop high-yielding basmati, potato and wheat varieties. He should have been honoured with Bharat Ratna while still amongst us; nevertheless, the GoI should give him one posthumously.

*Balu Uphade
RC Link Town — D 3142*

The cover story *India will miss this gentle caring farm scientist* recalled well the selfless service that MS Swaminathan put in for helping India conquer

famine. When India was fighting hunger, MSS came out with the idea of importing 100kg of wheat seeds from Mexico. And the rest is history. He has also empowered India's farm women with knowledge required for improving crop productivity without harming the environment.

*M Palaniappan
RC Madurai West — D 3000*

In the Nov issue, the article on M S Swaminathan is amazing and also the feature on Finland and Iceland was informative.

However, in the LBW column on the wheelchair by Srinivasa Raghavan, I do not agree with his suggestion that a charge of ₹500 should be levied on a wheelchair provided at the airport. Every facility is bound to be misused. That should not be the reason to penalise genuine users.

*Brij Khandelwal
RC Madras Central — D 3232*

Where happiness reigns

PRID Manoj Desai in his vivid narration brings before our mind's eye the scenic splendour and architectural marvels in Finland and Iceland where happiness reigns. We learnt all about Finland's architectural marvels and also read about how Iceland, where night life is dominant, is famous for its music festivals and horticulture.

*VRT Dorairaja
RC Tiruchirapalli — D 3000*

Humanity is at a crossroads as brilliantly pointed out in the article *A knock on the head* by Sandhya Rao (Nov issue). Wars and social conflict are on the rise, creating an existential crisis to mankind. We require statesmen like Dr Archibald

McIndoe and M S Swaminathan with healing powers to rehabilitate people hit by war, strife, poverty and hunger. Providing relief and succour to victims is a mammoth task.

*Radheshyam Modi
RC Akola — D 3030*

A magical Rotary project

The October cover story *Where magic happens with open sky education* was magnificent. Congrats to Lalita Sharma and her husband Hamit Anand for their humanitarian service. Another article *When Rotary transformed a city* highlights the extraordinary efforts of PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and others in building a Rotary hospital in Vapi, Gujarat.

*Daniel Chittilappilly
RC Kaloor — D 3201*

PRIP Banerjee has taken great efforts to set up the Haria LG Rotary Hospital, Vapi. Starting with a modest 25-bed hospital in 1982, it grew rapidly to become a 250-bed multispeciality hospital. A new cancer centre worth ₹7 crore is also under construction. Reading about this hospital made me proud as a Rotarian.

M Sundarambal, RC Kumbakonam Sakthi — D 2981

The open sky education story is inspiring to read. Apart from various courses, special programmes are offered for graduation and PG degrees with mentorship which is noteworthy. There is also a bridge programme for school dropouts and even for those who have never been to a school. This

only shows the commitment of Lalita Sharma who has started these innovative classes for the underprivileged children.

*S Muniandi, RC Dindigul
Fort — D 3000*

The October editorial *Under the open sky* is interesting, highlighting impactful Rotary projects. While the cover story on the open sky school showed the commitment of Lalita Sharma Anant, there are other inspiring articles such as *Aiding the education of rural girls*, and *Mumbai Rotaractors put spotlight on women's trafficking*.

*S N Shanmugam
RC Panruti — D 2981*

In the Oct issue, I found an interesting article (*Model township for Irula families*) about the Irulas residing at a scrub jungle 100km away from Chennai. We congratulate PDG Abirami Ramanathan who has donated ₹4 crore out of ₹8.5 crore of the project cost. Now 63 Irula families are living in 2BHK houses in Kuyilkuppam village comfortably, thanks to Rotary. Hats off to RC Madras Central for undertaking this Kuyilkuppam project successfully.

N Jagatheesan, RC Eluru — D 3020

Congrats to DG S Raghavan, RID 2982, for distributing sewing machines to empower women. The goal is to provide women skillsets so that they can take up tailoring as a profession in order to improve their financial situation.

*S Natarajan
RC Koothapakkam — D 2981*

I find the LBW article *The wheelchair brigade at airports* in the Nov issue, on the unnecessary use of wheelchairs at airports, insensitive. Wheelchairs are rightly provided free in airports all over the world I think, despite what Raghavan thinks. They are a

Rotary News is very addictive

I have spent over three decades in Rotary, and each time I read *Rotary News* I experience a refreshing whiff of air gently rubbing my soul, giving a new meaning, a new dimension to my being the member of this magical organisation. As I read each story of clubs across the country doing their bit for improving communities, I feel positive and encouraged to emulate them. It installs in me the spirit of oneness. For me this is a powerful monthly dose of inspiration.

As a journalist myself for over four decades now, I see tremendous negativity and feeling of hopelessness particularly from the people we elect. That disillusionment vanishes as I turn page after page of this magazine, mesmerised by the good work that Rotarians are doing. I absorb each word like a blotting paper. It opens my mind where fresh ideas start pouring in giving me the kick which even the 'happy hour' may elude me.

I do not exaggerate when I say that reading *Rotary News* is the happiest hour for all Rotarians. The non-Rotary articles (such as LBW, Wordsworld) give the feeling of completeness to this product,

and I appeal to all our Rotarians to recirculate the magazine after they have read it.

The magazine consolidates the rudiments of why we are in Rotary. Let the flavour of this constructive journalism increase our appetite for goodness that we are hungry to devour month after month under your editorship.

*Milind Ballal, RC Thane Mid
Town — D 3142*

This is to convey to you, with a sense of satisfaction and gratitude, that the Nov issue was planned and produced with great skill and care for intellectual aesthetics. I've been conversant with the magazine for almost four decades and could never leaf through the whole, since 1978. I'd tell my club secretary not to bill me for *Rotary News* because I found it so drab and uninteresting. Hats off to your skill and selection in choosing the material for the last issue. After carefully leafing through it, I've decided never to dismiss this publication!

*ID Shukla
RC Chandigarh — D 3060*

boon to weak passengers. Walking inside airports can be quite exhausting. I have seen it in Chicago, Heathrow and so on. With a carry-on weight of 7kg and a bag-on-wheels in tow, it is quite beyond my (and many other

wheelchair passengers') physical capability to lug this weight. It is wrong to spread thoughtless aspersions on all wheelchair users.

*PDG RD Prabhu
RC Shimoga — D 3182*

On the cover: Inside a gold mine in Kolar, near Bengaluru, during the British era.

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor: rotarynews@rosaonline.org; rushbhagat@gmail.com. Mail your project details, along with hi-res photos, to rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com.

Unnatural disasters

In December, I will attend the United Nations COP28 climate change summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. There, I will speak about the convergence of two global crises: climate and mental health. As the World Health Organisation has noted, climate change worsens risk factors — such as disruptions to homes and livelihoods — for mental health problems. The emotional distress of a disaster also makes it difficult for people to recover and rebuild.

Rotary partner ShelterBox is an international disaster relief charity that has helped more than 2.5 million displaced people in approximately 100 countries with emergency shelter, essential household items, and technical support. I wish to share this month's column with their CEO Sanj Srikanthan who explains that the words we choose to describe disasters matter.

— Gordon McNally

The term “natural” disaster has long been used to describe tropical storms, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, but there needs to be an urgent shift in the language we use. While the term may seem harmless, and we've not always gotten it right, we've learned through our work with disaster-affected communities how it perpetuates a dangerous myth that nothing could have been done to prevent people being so badly affected. This misleading and harmful narrative can lead to a lack of action to help people who need it.

The language we use matters. When we frame disasters as natural, we fail to acknowledge the complex interplay between nature and the role of human actions and how they impact communities around the world.

Earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, extreme storms, drought and flooding occur because of natural processes on Earth. But it is how these events affect people or the environment that has the potential to make them a disaster — outcomes influenced by human factors like where people live, what types of homes they have, political instability, and the lack of proactive measures to protect vulnerable communities. A disaster is the result of systemic inequalities in access to resources and power. Where we live and how much money we have often determine our ability to



recover. The people worst affected are those living in poverty, with the least means to protect themselves and few resources to withstand the next event.

By framing these events as natural, we undermine the need for proactive measures to protect vulnerable communities, masking the underlying social, economic and political instability that make marginalised and disadvantaged communities disproportionately affected. Our teams see firsthand how issues like inequality, poverty, urbanisation, deforestation, and the climate crisis can make communities more vulnerable.

At ShelterBox, we simply say “disaster” or are more specific, describing the extreme weather, earthquake, tsunami, or volcanic eruption. I urge everyone to help us in breaking this cycle by committing to language that accurately reflects why people are affected so badly.

Only then does it pave the way to address the underlying causes of vulnerability and work toward a more just and equitable future for all, with the necessary investment, resources, and proactive measures to help protect affected communities.

Disasters are not natural. Let's stop saying they are.

Sanj Srikanthan
CEO, ShelterBox



A heartbreaking defeat

Nov 19 ended with over a billion broken hearts in India, with the ODI World Cup 23 eluding our cricket team. How do you reconcile with the Indian team comfortably winning 10 matches till the final, and then faltering in the final, and failing to bring home the trophy that has eluded India after 2011? Who can forget a crestfallen Virat Kohli who batted so brilliantly through the entire series, Rohit Sharma trying unsuccessfully to hide his tears or Mohammed Siraj sobbing so openly and being comforted by Jasprit Bumrah?

The pundits have shed *gyan* on what should have been done/not done; but what was refreshingly different this time was the support, respect and love that was showered on our men in blue. It began right at the top; Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: “Dear Team India, your talent and determination through the World Cup was noteworthy. You’ve played with great spirit and brought immense pride to the nation. We stand with you today and always.” Bollywood stars did the same, with Shah Rukh Khan posting: “The way the Indian team played this whole tournament is a matter of honour and they showed great spirit and tenacity. It’s a sport and there’s always a bad day or two. Unfortunately, it happened today. But thank u Team India for making us so proud of our sporting legacy in cricket... Love and respect.” The next morning, an HSBC ad in *Times of India* had this heartwarming message for the Indian team: “Thank you for winning. Our hearts. Our love and all our respect. Thank you for showing grace in defeat. And for your indomitable spirit that we know will come back stronger.”

This spontaneous response is a positive indication that as an audience we have come a long way from booing,

harassing and even throwing stones — remember the pelting of stones on M S Dhoni’s home — after they lose big matches. If our cricket team can accept defeat gracefully, then so can their fans.

The manner in which the Indian head coach Rahul Dravid, who had quietly kept in the background as the Indian team won match after match in this tournament, came to the front on that sad Sunday to answer the media’s questions as Rohit and his boys retreated to the dressing room to deal with their disappointment, was commendable too. As he said, “the sun will come up tomorrow”; the team would reflect, learn from this defeat and move on.

But while patting ourselves on the back, let’s also examine the two core components of Rotary’s Four-Way Test... on truth and fairness and look at what the international media — both mainstream and social — said about the entire tournament and the audience. The international spirit was missing, it said. Barring the Indian flag, hardly any other flags were waved from the stands, which were barely filled when India wasn’t playing, and supporters of opposing teams were barely visible. There was thundering silence when non-Indian batsmen sent the ball across or over the boundary.

Let’s turn the spotlight inward and examine this criticism too. The Indian cricket team was the best of the best, but did we, as an audience, fall short in exhibiting the spirit of the game? Traditional and colourful welcome ceremonies apart, did we really make other players feel welcome in the true spirit of *Athithi Devo Bhava*? Let’s search our hearts and come out with an honest reply!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Rasheeda Bhagat'.

Rasheeda Bhagat

Top reasons to register early



Daydreaming about a trip on your calendar is one of life's small rewards. All the more so if the destination is the Rotary International Convention 2024 in Singapore, Asia's dazzling garden city, rich in culture and unique attractions. Here are just a few of the reasons to register early.

- **Give yourself a vacation to look forward to.** Whether you're making the trip of a lifetime or a return visit, you'll find inspiration and wonder in Singapore.
- **Save significant money.** The last day for the early registration discount is Dec 15. You won't get a lower rate.
- **Have your pick of fares and hotels.** It's the right time to lock in a good airfare rate before prices almost certainly go up closer to May 25–29. You'll have more room choices when you book your hotel at a special rate. Looking for a deal? A city view? Enough space for your kids? Check your options.

- **Book a special experience.** Exclusive excursions for Rotary members can sell out, and organisers have curated tour packages to see hidden gems in Singapore and nearby countries.
- **Leave time to gather your entourage.** Veronica and Johnny Yu, of the Rotary Club of Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines, committed to Singapore while still in Melbourne and have been encouraging others to take advantage of early registration. "You can only believe in the magic of Rotary if you go to the convention," Johnny Yu says. No two conventions are the same, so even if you've been before it's a chance to reconnect with friends and be inspired. This convention is when members turn ideas into actions for *Sharing Hope With the World*.

Learn more and register at
convention.rotary.org

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Magazine

Director speak



Dear Rotary Family,

As we embrace the spirit of December, a month of reflection and celebration, I find myself humbled by the privilege of serving as a Rotary International director. This role has granted me the extraordinary opportunity to witness the incredible, innovative endeavours taking place in districts and clubs across our great nation.

Rotarians, December prompts us to pause and assess the progress we've made thus far. Reflect on the strides your club has taken in membership development, project completion, Foundation and Polio Fund contributions, and the realisation of goals set at the beginning of the year. Let this be a time not just for celebration but for strategic evaluation, ensuring our actions align with our vision for a better world.

Rotarians are a force of change, and our power lies not only in our numbers but in the diverse life skills we bring to the table. Our backgrounds equip us with the tools of time management, delegation and the ability to transform visions into measurable goals. These skills, vital in our personal and professional lives, find new purpose within the framework of Rotary.

December, designated as Disease Prevention and Treatment month, calls us to extend our hands further to those in need. Over 400 million individuals worldwide lack access to basic healthcare,

Let's champion positive health

and our commitment to proper healthcare for all has never been more crucial. Let us promote awareness and prevention of diseases like polio, diabetes, and Alzheimer's, alleviating pain, poverty and misery. As Rotarians, our mission is not just to respond but to proactively contribute to a healthier world.

As part of our commitment to a healthier world, our ongoing awareness campaign, Project Positive Health, encourages a simple approach: 'One Spoon Less of Sugar, Oil, and Salt, and Four Steps More of Walking.' This initiative aims to tackle lifestyle diseases. Let's wholeheartedly support this within our clubs and districts, recognising the invaluable well-being of each Rotarian for the service they provide. Additionally, let's extend our efforts by promoting and organising campaigns and health camps within communities, guiding them toward a healthier life.

In the warmth and comfort of our homes, let's acknowledge our blessings and express gratitude for the ability to make a difference through Rotary. To the clubs that have initiated new projects, collaborated with other clubs and stakeholders, welcomed new members to Rotary, contributed to The Rotary Foundation, and the Rotarians offering time, energy, enthusiasm, or financial support — a heartfelt thank you.

As we enter this holiday season, I wish each of you the most blessed and joyous moments. May kindness and love fill your lives and homes, and may our collective efforts in Rotary continue to illuminate the path toward a brighter, healthier, and a more compassionate world.

Raju Subramanian

RI Director, 2023–25

What Rotary is all about



“So this is Christmas/And what have you done?” sang John Lennon in the holiday classic “Happy Xmas (War Is Over),” released in 1971 with Yoko Ono.

The holidays are a time of warmth and togetherness but also of reflection. Above all, the season is a

time of generosity, especially to those less fortunate.

During your holiday giving, remember that gifts to The Rotary Foundation may not fit nicely in a present box, yet they keep on giving throughout the year.

December is also Disease Prevention and Treatment month. Just think of all the Rotary efforts that would not be possible without the generosity of you, our Rotary family. Consider the incredible progress we have achieved in our fight to end polio — the countless lives we’ve saved and the hope we’ve restored. Think of all the clinics around the world Rotary has equipped and the medical professionals trained through Foundation grants, helping fight heart disease and Guinea worm disease.

Your gifts to the Foundation also help make healthcare accessible to underserved communities in a big way through Programs of Scale. Right now, those grant recipients are working to end malaria in Zambia, reduce the mortality rate of mothers and their infants in Nigeria, and eliminate cervical cancer in Egypt.

Of course, our reach extends far beyond disease prevention and treatment. During times of disaster, we must act swiftly to alleviate suffering and offer support. In response to the devastating earthquake in Morocco in September, The Rotary Foundation trustees established the Morocco Earthquake Response Fund to support immediate relief efforts led by Rotary members on the ground. You can contribute directly, and your districts can apply for grants from the fund until Sept 21, 2024 or until the funds are fully allocated. Anyone can initiate a fundraiser for the Morocco fund on Raise for Rotary, opening further avenues for your generosity.

We truly have the gift of giving. There are no limits to the opportunities to give and make a difference through Rotary.

As we approach the end of the year, I invite you to make your gifts before Dec 31. Your generosity will have a profound impact on many — people who you may never meet, but whose lives you will change just the same.

On behalf of Esther and myself, we wish you all a joyful holiday season. Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and unwavering commitment to The Rotary Foundation and to what Rotary is all about: helping others.

Barry Rassin

TRF Trustee Chair

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Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 37,082

Rotaract clubs : 11,244

Interact clubs : 14,833

RCCs : 13,176

Rotary members : 1,188,470

Rotaract members: 170,061

Interact members : 341,159

As on November 15, 2023

Membership Summary

As on November 1, 2023

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	139	6,109	6.30	73	494	34	254
2982	86	3,840	6.41	35	841	93	172
3000	139	6,052	12.10	116	1,866	220	215
3011	138	5,138	29.19	85	2,337	137	37
3012	154	3,840	22.94	76	819	97	61
3020	86	5,070	7.59	48	1,034	119	351
3030	101	5,748	15.87	128	1,970	502	384
3040	113	2,494	14.72	54	926	77	213
3053	74	2,948	16.25	37	608	42	131
3055	80	2,934	11.90	67	1,096	73	376
3056	89	3,894	25.68	51	586	102	201
3060	105	5,074	16.06	68	2,265	59	143
3070	125	3,351	16.29	49	557	51	63
3080	109	4,270	12.58	130	1,976	158	122
3090	118	2,572	6.38	50	623	193	166
3100	114	2,264	11.57	15	138	36	151
3110	147	3,910	11.15	17	110	45	107
3120	89	3,657	15.72	48	616	27	55
3131	143	5,806	26.70	147	3,345	252	147
3132	90	3,693	13.62	41	595	120	199
3141	115	6,189	27.31	155	5,248	166	223
3142	107	3,995	21.48	96	2,297	112	92
3150	110	4,389	13.08	155	1,884	107	130
3160	84	2,778	9.14	32	228	95	82
3170	150	6,710	15.23	121	1,811	180	179
3181	87	3,658	10.61	42	509	90	118
3182	87	3,706	10.31	47	253	106	103
3191	92	3,541	18.53	109	2,771	135	35
3192	82	3,571	21.14	122	2,562	108	40
3201	174	6,786	9.95	137	2,217	97	93
3203	95	5,034	7.59	92	1,158	176	39
3204	75	2,478	7.26	24	226	17	13
3211	159	5,128	8.21	11	178	19	134
3212	127	4,771	11.36	94	3,688	167	153
3231	97	3,524	7.21	39	437	43	417
3232	188	6,628	19.92	128	7,289	150	100
3240	106	3,615	16.74	74	1,159	67	227
3250	109	4,185	21.39	70	992	65	191
3261	105	3,496	22.63	23	242	23	45
3262	113	3,851	15.89	77	749	644	286
3291	143	3,874	25.48			71	733
India Total	4,644	174,571		2,983	58,700	5,075	6,981
3220	70	2,016	16.57	98	4,780	83	77
3271	180	3,065	18.73	194	3,349	333	28
3272	161	2,231	14.66	97	1,347	25	49
3281	338	8,218	17.92	281	1,952	144	214
3282	182	3,661	9.78	203	1,431	30	47
3292	154	5,607	18.73	185	5,448	120	134
S Asia Total	5,729	199,369	15.54	4,041	77,007	5,810	7,530

Source: RI South Asia Office

Bengaluru Rotarians

“create fruits from poison” in KGF

Rasheeda Bhagat

Of all the places in the world, in the erstwhile cyanide dumps of the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) township, where till only recently, dusty, dry, barren and cyanide-laden soil reigned supreme, blowing in the windy season tiny and fine particles of poisonous cyanide over the KGF township, I get my first taste of Singapore cherries! And they are delicious.

