

Rotary NEWS

INDIA
www.rotarynewsonline.org



Houston Convention moments



RI presidents - past, present & future: (seated, from L) PRIPs Carl Stenhammer, Kalyan Banerjee, RIPE Jennifer Jones, RI President Shekhar Mehta, RIPN Gordon R McInally, PRIPs Richard King and Rajendra Saboo. (standing, from L) PRIPs Mark Maloney, John Germ, Ian Riseley, Barry Rassin, DK Lee, KR Ravindran and Holger Knaack.



RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi enjoying a lighter moment at the Convention.



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

Rasheeda Bhagat



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In preparing your food, do opt for eco-friendly, safe cookware options, says our Go Green column.



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Scan our QR code & visit our Website

On the cover:

RI President Jennifer Jones

Picture by: Monika Lozinska



Scan our QR code & read our Magazine

Rotary magic in Nepal village

It is difficult to digest that even today people are living without bathing, washing their clothes. We are glad that RC Mahabouddha, RID 3292, Nepal, has brought piped water to all the 236 homes, built toilets, and transformed the life in Pere village. No doubt, this is one of the 10 best Rotary projects ever done anywhere in the world.

N Jagatheesan, RC Eluru — D 3020

The June cover picture touched me and the sufferings of people at the Pere village, Nepal, were vividly explained by the editor. All the pictures related to the RI presidential conference in Hyderabad were of high quality and the articles were accompanied by illustrative pictures.

V Jayaprakash, RC Salem East — D 2982

Rotary Club of Mahabouddha, RID 3292, under the leadership of Rtn Devaraj Ghimire has executed a life-changing project to bring water supply to each house in Pere village, Nepal. Now, the lifestyle of the Pere villagers has changed for good with easy access to clean water and the village is open defecation free, thanks to Rotary. We can say god has opened his eyes in that village, acting through a Rotary club. Let us march further.

S Mohan, RC Madurai West — D 3000



The cover photo depicting a woman in Pere village, Nepal, bathing her child, is unique. Thanks to RC Mahabouddha, the villagers now have piped water supply. The farewell message of RI President Shekhar Mehta is excellent, and his recap of his year in the editor's interview is very interesting.

Glad to note that PRIP KR Ravindran led a solidarity march in Colombo demanding good governance in Sri Lanka. RID Mahesh Kotbagi explains well the importance of Rotary summits.

RID AS Venkatesh has focused on member retention which is critical. Messages from trustee chair and trustee are inspiring.

Ravishankar Dakoju's simplicity and helping mentality is laudable. Articles like *Hurts to see Ukraine bleed*, *Breast prosthesis for cancer survivors*, *RID 3292 Discon*, and *Projects at presidential conference* are all enjoyable. Colourful moments from RI presidential conference with beautiful pictures are a treat.

*Philip Mulappone M T
RC Trivandrum Suburban — D 3211*

The June issue is eminently readable and the magazine is reaching new heights by providing the latest information about Rotary projects. The articles on

Thanks for publishing the felicitations of Rtns Jayaraman and Narasimhan for completing 50 years of service in Rotary which will be a great encouragement to new members.

*N Alagusubramani
RC Chennai
KK Nagar — D3232*

championship for the blind. Thanks to DG Sunil Pathak and RC Pune Heritage for these two great projects. Photos are colourful and vivid; kudos to Team Rotary News.

*Chinmaya Mahapatra
RC Rajdhani
Bhubaneswar — D 3262*

**Great content
in May issue**

RI President Shekhar Mehta's message in the May issue on fostering global

peace is timely and relevant. Editor's note on Sri Lanka's plight is superb. Congrats to RC Bangalore Lakeside for doing 200 community welfare projects in a single year, spending over ₹1.5 crore, with three more months remaining. That is almost one service project every day of the year.

RID Dr Mahesh Kotbagi's message titled *The many shades of grey in the Ukraine war* was an eye-opener. Preeti

Mehra's feature *How much carbon on your plate* was informative.

*Daniel Chittilappilly, RC
Kaloor — D 3201*

The May issue revels in all quarters. President Speaks from Mehta is truly inspirational. Editor's note pointed out the disaster in Sri Lanka. It is our duty to render whatever help we can to our neighbours. The project details of clubs were really motivating. The messages

the global grant project by RC Mahabouddha, Nepal, and Sri Lankan Rotarians strongly supporting the demand for good governance show the global character of *Rotary News*. It was nice to read about the diverse experiences of RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi. Articles on empowerment of girls, RC Sambalpur's gift of mother and child hospital due to munificence of Dr Narayani Panda, and the great work done by the 'Iceman' Chewang Norphel are evidence of Rotary's great service.

*Dr Anil Latey, RC Poona
Downtown — D 3131*

Details of how Rotary is helping the Perevillagers in Nepal by bringing piped water to their homes, resulting in prevention of disease and improving their health were impressive. Inadequate access to safe water combined with poor sanitation and hygiene practices is among the leading causes of diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, worm infestation and skin diseases. Kudos to RC Mahabouddha for taking up such a deserving project to alleviate the sufferings of villagers. With reference to Sri Lanka's plight, we hope PRIP Ravindran will be a gift to Sri Lanka and use his good offices, along with his well-informed knowledge in economics, to help out Sri Lankans.

K M K Murthy, RC Secunderabad — D 3150

of RI directors and trustee chair were straight and plain, creating an impact.

The service projects of RC Bengaluru Lakeside are a global role model, branding Rotary as a globally successful organisation. PDG Vijay Rathi's foray into sanitary pad distribution has relevance for all clubs in India. Phulkari training of RID 3090 and promoting the handicrafts will help in women's empowerment. PRIP Rajendra Saboo has

penned an energetic piece on dancing. The innovative techniques in watering crops by Karnataka's farmers is a good example to be followed in areas with water scarcity. The joint effort of RC Madras and UK clubs in building toilet blocks will spread the message of hygiene and sanitation among other clubs. All other content in the May issue is well picked and edited.

*Dr Jayasekharan V P
RC Payanur — D 3204*

Where is the 'grey'?

With reference to the RI director's message titled *The many shades of grey in the Ukraine war* (May issue), the RI statement calls for "the withdrawal of Russian forces". There is not much 'grey' about this injunction. My grandfather was the charter president of RC Madras (1929), and though a peaceable man, would not hesitate to call out injustice and war-mongering when he saw them. He would not be too impressed today by the fence-sitting exhibited in your subcontinent.

*John Armstrong, RC Chiswick
and Brentford — D 1130*

I am impressed by the work done by RC Bangalore Lakeside, RID 3190. Their achievements, be it the restoration of a pond, setting up a creche for the children or gifting cycles to girl students will motivate Rotarians to serve the needy.

*Jagdish Malu
RC Gulbarga
Suncity — D 3160*

Cross-border friendship

Regarding the article *India Pak Rotarians meet at Kartarpur* (May), I'd like to share my experience of attending the Rotary peace

meet at this gurudwara in March. Being a part of 25-plus delegation from India, we were privileged to make new friends from Pakistan. We exchanged flags and visiting cards and invited them to our country. Around 100 Rotarians from Pakistan took part in the peace meet. The mission had a positive impact on us. I presented my club flag to RID Mahesh Kotbagi and RIDE Muhammad Faiz Kidwai. Together, we had food in the langar.

*Dr Pallavi Maji
RC Burdwan — D 3240*

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.

Telling our stories

Every month since I joined Rotary, I've looked forward to reading *Rotary*, especially the opening essay from our Rotary president. I'll admit that as much as I appreciate a digital copy, I still revel in the tactile sensation of sitting down and leafing through the magazine's glossy pages. They are a treasure trove of photos and memorable stories about our great organisation — the one we all know and love. I have learned so much over the years about service projects and the lives that each of you have transformed.

As a communications professional, I have longed for the day our stories would be a regular part of mainstream media and our flagship magazine might populate doctor's offices, coffee shops, or anywhere else people sit, wait, and browse. It's great that Rotary members are better informed about all we do — and wouldn't it be that much better if more people knew our stories?

All this was top of mind as I thought about our plans for promoting Rotary worldwide during the upcoming year. Over the next 12 months, we are going to shine a light on projects that put Rotary service on display to the world, and we are going to do it strategically. Nick and I will focus on some of the most impactful, sustainable and

scalable Rotary projects from our areas of focus, in what we call the *Imagine Impact Tour*.

We are inviting top-tier journalists, thought leaders and influencers to use their channels to help us raise awareness by reaching people who want to serve but have not yet realised they can do it through Rotary.

But there was another important issue to consider — our carbon footprint. I take seriously Rotary's emerging leadership position on environmental issues. The example set by our members during the Covid-19 pandemic is fundamental to how we carve out our future.

That means we will harness digital technology to tell our stories — we will be tweeting, posting, and “going live” to anyone who will listen. We must consider the environment, and part of that means not always travelling but continuing to connect in meaningful ways as we have for the past two years.

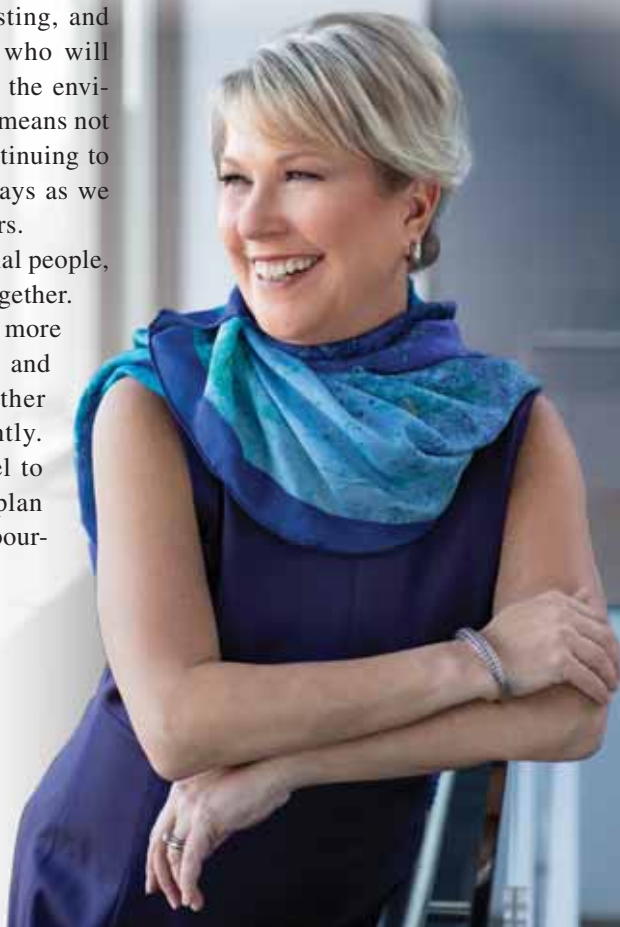
Of course, we are social people, and we still need to be together.

We simply need to be more mindful of our decisions and think about how we gather just a little bit differently. For example, if we travel to visit a project, we will plan successive visits in neighbouring areas.

