

Rotary News

INDIA

www.rotarynewsonline.org



Assembly Moments



Above: Amita Kotbagi, Vinita Venkatesh and Shipra Roychowdhury with women participants at the International Assembly, Orlando, US.



(From L) RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, Amita, Vinita and RI Director AS Venkatesh.



Heather, spouse of RIPE Gordon McNally, with the Indian delegation. RIDE T N Subramanian and Vidhya, TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya and Vinita Venkatesh are also present.

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Excellent coverage of Visakha Vista

The Jan cover photo, depicting a dance performance at the Visakha Vista zone institute, is excellent. RI president Jennifer Jones' views on member retention are interesting. Delighted to read about *A value added Rotary institute* by RID Mahesh Kotbagi. RID AS Venkatesh explains well the power of one and urges us to unleash it in the new year. *Mega projects dazzle Vizag delegates* is really worth reading and photos are self-explanatory. Articles like *Gavaskar's third innings*, *India's transition from a receiving to giving nation* and *Pune Rotarians create eco-friendly villages*, and the life story of Shamshad Begum are really good. All photos are colourful as usual.

Philip Mulappone M T
RC Trivandrum Suburban — D 3211

The Jan issue cover page with a photograph of Ganeshji and the dancers is fascinating. I bowed before it before opening the pages of the beautiful magazine and was delighted to go through the well-documented Editorial.



Rajendra Singh's advice to save every drop of water is worth following by Rotarians. He rightly says, "Once your earth has no water, then RBI's currency will have no value"; and that our agriculture consumes huge quantity of water. To cope with this alarming situation water harvesting and groundwater recharging are the only answers. We waste a lot of water for washing cars, watering the lawns, etc which should be avoided. Use the shower instead of bucket while bathing; this saves at least five litres of water per person.

Raj Kumar Kapoor, RC Roopnagar — D 3080

The highlights of the institute and its coverage with action photographs speak volumes. While not all Rotarians can attend the institute, *Rotary News* plays a significant role in bringing it to us. It is no exaggeration to say that a complete reading of the coverage in the magazine makes us feel as though we attended the event.

R Srinivasan, RC Bengaluru J P Nagar — D 3190

The Dec issue was wonderful. The activities of RID 3110 are impressive. The picture of the Badawi Linga from the temple in Hampi, Karnataka, made me bow down my head with reverence. Articles on the solar dryers, Interactors, Wordsworld, environmental responsibility, and the health column were impressive. I love movies and music and S R Madhu's article *Mukesh: The Emperor of Pathos* took me back to the beautiful era of golden music.

Santosh Tiwari
RC Jalna Rainbow — D 3132

In the Dec issue, RI President Jennifer Jones has turned the spotlight on malaria, the deadly scourge that is rampant in Zambia. The Editor's note has detailed the challenges posed by climate

change and rightly points out the work being done by Rotary clubs to arrest environmental decay like creating Miyawaki forests and other eco-friendly projects. I wish *Rotary News* a great year ahead.

S Muniandi
RC Dindigul Fort — D 3000

I was happy to read about golf fellowship among Rotarians. An avid golfer. I'd like to become a member of the group and seek contact details.

Capt Satish Yadav
RC Bhopal Hills — D 3261
PDG Parag Sheth can be contacted
at parag@ambicasalt.com

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.

Messages on your club/district projects, information and links on zoom meetings/webinar should be sent only by e-mail to the Editor at rushbhagat@gmail.com or rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com.

WHATSAPP MESSAGES WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.

Click on **Rotary News Plus** on our website www.rotarynewsonline.org to read about more Rotary projects.

On the cover: Children, along with Ravi Kajale, school principal, at the newly created playground by RC Bombay Worli, RID 3141, in a village school.

District Wise TRF Contributions as on December 2022

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution
India					
2981	17,312	512	0	1,125	18,949
2982	8,971	1,694	4,001	33,116	47,782
3000	21,110	2,772	0	0	23,882
3011	33,370	8,063	25,127	209,234	275,794
3012	11,867	752	65,235	113,918	191,772
3020	105,351	7,902	40,000	0	153,253
3030	33,399	286	0	1,275	34,961
3040	17,886	1,992	0	21,925	41,803
3053	40,761	136	0	0	40,897
3054	8,485	507	0	31,500	40,492
3060	62,737	425	0	64,635	127,797
3070	51,692	2,570	35,966	9,209	99,438
3080	15,640	2,482	0	38,163	56,285
3090	7,640	0	4,951	0	12,592
3100	49,032	400	25,012	0	74,445
3110	14,151	454	24,304	624,953	663,862
3120	23,460	411	0	0	23,871
3131	263,542	7,540	35,303	215,555	521,940
3132	16,824	2,391	50,000	1,000	70,215
3141	642,401	31,200	102,003	1,250,561	2,026,165
3142	157,281	3,691	24,866	77,045	262,883
3150	69,040	27,172	42,000	417	138,629
3160	2,996	2,363	0	3,675	9,034
3170	70,150	30,595	15,506	380	116,631
3181	60,073	590	25	912	61,601
3182	32,446	2,789	100	0	35,335
3190	38,214	4,859	0	22,236	65,309
3201	85,341	22,692	12,195	385,088	505,316
3203	4,057	12,783	1,000	26,479	44,318
3204	5,103	565	0	152	5,820
3211	65,818	5,000	10,000	1,049	81,867
3212	156,402	35,615	305	42,146	234,467
3231	58,795	22,797	32,278	1,569	115,439
3232	49,072	55,863	19,358	157,596	281,888
3240	72,049	14,729	1,000	3,622	91,399
3250	11,509	200	0	12,805	24,514
3261	11,218	917	0	5,277	17,412
3262	41,193	463	700	32,771	75,127
3291	49,125	1,162	40,533	8,190	99,010
India Total	2,485,511	317,336	611,769	3,397,577	6,812,194
3220 Sri Lanka	43,562	8,333	3,000	226	55,122
3271 Pakistan	25	22,125	0	250	22,400
3272 Pakistan	455	87	0	5,000	5,542
3281 Bangladesh	50,551	1,446	21,125	91,745	164,867
3282 Bangladesh	45,440	6,701	2,000	10,320	64,462
3292 Nepal	231,592	20,236	49,167	28,830	329,824
South Asia Total	2,857,137	376,264	687,060	3,533,948	7,454,410

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

Source: RI South Asia Office



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Recently, I spent time in the Nakivale refugee settlement in Uganda.

As the “settlement” in its name suggests, the people living there are free to move around and integrate as best they can — one thing that makes the place unique.

I had a chance to play soccer with boys and girls from about a dozen nations and talk with women who had fled areas of conflict. It was a tapestry of human experience shared through both laughter and tears.

As I walked across a school campus at the settlement with a teacher, she shared with me the dire statistics on girls’ education. Most don’t get through grade school. Many are sold into child marriage to pay for food for their families. As I looked around at these young girls, I was gutted.

Our work with empowering girls and women is much more than creating equity — sometimes, it’s about health or education. Other times it’s about providing safety. Regardless of the path, it’s always about basic human rights.

We can do more to empower girls and women, and we can expand how we share the progress Rotary members and our partners have made toward this goal.

There is no shortage of inspiring examples of our work, from interest-free

Empowering girls is about more than creating equity



Esther Ruth Mbabazi

RI President Jennifer Jones and Zimbabwean actor Sibongile Mlambo watch a soccer match in Nakivale settlement.

microcredit loans for women in Nigeria, to projects in India that provide girls menstrual hygiene products. Hundreds of projects are taking place across all Rotary areas of focus and are making a meaningful and often lifesaving difference.

Together, we can address the needs and inequities that girls throughout the world face daily. But we must also monitor the impact of these projects and create awareness of Rotary resources and subject matter experts, including Rotary Action Groups, The Rotary Foundation Cadre

of Technical Advisers, Rotary Peace Fellows, and others.

It is especially important that we tell the stories of our initiatives that have a positive impact on the lives of women and girls. This last point is near and dear to my heart. This means sharing our stories on social media, through local news outlets, in this magazine, and wherever we can inspire others.

As you do so, it’s important to provide information that helps our Rotary family connect with others who are implementing activities in their regions, as well as across

the world. Let’s share our successes and learn from one another — then proudly tell our stories to a larger audience.

These are exciting times in Rotary, and the world is taking notice. As we work to empower women and girls to step into their full potential, we create new pathways for membership growth and greater collaboration with partners to create positive, lasting change. Thank you for your continued action in this vital effort.

Jennifer Jones
President
Rotary International



Joshimath, an environmental disaster waiting to happen

Within just one year of Rotary making environmental protection one of its areas of focus, we are facing a man-made disaster in Joshimath, located in the Himalayas. Fortunately, before the government gag order, we learnt from the National Remote Sensing Centre of ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) that this temple town in Chamoli district, and the base camp, from where we trek to the holy city of Badrinath, has sunk a whopping **5.4cm in just 12 days** from December 27. The massive soil sinking occurred due to “a rapid subsidence event that was triggered on January 2, 2022.” What has terrified the residents of Joshimath, whose houses have developed massive cracks, is evidence that this rapid shifting of soil had occurred only recently, and the sinking rate was much lower in the previous months. Between April and November last year, Joshimath sank by 9cm. Having trekked to Badrinath some 20 years ago, spending one night at the beautiful temple town of Joshimath, I will never ever forget the clear star-studded sky that we gazed into beyond midnight. In pollution-afflicted metros like Chennai, you can never ever dream to see a night sky like that. And, trust me, I’ve never seen a star-filled night sky like that ever again.

That is why it is even more heartbreaking to read about our “sinking” beautiful temple city, which is now on the verge of disaster and from where some 4,000 people had to be moved out to relief camps after the satellite survey. The Uttarakhand government has admitted that apart from hotels and business establishments, nearly 700 homes are in danger. Experts have blamed this man-made ecological disaster on unplanned and chaotic infrastructure projects in the region, especially a power plant that involved blasts and drilling in the mountains. Of course now committees

will be formed and compensation given, if any worthwhile compensation is even possible for uprooting anybody from their home and life.

How did this disaster happen? First of all, Joshimath is located not on solid rock but soft sand and stones, and that too in seismic zone 5, which is more prone to earthquakes. Add to this the scourge of unplanned development. It is heartbreaking to know that way back in 1976, the then Joshimath district collector, MC Mishra, had warned the government not to allow digging or blasting of land in that sensitive region. Add to this, lack of a proper drainage system and hectic and unplanned construction to accommodate the growing number of tourists/pilgrims in more restaurants and hotels, it was a disaster waiting to happen.

So what are the lessons to be learnt from this? Indiscriminate blasting, tunnelling and construction of roads in ecologically fragile Himalayan regions should stop immediately. This is also a warning to the government to stop rushing through with “development” projects in the Himalayas and other ecologically sensitive regions like the Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep etc, and stop the allotment of forest land to industrialists. As for the courts, how exactly does this tragedy make the Uttarakhand High Court decision, which in July 2021 described five petitioners who sought revocation of green clearances granted to some hydel projects in Chamoli district, where more than 200 people lost their lives in a flash flood in February 2021, as ‘puppets’? Atrociously, each was fined ₹10,000 for their “frivolous petition”. It’s time we stopped calling those who seek to protect our planet as “ecological terrorists,” and learn to have more respect for mother nature.

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

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Love the world around you

Valentine's Day (Feb 14) is celebrated every year as a day of adoration and friendship. It is a day for communicating your appreciation to your friends and family. The day is celebrated in honour of St Valentine who taught the world to spread love.

Love should be like breathing. It should be a quality in you — wherever you are, with whomsoever you are, or even if you are alone, love should continue to overflow from you. It is not about being in love with someone — it is just about being in love. Love is not dependent on an object, but is a radiation of your subjectivity, a radiation of your soul. And the vaster the radiation, the greater is your soul. The wider you spread the wings of your love, the bigger is the sky of your being.

Our joint family culture has taught us to love and share. Our service/*seva* makes us share everything and get happiness. Our organisation's motto, 'Doing good in the world' teaches us to love the world as one family — which we describe as: 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

The goal is to promote peace and restore love and hope to help the world heal from destructive conflicts. Rotarians should offer love and hope to those affected by various challenges exacerbated by the Covid pandemic or due to natural disaster or war. People have lost their dear ones, many have found their societal networks uprooted, and young people, especially, have had their educational and developmental paths interrupted. As a result, more people around the world are facing mental health issues. And yet, seeking assistance is often perceived as a sign of weakness.

Medicine and meditation come from the same root. Love needs the medicine of meditation to be purified. And the more purified it is, the more ecstatic it becomes.

Love yourself and love the beautiful world around you.

Mahesh Kotbagi
RI Director, 2021–23

Speak

Learning and Training

One of Rotary's strengths has been the emphasis on learning and development continuously at every level. All district governors for the next Rotary year underwent an intensive training at the International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, and I am sure they would have planned to transfer that to the clubs in their respective districts in the coming months.

Every district has separate training programmes for assistant governors, district officers, presidents and club office-bearers. Some delegates have asked me the purpose of such training events year after year. I look at these events as learning opportunities rather than training events. Rotary as an organisation has been evolving over the years, and adapting itself to the changing needs, without sacrificing our core values. Adaptability is one of the key components of our action plan. This was in ample evidence during the recent pandemic. Be it membership models, club types, grant models, use of technology... the list is long. All this has ensured that we continue to stay relevant and focused on growth.

This would also mean that all those Rotarians who have volunteered to take up various assignments at different levels need to keep themselves up to date on these developments so that they can discharge their responsibilities



better. If someone feels that these training programmes haven't been as impactful, the issue would more likely be in the implementation rather than intent.

I urge the leadership of our organisation at club and district levels to lay proper emphasis on these training events that will be conducted over the next few months ahead of and in preparation for the next Rotary year. They give us an opportunity to learn about recent developments, share best practices and be inspired. A proper training would also ensure that we speak in one voice. Our future is dependent on how well we make use of these training events to educate, inform and inspire Rotarians at different levels so that we create more engaged Rotarians.

Let us create better informed and more *learned* Rotarians!

AS Venkatesh
RI Director, 2021-23

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Magazine

A global force for peace

One of the fascinating things about Rotary is that we are many things at once. We are a service organisation based on action. We are also a professional and community networking group, not to mention a place to find friendship and fun.

And, when you stop to think about it, you and I are also part of a peace organisation.

I saw this in 2013 when I represented Rotary at an international symposium on advancing a peaceful democratic transition for Myanmar. Despite recent setbacks, the fact that Rotary was at the table demonstrates that the world sees us as peacebuilders who are not deterred by the most difficult issues.

How did we earn this reputation? Through literacy projects that help people expand their minds and viewpoints. And through water, sanitation and hygiene projects that create common ground for communities in conflict. The Rotary Action Group for Peace promotes hands-on service projects, and our annual international conventions unite thousands in a celebration of global harmony.

Perhaps the most visible face of this cause is the Rotary Peace Centers programme, now in its 21st year. Today, more than 1,600 Rotary Peace Fellows are advancing the cause of peace in more than 140 countries. On Feb 1 we open applications for the next generation of peace fellows. Encourage your local peacebuilders to learn about Rotary and apply for this unique fellowship.

And soon, we'll be recruiting fellows for a new peace centre in the Middle East and North Africa region as we begin working this year with a recently selected partner university. Made possible by a generous gift of \$15.5 million to The Rotary Foundation from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, the addition of this centre furthers Rotary's vision of peacemaking in action.

As we celebrate Rotary's 118th anniversary and Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Month, we can be proud of the many ways Rotary promotes peace. Without The Rotary Foundation, and your support of it, none of that would be possible.

You can directly support this work through the Foundation by visiting rotary.org/donate and selecting the peacebuilding and conflict prevention area of focus. I also encourage you to contribute to the Ian and Juliet Riseley Endowed Fund in The Rotary Foundation to support peace projects.

If Paul Harris could see us now, he would be amazed by the astonishing growth of the little club he founded in 1905 and the global force for good — and peace — that Rotary is today.

Ian HS Riseley
Foundation Trustee Chair



A family affair

Eva Remijan - Toba



Make the Rotary International Convention in Melbourne your next family trip. You'll find activities for all ages and interests during your stay in Australia for the May 27–31 convention. Highlights include museums, an aquarium, an informative ship voyage, and a private tour of the zoo. The Museum of Play and Art opened last year with exhibits designed for ages 1 to 7, including a real car to paint and a playground that looks like tall city buildings. (Tip: The museum has been requiring advance reservations.)

At Sea Life Melbourne Aquarium, watch fish and crocodile feedings and see sharks and rays up close. You can even suit up in snow gear and get onto the exhibit ice to mingle with penguins. And you can surround yourself (safely) with thousands of jellyfish in an immersive exhibit.

Check out Rotary-organised family-friendly tours too. For the Tall Ships Experience, guests as young as 12 ride on the One and All ship, the craft that Australian teenagers learn in the Youth Sailing Challenge through District 9510. You'll sail from a wharf near the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre along the Yarra River toward Port Phillip Bay. You'll learn about landmarks you float by, talk with the crew, and eat traditional Australian food.

Rotary members and their friends and family can also sign up for a behind-the-scenes experience at the Melbourne Zoo. On the two-hour guided walking tour, you'll visit koalas, kangaroos, and a wombat's underground burrow. To browse tours and book your spot, visit rotarymelbourne2023.org/tours.

Learn more and register at
convention.rotary.org

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Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 36,855

Rotaract clubs : 11,138

Interact clubs : 19,149

RCCs : 12,698

Rotary members : 1,182,063

Rotaract members: 173,840

Interact members : 440,427

As on January 17, 2023

Membership Summary

As on January 1, 2023

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	136	6,425	7.41	67	402	55	243
2982	80	3,642	6.92	50	1,123	115	76
3000	131	5,376	10.36	101	1,763	324	215
3011	123	4,682	28.53	82	2,759	140	37
3012	149	3,673	23.31	73	1,632	93	61
3020	83	4,869	7.25	37	1,028	168	350
3030	100	5,361	14.77	126	2,154	369	382
3040	111	2,550	14.67	59	792	94	190
3053	64	2,705	16.67	35	558	54	128
3054	166	6,873	19.60	115	7,259	204	574
3060	102	4,880	14.88	66	2,410	81	152
3070	127	3,360	16.49	47	551	64	59
3080	107	4,280	12.76	149	2,845	213	118
3090	104	2,449	5.63	46	636	118	164
3100	97	2,041	9.85	14	104	39	151
3110	142	3,833	12.44	15	112	33	106
3120	90	3,596	15.57	35	383	36	55
3131	142	5,662	24.39	134	2,920	260	144
3132	90	3,583	12.50	36	499	126	168
3141	109	6,093	26.83	147	6,131	207	151
3142	103	3,821	21.30	90	3,010	148	89
3150	109	4,273	12.22	149	2,022	158	124
3160	78	2,616	9.14	32	207	20	82
3170	145	6,594	15.86	100	1,785	269	177
3181	86	3,561	9.97	36	422	223	117
3182	88	3,625	10.23	44	165	132	106
3190	168	6,888	20.03	215	5,079	287	74
3201	165	6,447	9.91	128	1,992	113	90
3203	93	4,949	7.78	74	798	241	39
3204	71	2,463	7.51	23	201	33	13
3211	153	4,989	8.58	8	108	31	133
3212	126	4,660	11.12	84	3,490	303	153
3231	95	3,423	8.30	37	411	99	417
3232	171	6,864	19.84	133	7,328	245	101
3240	106	3,596	16.88	69	1,446	414	226
3250	103	3,899	21.11	68	1,082	85	188
3261	84	3,188	19.70	17	50	26	44
3262	125	3,814	14.55	74	782	659	277
3291	151	3,930	24.99	137	2,024	111	696
India Total	4,473	169,533		2,952	68,463	6,390	6,670
3220	71	2,123	16.34	98	5,083	147	76
3271	144	2,907	17.92	159	2,444	255	28
3272	162	2,764	12.92	70	943	22	47
3281	310	7,282	18.33	281	2,413	157	207
3282	179	3,465	10.36	202	1,700	49	47
3292	153	5,701	18.79	182	4,843	145	133
S Asia Total	5,492	193,775		3,944	85,889	7,165	7,208

Source: RI South Asia Office

RC Bombay Worli Rotarians transform a tribal village

Rasheeda Bhagat

The untiring efforts of the passionate and dedicated Rotarians from Rotary Club of Bombay Worli (RCB Worli) were recognised

and celebrated by the senior leadership of the entire district RI 3141, when their dream project of complete transformation of Zugrewadi village was inaugurated

in October. This village is over three hours' drive from Mumbai, and the club decided way back in 2016 to focus its energy on improving the living standards and schooling



Zugrewadi school principal Ravi Kajale with students at the new playground created by RC Bombay Worli.



facilities in this tribal hamlet with 1,650 inhabitants.

Today if this tribal village in Raigad district of Maharashtra has a spanking new school building with well-equipped library and laboratory, shining classrooms, separate toilet blocks with water for both girls and boys, and healthy children with minimal absenteeism due to health problems, the credit first goes to both its dedicated principal Ravi Kajale and members of this club.

Kajale is no ordinary government teacher; in his 24 years as a teacher, first in another village — Anandwadi — and for the last seven years in Zugrewadi, he has always been passionate about his vocation. In 2016, when he was posted to this tribal village near Mumbai, he was shocked to find the school building was falling apart and in dire need of repair, the children were pale

and sickly, diseases were rampant and due to that attendance was dismal.

There were so many problems, but the biggest one was the state of the building; it needed urgent repairs but due to the local village politics, the repair work/construction could not be completed. “So I used to ask my friends to get me help of any kind from any individual or organisation,” says Kajale. His educational background is interesting and gives us an insight into why he has been helping so many students complete higher education. He himself went to a Marathi medium school in Mumbai but when he was in Class 10, his father died. “I didn’t know what to do, I had no money to pay my fees, buy books or even clothes. But I was sure that I wanted to continue my education, go to

Club president Sachin Singhvi; DG Sandip Agarwalla; Kiran Patil, CEO Raigad ZP; Neha Belsare, deputy director SCERT, Pune; Digamber Vishe, former MLA, Murbad, and Punita Gurav, education officer, Raigad, with students after distributing school bags, books, stationery and footwear to them.

college and study in English medium. Towards this goal, I started working and saved money to pay my fees.”