Ravishankar Dakoju, past president of RC Bangalore Orchards, but better known for his ₹100 crore donation to the TRF, who teaches me how to squeeze the juice of the tiny cherries into the mouth, happily takes me back to his club's “*hat-ke* (different) project which proved to the whole world that only Rotarians can grow sweet and delicious cherries out of poison (cyanide dumps)!”

His exuberance is palpable as we drive towards the infamous cyanide dump area of KGF, being thrown around in the SUV during the bumpy ride, and notice the assembly of a plethora of big vehicles, the biggest being the OB van carrying a generator for a film shooting crew, parked alongside the road.

“Oh god they are back again here...,” groans Dakoju, who as

RC Bangalore Orchards president (he has since then joined RC Bangalore) spearheaded a transformational environmental project in this area, about 100km from Bengaluru. His exasperation is justified going by just one factor — when I google KGF for its history, one of the options the search engine throws up is this: ‘Is KGF bigger than Bahubali’!

Dakoju explains that during the British rule, gold was extracted from the Kolar gold fields, and the process of extraction left behind a slurry, filled with cyanide, the lethal chemical which was infused into the ground to extract the gold. After the mining of the gold, layer after layer of this slurry was dumped on the adjacent fields, and as it dried, it formed a flat heap akin to a flat, layered mountain. He gives the comparison to African tabletop mountains, but the brown and dusty flat hills remind me of the road... more like a wide dirt track... from Kabul to Bamiyan in Afghanistan, nestled among tall, stark brown sandstone cliffs. Through this stark landscape of Afghanistan we had driven in 2005 to take in the heart-breaking visual of huge gaping holes from where the Taliban had blasted



Ravishankar Dakoju,
member of RC Bangalore,
holding out Singapore
cherries being grown in the
Kolar Gold Fields.



out — using dynamite — the ancient, historic Buddha statues.

As I struggle to totally understand how those flat hillocks could have been formed by the piling of slurry, he makes it simpler: “It’s like putting one dosa on top of another, till you’ve put hundreds of them, and they pile up in a heap. The slurry spreads and then solidifies.”

Adds Srinivasa Rao, a retired deputy conservator of forests, who has helped the Rotarians to convert a significant part of what had literally become the “killing fields of KGF” into a green zone, “The region around us that you see are the cyanide dumps; an area of 100–120 acres. The British used cyanide as a component in gold extraction and that got mixed up with the soil, which in the form of slurry was dumped here layer after layer and it all dried and formed into flat hillocks. As this is a dry area and there is no humus on this land, it didn’t allow any form of vegetation. So during the dry and windy season, a thin layer from this pulverised soil, with content of the poisonous cyanide, would blow into the township, causing all kinds of health problems for the local residents... problems related to the lungs, eyes and skin.”

The seed of this project was planted in Dakoju’s head when he met, about 5–6 years ago, Almitra Patel, “an MIT graduate and an amazing woman. She is 90 but full of energy, hails from a big industrial family and is very passionate about the environment. She told me that the cyanide dumps of KGF are very disturbing and explained

Rasheeda Bhagat



A small hill formed from layers of slurry waste of cyanide and other residues left behind after the gold was extracted from the ore.



to me how the British used cyanide to extract gold from the ground. I could see she was very disturbed and as she explained to me how during the windy season, the wind blows cyanide dust across the township from these dumps causing all kinds of health problems. Listening to her, I started wondering that the British took away the gold (see box), but left behind the poison through these cyanide dumps,” says Dakoju.

His club member, Neil Michael Joseph, firmly agreed that something had to be done to help the people of KGF township. That is not all, he adds. As they discussed and debated the issue, Joseph briefed him that when the rain falls on the dumps, the

water carrying bits of cyanide from the dumps goes down the flat hillocks and percolates into the groundwater and water bodies, including wells. “That water can’t be used for productive agriculture, fish cannot survive in such water and birds can’t drink it. The whole thing was an ecological disaster. Both Almitra and Joseph said something had to be done; she said please go there and see for yourself.”

So he went, along with Joseph, came back and “promptly fell sick. I am asthmatic from early childhood; the moment I opened the car door, and

took in that air, my health problems started. I had a respiratory infection and skin eruption and it took 4–5 days for me to recover.”

Well before his presidential year (2018–19) when Dakoju began planning this project, he knew Neil Joseph had to be involved “as he has both passion and vision for such issues. And his roots are here; he is the son of a miner from the earlier gold fields, he studied in the KGF school and his heart beats for KGF; his uncle’s statue is still there.”

Joseph says he grew up near the cyanide dumps and still gasps for breath, probably from inhaling the dust all these years. “Many of my friends have passed away due to lung

A film shooting in progress.



A picture postcard town

Past president of RC Bangalore Orchards Ravishankar Dakoju comments that “once upon a time, KGF, with its gold reserves, was more prosperous than Bangalore.”

Researching its past glory, I come across a wonderful article written by Bengaluru-based journalist Gita Aravamudan, describing how in the 1950s, KGF, where she grew up and attended school, was a “a picture-book colonial town with big bungalows, colourful gardens,

churches with steeples and a sprawling clubhouse surrounded by a golf course.”

Her father, an accountant, was one of the first Indian officers to be hired by the British mining company John Tayler & Co, which had leased the land for mining from the Mysore Maharaja. They lived in a little bungalow with a tree-filled garden in the mining area, “almost within touching distance of the Champion Reef Mine, which had the deepest shaft in the world.”

The British lived in royal style; around 1901, two decades after

mining activity started in KGF, gold production peaked and in the subsequent years the best quality of gold was mined and sent to England. “In those 10 years, over 170,000kg of gold was extracted, all of which went directly to England,” she writes.

Only in 1956, the mines were nationalised, but the quality and grade of gold had dipped, as also the quantity. In 2001, the 120-year-old gold mine was closed, being considered unviable for both economic and environmental reasons.



diseases and kidney failure. Finally, there was an opportunity before me to do something to help my birthplace with help from some outstanding Rotarians.”

As Dakoju started musing about the project, “we decided on one thing... that we have been around for more than a century, so we have to move beyond planting trees and taking selfies, which unfortunately seems to have become the norm for many clubs. Now, looking back, I realise that we conceived and executed this project because of our innocence and with no clue on the huge problems and challenge we would face.”

While they were debating what to do and how to handle this project, they chanced upon this “outstanding DCF (deputy conservator of forests) Srinivasa Rao. He said I am retiring in 18 months and before that I want to do something that is substantially good for the environment. Help me achieve

Rasheeda Bhagat



Dakoju with Srinivasa Rao, former deputy conservator of forests, and RC Bangalore past president VS Ranga Rao.

Below: Neil Michael Joseph, member of RC Bangalore Orchards.





Trenches made on the ground to hold water.

Below: Compost being spread in the trench to enrich the soil.



that dream, and let us jointly take up this challenge of helping the people of KGF by greening this area.”

Almitra had said the Rotarians must provide a green cover at the cyanide dumps, an area of around 120 acres — by planting trees, bushes, grass and ensure that the moisture is retained by the earth, so the dust from the extremely dry dumps doesn’t blow across to the town.

The project began with a soil test “and they said nothing can grow here. So Rao came out with the brilliant idea of doing 2ftx2ftx14 of interlocking trenches. The juxtaposed trenches — 14,000 of these were created by the Rotarians — ensured that the water would get trapped within the trenches and provide the required moisture for the planted flora.

The next problem was the poisoned soil; obviously nothing would grow on land filled with cyanide. Dakoju recalls that after the initial planting of saplings, the growth was fine, till the

roots touched the poisonous cyanide in the soil, and the plants started to die.

Rao said: ‘Ravi, organise compost to be put in the trenches.’ This was easier said than done. A huge quantity of 700 tonnes of compost was required... “as you know compost stinks, and we had to stealthily smuggle it out of Bengaluru to KGF... would you believe it, in the nights? Because we didn’t want the people of KGF township to think we were bringing stinking garbage here!”

Through this mammoth project, the Rotarians planted all kinds of greenery under Rao’s expert advice...

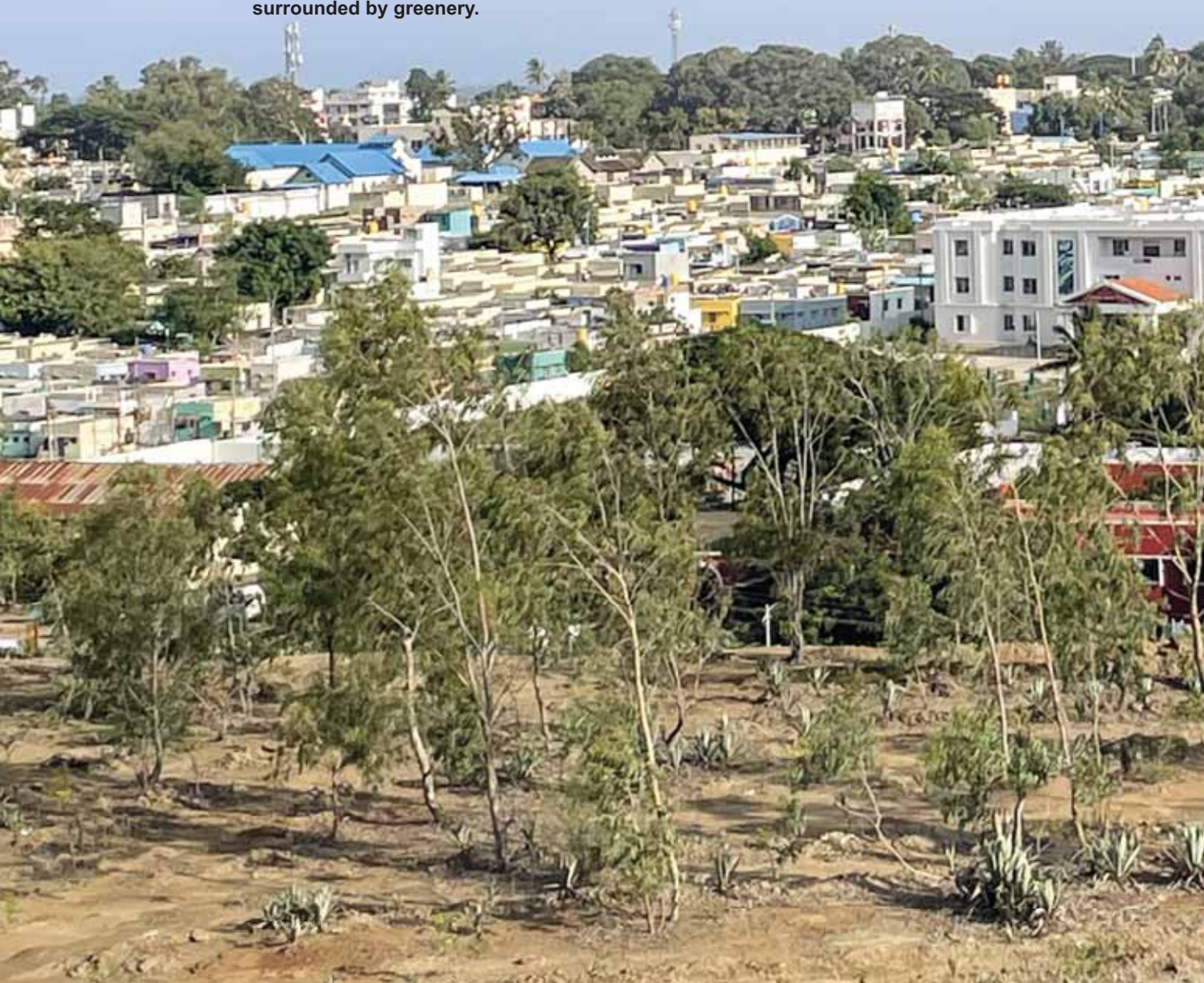
**We decided on one thing...
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become the norm for many clubs.**

Ravishankar Dakoju
RC Bangalore

Singapore cherries, algae, sesbania, which provides rich fodder for the cattle, wild grass and algae to bind the soil... Pongamia (which provides biofuel), algae, Peltophorum which gives yellow flowers and is commonly known as copper pods and which has medicinal properties and, babul trees. Asked why babul trees, Rao says it was to provide the green cover. With the the rainwater providing the moisture and the compost the necessary nutrients, the trees now started growing.

“The cyanide levels have come down and the town people have almost forgotten they had such

**A transformed KGF township
surrounded by greenery.**



severe health problems,” says the forest conservator, estimating that at least 80 per cent of the residents’ health problems have reduced thanks to the green cover given by this project binding the soil, and arresting the blowing of cyanide dust across the town.

Adds Dakoju, “Now it is very difficult to understand how barren and desert-like this area was... there was nothing here. We have also planted ficus, for which, as also the *Sesbania*, the rabbits come here and their droppings adds humus and manure to the soil, so the cycle is established. Not

a single drop of water was required from us to water the plants, and yet you see such greenery around you. We totally relied on rain; during the first rain of the season, the planting was started.”

Now a variety of birds also come for the greenery, and the bats in particular love the cherries. “We have also planted bamboo; their growth is not that good but they have at least survived.”

He adds wryly, “Now the place is good enough for shooting; after the success of *KGF: Chapter 1*, everyone wants to shoot movies here.”

But the cheerful optimist in him takes over the next moment, as I reach for the sanitiser to clean my hands once we are back in the car. He quips: “But as you can see, we Rotarians can grow fruits out of poison.”

On the return drive, he regales everyone with this unforgettable story: “She made a dash for the Singapore cherries and devoured the fruit, dust, cyanide and all. And now she is sanitising her hands.”

Well, as long as one lived to tell the tale, all’s well, I suppose!

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



“What is the **Pivotal Role** of the Rotary Club and its Members in **District and Zonal Elections** ?”

In Rotary district elections for district governor or in regional elections for Rotary International directors, **the vote of the club shall not belong to any individual, president or elector, but shall be an unanimous decision of a majority of the members of the club**

- the vote belongs to the club.

Each Club Member bears the responsibility of actively engaging in the club election meeting, contributing insights to **choose the most qualified candidate based on their biographical information.**

Encourage club members to freely express their views and opinions.

Collect opinions from all members,
and the majority opinion holds the final decision.

If necessary, conduct a

secret opinion poll within the club.





**Prioritize
the
unity
of the
club
over any
specific
candidate.**

Preserve the confidentiality and secrecy
of club discussions and decisions, and refrain from
sharing them with others.

Upholding ethical standards and the Rotary
four-way test is of utmost importance.

Remember, **club members are the lifeblood** of the
organization, and **elections are a temporary**
aspect of its operation.

Emphasize transparency in all club activities and
Cultivate Trust and Unity in order to
retain existing members and to **promote growth.**



Rtn. A. Rangarajan

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for more Election
information scan the QR code

Rotary mourns two past presidents

Rajendra Saboo

James Lacy who was RI president during 1998–99 passed away on Oct 4 at age 92; and PRIP Richard King (2001–02) on Oct 11.



James Lacy, also called Jim, was a dedicated public servant, successful businessman and a devoted family man. I met him in November 1989, when I was confirmed as the RI President for 1991–92. He was the best person to be an assistant moderator in the 1991 District Assembly. My aide-designate and friend George Arceneaux Jr suggested James Lacy. I met him and his wife Claudine and I was impressed and agreed. Thereafter, I contacted him many times, and he became a moderator in my year as RI President. We met the couple for family, business and Rotary life.

Jim Lacy joined RC Cookeville, Tennessee, US, in 1964. He was club president in 1978–79, DG in 1980–81 and RI Director in 1988–90.

Jim was born in Cookeville, Tennessee, east of Nashville, the state capital, and spent most of his life here. At the Cookeville Central High School, he met Claudine Carrington and they got married in 1948.

Jim's first business enterprise was selling automobiles.

In 1950, he and Claudine moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he soon earned distinction as Pontiac Automobile's youngest sales manager. In 1952, he responded to his country's call to service and spent two years in the military. He declined an opportunity to become an officer because it would mean more time away from his young wife.

By 1956, the Lacys were back in their hometown of Cookeville. Jim became very successful as a real estate developer, while Claudine helped with decorating custom-built homes. Jim was a well-respected businessman and decided to seek election to the House of Representatives of the Tennessee General Assembly, the legislative branch of the state government. He won the

PRIP James Lacy looks on as PRIP Rajendra Saboo administers polio drops to a child on a National Immunisation Day.





PRIP Lacy (5th from R), PRIP Saboo (L) and PRID Sudarshan Agarwal (R) with RI directors at a meeting with the then Prime Minister of India IK Gujral in 1997.

A dream is something that comes from the heart, and you make it happen with your hands. After several brainstorming sessions with staff, I decided on the theme, 'Follow Your Rotary Dream'.

James Lacy
RI President (1998–99)

election in 1965 and served two terms in the Tennessee House of Representatives.

In 1986, Jim decided to sweeten his life with the purchase of a candy company in Paducah, Kentucky. The company — Gilliam Candy Brands, Inc — makes hard candy (boiled sweets), peanut brittle and taffy. “Everything but chocolate and jellies,” he would say. Although the couple’s home remained in Cookeville, they commuted to Paducah every week to oversee corporate operations.

Over the years, Jim expanded his enterprise tenfold by buying other candy companies with manufacturing plants in New York, Kansas, Kentucky and Georgia. He had the highest regard for the well-being of his employees, and was very proud of the fact that each company he acquired retained its management.

Jim had many fond memories of his Rotary service over the years. One of the highlights, he said, was leading a Group Study Exchange (GSE) team to England (now District 1110) in 1977. This opened his eyes to the internationality of Rotary.

Jim came to Chandigarh in January 1997 for PolioPlus, visited our home and met all the past governors of my district. The late PRID Sudarshan Aggarwal arranged our meeting with IK Gujral in the prime minister’s office.

Later, Usha and I invited Jim and Claudine to visit the Taj Mahal, Agra. Thereafter, we stayed for 2–3 days, visiting other places.