So, what are your stories and who can help tell them? I hope you might consider your own *Imagine Impact* efforts — your story might be something you can promote just as easily on social media or during a zoom call. Think about ways to showcase notable projects in your clubs and districts.

We all feel the impact that Rotary service and values have on us. Now it's our opportunity to share that feeling with others.

Jennifer Jones
President, Rotary International





Finally, a woman RI president!

It is no exaggeration to say that she has stormed into the Rotary world like a breath of fresh air. When Jennifer Jones, the first ever woman president of Rotary walks onto the stage, or even a room, or a large conference hall, you cannot miss her presence. Her broad smile, cheerful demeanour and sparkling eyes tell you a lot about her persona. I have observed her closely in the Rotary fraternity for over six years... oh yes, *Rotary News* and your editor had engaged President Jennifer in a freewheeling chat at Evanston some seven years ago. The obvious and uppermost question in my mind, for the then RI Director Jennifer Jones, was how long before Rotary sees a woman at its helm... and she had said: “We’ll see an RI woman president in five years”. That naturally became the headline of the interview done in March 2016. Five years later, by 2021 we knew that a woman was going to be at the helm of RI in 2022–23. So she was bang on!

But to me, what she had added while responding to that question was even more important. She had said: “We get asked all the time when will Rotary International see a woman president. But had we put someone in that place just to check a box, it would’ve been terrible not only for Rotary but women as well.” The burden of her song then, as also now, is that while gender is important, Rotary has to look beyond gender... at women who are both qualified and competent to join Rotary. “We do a disservice to ourselves if we go on a campaign and try to fill a certain population. We just have to find the right people who are worthy of our organisation.” You can read our 2016 interview with Jennifer at <https://rotarynewsonline.org/well-see-an-ri-woman-president-in-five-years/>.

Of course we need qualified and competent women for all leadership positions within Rotary and outside of it. No two ways about that. But the underpinning factor is that even competent and qualified women, in all organisations and all regions of the world, need an enabling environment to excel in their jobs. They need equal opportunities, they need to be evaluated without the lens of prejudice, and they need just a tiny bit of elbow room to bloom in whatever role they are assigned. And this goes not only for women, but for all sections of society who have to be considered for any role or position irrespective of not only their gender, but also colour, creed, community or region. That is exactly where Rotary’s new mantra of DEI — diversity, equity, inclusion — comes into play. In a world that is getting increasingly polarised, the DEI credo holds much more significance than it ever did.

So as Rotary welcomes its first woman president, and a highly qualified and competent one at that, it’s a good time to resolve to really embrace the DEI mantra, with all our hearts and in the truest sense of the word.

Another heartening message from the new president’s stable is her commitment to continuing what the outgoing president Shekhar Mehta had so commendably started and vigorously pursued... the initiative to empower girls and women. Jennifer has reiterated her commitment to keep the focus and headlights on this initiative. When direction comes right from the top, then miracles do happen. The battle for gender equity is a long one, and it needs as many shoulders at the wheel as possible... both male and female.

Let’s wish our new president all the best to make her year a resounding success.

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

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Director

Bonding over Rotary Fellowships

changeover of officers. Addressing these administrative issues early can help to ensure the long-term viability of a fellowship. Consider using Rotary's online discussion groups to network with prospective international supporters.

To help you get started, review the following resources: Article 42.010 of the RI Code of Policy, Recommended Standard Bylaws for Rotary Fellowships, Rotary Fellowships Visual Identity Guidelines and Online Submission Form to Propose a new Rotary Fellowship. If your Fellowship proposal is approved, you and your fellow leadership team will be responsible for maintaining a vibrant, global Rotary Fellowship. The leadership team must periodically communicate with Rotary staff and apprise RI of your activities. Contact rotaryfellowships@rotary.org for more information.

I urge you all to join an existing fellowship of your interest or start a new fellowship. Fellowships will promote friendship and membership retention in Rotary. You will be able to invite several new friends and family members to join Rotary once you identify their fellowship interests. Fellowships will have diverse membership of youngsters, women and men promoting Rotary's DEI policy. This group will have the power to support service projects together. Together we can *Imagine Rotary* in a new dimension of friendship and fellowship.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mahesh" in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Mahesh Kotbagi
RI Director, 2021–23

Rotary Fellowships are international groups that share a common passion. Being part of a fellowship is a fun way to make friends around the world, explore a hobby or profession, and enhance your Rotary experience.

Rotary Fellowships globally unite individuals around a common interest, vocation, or recreational activity with the primary purpose to network, further friendship and build community. Starting a new fellowship requires significant time and dedication. Fellowship leaders are responsible for creating a meaningful, engaging, interactive and thriving global community of Rotary and Rotaract members and friends.

Thousands of Rotary members meet regularly as fellowship groups for adventure, music, sports, environment, motorcycling, flying, camping, gourmet cooking, scuba diving, sailing, camping, photography, golf, travel, hosting, etc. Such stalls are seen at Rotary conventions.

For general information on Rotary Fellowships and a list of currently active fellowships, visit www.rotary.org/fellowships. Reach out to rotaryfellowships@rotary.org to ensure that your new fellowship does not conflict with any of the above categories.

New Rotary Fellowships are subject to review by RI for recognition. Discuss your idea with existing fellowships to understand the details of managing an international group, especially on matters such as structure, bylaws, appropriate membership dues, communication between members, and election and

Speak

New year new beginnings

One of the unique features of Rotary is the change of guard in all clubs across the globe on July 1 every year. While some may argue that this hampers a club from thinking big and setting long-term goals, those inside are keenly aware that this change in leadership provides scope for fresh thinking while building on the successes of the past. In addition, leadership development is one of the basic tenets of our organisation and this provides ample scope for the same.

At the club, this beginning of a new Rotary year, with a new team taking charge, is also probably the best time to look back, review and reassess our goals and the strategies for achieving the same. Success stories of the past have to be cherished, celebrated and built upon. Mistakes of the past have to be reviewed dispassionately and the learnings from those are to be remembered.

I commend every club for the work they did in the last year amidst huge challenges and uncertainties. It was indeed heartening to see the passion and commitment that so many Rotarians demonstrated in the year that went by.

The time has come to pass the baton. A new year is a good time to plan something that has never been done before. This is the time of



the year when members are most likely to be in a receptive state of mind to accept, adopt and approve new ideas. Let us make use of this opportunity. Let us look around our community and imagine what could be improved. Let us be empathetic to the less fortunate. Let us imagine the things one could do to make this diverse society an equitable and an inclusive one. Let this imagination lead us into hitherto untried areas. Let us take the less travelled road. While the journey would be enjoyable, it is also likely to herald unprecedented successes.

The time is now to *Imagine Rotary!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AS Venkatesh'.

AS Venkatesh
RI Director, 2021–23

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Our giving adds up

As an accountant, I look at the world through the lens of inputs and outputs. We can plan with precision today for success tomorrow. My profession also taught me that numbers — those inputs and outputs — can sometimes tell great stories.



One of those stories is TRF: What it has given the world, starting from a modest input of \$26.50, is nothing short of remarkable.

In 1918, that amount — the surplus from that year’s Rotary Convention in Kansas City, Missouri — was applied, at the suggestion of 1916–17 Rotary President Arch Klumph, to a fund with the purpose of doing good in the world. The fund grew modestly until 1947, when Rotary founder Paul Harris died and donations poured in as a tribute to him. That year, the Foundation supported scholarships for 18 students — the first indication of the greatness to come.

Later the Foundation expanded, providing programmes such as Group Study Exchange and humanitarian grants which impacted the lives of members and communities around the world. In 1979, a major grant helped immunise 6.3 million children in the Philippines against polio, which led to the establishment of PolioPlus in 1985.

Rotary’s work with polio eradication — helping reduce wild polio from an estimated 1,000 cases daily in 1988 to just six total cases in 2021 — has been one of the most ambitious humanitarian projects ever undertaken by a nongovernmental body. That success story alone shows the significance and widespread impact of Rotary and its Foundation. Perhaps what is even more remarkable is that polio eradication is but one part of the Foundation’s efforts.

Today, the Foundation has grown into a multimillion-dollar charity. Our robust funding model allows districts the flexibility to choose which Rotary aspects they would like to support — polio eradication, scholarships, district grants, global grants, and more. Today’s Foundation impacts the world through disaster relief, disease prevention, peace education and other areas.

Everyone in Rotary is part of this great legacy; it is our responsibility to keep it going. This year, the trustees have set the goal of raising \$430 million. I know the expectations are high. But I also know just how much our members can achieve.

To get there, we will work together as we always do, with each club and individual giving what they can. In this way, we will ensure that we meet our ambitious but achievable goal and move our Foundation forward.

Ian HS Riseley
Foundation Trustee Chair

Let us rededicate ourselves to TRF

While Rotarians are at the heart of Rotary, The Rotary Foundation (TRF) is the backbone of Rotary. Much of the good work in Rotary is possible because of TRF. The programmes of TRF benefit millions; providing water to thirsty, food to hungry, medicines to sick, education to illiterate, shelter for homeless. The Rotary Foundation is the shining jewel in Rotary’s crown.



One of the greatest opportunities for Rotarians to work for peace is through the programmes of TRF. Helen Keller was blind. She was once asked by a reporter, “Miss Keller, is there anything worse than being blind?” She said, “Yes, having sight but no vision.” It is The Rotary Foundation, through its programmes and the good work that it does, that provides a forward looking vision to Rotary to make our dream of a better world come true.

As the new Rotary year begins, it is time to recommit ourselves to the Foundation. The 3rd Programmes of Scale application process has begun. These support a competitive grant process resulting in one award of \$2 million from TRF that is distributed over a 3–5 year period to a club or district-sponsored project showing success and readiness to expand to help more people in more places. The larger grant investment enables Rotary members to make an even greater impact in our areas of focus.

Over several years, more programmes are developed to create sustainable, impactful change with measurable results. The 2022–23 Programmes of Scale competitive grant application is open till August 1, 2022. I encourage clubs and districts of our zones to consider participation in this much-needed activity. Link - <https://my.rotary.org/en/take-action/apply-grants/programs-scale-grants>.

As we imagine what Rotary should be, can be and will be in 2022–23 let us rededicate to supporting our Rotary Foundation. Lead The Way to ensure Rotary Making a Difference.