Finally, through sheer hard work, he completed his MA and B Ed and was posted to a government school in Anandwadi, made rapid strides, was promoted as principal and even won the Maharashtra government’s award as an ‘ideal teacher’. Commendably, he used the award money of ₹1 lakh to pay the fees of some tribal children from his village to complete higher education.

It is with a lot of pride that he told *Rotary News*, “Thanks to my personal efforts, four students from our school (which is only till Class 8), went for higher education and became engineers.” Notably, the service of one of the engineers that he helped and mentored, Vijay Mahase, was hired by the Rotarians for the clutch of village improvement projects

they have done in this village over the last seven years.

One of the reasons for Kajale's success in improving the quality of learning the children imbibe is that soon after his transfer to this tribal village, he quickly learnt the local language. "When the children have some difficulty in understanding a subject or a concept, I explain it to them in their own language — Thakari or Katkari — and they find it much easier to understand the subject. Slowly but surely, their academic performance has improved over the years," he gushes.

Sachin Singhvi, club president, puts the cost of the work done in this village for the last several years, including constructing four new classrooms, toilet blocks, deepening village wells and creating check dams,

conducting health camps and taking care of the nutrition of the children and basic health-care needs of the villagers, at around ₹1.5 crore.

Wind back to 2016 and Kajale, who was getting help in small bits and pieces for his beloved school by approaching small and scattered NGOs, mentioned his mission to one of his classmates in Mumbai who was a financial adviser. That man directed his principal friend to a Rotarian from RCB Worli, Prabhakar Nagashe, who in turn took him to Kavita Godbole, who was then handling women and child development projects for their club. Later on, she went on to become the club president.

Below

Principal Kajale (extreme left), DG Agarwalla (seventh from R), RC Bombay Worli president Singhvi (seated, R), Nimesh Sanghrajaka (centre) and club members at the inauguration of the new building at the school in Zugrewadi village.

Kavita was struck by the sincerity and passion of the teacher seated before her, and expressed her desire to visit the village. Kajale was only too happy to organise a visit. Kavita took two more Rotarians from the club and they were convinced after the visit that this was a worthy service project their club should take on. She herself calls it her 'baby' and says: "I was convinced that this was a baby I wanted to adopt and it has remained my baby for the last seven years."

What she saw in Zugrewadi, a tribal hamlet of 110 households and some 650 people, in 2016, is still fresh in her mind. "The children's health was very bad and they couldn't even study because they were malnourished and had so many health issues. I couldn't believe that just



three hours' drive from Mumbai there was a village where there was so much of hunger and poverty."

First of all, she organised a paediatrician from the KEM Hospital to travel to the village and do a check-up to assess the nutrition level of the children. "This village is located in a forest and mountainous area and the children were eating mostly some roots that grow in the forest and were suffering from several tapeworm and other related health problems. Their nutrition level needed to be improved urgently."

To begin with, the Rotarians immediately organised funds from their club members to give the schoolchildren nutritious *khichdi* for lunch, and after a few weeks added an egg and peanut and *gur* (jaggery) *chiki* (a

healthy candy) to their diet. The children were subjected to a deworming procedure and regular medical camps were organised to assess their health and nutritional status.

Next the club engaged four students who had graduated from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to do independent research on the village, its short and long-term needs and problems, and brief the Rotarians on what they could do to improve the villagers' lives. The students submitted a report and the work to be done over a five-year period.

For seven years now, the *khichdi*, egg and *chiki* diet has been continuing and Kajale beams when he says,

The club has spent
₹1.5 crore
over seven years in constructing four new classrooms, toilet blocks, deepening village wells, creating check dams, conducting health camps and improving the children's nutrition

"The children's health has improved dramatically, there is near-zero illness now, their attendance is 100 per cent because such nutritious food is served that absenteeism due to health problems has fallen dramatically. Earlier, they rarely used to bathe, and never cleaned their hands and feet. But now due to the awareness spread by the health camps held by the Rotarians, their hygiene levels have improved dramatically. Now, in all of Raigad district, this has become an 'ideal school'."

With the club now having a paediatrician — Dr Paula Goel — as a member, she goes regularly for the health camps. General medical check-up camps are also held regularly and those villagers having dental or eye problems are given treatment, with cataract surgery being done in Mumbai. The women of the village who were found to have vitamin and iron deficiencies also have been attended to.

Next the Rotarians turned their attention to the dilapidated school building. When there was heavy rain and wind, "the *chhaapra* (roof) flew away and year after year we kept repairing and maintaining the building," says Kavita. But they knew that well-built classrooms with concrete roofs were required, and more money would have to be raised.



Apart from donations from its own members, as the club expanded the scope and reach of its services in Zugrewadi, it roped in the corporates.

Singhvi thanks Mammoet India, KT Exports, Varija Madhava Foundation, Switz Food, VN Patkar Memorial Trust, Manjula Bansal, Harikishandas Tulsiram Aggarwal Charity Trust, the Avani Ajmera family (for financing the bund dam) and club member Ashish Meghani's friend who donated ₹12 lakh for the toilet blocks.

Kavita adds that the new building which is "completely made of concrete is very modern and environment-friendly with open brick work; we've not spared any efforts, and all facilities that you'd find

in a private school with a well-equipped library and laboratory are there. The old building too has undergone a massive renovation and painting and new desks and benches have been provided. Now totally there are eight classrooms, a library, laboratory, and a separate kitchen and a dining area. Earlier the food was being cooked under the stairs."

Singhvi adds that apart from the library and well-equipped laboratory, the club has also given the school a well-equipped computer room and a playground with suitable equipment for various age groups. The school can now accommodate 200-plus students, 80 more from its present strength of 120, he adds.

The children's health has improved dramatically with near-zero illness and **100** per cent attendance thanks to delicious, nutritious food being served

Lack of water for household use and washing was a huge problem in this village, which being on a hilly terrain, cannot retain monsoon water which runs off. "Once the monsoon water was not available, women had to walk for 8km to fetch water. We identified two places where the water could be prevented from running off and stored, and constructed check dams and also provided borewells. The result is now the villagers have access to clean water for drinking and household needs throughout the year. During the last three years, water has remained in the dams till May-June, when the monsoon brings fresh water," he adds.

Women of the village are extremely grateful to the Rotarians for saving them the



arduous task of fetching water from as far as 8km; and they have also benefitted from regular medical camps, and along with adolescent girls, receive sanitary napkins too.

On Oct 29, when club members, along with senior Rotarians from RID 3141 and officials from the Raigad revenue district, came to Zugrewadi for the inauguration of the spanking new school facilities, “the incoming district governor Arun Bhargava, who had accompanied us to the village several years ago for one of our projects couldn’t believe his eyes! He told me that you people have completely transformed this village and I can’t believe this is the same village I had visited several years ago.”

An ebullient Kajale recalls, “*Us din na mei apni khushi sama pa raha tha, na apna anand chhipa sakta tha* (I couldn’t hide my joy); thanks to Rotary, my school has become one of the best in our state. You won’t believe it, but the whole day I was crying of joy....”

Smiles Singhvi, “Actually, he was crying even during his speech. He was so emotional, and he told the deputy director from the education department who had come for the inaugural event, that please don’t transfer me from here. The children are doing so well now!”

One of the best features of this project is its long-term

nature and sustainability as also the fact that as many as seven successive presidents and club officers have shown both interest and devotion in taking it forward. Singhvi says the transformation of the village will continue and the club has drawn up a series of plans to further improve the lives of Zugrewadi villagers. These plans include providing solar energy for both the school and the street lights; getting more qualified teachers with the help of the education officials in Raigad district; setting up scholarships for deserving students for further studies; organising nurses training for some girls through a tie-up with a hospital; and carrying out vocational and skill development training for villagers in farming, carpentry, plumbing, electrical and masonry work.

To begin with they recently took an agri expert with them to the village and “he explained to the villagers the benefits of collective farming. Right now, they cultivate only one crop — paddy — and that too only for

Principal
Kajale used
the Maharashtra
government's
ideal
schoolteacher
award money of

₹1

lakh

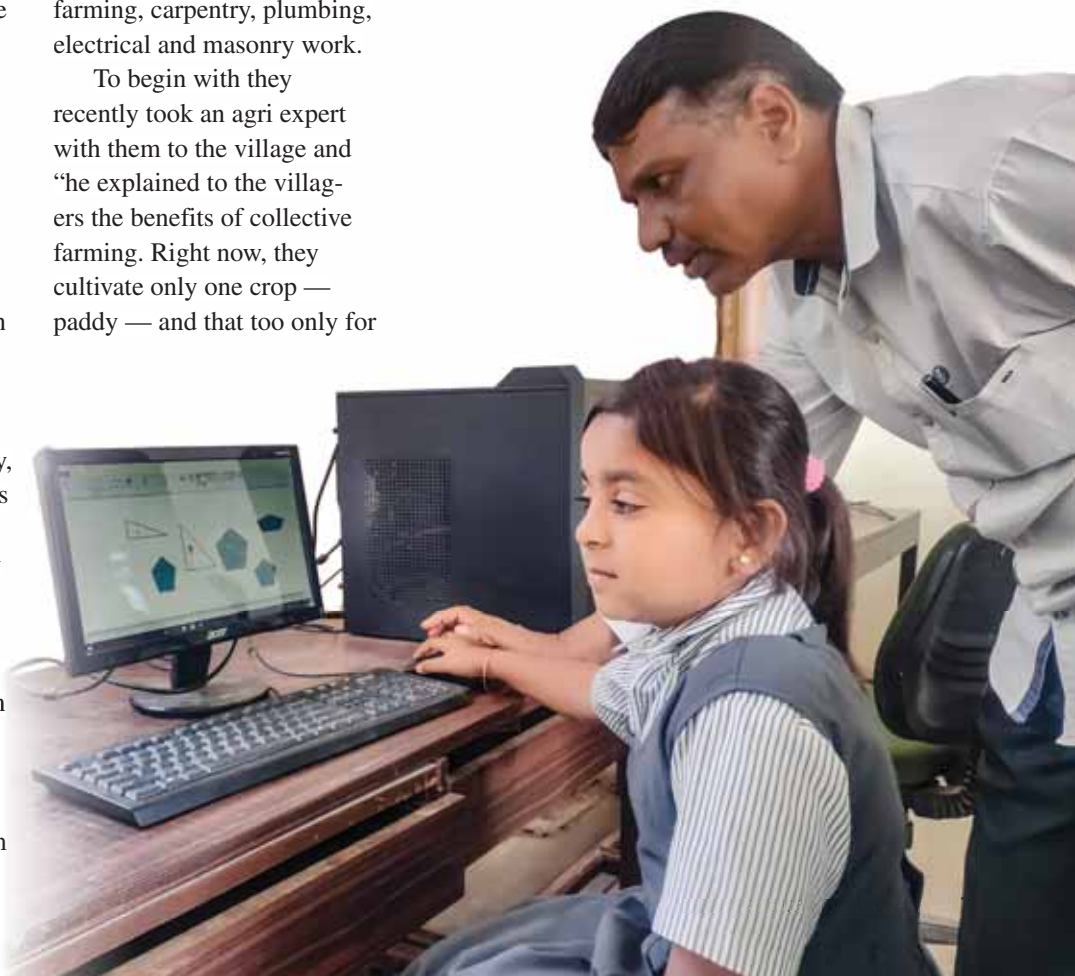
to pay the fees
of tribal children
for higher
education

School
principal
Kajale teaches
computer
operations to a
young student.

three months in a year,” says the club president.

But the new concept of collective farming will take a little more time to sink in; for one, the average landholding is rather small; and as is well-known, each farmer has attachment to his land, and many villagers have no land at all. “But this expert has explained to them that their income from land can go up only if they cultivate multiple crops and do it through collective farming. He has advised them to plant vegetables such as drumsticks and bitter gourd.”

As Singhvi and Kavita express satisfaction at their club successfully converting a backward Adivasi village



from want and dependency to some progress and hope for the future for its inhabitants, another past president of the club, Mehul Zatakia, aptly sums up the commendable thread of continuity that defines this project and sets it apart. “The flawless inauguration involved a massive coordination between our club, district, various government agencies, the villagers, the school and its students. The hard work put in by club president Sachin Singhvi and his entire team (including Rotaractors) was commendable. Full credit to Kavita Godbole who has steered this project successfully through various presidents and continues to be the driving force for this commendable initiative.”

The inaugural event was attended by Kiran Patil, CEO of Raigad ZP, Neha Balsare, deputy director SCERT, Pune, RID 3141



DG Sandip Agarwalla, DGE Arun Bhargava and PDGs Lata Subraidu and Sunnil Mehra. Said Agarwalla, “It is a matter of great pride for RID 3141 that RCB Worli has taken on such an impactful and meaningful work in

The women no longer have to walk for **8km** to fetch water, with the construction of check dams and borewells

this village for the last seven years. Under the leadership of president Singhvi and project director Kavita Godbole this remarkable project showed what the enthusiastic and dedicated team work of club members can achieve.”

PDG Mehra added: “It is a pleasure and such an emotional moment to see such great work done by the clubs of our district. RCB Worli is really changing lives and impacting communities.”

It speaks a lot for the efforts of principal Kajale and Rotarians from RCB Worli that one tribal girl from the village has cleared the NEET exam and Singhvi says his club will give all support, including payment of fees, to this first medical student from the village.



Designed by
N Krishnamurthy

RC Calcutta executes a ₹1 crore project

Team Rotary News

The oldest club in India which completed its centenary three years ago, RC Calcutta, RI District 3291, is keeping up its reputation of doing mega projects.

Recently the Prinsep Ghat Memorial Ground on the banks of the river Ganges in Kolkata reverberated with the latest service projects done by this club.

With the support of the Eastern Command, Indian Army, who gave the space for the project, 650 wheelchairs were distributed to disabled persons. In the presence of district governor Ajoy Kumar Law, seven PDGs, partner NGOs, Rotarians from various clubs and Rotaractors, the beneficiaries from disadvantaged families received this life-changing gift. “The wheelchair project was supported by generous donations from our club members and the Rotary India Humanity Foundation.

A special thanks to PRIP Shekhar Mehta for supporting this programme,” said Arindam Roychowdhury, chairman, community services and member of RC Calcutta. About 1,700 food packets were distributed to all the beneficiaries, their guardians and volunteers. Kolkata police helped with the smooth conduct of the programme, total cost of which was ₹1 crore.

He added that empowerment of women was another initiative taken up by their club through skilling. “Last year our club started five sewing schools, where 300 women were taught sewing. After the training, these women needed an earning process. Our club identified 100 such women and gifted them Singer sewing machines, using which they can get a decent income by working from their homes. The sewing machines were donated by our club member.” ■



Making Rotary irresistible

Jaishree



From L: RI Directors A S Venkatesh, Vicki Puliz and Drew Kessler, and RI Vice President Nicki Scott at a GETS/GNTS session in Abu Dhabi.

When you are not so successful in pushing the community into Rotary, you can still pull people into Rotary by making it irresistible,” said RI director A S Venkatesh, moderating a panel discussion at the GETS/GNTS in Abu Dhabi. RI vice-president Nicki Scott, and directors Drew Kessler and Vicki Puliz participated in the brainstorming session which explored ways to attract members and youth. Director Venkatesh cited a club in Lisbon that has been started on metaverse. “One of the recent innovations in Great Britain is the ‘global hub’ which tries to engage people without formally being part of a Rotary club,” he added.

The Rotary Global Hub complements and works alongside traditional clubs, but operates in

a virtual space, explained Scott. “Like-minded members of other clubs also join the hub to implement cause-based projects with district and global grants. We did not foresee the side benefits that it opened up — a platform for international members and the model has an enthusiastic member-engagement. It is a new way of doing Rotary.”

Venkatesh highlighted RI’s new Youth Advisory Committee constituted by RI President Jennifer Jones this year. It has a representation of the alumni and Rotary and Rotaract members. “This is the first time ever we have invited young voices to the table for suggestions and to work out strategies to enthuse and encourage them to actively get involved in our programmes and events,” said Puliz, urging the incoming leaders to

consider having such a committee at the club and district levels.

“Make Rotary inclusive for families,” suggested Director Kessler from the US. He was accompanied by his wife Vicki, and sons Jackson and Brandon. “I made my Rotary life interesting by bringing my family into Rotary. I have five children, and I didn’t want to choose between my family and Rotary life. If you are to choose between the two, I am sure Rotary will lose every single time.” At 41, he is the youngest director on the RI board.

As a proponent of Rotary attracting young members, and having joined Rotary at 20, Kessler spoke about how his son Jackson, aged 9, introduced EarlyAct in his school. “When his teacher asked him what it was, he spoke to her for ten minutes about

Rotary and how it helps people. Last year he started an EarlyAct club in his school for children between 9–12, and helped start an Interact club for students from 13–18. When the teachers and other children and their parents got involved, it created a huge public image for Rotary,” he said.

Scott, giving insight into how to attract younger members, shared how in Great Britain “we are actually planting new clubs among traditional clubs. It is like how in a forest the tall trees that have been there for a long time know to clear up light for the saplings to grow.”

To keep younger members engaged in Rotary she suggested that “we sell the benefits that we get personally from being in Rotary. We must talk about growing our leadership skills while working on a project, learning management skills, managing teams and public speaking. Younger people today typically stay in a job for less than two years, and it is difficult for corporates to invest in their training and development. Rotary can be the answer.” The RI vice-president called for integrating women and Rotaractors

We must talk about growing our leadership skills while working on a project, learning management skills, managing teams and public speaking.

Nicki Scott
RI Vice President

into Rotary. “Their voices must be heard and every member must feel a sense of belonging.”

TRF — Rotary’s heartbeat

“The image of TRF has undergone a huge change after the war in Ukraine. It is more responsive to meeting the immediate needs of communities,” said TRF trustee Bharat Pandya in a chat show about how the Foundation has evolved to meet challenges of the changing times. “Whenever a disaster strikes, TRF has shone through with its timely grants for relief, rebuilding and rehabilitation,” he said. A couple of weeks after the war broke out in Ukraine the trustees set up the Disaster Response Grant (DRG) Fund.

“Within three months Rotarians world over helped raise \$3.3 million which was disbursed in the last four months through 440 grants in 29 countries for ambulances, medical equipment and other urgent needs,” he added.

The DRG for Ukraine and the recent floods in Pakistan have taught the trustees that “beyond just responding when disaster strikes, we need a special task force to keep us prepared at all times.”

Answering a question from the session moderator RIDE TN Subramanian about making the Foundation stronger, Pandya replied, “We need to build our resources with non-Rotarian contributors. The CSR India model is successful and countries like Australia are replicating it. However, at all times we cannot compromise on fiscal prudence, discipline and transparency which are our priorities and strengths.”

Pandya explained about TRF’s recent endeavour — Programs of Scale — to the incoming district leaders. Referring to the first grant under this programme for Malaria-free Zambia, he said that in 16 months of its launch, the mortality rate in the country has gone down by 40 per cent. “TRF will fund this kind of mammoth project only if its impact is largely significant and it should attract huge partnerships,” he said. The Zambia project worth \$6 million is partnered by TRF, Gates Foundation and World Vision with \$2 million each.

As of June 2022, the Foundation has collected \$1.55 billion in contribution and commitments. “We have reached almost 80 per cent of our goal of \$2.025 billion in 2025 for our Endowment Funds,” he said.

GETS/GNTS co-convenor RI director Faiz Kidwai and trustee Frederick Lin also participated in the session.

Pictures by Jaishree



From L: TRF Trustees Bharat Pandya and Fredrick Lin, RI Director Faiz Kidwai and RIDE T N Subramanian.

Plea to Indian Rotarians to support the last mile in polio

Rasheeda Bhagat

Enumerating the sheer reach and scope of the work done by The Rotary Foundation, TRF trustee Jorge Aufranc, representing trustee chair Ian Riseley at the Vizag zone institute, congratulated the Rotarians of India for the “fantastic work” they had done in eradicating polio from India.

Spelling out at the TRF seminar the latest strategy of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI),

of which Rotary is a founding member, he said this “new strategic plan for 2022–26 has two goals — interrupting the transmission of all polioviruses in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and stopping the transmission of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 outside the endemic countries.”

This strategy required Rotarians to reach about 400 million children a year, which requires hundreds of thousands of frontline

TRF chair representative and trustee Jorge Aufranc recognises RID 3141 IPDG Rajendra Agarwal in the presence of (from L) RIDE T N Subramanian, TRF trustee Bharat Pandya and past trustee Gulam Vahanvaty.

Rasheeda Bhagat



workers going door-to-door. In addition, disease surveillance activities must intensify by looking for the virus in children and the environment. For a polio-free world three things were required — fundraising, advocacy and raising awareness through engagement of club members. “You did a wonderful job to eradicate polio in this country of 1,400 million people. Now, on behalf of the board of trustees, I encourage you to support the last mile. Our fundraising goal for PolioPlus this year is \$35 million in new outright contributions, alongside another \$15 million in district designated funds and world fund,” he said.

This would bring in \$50 million, to be matched 2:1, or \$100 million, from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Unfortunately, today, only one in 10 Rotarians donated to the End Polio Now campaign, and this had to improve, to each member donating at least \$100 a year, said Aufranc.

Striking a warning note, the trustee said that the recent detection of polio this year in till-now polio-free countries “is a stark reminder that if we do not deliver our goal of ending polio everywhere, it may resurge globally.”

He congratulated India for bagging “an honorable second place” in the annual goals of TRF, and urged the Rotary leaders at the institute to motivate more Rotarians to become PHF members by donating \$1,000 every year. India had also made “big achievements” in getting big CSR funds, he said.