In December 1997, Jim and Claudine were the guests of honour

at the sixth Rotary India Award organised at the FICCI Auditorium, New Delhi. In July 1998, Dr Clarice Broome, acting Director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, presented the Champion of Prevention Award to Jim in appreciation for continuing his extraordinary contribution toward the global eradication of polio.

In January 2004, at the launch of National Immunisation Day (NID), Jim presented the Rotary Polio Eradication Champion Award to Sushma Swaraj, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister, in New Delhi. “India has seen a tremendous decline in polio over the past year,” said Jim, as India recorded 233 polio cases in 2003, down from 1,400 in 2002.

Rotary Centennial Sculpture, presented to the city of Knoxville in April 2005, honours RI’s commitment to the children of the world as exemplified by three outstanding Rotary District 6780 leaders, Bill Sergeant, who headed Rotary’s global polio eradication campaign, and past RI presidents James Bomar

and Jim Lacy who championed serving all children. These three Tennesseans are global volunteer leaders who worked together to take the fight against polio to new heights.

“I started to think about how Rotary and The Rotary Foundation started with a dream. A dream is something that comes from the heart, and you make it happen with your hands,” Jim said, adding, “Through action, you make your dreams come true. After several brainstorming sessions with staff, I finally decided on the theme, ‘Follow Your Rotary Dream’.”

Richard King

Richard D King joined RC Niles (Fremont), California, in 1968 and his love for the service organisation, of which he was a member for over 50 years, remained as strong as ever.

Rick adopted the Charles Dickens line, “Mankind is our Business”, when he assumed his role as RI President in 2001–02. He was humbled to serve as President in the year he was selected. He said, “The lesson ‘humble’ is to admit the challenges we face and to seek help as soon as we get stuck. This will enable us to move faster and achieve more.”

We both walked a significant part of our Rotary journey together and our togetherness was a source

I cannot forget how Rick defended the Board decision at the 1990 Portland Convention with absolute candor to uphold the righteousness.

of Usha’s and my fondness for Rick and Cherie and we are fortunate to call them our friends.

It looks like yesterday when we first met in Delhi in 1980 during his visit to our then District 310 as a leader of a GSE team. I was a past governor then but could even then spot the leadership potential in Rick. He returned home from that first GSE experience a changed man.

Everyone told Rick, “You’ve got to meet Raja Saboo.” When we met, he urged me not only to talk about Rotary service, but do it too! My speeches over the years have demonstrated my commitment to the work of Rotary and it was a great lesson for Rick.

Next I heard Rick address at RC San Francisco during my visit as RI Director in 1981. And the next opportunity was in 1982, when as RI Director I represented RI President Stan McCaffrey and addressed Rick’s club at his District Conference. That was the beginning of our association and over a period of time, we went through our significant Rotary journey. It has been my pleasure to share Rick’s companionship and camaraderie.

I also cannot forget how Rick defended the RI Board’s decision with candor to uphold absolute righteousness at the 1990 Portland Convention. He also talked about how regardless of one’s personal success, nothing in the end matters if we can’t help people while we’re here.

Another occasion I recall is when I was the incoming RI President



PRIP Saboo and Usha with PRIP Richard King and his wife Cherie at the Saboos’ residence in Chandigarh.



A 1996 file photo of PRIP Rajendra Saboo with PRIP James Lacy (seated, left) and PRIP Richard King (standing, second from right) at the RI headquarters, Evanston, USA.

at the 1991 International Assembly in Anaheim, USA. President Paulo Costa and his wife Rita insisted that my wife Usha and I join them on the stage. I was to dance with Rita, Usha with Paulo. It was a great honour but we felt uneasy. Both of them being proficient in dancing made it easy for us to dance with them for a few minutes. By the time Cherie, Rick and more couples came on the floor, we withdrew to our seats.

One of the nicer traditions in northern and central India is to touch the feet of elders to show your respect and seek their blessings. When Rick visited India, he observed this and whenever we met, Rick touched my feet, seeking blessings.

Rick always motivated and touched people with his eloquence and heartwarming presentation. His humanitarian services were recognised by his district.

Over the years, Rick stayed in our home, and we stayed in his. I asked him and Cherie to represent me in Africa. While there were many highlights in our journey, what made our camaraderie so rich was the little thoughtfulness that he extended to Usha and me, with such huge respect.

*No matter how many cars we
have in our driveway, or how
many accolades we receive for
the things that we do — no
business success will ever
register if we fail mankind.*

Richard King
RI President (2001–02)

Rick was one of the best speakers in the Rotary world. His moving and inspiring presentation about the good Rotary does in the world offered a great opportunity to introduce Rotary to our family, friends and colleagues, and for new members to get a deeper understanding of Rotary.

Rick said Rotarians were important and among the nicest people on the face of the earth. Let me end, by quoting Rick: “I am convinced that no matter what we do in our own lives — no matter how many cars we have in our driveway, no matter how many degrees we have hanging on the walls in our offices, no matter how many accolades we receive for the things that we do — no business success will ever register if we fail mankind. It’s the only business we’re going to take when we leave this world.”

*The writer is a
past RI president*

Madhura Chatrapathy

her dynamic legacy transcends time

Usha Selvaraj

In the quiet hours of October 31, the Rotary world was jolted by the sad news that one of its brightest stars, PDG Madhura Chatrapathy was no more. The disbelief echoed through Dntowners, flooded with messages about Madhura — the ever-smiling, gracious, caring Rotarian who left an indelible mark on their hearts. Her sudden passing was a huge loss to Rotary, leaving behind a huge void in our hearts.

A vibrant and trailblazing force in the bustling city of Bengaluru, Madhura left her mark in entrepreneurship and women's empowerment. I've known her from 2016 and found her to be a natural charismatic leader who shattered glass ceilings by becoming the first woman president in the then District 3190 and later created history as the first woman district governor in South Asia in 1998–99.

She was Editor of *Rotary News*, much before she became a Rotarian, and under the guidance of late PRID MK Panduranga Setty, Madhura led

Downtown to become the first giving club in RID 3190 in its charter year itself. Initiatives like Roving Comfort Stations (Toilets on Wheels), novel bus shelters, tree census, international young entrepreneurs conference,



PDG Madhura Chatrapathy

Money Mart, etc showcased her visionary spirit.

Madhura's commitment to service extended globally, where she served as one of the training leaders at the International Assembly in Anaheim in 2004. As the District TRF chairman, she achieved an all-time high contribution of over \$300,000. She was instrumental in raising over ₹1 million for the World Polio Fund for two years in succession.

Madhura's influence transcended Rotary; in 1981, she established Food Associates Bangalore, a dehydration plant producing customised dehydrated food ingredients for local and global markets. She set up AWAKE (Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka) which became an internationally recognised resource centre, nurturing over 30,000 start-ups and women entrepreneurs.

Madhura's entrepreneurial spirit also manifested in ToeHold, an organisation making handcrafted footwear by artisans in Athani, Belgaum district. Through ToeHold, she revolutionised the production and marketing of Kolhapuri footwear, positively impacting the lives of hundreds of artisans.

Her dedication to eradicating polio showcased her tireless efforts in making the

world a better place. She was a compassionate human being, an inspirational leader and a determined go-getter. A much sought after resource person by multilateral agencies like UNDP,



With PRIP KR Ravindran.

ILO, UNIDO, World Bank, UN ESCAP and Economic Commission for Africa and others, Madhura has authored many books and research papers.

Raising above a difficult childhood, she chose a path less travelled and shone like the North Star; a true role model and a visionary who led from the front. Madhura's legacy lives on in the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing her. In her passing, the world has lost a true supporter of the downtrodden.

The writer is president of Rotary Bangalore Downtown, RID 3191

RYLA at scenic Kodai hills

Team Rotary News

Forty-five children participated in a three-day RYLA titled STARS (set, thrive, aim, rise and shine) organised by RC Kodaikanal, RID 3000,

with RYLA chairman Sukumar and secretary Kripa Soans coordinating the event.

Rtn Nicholas Francis piloted the sessions which had an array of

trainers. The children showcased their talent, public-speaking skills, teamwork and learnt to become leaders for a 'progressive change' while being empathetic and disciplined, said Kripa. PDG Gopalakrishnan inaugurated the RYLA, and its closing sessions were

attended by DG Anandtha Jothi and PDG Sam Babu.

Nicholas, Yuvraj from Karur, DGE Raja Govindasamy, Rotaract district trainer Shashank, PDG George Sundararaj and DRR Sunil Gowthamraj guided the students in various sessions on leadership qualities. A presentation on artificial intelligence was made by Interactors from the Kodaikanal International School, and the participants enjoyed the visit to the solar observatory. Club president Madan K Govindan, secretary Akbar Sait and member Shobana Sudhakar were instrumental in the success of the RYLA. ■



DG Anandtha Jothi (centre), PDG Sam Babu (on the left, behind the DG), club president Madan Govindan, club secretary Akbar Shait, Nicholas Francis, RYLA chair Sukumar (L) and secretary Kripa Soans (R), with RYLA participants.

RC Delhi Imperial rejuvenates schools in Delhi NCR, Gurugram

Rasheeda Bhagat

This is a club that has specialised in bringing to life and modernising government schools. In the last few years RC Delhi Imperial, RID 3012, has done three global grant projects to rejuvenate government schools in and around villages in the Gurugram and the Delhi NCR area.

From building the boundary walls, setting up libraries and computer labs,

to building group handwash stations, providing clean toilets with running water, making available drinking water, storage tanks, solar panels, projectors, printers and providing reusable sanitary pads to adolescent girl students for their menstrual hygiene management, the club has done it all.

Through its latest global grant project totalling \$192,000, the club has spruced up, renovated and rejuvenated a whopping 19 schools in Gurugram.



Above: Students hold up the reusable sanitary pad packets provided to them by the club.



Students and teachers at the Government Girls Primary School, Kherla, Gurugram.



Past president of the club Ram Chand, a core member of the schools renovation project, gives the main credit for the successful completion of this project to “our charter president and owner of Pathways Schools Praveen Jain. He and his team helped in identifying the government schools which needed support, oversaw the execution of all the components of the project and continues to ensure maintenance of the project components as required. We all know that it is easier to provide facilities and equipment, but very difficult to sustain and maintain what has been given, but he ensured that the schools continue to function smoothly.”

Giving an example, he says that in the renovated schools, furniture was given and computer rooms set up with laptops. “Now the furniture doesn’t require maintenance, but laptops do. It is here that the Pathways team helps; on a monthly and even weekly basis,

they assist us by servicing the laptops, updating software and sorting out glitches, if any, apart from the physical cleaning of the laptops.” This ensured sustainability of the computer rooms.

Even for the maintenance of the water filters and water coolers, the Pathways team is helping. “But the

major challenge we face is in the toilet maintenance. To begin with we have given them handwash and cleaning material for the toilets. But how do you ensure continued maintenance and, more important, cleanliness and hygiene?” So here the school maintenance committees (SMCs), which include parents, were involved. It is their responsibility to see that the washrooms are kept clean and hygiene levels maintained,” he adds.

Total GG
\$192,000

World Fund
\$69,333

DDF contribution
\$46,000

Cash contribution
\$46,666

Endowed/Directed gift contribution
\$30,001

In its latest global grant project titled *Umang*, with international partners from RIDs 4563 and 4621 to develop 19 schools in the villages of Gurugram and Delhi (NCR) the club really faced many challenges. The earlier two grants were for a lesser number of schools. “For this big project, we raised the money in Dec 2019 by getting commitment from our club members. From Jan 2020, concerns

about Covid surfaced and around April/May, we had to make a choice — either continue our efforts to raise the money required or abort the project altogether. Fortunately, there was a lot of support from the then DG Deepak Gupta and we decided to go ahead,” says Ram Chand.

As the lockdowns came and went, without getting disheartened, the team collected the required funds and applied for a GG. But then, he adds “it was a time when the TRF itself was facing a huge challenge in terms of the demands made on the Foundation to support Covid-related projects.”

But the GG came through and around December 2020, the project team got cracking on the things to be done such as organising the school furniture, computers and other educational material and the physical infrastructure such as compound wall, renovation of the building etc.

One of the major things that needed to be put in place was creating solar power to ensure that the computers, printers, water motor, etc had adequate electricity. With two district governors supporting the project — first Deepak Gupta and then Alok Gupta, “we managed to inaugurate the project before the second wave of Covid, the Delta wave, hit,” recalls Ram Chand.

Once again, the schools closed and they couldn’t do much till September 2021, and as slowly things returned to normal and the Covid threat receded, the rest of the pending work was completed.

Outlining the manner in which the project unfolded, and highlighting one of its most important components, past president Akhil Bansal said the schools chosen “were really bad and in a totally dilapidated state. There was no drinking water, no electricity;





Clockwise from top: Members of RC Delhi Imperial, along with their spouses, with PDGs Alok Gupta, Deepak Gupta and Lalit Khanna at the Pathways School; PDG Alok Gupta and Deepak Gupta inaugurate a solar plant installed at the Government Higher Secondary School, Teekli, Gurugram, in 2021; PDG Ganesh Bhat interacting with students; From L: Sanjeev Jain, Akhil Bansal, Ram Chand, PDG Ganesh Bhat, Praveen Jain, Vidya Bhat, Manoj Gupta and Divya Chand watch children use a handwash station.



the government had given generators but who will fund the diesel cost? The schools have no funds. Initially we gave drinking water coolers, but they were useless without electricity, and the purpose was again defeated, hence we thought of going in for solar panels.”

Another major problem was the pathetic condition of the toilets, which had no water, and hence adolescent girls were missing classes during their menstrual cycle. To tackle this problem, and to address the menstrual hygiene management (MHM) issue, the Rotarians partnered with the NGO Baala, which conducted workshops on MHM for the girls and distributed reusable sanitary napkins in the schools.

Adds Bansal, “Some of these government schools are run on a strange governance principle; they get funding from the government for the capex, but are given no money for maintenance. But the one good thing they have are school management committees (SMCs) comprising the school management, teachers and parents, and we are involving them to ensure proper maintenance of the facilities we have created.”

TRF cadre and PDG Ganesh Bhat, who was given the responsibility of examining the execution of this GG, said, after visiting the rejuvenated schools in mid-August, that the “work done under this project has really changed the entire scenario for the children and the teachers. I had a dialogue with all the stakeholders — the children, teachers, parents and school principals. A few girl students at the Government Girls Primary School in Kherla said after getting clean toilets with water, they no longer had to miss their classes for MHM reasons.”

He also found that there had been a dramatic improvement in the children’s health as they were now regularly washing their hands with soap and water before their midday meals and are now not falling ill frequently



A session on menstrual hygiene at the Government Senior School, Bhandwari.

due to water-borne diseases. “The teachers told me that using tables and sitting on benches, instead of the floor, the children now have a sense of dignity and their confidence level has gone up, even as the dropout rate has come down. Their academic performance has improved too and their average marks have gone up from of 65 to 85 per cent, and the attendance has gone up from 65 to 90 per cent.”

A heartwarming comment from one teacher was that thanks to the presence of laptops and Internet, along with a projector, the children were able to see the proud moment when Chandrayaan-3 landed successfully on the moon.

Bhat suggested that Interact clubs should be started in all the renovated schools, a close eye be kept on the maintenance aspect, and added that

through this “transformational project, nearly 6,000 children and 100 school staff have benefitted.”

Ram Chand put on record the “contribution of the key members of the core team who conceived, mentored, shepherded and worked tirelessly to complete this ambitious project.” They include Dushyant Arya, the club president in 2019–20, under whose leadership funds were raised; Manoj Gupta, the president in both 2020–21 and 21–22 when the project was executed; Vishal Jyoti who worked on the global grant approval, and past president Ashwani Gupta who ensured that quality equipment was purchased at the lowest prices. “Of course the main force behind the project is our past president Praveen Jain of Pathways School and his team; they are the main reason for its success and the happiness it has created for the students, parents and of course, the teachers and the principals. Most important, thanks to him, the maintenance of these renovated schools is going on smoothly,” he adds. ■





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WASH transforms 20 schools in Kolkata

Jaishree



PRIP Shekhar Mehta inaugurating a WASH facility in one of the schools in the presence of PDGs Ravindra Prakash Sehgal (second from L) and Prabir Chatterjee (third from L).

Over 10,000 students in rural Kolkata now enjoy better sanitation and hygiene, all thanks to a mega \$142,600 global grant project implemented by RC Belur, RID 3291. The programme, initiated in April 2019 and completed in August 2023, brought clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to

20 schools across six revenue districts. “The project was a significant investment in the future of these children,” smiles project chair Vishnu Dhandhanania.

Shahanara Khatoon (9) is excited that Rotary has built toilets in her school, the Purba Bharatpur Primary School in Murshidabad. “Everyday I would hold on for half an hour to reach home and relieve myself because there was no toilet in the school. Now it is a huge relief for all of us. We can drink as much water as we want because we have toilets here now, and we can wash our hands and face after playing, instead of remaining dirty, because Rotary has installed handwash stations in our school,” she says. Less than 20 per cent of schools in Murshidabad have separate toilets for girls. Shared-gender restrooms and poor overall sanitation discourage girls’ attendance in schools, says Dhandhanania.

An important aspect of the project was behaviour change achieved

through hygiene training in schools. Vital lessons such as handwashing with soaps, using water in toilets, personal hygiene and waste management were imparted to schoolchildren through fun activities, storytelling and interactive sessions.

A teacher at Saradapally Free Government School describes how the project has transformed children’s behaviour in his school. “Earlier the students would cursorily wash their hands with water and wipe them on their clothes gathering more dirt. Soap was not readily available on the wash basins and the students never asked the teachers for it. But now, after the WASH project was introduced, they not only demand soaps, but also wash their hands the correct way.”

Dhandhanania shares how Nita Dey, headmistress of the Barai Balika Vidyalaya, inspired not just her staff but also the parents of students to take an interest in the WASH project in her school. The school had run out of

**Everyday I would hold on
for half an hour to reach
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relief for all of us.**

**Shahanara Khatoon
a student**

soaps and cleaning items, and did not have a ready fund to purchase the next stock immediately. So Nita bought the soaps from her own pocket, and the teachers also chipped in. “It is a small cost but a big move that signals a change in the mindset of the teachers. Now a ‘soap bank’ is in place at the school where everyone — students, parents and staff — contribute soaps and hygiene items. Students even give a bar of soap to celebrate their birthdays!”

Sanitation and MHM

In Kalighat Mahakali Patshala, a secondary school for girls, located close to the Kalighat temple, students were shy to discuss menstrual health and hygiene. The trainers broke the taboo when they started narrating their own experiences. The girls felt confident to speak and soon there were animated discussions about sanitary pad usage, its disposal and the problems they face. The school now has a sanitary



An interactive session on waste segregation in a classroom.

pad vending machine and an incinerator. The girls feel empowered to drop a coin and take out a pad whenever they need to.

Similarly, boys in Shree Maheshwari Vidyalaya, a secondary

school in the Burrabazar area in Kolkata, have started making their own trash cans for their classrooms. Each classroom now has two bins, one for biodegradable products and one for plastic and other disposables.

The WASH GG project included construction of 35 gender-specific toilet blocks, 21 handwash stations, 18 drinking water stations and nine sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators. The participating clubs included RC Belur, the lead club, along with RCs Calcutta Chowrenghee, Calcutta North Suburban and Chandannagar in India, and RCs Danville/Sycamore Valley, Danville, Richmond, Alamo, San Ramon and San Ramond Valley, from the US.