Dr Bharat Pandya
TRF Trustee, 2022–26

District Wise TRF Contributions as on May 2022

(in US Dollars)

| District Number | Annual Fund | PolioPlus | Endowment Fund | Other Funds | Total Contributions | EREY Donors (in numbers) | EREY % |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| India | | | | | | | |
| 2981 | 108,381 | 2,230 | 15,000 | 336,137 | 461,749 | 184 | 3.5 |
| 2982 | 56,781 | 6,870 | 2,526 | 16,431 | 82,609 | 244 | 7.5 |
| 3000 | 33,653 | 1,611 | 330 | 47,376 | 82,971 | 41 | 0.8 |
| 3011 | 38,885 | 10,957 | 0 | 322,212 | 372,055 | 70 | 1.7 |
| 3012 | 47,988 | 18,603 | 80,331 | 506,653 | 653,574 | 154 | 4.1 |
| 3020 | 88,889 | 36,066 | 44,997 | 4,620 | 174,572 | 220 | 5.2 |
| 3030 | 118,627 | 2,141 | 63,185 | 15,704 | 199,657 | 256 | 5.4 |
| 3040 | 34,986 | 284 | 0 | 89,130 | 124,401 | 10 | 0.4 |
| 3053 | 68,205 | 1,911 | 30,027 | 182,334 | 282,478 | 66 | 2.4 |
| 3054 | 15,129 | 3,221 | 0 | 244,969 | 263,319 | 38 | 0.5 |
| 3060 | 201,138 | 10,539 | 933 | 164,320 | 376,930 | 2089 | 43.4 |
| 3070 | 53,785 | 127 | 0 | 32,399 | 86,311 | 269 | 8.7 |
| 3080 | 98,375 | 7,754 | 22,171 | 17,192 | 145,493 | 298 | 9.4 |
| 3090 | 55,709 | 2,379 | 29,000 | 0 | 87,088 | 219 | 10.5 |
| 3100 | 51,430 | 200 | 0 | 3,937 | 55,566 | 107 | 4.9 |
| 3110 | 31,338 | 68 | 1,014 | 33,117 | 65,537 | 125 | 3.6 |
| 3120 | 79,556 | 1,010 | 0 | 0 | 80,566 | 429 | 12.6 |
| 3131 | 482,401 | 37,285 | 82,013 | 1,368,295 | 1,969,994 | 2207 | 47.1 |
| 3132 | 45,153 | 5,222 | 5,493 | 12,029 | 67,898 | 93 | 2.8 |
| 3141 | 503,626 | 25,150 | 139,032 | 1,831,762 | 2,499,570 | 1416 | 24.0 |
| 3142 | 382,363 | 6,941 | 57,998 | 277,866 | 725,169 | 940 | 27.8 |
| 3150 | 110,483 | 44,357 | 183,000 | 122,448 | 460,288 | 881 | 22.3 |
| 3160 | 147,479 | 4,673 | 17,264 | 0 | 169,416 | 65 | 2.7 |
| 3170 | 184,518 | 17,449 | 36,587 | 197,871 | 436,425 | 536 | 9.2 |
| 3181 | 101,991 | 5,948 | 203 | 116 | 108,257 | 413 | 12.7 |
| 3182 | 71,734 | 9,718 | 4,000 | 39,487 | 124,940 | 306 | 9.8 |
| 3190 | 376,519 | 39,560 | 30,411 | 336,616 | 783,107 | 1533 | 24.9 |
| 3201 | 164,133 | 68,120 | 0 | 435,386 | 667,639 | 610 | 10.7 |
| 3203 | 52,806 | 22,268 | 7,086 | 335,960 | 418,119 | 188 | 4.6 |
| 3204 | 49,972 | 6,423 | 0 | 1,036 | 57,431 | 131 | 6.8 |
| 3211 | 72,837 | 1,024 | 0 | 53,020 | 126,881 | 185 | 4.0 |
| 3212 | 99,411 | 2,645 | 1,036 | 9,811 | 112,903 | 200 | 4.0 |
| 3231 | 25,885 | 14,504 | 9,867 | 10,784 | 61,040 | 160 | 4.7 |
| 3232 | 148,945 | 104,894 | 202,100 | 1,545,427 | 2,001,366 | 500 | 7.0 |
| 3240 | 177,799 | 12,647 | 0 | 77,864 | 268,310 | 637 | 19.5 |
| 3250 | 58,917 | 3,576 | 1,036 | 22,108 | 85,636 | 548 | 15.0 |
| 3261 | 13,136 | 1,833 | 300 | 210,532 | 225,801 | 40 | 1.4 |
| 3262 | 23,660 | 3,872 | 0 | 0 | 27,532 | 80 | 2.1 |
| 3291 | 174,518 | 5,789 | 47,804 | 23,785 | 251,895 | 480 | 12.8 |
| India Total | 4,651,142 | 549,872 | 1,114,743 | 8,928,735 | 15,244,491 | 16,968 | 10.8 |
| 3220 Sri Lanka | 87,496 | 24,417 | 2,010 | 103,165 | 217,088 | 248 | 10.9 |
| 3271 Pakistan | 9,555 | 5,431 | 0 | 18,685 | 33,670 | 11 | 0.6 |
| 3272 Pakistan | 16,882 | 11,158 | 0 | 2,117 | 30,157 | 15 | 0.8 |
| 3281 Bangladesh | 119,933 | 69,787 | 26,118 | 431,901 | 647,740 | 253 | 3.1 |
| 3282 Bangladesh | 42,113 | 24,093 | 1,000 | 43,252 | 110,458 | 159 | 4.3 |
| 3292 Nepal | 158,722 | 21,525 | 51,321 | 133,814 | 365,381 | 893 | 15.3 |
| South Asia Total | 5,085,842 | 706,282 | 1,195,191 | 9,661,669 | 16,648,984 | 18,547 | 10.3 |

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

Source: RI South Asia Office.

Storyteller in Chief

Diana Schoberg

2022–23 President Jennifer Jones is eager to advance Rotary’s narrative.

At a training seminar for Rotary club presidents-elect at a Dallas hotel in February, sergeants-at-arms wearing yellow vests and stetsons lead participants, grouped by Rotary district, into a small room for a photo op with 2022–23 Rotary International President Jennifer Jones. As the groups enter, the club leaders mob Jones — the room a flurry of handshakes, fist bumps, hugs and the occasional squeal. For each photo, the stetson-clad Rotarians (nicknamed “Rangers”) give instructions on who should stand where, then Jones, who is seated front row centre, stands up, turns around, and warms up the crowd. “Is this the best district?” she asks one. She challenges a district to dance, busting a groove on the tan and grey patterned hotel carpet. Another, she teases, is the best looking. And then there’s the “party” district, whose members give a raucous cheer.

Click. Click. Click.

The groups file out. More than a few people linger to get selfies with Jones and her husband, Nick Krayacich. One young woman, dressed in cobalt blue, shouts, “Congratulations and thank you for being a leader for women in Rotary!” More cheers. She and Jones bump fists as she departs.

“She’s just amazing. She’s a rock star,” says Rhonda Walls Kerby, past governor of District 5890, who has been observing the scene. When the

photo session is finished, Jones signs several Star Wars collectors’ helmets that will be auctioned at an upcoming district conference in Houston. She pulls on a Stormtrooper helmet. The phones of the Rotarians still in the room shoot up in unison to capture the moment.

Click. Click. Click.

“She makes everyone feel special. That’s why everyone feels like they are best friends with Jen,” says Eric Liu. Liu met Jones at the International Assembly in 2016, when he was an incoming district governor and she was the incoming RI vice-president, and they hit it off.

Liu’s sentiment is among the common refrains heard during a whirlwind weekend travelling with Jones. Over and over, people mention that she has an easy way with people, that for years everybody “knew” she would be the first female Rotary president, that she’s a new kind of leader.

And that she’s the leader Rotary needs right now. The laughter in the room grows to a warm buzz as Jones jokes around with her friends. But it’s been a long day after an exhausting trip. Jones and Krayacich spent nine hours in the airport the previous day due to weather delays, then had to solve logistical issues with their travel to Dallas. They are in bed by 11, a brief respite before the pre-presidential duties start all over again the next day.

Jones, 55, was born in Windsor, Ontario, and — save for a few post-college years working in the Turks and Caicos Islands and Manhattan — has lived there her whole life. The oldest of three children, she’d run lemonade stands to earn money to give to charity, and recalls organising a carnival in her family’s yard to benefit kids with muscular dystrophy. “Growing up, my parents had given us wings to do service in our community,” she says. Today, her mom, dad, and one of her brothers and his wife are Rotarians. Her other brother created a painting that inspired Jones’s presidential theme ties and scarves.

Both Jones and Krayacich are originally from Windsor, but the two met in the Caribbean. Burned out after finishing university and working in the newsroom at a radio station, Jones took time off and worked at a resort in the Caribbean, while Krayacich, a physician, had just finished his internship in Toronto and went to the islands to go scuba diving. They struck up a friendship, and when they both eventually moved back to Windsor, they started dating and got married shortly thereafter.

In many ways, Krayacich, the governor-nominee of District 6400, is the opposite of Jones. He’s quieter and more serious, preferring one-on-one conversations, traits that are suited to his vocation. “Jones is definitely an

Jennifer Jones with her husband, Nick Krayacich, during a visit to northern California in February.





President Jones addresses a training seminar for Rotary club presidents-elect in Dallas.

Energiser Bunny. She's outgoing and very much a connector," he says. "We complement each other very well."

Jones started her own television production company when she was in her late 20s, wowing bank officials with her business plan, negotiating a lease, and investing in hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of equipment. "I've always wanted to carve my own path," she says. "Sometimes that's meant taking risks and making yourself open to new experiences."

One of those was Rotary. As a rookie radio reporter in the late

1980s, she'd covered the organisation and remembers attending club meetings where the members were nearly all men. "I remember feeling very intimidated by the experience," she says. "I was in my early 20s. It was the power brokers of the community." Fast forward to 1996, months after she'd started her business, Media Street Productions. The manager of the local cable station invited Jones to a meeting. She realised she had found her home. "It was clearly one of the greatest gifts I've ever received," she says. "I didn't think walking through

the door that day that it would change the trajectory of my life."

The next day at the Dallas training seminar, during a soup and salad lunch, the 1980 Kool & the Gang song "Celebration" blares over the speakers. People around the hotel ballroom begin to dance, clapping and swaying to the music. Among them is Jones, waving a colourful light stick above her head. She dances among the tables, stopping for a selfie here, a hug there, grooving with the crowd. The flash mob lines up in front of the stage, Jones at the centre. When the song ends, Past RI Director Don Mebus introduces Jones, who makes a heart with her hands as she arrives onstage.

Her speech brings listeners through the full range of emotions. As she speaks about witnessing a paediatric heart surgery in Jordan, the room is so quiet you could hear a Paul Harris Fellow pin drop. When she finishes, the crowd stands and erupts in applause. But there is no time to bask in it. Jones has a plane to catch. The emcee asks the throngs of enthusiastic Texans to please let her through. And with that, she's off to the airport, her sprint aided by a pair of purple sneakers that she wears throughout the trip ("I save heels for when I'm presenting," she says). She doesn't like to eat before she speaks, so now she grabs a bag of chips and settles into her seat to rest.

Four hours later, she arrives in Los Angeles for another presidents-elect training seminar. Tonight's duties involve stopping by the hospitality suites to meet Rotarians from the participating districts. In one room, Rotarians drinking umbrella-festooned mai tais mingle as Hawaiian music emanates from speakers decorated with grass skirts. Jones barely

makes it in the door before she is again swarmed by Rotarians eager to meet her. Randy Hart, 2022–23 governor of district 5000 (Hawaii), presents her with a lei. “All I can think about is the energy she has,” comments one man. “To think, this is the third room she’s visited!”