“It is not about the money. It’s about what the money can do through the grant programmes,” said Aufranc. And Indian Rotarians would be happy to know about the RoI (return on investment) on their contributions. About “20 per cent of the grants in the Rotary world are awarded to India.”

The Rotary leadership had also decided that “for our projects to have real impact, we need to identify the needs of the community and do large, impactful projects.” Rotarians would do well to remember that it is not “‘what we want’ or ‘our project’”. It is the community’s project that we are

The rate of
return for Indian
Rotarians’
contributions to
TRF is
20
per cent
of TRF grants
coming to India

doing.” And always remember to make alliances, either with the local government or an NGO, “because that will guarantee sustainability and success once the Rotarians leave,” he advised.

Believing in the real impact of big projects TRF had introduced Programs of Scale, where it provided an award of \$2 million; the first such programme was for a Malaria-free Zambia, and the second was for creating “Healthy Families in Nigeria, to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates,” he added.

Later, addressing a session at the institute, Aufranc recalled his visit, along with wife Debora, for a polio NID in Moradabad in 2009. “On January 13, 2011, India had the last case of polio, a 3-year-old girl, Rukhsar Khatun. This week, I had the opportunity to give drops of the polio vaccine in Karachi, Pakistan. I am fully confident that in one year from now, we’ll see Pakistan polio-free.”

On Rotary’s peace programmes, the trustee said that TRF had enough credibility to be recognised as a “peace icon in the world” and had recently received a pledge of a \$15.5 million donation from the Otto & Fran Walter Foundation to fund a new Rotary Peace Center in the Middle East-North African region.

In his own country, Guatemala, known for its large indigenous population where many lived in poverty, with lack of clean water, poor access to healthcare and one in two children suffering

TRF has
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a new peace
centre



from malnutrition, TRF projects in healthcare, water and sanitation, MHM and nutrition, had rendered great help.

Urging Rotarians to donate generously to TRF, Aufranc said their generosity assured that “when hurricanes hit, Rotary is there, when we were fighting against the pandemic across the globe, Rotary was there, when war and a humanitarian crisis unfolded in Ukraine, we opened

our disaster relief fund for donations and raised more than \$15 million. We put our humanitarian networks and resources to work, providing help, food, shelter, and other necessities to the millions of displaced people who continue to seek refuge.”

Addressing the TRF seminar, former trustee from India, Gulam Vahanvaty said Rotary’s endowment funds ensure that Rotarians make a powerful difference in the world.

TRF opened its disaster relief fund for donations and raised more than **\$15 million** for Ukraine

Trustee Bharat Pandya explained the intricacies of how TRF funds are invested by experts, with great care, different strategies and varying risk parameters, to meet the different goals of different funds.

Institute convener and RI director Mahesh Kotbagi explained how our four zones had transitioned from “takers” to “givers” when it came to TRF donations. Awards were distributed to various districts for the highest contributions to TRF. ■

RIPN Stephanie Urchick visits Rotary hospice

Team Rotary News

RIPN Stephanie Urchick, during her recent visit to India to participate in the Visakha Vista Rotary zone institute in Vizag, took time off to visit the Sparsh Hospice established by RC Banjara Hills, RID 3150, in Hyderabad. The hospice, which was initially set up with 12 beds in 2011 to provide palliative care to terminally-ill patients, was upgraded in Oct 2021 at a cost of ₹14 crore (Read <https://rotarynewsonline.org/a-rotary-hospice-in-hyderabad-at-rs-14-crore/>)

The new facility built over 60,000 sqft has an



RIPN Stephanie Urchick greets a terminally-ill patient and her caregiver at the Sparsh Hospice. DG Raja Sekhar Reddy (second from R) is also present.

auditorium, amphitheatre, library, dining hall, physiotherapy and prayer rooms for patients and their attendants. All facilities including stay, medicines

and food are entirely free for them.

The president-nominee was accompanied by DG Raja Sekhar Reddy, DGE Shankar Reddy and

DGN Sharath Choudary. Club president Prabhakar Dhulipudi, secretary G Vaasudevan and treasurer Jagadish Ramadugu were also present. ■

Indian laws need active citizenry: Ex-CJI

V Muthukumaran

Public apathy and indifference is a social malaise that we have to get rid of as it does not augur well for a vibrant democracy, said former chief justice of India NV Ramana. “As individuals in a community, raise your voice, be active and bring any social injustice to the notice of the judiciary,” he said, addressing the delegates at the zone institute.

Laws regulate human behaviour and they don’t operate in a vacuum. “Our Constitution has given us a structure, form and content of laws which are organic and its various documents are being created by people. Also changes in their

interpretations (with amendments) are made by people. Hence they have a role to play in framing our laws too.”

Our laws provide space for debate and means to resolve disputes through judiciary, he said. “Laws are needed for society to progress. Our Constitution has given us the framework and guiding principles with enough flexibility to make changes as we evolve in time,” he said.

Ensuring justice to all and fostering fraternity, the Constitution has neatly defined organs of democracy — executive, legislature and judiciary — all of which work within the limits prescribed in the charter document, he said.

“While laws shape the society, we, the people, have the power to change the laws — hence, it is a two way interaction for an evolving society.”

However, unlike in the past where student movements played an active role to bring in political changes, “today’s youth are not involved and their apathy is growing. Many individuals are not exercising their power of vote.” Judicial action is desirable to address political grievances and address social issues.” But ultimately it is the power of people that will prevail and for this to happen, “individuals have to be active and protest against injustice.” ■

RIDE Anirudha Roychowdhury presents a memento to former Chief Justice of India NV Ramana in the presence of (from L) RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, institute chair PDG Kishore Kumar and Rtn Vasanth Kumar from RC Jubilee Hills, RID 3150.



At the mid-year review for district governors held a day prior to the zone institute at Vizag, RI President Jennifer Jones thanked the DGs from zones 4, 5, 6 and 7 for “the amazing service projects that you do in your communities”.

Saying she had lost count of the number of times she had visited India, a country she admired tremendously, the most remarkable feature of India that she had noted was the

DGs have made India proud through their service projects

Rasheeda Bhagat

huge and remarkable transformation that has taken place in India over the last decade. “You have come such a long way. I don’t remember how many times I’ve been to your beautiful country. I’ve lost count. I keep coming back because I love it and

the people here. You are a nation that I have witnessed, in the decade-plus that I have travelled here, transition from a receiving to a giving nation. You give so much to our world and I sincerely thank you for being leaders in our organisation and for



RI President Jennifer Jones with the district governors at the Rotary Zone Institute.



**RI Director
AS Venkatesh
addressing the
session.**



*You give so much to our world and
I thank you for being leaders in our
organisation. What we do together
transcends borders and boundaries.*

Jennifer Jones
RI President

understanding that what we do together transcends borders and boundaries. The projects you do and the service you render has made Rotary proud.”

Addressing the DGs as her “babies”, Jones explained to them the importance of the Imagine Impact tour she had undertaken across the world and had seen some wonderful service projects. She also underlined the importance of Rotary’s new mantra of DEI — Diversity, Equity, Inclusion. She then asked the governors to recount for her some of the best projects they had done during their year so far. Needless to say, service projects related to the environment — such as Miyawaki forests and building of biodiversity parks, water and sanitation and empowerment of girls and women

through education, skilling and enhancing women’s income, took the place of honour, and got encomiums from the RI president.

Thanking them she said the projects they had implemented had made a big difference to their local communities, even while enhancing Rotary’s public image.

RI director AS Venkatesh who conducted the review meet, made it clear to the governors that the innovations and new ideas that RI had introduced on flexibility of meetings, the way clubs meet and conduct their affairs, and so on was there to stay. The push on membership would stay, and it was up to club leaders and members to ensure that the new members feel welcome, develop a sense of belonging and enthusiasm to do service in all of Rotary’s special areas of focus. It was up to the existing club members to create such a genial and welcoming atmosphere that the new members understood the true meaning and spirit of Rotary.

“If you ensure this, I can ensure you that we will not face the problem of members leaving our clubs,” Venkatesh added.

Institute convenor and RI director Mahesh Kotbagi welcomed the governors, commended their work, and urged them to remain focused on their goals for the rest of the year. PDG Lakkaraju Satyanarain counselled the DGs on the intricacies involved in administering their districts and how to remain clear of pitfalls.

The session ended with the RI President doing what she does best. After “apologising” to the session chair, Director Venkatesh, for the “bit of chaos” she was going to create in the room, she got the DGs together for group photos and video sessions. This was bonding at its best!

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Foundation, membership – Rotary’s pillars of strength

V Muthukumaran

With its transparent funding and stewardship, The Rotary Foundation is playing a key role in executing global service projects. But Rotary clubs still find applying for global grants a cumbersome process as they have to fill forms and answer queries from the RI head office at Evanston before they get their funds sanctioned. Chairing a panel discussion on TRF giving (*Hundi Daan*), trustee Bharat Pandya said, “unlike repaying with interest for bank loans, global grants are offered to genuine projects that fulfil certain criteria and they don’t ask for collateral. The only requirement is that we have to observe due diligence.”

Some views of the panellists on TRF-related issues:

Trustee Jorge Aufranc, Guatemala

The Foundation has been a ‘lava of philanthropy’ and is the best investment to make the world a better

place. Charity Navigator has given it a four-star rating consecutively for 10 years. For providing food and shelter to displaced people in the Ukraine war, over \$15 million was sanctioned under the emergency Disaster Relief Grants. TRF okayed 478 district grants totalling \$28.7 million in 2021–22 and India ranked number two in TRF giving at \$26.48 million last year. The US charity market was estimated at \$728 billion the same year. Perhaps, we can also look at external donors to fund our TRF projects in the future. Also, we have to strengthen our linkages with our big partners such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

RID Drew Kessler, US

There is good understanding between the RI board and the board of trustees. Each year two joint meetings are held with the two boards exchanging notes. Stewardship is the key element that separates Rotary from other charity organisations as every single dollar is accounted for. We can take pride and purpose in how we are spending our funds.

RIDE TN Subramanian

Rotary clubs must seek help from regional grant officers and technical cadres for filling the global grant forms. Every club president must do financial

From L: PRID Kamal Sanghvi, RIPN Stephanie Urchick, RI Directors AS Venkatesh and Drew Kessler, and RIDE Anirudha Roychowdhury at the membership-related panel discussion.





V Muthukumar

From L: TRF Trustees Bharat Pandya and Jorge Aufranc, RID Kessler, RIDE TN Subramanian and RID Mahesh Kotbagi at the TRF-related discussion.

planning and apply his/her mind while filing the GG grant application. The rise in directed gifts has adversely impacted the contributions to the Annual Programme Fund and we need to address this issue.

Summing up the talk, Pandya said TRF needs to invest in markets across the world, especially in India, rather than invest only in the US treasury bonds, for long-term assured returns. “We will continue giving to TRF in the

years to come for it to sustain its global projects,” he said.

Membership, a corporate priority

Rotarians are the only sustainable assets of Rotary, “so we have to close the back door to retain our members,” said PRID Kamal Sanghvi, while moderating a panel discussion. “Each one of you should be a good storyteller to attract new members.”

The views of other panellists:

RIPN Stephanie Urchick: During the pandemic, Rotary clubs reached out to the communities and our ‘psychic income’ went up across the world. It is in our DNA to make the world a better place. A new format or cause-based clubs must be encouraged as they give flexibility to members. As the fastest growing segment, cause-based clubs provide a new range of experience and bonding for members.

RID AS Venkatesh

Rotary is a member-based organisation that does service. It is the responsibility of zones to induct new members. We need to involve Rotaractors as much as possible. There is no need to handhold them, but allow them to define themselves and they can do

wonders in Rotary as they are focused, passionate and energetic.

RID Drew Kessler

We need more hands to accomplish more things, hence membership is our top priority. We can learn from Rotaractors on ways to diversify and usher in gender parity too. If every Rotarian lives up to the ideals of the 4-Way Test, it will strengthen our clubs, lift our public image and get in more members.

RIDE Anirudha Roychowdhury

There are certain gaps which need to be addressed. We need to engage our new members and understand their aspirations better. Secondly, the November data on Rotaract shows a steep fall in membership which may be due to “mandatory RI dues that have come into force.” We need to give space to new format clubs for which there is a big demand now.

In his concluding remarks, Sanghvi said in Rotary everything ticks based on membership. Rotarians must not just adopt *Each One Bring One*, but also retain one. Also, Rotary is a platform to have fun and varied experiences with like-minded people, he said. ■



Jaishree

Rotary should reach the LGBTQ dialogue to **Indian homes**

Rasheeda Bhagat

The unanimous opinion of all the three panellists who participated in the DEI session moderated by RI director Vicki Puliz was that Rotary clubs in India, and across the world, should step up their efforts to take out from the closet issues related to LGBTQ, and bring them upfront, “so that people can face these issues and tackle them right in their homes.”

Moderating the discussion, Puliz said that the DEI mantra was only a broader and more effective version of the earlier classification system that existed in Rotary. That too was driven by “diversity, as it was a way for us to have different vocations and

professions represented in our clubs, to provide a better understanding of and service to our communities.”

Now we have diversity in much broader terms and DEI focuses on the fact that every individual is unique and there is strength in recognising our differences. DEI now includes gender, age, sexual preference, and even things like accessibility for people who need hearing support or wheelchair access.”

She said one of RI’s priorities, and RI President Jennifer Jones’ governing mantra, was to “grow diversity in our membership and hence expand our reach... so that we are seen as a welcoming and inclusive organisation. Jennifer has made DEI one of her over-arching priorities.”

Kicking off the discussion, Manvendra Singh Gohil, crown prince of Rajpipla, Gujarat, said he was the “first openly gay royal,” who had come out of the closet after long years of confusion and little knowledge about what he was grappling with during his adolescent years and beyond. “I finally came to terms with my sexuality as late as when I was 30, came out to my parents after a nervous breakdown, with my parents trying to “convert” me into becoming straight through both medical and religious conversion! I then made history by becoming the world’s first openly gay royal in 2006, got thrown out from the palace, disowned and disinherited by my family, and got death threats too.”

Rasheeda Bhagat



Winding up his traumatic journey he said, “But it has happy ending. I have been accepted back by my family, am married to an American man and we are very happy.”

Singh has the distinction of being the only Indian to be interviewed by Oprah Winfrey thrice.

The chairman and co-founder of the Lakshya Trust, he prefers to call himself a human right champion, than merely an LGBTQ advocate, even though his trust champions the cause of the LGBTQ community. He is also the brand ambassador of the HIV/AIDS Healthcare Foundation, India Cares, the world’s oldest and largest centre for HIV-testing and treatment.

He said he was currently working on his pet project, a community care centre being put up at his royal establishment, (his parents have reconciled and accepted him for who he is) for the “social and financial empowerment of the LGBTQIA community.”

Arfi Lamba, a filmmaker, whose film *Love* has now been accepted by

Netflix, and has attended more than 60 international film festivals, said Bollywood has now started making films featuring gay relationships such as in *Badhai do*. But many years ago, when he and his business partner in Germany came across the script and made this film *Love*, “we were worried about whether it would ever get released, so we made it very low budget, but now Netflix has picked up our film, and has given us the most respect.”

He commended Singh for the “phenomenal work” he was doing for the LGBTQ community. When asked by Puliz what Rotary could do to make this group more acceptable, Lamba said, “Rotarians will have to move away from Delhi and Mumbai and into homes and areas where India lives.” Appealing to the delegates in the room, he said, “If you find kids with different sexuality around you, show them better understanding and support. The truth is that when parents in small towns of India discover that their children are gay, they disown them. The NGO of Manvendra (Singh) picks up these kids,

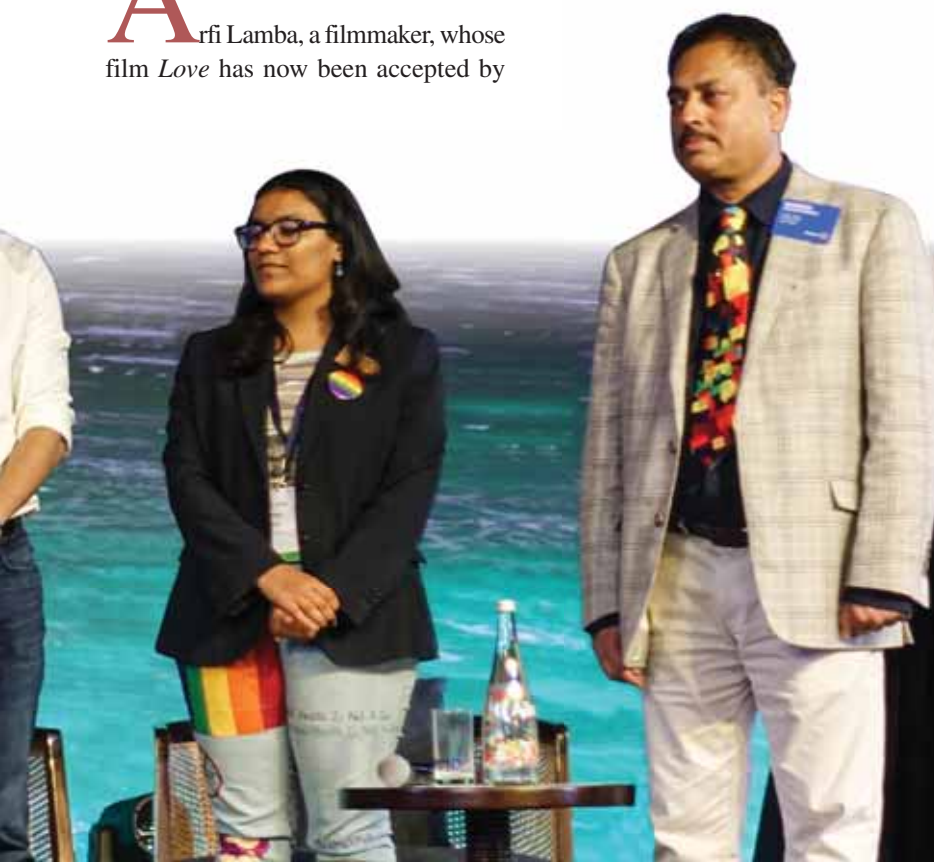
17, 18, 19, gives them shelter, for six months or a year till they can stand on their feet. He is doing amazing work, Rotary should support his NGO.”

Madhura Mundada, international service chair and LGBTQ director from the Rotaract Club of Ruia, Mumbai, said both her parents were Rotarians and “Rotary was something I was part of growing up. I have seen what Rotary does and the impact it has.”

When she joined her college, there was a Rotaract club “and I immediately knew I wanted to join it.” When she was told by her club leaders that this was its 10th year and they would like to start an LGBT chapter and “could I lead it, I agreed. They said but people can assume you are from the LGBTQ community and I said but everybody is from the LGBTQ community!”

Madhura said she comes from “a small town where people don’t understand what LGBTQ is... they just don’t have any idea about it. You asked what Rotary could do, I’d say let’s start educating people at the school level, bring this issue in the syllabus. I can tell you that if a few years ago you had asked me about diversity, I would have been blank, people need to learn about it at a younger age.”

Singh urged Rotarians to “break their silence and talk about this issue. That is what I did. One of the things we don’t talk about is sexuality. We need to break taboos, stereotypes, stigma



From L: RI Director Vicki Puliz; RI President Jennifer Jones; Manvendra Singh Gohil, crown prince of Rajpipla, Gujarat; filmmaker Arfi Lamba; Madhura Mundada, international service chair and LGBTQ director, RAC Ruia; and Institute Convenor RID Mahesh Kotbagi.

and discrimination, and we need to mainstream these issues. I have very high hopes on Rotary.”

Lamba added that unfortunately in Indian movies LGBTQ issues were “projected in a cliched manner, but if mainstream actors do these roles, and people go and watch them, there will be better awareness and hopefully greater understanding. Cinema has amazing reach and it should take up this subject. Any change happens at grassroots level and India lives in the small towns and villages. Also, we might make one such film once in five years, but Rotary, which reaches out to the innermost corners of India, including rural India, can play a very important role. You can be flagbearers and reach this conversation and awareness to a large number of homes in India.”

Madhura got a lot of attention, including from RI President Jennifer Jones, on her unique pair of jeans, which she had designed and sewed/embroidered on it various social messages,

including some connected with Rotary’s areas of focus. When quizzed by Jones, she demurred and said, “This was my 19th year birthday gift to myself!”

When Director Puliz asked the panellists for their opinion on how Rotary could be more inclusive, they all unanimously felt that inclusion of more women, at leaderships levels, was really necessary. Said Lamba: “we were discussing backstage about everything that India is lacking... that prevents it from becoming the next superpower. And that is not going to happen till we are inclusive. Not only towards the LGBTQ and other different groups, but also when it comes to enough participation of women at the higher levels in different fields.”

The panellists’ final appeal to the assembled PDGs, DGs and DGEs was to take the message of inclusion to their clubs.

Added one of them: “Tell the members that if there is a kid around you, who wants to go on a different path when it comes to sexuality, let

him/her do so. Indian parents are ready to give everything to their kids... the best of education, travel, opportunities, but the moment a kid comes and tells them I am different, parents shut off from the kid. That is wrong; let’s work for the kids who are hiding from us in the backyard... that is where real change will start.”

President Jones added that this was an incredibly important topic and broached on the level of sexual orientation, as well as gender parity. “We talked about it a lot at the *Women in Rotary* event yesterday. But really we shouldn’t have to have separate events like that. We need to be able to talk about it collectively as individuals working towards humanity and break down barriers. I know that probably there were some people who were uncomfortable with the conversation that we had just now but that’s okay. We need to sometimes get uncomfortable in order to feel comfortable with where we are going.” ■

PRID Panduranga Setty no more

Team Rotary News

Past RI director M K Panduranga Setty passed away on Jan 21 at 90 due to age-related ailments. He was a member of RC Bangalore, RID 3190, and a trustee of Rotary News Trust. For long years he had steered the content of the magazine in Bengaluru.