“The project’s success will truly reflect on the children and their health, with an active participation of the entire community,” says Ranjit Chakravorty, member of RC Danville/Sycamore Valley, and the force behind so many US Rotary clubs joining the project. Egged by the transformation Dhandhanian is now working on making another set of 20 schools WASH ready. ■



Students using a handwash station installed in a school.

Skilling trafficked women

Rasheeda Bhagat

This is a project that fits bang into Rotary's core ideology of DEI — Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Thanks to the herculean efforts of past president

of RC Bombay Airport, Rajesh Agrawal, with longstanding support from two corporate majors — Vedanta Foundation and D-Link Academy — a rare community initiative has been

launched in Mumbai for 20 teenaged girls and young women (14 to 24 years) rescued from the metro's infamous flesh trade.

Working in partnership with the Chaiim Foundation, the Rotarian, who is the chief training and learning facilitator of RI district 3141, has successfully ensured that a computer skill centre established at the Chaiim Foundation has become operational in Borivali. To begin with, these women will be given basic computer skills. Giving details of the project to *Rotary News*, Agrawal said, "These girls know very little about computers;





A vocational training in progress for survivors of human trafficking.

almost all of them are school dropouts and don't even know how to switch on a computer. So through trainers, they are being taught how to open a file, work on it, save it, etc."

These girls, he adds, have been rescued by the police through special operations and handed over to the Chaiim Foundation, whose objective is to rehabilitate those rescued from human trafficking. According to the Foundation's website, every such survivor is put through a three-year rehabilitation programme where she

These girls know very little about computers; almost all of them are school dropouts and don't even know how to switch on a computer.

Rajesh Agrawal

past president, RC Bombay Airport

is encouraged to make "safe and good decisions, and trained to earn a decent livelihood." Apart from rehabilitation of the "survivors of human trafficking, we also promote the welfare of the marginalised, the poor, disadvantaged and exploited, irrespective of religion, caste or gender," it adds.

Agrawal says a unique aspect of this ongoing project, on which he has been concentrating for several years before it went off the rails during the Covid years, is that "the sponsoring club does not have to spend a single rupee for this project." That is because, he adds, the mega bucks required for this community initiative come from both the corporate entities through CSR.

Vedanta and D-Link will provide the hardware, software, trainers and training facilities. He recalls that when Prafull Sharma was the

governor of RID 3141 "we had done 20 such centres. I had put together this strategic partnership after coming to know during that time that both these corporates were doing such training as their CSR activity." He recalls that in 2017, when he was once seated at an MTNL office in Mumbai, he saw a D-Link placard which said they were going to train people so that they would get jobs. "So I called a D-Link executive, and from that time we are having this partnership with them."

On the young women rescued from human trafficking, which cities they come from, etc, Agrawal says "since this is a very sensitive issue and there are so many undesirable elements in the community who want to exploit them and benefit from them, we are not allowed to interact with them, seek any details or take their photographs. I must have gone there so many times, but

I say hello to the girls from a distance of 10 to 15ft. If people are allowed to talk to them, all kinds of advice will be given, which is not desirable as surely none of the girls want to be reminded of their past.”

But he does share some of the heartrending stories he has heard about the rescued women from the social workers and NGO representatives. One very good-looking girl, he says, had passed through four brothels in four different cities, before being rescued by the police in Mumbai. In another case, in a small town, when a girl left her house in the evening, she was raped by four men. “Her family wanted nothing to do with her and rejected her; somebody told her I’ll take you to Mumbai and get you a job, and she ended up being trafficked to Mumbai.”

He says the Rotarians work with many NGOs and so far, have helped to rehabilitate 200 people, including survivors of human trafficking, and helped them get jobs in different areas. The skills given through such centres, many of them in villages,



Below: (From R) DGE Chetan Desai, RC Bombay Airport past president Rajesh Agrawal, president Akshay Mehta and Rizwan, head - western zone, Vedanta Foundation, with trainees at the computer centre.

include sewing, tailoring and many different crafts, and a typical training course lasts for some eight weeks.

He estimates that through partnership with both these corporate majors the Rotarians have managed to generate a value of at least a few crore rupees... “I would say over ₹9 crore, through all the components of the different kinds of skills and training we’ve provided over the last few years to different batches of young people.”

He is next planning a project where the women rescued from human trafficking can be given training as beauticians. They could be registered or linked to service providers such as Urban Clap or Urban Company, and “when they go out to provide service, nobody would know their background, and so will not be able to humiliate or embarrass them,” he adds. ■



Rotary-Bosch partnership to set up 100 skill development centres

Team Rotary News



RID Raju Subramanian and Guruprasad Mudlapur, managing director, Bosch, along with DG Srinivas Murthy, IPDG Jeetendra Aneja and PDG Nagesh after signing the MoU in Bengaluru.

RI Director Raju Subramanian recently signed an MoU in Bengaluru with Guruprasad Mudlapur, managing director, Bosch Limited, to establish 100 skill development centres in various locations across

India to impart the corporate's Bridge programme.

The Bridge course is a three-month training initiative to empower college and school dropouts with soft and life skills, and thus enhance their employability opportunities. It

also includes placement support for entry-level jobs. It is estimated that the 100 centres together will have the potential to create 10,000 job opportunities annually.

RID 3191 DG Srinivas Murthy, IPDG Jeetendra

Aneja, PDG K P Nagesh and members of RC Bangalore Junction were present at the event, along with representatives from Bosch including BR Suresh, country head – HR and CSR head Sakina Baker. ■



A school for mentally-challenged children

Rotary Club of Lakhimpur Central. RID 3120, is running a special school called AASRA for children with mental disabilities on the premises of the Ajmani International School which belongs to club member Jasmeet Singh Ajmani.

Around 20 children learn various life skills here, says club secretary Amit Gupta. The special school was begun ten years ago and the club has been supporting it with salary for the staff, lunch for the children and staff, and a bus to pick and drop them home. "We spend ₹50,000 a month as administration expenses," he says.

The club chartered in 2000 has 65 members, and the monthly expenditure for the school is met with their generous contributions.



DG Sunil Bansal with a child at AASRA, a school for the mentally-challenged run by RC Lakhimpur Central.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US

UDAYA IDHAYAM

Located in the cool environs of Coonoor town is the oldest Rotary club in RI district 3203 and one of the oldest in India, having been started in 1941. The Rotary Club of Nilgiris is living up to the impressive history it has charted by doing several significant projects; the one on renovating, modernising and revolutionising a panchayat middle school in Bettati in Nilgiris at a cost of ₹51 lakh was featured in this magazine a few months ago.

A couple of other noteworthy projects this club has done include setting up a dialysis centre in Coonoor, providing an ICU on wheels and a gas-fired crematorium. A palliative and geriatric care unit at the Government Lawley Hospital at a cost of ₹2 crore, is now being put up.

I visit the idyllic setting in which the Rotary crematorium is set up, accompanied by a group of senior Rotarians from the club, including two past presidents Lt Gen (retd) MG Girish and Vijaya Kumar Dar, who

have been spearheading this project. Gen Girish briefs me that prior to 2005, when this crematorium was set up by RC Nilgiris in a sprawling 2.5-acre plot given for the project by the Willingdon Cantonment Board, there was only one conventional wood-fired crematorium in Coonoor and that too in a dilapidated condition. The project to set up a gas-fired crematorium was taken up by the club in 2005 and a corpus fund of ₹40 lakh was collected from different donors in the city.

Earlier RC Ootacamund was also supposed to partner in this project,

but later withdrew. The crematorium started functioning in 2005 with an LPG-fired furnace.

“In three years, it broke down, and in 2008, when I joined the club, I learnt it was going to be shut down. Perhaps the costing had not been done right, because the cost of LPG and other operations were constantly going up, but we were charging a pittance (₹2,000) and there was no support from anyone. I took it as a personal challenge to raise enough funds to keep it running, went with a begging bowl and collected ₹15 lakh

RC Nilgiris creates a crematorium & biodiversity park

Rasheeda Bhagat



Lt Gen MG Girish at the crematorium complex.



Rasheeda Bhagat

(From L) RC Nilgiris past president BC Kumar, Vijaya Kumar Dar, Gen MG Girish, club president Captain CHN Kumar and Charles Nathan.

Charles Nathan, a club member who has spent 20 years in Africa on ecology projects, has volunteered to convert this place into a biodiversity park.

from the local people through a couple of fundraisers,” says Dar.

That money was used to repair and renovate the facilities, set up a chimney system and a garden, but it was still not enough. The rate was revised to ₹9,000, and CSR funds were brought in from Microland (₹20 lakh).

Gen Girish explains that the crematorium now has 16 LPG cylinders; eight cylinders are used at one time, connected to the machine and they fire simultaneously. The cremation is completed in an hour and one cylinder is used for each body.

But the core group involved in the project has more ambitious plans to turn this into a serene and soothing place from where the family can bid a final goodbye to their loved one.

Biodiversity park

While in the short term the Rotarians want to build a kind of lounge where the family members can be seated, or hold a prayer or remembrance meet while the cremation takes place, the long-term plan is to “use this beautiful green piece of land to set up a biodiversity park.”

Gen Girish introduces me to another club member Charles Nathan, “a complete man of nature, who is extremely knowledgeable about nature, birds, bees, trees, plants and animals. He has spent 20 long years in Africa and has volunteered to convert this place into a biodiversity park. When that is done, we plan to get school kids over here for an educational tour to learn about the environment. This also fits in beautifully with Rotary’s latest area of focus — conservation of the environment.”

And, he adds, not using wood for burning the body is itself “an environment project because through this gas-fired cremation we save a 20-year-old tree. In a normal cremation, half a tonne of wood is used, so if we do 100 cremations,

we save 50 tonnes of wood. And that amount to so many trees.”

He adds that ultimately the project will be a combination of a crematorium and biodiversity park, “so that the mourners get a sense of peace and harmony with nature, rather than just experience grief and sadness. We hope to give them a feeling of satisfaction that their loved ones have gone through the last journey from such a beautiful place.”

Gen Girish, a two-term club president, who retired from the Indian army in 2006 and calls himself a ‘piece of fossil,’ in typical army humour, says that even people from Ootacamund use this service, and for those who can’t afford the fee, Rotarians raise the money. “So whether it is the richest estate owner in Coonoor, or a poor man on the street, all of them get the same kind of cremation here.” During Covid, at least three cremations a day took place here.

This final resting place is indeed enchanting... green grass and rich foliage, colourful and fragrant flowers, lovely balmy climate of the hills, and a serenity where the welcome break is the sweet chirping of birds. Nathan



The dialysis centre set up by the club at the Government Lawley Hospital.

says that the place is a hive of activity, a couple of peacocks come there regularly, and the nesting season has started. Emerald doves, spotted doves, jungle fowls, herons... all of them are found here. The stream in this property brings the birds and the grain attracts the peacocks and jungle fowl.

A migration path for butterflies is also there but this is not the season, and a few plants, which are particularly attractive to butterflies, from the Jungle Lodge in Masinagudi will be planted here.

As Nathan explains all this, Kali, a worker describes how he was amazed and enchanted to see a “baby butterfly open its wings for the first time and fly away”! Apart from squirrels and mongoose, porcupines, barking deer, and a bear also come here; “we haven’t seen the bear, but the clear marks are there,” adds Nathan.

Gen Girish thanked Vijaya Dar for helping in getting CSR funds for the club’s projects.

An ICU on wheels

Earlier this year in August, RC Nilgiris launched an advanced life support ambulance which essentially is a cardiac care ICU on wheels. “We have a driver and a paramedic

and whenever a local hospital requires to send out a patient for advanced medical care — mainly to Coimbatore, this well-equipped ambulance is available,” says Dar who helped to get CSR funds from Kotak Mahindra Bank for this project, which cost ₹25 lakh.

Earlier, these thoughtful Rotarians stationed a golf cart, costing ₹5 lakh, at the Government Lawley Hospital, which, as most buildings in the hills, is located at several levels on a slope and this battery-operated vehicle can transport patients and their relatives from one section to another.

Two years ago, noting that there were no dialysis facilities in Coonoor, and “poor people requiring dialysis were simply left to die as they could not afford to go to Coimbatore every

time, we set up a dialysis unit. We were planning this project for a long time but had no support from a hospital. Because we can only set it up and not run such a unit for lack of expertise.”

But one fine day, in a dialogue with the Lawley Hospital CMO, when he offered to give them a hall, a unit was set up with six machines at a cost of ₹70 lakh with funding from Microland, Sancheti Brothers, Fairfax, and others. “We have put up state-of-the-art machines and the government charges only ₹500 to those who can afford to pay and nothing to those who can’t,” Dar adds.

At the Lawley Hospital, the club has also done up a dental unit, OPD, and now has plans to put up a palliative care and geriatric care unit at a total cost of ₹2 crore, again with CSR funds. “We have a good relationship with corporates,” grins Dar, adding on a serious note: “Basically what is important is credibility, people have to believe you’re using the funds properly and that no money is being siphoned off. We have practically zero admin expenses for our charitable projects, as the club is run on members’ money.”

Deepika Unni, the club’s public image chair, and a core member of the Bettati school project, shares a video clip on how the children from this panchayat school put up a play, entirely in English, on Children’s Day, the very day on which I was writing this article. As described in the Bettati school article, all the children and their parents had expressed the desire that they should learn English, and the Rotarians had specially budgeted for the salary of an English teacher. “Imagine the effect of one English medium teacher on these kids. We were blown away,” comments Deepika.

Watching the clip, I couldn’t agree more. ■

At the Lawley Hospital, the club has done a dental unit, OPD, and is now putting up a palliative and geriatric care unit at a cost of ₹2 crore with CSR funds.

Cinema on Wheels in Udaipur

Kiran Zehra

Parked outside government schools in Udaipur, a huge container truck called Cinema on Wheels is silently championing change and fostering progressive thinking among students. Stepping out of this unconventional classroom, 11-year-old student Sham says, “Child marriage is bad and so is treating a girl like a subordinate.” He is delighted to have watched “movies in an air-conditioned theatre, with comfortable seats and delicious snacks, all within a truck.” Mohit, a Class 3 student is utterly amazed “*Bahar se truck, andar se cinema hall! Yeh jadoo hai.* (Outside it looks like a truck but inside it has a cinema hall! This is magic.)” Such is the enchantment of *Project Navchetna*, an initiative of RC Udaipur Elite, RID 3056, that aims to educate students about pressing social issues in their region and beyond through the power of cinema.

On a visit to Jaipur, club president Vikas Sharma came across a container truck that was transformed into a mini cinema hall, and wanted to use it to “raise awareness and educate school students, mainly in government schools, about child marriage, proper use of social media and mobile phones, good and bad touch, cybercrime and gender equity, and also provide

them with an unforgettable cinematic experience.”

He presented the idea to the club’s board which “loved it and approved it immediately.” Project coordinators were swiftly appointed, and a route map

was prepared to address the logistical challenges posed by the 60-foot-long container truck. The project team identified schools located near state highways and secured permissions from school principals, who “welcomed this unique experience for their students. The shows were met with enthusiasm by the students, who also enjoyed snacks and juice during the interval. Most of these students had never had such an experience before, making this initiative all the more impactful,” says Sharma.

On all the days, 3–4 club members attended the initiative to ensure smooth running of the shows. The project cost of ₹2 lakh was covered through sponsorships from local factory owners, club members and other donors. Sharma is happy that “the Cinema on Wheels has kindled not just love for the movies but also a spark of change.” ■



Children enjoying snacks and engrossed in watching a movie in the Cinema on Wheels.



What Team India can teach all of us

Mudar Pathreya

The capacity to be good, to do good, and be seen as good — the Indian team has lived this ethic visibly and consistently across the last 20 years. It is perhaps its biggest — and most under-celebrated — achievement.

The world's right wing has run into an unusual opposition in the Indian cricket team. For various reasons.

One, the Indian team represents a laboratory beaker of classes, castes, cultures and communities. This goes against the basic right wing lowest common denominator of ethnic sameness. Rohit Sharma sounds North Indian but comes from Mumbai. Shreyas Iyer's ancestors are from Kerala, but he hails from Maharashtra. KL Rahul is Mangalorean. Hardik Pandya is as Gujarati as they come. Surya Kumar and Kuldeep are Yadavs from Uttar Pradesh. R Ashwin is a Tamil Brahmin. Ravindra Jadeja and Shardul Thakur are Rajputs (but play for different states). Mohammed Siraj is from Telangana. Prasidh Krishna is from Karnataka. Mohammad Shami comes from Uttar Pradesh (but plays for Bengal). Shubhman Gill and Virat Kohli are Punjabis (one plays for Punjab, the other for Delhi). When a team is so ethnically diffused that

it cannot be labelled, it does not stand for anyone and yet stands for everything. A *shaayar* wrote: *Chaman me ikhtilat-e-rang-o-bu se baat banti hai; hum hi hum hain to kya hum hain; tum hi tum ho to kya tum ho.* This Indian team lives this. Arrogantly.

Two, the Indian cricket team is the unquestioned ambassador of the world's largest population cluster (one sixth of humanity). Football may be religion in Brazil but there are more cricket lovers in Uttar Pradesh than in that South American country. American football may be the number one US sport, but that country would need to more than quadruple its population to even match the number of Indian cricket lovers. Basketball is possibly the most popular sport in China, but the following of that sport has been estimated at less than half of India's cricket base. India's scale — the largest nation-centric sporting franchise anywhere — provides it with a large responsibility: the capacity to be good, to do good

and be seen as good for the largest and most demanding real-time audience in the world. The Indian team has lived this ethic visibly and consistently across the last 20 years; it is perhaps its biggest — and most under-celebrated — achievement.

Three, the Indian cricket team represents the cleanest form of 'government'. No aspect of Indian public life — not even the judiciary — has possibly been as consistent in living this high moral line. I have not heard of a selector being 'influenced' in modern Indian cricket. There has been no whisper that Dhoni (or Kohli or Tendulkar or Ganguly or Sehwag or Dravid or Laxman or Kumble) may have willfully or fleetingly under-performed. In a country, where a range of politicians, TV anchors, actors and businesspersons maybe — and are — morally suspect, a presence in the Indian cricket team is equivalent to a moral ISO certification. This is an achievement



When a team is so ethnically
diffused that it cannot be labelled,
it does not stand for anyone and
yet stands for everything.

in a country ranked 85 on the World
Corruption Index.

Four, even as there is a growing
concern that India is making
minorities a convenient whipping
child for everything that has gone
wrong from the beginning of the
previous millennium, the opposite
is true in the Indian cricket team.
The Indian team treats its minorities
with respect and on merit. Two
fast bowlers from the minority
community have been lionised for
their World Cup 2023 performance,
validating a theory: 'Cricket is

sacred, everything else may not.'
I am tempted to misquote some
Persian here: *Bakhuda deewano
basho, ba Shami-Siraj hoshiyaar!*
(You may say anything against God,
but dare you say anything against
Shami and Siraj).