Lakecia King is one of the well-wishers, embracing Jones when they meet. “She’s so warm and genuine,” says Lakecia, the incoming president of the Rotary Club of East Honolulu and the diversity, equity, and inclusion chair for District 5000. Eight weeks out from surgery for a torn meniscus, Lakecia has flown from Hawaii for this opportunity, drawn by Jones’s rally for diversity in Rotary. “I was not going to miss it for the world,” Lakecia says. “She believes in something that is so necessary. This time calls for peace and unity, for embracing despite our differences and based on what we have in common.”

Jones finally makes it to the back of the room, where she’s swept into a hula dance with seven other women



in front of an “Aloha” backdrop. She visits a few more of the hospitality suites and ends in that of District 5500 (Arizona), where she chats with a circle of Rotarians. As she raises her glass to leave the room — “Well, cheers, everybody!” — an older

woman with close-cropped white hair calls out, “Thank you for being the first!” Jones responds, not missing a beat: “But not the last.”



Posing for selfies in Los Angeles.

Jones and Krayacich took their first international service trip in 2000, shortly after Jones joined Rotary. (Due to schedule conflicts, Krayacich didn’t join until 2010 when a breakfast club was chartered, two minutes from their house. “She wasn’t even the one who asked me to join Rotary,” he chuckles.) They went for five weeks to the Brazilian Amazon, where Krayacich ran a medical clinic and Jones produced a fundraising video for the clinic and created a training programme for local journalists. “Once we went on an international Rotary service trip, it resonated very profoundly with me,” she says. “I knew this was something I wanted to do more of — to help people tell their stories, to find the narrative in what we were doing and come back and share it.”



In 2001–02, she served as president of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland. Every meeting, she'd randomly pick a member, have them stand, and tell them why they were important to the club. "Every week, people would show up to see who the next person would be," she says. It taught her a lesson about the importance of taking care of members, a priority now that she is RI president. "We were having fun, doing good work, and we liked each other," she says. "Sometimes we try to over-manufacture the reason why people join and stay."

At that point, her district had never had a female governor. She was under 40, and she "wanted to try to take that for a ride," she says. "I knew I wanted to put my full-on energy into Rotary. I loved it." After her term as governor in 2007–08, she chaired the local chamber of commerce and the University of Windsor board of governors. "It was the most amazing precursor to sitting on the board of directors of Rotary," she says. "Each one was a building block."

In 2009, when Jones was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 42, her days turned to chemotherapy and radiation. She got the diagnosis in the fall, and she had been asked to speak at the International Assembly, the training for incoming district governors-elect, in January 2010. Then RI President-elect Ray Klinginsmith encouraged her to come if she was able. In consultation with her oncologist, she decided to attend. "The Sunday before, I lost all of my hair," she says. "I showed up at the event in a wig."

Some technical issues interrupted her speech, but it still made an impact, most of all on her. "At one of the lowest points in my life, someone didn't count me out," she says, tearing up. "It was just such a message that I needed at that point in time. That I had value, that I could contribute and participate. He gave me hope at a time when you think that maybe hope isn't what you're going to get."

President Jones and Krayacich pose beside a towering redwood tree during their stop in northern California.



Jones went through eight rounds of chemo and 21 rounds of radiation. Her employees stepped up to keep her business running as she stepped back. That too proved pivotal. When her health improved and she prepared to re-engage with her work, she looked at what her team had accomplished. “I sat back and thought about it,” she says. “If I go back in as I was, I’m going to rob them of the leadership growth they would have had.” She decided to pass the day-to-day operations of the company to her team so she could pursue Rotary almost full time. “I wouldn’t orchestrate having cancer again,” she says, “but I can definitely say I wouldn’t be sitting here where I am today if all of these things hadn’t happened.”



When the Covid-19 pandemic shut down the world in March 2020, Jones was fresh off a month-long Rotary trip, which started in India for its Rotary centennial, continued in Nepal to visit a project started by a Rotary Peace Fellow, and concluded in New Zealand for the South Pacific presidents-elect training seminar. In the airport travelling home, she began to see people wearing masks, but she still thought she’d be back out on the road within weeks for a scheduled appearance at a district conference in Nairobi, Kenya.



Then, suddenly, the world changed. “I remember the moment I heard that the border between Canada and the United States shut down,” she says. “In my life I could never have envisioned hearing those words.”

Jones and Krayacich isolated at their cottage on Lake Erie, about half-an-hour from their house. “I still remember waking up at 3 o’clock in the morning and flipping open my phone to look for a newsfeed to find out what was going on. That sense of





Above: President Jones leads attendees in Danville, California, in a rendition of John Lennon's "Imagine" in honour of Ukraine.

Left: With her aide, Brad Howard, and his wife, Marcia, in northern California.

Below: Addressing an audience in Los Angeles.

unknown we all went through at that time was so horrific."

Jones was a Rotary Foundation trustee at the time. She watched with pride and amazement as Rotary members quickly applied for disaster response grants from The Rotary Foundation to fund service projects. But she wanted to do more. Previously, she'd drawn on her vocation to plan large fundraising events for the Foundation, such as a golf outing with Jack Nicklaus in 2019. She called then RI President Mark Maloney and pitched the idea of a telethon.

The idea came together over a matter of weeks. Jones reached out to her vast network of contacts in the Rotary world and asked them to send videos. "We really wanted to capitalise on what we could do in real time for people," she says. "Yes, raising critical funds was important, but more than anything, it was an opportunity to bring together people from around the globe and to showcase that we're people of action — even though we were all isolated in our own homes, we were able to do something." (More than 65,000 people tuned in to the event, hosted by Past RI President

Barry Rassin and Past RI Director John Smarge, which raised more than \$525,000 for the Foundation.)

One of the people who contributed a video was Anniela Carracedo. A Rotary Youth Exchange student in Mississippi in 2019–20, Anniela could not return home to Venezuela when the pandemic struck. Stuck in the United States, she started Rotary Interactive Quarantine, a global youth network for Interactors and Youth Exchange students. Jones messaged her in a chat during an online zone meeting and asked her to create a video about the youth network for the telethon.

"After that, I googled her," Anniela recalls. "Who is this person, and why is she organising this? I told my host mom about it, and she said, 'People say Jones will be the first female Rotary president.'"

Anniela and Jones kept in touch. They've never met in person, but they've formed a strong bond. Jones has spoken at Anniela's meetings and invited her to speak at the International Assembly. Anniela has made TikToks about Jones. In an interview over zoom, she holds up her phone to show Jones-themed stickers on WhatsApp. "I'm her biggest fan, I guess," she says. "She really inspires me to keep doing what I'm doing. That it's OK that I'm a leader and that I'm a woman. If she did it, that means that I can do it too."

And Anniela's not the only one who feels that way. Another TikTok posted on the *@interactivequarantine* account juxtaposes a video of Jones with an audio clip declaring, "She's an icon, she's a legend, and she is the moment."

Jones's ability to inspire extends beyond young women. Following her visit to Los Angeles, Jones attends a





President Jones shares a quiet moment with Krayacich during their visit to northern California.

District 5170 dinner at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, California. At a pre-dinner reception for Major Donors, Jones gives a speech in an exhibit about the American West. “I knew back in 2013 that someday she’d be RI president. She has an aura about her,” says Joe Hamilton of the

I’ve always wanted to carve my own path. Sometimes that’s meant taking risks and making yourself open to new experiences.

Rotary Club of Cupertino, who has been mingling in the crowd. The vibe is more subdued than it was at the seminars she’d attended earlier in the weekend. Sequestered partygoers line up to take photos with Jones, who is elegantly dressed in a flowing cream-coloured top and palazzo pants with gold embellishments that she bought on her trip to India before the pandemic.

Click. Click. Click.

It’s dinnertime now, and the donors leave the American West for the classic car exhibit on the first floor, where tables are set up among a kaleidoscope of gleaming sports cars. The weekend has felt like an episode of *The Amazing Race*. In the past 48 hours, Jones has taken two flights, spoken at three major events in three cities, and posed for possibly hundreds of selfies. (“There’s the paparazzi — this is the Rotarazzi,” Krayacich jokes.)

Even so, Jones, standing in front of a black screen with the words of her presidential theme, *Imagine Rotary*, projected behind her, is practically glowing as she speaks again. The war in Ukraine has intensified over this weekend, and this speech ties the troubling current events to the peacemaking power of Rotary. She says, “You can’t underestimate the importance of what you’re doing today.”

Jones calls the district governors and governors-elect onto the stage and leads everyone in attendance in a teary rendition of John Lennon’s “Imagine,” in honour of Ukraine. People in the crowd hold hands and sway along, imagining the power of Rotary with Jones at the helm.

Click. Click. Click.

Pictures by Monika Lozinska

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Membership Summary

As on June 1, 2022

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Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 37,135

Rotaract clubs : 11,304

Interact clubs : 17,895

RCCs : 12,203

Rotary members : 1,209,069

Rotaract members: 230,611

Interact members : 411,585

As on June 15, 2022

| RI District | Rotary Clubs | No of Rotarians | Women Rotarians (%) | Rotaract Clubs | Interact Clubs | RCC |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2981 | 135 | 6,327 | 8.47 | 59 | 53 | 239 |
| 2982 | 77 | 3,485 | 7.23 | 47 | 98 | 73 |
| 3000 | 132 | 5,501 | 9.18 | 97 | 293 | 214 |
| 3011 | 121 | 4,772 | 27.01 | 75 | 120 | 36 |
| 3012 | 149 | 4,063 | 24.49 | 69 | 81 | 61 |
| 3020 | 80 | 5,026 | 7.58 | 33 | 168 | 350 |
| 3030 | 98 | 5,387 | 15.48 | 128 | 335 | 366 |
| 3040 | 108 | 2,715 | 14.18 | 57 | 83 | 181 |
| 3053 | 75 | 3,046 | 18.09 | 36 | 50 | 126 |
| 3054 | 171 | 7,284 | 20.22 | 106 | 195 | 566 |
| 3060 | 105 | 5,192 | 15.43 | 64 | 77 | 150 |
| 3070 | 124 | 3,421 | 15.96 | 47 | 43 | 59 |
| 3080 | 104 | 4,577 | 14.33 | 145 | 164 | 116 |
| 3090 | 93 | 2,478 | 6.46 | 45 | 92 | 127 |
| 3100 | 102 | 2,342 | 11.70 | 14 | 27 | 146 |
| 3110 | 142 | 3,870 | 11.78 | 14 | 19 | 106 |
| 3120 | 90 | 3,760 | 16.81 | 63 | 34 | 55 |
| 3131 | 142 | 5,779 | 24.43 | 120 | 244 | 143 |
| 3132 | 87 | 3,663 | 11.08 | 34 | 125 | 167 |
| 3141 | 112 | 6,500 | 27.40 | 142 | 187 | 103 |
| 3142 | 102 | 3,838 | 21.44 | 83 | 147 | 83 |
| 3150 | 115 | 4,615 | 12.89 | 142 | 144 | 118 |
| 3160 | 79 | 2,764 | 9.80 | 29 | 20 | 82 |
| 3170 | 144 | 6,662 | 15.69 | 96 | 255 | 173 |
| 3181 | 87 | 3,516 | 9.27 | 35 | 196 | 116 |
| 3182 | 86 | 3,554 | 9.54 | 44 | 128 | 104 |
| 3190 | 162 | 6,966 | 19.49 | 198 | 259 | 72 |
| 3201 | 158 | 6,283 | 10.14 | 125 | 103 | 81 |
| 3203 | 95 | 4,888 | 8.14 | 74 | 234 | 37 |
| 3204 | 68 | 2,347 | 9.12 | 23 | 31 | 13 |
| 3211 | 153 | 5,216 | 8.70 | 7 | 27 | 133 |
| 3212 | 131 | 5,001 | 12.06 | 82 | 216 | 153 |
| 3231 | 95 | 3,615 | 8.24 | 33 | 83 | 419 |
| 3232 | 169 | 8,230 | 18.63 | 128 | 223 | 96 |
| 3240 | 105 | 3,665 | 16.56 | 65 | 409 | 222 |
| 3250 | 105 | 3,986 | 20.75 | 64 | 74 | 185 |
| 3261 | 91 | 3,411 | 18.97 | 17 | 25 | 44 |
| 3262 | 129 | 4,308 | 14.69 | 75 | 121 | 164 |
| 3291 | 164 | 4,389 | 24.27 | 137 | 101 | 669 |
| India Total | 4,485 | 176,442 | | 2,852 | 5,284 | 6,348 |
| 3220 | 73 | 2,311 | 16.01 | 90 | 139 | 75 |
| 3271 | 121 | 2,477 | 17.40 | 127 | 185 | 25 |
| 3272 | 161 | 1,824 | 17.49 | 70 | 22 | 47 |
| 3281 | 308 | 7,678 | 17.80 | 276 | 154 | 207 |
| 3282 | 182 | 3,853 | 10.98 | 202 | 49 | 47 |
| 3292 | 155 | 6,125 | 17.98 | 174 | 136 | 127 |
| S Asia Total | 5,485 | 200,710 | | 3,791 | 5,969 | 6,876 |