Setty, a recipient of RI’s ‘Service Above Self’ Award, had served RI as a member of the strategic planning committee, membership development committee, districting committee, election review committee and the Centennial History of Rotary committee. He had also served as chairman of RI’s

executive committee (1992–93), Rotary Foundation (India) and the South East Asia Regional PolioPlus Committee.

A veteran educationist, Setty expanded the academic operations of the Rashtreeya Sikshana Samithi Trust, of which he was president emeritus, into an empire, and was chancellor of the RV University run by the trust.

As an industrialist he was instrumental in building the milling technology from scratch in Mysuru after studying an advanced course in Switzerland. Thanks to his efforts in its formative years, the Indian Institute



of Management Bangalore has become a premier B-school in the country. Setty was appointed by the Karnataka government as chairman of the Karnataka State Industrial Investment & Development Corporation Ltd.

(Detailed obit in the March issue)

Dos & don'ts for district trainers

V Muthukumar



V Muthukumar

RI President Jennifer Jones with past RI president Shekhar Mehta and PDG EK Sagadhevan at the DTTS session in Vizag.

If you want responsible Rotarians, give them responsibility by engaging them in regular meetings, events and service projects so that “they feel the belongingness and don’t leave the organisation,” said RI President Jennifer Jones. Addressing the 30 district trainers-elect at Visakha Vista Rotary zone institute, she said, “the role of DTs is crucial for clubs and districts to effectively reach out to communities. As RI is expanding its horizons with its new DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) policy, it is vital for DTs to update themselves and adopt new training modules.”

She praised PRIP Shekhar Mehta for his bold *Each One Bring One* initiative “which turned the momentum towards a positive growth.” With the new thrust on diversity and inclusion, “we are breaking down barriers to membership growth.” Rotary will emerge stronger with a kaleidoscope of visions that embrace all religions, nationalities and diverse perspectives,

Jones said. DTs should train confident leaders in Rotary; and “Rotaractors too must benefit in cross-mentorship as they think and do things differently and can carry our legacy forward.”

They also must be compatible trainers to their governors, said RID Mahesh Kotbagi. “Some PDGs feel that there is nothing to be learnt as DTs, which is wrong. For, you get trained to update your skills and capabilities.” Adopt the learning tools available on rotary.org and get conversant with Rotary’s Code of Policies, he told the participants. “You need to support your DGs. Better still, take up active branding of your district as it will lift its public image.”

PRIP Mehta advised the DTs to shape the future of their RI districts through a process of standardisation and scaling up of their training programmes. He cited RIHF and RILM which were formed to address Rotary’s focus areas of water and sanitation, and literacy.

PDG Jawahar Vadlamani asked the DTs not to dominate their governors, but support them; “your role is like an elder in the family.” All the resource tools are available at the Rotary Learning Centre link on rotary.org. “Structure your training programmes and plan your calendar well in advance,” he said.

There are seven training modules including speed bee, table topics, plenary session, brainstorming and case studies which the trainers can adopt suitably for holding PETS, AETS, DTAs and other programmes, said PDG George Sundararaj. Two panel discussions on ‘Good and bad practices’ and case studies were chaired by PDGs Kishore Kumar and Ranjan Dhingra that dwelt on major responsibilities of DTs and how they can meet emerging challenges. PRID Kamal Sanghvi called for training the trainers by “inviting the right, qualified speakers at the workshops and seminars.” ■



RI General Secretary John Hewko

What ails Rotary

Jaishree

At the GETS/GNTS in Abu Dhabi, RI general secretary John Hewko presented a realistic picture of Rotary in the next 10 years. “Six critical issues need to be addressed if Rotary has to be strong in the next 5, 10 or 20 years,” he said, elaborating on the challenges ahead.

Membership

“Our membership has been hovering around 1.2 million over the past 20 years. If we have been able to maintain it at that level, it is thanks to this region. We are seeing significant growth in Asia, Africa, Far East and Eastern Europe. But in the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand, we have a membership crisis,” he said. For the first time in Rotary’s history membership in the US and Canada has fallen by 30 per cent of the worldwide total. “If the current trends continue, in 10 years North America will have 15 per cent and Asia will have 50 per cent Rotarians. The fact that Asia is growing is fantastic. But we need to grow Rotary everywhere. Last year we saw 150,000 people join Rotary but also saw a 150,000 people leaving Rotary.”

The key to growing Rotary membership and retaining it is to offer an innovative club experience. “When you join a club, you pay for the Rotary experience with your time and money. In many cases

people realise that the experience is not what they had anticipated. So we must improve the product that we offer, in this case the club experience, or offer new products to make them more attractive to people.”

Flexibility

Urging the district leaders to encourage flexibility in clubs, he said, “What worked yesterday and today will not work tomorrow as the world continues to rapidly change. But the things that will never change are our 4-Way Test, our focus on ethics, fellowship and doing good in the world.” This is the core essence of being a Rotarian and the key to Rotary DNA. “But meeting frequency, in my view, is not a value. Ringing a bell or, singing a song, may no longer be relevant to people who want to join Rotary. Those are simply vessels with which we deliver our values. You as future leaders have the opportunity to fashion and charter club models to suit your community. There is no Rotary police. It is important to create clubs that are growing, vibrant and making a difference,” he said.

Check stagnation

Citing Kodak’s fall, Hewko said, “The iconic brand eventually became bankrupt because it failed to grow and adapt to the digital era. We are not in the business of formal meetings or memorising the manual

of procedures or strictly adhering to rules. Rather, we are in the business of bringing people together, changing the world, growing as individuals, and basically having fun. That is the business model that we have to create to make it work.”

He urged Rotarians to be nimble enough to adapt to the dynamic changing times.

Continuity

Rotary’s strength is in “bringing new blood and ideas to the table every year. Our international president, a section of our directors and trustees change every year. But this has one drawback. It does not foster continuity. It is not about my year, my club, my governors, or my achievement.” RI has devised the Strategic Plan, and as new leaders come in each year, they should simply carry on from where the previous batch of leaders left matters. “It is going to be absolutely critical to achieve this strategic continuity at the club, district, zone and international level,” he added.

What next

To stay relevant, it is important that Rotary identifies its next global project. “Yes, polio eradication will be our top priority until we cross the finish line. But we need to have another global project because polio put us on the international stage as equals at the table with the CDC, WHO, UNICEF and the Gates Foundation. The question is which one and how are we going to get there, because we do so many things so well,” he said.

Regionalisation

Rotary is evolving in different ways in different regions. Rotary in Australia need not be the same as in India. “We need to realise that regionalisation is here to stay as it enhances its appeal to local Rotarians, and helps in growing our membership,” he said.

On a positive note, Hewko added, “We have been doing a lot of things right to keep Rotary vibrant in the last 117 years, but the things that didn’t do well may be a 1,000 to 1.

We need to be open to the challenges that we face at a global level. Your work is going to play a huge role in how we are going to navigate the crossroads.”

He assured the DGEs and DGNs saying, “if we improve our flexibility, adopt our action plan, grow Rotary with new and innovative clubs, take a long, hard look in the mirror and not get defensive about the challenges, or nostalgic about how Rotary used to be, we will achieve our dreams. Our organisation is a great gift to humanity and we cannot let that gift wither and die. The future of Rotary is very, very bright and with your leadership our Rotary organisation will get past the bumps on the road, continue to fulfil its destiny and will continue to make new, greater difference and good to people around the world.”

Earlier during his address, the general secretary complimented Rotarians for their performance in weathering the Covid crisis. “We adapted to the new normal and came through the crisis with flying colours. There was a concern that there will be a significant drop in membership because we were working virtually and countries were facing severe economic issues. But membership actually increased slightly. South Asia showed remarkable stability in membership,” he said.

Giving an update on Rotary’s financial position, he said that the reserves of RI and TRF remain “very high and in excellent shape even if another crisis were to come.”

TRF trustee Bharat Pandya chaired the session.



TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya with RI General Secretary Hewko.

Pictures by Jaishree

Full Throttle



From R: RI President Jennifer Jones, Meenakshi, GNTS chair PDG Sanjay Khemka, Ellora and GETS chair PDG Priyesh Bhandari at the GETS/GNTS in Abu Dhabi.



From L: Meenakshi Khemka, Ellora Bhandari, Sonal Sanghvi, Amita Kotbagi and Sujata Madhav Chandran.





From L: DGE Asha Venugopal, RIDE T N Subramanian, TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya, PRID Kamal Sanghvi, DGEs Manjoo Phadke and Ritu Grover.

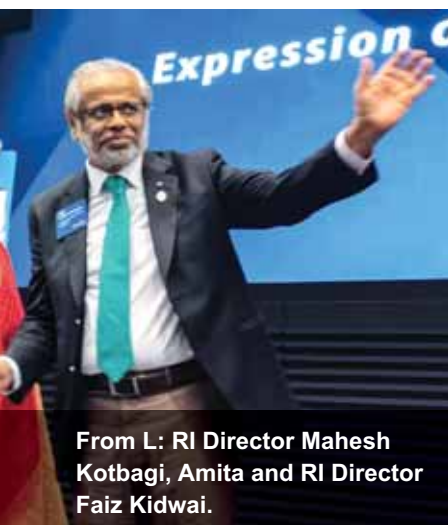


RI General Secretary John Hewko and his spouse Margaret.

Special arrangement



From R: RI Directors Mahesh Kotbagi, Drew Kessler and Vicki Puliz.



From L: RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, Amita and RI Director Faiz Kidwai.



On a desert safari in Abu Dhabi (from L) Sonal, PRID Sanghvi, RID Kotbagi and Amita.

Special arrangement

Enhanced opportunities await Rotaractors

Jaishree

As Rotaractors world over will have to pay membership dues of \$5 and \$8 from January 2023, RI President Jennifer Jones explained the benefits to them at the Rotaract seminar, *Symbiosis*, that was part of the *Visakha Vista* zone institute. “Paying membership dues will help us give you a valuable Rotary experience and it will make you take Rotaract seriously. In the coming years you will understand its value so much so that you’ll invite

your friends for the experience. When I joined Rotary I didn’t understand what value it can add to my life. I am now a better leader, being in Rotary, and I am better in governance, finances, and public speaking,” she said.

Jones pointed out that Rotaractors are now part of several Rotary committees. “One of the most coveted committees is our international convention committee. I have put our Rotaractors here. When we were discussing ideas for our convention, the best ones came from the Rotaractors,” she said, adding that they have also been made RI president’s representatives to district conferences.

“We need fresh ideas from young, capable leaders like you. If we want something done in Rotary, we Rotarians form a committee and have lots of meetings. Whereas you would have already figured out the issue and moved on to the next one,” said Jones, amidst applause.

Batting for dual membership, she said, “If you find a Rotary club attractive, join the club. Or start your own club and run it how you want it. You are our future. No, you are the now. You are going to decide what Rotary will look like in the next couple of decades. And one of the things you are going to teach us is gender parity.”

RI President Jennifer Jones releases the poster for the mega blood donation programme, *Mahadan*, at the Rotaract session in the presence of RI Directors Mahesh Kotbagi and Drew Kessler, PDG Ravi Vadlamani and district Rotaract leaders.



Earlier RIPN Stephanie Urchick inaugurated the seminar in the presence of former World Rotaract Committee chair PDG Ravi Vadlamani, event chairman RID 3131 PDRR Arjun Dev and RID 3020 (host district) DRR Pratyusha Varma.

Observing that Rotarians in their 30s and 40s are more in India than in the rest of the world, RI director Vicki Puliz said that this situation creates better opportunities for Rotaractors. “We want your ideas and perspectives to make our organisation strong. You are key to how we continue to provide value and relevance to our members, our communities and to the world,” she added.

RI director Drew Kessler urged the Rotaractors to join Rotary early. “When I joined Rotary at 20, I was the youngest in my club, and today at 41, I am still the youngest. I look forward



RIPN Stephanie Urchick inaugurates the session in the presence of RID Vicki Puliz, PDG Ravi Vadlamani, PDRR Arjun Dev and DRR Pratyusha Varma.

to seeing someone younger join my club.” Urging them to be dual members, he said, “This way you don’t have to give up your Rotaract identity to join Rotary. It doesn’t matter where you’re from or who you are. All that matters is the pin — the Rotary or the Rotaract pin.”

Recalling his experience when he joined his Rotary club, Kessler said, “My club members didn’t see me as a 20-year-old. When I thought that I had no business sitting amongst such accomplished individuals, they saw me as a potential Rotarian. They took me under their wings, mentored me, and made me what I am today.”

A strong advocate for bringing business into Rotary, he said, “I know we are the No 1 service organisation in the entire world. But we started with one individual who brought together his business friends for the purpose of networking. If I have a business to give someone, I’d share it with a like-minded friend who is a Rotarian instead of a non-Rotarian friend. Rotary is a network of

like-minded individuals. They want to see each other do well.”

Now that Rotaract clubs can participate in Foundation grants, the RI director said, “Once you realise the power of our Foundation you will contribute in a big way. I believe in giving from the heart and not just reaching into our pockets. I want Rotaract clubs to first receive a grant, and see the impact it has in transforming a community. That will inspire you to give voluntarily. I don’t want people to give because they have to, people should give because they want to.”

Addressing the reluctance among Rotaractors to pay membership dues, Vadlamani said, “The challenge is in the mind because you have not yet realised the value of Rotaract as much as you love your pizza. You say that \$5 and \$8 is expensive. Break the shackles in your mind that money is everything. What matters is the experience and education that Rotary gives. If you have to reach new horizons, you must dream big.”

Pictures by Jaishree



RID 3212 creates freshly minted entrepreneurs

Rasheeda Bhagat

RI District 3212 is successfully encouraging entrepreneurship through its regular and ongoing 3-day residential RYLA programme sessions conducted every month in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, to create young entrepreneurs for today's world. "Rotarians of RID 3212 contribute in different ways to ensure the success of this continuing programme. Youngsters between 18–28 years, from all over Tamil

Nadu, and neighbouring states, who cherish dreams to become entrepreneurs, are identified and given skills to master different nuances of business management," says district governor VR Muthu.

The training programme, which began 14 months before his term as governor, "and will continue beyond my year, has so far trained 620 participants through 20 training sessions. And of these, we are happy to announce,



DG VR Muthu presents a memento to a RYLA participant.



DG Muthu and Tirunelveli District Collector Vishnu Venugopalan (seated, fifth from L) with participants and faculty at one of the RYLA valedictory events. Umashankar Jayaraman, secretary, Punch Gurukulam, and Rtn Thanga Vijaya are seen on the extreme left.

93, including women, have started their own enterprises,” he added.

The actual cost of training each participant, in this programme, conducted by the training organisation Punch Gurukulam (PG), is ₹11,500, but at the RYLA, the course is offered at a subsidised rate of ₹2,500. The remaining expense is borne by the CSR wing of VVV Sons Edible Oils, in Virudhunagar which produces *Idhayam* brand of edible oil and is owned by DG Muthu.

The courses are conducted under the leadership of PG secretary Umashankar Jayaraman, along with project chairman and RYLA navigator Rtn KC Gurusamy, co-faculty J Srinivasan, and Rtms P Thanigaivel Pandian and Thanga Vijaya.

Giving details of the young and aspiring entrepreneurs who have already begun their own enterprises, Jayaraman said the youngsters have ventured into different areas to set up their own start-ups. These include virtual reality learning, recruitment and training, food business and home kitchen, and becoming franchisees for automotive service centres.

“One of them has set up a spirulina manufacturing plant; this is a herb with



RYLA participants with Rtn KC Gurusamy (seated, centre).

medicinal values, (a type of blue-green algae with strong antioxidant properties). Studies have shown that it reduces inflammation, promotes healthy aging, etc. One group of five youngsters have come together to set up a private limited company, Aquaketo, to develop ornamental fish using marine technology. The monthly turnover of the enterprises set up by the RYLA graduates ranges between ₹50,000 to 5 lakh.”

The best part of the story is that few of the entrepreneurs have already generated some employment, “I’d venture to say that some 40–50 people have been employed so far by these start-ups,” says Muthu.

The RYLA organisers have also thought of giving the new start-ups some financial linkages. For one of the RYLA valedictory events, for the 18th batch, the Tirunelveli Collector Vishnu Venugopalan was the chief guest, and he was so impressed by the programme that he requested the Tirunelveli chief of the TN Startup hub, a TN government initiative to visit one of the RYLA sessions. “He did come for one of our sessions and has promised support to those who want to set up their own enterprises,” said Jayaraman. On the range of the loan available, he said it starts at “₹1 lakh, and could then go all the way upto ₹5 crore! We have also tied up with Srinidhi Investments, and the entrepreneur who

started the spirulina business, has been given a loan of ₹5 lakh by them.”

Asked about mentoring by veteran entrepreneurs, he said, “We have formed a team in Punch Gurukulam for this purpose. Also, every Sunday, over a 1-hour online session, we introduce one component or industry to these people. They are given insight into financial planning, GST, the registration process, how to start a restaurant business, etc. Two people who have started restaurants, and others who have set up home kitchens, have tied up with Swiggy and Zomato to expand their reach,” added Jayaraman.

Coming to the feedback from the participants, Dharshana Shree, said, “These three days felt like a mini practical MBA course.” She has started a music coaching enterprise after the training.

Added Nuyonitha, “As a college student, I felt it is too early to get into business education, but after attending RYLA – Be an entrepreneur session — I realised that it is the right time now. I will complete my studies, exploring all options of entrepreneurship as a prospective career option.” She has now decided to float her own CA firm, after she finishes her internship as a chartered accountant. These two women are among the 17 women who have attended these RYLA programmes. ■

Youngsters between 18–28 years, from all over Tamil Nadu, and neighbouring states, who cherish dreams to become entrepreneurs, are identified and given skills to master different nuances of business management.

VR Muthu
District Governor

Pawan & Prachi Agarwal

District Governor & First Lady



VISAKHA VISTA

New horizon

Our several District RI Officers participated in the recently concluded Rotary Institute, Visakha Vista at Vishakhapatnam from 8th to 11th December, 2022.

In one of the sessions, DG Pawan Agarwal and Prachi Agarwal won the coveted bat, autographed and given away by Legendary Past India Captain, Mr. Sunil Gavaskar. The price paid by the couple for this bounty was – "surgeries of 35 children suffering with Congenital Heart Disease."



Rotary
District 3110

IMAGINE
ROTARY

प्रोजेक्ट
शिशु

250 Baby Warmers
(Total Cost: Rs. 1 Crore)

Committed by
41 Clubs of our District



Congratulations



PDG Sharat Chandra
has been declared elected for the post of
COL Representative (2023-26 Cycle) by
District Governor Pawan Agrawal on 6th
January, 2023.

कन्या श्री
2.0

Distribution of E-Tablets



Under project Kanyashree 2, 635 E-Tabs were given by 78 clubs of the district to needy and meritorious girl students of class 9th. These girl students were from government schools or Vidya Bharti schools or government aided schools. The mega event was organised on 4th and 5th December, 2022 by all the clubs of the district. The E-Tabs were branded (Lenovo make) and of high technical specifications for long term use of students. These were wifi-enabled with provision for SIM card as well.



DG Pawan Agarwal and First Lady Prachi Agarwal at Rotary Zone Institute 2022 (VISAKHA VISTA)



AARAMABH - AN INTRODUCTORY MEET



STUDY STATIONARY DISTRIBUTION



EYE CHECK-UP CAMP



WOOLEN CLOTHS DISTRIBUTION



BLOOD DONATION CAMP



PROSTHETIC AID DISTRIBUTION



PDG Devender Kr. Agarwal
District Trainer



WHEEL CHAIR DISTRIBUTION



DENTAL CHECK-UP CAMP



Rtn. Raj Mehrotra
CDS (Admin)

A mobile home donated to war-hit Ukrainian children

V Muthukumaran

It is difficult to estimate Rotary's contributions in providing relief to war-torn Ukrainians, "but in the nine months of war, The Rotary Foundation has disbursed \$15 million in a specially created fund to support Rotarians in Ukraine and help the refugees fleeing the war... this is a war between

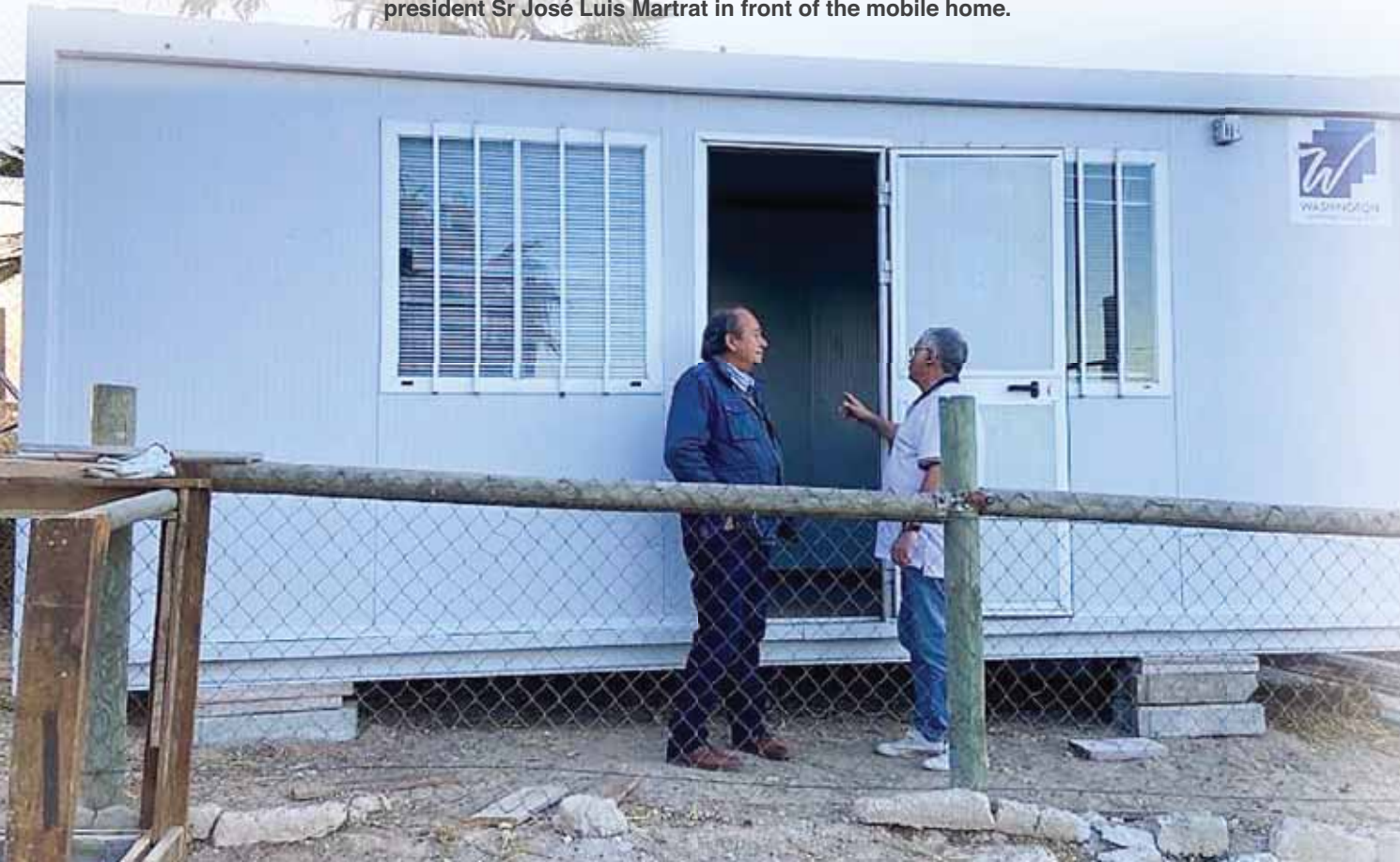
democracy and a totalitarian regime and we will emerge victorious," said DG Vitalii Lesko, RID 2232.