The Indian team has been tested
on this count. Two years ago, Shami
was accused by a section of Indians
for having 'thrown it away' during a
needle T20 match against Pakistan
(India lost). Most teams would have
allowed the criticism to pass ('We do
not respond to this kind of thing').
Kohli waded in. His words: 'Our
brotherhood and friendship within
the team, nothing can be shaken.'
That word 'brotherhood'. Kohli
touched an emotional Indian nerve.
He spoke of unity and oneness. High
principle, even Sufi. Someone called
that public statement 'Kohli's biggest
century.'

The transactional will measure
this Indian team by the number of

200-run-plus wins. The discerning
will observe the different: how Virat
puts his hand on Siraj's head when
the team converges, how Rahul
shouts a word of encouragement
after a Shami outswinger, how the
team drowns either of them after
they have taken a wicket and how
Shami-Siraj are praised in press
conferences. The minorities are
observing this consciously; others
possibly osmotically. But no one is
missing the message that these two
individuals are winning it 'For us,
for India.' Suddenly, the 'them' has
been replaced with 'us'. Cricket is
healing the nation.

The other day I tracked a social
media photograph of Kohli at Siraj's
modest Hyderabad home, which told
me a story (half imagined). How
he may have told Siraj 'One day I
want to meet your parents.' How he
may have said, 'Can you ask your
mother to make me some low-sugar
kheer when I come?' How he may
have dropped in unannounced.
How he may have taken the Siraj
neighbourhood by surprise. How
he may have sat on the *zameen*, as
the Siraj family fumbled around for
chairs, and just said, '*Main yahaan
ekdum theek hoon.*'

This picture represented the ideal
of an aspirational India — different
social orbits pulled together by the
compelling ethic of a team that
believes that every player is — and
has been created — equal.

When this World Cup is over,
India will need to replicate this
DNA across 1.41 billion if it is to
emerge as it once was: the best
among nations but in a different
game. Of humanity.

(First published in The Economic
Times. Reproduced with
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Mohammed Siraj (R) celebrates with Virat Kohli after taking a wicket.

Addressing anaemia in women

Jaishree

It is sad that several rural women cannot differentiate a normal period from an abnormal one. They have no idea how long a period lasts. Many of them bleed for months not knowing that they have a problem in their uterus. Losing so much blood makes them anaemic, triggering various other health issues, says Dr Aruna Tantia, a gynaecologist and member of RC Salt Lake Metropolitan, RID 3291.

The club, through its project *Matri Raksha* (saving women), has

embarked on an awareness and treatment drive to address 20,000 women in the district with \$140,000 global grant support from TRF and Rotary clubs from Switzerland. Though the project was begun three years ago, it had to be paused during the Covid pandemic.

The club, along with its RCCs and other NGOs, has conducted 26 special camps until August, in various pockets of Bengal, stretching from the Sundarbans to Nadia and Bankura. “We have so far screened 2,600 women in these camps,” says Aruna. Twelve Rotarian-doctors from the Swiss clubs, and TRF’s technical cadre members had also participated in some of the camps.

“About 80 per cent women had severe anaemia with the blood count alarmingly low at 4–5 units (the normal index is 12). Around 250 women had issues in the uterus, resulting in blood loss,” she says. The club is extending surgical care for those diagnosed with tumour. Deworming tablets and vitamin supplements

were distributed at these camps, and women were educated on the importance of a nutritious diet.

Utilising local resources, like the iron-rich *Kulekhara* (swamp weed) plant, has been a key strategy to combat anaemia. “I prescribe the recipe to all my patients. The leaves are to be boiled and made into a soup. Consuming it daily for a fortnight is a sure shot to increase the haemoglobin levels,” explains the gynaecologist. She points out that the tribals enjoyed better health “because they knew the value of the herbs they had in their backyard.”

The services at the camp extended beyond anaemia treatment to overall health, addressing issues related to eyes, bones and dental health, all thanks to the seven doctors of the club practising various disciplines. The club also upgraded the rural PHCs with better screening facilities, and trained the health workers. “We even set up a PHC for a cluster of five villages in the Sundarbans where medical help is totally absent. The nearest clinic is 30km away,” she says.

Six months after the initial camps, the women were evaluated again, and “to our joy, most of them have been cured of the disorder. Not only are these women now aware of healthy eating, they are also spreading the word about it among their neighbours.” The camps also served to educate the villagers about hand-washing, safe drinking water and menstrual hygiene.

DG Hira Lal Yadav has made *Matri Raksha* a district project and Aruna is confident of achieving significant success in the district in the next 3–5 years. “I will be happy when women learn to understand a normal period and make a healthy diet with food from her kitchen shelf,” she smiles. ■

An anaemia detection camp in a village.



Samyra Sengupta, a member of RC Calcutta South Circle, RID 3291, led an ocean dive with the message ‘No Blue, No Green’ organised by the club to create awareness on ocean conservation. Sengupta is a professional scuba diver and an underwater photographer. He was accompanied by Kaustubh Mukherjee from Kolkata, and Delon Sujaya from Indonesia.

The scuba dive was conducted off the coast of East Bali, Indonesia, in the renowned Coral Triangle of the world, where the Indian Ocean meets the Pacific Ocean. This area is known for its incredible marine biodiversity, said club president Prosenjit Gupta. ■



From RI South Asia

Highest rating from Charity Navigator

For the 15th consecutive year, The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating — four stars — from Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of charities in the US. The Foundation earned the recognition for adhering to sector best practices and executing its mission in a financially efficient way, demonstrating both strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

Read more details at <https://www.rotary.org/en/rotary-foundation-receives-highest-rating-charity-navigator-15th-consecutive-year>

Give online on behalf of club or club members

All club officers such as the club president, Foundation chair, membership chair, executive secretary/director, secretary and treasurer can make online contributions on behalf of their club members through their My Rotary account with their credit/debit card or net banking platform. While the contribution credit is assigned to individual members, the 80G receipt is generated solely in the club leader's name as the remitter and not in the name of individual members.

For more details refer: http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/give_online_on_behalf_of_club_or_club_members_sao.pdf

CSR India grants reporting

CSR grants reporting play a significant role in ensuring transparency, accountability and the overall effectiveness of CSR initiatives. Every implementing club should submit the progress report or the final report, depending on the project's status. The CSR India grant reporting requirements can be accessed through following links:

CSR global grants and CSR India grants reporting requirements

http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/csr_gg_and_csr_india_grants_reporting_requirements.pdf

Reporting template

http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/csr_india_grant_reporting_template.pdf

Utilisation certificate format for Rotarian's contributions towards CSR India grants

http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/csr_grant_rotarians_contributions_uc.pdf

Utilisation certificate format for CSR contribution towards CSR India grants

http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/csrgrant_csr_contributions_uc.pdf

Sparkling service by RC Chandigarh

V Muthukumaran

There is a striking parallel in the growth of Chandigarh, the union territory and the capital city of both Punjab and Haryana, and the 65-year-old marquee club, RC Chandigarh, RID 3080, the first one to be chartered in this region in May 1958. It was the time when the city was being created

by French architect Le Corbusier with an urban design having unique buildings, roads divided into sectors and a huge space for a thriving ecosystem, so that 65 per cent of the total land area (114sqkm) has lush green cover.

In this city, Rotary projects have transformed the living conditions of underprivileged families. *Project Rahat* (comfort zone) has brought holistic development for 650 people at a slum colony in Saketari village in Panchkula through an MoU signed between RC Chandigarh, Sewa, an NGO, and

Bhavan Vidyalaya in March 2017. PRIP Rajendra Saboo and his wife Usha were moved by the plight of the underprivileged families when the couple came here to distribute blankets to them in the winter of 2016. “The Saboos adopted the slum colony and did the spadework; the Sewa workers undertook the field work; and we trained 13 local people to do a house-to-house survey, create awareness on education, hygiene and sanitation. The salaries of teachers hired by the club were paid by Bhavan Vidyalaya,” said Neenu Vij, chairperson, *Project Rahat*.

Soon the field study came out with some alarming findings: Around 100 children were not in school; pregnant women avoided hospitals; domestic abuse was common with husbands not going to work, gambling, getting drunk and often beating wives; and pathetic sanitary conditions. After five years of work by the club and several medical camps, all parameters have improved.

Project Rahat is going strong with the women and children being engaged in productive activities, such



Rasheeda Bhagat

as tailoring, beautician, computer and adult literacy courses, and further training is planned. With a confident smile, Geeta (23), who was a paid worker of the club, said “Now I don’t depend on others for my daily needs, as I have a regular income.”

During the five-year MoU period, the annual expenditure of ₹14–15 lakh was shared by PRIP Saboo, Rtn Jagesh Khaitan and the club. “Now the annual expenses have come down to ₹5 lakh,” said Anil Chadda, club president. “Most women have become financially independent.”

Around 50 toddlers and schoolchildren of female domestic help, construction workers etc are taken care of in Bal Bahar, a creche, and a modest fee of ₹500 a month is charged by the club, said Col (retd) Alok Batra, club secretary.

WASH in schools

Since 2016–17 a hygiene and sanitation awareness programme, is benefitting students in 20 government schools through a GG project (\$82,000) in a tie-up with RC Seoul Namsan, RID 3650. Till now, three schools have either got new toilet blocks or repaired existing ones; and the club plans to distribute 50,000 sanitary pads this year. In five years, the club has distributed more than one lakh sanitary pads.

From L: Usha and PRIP Rajendra Saboo and PRIP Barry Rassin and Esther with PDG Praveen Goyal, his spouse Basu (on his right), RC Chandigarh past president Vijay Wadhawan, PDG Madhukar Malhotra and past president Manmohan Singh Kohli at the Rotary Peace Monument on the banks of Sukhna Lake.



(From L) Project chairperson Neenu Vij, coordinator Dr Seema Gupta and club president Anil Chadda at the skill development centre in Saketari village. Trainer Sonia Yadav is present in the background.

Around 950 students are engaged in WinS programmes at the Government Senior Secondary School, Khudda Lahora. Kanwaljit Kaur, WinS coordinator, says regular handwash demos are held and in the last two years, WinS programmes have reached 2,000 students at this school.

Human milk bank

Thanks to a CSR grant of ₹31 lakh from Ruchira Papers, Haryana, a Rotary human milk bank was inaugurated recently to treat newborns with low birthweight in Mohali. “The Punjab government has sponsored machinery worth ₹1 crore and the balance amount was met by club members. The human milk bank with a capacity to store 500ml of breast milk is the first such facility to offer effective care to low birthweight infants across the Tricity area and beyond,” said Dr Bhavneet Bharti,

director-principal, Dr BR Ambedkar State Institute of Medical Sciences.

Project Aashiana

In a touching gesture, Aashiana, a home for abandoned infants run by the Social Welfare department, was revamped with cots, wall paintings, curtains, colourful blinds, toys and PVC ducts at a cost of ₹1.5 lakh. Fourteen children (up to three years) are under the care of three midwives. A cradle is available here for unwanted babies. Sneha Tickoo, superintendent, Snehalya, a destitute home for girls under which Aashiana is housed, profusely thanked Anil Chadda for the makeover.

In 2003, then RI President Jonathan Majiyagpe unveiled a Rotary Peace Monument at the Sukhna Lake, with SBI sponsoring the monument at a cost of ₹6 lakh to mark the club’s golden jubilee. *Project Heartline* has sponsored 771 heart

The Godfather



PRIP Saboo and Usha with Rwandan children who were treated for cardiac disorders by the club at the Fortis Hospital, Mohali, in 2015.

Jogging down memory lane, Charanjit Singh, past president, RC Chandigarh, and RID 3080 chair of Young Generation, said, “I call PRIP Rajendra Saboo as the king of hearts for he connects with the people through an emotional bond. His connection with the global humanity is phenomenal.”

When Saboo was RI director (1981–83), “our RID 308 was so huge that it spread from Delhi to Uttar Pradesh covering Punjab, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. He touched the lives of many people through innovative, action-oriented programmes and projects.” One of his hallmarks is his specific instructions to Rotarians on “how to execute specific projects,” said Singh. After being DG in 1976–77, Saboo became the second Indian to hold RI presidency (1991–92) following Nitish Laharry who led the Rotary world in 1962–63.

Rotary PGI-Sarai is the first hostel for patients and their attendants built by RC Chandigarh in 1986–87 at the

PGIMER Hospital. “Around 40 Rotarians went around shop-to-shop and house-to-house to mobilise funds. We raised ₹20 lakh through public funds and member donations to build the Rotary PGI-Sarai. Saboo was right behind us, motivating the project team,” he said. Rotary PGI-Sarai is now a three-storeyed, 50-bed accommodation for patients.

Saboo will be remembered forever in the Rotary world for his pioneering work in organising Rotary Medical Missions in 1998, which later on became popular by the acronym RVTM — Rotary Vocational Technical Training Mission. He led many such missions with doctors, volunteers and Rotarians to Africa, Cambodia and Mongolia. “We have done 48 RVTMs till now; and 17 medical missions within India since 2007. The primary aim is to reach medical care to backward, remote parts of the world, mostly in Africa, and some pockets of India,” said Singh.

surgeries for children since 1996 through a series of global grants. “With the latest GG of \$98,000, we plan to do at least 20 child heart surgeries this year, of which four were already done. Our global partner is RC Hall County, RID 6910, Georgia, US,” said Chadda.

Rotary blood bank

In partnership with the Blood Bank Society (BBS), a modern blood resource bank — Rotary and Blood Bank Society Resource Centre — was set up in Nov 2004. While the two-storey building was constructed

Front row (from left): Club president Chadda, Arun Aggarwal and community services director Teena Virk.

Back row (from left): Club secretary Col (retd) Alok Batra, vocational centre director Sartaj Lamba and treasurer Pawan Pahwa at the club’s Rotary House.



by BBS, the club sponsored the first set of machines through a 3-H grant worth ₹1.75 crore, said PDG Madhukar Malhotra.

Recalling the Covid times, Malhotra said that the club set up an 18-bed critical care unit in quick time for Covid patients (GG: \$60,000) at the Government Medical College Hospital. Since inception, the club would have done 45 global and matching grant projects worth \$6 million, he said.

Community initiatives

After renovating two toilet blocks at the cremation ground (₹45 lakh), “we have entered into an MoU with the municipal corporation for the upkeep of the sanitation blocks, spending ₹30,000 a month,” said Teena Virk, director, Community Services. Rotarian couple PJ Singh and Dr Rajinder Kaur have donated



(From R) Project chairperson Neenu Viji, Arun Aggarwal, coordinator Dr Seema Gupta and club president Chadda at the after-school classes being held at the skilling centre of *Project Rahat* in Saketari.

200 apheresis kits (₹16 lakh) to the Rotary and Blood Bank Society for separating blood components.

The monthly fun programme since July at the Senior Citizen Home is much awaited by its 37 inmates as they are given fruits, food essentials and grocery bags. Around 5,000 patients, mostly women, have benefitted from the health *melas* being held regularly from July at the Mauli Jagran, a slum cluster. Cervical cancer detection and vaccination for girls are being undertaken. Protein powder is given to lactating, pregnant women and weak adolescents; nutritional diet bags were distributed to TB patients who are counselled, along with oral hygiene kits, antibiotics and painkillers.

Over 5,000 sweet boxes are being sent to soldiers at Ladakh and Siachen subsectors at the Sino-India border ahead of Diwali in the seven-year-old ongoing project initiated by PRIP Rajendra Saboo.

Rotary House

A sparkling two-storey Rotary House on a 12,300 sqft plot is a landmark.

Skill training is being given in batches to 65 students in computer programmes, beauty parlour and tailoring at the vocational centres in this building; and over the last 15 years, “around 8,500 youth would have benefitted from our skilling courses,” said Sartaj Lamba, director, Vocational Training Centre. “We will train 250 youth in gardening, and 80–90 students in soft skills this Rotary year,” she said.

Anil Chadda wants to add 20 new members, and increase the number to 182 by June next year. Over 150 RYLAs were held for 20,000 school and college students; and “in the last four years, special RYLAs for visually-impaired students (100 each year) strived to bring them to the mainstream society. We gifted *Cuckoo FM*, an audio book subscription to 100 blind students.”

Over the decades, the iconic club has sponsored nine Rotary, six Rotaract and 54 Interact clubs across the Tricity area, which now has around 900 Rotarians in 19 Rotary clubs.

Pictures by V Muthukumaran



Empowering students and teachers in Pune

Kiran Zehra

RC Pune Kothrud, RID 3131, has been making a significant impact on the lives of teachers and students alike through its teacher training, and ‘study and life development skills’ workshops. For the past 18 years, these workshops have enhanced the learning techniques of students in higher secondary classes.

Club members Urmila Haldankar, a child psychologist and professor, along with Ujwal Tawade, a Human Relations trainer, have been at the forefront of these workshops.

Samartha Dattatrya Khamkar (13), who has been attending the workshop, found that not only did his writing skills improve, but his confidence also soared. “I even ventured into writing poems for my friends and family to showcase my new-found creativity,” he smiles. Archana Shankar Markale, another student, now recognises the importance of scientific study techniques for academic success. “The workshops have given me the tools to excel in exams and make learning an easy and comfortable experience,” she says.

The principal of Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana School in Satara, S C Bhandari, says, “I see the positive impact these methods have on students with below-average learning capacity. They really help in

transforming their learning experiences.”

But the impact doesn’t stop with the students. The club has also been investing in the professional development of teachers. Special training seminars, “spanning over a decade, have helped over 200 teachers from 50 schools become adept at modern teaching methods. They focus on guiding teachers in helping slow learners navigate learning challenges,” says Tawade.

This year, Urmila and Tawade conducted three seminars at the state and district levels, benefiting 185

A student clearing her doubts at the workshop.



teachers. “We are now equipped with innovative teaching techniques that can help students, regardless of their academic standing,” says Ingole PV, a teacher from the Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana School.

Additionally, a stress management workshop for teachers was also conducted where they were introduced to techniques like the



Urmila Haldankar (seated left) and Ujwal Tawade (seated second from right) along with the teachers after a stress management seminar.

Colorado method of stress relief. It's a method where a stressed person takes deep breaths while squeezing a stress ball or a toy, explains Tawade.

In collaboration with RC Satara Camp, a teacher/parents seminar for students with learning disabilities was conducted at the New English School, Satara.

Urmila and Tawade, assisted by Anns Chandana Chitale and Ruta Date, child psychologists, provided guidance to 78 participants. ■

Rotary library in 100 schools in Ahmednagar

Team Rotary News

RC Ahmednagar Midtown, RID 3132, under its *Project Vidya*, set up libraries in 100 zilla parishad schools across Ahmednagar. The municipal corporation education department helped the club identify the schools to benefit from this project. The club provided cupboards, stocked them with a variety of books in these schools and urged the staff to encourage the students to utilise the facility everyday at least for an hour. "This



will certainly inculcate reading habit in them, which will enhance their knowledge and make them fluent in the language. At least 10,000 students will benefit from this initiative," said club president Madhura Zaware. The club's Literacy Committee director Prasad Ubale helped in choosing

the books for the libraries, which comprised a mix of simple storybooks and informative books.