Source: RI South Asia Office

Mehta thanks Rotarians for a fulfilling year of service

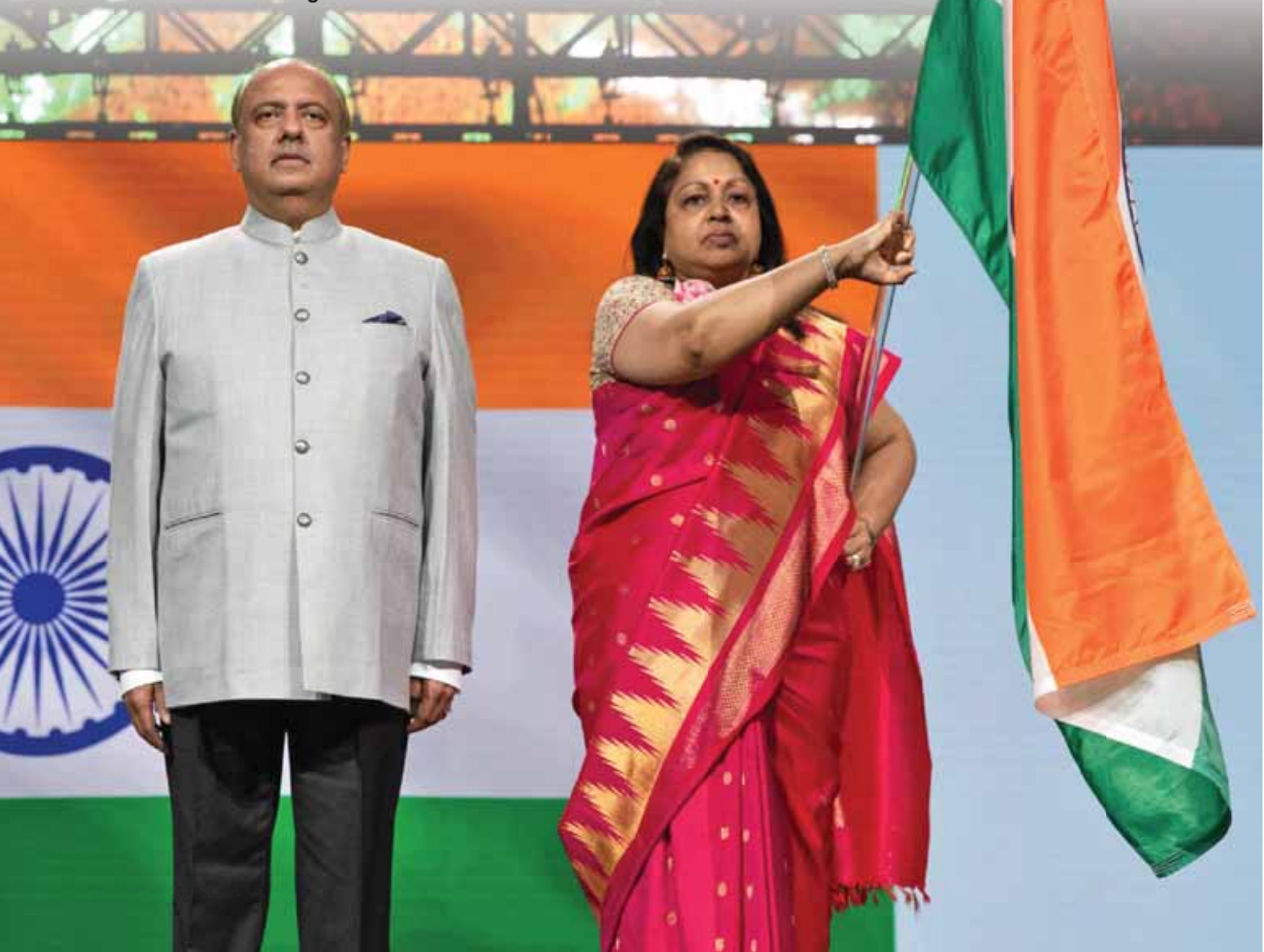
Rasheeda Bhagat

As I look back, a thousand visuals flash before the eye. What a wonderful year it has been for Rotary. You, my dear changemakers, have lived up to the highest aspirations of ‘grow more, do more’. We have grown like we haven’t for many years, and that despite the pandemic.

Rotarians have added a net of 45,000 new members, resulting in a hard stop to our declining membership of many years,” said RI President Shekhar Mehta, at the opening session of the RI Convention in Houston.

He was particularly chuffed that finally, Rotary had seen a “face-to-face convention in three years.

RI President Shekhar Mehta with Rashi holding the national flag.



It's unbelievable, but now that we are all here, enjoy the convention, meet old friends, make new ones, and that too in person. This will also be our opportunity to hear outstanding speakers from around the world, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And even as we discuss the future of Rotary, it will be a wonderful opportunity to look back at the achievements of the year gone by."

Complimenting Rotarians for the strong growth in membership this year, he said, this growth had "been especially strong in India", where the 'each one bring one' (EOBO) mantra had really worked. "In just one year, the governors there have assured an addition of 20,000 new members, of which 75 per cent have come just from the EOBO initiative." This one-year growth was equivalent to the normal growth seen in five years.

Korea and the African continent too had done "extremely well", with Kosovo and Albania in Europe marking "remarkable growth. I am sure that if we keep the focus on growth, our membership will grow across the world," he said.

Congratulating Rotaractors, who had also registered growth and done some exemplary projects, Mehta said, "My heart filled with pride each time you served to change lives. All of you

You, my dear changemakers,
have lived up to the highest
aspirations of 'grow more,
do more'.

Shekhar Mehta
RI President



President Mehta and Rashi with PRID Bryn Styles (extreme L) and Orbie, the teddy bear in a space suit — the official mascot of the Host Operating Committee of the RI Convention, Houston.

have done meaningful work in all areas of focus. We brought literacy to the illiterate, water to parched areas of the world and sanitation where it was badly required and in different communities. We also healed the sick and worked for the environment, took a stand for peace, expressing solidarity with the people of Ukraine."

Amidst thunderous applause the RI president said: "Rotarians have donated millions of dollars to help the displaced in Ukraine, with Rotarians in nearby countries opening both their hearts and homes. Rashi and I visited Poland to see the displaced people and we saw at close quarters how Rotarians were caring for them."

Seeing was believing, he added. "It was a heart touching moment,

listening to the story of Olga, who had to flee with her children, leaving her husband behind to fight for her country. And Olga was not the only woman, there were so many of them."

Enumerating other "shining examples of service across the world," Mehta said one such example he witnessed was in Korea, "where we were amazed by the hands-on service of Rotarians to save Planet Earth. Twenty divers, comprising 10 Rotarians and 10 Rotaractors, kept diving into the sea again and again for 24 hours to take out 40 tonnes of debris."

He was also overwhelmed to see the thousands of heart surgeries on children, and a multitude of dialysis centres, blood banks, eye hospitals, etc coming up to ensure prevention of disease, particularly for mothers and children. "The work to eradicate malaria from Zambia continues in full swing, the programme will



President Mehta and Rashi with their family.

impact tens of thousands of people in that country.”

Rotary was taking big strides in basic education and literacy in India and elsewhere. The literacy programme in India during the pandemic brought education to the homes of millions of children. The WASH programme in Honduras, Belize, etc

The flame of empowering girls has now become a shining torch thanks to your efforts, and it will become brighter as the torch passes on to an extremely empowered girl herself, the incoming president Jennifer Jones.

“is helping children, especially girls, remain in school and creating a huge impact in changing their lives.”

“One example of our organisation’s true potential is related to our initiative of empowering girls. Rotary has the power to lead the charge for gender equality and that charge has begun. I strongly believe that there is no country in the world where the status of girls/ women cannot be improved. Girls form half of humanity and so should have half the opportunities.”

He was happy to share that in every country he and Rashi visited, “we were greeted by hundreds of girls whose lives have been changed by this initiative. The menstrual hygiene management (MHM) programme is a huge success in Africa and Asia, where a large number of girls were making sanitary pads. In India, my own district and club (RC Calcutta Mahanagar) has initiated a programme of training girls in self-defence to enhance their ability to ward off attacks and advances. Its impact was truly understood when the Kolkata police recruited some of these girls in its police force!”

Striking an emotional note, the RI president said that on International Women’s Day (March 8), the Egyptian Rotarians displayed a girls’ empowerment project “that left a lump in our throats. We met there a 21-year-old blind woman, and Rotarians there are helping physically-challenged women like her get proper skills to earn a livelihood. To me, this was empowerment of girls at its best.”

In Hyderabad, at the presidential conference “I literally saw a sea of service; a single project touched different areas of focus with the overarching theme of empowerment of girls.

The very sight was stunning; 500 girls getting bicycles, which will enable them to travel safely to school and back home. Another 500 got sewing machines and training that will empower them to enhance their ability to earn; 500 benches were given for schoolgirls which meant that 1,500 girls will not have to sit on the floor in schools. To protect their health and hygiene, 100 handwashing stations were given to girls’ schools and when



I interacted with these girls, I felt blessed to be able to serve to change lives.”