There are 66 Rotary clubs with 1,400 members across Ukraine; and "volunteers from 10 clubs are providing humanitarian relief to war-hit people. We have set up over 20 shelter camps for internally displaced

people," said Lesko. He was speaking at a zoom meet organised by RID 3054 to mark the handover of a mobile home to 15 orphaned children from Ukraine and their two tutors who were being accommodated by Pastor Gabriel and his wife Dr Anna in Barcelona. The mobile home worth €3,700 (₹3.25 lakh) was funded by seven

Rotary clubs in Spain and two Interact clubs from Ahmedabad. Shedding light on the unfolding human tragedy in Ukraine, he said, "now we are into a dark, severe winter and are badly in need of warm clothes, generators, water, light and heat. With a network of clubs, we are trying to deliver essential needs quickly to wherever needed."

Project head Luis Pueyo from RC de Castelldefels, Spain, RID 2202, (right), and club president Sr José Luis Martrat in front of the mobile home.



But, he added, “difficult times are ahead of us, as it will be a long, painful journey and at the end of it, together we will win. The contributions of Rotarians may not be decisive, but it will be significant to our victory.” Stating that he is doing a “systematic analysis of funds being given by Rotary,” the DG added, “after the war is over, I will meet RI President Jennifer Jones to brief and thank her for all that Rotary has done for us.”

A model project

The delivery of the mobile home to the war-torn children in Ukraine “is a perfect example of what Rotarians can do when we work together. We are from different countries, speak many languages and have diverse beliefs, but we all share the same values. Here seven Rotary clubs have come together to help out 15 orphaned children aged 4–17 years from Ukraine and their two teachers who are being sheltered by Pastor Gabriel and his wife,” said DG Ingrid Steinhoff from RC de Barcelona, RID 2202, Spain. Bowled over by the participation of Interactors, she said, “we are having a friendship exchange programme with Indian clubs; we will now include Interactors too in this project which I will continue to do even after I demit office.”

Thanks to the local community in Barcelona, the couple is able to provide education, good food and other support to the Ukrainian children, and that will help shape their future, the DG said.

In his brief speech, DG Balwant Singh Chirana, RID 3054, praised the involvement of two newly-formed Interact clubs from the Vishwabharati group of schools, Ahmedabad. “Thumbs up to PDG Lalit Sharma (DRFC) for helping Rtn Arup Sinha to contact DG Ingrid, Spain, whose clubs have taken up this project. This facilitation helped the Interactors to channel their money through the right conduit,” he said. “We will be with the children of Ukraine in their hour of need and extend support to them in whatever way possible and through all means.”

Recalling the phone call from Sinha requesting his help to send the money collected by Interactors to Ukraine beneficiaries, PDG Sharma said, “though the amount may be small €162, around ₹14,000, the Interactors have put in a Himalayan effort.”

Lively Interactors

When the digital space was thrown open to the Interactors, there was a flurry of Q&As exchanged between Indian students and Ukrainian children. “How are you going to celebrate

Christmas,” asked Mihir Vachcheta from India. “We plan to decorate our home with green Xmas trees, and have great supper with special dishes,” replied a child in Barcelona.

Interactors Kavya Dave, Jay Patel, Dev Thakkar, Devansh Vaghela and Rahul Iyer interacted with the children on issues of common interest — New Year celebrations, Ukrainian culture, monuments, statues, their religion, et al.

The answers of the children were translated by Intercountry Committee (ICC) head Dmitry Popov from RC Kharkiv Multinational. His Spanish counterpart Salvador Olivé from RC Tarragona Tarraco August, RID 2202, coordinated and chipped in to ensure a smooth two-way dialogue between Indian students and the beneficiaries in Barcelona. The Ukrainian boys and girls were curious to know about school education in India, the way exams are conducted and marks granted, how Christmas is celebrated here and whether it will snow in India during the festival season.

RID 2232 PDG Mykola Stebljanko, Ukraine, spoke on the two rehab projects being taken up — the rebuilding of a completely damaged school in Buzova village, Kyiv, due

to Russian bombardment; and helping farmers to get back to their vocation by demining their land and making it fit for cultivation under *Project Mines to Vines*.

Project head Luis Pueyo from RC de Castelldefels, Barcelona, RID 2202, the implementing club, said, “it is important for us to stay connected to take up new and more challenging projects.” The mobile home was made possible due to the collective efforts of Interactors from India and Rotarians from the Spanish clubs, he said.

Interact clubs trustee Rtn Kartikey Shukla expressing his solidarity with Ukrainians, said, “Rotary clubs must do everything possible to mitigate the sufferings of war-hit people through joint projects.” Vishwabharati English Medium School principal Dhaval B Solanki and Interact club coordinator Rita Shukla were also present. Around 100 Interactors, Rotarians from Ahmedabad, Spain, Ukraine and other countries took part in the virtual session through zoom and live Facebook streaming. RC Ahmedabad Greater interact chair Arup Sinha moderated the web event with the Spanish clubs. Rtn Harish Khatri from Jaipur provided the web infrastructure for the event. ■

RID 3231 hosts a multidistrict meet

Kiran Zehra

At the inaugural session of *Deepam*, a multidistrict meet hosted by RID 3231, at Tiruvannamalai PRIP Kalyan Banerjee appreciated “every member of the district for showing relentless effort in organising this programme. You are a group of consistent and reliable Rotarians trying to build Rotary at a time when our organisation has reached a plateau. Programmes like these, where you address the spiritual side of a Rotarian, will help them feel a higher sense of purpose, peace, hope and meaning. Which in turn will build our

confidence to do better not just for ourselves but for others too.”

Banerjee recalled a previous visit to this temple city with his late wife Binota, who was “terrified when the temple elephant tried to put a garland on us! Nonetheless, we had a good *darshan* and I will keep coming back, because of the wonderful memories and good friends I have made here.”

Comparing the event to a full moon night or *pournami* (in Tamil), when the city swells with thousands of pilgrims who walk 14km around the base of the Arunachala mountain to complete a ritual called *Girivalam*,

DG JKN Palani, RID 3231, said: “It looks like a full moon today because our city is overflowing with the presence of Rotarians from across India. I hope you enjoy our South Indian hospitality.” Eleven Rotary districts with over 1,000 registrations, including DGs Dushyant Choudhary (RID 3070), N Nandakumar (3232), Raja Sekhar Reddy (3150), B Elangkumaran (3203), and I Jerald (3000) attended the event, along with several PDGs.

Asking the Rotarians not to think of it as a “mere coincidence,” RID 3232 PDG Abirami Ramanathan, said “You must have done some *puniyam* (good deed) to meet Lord Arunachaleswar. After this event, I hope you will return to your district and double the good you are doing in the world.” He contributed ₹20 lakh to clubs in RID 3231 for six ambulances.

Set below the boulder-scattered Mount Arunachala, Tiruvannamalai is one of South India’s five ‘elemental’ cities of Lord Shiva. Here he is worshipped in his fire incarnation





(From left) DGs N Nandakumar, Raja Sekhar Reddy and JKN Palani in discussion with PRIP Kalyan Banerjee.

as Arunachaleshwar. The temple is one of India's largest (10-hectare) dating back to the 9th century. "For six years now, my club has been hosting the multidistrict meet on the last day of the 10-day *Karthigai* (Hindu month) festival that the temple hosts. At a time when lakhs of people are visiting our town, we have made special arrangements for our guest Rotarians to experience a special darshan and witness the lighting of the

Maha Deepam (a massive earthen lamp) atop the 2,668-feet high mountain," explained Dr Saiprasanna Sampathkumar, a member of RC Tiruvannamalai and event committee member.

One of the highlights of the event was a panel discussion with PRIP Banerjee and DGs Palani Nandakumar, Choudhary, Raja Sekhar Reddy, PDGs Rajasekhar Srinivasan, and Arumugapandian.

"The most important part of your leadership is to leave your district stronger than you found it," said Banerjee. For a good future for the organisation, he advised the DGs to "look beyond your year and invest in Rotaract."

Choudhary added "Nandakumar, Raja Sekhar, and I were Rotaractors who went on to be DRRs and are now DGs. We are living examples to show you that Rotaract is the future of our organisation."

Banerjee stressed that "you cannot by yourself achieve something monumental in a year. Look beyond your position and year. Think how you can extend support to your incoming leaders." Describing a club as the "basic unit of Rotary," Nandakumar explained how important it was to "engage and nurture our members, and care for them. If we don't, they are going to leave. We are sitting here because our leaders gave us responsibility and held us accountable. We have a lot to thank them for."

During the event, clubs from the different districts exchanged flags, sister club agreements were signed and a few club projects were featured. Event chairman PTL Shankar delivered the vote of thanks.

Pictures by Kiran Zehra

(From left) Rtns Robin Allen Shankar, event chairman PTL Shankar, DGs B Elangkumaran, JKN Palani, PDG Abirami Ramanathan, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, DGs Dushyanth Choudhary, Raja Sekhar Reddy, PDGs Arumugapandian, Rajasekhar Srinivasan and DG N Nandakumar releasing the district newsletter.



Alleppey club donates fish tank, home

V Muthukumaran

Rc Alleppey East, RID 3211, donated a 22,000-litre fish tank made of biofloc technology and costing ₹1.5 lakh to Vijay Lal (68), a motor mechanic and a plumber who had retired due to age-related illness. Now he and his spouse can pursue fish farming and make a decent income,” says club president Gopal Gireesan. Unlike an ordinary fish tank in which one can grow only around 100 fish, “biofloc tech helps accommodate over 1,000 fish at a time in a single tank and helps us to get a rich harvest in six months,” he explains. Along with the tank, fish, fish food, aerators and other equipment to maintain the hygiene of the biofloc tank were donated to the couple.

The biofloc technology uses aerators that aid the growth of bacteria and algae. “Bacteria converts the fish excreta (ammonia) into nitrate, which is consumed by algae, a rich food for fish.” A local vendor has built the custom-made tank for the couple.

This is not the first time, the club has reached out to needy families...

Project Snehaveedu

A newly-built house (750 sqft) on a three-cent land worth ₹16 lakh was gifted to a five-member family of a disabled person. Alappuzha

Biofloc tech helps accommodate over 1,000 fish at a time in a single tank and helps us to get a rich harvest in six months.

Gopal Gireesan
president, RC Alleppey East

The biofloc fish tank donated by RC Alleppey East to a beneficiary in Alleppey.



Club president Gopal Gireesan hands over the house key to a woman in the presence of Alappuzha Municipality chairperson Sowmya Raj.

the facility and DG K Babumon addressed the gathering at the hospital. All the 86 club members are multiple Paul Harris Fellows. “At the beginning of the year, we collect ₹15,000 from each member to build an annual corpus.” While donations such as those for the fish tank and building houses are collected through member contributions, for bigger projects like dialysis “we rely on CSR grants,” adds Gireesan. ■

Municipality chairperson Sowmya Raj inaugurated the home.

A dialysis unit (₹6.6 lakh) was donated to the Sagara Cooperative Hospital, Punnapara near Alleppey to provide subsidised treatment

to poor patients. “Last year we donated two such units (over ₹13 lakh) and we are continuing with this project through CSR grants,” says Gireesan. Alappuzha district collector Krishna Teja inaugurated



Drinking water facility for the Sundarbans

Team Rotary News



Over 10,000 people across four villages of the Sundarbans will enjoy safe drinking water, thanks to the water purifiers installed by RC Calcutta New Alipore, RID 3291, under the leadership of Sushil Agarwal. “There is plenty of water in the water-bodies in these hamlets but it is not safe for consumption,” says Agarwal, adding that children and the elderly would often fall sick due to waterborne diseases.

Since the start of this Rotary year the club began installing the purifiers in the villages in a phased manner. The units were procured from Tata Chemicals at a subsidised cost of ₹5 lakh a unit and the funds were raised from the club members. The RCCs helped the club identify the places to install the water purifiers and a committee with women members were put in place to take care of the operation and maintenance of the systems. ■

Create Hope in the World

Rotary theme 2023–24

Etelka Lehoczky

Addressing the incoming district governors at the 2023 International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, RIPE Gordon McNally called upon the members to capture the world's attention and lead the way toward possibilities far beyond our current expectations.

McNally, a member of RC South Queensferry, Scotland, unveiled the 2023–24 presidential theme, *Create Hope in the World*, during the Assembly on Jan 9. He urged members to promote peace in troubled nations, help those affected by conflict and maintain the momentum of initiatives begun by past leaders. “The goal is to restore hope — to help the world heal from destructive conflicts and, in turn, help us achieve lasting change for ourselves,” he said.

He recalled meeting a woman in Ban Taling Chan, Thailand, where Rotarians helped build houses, a meeting hall, and childcare and healthcare facilities following the tsunami that devastated South Asia in late 2004. The woman had lost her

family and livelihood. But she still had a gift to offer McNally: a beautiful seashell. “She told me that Rotary had restored her optimism. We gave her hope,” he said.

Promoting peace

A significant way to bring hope to the world is to put a greater emphasis on peace, said McNally. He cited the action Rotarians have taken in the past year to support the people of Ukraine after the invasion

by Russia. Rotary has made humanitarian relief a priority, attracting more Ukrainian members in the process. But he noted that true relief won't come without peace — not just in Ukraine, but in Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and dozens of other places around the globe. “Peace is the soil where hope takes root,” he said.

He emphasised the power of continuity, calling for Rotarians to continue the work of past leaders.

He pledged to maintain the *Empowering Girls* initiative launched by 2020–21 president Shekhar Mehta and uphold the emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion throughout Rotary. He also noted recent events that underscore the importance of Rotary's continuing focus on polio. In the past year, polio cases have emerged in many areas around the world, making it more crucial than ever for Rotary to lead the fight against the disease.



RIPE Gordon McNally

To do that Rotary must continue to raise at least \$50 million each year to receive the full 2-to-1 funding match from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said the RIPE. Only about 1 in 12 members currently gives to the polio eradication campaign, with fewer than 1 in 5 clubs donating each year. He asked the DGEs for support, creating a new sense of urgency in their clubs to help realise

Rotary's vision of a polio-free world.

Focus on mental health

Rotarians should offer hope to those affected by mental health challenges — a crisis exacerbated by the Covid pandemic, said McNally. Many people have lost family members, many more have found their social networks uprooted, and young people especially have had their educational and developmental

paths interrupted. As a result, more people around the world are facing mental health issues. And yet, seeking assistance is often perceived as a sign of weakness. “Reaching out for help is courageous — and continuing on a path towards wellness is even more so,” he said, adding that Rotary will work to improve mental health services in the next year and beyond.

McNally ended his speech by describing his

ideal balance of continuity and innovation. “Rotary helps create the conditions for peace, opportunity and a future worth living. By continuing what we do best, by remaining open and willing to change, and by keeping our focus on building peace in the world and within ourselves, Rotary helps create a more peaceful world — a more hopeful world.”

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A multidistrict DEI seminar in Rourkela

Team Rotary News

All clubs must adopt DEI — diversity, equity and inclusion — principles as they are important for Rotary's growth, said DG Shashank Rastogi at a multidistrict seminar on DEI hosted by RC Rourkela Steel City, RID 3261.

He congratulated the host club for organising the seminar on this critical subject. PDG Shyamashree Sen from RID 3291 traced the origin of DEI principles and shared a lot of statistics with the delegates. In her presentation, Anjana Maitra, district DEI chair, explained the meaning of each of the three terms and stressed the need for Rotary to be more diverse, equitable and inclusive “as envisioned by RI President Jennifer Jones.”

PDG FC Mohanty moderated a session on ‘Demystifying DEI’ in which AG Pratap Behera spoke on psychological safety and culture, while RID 3011-Women in Rotary International (WIRI) convener Julia Gangwani gave a presentation through



Rtn Arghya Guha addressing the delegates. RC Rourkela Steel City secretary Piu Guha (L) and RID 3291 PDG Shyamashree Sen are also in the picture.

video on the role of WIRI in the adoption of DEI principles.

Shyamashree moderated a session in which Anindita Mohapatra of Steel Authority of India and Anjana spoke. Rtn Arghya Guha, a differently-abled member, gave a talk on the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. In keeping

with the theme of DEI, the welcome kits given to delegates were made by students of Home and Hope, an institution for differently-abled children. Around 100 Rotarians from across the district attended the seminar. Sandhya Rani Baral, vice-president, RC Rourkela Steel City, presided over the meet. ■

Rotary Run for Indian Army

V Muthukumaran

RI District 3232 organised the *Rotary Run for Indian Army* on December 16 to mark Vijay Diwas, the anniversary of the Indian Armed Forces' victory in the 1971 war against Pakistan that led to the creation of Bangladesh. "We had organised a marathon for the Indian Army for the first time to create awareness among the youth about the valour of our soldiers who fought and won the 13-day war that ended in the surrender of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers," said DG N Nandakumar. The event suits Rotary well as it comes "under our focus area of Peace and Conflict

Resolution, besides giving us a big public image boost," he added.

In this first edition of the 3.5/6km marathon over 5,000 participants — 1,500 Army men, 3,500 Rotarians, Rotaractors and college students — 60 bikers and 100 cyclists displayed their patriotism with enthusiasm, put on Rotary t-shirts and either ran, walked or rode their way from the Army Golf Course, Island Grounds, at the stroke of dawn.

Flagged off jointly by Nandakumar and Dakshin Bharat Area General Officer Commanding Lt Gen A Arun, the runners and bikers went around

the neighbourhoods of the Army Golf Course and coursed through the Marina beach road before returning to the start point. "This event was made possible with the support of 50 Rotary clubs, the Army and event sponsor Mobis India Foundation. RID 3232 will continue *Run for Indian Army* as an annual programme," said the DG. Thanking Mobis, he said the company had earlier sponsored an Olympiad sports meet in August for 10,000 students from government schools which was attended by three state ministers, city mayor and other officials.

Thank you, Rotary

"Over the last two years of my stay in Chennai, I have said 'Thank you, Rotary' many times as the district Rotary clubs have stood with us, providing emotional support to the Armed Forces and war veterans," said Lt Gen Arun.

District Olympiad and Marathon chairman Vinod Nair from RC Chennai Galaxy, said, "If we and our families are safe today, it is due to the valiant efforts of our soldiers. Let us salute the Indian Army." DRR Gowtham Raj said, "we feel proud to run for the Army and this will motivate the youngsters."

RID 3232 DG N Nandakumar and Dakshin Bharat Area General Officer Commanding Lt Gen A Arun at the marathon in the presence of (from L) district coordinator Ganapathy Suresh, Sumedha Nandakumar, event chairman Vinod Nair and PDG G Chandramohan.



Around 2,200 Rotaractors from 100 clubs ran the marathon.

Lalitha, aged 88, whose husband, Lt Colonel A O Alexander, was killed in action during the 1971 war, came all the way from Kottayam, Kerala, to participate in the Rotary Run. “Lalitha embodies the Indian Army from A to Z and is a good friend to all of us,” said Lt Gen Arun. She, along with Nandakumar, Arun and Nair, cut a 51kg cake on the podium to mark the 51st anniversary of the war victory.

All the runners and riders got commemorative medals and were served breakfast after the marathon. While a live military band kept the mood upbeat, Zumba trainer Deepashree, president, RC Madras Mount, danced to some peppy film numbers which was followed by the audience. Earlier, yoga instructor Nidhi Sharma performed simple exercises that dispelled the



Zumba session in progress.

inertia among the early morning runners. PDGs ISA K Nazar, G Chandramohan and former DRFC M Ambalavanan were among those

present. TV anchor Nandhini from RC Chennai Dynamic compered the stage show.