Over 100 pouches of seeds were also given to the schools to encourage the children and the school staff to plant them on the school campuses. The total project cost was ₹6 lakh. ■

Meet your



HR Keshav

Manufacturing

RC Mysore Brindavan, RID 3181



Jeetender Gupta

Lawyer

RC Delhi, RID 3011

Rotary Bhawan to house dialysis centre

Friendship and the kind of networking being offered drew Keshav to Rotary in 2002. Later on he got involved in service projects and reached out to the local communities. PDGs R Guru and GK Balakrishna are two persons “who shaped my Rotary ideals as I learnt virtues like punctuality and public speaking skills from them.”

With 87 clubs and 3,800-plus Rotarians across four revenue districts of Karnataka, including Mysuru, Kodagu, Dakshina Kannada and Chamarajanagar, “I will start six new clubs and induct 380 Rotarians, to achieve the target of 10 per cent net growth.” A two-year-old dialysis centre attached to a private hospital in Chamarajanagar will be shifted to the newly-built Rotary Bhawan in this town shortly. RCs Ivory City Mysuru and Chamarajanagar will run the centre which is treating 200 patients a month at a subsidised cost of ₹500 per sitting. “Around 150 anganwadis will be revamped this year. Each club has taken up 2–3 centres, spending at least ₹30,000 on each of them.”

A skin bank (GG: \$51,651) is being set up by RC Mangalore at the Father Muller Medical College Hospital; and a Rotary Blood Bank (GG: \$67,999) is coming up at Bantwal. Keshav will be setting up nine RWH facilities (each ₹45,000) at rural schools and hostels where there is acute water scarcity. He aims to collect \$300,000 for TRF.

Affordable heart care hospital in Delhi

At 48, Jeetender Gupta is one of the youngest DGs in our zones and he credits his successful Rotary journey to his wife, Deepti, past president, RC Faridabad Tulips. “My wife is hand-in-hand with me in every project and I deeply value her support.” He has inducted 400 new Rotarians and formed 10 new clubs, raising their numbers to 5,100-plus and 138 across the Delhi-NCR. “The net membership growth will be sustained at 10 per cent,” he said. A Rotary Prem Sagar Goel Heart Hospital (GG+CSR: \$850,000) will provide affordable care — bypass surgery at ₹1 lakh and angioplasty at ₹50,000.

A check dam in Alwar (GG: \$50,000); expanding the diabetes centre in Delhi (GG: \$35,000); and four Gurgaon clubs setting up a skill development centre (GG: \$75,000) are going to be other highlights of his term.

Over 5,000 girls (9–20 years) will be vaccinated against cervical cancer at special camps. An organ donation awareness bus with Rotarians and artistes will visit neighbouring states to perform street plays and road shows.

He aims to collect \$2 million for TRF. Around one crore rail passengers will see the Rotary wheel on paper cups and menu flyers in a public image project worth ₹2.5 crore. He joined Rotary in 2001 at age 26.

Governors

V Muthukumaran



Nilesh Kumar Agarwal

*Defence contractor
RC Greater Tezpur, RID 3240*



Vipin Bhasin

*Lawyer
RC Amritsar South, RID 3070*

Rotaract and PR will drive Rotary

Given the vastness of the eight northeastern states, “my twin focus will be on nurturing Rotaract and building our public image to steer Rotary,” said Nilesh Agarwal. A 30-member team is showcasing Rotary in print, electronic and social media; and “I will start at least 10 Rotaract and 10 Interact clubs to groom future Rotarians.”

There are around 70 Rotaract clubs in the north-east. Agarwal wants to start 8–10 satellite clubs, to take the number of Rotary clubs to 115 by 2024 June-end. He has inducted 250 new members already and “will add 250 more, raising the membership to 4,000-plus.” Around 550 families in 20 tribal hamlets will be trained in organic farming (GG: \$88,000) to enable women to set up a kitchen garden and consume healthy food. “They can sell part of the harvest to earn regular income. We are giving them iron supplements and nutritional foods to improve their health.”

Project Heart-to-Heart (GG: \$80,000) will do heart surgeries on 50 children in Ranchi. Agarwal is planning 25 Happy Schools (₹1 crore) through CSR grants and club donations. His TRF target is \$400,000. A former Rotaractor, he joined his club in 2004 as charter president.

A skin bank in Amritsar

Rather than focusing on numbers, Vipin Bhasin is all for a good vetting system to induct only those “who exhibit personality traits that gel with our core values like *Service Above Self*,” he says. But he is confident of a 15 per cent net growth on an existing membership of 3,600-plus.

He is not in a hurry to expand clubs; instead “I want to strengthen existing ones. Those with less than 15–20 members were given two options — either to expand their headcount or merge with other clubs.” The district’s GG status was suspended by RI for want of proper reporting. “I will complete all formalities to reactivate our GG status,” he says. On his wishlist is a skin bank in Amritsar through a GG (around \$60,000) as there are a lot of burn victims in the city. “If we cannot not get a GG approved in time, we will go for CSR funds.”

The Palampur Eye Foundation will be expanded to take up major services. His TRF-giving target is \$100,000. Bhasin joined Rotary in 1989, and is inspired by PRIPs Rajendra Saboo and Cliff Dochterman.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Exploring the Global Rise of Rosé: A Sparkling Journey

Elizabeth Gabay

The rise of rosé over the last decade has attracted vast investments in Provence, a region in southeastern France, and media attention across the globe. Within the rosé world, one category has outstripped every other in terms of volume growth, value and buy-in from producers and consumers alike: sparkling pink.

Rosé Cava has gone from 8 per cent of Cava volumes eight years ago to 10.5 per cent today, while rosé Champagne has progressed from 10 per cent to nearly 13 per cent of volumes today. A few years ago, not one single bottle of rosé Prosecco was produced. Today, over 75 million bottles are sold every year. Prosecco, however, is not made in the traditional method, and while some producers such as Villa Sandi make a good example, many

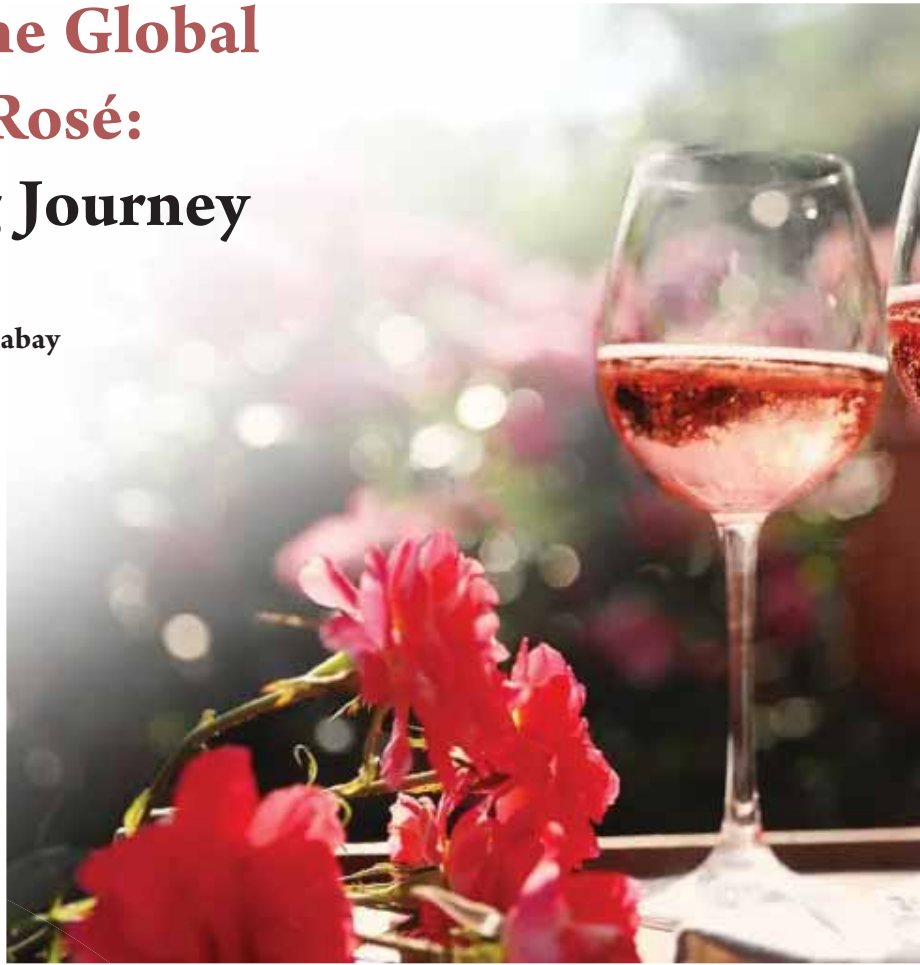
to my mind are a touch too sweet. However, it is this very ripeness and soft creaminess which appeals to so many drinkers.

With a few exceptions, this increase in volume is accompanied by a marked increase in value as well. Pink Champagne commands anywhere from a 15 per cent to 40 per cent price increase over comparable white cuvées. Prestige and Vintage Champagnes are just as qualitative as the whites with subtle differences based on the percentage of red grapes. The length of maceration and the amount of ageing can contribute greatly to the different styles.

Traditionally, white base wines were coloured with a small quantity of red wine. As little as 5 per cent

of the total can provide a reasonable pink colour, albeit without much red fruit character. Increasingly popular, especially in Champagne, are what are known (erroneously) as *rosé de saignée*, but are in fact maceration rosés, whereby colour and red fruit character are achieved by leaving the juice in contact with the skins for a certain length of time — eight days is not uncommon in Champagne. These wines are typically the darkest, most structural, most tannic. For the ripest grapes, direct press can result in a pale rosé, closer to a blanc-de-noirs.

Rosé character is one of the key qualities to look for in a sparkling rosé. Red berry fruit and crunchy, subtle tannic acidity are two key components while brioche notes from extended





is added with the second fermentation. Four years ageing under cork while on the lees, instead of the more usual crown cap, gives mature brioche and spice and enticing richness. Rich notes of strawberries and cream, pretty floral notes, vibrant crunchy red berry fruit and some long austere acidity.

La Foret 2015, Champagne Alexandre Bonnet is 100 per cent Pinot Noir. This powerful older wine from Champagne revels in slightly longer maceration to give a darker pink colour. Crushed strawberries and cream, crunchy cranberries, beautiful acidity, weight and structure, remind you that this is not far from northern Burgundy. A stunning gastronomic style with a hint of decadence. Sparkling wine from southern England has recently been receiving considerable attention by Champagne houses, and now it has received Californian investment. Largely made with the Champagne trio of Pinot Noir, Meunier and Chardonnay English sparkling wine is similar to Champagne in quality but with the freshness of a cooler climate.



Coolhurst's Lady Elizabeth 2019 is 100 per cent Pinot Noir from West Sussex (south of London). 48 months on the lees gives classic bready notes before opening up to sweet ripe strawberries, cherries and raspberries with a touch of creaminess and crisp, fresh, crunchy redcurrants and vibrant leafy acidity.

Cava is both the generic name for Spanish sparkling wine, and somewhat confusingly, the Cava DO for sparkling wine around the town of Penedès in northwest Spain. Corpinat sparkling wines are splinter group made up of smaller producers who broke away

ageing should be just as present as they would be for a white or a blanc-de-noir. Bubbles come from a second fermentation in bottle followed by disgorgement, riddling and dosage, which can be made with red wine.

Champagne Drappier NV rosé, 100 per cent Pinot Noir, is classically pink declaring its style from the moment it is poured, boldly followed by an explosion of fruit: redskinned apples, sour cranberries, hints of darker fruit and wild strawberries. The weight of red fruit balances the acidity and very linear precision of the wine.

Au Bout du Chemin NV, Champagne Lebrun de Neuville has a majority of Chardonnay at 60 per cent with 25 per cent Pinot Noir for the base wine, but 15 per cent red wine



from the Cava DO, and are not an official appellation. Cava DO requires a minimum of 25 per cent of red grapes in rosé, but some, like the following two, are 100 per cent red varieties.

Trepat 2019, Agusti Torello Mata, Cava DO is made with the traditional red variety Trepat. Dark pink, the fruit reflects the hot summers of Catalonia with sweet, scented notes of dried flowers, honeyed apples and peaches before opening out to rich, ripe, red fruit. It has the characteristic herbal finish with crisp, crunchy red fruit acidity.

Intens Rosat 2019, Recaredo, Corpinat is made with varieties more normally found in red wine than in pink sparkling (Grenache and Mourvedre) revealing an atypical, but nevertheless exciting pink sparkler. Dark pink wine with intense rich red fruit and herbal notes. There is almost a hint of red wine structure which decanting (yes, that does work for sparkling wine) softens to bring out opulent, rich, spiced fruit with rich and silky length.

Portugal on Iberia's Atlantic coast is increasingly producing some stellar sparkling wine. Quinta dos Castelres Extra Bruto 2020 from the Douro may come from Port territory, but this 100 per cent Pinot Noir reflects both schistous soils and higher altitude vineyards to create a vibrantly



mouth-watering wine with crisp red currant fruit and a saline finish.

The Tselepos family in central Greece have made a name for themselves for being Greece's top producer of sparkling wine. Their Amalia NV is made with local red variety Agioritiko. A mere whisper of pink in the colour, followed by crunchy red berries, cherries, blackcurrants, mouth-watering tamarind sourness, creamy spice, floral notes and a saline twist on the finish.

Returning to northern France, one region with a big tradition of

sparkling wine is the Loire Valley. Couly- Dutheil Brut de Franc NV comes from the region of Chinon, but is labelled Vin de France. 100 per cent Cabernet Franc with creamy toastiness and nuts from 24 months on the lees. The Cabernet Franc adds another dimension to the ripe red fruit with fresh leafy acidity and floral notes of roses and lavender. Perfect for a garden reception where vibrancy and prettiness go hand in hand.

Terroir, varieties, ageing — all contribute to widely varying styles of pink sparkling wine, from light aperitif wines to richly gastronomic. Prices also vary widely, so it is always worthwhile to explore outside of the big name regions. Even more so than still rosés, sparkling pink wine is extremely susceptible to light strike: UV-induced degradation that leaves the wine with a sulphurous, vegetal, reductive nose after as little as an hour or two exposed to sunlight — even on a supermarket or wine shop shelf. Lightstrike can be almost wholly avoided by bottling in dark glass. Be safe, aim to buy sparkling rosé in dark bottles.



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Project Vignettes

Team Rotary News

A meeting with President Murmu



PDG Vivek Kumar, DG SP Bagaria and Shubham Bagaria with the President of India Droupadi Murmu.

RID 3250 DG SP Bagaria, along with PDG Vivek Kumar and Shubham Bagaria, member of RC Calcutta Presidency, RID 3291, met the President of India Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapathi Bhavan. DG Bagaria presented a compilation of Rotary projects to the President. ■

Largest heart formation by RID 3232



DG Ravi Raman (centre) with PDG Abirami Ramanathan, DGE NS Saravanan (RID 3234), DGN Vinod Saraogi and Muthuswamy.

The World Record Union certified the record for the largest human formation of a heart symbol by RID 3232. The event was organised at the Olcott Memorial School in Chennai with the TN health minister Ma Subramanian as chief guest. ■

Commemorating World Heart Day



PRID Ashok Mahajan with a child patient. Club president Ram Bhatnagar is seen behind him.

RC Thane Premium, RID 3142, celebrated World Heart Day (Sept 29) by distributing gifts to children whose heart surgeries the club has sponsored at the Jupiter Hospital. The club, along with the Jupiter Foundation, has been sponsoring paediatric heart surgeries as its signature project. ■

Equipment for eye hospital



Club members with the equipment.

RC Pune Sports City, RID 3131, donated advanced ophthalmic equipment worth ₹41.4 lakh to the Sane Guruji Arogya Kendra Hospital in Hadapsar, Pune. The project was funded through a global grant supported by RCs Fort Collins, Fort Collins Breakfast, Fort Collins After Work and Denver, USA, and TRF. ■

Uniting the world through art

V Muthukumaran

Rotary club of Chandigarh, RID 3080, celebrated the spirit of 'one world, one family' through a week-long art and cultural festival (Oct 16–22) at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), in partnership with the Infosys Foundation, the CSR arm of the IT major, and Bhavan Vidyalaya. The cultural programmes turned the spotlight on the cosmopolitan ethos of Chandigarh, reflecting the global confluence of traditional and contemporary art forms to drive home the universal truth of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (World is one family).

The school and its parent body, BVB-Chandigarh, are being run by a team of veteran Rotarians with PRIP Rajendra Saboo as the chairman-mentor. This illustrious cultural entity was

founded by K M Munshi, a freedom fighter, politician and writer, in Bombay in 1938 as an educational trust. Speaking at the inaugural session of the art festival, Saboo said, "we are honoured to partner with BVB-Bengaluru and the Infosys Foundation to further the cause of art and culture." Noting that the Indian culture is a "tapestry of music and dance, a kaleidoscope of colours and a repository of wisdom," he expressed his gratitude to the organisers for weaving a programme that showcases the heart and soul of India's heritage.

It is through these cultural expressions "we come to understand the true essence of India. Let us remember that our culture is not just a reflection of our past, but a beacon guiding us towards our future. As we progress, we do so

as one big family, bound by the threads of culture, tradition and unity," he said.

A cultural boost

While the cultural fest was first mooted by Infosys, "we got on board with the aim to promote young and budding artistes in the fields of music, dance, art exhibition, theatre play and other forms of cultural expressions," said PDG Madhukar Malhotra, secretary, BVB-Chandigarh. About 150 artistes from across India participated in the second edition of the art festival.

Recalling the success of the art festival last year, he said, "The 275-seater Bhavan auditorium was packed on all days; and on average 4,000 people viewed the events livestreamed through the Bhavan's and Infosys' YouTube channels every day."

Infosys-Chandigarh campus head Vikas Gupta felicitates kathak dancer Samira Koser in the presence of (2nd from L) Neenu Vij, Bhavan Vidyalaya senior principal Vineeta Arora, BVB-Bengaluru joint director Nagalakshmi Rao, BVB-Chandigarh's Cultural Committee chair Manmohan Singh Kohli, PDG Madhukar Malhotra and artistes from the Pracheen Kala Kendra.



Let us remember that our culture is not just a reflection of our past, but a beacon guiding us towards our future.

PRIP Rajendra Saboo



PRIP Rajendra Saboo felicitates Dharam Pal, advisor to Chandigarh administrator, and his wife Anita at the inaugural event.

music of their countries. Running a 70-year-old Pracheen Kala Kendra, Samira Koser, a kathak dancer, said, 20 disciples including foreigners performed in the inaugural show.

Irina Shuvalova from Kazakhstan was elated to perform and share the stage with “professional dancers from across the world.” Earlier, in his welcome address, Manmohan Singh Kohli, past president, RC Chandigarh, and chairman, BVB’s cultural committee, said that “the concept of world as a single family is not new to India and Saboo has been promoting this ancient ethos for decades as a global Rotarian.”

Pictures by V Muthukumaran

For years now, though Bhavan Vidyalaya, a CBSE-affiliated school with three separate campuses and student strength of over 3,000, is a top ranker in academic performance in Chandigarh, “our cultural activities were lagging behind. We are confident that this annual cultural festival will fill up the void by opening a national platform for students and young artistes to showcase talent,” Malhotra added.