What better brand ambassador could there be for Rotary than Piyali Basak, a teacher from Kolkata, sponsored by Rotarians, reaching the highest point on Mount Everest “to send out a message to the entire world from that height that Rotary is working to empower girls. At each Rotary event, Rotarians told me how they were empowering girls through different projects. The flame of empowering girls has now become a shining

torch thanks to your efforts, and it will become brighter as the torch passes on to an extremely empowered girl herself, the incoming president Jennifer Jones.” She would be working with UNICEF in a new partnership to empower girls.

Mehta added that “when Rotary takes on challenges, we take off. We are closer today than ever before to eradicating polio. Our polio eradication drive is not just a private-public partnership for three decades, it’s a humungous effort to save millions of lives and a shining example of bringing peace in this world.”

Rotarians were harbingers of peace and through “our polio programme what we have done is as good as averting a war.” In World War I, 20 million lives were lost; “the lives saved through our polio programme is 19 million. “What better example can there be of bringing peace in the world,” Mehta asked, while conceding that “challenges do remain (in total eradication) but we have strategies in place. But we need your help in this mission to take us to the finish line.”

Rotary had also taken on the great challenge of protecting the

environment in its new area of focus. When he had participated in COP26, the climate change summit in Scotland attended by around 100 heads of state, at the roundtable discussion he had co-led, the focus was on the critical role that mangroves play in mitigating and adaptation to climate change. “Having decided that our discussions should lead to action, Rotary is now poised to work in 10 countries to set up mangroves, a move to protect Planet Earth. I am happy to announce that of the 10 countries, global grant proposals for five countries have already been submitted.”

Giving the credit to Rotarians and Rotaractors for the achievements of his year, Mehta said, “We could accomplish so much thanks to your hard work and your resolve to do more and grow more. Rashi and I are most proud of our interactions with over 30 heads of state across the globe. We were able to showcase to them Rotary’s commitment to change lives through our work. As we moved from country to country and met the heads of state, with each of them I could discuss the partnership of Rotary with their governments, which they welcomed wholeheartedly.”

On behalf of Rotary, he assured the president of Uganda that Rotary would do 100 heart surgeries for children from Uganda, “and we are keeping our promise; the first 28 surgeries have already been completed. District 3030 in India is ready and committed to do 30 heart surgeries on children from Seychelles. Around the world we are ready to do projects and programmes wherever we’ve given commitment... such as education, heart surgeries, capacity building for nursing, setting up eye hospitals, dialysis centres, etc in different countries. Every one of our commitments will be fulfilled and our work with 50 governments across the world will surely raise the bar of Rotary,” he added. ■





India proved the world wrong in tackling Covid: **PM Modi**

Rasheeda Bhagat

One of the star speakers at the inaugural session of Houston Convention was Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and through a video speech he drew several parallels between Rotary's core principles and goals, and developments in India, which were impacting the entire world.

Giving an example of how these developments were having a positive impact on the world, he said that when the Covid pandemic came, "people thought India with its large population will not be that successful

in its fight against the pandemic. The people of India proved them wrong. We administered two billion doses of Covid vaccine to our people. Similarly, India is working to eliminate TB by 2025, five years earlier than the global target of 2030."

Drawing another parallel between Rotary's ethos of Service Above Self and traditional Indian beliefs, Modi said thousands of years ago "our saints and sages gave us a powerful prayer which said all living beings should be happy and lead a healthy life. In our culture we also say great souls work and live only for the wellbeing

of others. We are the land of the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi who showed in action what living for others really means."

He said in today's world, "we all exist in an interdependent, inter-related and inter connected world. Swami Vivekananda said very well that not one atom in this world can move without taking the entire world with it. It is important that individuals, organisations and governments work together to make our planet more prosperous and sustainable."

Expressing happiness that Rotary was working "in several causes that

have a positive impact on the earth,” the Prime Minister said sustainable development was the need of the hour. “Inspired by our centuries-old ethos of being in harmony with nature, 1.4 billion Indians are making every possible effort to make our earth cleaner and greener. Renewable energy is a growing focus area and at the global level India has taken the lead in forming the International Solar Alliance.”

Congratulating Rotary for working actively to provide clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, Modi said that his government had initiated the Swachh Bharat Mission in 2014 and “in five years we achieved

near-total sanitation coverage. This benefitted the poor and India’s women in particular.”

At present India was marking 75 years since “freedom from colonial rule. A new collective movement has now taken shape to save water; this has been inspired by our age-old practices of water conservation combined with modern methods.”

Drawing another parallel between Rotary and India, Modi said, “Your cause of growing local economies is very relevant in a post-cold war world. The *Atmanirbhar* movement taking shape in India aims to make our country self-reliant and also contribute to global prosperity.” India had one of the largest and fastest growing start-up ecosystems in the world, many of which were trying to provide solutions to global challenges. “India

is home to one-seventh of humanity, and we remain open to learning from global practices and sharing ours with others.”

These were only a few examples, he said, inviting the Rotary family to support these efforts at the grassroots level. He also invited the global community of Rotarians to join Indians in observing the International Yoga Day on June 21. “Yoga is an effective passport to physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual wellness. Can the Rotary family observe yoga day in a large way and promote the practice of yoga among its members? You will see the benefit of doing so,” he added.

He congratulated Rotarians, all successful people in their individual fields, “for coming forward to make the planet a better place.” ■

Skilling women in Nagpur

Team Rotary News

Project *Sundari* of RC Nagpur Vision, RID 3030, is training 100 women in beauty care, in partnership with the Chitnavis Trust, a local NGO, and Mahila Aarthik Vikas Mahamandal, a women’s empowerment initiative run by the Maharashtra government. The three-month project is being conducted at four rural centres near Nagpur. Club president Vikram Naidu said that girls from one of the five batches being trained



Project *Sundari* trainees at Chitnavis Wada with (from L) Sarita Agrawal, vocational courses director, Dr Jugal Kishor Agrawal, Neeru Bhatia, Chandru Shahani, club president Vikram W Naidu, Gulab Mahant, Padma Mahant, club secretary J Chhabrani and Shalini Naidu.

under this programme hail from families who have lost their breadwinners to Covid, while another batch of 20 women are hearing-impaired.

The women are trained in language and soft skills additionally to build rapport with clients.

The first two batches of 40 Project *Sundari* trainees received their course completion certificates from DG Ramesh Meher. The club is also working with a start-up that provides beauty services at home for the placements of these candidates. ■

South Asia dinner at Houston

RI President Shekhar Mehta and his family being felicitated.



President Mehta and RIPN Gordon R McInally wave the Rotary flag as RIDs Mahesh Kotbagi, AS Venkatesh and RIDE Muhammad Faiz Kidwai look on.



From R: PRIP KR Ravindran, Vanathy, S Asia Reception chair PDG John Daniel, his wife Meera, RIPE Jennifer Jones, DGND Nick Krayacich (Jennifer's husband), RID Venkatesh, PRIP Rajendra Saboo, PDG Sam Patibandla and Usha Saboo.



Meera felicitates RIPE Jennifer in the presence of PDG John Daniel (R), DGND Krayacich, RIDE Kidwai and his wife Uzma.



President Mehta and Rashi with grandson Veer.



PRID Kamal Sanghvi, Vinita Venkatesh, Sonal Sanghvi and Amita Kotbagi.



Clockwise from above: PRID Sanghvi and Sonal. ● **From L:** Neeta (wife of RID 3054 PDG JP Vyas), Neelu and RID 3012 DGE Lalit Khanna, TRF Trustee-elect Bharat Pandya, RID 3040 DGE Ritu Grover, Madhavi Pandya, PDG Rajiv Sharma, his wife Reshmi and Dr Ranu (wife of RID 3060 PDG Ashish Ajmera). ● PRIP Kalyan Banerjee greets TRF Trustee Aziz Memon. ● PRIP Rajendra Saboo and Usha with Sonal Sanghvi and Amita Kotbagi. ● **From L:** PRIP Ravindran, PDG Ravi Vadlamani, RID Venkatesh and Vinita. ● From L: President Mehta and Rashi with PDG John Daniel, RID Kotbagi, PDG Sam Patibandla and RIDE Kidwai ● RIPE Jennifer with Nick Krayacich.







Clockwise from left: RIPE Jennifer Jones. ● RID Kotbagi with RIDE Drew Kessler and family. ● PRIP Banerjee with (from L) PDGs Kishore Kumar and Sam Patibandla, and RIDN Anirudha Roy Chowdhury. ● RIPN McNally and his wife Heather being felicitated by RID 3160 DGE Vommina Satish Babu and his wife A Sulochana in the presence of RID Kotbagi and PDG John Daniel. ● RIDN Chowdhury with his wife Shipra. ● PRIP Barry Rassin and Esther. ● RIDE Kidwai lights a candle as RID Venkatesh and Vinita look on. ● TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty with RID 3141 DGE Sandip Agarwalla and his wife Malini.





Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat
Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



Left: RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi presents a memento to Gen V K Singh, Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, in the presence of RI President Shekhar Mehta.

Peace, conflict and Rotary's role

Rasheeda Bhagat

One of the popular speakers at the presidential peace conference in Hyderabad was former Army chief Gen V K Singh, Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways. Speaking on 'Peace, the only solution' he had words of high praise for Rotarians and their integrity, and said he had attended several Rotary meets and was aware of the work done by Rotarians in India. "Whenever you implement projects,

the trust from the community comes because you are impartial, transparent and ensure things are done properly. Other NGOs can't claim all this. It is something unique to Rotary culture."

He made a particular mention of a Rotary project in Ghaziabad he was scheduled to attend, where over 2,000 bicycles would be distributed to girls attending government schools in that town. "I asked the Rotarians how they had identified the girl beneficiaries,

and I was told that it took them almost a month to make a database and carry out a check to ensure that the right person was chosen to receive the bicycle. I was very impressed... this is akin to the background checks the Income Tax and revenue people carry out!"

Every society needed the right people to lead it in the right direction, he said. "As they say in the military, a pack of sheep led by a lion will act as a lion, and vice-versa. As you return home, take the message that you have the good luck to be a Rotarian, and hence can lead the community in the right direction." If Rotary could do this, three-fourth of the country's problems will be solved, in areas like poverty alleviation, giving the right skills and creating entrepreneurs to improve the wealth of the community.

"If you have a clear vision, things become simpler. Today there are so many opportunities in the world; a lot of time is wasted in pulling each other down; it is time to combine our strength and move forward. The day we do that we will be really able to march forward as a nation," he added.

Coming to India's Armed Forces, Gen Singh asked: "What is the expectation that you have from the military and what does the military expects from you, we need to ponder."

As somebody who had spent 32 years in the Indian Army "I can say proudly that Armed Forces are trained, geared and imbibed with the ethos to give their wholehearted sacrifice for the nation and its people. Do you know the Indian Army has the highest rate of officer casualties in the world? Pick up any military in the world; the fact is that

the rate of officer to men casualties is the highest in India, and that is because officers of the Indian Army lead by example and are not scared to take bullets while defending their country.”