Pictures: V Muthukumaran

Sri Lankan Rotarian bags Pravasi Bharatiya award

Team Rotary News

Kumar Nadesan, a member of RC Colombo, Sri Lanka, since 1974, has been selected by the GoI for India’s Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. The managing director of the 92-year-old *Virakesari* — the largest circulating Tamil daily published by Express Newspapers in Sri Lanka, Nadesan serves as Sri Lanka Press Institute chairman and represents the Newspaper Society of Sri Lanka. He also chairs the Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka, and is the president of the Global Organization of People of Indian origin (Sri Lanka).

This award is given by the President of India to honour people who have made exceptional and meritorious contributions in their chosen field/profession both in India and overseas. A recipient of RI’s Service above Self award, for several decades, Nadesan has been involved extensively in RC Colombo’s



(From L) Kumar Nadesan, PRIP K R Ravindran, US Ambassador to Sri Lanka Alaina Teplitz, PRIP Mark Maloney and his wife Gay.

community service projects, has headed many of them and was the architect of the club’s award-winning project to set up the SLANA (Sri Lanka Anti Narcotics Association). ■



PRIP Shekhar Mehta (fifth from R) with an Ethiopian child after CHD treatment, and her mother at the Jayadeva Hospital. (From L): F R Singhvi, PDG H Rajendra Rai, Needy Heart Foundation's director Dr C N Manjunath, Kiran Kumar, PDG Fazal Mahmood, Bimal Desai and RC Bangalore Midtown president Atul Kaushal are also in the picture.

Heart surgery for Ethiopian children in Bengaluru



Team Rotary News



One of the ambulances donated to Ukraine hospitals.

Four children from Ethiopia suffering from congenital heart disease were successfully treated at the Jayadeva Hospital in Bengaluru, thanks to RC Bangalore Midtown and RI District 3190's Needy Heart Foundation (RNHF). They were the first batch of 20 children from that country shortlisted for open-heart surgery at the hospital. The remaining patients will come in batches of four in the next few months, said club president Atul Kaushal.

It all began last year when the then RI president Shekhar Mehta met the

PM and the President of Ethiopia during his Africa tour and promised them that Rotary India will perform heart surgeries in India for 100 Ethiopian children with CHD. The Rotarians of Ethiopia worked out a partnership with the government and the Ethiopian Airlines to bring the children and their caretakers to India. The children, along with their parents, were flown free by the airline from Addis Ababa to Bengaluru and back, said PDG H Rajendra Rai, managing trustee, RNHF.

He thanked the foundation's director Dr CN Manjunath, surgeons and donors for the successful execution of the surgeries.

Since 2001, the district has sponsored over 10,000 heart surgeries.

Every year the club sponsors treatment for one lakh patients. "This year our emphasis is on corrective surgeries for congenital anomalies including heart, and cleft lip and palate," said Kaushal.

Ambulances for Ukraine

The district, along with RIDs 3170 and 3182, and RID 6980, USA, recently executed a joint disaster response grant of \$100,000 to provide three ambulances to Ukraine State hospitals at Mykolaiv, Dnipro, and Novooleksandriv, as the ambulance fleet here had worn out due to the war.

Speaking about the project, Rai said, "Last June when I returned from the Houston convention, Sanjay Deshpande

of RC Lake Nona Lunch, RID 6980, US, asked for our assistance to execute the grant project, and the three governors — Fazal Mahmood (3190), Gaurish Dhond (3170) and Ramachandra Murthy (3182) immediately agreed." The application was approved by TRF and the project was completed in September 2022. The vehicles were delivered to RID 2232 (Ukraine) at the Poland-Ukraine border-crossing, to be handed over to the hospitals.

The ambulances are now being used to provide emergency healthcare transportation in the war-torn country, said Rai, adding that one of the ambulances was used to transport a wounded woman to the hospital the day after it was handed over. ■

From RI South Asia office desk

Major Donor recognition

All individuals or couples whose combined giving has reached \$10,000, regardless of the gift designation, are being recognised as Major Donor by The Rotary Foundation. This recognition level can be achieved only through personal/spouse contributions and not through matching contribution by another individual, club, district, or any other entity or through recognition points. Donors will receive a crystal piece and pin(s) commemorating the gift at each new recognition level. Major Donor recognition items commemorate giving at these levels:

Level 1: \$10,000 to \$24,999

Level 2: \$25,000 to \$49,999

Level 3: \$50,000 to \$99,999

Level 4: \$100,000 to \$249,999

Major donor recognition is not processed automatically. Donors should fill and submit the form along with engraving instructions to Donor

Services Team, RISAO. The recognitions are processed at Evanston and will take 5–6 weeks to reach donor. Contact Madhu Mamgain (Madhu.Mamgain@rotary.org) or Manju Joshi (Manju.Joshi@rotary.org) for more details.

2022–23 Annual Fund Challenge

Apart from TRF Awards, here comes another chance for district/club/individual to be rewarded for their efforts in current Rotary year, by fulfilling the Annual Fund Challenge launched by RRFCs from Zone 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The challenge is already live, and members/club/district have time till March 31 to qualify for various awards under APF Challenge. All contributions made towards Annual Fund since July 1, 2022 will be considered.

This year's APF Challenge will not only help you in achieving your Annual Fund goal for the year but will also help you in increasing your club and donor participation rates.

For details, please refer http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/2022-23_annual_fund_challenge.pdf

Give online on behalf of club/members

All club officers can make online contribution on behalf of their club and club members, via. credit/debit card or using net banking option. This is the fastest and most secure way for contributions to be processed and posted. When a club leader uses this option, though the contribution credit goes to individual members, the 80G receipt is generated only in the name of remitter (the one whose *My Rotary* login has been used) and not in the name of individual members.

Step-by-step guide of this process is available through following link: http://www.highroadsolution.com/file_uploader2/files/give_online_on_behalf_of_club_or_club_members_sao.pdf ■

Star Performers (Membership)

Membership Awards	Zone 4	Zone 5
Highest Membership Growth in Absolute Nos	Ajay Madan (RID 3080)	S Balaji (RID 2981)
Highest Membership Growth in %age	Ajay Madan (RID 3080)	Rajesh Subash (RID 3204)
Maximum New Club Formation	Ashok Agarwal (RID 3012)	J Sridhar (RID 3232)
Highest Women Membership Growth in %age	Parveen Jindal (RID 3090)	Rajesh Subash (RID 3204)
Highest Existing Membership Retention	Ajay Madan (RID 3080)	Rajesh Subash (RID 3204)
Highest New Member Retention	Sanjay Malviya (RID 3053)	Rajasekhar Srinivasan (RID 3201)
Highest New Rotaract Club Formation	Ajay Madan (RID 3080)	Rajasekhar Srinivasan (RID 3201)
Highest New Interact Club Formation	Parveen Jindal (RID 3090)	Jacintha Dharma (3212)



RID 3080 DG VP Kalta receives the award in the presence of (from L) PRID Kamal Sanghvi, RIPN Stephanie Urchick, RIDE Anirudha Roychowdhury, RID Drew Kessler, PRIP Shekhar Mehta, PDG Manmohan Singh, institute convenor RID Mahesh Kotbagi, RI President Jennifer Jones and RID AS Venkatesh.

A fellowship cricket tournament

Team Rotary News



RID 3054 led by DG Balwant Singh Chirana organised the Uditia Cricket Championship which was hosted by RCs Jaipur and Jaipur Bapu Nagar, and RACs Arya College of Engineering and IT Jaipur. Rotarians from 173 clubs participated in the event. Eight teams qualified to compete in the semi-finals. Ahmedabad's Supreme Super King won the tournament and Jaipur's Royal Rocker was the runner up. ■

DG Balwant Singh Chirana playing a shot at the cricket tournament.

Awards) — Zones 4, 5, 6 and 7

Membership Awards	Zone 6	Zone 7
Highest Membership Growth in Absolute Nos	Sunil Phatak (RID 3261)	Pankaj Shah (RID 3131)
Highest Membership Growth in %age	Sunil Phatak (RID 3261)	Thirupathi Naidu (RID 3160)
Maximum New Club Formation	Santanu Kumar Pani (RID 3262)	Fazal Mahmood (RID 3190)
Highest Women Membership Growth in %age	Santanu Kumar Pani (RID 3262)	Thirupathi Naidu (RID 3160)
Highest Existing Membership Retention	Pratim Banerjee (RID 3250)	MG Ramachandra Murthy (RID 3182)
Highest New Member Retention	Santosh Prasad Rijal (RID 3292)	Thirupathi Naidu (RID 3160)
Highest New Rotaract Club Formation	Santosh Prasad Rijal (RID 3292)	K Prabhakar (RID 3150)
Highest New Interact Club Formation	Santanu Kumar Pani (RID 3262)	Fazal Mahmood (RID 3190)



RID 3261 PDG Sunil Phatak receives award from PRIP Mehta and RID Venkatesh in the presence of RI President Jones and RID Kotbagi.



RID 2981 PDG S Balaji and his spouse Jeyasree with PRIP Mehta, RID Venkatesh, RI President Jones and RID Kotbagi.

US team gets warm reception at RID 3120



PDG Karunesh Kumar Srivastava and his spouse Kanchan with the US delegates and marathon team.

RI District 3120 welcomed the 10-member delegates from the US led by team manager Simon during the mega marathon, *2 Million Steps to Hope*.

PDG KK Srivastava garlanded the Rotarians from the US and exchanged club flags with them. The 15-day marathon from Delhi to Kolkata, covering 1,550km (Jan 6–20), was organised with the support of RIDs 3190, 3011, 3012, 3110, 3240, 3250 and 3291 to create awareness on human trafficking. ■

Meet your



V R Muthu

Edible oils manufacturing
RC Virudhunagar, RID 3212

Focus on holistic community growth

Instead of giving fish, teach the community how to fish, says VR Muthu, who was inducted into the Chair's Circle (Level-2) of AKS and will complete his payment this June. He is the third Rotarian from the state to join the second AKS level. "I believe in community development, rather than community service," he says. "I don't believe in numbers. Instead of adding members, I believe in increasing our TRF contribution, and my thrust will be on Foundation giving," he says. His target for TRF giving is \$1.2 million. Thanks to Rotary, "we are one world without borders. I am an optimist and India has become a leader in the Covid pandemic management. Apart from immunising our population, we are a global supplier of Covid vaccines."

Having 'Support girl children' as the district theme, a two-hour motivation programme for school and college girls is being held under the signature project *Yathumanaval* (she is everything). "Around 1,000 to 4,000 girls attend these sessions conducted by motivation speaker Jayanthasri Balakrishnan. Our aim is to promote courage and confidence among girls," explains Muthu. So far, 24 such programmes were held, and the target is to reach 42,000 girls. A three-day RYLA in each month grooms 32 youth in entrepreneurship. "We have trained 640 students and Rotaractors till now, and will reach out to 180 more during this year." Already, 94 of them have started their own ventures. Muthu joined Rotary in 1981 and former Tamil Nadu CM K Kamaraj is his "ideal as he is the father of literacy movement in the state."



V V Pramod Nayanar

Medical tech
RC Payyannur Midtown, RID 3204

Mega eye camps for schoolchildren

Mega service programmes like polio eradication, networking and fellowship are key factors "that motivate me to be active in Rotary ever since I joined the organisation in 2000," says Pramod Nayanar. He is inspired by PRIP Rajendra K Saboo and his two-volume book *Look Beyond Yourself* is "something that is close to my heart."

So far, 180 artificial limbs (Jaipur foot) and 900 wheelchairs were distributed at special camps. "We will be holding mega eye camps for schoolchildren across the five revenue districts comprising RID 3204. The camps will reach out to around 50,000 students in the coming months," he says.

To shore up the public image of Rotary, a mega rally against drug abuse was conducted in September in which over five lakh people took part including police, excise officials, councillors and local VIPs. "The Rotary rally passed through all the revenue districts and the volunteers interacted with the school students." RCs Kasaragod and Kabany Valley were the co-hosts of this anti-drug rally. After the rally, "we got positive feedback from many quarters and some wanted to join Rotary, hence the event boosted our public image." His target for TRF giving is \$500,000.

One of his notable projects is the setting up of a dialysis centre (GG: \$34,000) with 10 machines at Kalpetta in Wayanad district. "We will take up more projects and programmes that will enhance our public image in this part of Kerala," he says. His wife Sreevidya, also a Rotarians, is his anchor in all initiatives and activities.

Governors

V Muthukumaran



Sanjeev Kumar Thakur

Biscuit manufacturing
RC Muzaffarpur, RID 3250



Kushanava Pabi

Radiologist, RC Burdwan, RID 3240

Great scope for Rotary in Bihar, Jharkhand

Two days are defining moments in a Rotarian's life, says Sanjeev Thakur. "The first one is the day he or she joins a Rotary club like the way I became a member in 1999. At that time, I was looking only for friendship and fellowship. But in due course, I got involved in the polio corrective surgeries done by my club; and when I saw the smiles on the faces of beneficiaries, then at that moment Rotary entered my blood, the second most important day in my life," he recalls.

In January, a mega distribution of sewing machines was launched with funds collected from friends of Rotary and club donations. "Our target is to reach out to 1,000 women to empower them through a regular income," says Thakur. One mammography bus (GG: \$100,000) and two eye-screening buses (GG: \$120,000) will be flagged off to provide medical care to the villagers.

With district grants, the clubs will be distributing 1,000 water wheels to tribal women. "There is tremendous potential for growth in this region with lots of revenue districts in Bihar and Jharkhand having no presence of Rotary," he says. "But the challenge is the terrain as the distance between the two ends is over 1,500km." He aims to collect \$400,000 for TRF. He, along with spouse Poonam, a Rotarian and former Inner Wheel chair of RID 325, has a "good knowledge of what needs to be done to lift the backward communities. As passionate Rotarians we are working on it."

Diversity strengthens clubs

The DEI — Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity — principle is now Rotary's core mantra and in tune with it "we love to have diverse Rotarians from Bengal and Northeast India comprising different cultures and lifestyle. We enjoy their fellowship and their inclusion will enhance our public image. The huge diversity of northeast is our strength, says Kushanava Pabi.

He joined Rotary in 1988, but became active only since 2000 when he was club president. "In the first decade of 2000, there was a snag in my professional life with the demise of my father. With the support of friends and well-wishers in Rotary, I overcame the personal tragedy... it was a process of reinventing life for me then," recalls Pabi. Rotarians must nurture a "strong mentality to serve society in the best possible manner."

Now busy doing a tightrope walk between looking after Camri Hospital, Burdwan, and Rotary activities, he says 64 district grants are being used by clubs for community projects. Two dialysis centres (five units each) will be set up at the Indian Red Cross Society, Burdwan, and in Siliguri with GG worth \$120,000; while a mobile dental clinic (GG: \$70,000) will come up in Durgapur. An eye hospital will be set up in Agartala (GG: \$70,000). "We have set up two dialysis centres in Bangladesh," he says. His target for TRF giving is \$500,000. Late PDG Ramesh Agarwal, who was instrumental in forming RID 3240, and PDG Samir Choudhury from his home club are his role models.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

worried about how he could surpass the beauty of songs like *Jag dard ishq jag*.

Yaad kiya dil ne kaha — *Patita*, 1953. A song that oozes romance! Hemant and Lata made this evergreen charmer one of the love anthems of the 1950s. Composers: Shankar-Jaikishen

Nain-se nain — *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Bhaje*, 1955. Hemant and Lata pour out romantic melody that matches the visual grandeur of the flowers and fountains of the Brindavan Gardens, Mysore. The song is filmed on the dancing duo Gopi Krishna and Sandhya. Composer: Vasant Desai.

In Hemant's voice, a deep but soothing baritone, one could experience an amalgamation of Rabindra Sangeet and folk music, the best of tradition and modernity. But Hemant always played down his golden voice dismissing it as an *uparwale ki den* (god's gift), says Biswajit.

Some great Hemant solos

- *Na ye chand hoga* — *Shart*, 1952 (Composer: Hemant Kumar)
- *O chandan ka palna* — *Shabab*, 1954 (Naushad)



Biswajit and Waheeda Rehman in a song sequence from *Bees Saal Baad*.

- *Jane woh kaise log the* — *Pyaasa*, 1957 (S D Burman)
- *Hai apna dil to awara* — *Solva Saal*, 1958 (S D Burman)
- *Ya dil ki suno duniya walo* — *Anupama*, 1966 (Hemant)
- *Tum pukar lo tumhara intezaar hai* — *Khamoshi*, 1969 (Hemant)

Early years

Hemant Kumar was born on June 16, 1920 in Varanasi. He

had three brothers and a sister. The family moved to Kolkata when he was young. His interest in music began early — he was just 13 when he sang his first song on All India Radio in 1933.

He tried to study engineering at Jadavpur University, but his heart wasn't in the course and he gave it up after a year. He learned from a couple of music gurus and received training in Rabindra Sangeet from the great Faiyaz Khan, till the latter's death in 1950. His first playback song was for the Bengali film *Nemai Sanyas* in 1937. He also served as music director for the Bengali film *Abhiyatri* in 1947.

The early 1940s were a tumultuous period in Indian history. The great Bengal famine of 1943 killed three million people, but the colonial government's attitude to this

Hemant's voice was a deep but soothing baritone, an amalgamation of Rabindra Sangeet and folk music, the best of tradition and modernity.



colossal human tragedy was callous. Hemant joined the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), which tried to raise political awareness through works of art.

In 1947, Hemant recorded a non-film song called *Ganyer badhu* (The rural bride) that had music and lyrics by Salil Chowdhury. The six-minute song was about how an idyllic rural woman's life was ravaged by famine and poverty. The raging popularity of the song made Hemant and Salil famous names in eastern India. The two paired again in many songs over the next few years, most of which were hits.

Hemant moved to Bombay in 1951. He was invited by Filmistan boss S Mukerjee to direct music for his first Hindi Film *Anand*

Math (1952). It left its mark in history with Bollywood's best patriotic song, *Vande Mataram*, sung by Lata Mangeskar. The song owed its eternal appeal to Hemant's arresting melody, superb picturisation, and exceptional rendering by Lata. But the film was not commercially successful.

However, Hemant won further success as singer. In *Jaal* (1952), his song *Yeh raat, yeh chandni phir kahan* was a masterpiece. The next year, Shankar-Jaikishen engaged Hemant for the song *Yaad kiya dil ne kahan ho tum* in *Patita*, one of Bollywood's iconic songs of romance. And C Ramachandra's baton created outstanding music for the phenomenal *Anarkali* the same year. Hemant's duet with Lata, *Jaag dard ishq jaag*, was magical.

Hemant's second film as composer for Filmistan, *Shart* (1954), failed to ignite the box office, though two romantic songs in it were thumping hits — *Na ye chand hoga*, sung separately by Hemant and Geeta Dutt, and *Dekho woh chand chupke karta hai kya ishare* (Hemant and Lata). The moon shone bright in Hemant songs!

But Hemant was disappointed by his commercial failure as a music director and decided to return to Kolkata. But S Mukerjee stopped him, Bollywood-style, at the Bombay railway station. "Give me a hit film first before you leave," he said.

The hit film did happen: the 1954 *Nagin* rocketed Hemant to the pinnacle of popularity. The snake charmer song *Man dole mera tan dole* (filmed on Vyjayantimala in Lata's voice) mesmerised audiences. It was claimed that snakes entered cinema

Hemant Kumar (R) with Kishore Kumar.



Disappointed by his commercial failure as a music director, Hemant decided to return to Kolkata. But S Mukerjee stopped him, Bollywood-style, at the Bombay railway station.

halls and residences when the song played! The sound of the *been* in a few *Nagin* songs was simulated by two Hemant assistants (Kalyanji, who played the clavoline, and Ravi the harmonium). Both of them became noted music directors themselves. Thus Hemant introduced electronics to Bollywood music. Other *Nagin* songs were hits too. Hemant won the 1955 *Filmfare* best music director award for *Nagin*.

Hemant gave expression to his patriotic bent once more in 1954, as composer for the film *Jagriti*, whose patriotic songs *Aao bacchon tumhe dikhaye* (sung by Kavi Pradeep, who was also the film's lyricist) and *Hum laayen hain toofan se* (sung by Rafi) became classics. *Jagriti* won the *Filmfare* best film award in 1956.

Hemant was often Dev Anand's voice — he sang 11 songs for him, many of which were hits. After Hemant recorded the song *Na tum hamey jano* for *Baat Ek Raat Ki* (1962), Dev Anand embraced Hemant, saying "You have given my romanticism a new dimension."

The most prolific phase in Hemant's career was from the mid-50s, when he saw all-round success for some 15 years — and failures as well. He did shows overseas — to ecstatic audiences in Trinidad,



With Lata Mangeshkar and Biswajit (L).

Tobago, Fiji and Suriname. He became a producer, launching Hemanta-Bela productions. His very first film (the Bengali *Neel Akshar Neechey*, directed by Mrinal Sen) won the President's Award for best film of the year. He went on to produce several Hindi movies under the banner of Geetanjali productions, for all of which he composed music as well.

Of these films, *Bees Saal Baad* (1962) was a hit, *Kohra* (1964) and *Khamoshi* (1968) were moderately successful. But all three yielded some memorable songs. Lata's *Kahin deep jale kahin dil* (*Bees Saal Baad*) won her the *Filmfare* award for best singer.

Incidentally, it was her first song after a three-month break

caused by a mysterious attack of food poisoning. Hemant was a wonderful source of support during this critical period, said Lata.

Kohra presented one of Hemant Kumar's gems, *Yeh nayan dare dare*. Kishore sung the pathos-filled *Woh shaam kuch ajeeb thi* in *Khamoshi* (1969). The same film featured *Tum pukar lo*, one of Hemant's most haunting solos.

The crowning glory of Hemant's composing career was his music for Guru Dutt's 1962 film *Sahib Bibi aur Ghulam*. Hemant used all of his knowhow and experience to craft seven emotional stunners rendered by Asha Bhosle and Geeta



Dutt — from *Bhanwara bada naadan hai* (Asha) to *Na jao saaiyan chhuda ke baiyan* (Geeta).