Dharam Pal, advisor to Chandigarh administrator, addressed the event. Around 1,300 artistes from eight states performed in 90 events/programmes in the first edition of the art festival last year, said Vikas Gupta, centre head, Infosys campus-Chandigarh. “The CSR arm of Infosys is committed to growth with purpose and the Foundation was set up 25 years ago to usher in development in healthcare, education, women’s empowerment and environment sustainability,” he said.

Dancers from the Central Asian Republics, Europe and Africa displayed the vibrant diversity of the world and the unique heritage of their lands through rhythmic, foot-tapping

Artistes from the Central Asian Republics perform at the opening ceremony.



Fostering Rotary in Rotarians through RLI

Jaishree

Addressing the Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) South Asia meet in Chennai, RLI South Asia chair PRID Kamal Sanghvi, said, “We must encourage and foster the ideals of Rotary in everyone. An informed Rotarian is an asset to Rotary, he will inspire people around him to join us and serve the world better in all possible ways. So be well-informed and cautious in what you deliver. And what you impart to the Rotarians must be universal with no regional differences.”

RID Anirudha Roychowdhury spoke about declining membership, continuity of leadership and adaptability to the new Rotary world. He urged the delegates to “organise RLI for green Rotarians.” Congratulating the RLI members he said, “you are making the organisation stronger by engraving Rotary thoughts in the minds of Rotarians.”

RLI international chair PRID Michael McGovern, in an AV message said, “Rotary needs leaders who can understand its objectives and what those mean — not just the words,” The meet aimed to explore ways to promote RLI in every region and discussed challenges the members face, and brainstormed solutions.

“RLI is a multidistrict, grassroots leadership development programme recommended by the RI Board and was strongly endorsed by the CoL at three of its triennial meetings,” said RID 3232 PDG A Subramaniam, regional chair for zone 5. The RI training at the International Assembly



From L: PDGs Chandrabob, Frank Wargo from USA, RID Anirudha Roychowdhury, RLI South Asia chair PRID Kamal Sanghvi, RLI zonal chair PDG A Subramaniam and vice chair George Sundararaj at the meet in Chennai.

is crucial to prepare the DGEs and other district officers for their roles. The same is true for PETS and SETS. But RLI is a foundation course to transform a member into a Rotarian, and make him more knowledgeable about Rotary.

Citing an ongoing conflict of opinion regarding districts adopting RLI as a programme, he explained that the misunderstanding is in the word ‘leadership’. “If it was Rotary Learning Institute instead of Rotary Leadership Institute it would have received better support from all districts,” he said.

RLI vice-chair PDG George Sundararaj added that RLI will help in membership retention and groom

everyone for leadership roles. RLI International training leader PDG Frank Wargo (US) was a special invitee at the meet. Membership planning, TRF, DEI, strategic planning, public image, club communication and empowering Rotaract were some of the topics discussed at the meet.

Several district governors, DGEs and DGNs were among the 175 delegates who attended the meet. Zonal chairs PDGs Sivarraj (zone 4), Dilip Pattanaik (zone 6) and Jorson Fernandez (zone 7), RLI advisors Binod Khaitan and PDG Ulhas Kolhatkar, and secretaries PDG Arun Kumar Gupta and Mohan Kumar were the resource persons.

Picture: Jaishree

Our Rotarian at the Helm of JCI

Rtn Jc Kavin Kumar Kumaravel

JCI - International President - 2024.



PRESIDENT INSTALLATION

on 16 November
at
JCI world
congress 2023,
Zurich,
Switzerland.



Rotary Club of Erode Central Members



Rtn Jc Kaveen Kumar K
Junior Chamber International
President - 2024
95432 81000



Rtn Jc Premsharan M
Executive Assistant
to JCI President - 2024
94433 28386



Rtn Jc Mathivanan S
Member For Asia and Pacific
JCI in Business - 2024
99421 99930

Congratulations & Best wishes from

Rotary Club of Erode Central members and

Rtn D. Kamalanathan
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98427 21333

Rtn B. Vigneshkumar
Secretary
98429 55333

Rtn P. Suresh
Treasurer
98427 07233

Rtn JC S. Balavelayutham
Trainer
94433 67811



Let sustainability dictate your shopping list

Preeti Mehra

This new year keep in mind the buying decisions that will make you stand apart.

The last thing you want to hear is advice when you go shopping in the celebratory month of December. The mood is ebullient, and everyone is thinking of the Christmas and New Year festivities awaiting them. In the markets the shopping windows are lit up to match the joyous mood imploring you to go on a shopping spree for yourself, friends, and family.

So, amidst all the bonhomie and cheer should you be giving a thought to what you choose to buy? If this was 1953 and not 2023 counting down to 2024, I wouldn't have bothered to restrain you. In any case, back then global warming, climate change and saving the environment would not have been your concern and anyone offering unsolicited advice would not have been heard or would be dismissed as a killjoy or a party pooper.

But the times have changed. Today, we must be abundantly careful about all our actions, including the shopping we indulge in. It is only if you are environment friendly can green be the colour of your lifestyle; with a slight twist to the adage, you are what you buy.

Let's start with the big buys — cars, air conditioners, refrigerators, fans and other gadgets. In today's world, thanks

to the Internet, it is easy to thoroughly research products online before you even enter a shop or a showroom.

So, when you start, see that sustainability is a factor that contributes to at least 70 per cent of your decision. Go in for white goods that have the 'energy efficient' certificate. As you may know, the government's Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), set up in 2002, has done a lot of work in comparing products for their cost and energy consumption and has given Energy Star Ratings to home appliances such as air conditioners, fans, heaters, refrigerators, bulbs and others. It even has an app that helps you to compare products, their energy and cost savings, energy ratings etc. This is to aid consumers in making an informed choice.

While buying electrical gadgets, choose those that have the 'energy efficient' certificate, and for artifacts and clothes, shop for goods made by local artisans and tailors.

So, when you go shopping do check these parameters and check the stars on the products you buy to ascertain that it is the most energy efficient and, hence, eco-friendly.

Apart from the big buys, clothes and artifacts are high on the list of those looking for Xmas and New Year gifts.



Here too, it is best to go in for those that have not crossed the seven seas to reach you. In short, shopping locally for goods made by our own artisans, tailors and sold by our micro-entrepreneurs, is the greener option. As you know, the fashion industry is responsible for around 10 per cent of global carbon emission,



which means its contribution to climate change is substantial. So, when it comes to clothes, please try to avoid cheap, fast fashion garments that are meant to wear and throw as the majority of them land up in landfills.

If you must do away with some clothes, try to give them out for repurposing or reuse before you add more to your wardrobe. There are several organisations that collect old clothes and refurbish them for people in need and disaster-related situations such as floods. In Delhi, we have an organisation like Goonj that does wonders with repurposing old clothes. If your garments are on the verge of tearing, even those can be transformed into stylish and tasteful durries, foot mats and table mats. Cloths of different colours and textures is braided into long chains and then stitched together to create new products.

To be part of the sustainable fashion movement, it would be prudent to check on the supply chain of the garments you are purchasing. Are the manufacturers ethical, do they have a transparent supply chain, do they pay fair wages and provide healthy working conditions to their employees?

Also, a large number of fabrics are petroleum-based with fossil fuel used to manufacture them. Nylon, polyester, acrylic fabric require more energy to produce, while organic and recycled fibres take relatively less energy. All these factors contribute to the carbon footprint of a product. Organic cotton, hemp, linen, though expensive, are the best of course as they are mostly biodegradable. You could also look for eco-friendly brands made from natural or recycled fabrics. Our very own khadi is a good, green choice for clothing. Today, Khadi stores offer a wide range of options.

Artifacts too are a favourite with shoppers. The rules here are clear for a shopper looking for eco-friendly gifts.



If the gift is in wood, go for bamboo — you have great bamboo lamps, furniture, tables, table mats, coasters, name the item and you find it in this most sustainable material. Both metal and glass too are a good choice of material as both can be recycled.

Organic foods such as tea, coffee, dry fruits, honey, chocolates, have also become popular to stock at home or give away as gifts. Here too, it is important to keep the supply chain, packaging and labelling in focus. Are they buying from local growers, are they packing in natural, biodegradable, recyclable fibres instead of single use plastic containers? If a product ticks the right boxes, then it is worthy of your patronage.

Today, there are also some online green websites providing you guilt-free gifting solutions. Some of the popular ones who swear by their green supply chain are Loopify and Bombay Greens.

However, if you are more the kind who needs to see, touch or feel a product before you buy, please do so with utmost care. And, of course, use a decomposable, reusable shopping bag all the time. Your sustainable buying decision today will grow the demand for more of the same kind of products, and the world will thank you for it.

Happy shopping and a Happy New Year!

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues

Spine surgery on an African girl

V Muthukumaran

Five-year-old Maïssa from Burundi, a small landlocked and underdeveloped east-central African country, had a successful scoliosis surgery in a collaborative project between RCs Mumbai SOBO, RID 3141, and Gand-Maritime, RID 2130, Belgium. HELP, the medical NGO in Belgium, fostered this partnership and arranged for the three-member medical mission from India to the African country in November this year.

In the course of their regular medical missions to Africa, where

modern medical care is scarce, “a five-member HELP team of doctors and surgeons had a chance to meet Rushoza Laelynn Maïssa in Burundi in November 2022. She was suffering from a curved spinal cord, and her mother Karabona Martine could not bear the sufferings of her child,” explains Els Reynaers, past president, RC Mumbai SOBO.

After her husband passed away last year, as a single mom Martine was finding it difficult to bring up her two daughters, she says. While Maïssa’s condition was turning critical with

every passing month, the Belgian NGO contacted Pierre De Vriendt, member, RC Gand-Maritime to explore the possibility of corrective surgery.

Having heard of the Indian Rotarians medical missions to Africa, initiated by PRIP Rajendra Saboo, Vriendt approached Els in Jan 2023 for arranging an emergency mission to Burundi to save the life of the young African girl. “I arranged a zoom meeting between the surgeons of The Spine Foundation (TSF), Mumbai, and Martine, mother of the child. TSF doctors advised an MRI scan,” says Els.

After deliberation over the venue of the operation and resolving logistical knots, “it was finally decided that a three-member team — Dr Abhay Nene, Dr Harshal Bamb from TSF, and neuro technician Jasawala Parichar — will do the surgery at the Mutoyi Government Hospital near Bujumbura.” While the Indian doctors paid for their airfare, the hospital and Martine shared the cost of their lodging, medical equipment and consumables. The surgical tools and consumables cost €6,000.

During their one-day stay in Burundi, the doctors examined eight patients referred by the Mutoyi Hospital. They also trained two local doctors to handle similar cases in future. Seeing her daughter Maïssa, studying in senior KG, bounce back with joy and a ready smile on her lips,



Karabona Martine with her daughters, Rushoza Laelynn Maïssa (left) and her younger sister Rushoza Kaïna Marley. Dr Harshal Bamb is on the right.

Martine says, “I am forever grateful to Rotary. I don’t even know how to express my heartfelt thanks to two Rotary clubs in Belgium and India.”

Pleased with the success of the medical mission, Vriendt is “grateful to Indian surgeons who

took efforts to come to Burundi and help Maïssa.” RC Mumbai SOBO president Saurav Purkayastha says that it was a “nice collaborative effort between Rotary clubs from two continents willing to help a little, cute girl living in one of the poorest countries of the world.”

The Mumbai club is right now doing a GG project (₹50 lakh) of performing free spine surgeries in the tribal areas of Maharashtra with the support of around 12 TSF surgeons. “We have done 44 surgeries in tribal hamlets since April 2023,” smiles Els.■

E-tablets for 100 school students

Team Rotary News



RC Panchsheel Mysore president Kiran Robert (fourth from R) and club members with students after distributing e-tabs to them.

With an aim to enhance the digital learning skills of students, e-tablets worth ₹20 lakh were distributed by RC Panchsheel Mysore, RID 3181, to 100 beneficiaries from 50 government schools in Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka. The project was done with the support of RC Chamarajanagar, Infosys and Prof Rangaraju, chairman, INTACH-Mysuru chapter.

Rotary Club of Panchsheel Mysore will also provide an intensive crash course to 43 tribal students who had dropped out of school to prepare them for the Class 10 exams. After inspecting a school building of heritage value, INTACH members have decided to renovate it so that it offers a conducive learning ambience for students.

A computer lab will be set up at the Chamarajanagar Prison by Infosys to enhance the knowledge skills of the convicts which will help them in their rehabilitation. The tablet handover event was attended by 500 people including four MLAs — C Puttarangashetty (Chamarajanagar), AR Krishnamurthy (Kollegal), HM Ganesh Prasad (Gundlupet) and A Manjunath (Magadi).■

Tackling anxiety and depression

Bharat & Shalan Savur

The world is going mad... as in crazy. Red hot rage replaces business disputes. And blows apart international borders. Men will be boys. This is not a return to the innocence of childhood. But the rebirth of wild childishness. The bully boy that deserves to be expelled. The boor who should be shown the door takes over the class, the school. And given time, maybe consumes the world itself.

The fight-or-flight gene stemmed from early man's existence in natural surroundings. Much after their prehistoric roots to the present day, it still exists. Even though modern man hunts no longer. Nor is he the natural prey of the four-footed predator. Modern civilisation could have removed this response. And contemporary culture erased this barbaric genetic carryover from man's mental make-up.

Instead, two popular mass adaptations of this genre — sports and movies — have enshrined it. The former is now 'a war without weapons'. And the latter glorifies and glamourises its clamour. Through violent action-oriented and war-worshipping movies.

Stress is a normal part of our lives. It kicks in as a natural physical and mental response to emergencies. But if it is prolonged or ignored for a long length of time, stress can lead to anxiety or depression — SAD (Stress, Anxiety, Depression).

AD: Anxiety and Depression

To save column space and your time, we have clubbed the duo that could follow untreated stress. Anxiety: Like stress, a little anxiety too is a natural

and normal human phenomenon. It is the excesses that should bother you. There is an early warning system that you can employ to detect its presence. Look out for: ongoing prolonged periods of worry, fear and impending doom that sap you at work and zap you at sleep. Failure to keep relationships too can determine one is under its sway. Its physical form could be a pounding/racing heart, excessive sweating, dizziness and vertigo, insomnia or panic attacks. Emotional problems evoked by anxiety include fear of losing control, feelings of dread and concentration problems.

Depression could be a byproduct or extension of prolonged untreated stress. It reveals its bad, sad state by a person totally losing interest or pleasure in

activities that he earlier enjoyed. Lethargy, change in sleep patterns, loss of sex drive, alcohol or drug dependence are also areas of depression concern. Untreated depression is the single largest factor in suicide. Hence, it is doubly important to note that anxiety and depression are conditions, not weaknesses. And medical and effective treatments are at hand.

Song sung blue, everybody knows one

The word 'stress' is often used to describe both the physical and emotional or mental state. All stress, including anxiety, is not negative. They can invite and induce a better response and better attitude/application from us. 'Butterflies in the stomach' start and aid us — from



examination class, scientific experiments and sports, to every field of life.

Quite often, good stress sifts wheat from the chaff, separates the good from the ordinary and elevates the truly great from the rest. Nobel Prize winners, Academy Awards' winners, gold medal winners in track and field events are a few of its living examples.

Yet, living in the shadow of stress or in denial of the existence of bad stress is dangerous. Then, quite a few of those under the stress siege, for a prolonged period, can crack. Such stress can lead to cardiovascular health issues. An Australian study says that on an average, one in eight men encounter depression and one in five experience anxiety at some stage of their lives. India, with its far greater population and far fewer medical-social stress shelters, should be far more vulnerable. Indeed, the odds are high that you or someone close to you could be a victim of stress. For stress over a prolonged period can lead quite a few to anxiety or depression.

Consult a psychologist or psychiatrist in either case. Medical intervention in fending off stress has no social stigma.

Action station

Get your family doctor into it. He/she can put a handle on your problem, and tell you whether you are in a stage/state of anxiety or depression. And if need be, refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist for further treatment. In addition, reassess your lifestyle. Seek supportive people (family and/or friends) that you trust. Keeping it a hidden secret can draw you deeper into the vortex.

Blow away the blues: My close friend Bobby is a good case study. He has been through anxiety hell. And back, thanks to my sister, Deepika, a GP and psychiatrist. She treated him with the relevant medication and put him on the right (sound) track. Knowing his passion for singing, she cajoled him to sing. 'Song sung blue, everybody knows one,' crooned Bobby with Neil Diamond as back-up. Bobby, the karaoke kid, then sang and recorded 45 songs echoing the Beatles, Elvis and Cliff Richards. We have these on our pen drive and sing along from time to time. Yes, music soothes the savaged-ravaged breast. As the Beatles put it, 'Hey, Jude, don't make it bad/ Take a sad song and make it better.'

Rest assured

Fortunately, this SAD syndrome has as many solutions as it has problems. First of all, consult your doctor. Jointly work out an action plan. Then, more important, walk the talk. You have many options. Pick/develop those that you are passionate about. The highway back to good health is fundamental. Here, first change your 'mental' to mentality if required. Now, there are many paths you could pursue to return to normalcy. Here are a few:

Incorporate an exercise routine, eat a nutritious diet. Give good sleep

Untreated depression is the single largest factor in suicide. Anxiety and depression are conditions, not weaknesses.

the due it deserves and requires — downtime is your 'up time'.

Walk in nature and Mother Nature walks with you.

Maintain a diary. Writing is a good release and relief point.

Meditate. It grants you a good mental space and a better perspective, perception of things.

Encourage yourself to laugh. Watching TV sitcoms (*Friends*, *The Kapil Sharma Show*, *How I met your mother...*) and listening to stand-up comedians (Jerry Seinfeld et al) set a good mood. Besides, laughter is still the best medicine.

On the other hand, if you know someone going through anxiety or depression, give him your shoulder to lean on. Recommend him to visit a doctor or a healthcare centre. Accompany him on follow-up visits too. Also, encourage mutual friends and families to visit him.

Finally, life has its ups and downs. No one and nothing is foolproof. Work on your resistance and improve your resilience. Remember: The force is not just with you. The force is you.

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

District Wise TRF Contribution as on October 2023

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution
India					
2981	17,516	501	1,000	0	19,017
2982	19,204	338	7,085	4,488	31,116
3000	44,369	290	0	1,918	46,577
3011	77,647	17,527	26,089	135,273	256,537
3012	8,287	50	0	8,346	16,683
3020	71,926	7,395	20,211	20,500	120,032
3030	27,906	25,108	275	138,163	191,451
3040	1,065	108	0	25	1,198
3053	8,495	0	0	12,439	20,934
3055	33,944	539	30	0	34,513
3056	13,651	100	0	0	13,751
3060	46,876	9,415	100	99,821	156,212
3070	1,840	0	0	0	1,840
3080	21,364	8,829	0	2,600	32,794
3090	30,090	713	0	5,121	35,923
3100	44,247	1,205	0	6,203	51,655
3110	998	0	0	37,045	38,043
3120	7,461	58	0	0	7,519
3131	183,589	4,606	12,098	37,617	237,909
3132	68,507	2,485	10,000	13,718	94,711
3141	170,195	5,271	59,012	345,769	580,246
3142	220,924	4,650	6,500	0	232,073
3150	25,630	30,454	160,411	73,365	289,860
3160	7,219	51	0	0	7,269
3170	33,397	23,370	2,500	59,293	118,560
3181	28,086	1,045	0	50	29,181
3182	5,590	1,337	0	0	6,927
3191	24,278	4,006	60,976	73,464	162,724
3192	22,191	1,610	0	2,100	25,901
3201	54,104	40,483	44,436	909,090	1,048,112
3203	9,606	10,804	1,220	8,725	30,355
3204	7,665	2,662	0	2,962	13,289
3211	21,801	4,124	27,325	41,173	94,424
3212	30,275	7,440	0	14,210	51,925
3231	1,447	796	0	0	2,243
3232	22,161	10,800	8,300	740,946	782,207
3240	34,365	7,683	0	5,342	47,390
3250	11,520	1,673	26	9,247	22,467
3261	9,074	239	0	0	9,312
3262	7,218	2,868	0	2,575	12,662
3291	48,739	1,252	29,205	1,050	80,247
3220 Sri Lanka	24,029	2,060	0	673	26,762
3271 Pakistan	11,535	21,500	0	9,245	42,280
3272 Pakistan	1,342	385	0	25	1,752
3281 Bangladesh	8,812	1,978	2,000	102,976	115,766
3282 Bangladesh	20,411	1,438	0	25	21,875
3292 Nepal	38,972	7,527	0	39,820	86,319

Annual Fund (AF) includes SHARE, AoF and World Fund.