Referring to Rajya Sabha MP PDG Vivek Tankha, who was at the conference, the minister said: “I was talking to Vivek Tankha, who is like family to me... when I came into politics, people like him asked me how do you adjust to politics and I said if we can adjust from the deserts of Rajasthan to (the freezing temperatures in) Siachen, we can easily adjust to this environment. It is a different environment indeed, but if you are here to serve the people, then adjustment is not difficult.”

Referring to the violence and conflicts raging in our world today, Gen Singh said that “in all the conflagrations that take place one thing is certain, truth is the biggest casualty. Nobody is certain as there is so much of misinformation, propaganda and

information war, so it is very difficult to take a right decision.”

Nevertheless, he said, in Ukraine, India was able to take out our students thanks to PM Narendra Modi talking to leaders on both sides, and ensuring an effective evacuation. “I witnessed this in Yemen also, because he was able to talk to the king of Saudi Arabia to give us 2–3 hours every day, for our evacuation exercise, and we managed to bring back our people safely. As a nation if you maintain good relations with various countries, it helps to take out your countrymen from conflict zones.”

Indians were present in 193 countries, “and we also have a unique characteristic. We will only move out when the shells are falling on us. We don’t listen to advisories, or any sane advice coming from parents and others and act only at the last minute creating many difficulties.”

Chairing the session RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi said that Rotary had never believed in the “preaching of passive peace; instead we have championed the peace process by inspiring people to strive for sustainable peace. During several wars, whether in Sri Lanka or Afghanistan, Rotary was the only organisation which was allowed to do polio immunisation amidst conflict.”

It was a matter of deep concern that 70 million people in our world are affected by

We have a unique characteristic.

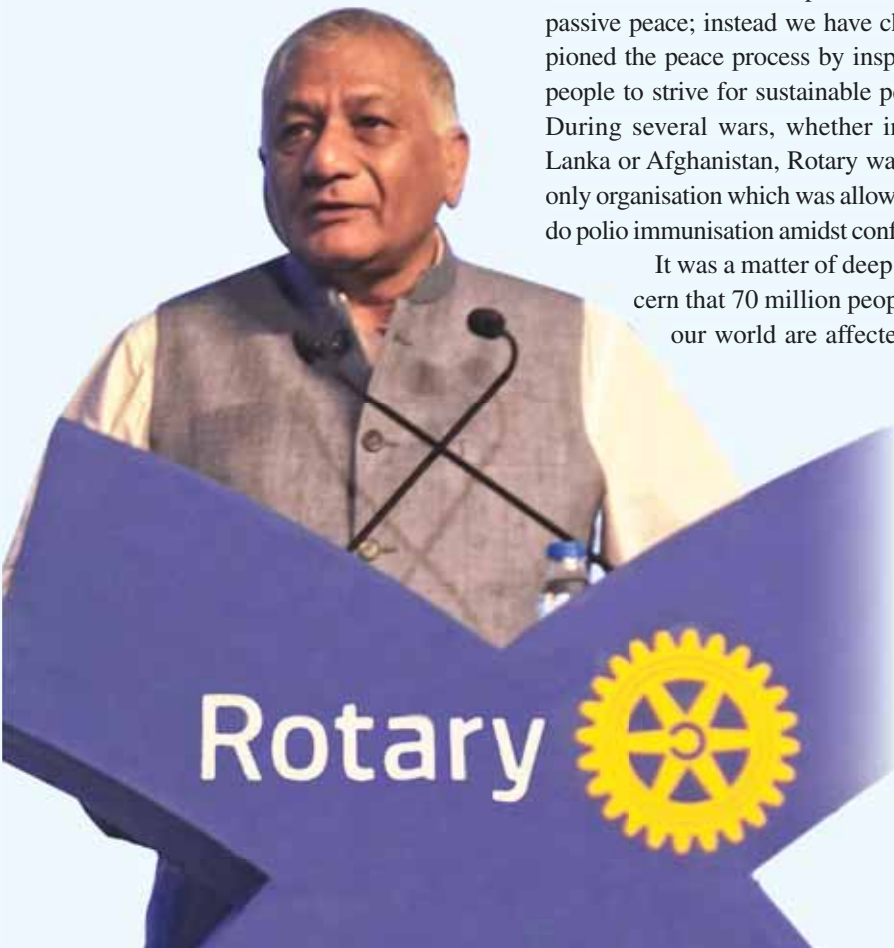
We will only move out when the shells are falling on us. We don’t listen to advisories, or any sane advice coming from parents and others.

wars and internal strife, and “nearly half of the affected population is children. We in Rotary cannot accept this. The time has come to invest in peace. Children make one-third of the world’s population and one in six children lives in extreme poverty. Six million children under the age of five die each year because of malnourishment. This is unacceptable.”

Kotbagi added that after long years of being in several NGOs, “and this one in particular, I realise that peace can never prevail without reaching everybody basic education, shelter and healthcare. Let us refuse to accept conflict as a way of life, and preach and practise peace by imparting education, shelter and basic healthcare.”

Rukmini Iyer, a Rotary Peace Fellow, conducted a panel discussion on peace beyond borders in which four Ambassadors to India — Alejandro Marin, (Cuba), Wael Md Hamed (Egypt), Fleming Raul Ramos (Paraguay) and Eleonora Dimitrova (Bulgaria) participated. She said peace was “really about creating a safe space within a conflict... can we create space for conflict in a way that can be worked through with dialogue, conversation and not through violence? We have to explore the possibility of fostering peace where civil society can step in as peacebuilders and conscious citizens.”

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat



This is an emergency time for our children

Rasheeda Bhagat

Why is an organisation like CRY — Child Relief and You — required? Because in this country, as yet, all of us are not equal. All our children don't get equal opportunities to education, healthcare and the life they deserve," said Puja Marwaha, CEO of CRY, addressing a session on girls' empowerment chaired by RI Director A S Venkatesh at the RI presidential conference in Hyderabad.

Painting a grim picture of how Covid had affected the learning of disadvantaged Indian children who had no access to smartphones to benefit from online classes, she said the number was an astounding 75 per cent "as only 25 per cent of our children have access to smartphones."

If we as a society and country put a little bit of money that we have reserved for fancy temples, rockets and missiles, into schools, making education free till Class 12, it would really benefit the nation.

Puja Marwaha
CEO, CRY

Covid shut down schools for the longest ever time, and considering that online education in our country is limited with internet access being only 4 per cent, learning really took a big hit. With limited smartphone access, 75 per cent of children had no access to education for two years. In all, 600 schooling days were lost for them. "These children had no school, no inputs, no learning. We are now running bridge classes for them and our teachers have reported that these children have gone back four years during the pandemic. They are actually trying to drop the curriculum and reteach the concepts again."

Making an impassioned plea on behalf of India's 75 per cent children, Marwaha said: "This is an emergency time as far as India's children are concerned. Right now, our children need us, not because of Covid but because Covid took them out of school and most of the poor children get protected in their schools. Because they are in school, they don't get married, or put into the labour force. They get midday meals which went as ration for the whole family." The result was falling nourishment and dropping out of school. "On an emergency basis we should do all we can to get our children back to school," she said.

Presenting a grim picture of the girl child being even more disadvantaged, she said, "we have some crazy

numbers in this country; 19 million girls are out of schools... a huge number of girls who go missing in secondary school." At primary school enrolment, we have 98 per cent in Grade 1, but when girls reach Grade 8, they start dropping out, and only 57 per cent go to the 8th grade. "We lose 47 per cent girls; and you might well ask what does Grade 8 really mean? Really nothing."

Spelling out "some of the biggest barriers" that prevent girls from entering high school, Marwaha said,



“The first barrier is the availability of schools. Research tells us that most girls finish school at whatever grade available in their village or at a distance of 3–5km. So if that village school ends at Grade 8, they drop out. If it ends in Grade 10, it improves their chance of staying in school despite economic barriers.”

But the “biggest barriers in our country vis-a-vis girls are in our heads and hearts.” Referring to the shocking spectacle of the front row in the auditorium of the conference being cleared of women because a *swami* addressing the previous session did not want to see women in the first two rows, she said, “As you could see before this

Below: School girls wave their new Tablets distributed to them by Rotary at the Hyderabad conference.

session, the whole front row had to be occupied only by men because women are considered dirty or polluted. And that is the biggest barrier too. That women, who are holding up half this earth, are considered dirty.”

Returning to the core point of making education easier for girls, she said higher secondary schools should be made available in villages, and single gender schools will have to be provided too. “In many areas parents are reluctant to send girls to mixed schools, so we must make all-girls’ schools available in such areas.”

Also, it was necessary to make education free as another big barrier to girls’ continuing their education was economics. This brought her to another abominable part of the Indian narrative... that it was not “wise to invest in girls because *ladki paraya dhan hoti hei..* she is not yours, she belongs to some other family. How ridiculous is

The total number of malnourished children in our country, according to government figures, are higher than all the Sub-Saharan African countries put together.

that. You gave birth to her as much as you did to the son.”

The girl child has to bear the brunt of such atrocious notions. “So the school becomes a place where girls are not allowed to ask questions. Girls should keep quiet, they should be seen and not heard. This is how girls are discriminated against. We know several instances where teachers, including women teachers, tell girls: ‘Oh, eventually you are going to do household work. So if you’re not very good in studies, don’t bother, don’t come to school.’”

Add to this a household where a younger sibling has to be looked after, or the parents have limited money, the girl is invariably pulled out of school and the boys’ education gets priority. “Unfortunately, girls are not nurtured and encouraged. When they are nurtured and encouraged, we all know they invariably do better than boys.”

Marwaha said probes done by CRY had revealed that things such as corporal punishment, the atmosphere of the class or having less number of teachers are also factors that influence dropout of girls. “Once you go past all these, supposing there are schools available in their area, are close enough and safety is assured, the retention of girls improves. But most high schools are typically 10–15km away from villages,



and distance and safety are a big concern when it comes to girls' schooling."

Complimenting Rotarians for building separate toilets for girls across India, the CRY CEO said, "This is one of the best things that you have addressed, because once you have toilets that are clean and have water, the retention of girls improves."

Giving details of a partnership between CRY and the University of Warwick, she said that when they

Unfortunately, girls are not nurtured and encouraged.

When they are nurtured and encouraged, we all know they invariably do better than boys.

analysed CRY's primary data, "they found that in any area where safety was better, there were more girls in schools. When the area is unsafe with a high crime rate, girls drop out, and as a consequence, are married early."

But when there are better roads with good bus connectivity, or girls are given cycles under various schemes, the situation improves... accessibility and safety were the mantra.

She added that "a distressing per cent of girls drop out because they get married even when they are children." But it is very difficult

Puja Marwaha, CEO of CRY, receives a memento from PDG T V R Murthy in the presence of RI Director A S Venkatesh.



to get any concrete evidence of this through numbers because such underage marriage, clearly in contravention of legal norms, do not get reported. "If we as a society and country put a little bit of money that we have reserved for fancy temples, rockets and missiles, into schools, making education free till Class 12, it would really benefit the nation."