In the 1960s, Hemant was insanely busy — as singer, composer and producer in Hindi and Bengali films, besides music shows aplenty. Many shows began late in the evening; Hemant was the last singer, his turn came at 5am! Gramophone Company of India put together a collection of Hemant's songs on Tagore — it was a sensation. Almost throughout this decade, Hemant would fly from Bombay to Calcutta in the evening and fly back to Bombay the next evening. In fact, Indian Airlines gave him a best passenger award. It was a Bombay-Calcutta return ticket for two!

Such work and travel schedules — which meant little sleep, poor food and stress — wreaked havoc on his health. He was already suffering from diabetes and blood pressure and spinal problems. Being a heavy smoker — he smoked 60 Marlboro cigarettes a day — didn't help. He said his vocal chords worked best

after a smoke! But he did slow down during the 1970s.

Hemant received several honours, including *Filmfare* and national awards and several from the Bengal Film Journalists Association. In the 1970s he turned down a government offer of a Padma Shri, saying it had come too late. It is said that during the 1980s, he was sounded for a Padma Bhushan Award, but he didn't express interest. He passed away in 1989, after a heart attack

following a visit to Bangladesh. "Rabindra Sangeet has died," exclaimed Satyajit Ray.

Hemant Kumar was a towering figure of cinema — and not just because he stood 6'3" tall. His intrinsic goodness was as exceptional as his music. He was generous with colleagues and friends, even strangers. Many acts of philanthropy came to light after his death. No wonder he inspired the kind of adoration that few enjoy.

Editor's pick

- *Ya dil ki suno duniyawalo* (Anupama)
- *Na yeh chand hoga, na tarey rahenge* (Shart)
- *Yeh raat yeh chandni phir kaha* (Jaal)
- *Jaag dard-e isq jaag* (Anarkali)
- *Saanwley salone aaye din bahar ke* (Ek hi raasta)

The author is a senior journalist and a member of the Rotary Club of Madras South

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



Hemant Kumar with Geeta Dutt and RD Burman.



Hemant Kumar with Bengali playback singers (from L) Pratima, Alpana, Sandhya and Bela.

Ambulances for hospitals



DG Gulbahar Singh Retole handing over the ambulances to club presidents in the presence of senior district members.

RID 3090 DG Gulbahar Singh Retole handed over ambulances to five Rotary clubs in the district as the culmination of a GG project undertaken in 2019 under the leadership of PDG Rajeev Garg. The vehicles were sponsored by clubs from RID 7255, USA, RC Pokhran, RID 3292, Nepal, TRF, and RID 3090 at a total cost of ₹34.69 lakh. ■

Water tanks for needy families



PDG Ganesh Bhat and club members with beneficiaries of the water tank project.

RC Hubli North, RID 3170, identified 30 needy families struggling with unavailability of clean water to drink and carry out regular household chores at Jagdish Nagar, a slum colony in Hubli. The club donated 500-litre water tanks worth ₹90,000 to the families in the presence of past district governor Ganesh Bhat. ■

Annets contribute for Ukraine war victims



Annetts club of RC Madurai Metro Heritage at an event selling raffle tickets to raise funds for Ukraine.

The Annetts club of RC Madurai Metro Heritage, RID 3000, raised ₹25,500 (\$300) to help war victims in Ukraine by selling raffle tickets to members during an event. The funds will be wired to RC Dnipro, RID 2232, Ukraine. ■

Club celebrates International Youth Day



DG Elangkumaran along with students and Rotarians at the Youth Day celebration.

RC Erode North, RID 3203, celebrated International Youth Day with over 2,000 students from schools across Erode. A book on elder care titled *Akkarai Avassiyam* was distributed to the students. DG Elangkumaran presided over the event. ■



Wordsworld

A walk through the wonderland of words



Sandhya Rao

There are more books than we can imagine, more that we haven't read, and still more we haven't even heard of.

We are familiar with the word, bibliophile. It describes a person who loves books and possibly also collects them. However, it's only this morning that I discovered what describes a person who loves words. Upon reflection, it's a no-brainer: of course it is 'logophile', from the Greek *logos*, meaning word, reason, plan.

Well, this time round I have no *logos*-plan for my choice of books to share, nor even *reason*-logos

because the picks are random. It's just the *logos*-words that motivated the motley collection. As George Mallory once said when asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest, 'Because it's there,' the question 'Why these?' will invite the response, 'Because they are there!' For instance, why *Between You, Me & the Four Walls* by Moni Mohsin? Because this much-awaited title in the Social Butterfly chronicles has just been published and is as tongue-in-cheek and entertainingly satirical as Moni Mohsin has ever been.

The 'Social Butterfly' is a diarist who records her unadulterated impressions of the public and the private in Pakistan. This book covers the years 2014–21. As the back cover records, 'The world may have moved at a rattling pace since her last outing but the lifestyles of Lahore's literati, Dubai's glitterati and London's desi flutterati have more than kept pace.' An entry dated December 2015 is headlined

'Indian FM plans talks on improving relations / Butterfly goes to Mumbai' reminding readers of happier times between two countries. 'Guess where I've been?' begins the 'shrieking' entry. 'Mumbai! And guess where I was staying? On Shahrukh Khan's backside! Ji haan. You can all surrho as you read that. But it's true. My hotel was on his backside.' She has a meal at the Taj, goes shopping and also, 'I saw Ambani's house, which, between

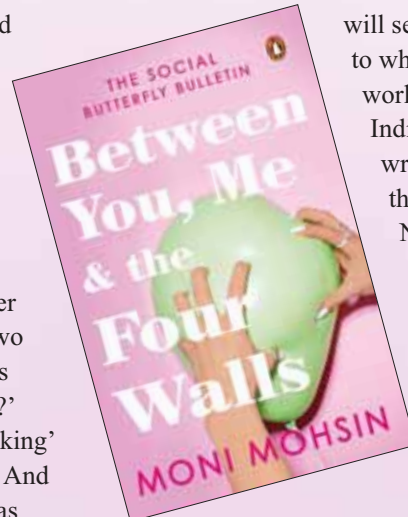
you, me and the four walls, looks like multi-storey car park.' Nobody in this part of the world, as far as I know, writes so boldly and with such command over political satire as Moni Mohsin. If nothing else, she injects you with a healthy and much-needed dose of guts.

Sifting and shifting through my modest collection, I rediscovered Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. Biafra, mostly peopled by the Igbo tribe, seceded from Nigeria and existed briefly as a nation between July 1967 and January 1970. Achebe, one of the most famous writers not only in Nigeria, but in the world, records in this book in elegant and compelling prose, his journey through the violent struggle that affected millions, looking at it from the historical, social, economic, literary, emotional, intellectual and other perspectives. As he peels off each layer of fact and meaning from this

account, the discerning reader will see many similarities to what's happening in the world today, including India. 'Suddenly,' he writes, reflecting upon the problems of the Nigerian federation, 'I realized that the only valid basis for existence is one that gives security to you and your people. It is as simple as that.' It is as simple as that.

But we never learn. We continue to actively engage in the art of 'othering' with a view to obliterating entire communities and regions as happened during the Biafran war.

At the other end of the spectrum are the Amish, a community living



mostly in the US who value the rural life, simplicity, pacifism and faithfulness to their religion. They eschew technology, instead opting to work their hands and their lands hard; they follow a simple dress code, generally have large families and usually stick to themselves. They are of Swiss, German and Alsatian origin and speak Pennsylvania Dutch, also called Dietsch, Swiss-German and English.

Jodi Picoult is a popular fiction writer who has some 28 novels and a lot other writing to her credit. According to literary critics, she is an unlikely candidate for the Literature Nobel, but around 40 million copies of her books are available worldwide and she's been translated into 34 languages. Now, if that's not a sign of popularity... Her 2000 novel, *Plain Truth*, is set among the Amish community. A newborn baby is found dead; the young mother, Katie, after steadfastly refusing to accept that she was ever pregnant, finally admits to giving birth, but vehemently denies killing

the baby. In the run-up to the trial, the girl's lawyer lives with Katie's family in the Amish community to get a better understanding of the situation. One thing is clear: the Amish are peaceful people, they will never resort to violence, let alone murder. How then to explain the death of the baby? As Jodi Picoult goes about unravelling the various conundrums in the plot, the reader gets to explore the Amish mind.

Picoult is known for building her novels around 'issues,' for which she does a tremendous amount of research. In *Small Great Things*, the theme is race relations, in *The Pact* it is suicide, in *House Rules* it is autism. *Plain Truth* is no exception and the amount of detail packed into it could wear you down. But then, reading physical books comes with an inbuilt safety feature: you can skip! The caveat is that skipping is an acquired skill: you must lightly skim over the crucial bits and bypass what you feel is unnecessary ones without impinging on the story.

Writing in *The Observer* some years ago, Louise France commented: 'Picoult has a formula: choose a subject which is soon to become controversial and tell the story through a rotating cast of characters. Stem cell research, date rape, domestic violence, sexual abuse, teenage suicide — here are some of the knottiest moral issues of our times sandwiched between the soft-focus covers of what is commonly dismissed as an airport novel.' It's not surprising, then, that many of her novels have been made

into films, the most famous among them being *My Sister's Keeper* (2009) starring Abigail Breslin and Cameron Diaz.

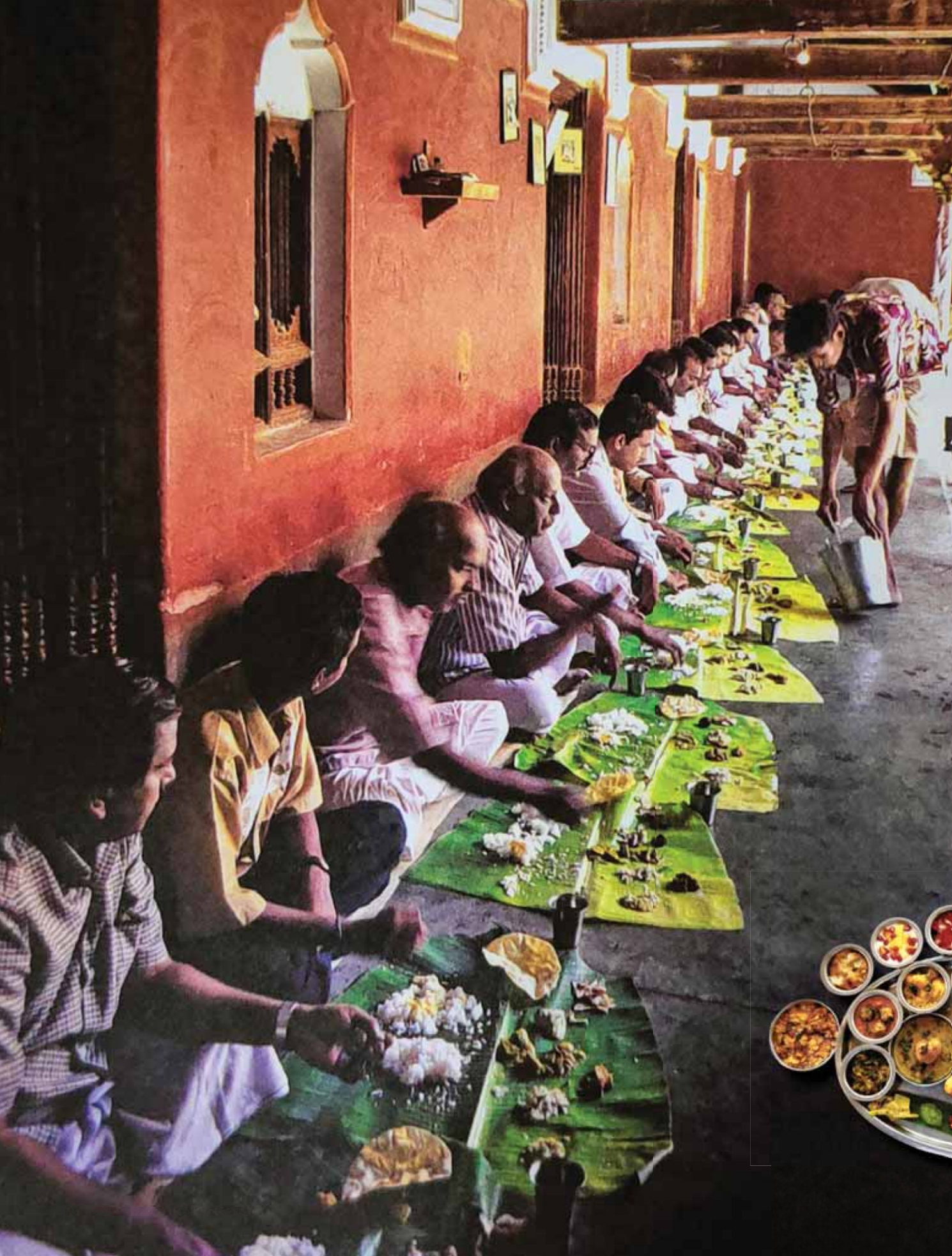
And so, to unashamedly borrow an unashamedly borrowed cliché, from reel to real life: *This Kind of Child: the Disability Story* by K Srilata. She is a poet, fiction writer, translator and academic who was formerly a professor of literature at IIT-Madras and now heads the Centre for Creative Writing and Translation at Sai University, Chennai. In *This Kind of Child*, Srilata collates first-person accounts, interviews and pieces of fiction about 'the worlds of persons with disabilities and those who love them.'

I have only just started reading the book. In a chapter entitled 'Beyond Sameness,' visual storyteller Dhaatri Vengunad Menon writes, 'Sometimes, a stroke of sunlight in the darkness can mean everything to someone. I am thankful to the teachers who have encouraged me and held my hand through my school days... The master who included me in the band... the teachers who would put aside their red pens to mark my papers in blue... I used to think that my dyslexia would go away sometime in the future, perhaps when I turned twenty. I used to think that life would, at some point, be a little less difficult. But the thing is, I am twenty now and the difficulties haven't really gone away.' As I try to really hear the many voices speaking up and out through the pages of this book, I learn so much more about darkness and sunlight and myself.

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

As I try to really hear the many voices speaking up and out through the pages of *This Kind of Child: the Disability Story*, I learn so much more about darkness and sunlight and myself.





Celebrating the diversity of Indian food

Kiran Zehra

If you've been to a South Indian wedding or a festival celebration in the south, you would've probably seen rows of people sitting cross-legged on the floor — with plantain leaves placed in front of them — patiently waiting for the servers to first place salt on it, followed by various appetising side dishes like *poriyal* (dry roasted vegetables), *kootu* (mix of lentils and vegetables), pickle, *appalam* (papad) and a sweet or two. Next, steamed rice and piping hot sambhar are served. You could either opt for *kara kuzhambu* (thick, sour gravy), *rasam*, or *moar* (buttermilk) for your next serving before savouring the delicious *payasam* (Indian rice pudding). The South Indian *thali* gives your palate an unforgettable taste, a melange of tangy, spicy sour, and sweet flavours.

You could say the same thing about the North Indian *thali*, a big plate with smaller bowls to serve the side dishes. The word *thali* does not merely translate to a platter but, refers to the way meals are eaten in

India; a selection of delicious dishes served together. Whichever part of the country you dine in, the *thali* is readily available in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, as it is an inherent part of India's dietary culture. This quintessential eating experience,

Title
The Great Indian Thali

Author
Nandita Iyer

Publisher
Roli Books

Pages
192

Price
₹1,140





Serves 4

Ishtu

Kerala vegetable stew

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp + 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 green cardamoms
- 3 – 4 cloves
- 1 piece cinnamon (1")
- 5 – 6 black peppercorns
- 20 g ginger, julienned
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 1 large onion, peeled and sliced
- 1 large carrot, peeled and diced
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- ½ cup (60 g) green peas
- 12–14 green beans, julienned
- 1½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp white pepper powder (optional)
- 400 ml coconut milk
- 2 green chillies, slit

Method

- In a pan or a pressure cooker, heat the oil. Add the whole spices and fry for 30 seconds until aromatic.
- Add half the julienned ginger and the curry leaves. Fry until the curry leaves turn bright green.
- Stir in the sliced onions and fry over medium heat for 3 – 4 minutes until it softens a bit.
- Mix in the remaining vegetables and saute for a few seconds. Add in half a cup of water, salt, and white pepper powder. Pressure cook for one whistle on stove top cooker or 10 minutes in electronic pressure cooker (pressure cook mode). Release pressure.
- Add in the coconut milk, green chillies and the remaining ginger. Bring to a gentle simmer. Take the pan off the heat. Add a final layer of flavour with coconut oil and raw curry leaves. Serve hot with plain rice, lacy aapams, or string hoppers.

Note

- Some recipes do not use the whole spices and the flavouring is from ginger, chillies, curry leaves and coconut milk alone. Spices like cardamom, cloves and cinnamon are abundantly grown in Kerala, especially the Malabar region, so it makes sense to use it in the recipe for added flavour. You can by all means make a simpler version of this recipe by avoiding the whole spices.
- This recipe uses a total of 400 grams of chopped vegetables. Mix and match using the fresh vegetables that you have on hand. ■

in its most elaborate form, is also a feast for your eyes with its bright, and colourful dishes.

As one of the largest consumers of vegetarian food in the world, Indian communities depend on a large variety of healthy, locally produced vegetables, fruits, nuts, grains and cereals. It is no surprise that we have specific or special food for every occasion, season, festival, age, region and even the day of the week!

The Great Indian Thali by Nandita Iyer, a nutritionist, is where stories meet flavours on a banana leaf or a round platter. Drawing recipes from Indian homes specific to the four main seasons of the country — spring, summer, monsoon and winter — the book shows you how to create 70 easy-to-make, delicious vegetarian recipes from your kitchen. The author takes a practical approach to cooking by using readily available ingredients and techniques that help enhance flavour and save time.

This book is also for those who are tired of preparing and eating the same old *aloo* (potato), *gobi* (cauliflower), and *bhindi* (okra) fry. The wholesome vegetable recipes will give you a culinary tour of India's landscape, make your mouth water and enlighten you with India's ayurvedic food history. The tagline "Thali brings India together" sums up the book's objective to inform and delight the readers with authentic recipes of the subcontinent. ■



Makes 10

Motorshutir Kochuri

Deep fried flatbreads stuffed with fresh green peas

Time taken: 50 minutes

The fresh green peas available in winters makes its way into these *kochuris* that are invariably a part of Bengali wedding feasts during the season. It is also one of the favourite *jolkhabar* (a Bengali term for snack) when served with *aloor dom* (potato curry). A bit of prep the previous night in preparing the dough and the filling makes it a rather easy festive breakfast.

Ingredients

For the dough

- 1 cup (150 g) all-purpose flour with ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 4 tsp cooking oil

For the filling

- 1 cup (150 g) shelled peas (fresh)
- 3 green chillies
- 2 tsp finely grated ginger
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp oil
- ½ tsp nigella seeds (*kalonji*)
- 1/8 tsp asafoetida

2 cups oil for deep-frying

Method

- Combine the ingredients for the dough in a bowl. Make sure the oil is well combined into the dough. Add warm water, a little at a time to make a smooth dough. Cover the bowl and allow it to rest for 15 – 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, prepare the filling. In a saucepan with 2 cups of water, boil the peas for 3 – 4 minutes until soft. Drain well. Combine with chillies, ginger, cumin powder, salt, and sugar and grind to a fine paste without using any extra water.
- Heat 2 tsp oil in a pan. Fry the nigella seeds and asafoetida for a few seconds. Scrape the prepared paste into the oil. Stir it over low-medium heat to dry out the moisture. This is to ensure that filling is not soggy. Keep stirring until the mixture comes together into a ball. Remove into a dish and let it cool.
- Divide the dough and the filling into 10 portions each. Flatten out the dough and make it into a cup in your palm. Add in the filling and cover well and roll into a ball. Using an oiled rolling pin and base, roll out into thick puris 5" diameter size.
- Heat oil in a wok and deep-fry each such *kochuri* separately over high heat until it puffs up. Flip it over with a slotted spoon and fry the other side for 20–30 seconds as well.
- Drain on a kitchen paper to absorb the excess oil.
- Serve with *aloor dom* (baby potatoes in Bengali style curry). ■



Serves 4

Bitter gourd curry

Time taken: 50 minutes

Gojju is a spicy, tangy and sweet preparation from Karnataka, typically had with steamed rice and ghee. It is prepared with a variety of vegetables and even fruits like pineapple and grapes. If you are a fan of salty-sweet flavours in a dish, this one is a must try.

Ingredients

- 3 – 4 medium sized (225 g) bitter gourds
- 2 cups chopped (karela)
- ¼ cup (40 g) tamarind + 2 cups water
- 2 tbsp peanut oil
- 1 tsp black mustard seeds
- 1 tsp split skinned urad dal
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 2 sprigs curry leaves

- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp rasam powder
- Kashmiri red chilli powder to taste
- ¼ cup (50 g) crushed jaggery

Method

- Slice the bitter gourds vertically. Remove seeds and inner white pith and dice it finely.
- Soak the tamarind in water for 20 minutes. Squeeze the soaked tamarind to extract the pulp. Discard the squeezed tamarind pieces and keep the extract aside.
- In a pan, heat the oil. Fry mustard seeds until they start popping. Add in the urad dal and fry over medium heat until golden brown in colour.
- To this, combine the chopped bitter gourd and fry over low to medium heat for 15 minutes. This will change colour to a duller green and the bitter gourd gets partially cooked. Sprinkle turmeric and stir in curry leaves. Stir well to combine and cook for another 5 minutes.
- At this point, pour the tamarind extract along with ½ cup of boiling hot water and let it come to a simmer over high heat. Allow to boil for 5 – 7 minutes and the tamarind extract to thicken. Add salt, rasam powder, chilli powder, and powdered jaggery. Allow the ‘gojju’ to boil for another 2 – 3 minutes. The consistency of the *gojju* is much thicker than dal so make sure you don’t add too much water.
- You can try the same recipe using sliced okra or green grapes.