PolioPlus excludes Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. **Source:** RISAO

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our clubs

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Cybercrime – a raging menace

Jaishree



Rizwan Shaikh

As our world becomes increasingly interconnected and digitally dominated, cybersecurity and cybercrime take centre stage with various threats emerging from the dark web. Phishing attacks, ransomware infiltrations, personal data theft and financial scams pose unique threats to individuals and organisations alike, leaving a trail of disrupted operations and financial repercussions in their wake.

According to an editorial in *India Today*, the RBI estimates debit and credit card frauds at ₹119 crore, ₹155 crore and ₹276 crore during the past three fiscal years. The magazine also reports Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat, AP, UP, Bihar, Assam, West Bengal and Jharkhand as the top ten cybercrime hotspots in India. Around 700,000 complaints were registered in April 2023 for online frauds on 1930, the helpline run by the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal; UP, tops the list with 1,20,938 complaints.

Rotary Club of Ahmedabad Greater, RID 3055, along with

Interactors, recently organised an online programme where Rizwan Shaikh, an ethical hacker and a cyber law consultant, shed light on cyber threats and measures to safeguard our virtual space.

“Your gullibility and greed are the primary capital for cyber criminals. Never click on any unknown link or website. They can rob you of your hard-earned money and take control of your digital space,” said Shaikh. He cited the IP (Internet Protocol) address as the key to a hacker to get all digital information about his target. It is the unique identity assigned to every user using a computer network. A link is sent as a bait to the target to gain access to the IP address, and the rest is a cakewalk for the hacker.

“Clicking on a wrong link may also result in inserting malicious software (malware) and viruses into your mobile phones or computer,” he said. Warning about the Trojan malware, he said that it is sent through an innocuous-looking link which when clicked gets lodged on to your phone/computer. “Trojan can instal a remote access/screensharing app such as Anydesk, get access to the victim’s calls, track locations, contacts, messages, record conversations, and even switch on the video camera. Ransomware locks and encrypts the system and the hacker demands money in the form of cryptocurrency or cyber money. Some links lure the target into making a token payment online so as to lift the PIN or password, or “urge you to scan a QR code that debits money away from your account.”

He gave a list of dos and don’ts to stay safe online. Always visit the official website of bank/merchant for correct customer care number; keep your contact details updated with the bank to get transaction alerts; secure your debit/credit cards and set daily limit for transactions; use strong passwords and report any unauthorised transaction to your bank to prevent further loss.

Do not enter your UPI PIN or scan QR code to receive payments; or save your banking username/password in the web browser or your device; click any link shared in SMS/emails threatening to block your bank account; download third-party apps that promise to resolve your complaints, or share your ID/password/OTP/CVV with anyone claiming to be a bank representative, he explained. “A little common sense and logic can go a long way in saving you from heavy losses and stress.”

Talking about careers and opportunities in cyber security, Shaikh provided insight into ethical hacking. “It is hacking into a system or app, not to damage, but to check its vulnerability, test for security breaches, patch loopholes and make it hack-proof. Most countries, unlike India, have ethical hacking included in their cyber law book,” he said.

Other opportunities include VAPT (Vulnerable Assisted and Protective Testing) applied in cyber audit. VAPT experts are scarce in India and it is a niche field, he said. He urged youngsters to explore careers in network and web security, and cyber law guidelines. ■



Wordsworld

A cage with a view



Sandhya Rao

This beautifully observed and tenderly written book about life inside a prison teaches us a great deal.

A must-read.

I would read anything written by Sudha Bharadwaj because of the extraordinary woman she is and the extraordinary life she has lived,' Arundhati Roy, fearless commentator on our lives and times, is quoted as saying on the back cover of *From Phansi Yard: My Year with the Women of Yerawada*. It's a reminder of the fact that India is a nation of extraordinary women, vast numbers of whom manifest their extraordinariness simply by being. It's a reminder that, as a people, we lay claim to a hoary civilisation that is believed to accord great respect to woman and womanhood. Sudha Bharadwaj's vignettes of

about 70 women she met during her incarceration in Yerawada Jail, Pune, from November 2018 to February 2020, reveal that they showed her 'how to survive injustice, how to remain hopeful... how to continue to live, love, fight and laugh, even behind bars.'

But first, who is Sudha Bharadwaj? To quote from the book: she is '...a respected trade unionist and human rights lawyer who has worked for over three decades for the rights of the poor in Chhattisgarh. Born in Boston to parents who were academics, she gave up her American passport to become an Indian citizen. After a five-year Master of Science degree in Mathematics from IIT Kanpur, she went on to work in Chhattisgarh as a trade unionist. At 39, Sudha also qualified as a lawyer. In 2018, she was arrested, as were several scholars, lawyers and activists, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) on the charge of inciting violence in the Bhima Koregaon village in Maharashtra.' She was working as a visiting professor at the National Law University in Delhi when she was put under house arrest. She spent over three years in prison, at Yerawada and then Byculla Jail, Mumbai. She was released on bail in December 2021.

Sudha dedicates her book 'to all the unjustly incarcerated,' and her daughter 'who suffered my absence the most.' Truly, the unjustly incarcerated and their children

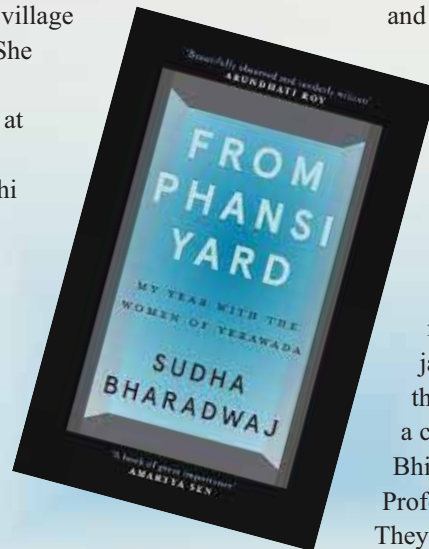
are the biggest sufferers. The introduction, done like an interview, giving readers a glimpse into the author's background, both personal and professional, is an eye-opener. For instance, to the question, 'Can you be called a dissident?', Sudha responds: 'If that means do I dare speak against corporates, against governments, against powerful people when they are tyrannical?... Yes. But I also believe that I am a deeply Constitution-abiding person. I have striven for and will continue to strive for justice, liberty, equality and fraternity for every citizen around me. Is that dissidence?'

She tells us how the book came to be written: 'Some prisoners pray, some weep, some just put their heads down and work themselves weary. Some fight defiantly every inch of the way, some are inveterate grumblers, some spew gossip. Some read the newspaper from cover to cover, some shower love on children, some laugh at themselves and at others. I watched through the bars,

and I wrote.' She bought

notebooks from the jail canteen and wrote at night in a single cell, ten paces by six paces small, in the *phansi* yard (death row) of the women's jail, Yerawada. In the adjoining cell is a co-accused in the Bhima-Koregaon case, Professor Shoma Sen. They are never told why they were in the high-security death row unit;

presumably because they were held under the draconian UAPA. On her other side are two sisters, held for the last 24 years. She has 'a cage with



a view' thanks to bars on one side overlooking the yard.

From one winter to the next, with summer and monsoon in between, Sudha watched and listened as bits and pieces of inmates' stories unravelled, leading her to wonder about life, justice, society, systems and much more. The first sketch is of a Maratha girl she meets in the Faraskhana lock-up in Pune where the author is first taken. The girl seems like any modern, middle class, working girl as she speaks animatedly about how she eloped with and married her Tamil boyfriend. She is in for supposedly abetting a rape.

It appears that many of the imprisoned women come from bad marriages. This Dalit nurse, for instance, is daughter of an Army man. After the death of her abusive and alcoholic husband, she moved in, along with her two small children, with her *muhbola* brother and his wife. There she endured the taunts of the wife, even though she contributed to the family's kitty. She worked as a day nurse at a private home and was pressured to work nights too. Eventually she joined a hospital. However, her previous employers accused her of stealing jewellery and here she was, in jail. She was happy her daughter wanted to join the police force. Yet, observes the author, 'Considering how much caste discrimination there is within the police, I don't know whether to feel happy or disappointed for her.'



Sudha Bharadwaj

Sudha acquaints readers with various aspects of prison life with a keen, yet objective eye. We meet law enforcers, we see prisoners given responsible duties, we see how the canteen works, how food is distributed, how supportive families send monthly stipends to the imprisoned while those with no support languish or do odd jobs for fellow inmates or rely on generosity. Some women have husbands or partners in the neighbouring

men's jail which, relatively speaking, is better off in terms of facilities, although Yerawada jail overall is clean and relatively well organised. However, there is groupism and cronyism, much as in the world outside, loneliness and jealousy, as well as desperation.

The author writes about a woman who doesn't know why she is there but she sometimes breaks tunelessly into Hindi film songs;

Some prisoners pray, some
weep, some just put their
heads down and work
themselves weary. Some fight
defiantly every inch of the way,
some are inveterate grumblers,
some spew gossip. I watched
through the bars, and I wrote.

Sudha Bharadwaj
on how she came
to write the book.

she appears to have Parkinson's, she tends to eat a lot, and she falls asleep anywhere. Sometimes she weeps to go home. Yet, says the author, 'in their own strange way, everyone cares for her. They humour her, they crack jokes, give her extra food.' And there are others clearly from upper class backgrounds. One of them, doing time for embezzlement, tells the author, 'I have learnt and understood so much about life after coming to jail, which I never could have otherwise.' Another woman, from a middle class background, takes to teaching the children who are there with their mothers, and yoga to the women. Children are allowed to live with their mothers up to a certain age, after which they are sent off to *sansthas*. Generally beloved, their departure is a difficult time for their own and 'other' mothers. They are usually the objects of everyone's affection. Sudha observes that legal services to the women inside is inadequate, and is an area that needs reform, especially in the case of convicted prisoners, who 'do not even seem to know the status of their appeals in the high court or Supreme Court'.

Faith plays a big role in prison life. Regardless of individual affiliation, most of the women, the author finds, respect each other's religion: everyone keeps *roza* and everyone celebrates Diwali. On Women's Day, there are many talents on display. Now, with bail terms confining her to Mumbai, Sudha says she thinks often of her fellow prisoners. Sometimes she gets a phone call from an unknown number: 'Hey Auntie, remember me?' and that brightens up her day.

The columnist is a children's writer and senior journalist

RC Nagapattinam — RID 2981



Steel cots, mattresses and benches worth ₹65,000 were donated to the newly-built primary health centre at Thittachery. Town panchayat officials took part.

RC Gurgaon — RID 3011



A food distribution (₹10 a plate) was held in memory of Rtn Meenakshi Khullar's father under Project Rotary Sanatan Rasoi at the Geeta Bhawan.

RC Mettur Dam City — RID 2982



DG S Raghavan inaugurated a digital library worth ₹2 lakh and a smart classroom at the Pothu Jana Seva Sangam Primary School in Mettur.

RC Bhopal Hills — RID 3040



A relocated vocational centre with revamped facilities for training in computer and tailoring was inaugurated by DG Ritu Grover and Bhopal mayor Malti Rai.

RC Pudukkottai City — RID 3000



Diwali was celebrated with underprivileged students of government schools and Rotarians advised the children to burst crackers with safety precautions.

RC Alwar — RID 3053



Motivational speaker Saroj Gupta gave a talk at the Learning Career Seminar at the Government Girls H S School on health, hygiene, eating habits and behaviour.

RC Cosmopolitan Ahmedabad — RID 3055



Over 1,960 students were screened at the three-day eye check-up camp at the Girdharnagar High School, Shahibaug, and spectacles given to 60 of them.

RI District 3080



Shelter kits were distributed to flood victims at Dharampur, in Solan district of Himachal. The kit contains 65 items of daily use, apart from materials for erecting the shelter.

RC Shri Madhopur Sunrise — RID 3056



At the weekly homeopathy camp at the Rotary Bhawan, 95 patients were examined by Dr SI Choudhary. Till now over 46,000 people had benefited.

RC Dhuri — RID 3090



Around 200 girls avail the free bus service to and from University College Benra. The project is sponsored and will be maintained by club president Makhan Lal Garg.

RC Surat East — RID 3060



A 2nd Parkinson's Therapy Centre was set up at the Unity Hospital to offer holistic care with the support of the Bhagwan Keertan Prakash Parkinson's Society.

RC Moradabad — RID 3100



Additional district judge Madhavi Singh gave a talk on child rights and sexual crimes at a POC SO Act workshop at the Krishna Bal Vidya Mandir Inter College.

RC Nainital — RID 3110



National coach Jyoti Durgapal held self-defence classes for students at the Mohan Lal Sah Balika Vidya Mandir, Nainital.

RC Panaji — RID 3170



Around 100 school students with placards and banners took part in the mental health awareness rally flagged off from Panjim Church by DGP Jaspal Singh.

RC Khopoli — RID 3131



A toilet block was built at an anganwadi primary school in Sarsan village under a CSR grant from Fibre Foils.

RC Thirthahalli — RID 3182



Farmers were honoured by the club during a paddy cultivation in the presence of past AG KPS Swamy and other members.

RC Chakur — D 3132



Video clips on polio vaccination were shown in schools during a rally taken on World Polio Day. A campaign was launched on social media.

RC Bangalore Vijayanagar — RID 3191



A drinking water booth at the KR Market bus stand was a symbol of communal harmony as the space was given by Jamia Masjid, funded by a Christian and executed by a Hindu.

RC Bhavani Komarapalayam — RID 3203



Healthy food and fruits are being given to pregnant women under *Project Thaimai* every week, thus lifting the public image of the club.

RC Karala Valley Jalpaiguri — RID 3240



Wheelchairs (₹30,000) were donated to 15 beneficiaries in partnership with the Rotary India Humanity Foundation and The Cao Zhong Zhi Foundation, Taipei.

RC Greater Haripad — RID 3211



A vehicle is being hired by the club as part of its PolioPlus campaign that creates awareness among the residents on the End Polio initiatives of Rotary.

RC Bokaro Steel City — RID 3250



A toilet block for girls was inaugurated at the Adarsh High School, Sonatand. The school principal Lalita thanked the club.

RC Mahindra Industrial City — RID 3231



DG P Bharanidharan inaugurated a new classroom block at the Panchayat Union Primary School, Kattankulathur, thanks to sponsor Ananthavalli Hariharan.

RC Belur — RID 3291



Over 60 students and teachers at the Akshar School, Kolkata, were trained on life-saving skills like CPR on World Restart a Heart Day (Oct 16).

Compiled by V Muthukumaran



**TCA Srinivasa
Raghavan**

Why cricket fascinates me



October and November were very fraught months for me. The cricket World Cup started on Oct 5 and ended on Nov 19, 2023. That's 45 days. What I found trying was that I didn't meet a single male person who wasn't a total expert. Total means total. He knew it all. It seemed as if the entire male population of India comprised either retired players or current top class players. None hesitated even for a moment before pronouncing judgement.

But for this periodic irritation caused by fans, I was in a state of deep contentment. On the days there was just one game, the match took up around eight hours a day. On the days there were two matches it took up 12. I tell you, it was blissful. There's nothing more that I enjoy than this game. No other sport comes anywhere near it — and for good reason. It's what's called non-linearity in mathematics.

Non-linearity means you can't predict the final outcome from the starting conditions. The best-known illustrative example of this is that a butterfly flapping its wings in Peru can cause an earthquake in Japan. Cricket is like that. There are a dozen things that happen between the time the bowler lets go of the ball and the batsman plays it. There's the way he grips the ball, the speed, swing or spin he generates, where it lands, how much it turns, how the batsman responds, where the ball touches

the bat, the position of the batsman's feet and head... one can go on listing the number of things that result in runs being scored, or not, or the batsman getting out by being bowled, caught, stumped, run out or trapped leg before wicket. Then there's catching — taken or dropped. And the number of runs that are possible off each ball — 6, 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0. The permutations are endless.

So you see where the beauty of the game lies. So many different things can influence the outcome of each ball that's bowled. No other game has this huge variety of possibilities and I haven't even mentioned the state of the pitch, the outfield, rain, dew, wind and, of course, the crowd. All these things also have a bearing on what happens.

This is not all. There's the field placing. People who have not played the game at a reasonably high level don't realise how this can make a difference.

There are a dozen things that happen between the time the bowler lets go of the ball and the batsman plays it. That makes cricket the ultimate example of non-linearity.

I mean, while watching a game have you ever wondered how so many shots go straight to a fielder? It's because the man (or woman) has been placed there deliberately. That is why the skill of the batsman in picking the gaps becomes such an indicator of skills.

Another highly underrated skill is how well a batsman can run those 22 yards that constitutes the pitch. It looks simple, but you should try it, not just alone but with a partner running in the opposite direction. This skill can be crucial in crunch moments. A split second can make the difference, especially when you include the time taken to turn around for another run.

Even the balance of the ball and the height of the seam can make a difference. Before a match starts, the fielding side is given a box of 12 balls from which to choose and usually the most senior and experienced player chooses the ball. The right choice can make all the difference to accuracy and what the bowler would like the ball to do.

Finally in the old days even the umpires could be critical to the outcome. There was no technology to show he was wrong and quite often the umpires of the home team had a bias in favour of their country. That's why neutral umpires were brought in.

That's what makes cricket the ultimate example of non-linearity. You can't predict the outcome at all. And I love it. ■

Rotary



A Project by
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CREATE HOPE
in the WORLD



PROJECT PUNCH



Spoken English Programme



A 3-Day Spoken English Programme for Student Teachers

As on
November, 2023
No. of Occurrences
63
No. of Beneficiaries
7037

What is Project Punch?

Project Punch is a 3-day Spoken English training programme by Rotary Club of Virudhunagar for student teachers (B.Ed. students) to improve their Communicative English and Public Speaking skills.

The programme has been designed in such a way that the participants get the fundamentals to start their journey of communication skills development and that the top performers receive special attention and booster sessions for further improvements.



Contact:
Project Chairman
Rtn.A. Shyamraj
97502 07464

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