Note

- The colour of the *gojju* depends on the tamarind used. A darker aged variety of tamarind will give a dark brown *gojju*.
- Acidity varies depending on tamarind, so taste as you go to balance chilli, jaggery, and salt.
- 1 tbsp coarsely powdered white sesame seeds can be added in the final stage. ■

Water wheels, a new year gift for Telangana women

V Muthukumaran

Having read and heard about the transformation water wheels have brought for the rural women in the drought prone Vidarbha-Marathwada regions of Maharashtra, Narasimha Medha Kotaru, president, RC Global Champions, RID 3150, set about the task of donating rolling plastic drums to tribal women in remote Telangana villages to ease their burden of fetching water.

“In RID 3150, this is the first time we are giving the water wheels to tribal women at select villages hit hard by water shortage. They trek 10km to fetch water from deep wells, ponds and streams located far away from their homes. Access to clean, drinking water is still a dream for many families in rural Nalgonda,” he says.

To begin with, he took up a pilot project that will cater to the drinking water needs of Kambalapalli village in Nalgonda district, 150km from Hyderabad, and two more villages — Kundee and Khadodi — in Adilabad district, 370km from the capital. While 42 water wheels were distributed in Nalgonda in November, another 137 ‘rolling drums’ were given to women at two villages in Adilabad on Dec 24. “Each water wheel has 45-litre capacity, and the women can just roll it over even on difficult terrain, saving themselves the tough task of carrying heavy loads on their head or waist,” says Kotaru. So far, 179 plastic drums have been distributed. “We are identifying



From L: Rtn Suseela, club's service projects director Kiran Karna, RC Global Champions president Narasimha Medha Kotaru and DG Talla Raja Sekhar Reddy at the distribution of water wheels in Kambalapalli village.

villages where there is an acute water scarcity to distribute water wheels as an ongoing project,” he says.

Kotaru has roped in Vanavasi Kalyan Parishad, an NGO working for tribal rights and livelihood, for doing the ground work and shortlisting the potential beneficiaries. Profusely thanking Rotary, Jella Eedamma (62) at Kambalapalli village, says, “earlier, most of our time was spent on carrying water on our heads. Now, even men are using the water wheels to fetch water and we have a lot of spare time to do other useful things.”

While holidaying in the US, Kotaru and his spouse, Suseela, were guided

by their sons — Krishna Chaitanya in California and Chakravarthy in Austin, Texas — and daughters-in-law, all five of them club members, on tapping the crowdfunding platform, Milaap. “Our 19 NRI members, along with others, pitched in with \$6,000 for the pilot project.” The water wheels were procured from the Silvassa plant of Nilkamal at ₹2,400 per unit.

The DG wants to make the water wheels a district project for better reach among rural women. “I will make a presentation at the *discon Uttej* (inspiration) at Guntur, Feb 4–5, to gather more support,” he adds. ■

5-min kitchen tips to good health

Bharat and Shalan Savur

A 43-year-old steps into Dr Rangan Chatterjee's clinic. He is slightly overweight and low on energy. The wonderful thing about Dr Chatterjee is, he doesn't just prescribe some vitamins and send you on your way. He cares, so he listens, and draws the person out. And they work on the solution together. This person seems inclined to doing step-ups as an exercise. 'Shall I do it for 40 minutes, three times a week?' he asks. The good doctor says, 'Yes, you think you could

do it?' 'Sure,' says the man, appearing quite charged. 'Okay, go ahead. And see me again after three weeks,' says the doctor.

Three weeks later, the patient returns. Slouching, still tired, he sheepishly says he has not been doing the step-ups — no time, so busy, the gym is expensive and so far away... That new slouch to his shoulders is because he now feels like a failure. Dr Chatterjee realises the 40-minute regime appears overwhelming. So, he teaches him two exercises, each to be

done for five minutes, twice a week, at home. The man is surprised, a bit skeptical. Would 10 minutes a week be enough? But he is game.

It's do-able!

A month later, he is back. He has a smile on his face, there's a confident air about him, his posture is erect. Guess what? He has been doing those exercises daily, yes, every day, before dinner. 'I said 10 minutes a week. He is doing 70 minutes a week!' says the happy doctor.

This UK-based doctor has, indeed, found the solution. Fitness need not be a drag. Set the time bar low. If it's 10 minutes, it feels doable and we do it, if it's half hour, it's overwhelming so we don't. I learnt this principle at a young age. My sister was jittery about her finals in home science. My dad took down key points from her voluminous text books and distilled the lessons into 10 pages. Taking heart, my sister studied them like they were scriptures. She sailed through her exams, she topped her class! When you make it short, you get the essence, you understand, you do what it takes. And it's sustainable.

5-minute kitchen workouts

Dr Chatterjee recommends some simple, effective exercises in his book, *The 4-Pillar Plan*. They're known as '5-minute kitchen workouts.' They are all done on the kitchen counter-top or wall:

Squats: Stand facing the kitchen counter. Holding on to it with both hands, squat as low as you can go, and rise again.

Heel raise: Stand. Raise your heels off the floor. Lower them.



Press-ups: Stand, arms straight out, palms against wall. Move chest to wall, bending elbows and raise your heels as you do. Return.

Arms strengtheners: Stand with back to kitchen counter, hands holding it. Go down, back straight, allowing arms to take your weight. Rise.

Lunges: Stand sideways to kitchen counter, holding it with right hand. Move right leg forward and lunge with left leg, keeping torso upright. Hold with left hand, move left leg forward and lunge with right leg.

Do two reps of each exercise every day. It's exhilarating! Go for them. As Dr Chatterjee says, 'Small things done regularly add up.'

The 12-hour eating window

The doctor also recommends TRE — time restricted eating which 'has profoundly powerful effects,' such as, ousting diabetes and excess fat. He suggests a 12-hour eating window: you eat only from, say, 8am to 8pm. And you don't eat from 8pm to 8am. That is, you don't eat for 12 hours of the 24 hours. The principle of TRE: In those 12 non-eating hours, the liver does not release glucose into the bloodstream but uses it to repair cells. Result: the blood-sugar level is controlled. In these fasting hours, it also secretes enzymes that break down cholesterol into acids which burn fat. Result: weight loss. This process is called autophagy — a 'housekeeping' process of the body.

I'm comfortable with a six-hour eating-window from 12 noon to 6pm — morning coffee at 7am, lunch at 12, coffee at 4pm, dinner at 6pm. It means, I don't eat 18 hours of 24 hours. I suggest you find your window and stick to it. A clarification: Tea/coffee without sugar, and water in the fasting 12 hours are fine, but no sweet drinks and no food. Other benefits of TRE: it lowers inflammation, supports digestion, aids elimination and promotes sleep.

However, I still opt for low-fat meals with sensible portions of:

Carbohydrates containing soluble fibre — brown rice, oats, sweet potatoes. Gastroenterologist Dr Will Bulsiewicz says fibre makes antibiotics more effective, cleanses our system and reduces the risk of dementia at an older age.

Protein from whole pulses — moong, red and white beans and masoor. They help regulate blood sugar balance and energy.

Fermented food — mainly yoghurt. It helps the gut balance itself, supports digestion, reduces inflammation, lowers high blood pressure, benefits the heart by increasing HDL, the good cholesterol, say medical researchers.

Vegetables can be a hot pot of carrots, beetroots, tomatoes, cauliflowers, peas, onions, French beans with garlic, ginger, salt, herbs, sauces. Roasted, spiced okra is a great dish too. All these have a host of vitamins and can be had every day.

Serenade sleep

If your cut-off eating point is 8pm, you have two fun-time hours to spend with your family, before turning in at 10 pm. Sleep is an important lifestyle factor as it is a fantastic stress-buster. A lovely way to serenade sleep and the sunset is quietly sharing all the wonderful things about our day. The mind and brain love such narratives. The subconscious laps them up and either promotes sound sleep or causes pleasant dreams. In sharing, include every happy detail: what made you smile, laugh, something beautiful that caught your eye, something graceful and sensitive in another's behaviour, productive things you did like updates, paying bills, completing a project.... It's heartwarming to dwell on compliments and see them as blessings; or recounting your meeting your siblings. Not only do you sleep well, the mind hums with quiet joy the next day.

Fitness need not be a
drag. Set the time bar
low. If it's 10 minutes,
it feels doable but if
it's for half an hour, it's
overwhelming.

One day equals one life

It's important to understand that one day is equal to one life. This helps us build our life around a good day, every day. Mornings are indispensable for starting anew. They're a great time to watch the trees and plants lending their stillness to the world while the ants and sparrows keep the world running with their activities and the birds sing and fly to hold the world in happy harmony. We could sway to any of these living melodies in us through practices that resonate with us — meditate, write, walk, run, sing, paint and breathe.

Finally three take-away tips:

- * Refuse to get distracted. Distracted people unsettle themselves all the time, focused people remain stable and serene. Do one activity at a time with full attention as if there is nothing else to do or think about.
- * Follow simple little daily routines. They can be our purpose. A purpose makes life meaningful and it includes chores such as doing laundry, taking out the garbage, etc.
- * Treasure the people who mean the world to you. Connect. Listen. Accept. That's how we weave love into a good life and make it joyful.

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



Towards making events carbon neutral

Preeti Mehra

From planning to implementation, organisers hold the key.

All of us have at some point or the other received invitations for what are billed as ‘green events’. These are happenings where the organisers profess to follow broad sustainability guidelines from planning to implementation. This is understandable given people are increasingly becoming environment conscious. In fact, we have to not only attend but also conduct conferences, seminars, office events, and sometimes even family get-togethers. So, what is the sustainability protocol we must follow when we are the organisers?

My thoughts immediately go back to last November when I heard about ‘India’s only ecologically designed music festival’ to be held in Bengaluru in December. Titled, ‘Echoes of Earth’ it had IKEA as its experience partner.

And, to give a boost to the idea of a circular economy, the festival promoters said they were making use of sustainable, life-size installation and furnishings and décor setup using discarded IKEA furniture and products. The stage and other accessories were all of recycled or upcycled material.

To my mind, the event showcased what can be done if we need to design a

music concert or stage a similar evening of entertainment. Obviously, a different mindset has to go into the planning bearing in mind the carbon neutral aspect of the event. It set me thinking.

I realised that, for a start, an important aspect is choice of the venue. You would have to identify a setting which harmonises with nature even as it serves its purpose—namely staging the event.



If it is an open-air venue, the carbon footprint would be that much less and would save on setting up tents or shamanas. But then the responsibility of leaving the venue exactly as it was before, or even better than before the event would be a huge responsibility.

Besides, where there is a gathering of people there is bound to be waste generated. If this aspect is not factored in, you can never claim with sincerity to be holding a green event. So, it's best to plan for not only waste disposal but segregation at the site itself. In fact, if you have a team of volunteers politely nudging people to throw their waste in the right bin you would do a big favour to those who have to later handle disposal and clearing. But unfortunately, at many large gatherings— from the Kumbh mela to any public rally— waste is strewn around without a care and remains a sad testimony to a don't-care attitude.

To give a sustainable edge it is best if the venue you choose can be reached

by public transport, or a last mile EV vehicle can be arranged for the audience/ visitors so that parking and use of precious fossil fuel can be reduced. Of course, it would be great if people could cycle to the venue, but that possibility is largely ruled out in our cities since urban planning has not made provisions for cycle tracks.

Transitioning to 'green events' cannot be dismissed lightly. In fact, it has become so important in our effort to decrease carbon emissions and mitigate climate change that in 2021 during the Glasgow climate change conference, the United Nations Environment Programme developed and introduced an online Green Events Tool (GET) that is accessible to the public and organisations to help them green their events.

With the help of GET, organisers can evaluate the GHG emission profile and sustainability impact of an event at the planning stage itself. In fact, GET could be a go-to tool for anyone deeply interested in greening events, especially if it is held on a bigger scale and is official.

Last month I got another info sheet from a global musical extravaganza taking place — Lollapalooza India 2023, co-produced by the portal BookMyShow. The organisers emphasised that their event was sustainable and environmentally conscious. Curious as to what extent they had planned for a carbon neutral music fest, I examined the organiser's list of what they had done. I was happy to find a fairly exhaustive action plan with attention paid to finer details. While outlining a 'zero waste to landfill goal', here were some of their initiatives:

- * Implement measures to minimise single-use plastics and non-recyclable materials.
- * Set up on-ground waste segregation stations across the venue to enable the audience to segregate waste while disposing. 'Trash Talk'

volunteers to guide festival attendees on the waste segregation process at key waste generation areas.

- * Establish a waste sorting area at the backend where a team would further sort the waste into over 15 categories. All biodegradable and recyclable waste would be transported to composting facilities or dry waste centres for further processing.
- * The waste categories would include items such as paper, plastic, cans, glass bottles, cardboard, food scraps, compostable plates and e-waste.
- * The musical event would feature a zero-food-waste programme through a waste management partner where all excess edible foods would be collected and shared with local NGOs for distribution to low-income communities. The team would have containers and food grade bags to enable collection of excess foods which would be sent to a food donation location.
- * To reduce waste, reusable cups made from crop waste would be provided, with even a small discount for those using eco-friendly cups.
- * A water execution plan would be in place. To reduce the usage of plastic bottles for water consumption at the event, many areas were to be serviced by water stations serving free water. For those attendees who did not carry their own water bottles, a reusable glass would be available for ₹150 with ₹50 returned to the consumer when the glass was returned.

Now these measures seemed like well thought out strategies that can be emulated when planning an event. So, when you plan your next big conference, music concert or get-together, you know what you have to do to make it sustainable and green.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues



RC Nagapattinam — RID 2981



230 students and teachers at the Municipal Middle School were examined at a dental camp. Club president P Karthikeyan and event coordinator Dr V Govindarajulu were present.

RC Vizag Couples — RID 3020



Two desktop computers, 10 ceiling fans and a printer worth ₹40,000 were donated to Shanti Ashram. The project was sponsored by club members.

RC Pudukkottai City — RID 3000



Over 150 people were screened for blood sugar, BP and chronic ailments at a health camp organised with the support of Be Well Hospital. Medicines were given.

RC Nasik West — RID 3030



Self-defence and karate training were imparted to 45 visually-impaired girls. They also attended a two-day workshop that covered menstrual hygiene and personality development.

RC Delhi Mayur Vihar — RID 3012



Woollen jackets, sponsored by Rtn Rajeev Gupta and his spouse Shashi, were distributed to farmers' children at Banphool School on the banks of Yamuna river.

RC Halvad — RID 3060



The club built a Rotary Garden in Halvad. It will have a children's park, gymnasium, walking track and other amenities.

RC Kharar — RID 3080



A dental check-up and hygiene camp was held at a government primary school in Bajhedi village. Dr Neetu Goyal spoke on good eating habits and oral hygiene. Hygiene kits were distributed to children.

RC Kanpur Green — RID 3110



The club sponsored the school fees of girl students following a request from MP Satyadev Pachauri. The financial assistance was covered in the local media.

RC Faridkot — RID 3090



A medical camp was held at the Dashmesh Hospital, Faridkot, in which elderly people were examined for health issues. Medicines were given.

RC Kushinagar — RID 3120



Nutritious food kits were donated to 26 TB patients at the Community Health Centre, Kasia. Club patron Rakesh Jaiswal and president Dr MH Khan spoke.

RC Moradabad — RID 3100



New Year was ushered in with Rotarians visiting Vriddha Ashram, an old age home, and providing snacks, tea and fruits to 120 persons there.

RC Pune Tilak Road — RID 3131



A week-long diabetes awareness and detection camp was held at 13 venues to mark World Diabetes Day.

RC Karad — RID 3132



250 people were examined in an orthopaedic camp organised with the support of Sancheti Hospital, Pune.

RC Mangalore City — RID 3181



An ICU facility worth ₹34 lakh was donated to Ladygoshen Hospital, with the support of RC Scherville, RID 6540, US. It will help patients with high-risk pregnancy.

RC Hiranandani Estate — RID 3142



In a two-phase artificial limb fitment camp, 107 beneficiaries were able to walk back home with joy of being able to lead a normal life. Food was arranged by the club.

RC Coimbatore Green City — RID 3201



In a joint project with RAC Personiv, computer labs (322 computers) were installed at 52 government schools. DG Rajmohan Nair inaugurated the ₹80 lakh project at a corporation school.

RC Kolhapur City — RID 3170



DG Venkatesh Deshpande flagged off a motorcycle rally from Shahu Mill Chowk to Rotary Samaj Seva Kendra in Kolhapur to mark World Polio Day.

RC Tirupur Celebration — RID 3203



Around 300 umbrellas were distributed to schoolchildren to help them attend school during monsoon under its *Kudaikul Malali* project.

RC Alleppey Coir City — RID 3211

A sanitary napkin incinerator was installed at the Mary Immaculate High School, Poomkavu, by inspector Saleena Beevi in the presence of club president Siju Joy and AG Thomas Anto.



RC Jamshedpur East — RID 3250

A medical camp and a TB awareness session were organised for transgenders at the Bhalubasa Community Centre in the town.



RC Port City Colachel — RID 3212

A cancer awareness programme was conducted for the public and 100 saplings were distributed. Children were asked to grow trees.



RC Bhubaneswar Meadows — RID 3262

Blankets were distributed to 80 Adivasis in Chandaka village to protect them against wintry nights. Club members funded the project.



RC Dharmanagar — RID 3240

A mega health camp was held in which elders and children were screened for general health issues. Medicines were given to the patients.



RC Salt Lake Metropolitan — RID 3291

At a GG-funded anaemia check-up camp, over 180 women were screened for haemoglobin, diabetes and hypertension at Noapara village.



Compiled by V Muthukumaran

Oxford musings

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan



Last month I had written about my short, three-month sojourn at the University of Cambridge in 1983. I had gone there to write a paper on the Latin American debt crisis. Six years later I applied to, and was invited by, Queen Elizabeth House (QEH) in Oxford. I was to spend a year writing a book on the Indian economy. But thanks to the general election of November 1989, I was able to go only for six months in 1990. However, I did start writing the book which was never finished because in 1991 the Indian economy underwent a massive transformation and the old chapters became irrelevant.

Oxford was a completely different experience. To start with it wasn't half as beautiful as Cambridge. The colleges look nice but the town itself is quite an eyesore. QEH had a large international programme for Indian bureaucrats and other employees of the Indian government. All of us were housed in rooms in a building called the North Oxford Overseas Centre (NOOC) in the famous Banbury Road. It wasn't a very nice place and I wanted to move out as soon as my wife and two sons joined me. But I think the colour of my skin came in the way and I just couldn't rent a flat. So the four of us had to make do in a large room at the NOOC. The saving grace was it had a tiny kitchenette and an attached bathroom. But I must mention here that one early morning

at around 3am someone threw a brick at our window. The glass shattered into small shreds and the only thing that saved us from injury were the drawn curtains. There was a lot of overt and covert racism in Oxford. I have several stories to tell. Suffice it to say that Oxford was very different from Cambridge.

It wasn't all bad though. One Saturday morning I was walking back with some shopping, wearing my usual white kurta, salwar and a khadi *bundi*, or what is now called a Jawahar jacket. It was absolutely deserted, with not a soul in sight when a taxi stopped on the other side of the road. The South Asian driver called out to me and asked if he could drop me somewhere. I told him I was almost home but

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he insisted saying it was because of my clothes. "*Dil khush ho gaya*," he said. So I got in and when we reached NOOC, half a km away, he refused to take any money. I invited him for tea. He said he was a Pakistani student. He drove taxis on weekends to earn some money. He told my wife he was always available on weekends — for free! This when tension between India and Pakistan was at an all-time high in the spring of 1990.

There was also a little shop down the road owned by a Bangladeshi man. He was a surly fellow who always seemed annoyed. But someone told me he didn't know any language other than Bengali. Imagine running a shop in England without knowing the language. He was helped in placing his weekly replenishment orders by two Bangladesh students. He never overcharged Indians. Pakistanis, however, were fair game, as were the locals. He was an absolute godsend for people with small children because he used to open his shop at 6 in the morning and kept it open till 10 at night.

What about the Indian sahibs, then, the babus who were also living at NOOC and attached to QEH? They weren't a bad lot on the whole but it was amazing how focused they were on freeloading or getting subsidised meals at the huge hospital just across QEH. Suffice it to say they were an embarrassment because the hospital finally complained. ■

In Brief



Man runs a marathon for 365 days

Gary McKee, a North England resident, ran a marathon every day of 2022 to raise money for cancer treatment. He ran 26.2 km every day before going to work, completing 15,300 km

during the year. He has raised £1 million for Macmillan Cancer Support and West Cumbria Hospice in North England.



Chennai safest for women in India

A study conducted by talent strategy consulting firm Avtar, which analysed cities on five metrics — ease of living, safety, women's representation rate, and women's empowerment initiatives, has ranked Chennai as the top city in India for women's safety with a score of 78.41 in the million-plus population category cities. The other cities in the list include Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mumbai, in that order.



Solar-powered car

Dutch company Lightyear has officially commenced assembly of a 4 – 5 passenger electric vehicle

that charges wherever there is daylight, whether parked or on the move. Named Lightyear 0, this long-range solar car, with a starting price of £250,000, charges on the go and gains up to 70km of range per day from the sun.



Creating opportunities for disadvantaged youth

Rare Recruitment, a London-based manpower company, is creating opportunities for disadvantaged young Britons

at some of UK's most prestigious companies. The firm uses a radical algorithm called Contextual Recruitment System, to identify talent from disadvantaged backgrounds and has so far 'contextualised' 1.7 million applications since it began in 2015.



Blue bonds to protect the ocean

The Nature Conservancy's Blue Bonds for Ocean Conservation strategy will unlock \$50 million as part of a debt-for-nature refinancing programme, for the island nation of Barbados which is reeling in debt and tackling low tax revenue. The Nature Conservancy announced it will work with partners to buy a piece of Barbados' national debt and refinance it to facilitate the nation's goal of protecting 30 percent of its territorial waters.

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