Marwaha conceded that both the central and state governments have several schemes such as the Rashtriya Kishori Yojana that encourage parents to keep girls in schools, but over 90 per cent of parents were not even aware of such schemes. "But we as civil society, you and I, need to make people aware of such schemes, instead of just saying we will give you money."

The next important factor was affordability; poverty resulted in the girl child being pulled out of school. "You might well say it is very productive to manage a home, bring up children, etc, so we did a cost-benefit analysis. What we found was startling."

Every additional year of education increased a girl's ability to attain some goals in life "by a huge percentage. CRY got a committee of

economists, researchers and others to measure the impact of a girl child continuing in school; the first was delayed marriage."

If a girl gets married at 13, has a baby at 14... at this point she'll most likely have anaemia, the baby will be underweight, resulting in huge health liabilities for the family. "She will never be able to earn any money, the child will most likely die, and there might be several other underage pregnancies, further endangering the girl's health. Malnourished children will grow into malnourished adults who in turn will again have malnourished children."

The repercussions of this vicious cycle were that "the total number of malnourished children in our country — and these are government figures — are higher than all the Sub-Saharan African countries put together. People tell me don't give us such bad news, but the fact is that Bangladesh has lower infant mortality than us."

It was estimated that one rupee invested in a girl will fetch a return of ₹15. "That's all it takes, not millions, frankly as a nation we can afford it. But we are so *kanjoos* when it comes to the girl child. So 19 million girls are left out of school." The benefits that accrue for every additional year in school are phenomenal; marriage is delayed, they will take up work, value themselves more and make meaningful contributions to the nation's development, creating a more equitable and accepting society.

Once we know the importance of the education of girls or one half of our population, "it costs nothing for a country and budget of our size to invest in schools. It makes not just moral and equity sense, it also makes

Most of the poor children get protected in their schools. Because if they are in school, they don't get married, or put into the labour force.

economic sense, and that is really the argument that CRY is trying to make."

Chairing the session, RI Director Venkatesh said "the future of our country depends on how well we educate our girl children, groom and train them to bring them into the mainstream of our nation. We are proud that in the RILM programme Asha Kiran, there is a component to return children, including girls who have dropped out, to school."

"I asked Puja Marwaha backstage what was the one motto and mission of CRY and she said our founders wanted to ensure that every citizen of this country becomes a stakeholder in its development...we are targeting retail and not big ticket contributions that will reduce the number of children out of school."

He said that when through Asha Kiran RILM sent children back to school, it is much more than just one more child back in school. "It is about nation-building and ensuring that universal quality education is available to girls, with technology inputs. So RILM and BYJU's have forged a partnership to provide free of cost preloaded Tablets to children of government schools."

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

The future of our country depends on how well we educate our girl children, groom and train them to bring them into the mainstream of our nation.

A S Venkatesh
RI Director

Conference vignettes

Rasheeda Bhagat & Jaishree



RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi at the House of Friendship.

Déjà vu

As the RI presidential conference kicked off in the Nawabi city of Hyderabad, addressing the inaugural session, RI President Shekhar Mehta struck a nostalgic note and said, “I am so excited to be here in Hyderabad and the reasons are so many. First of all this city, this venue, the people involved in organising it... both (PRID) Kamal Sanghvi and (PDG) Ravi Vadlamani, convener and chair... they all take me a decade back. To the time when I was on the RI board of directors, and we had the Hyderabad literacy summit, the largest ever Rotary event to be held in India, and at this very venue, the Novotel Convention hotel.”

The second reason for his happiness was that nearly 3,000 people gathering at the event is “our big blow to Covid. By assembling here, we have proved that human beings are resilient. They overcome any challenge, however big it might be.”

The third reason, of course, is that “I am thrilled to see the sea of Rotarians here. This is the second biggest event in Rotary worldwide this year; the biggest will be the convention in Houston. I am delighted to be in my own country with my family of Rotarians, who work so hard to exemplify ‘do more and grow more’”.

Evacuating pets from Ukraine!

Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, Gen V K Singh, a veteran of evacuation of Indians trapped in conflict zones, said that “of all the evacuations I got sucked into during the last several years, the most recent one (from Ukraine) was very interesting. This was because along with people, we also had to evacuate pets... dogs, cats, guinea pigs etc.”

As a vast majority of Indians trapped in Ukraine were medical students, “my first question to them was that did you come to Ukraine to study medicine or keep pets with you? It was a very difficult situation and you could

see the attachment they had to their pets. So we had to improvise ways to find cats and dogs and rabbits, and bring them back to India.”

The minister hoped “the pets we rescued are surviving in this great heat of India, because they were conditioned to live in much cooler climates.”

Meet & greet

Vibrant music and dancers dressed in extravagant Brazilian costumes set the tone for the inaugural of the House of Friendship by President Mehta who, along with Rashi, led the grand march. “It was a full-house on all three days,” said HoF Committee chair PDG Madhav Chandran. Professional performances included, among other outstanding entertainment, a ‘junk percussion’ band, Dharavi Reloaded, comprising a group of teenagers from the Dharavi slums of Mumbai, who had the audience grooving to hip music created with the aid of discarded barrels, plastic cans, bottles and paint buckets.

The photo booths were a big hit. The commercial stalls were popular and the Rotary Action Group booths



Above: Creating memories.

Below: A student and his pet dog evacuated from Ukraine.



had maximum footfalls. “Ranging from menstrual hygiene to environment and water conservation programmes there was something interesting for everyone,” said Chandran. Dreamscape, a Hyderabad-based property promoter, was the title sponsor for the presidential conference and its founder Nagaraju Nadikuda was happy with the interest shown by Rotarians at the stall. He announced his commitment to become an AKS member and to form RC Dreamscape as the first corporate club of RID 3150.

The food court was managed by the Novotel hotel. “The quality and variety of food was well appreciated by the guests. Convener Kamal Sanghvi’s announcement that “food and beverages will be on the house on the last day,” was greeted with cheerful applause. “We worked very hard and did everything possible to make the conference experience special and memorable for everyone,” smiled Chandran. ■



Rtn Shekhar Mehta
RI President



Rtn Ramesh Meher
District Governor

GLIMPSES OF

RC Nagpur North donates 100 smokeless chulas

RC Nagpur North is doing meaningful projects for the last 36 years. After learning about the Beltarodi cylinder blast and the losses people suffered, the club members met government officials to get a clear picture of the things urgently required to rehabilitate the victims. In the presence of DG Ramesh Meher, the club distributed 102 smokeless stoves worth ₹3 lakh and 100 food kits worth ₹70,000 to the affected families.

This project was executed in association with the management and parents of students of The Achievers School, Rotaract Clubs of SMV and NFSC. The club members visited the mishap site and enquired about the needs of the affected families. Club president Hashu Ambwani, treasurer Vinay Dara, joint secretary Nand Tahiliyani, youth director Swapnil Band, Anns Kimaya Pyaramwar and Gayathri Band assured the victims of all the help in the near future. ■



Rotary Utsav at RC Hinganghat



Agala Rotary Utsav 2022 was organised by RC Hinganghat at the Taka ground. The five-day festival presented by Gima White Gold from April 28-May 2 consisted of stage events that not only entertained the public but also enhanced the PR of Rotary. Legislator Sameer Kunawar was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony. Club president Jitendra Kedar performed the puja with his wife Sonali in the presence of event chairman Pitambarji Chandani, vice-chairman Kedar Joglekar, club secretary Pundlik Bakane, Utsav secretary Satish Dangre, Jitendra Varma, Shakir Khan Pathan, AG Smita Thakare, Srinivas Lele, Dr Ashok Mukhi, AG Murali Lahoti and other members.

The Utsav drew visitors from all over the town and nearby villages on all five days. The large gathering enjoyed a variety of spectacle including diverse food stalls, shopping pavilions with display items ranging from hearing aids to bikes and cars, and club events. A group dance with a social theme was held on the first day with a total of 83 participants. The next day Prashant Mohota hosted a show called *Kya Bolti*

Public. On the fourth day of the Utsav, the club held a morning programme, *Jiyo Zindagi Khul Ke*, which included activities such as Zumba dance games for a healthy lifestyle. In the evening a patriotic event titled *Akhil Bhartiya Kavi Sammelan* opened a platform in which Sunil Somiya, Devendra Parihar, Sunita Saroj and Murali Lahoti exhibited their poetical skills.

Each day featured a different signature event. A singing competition for school students titled *Hinganghat Idol* attracted 83 contestants from over 16 schools. Mansi Singh was the winner, followed by Samyak Moon and Talshri Danav. The jury panel consisted of Nagpur singers — Vaishali Jamunkar, Kunal Bhati and Jobanputra. The festival and its events got wide coverage in the local dailies and on TV channels.

The members of the Rotary family showcased their skills and talents on the final day. A yoga camp got an enthusiastic response. The festival was a huge success for the club as it brought a lot of joy to the public who were able to see something like this after two years of pandemic. ■

DISTRICT 3030



A gala festival at Chopda

Showcasing the organising skills of RC Chopda, the Rotary Utsav 2022 was a grand success. The event was inaugurated by district magistrate Abhijit Raut from Jalgaon. The Utsav was divided in four zones: Business, Cultural Activity, Food and Play zones. In business zone companies from various sectors — agriculture, automobile, home appliances, electronics, e-bike, garments, food items etc — represented their products. Cultural activities were performed by school children. The Food zone was a major attraction, followed by the play zone which drew a large number of children. During four days of Rotary Utsav more than one lakh people visited the event. The major highlights were the talk shows on current affairs, awards ceremony and the cultural programmes by students.

All the club members, sponsors and stall owners took active interest in the Utsav. Club president Pankaj Borole, secretary Pravin Mistri, project chairman Rupesh Patil, co-chairman Chtan Tatia and treasurer Tejas Jain took efforts to make the Utsav a spectacular event in Chopda. ■



All roads led to Rotary Utsav in Wardha



Over the last 26 years, RC Gandhi City Wardha has been organising the four-day Rotary Utsav which provides a great platform for more than 250 companies to showcase and sell their products.

The grand event hosted a range of competitions for the public in Wardha and surrounding villages, besides helping local enterprises to thrive. Apart from this, Rotary Utsav creates a healthy environment for children by providing amusement space which had play swings and sports equipment for entertainment. The club presented a wide range of cuisines, a major highlight of the event. Every member of the club took part with enthusiasm.

Fundraising is the main objective of the Rotary Utsav and the proceeds are used for implementing a range of club projects throughout the year. The club showcased seven focus areas of Rotary at this festival:

1. **Promoting peace** – Some stalls were kept reserved for groups like the Art of Living and Brahma Kumaris to display their services.
2. **Fighting disease** – A vaccination centre was set up at the entrance

for Covid prevention. Also, a mammography camp for women was conducted.

3. **Providing water and hygiene** – The huge ground littered with garbage and food waste was cleaned, thus protecting the health of the local residents; Water coolers were installed to provide drinking water for the visitors to the Rotary Utsav; and dustbins were put up to maintain cleanliness at the place.
4. **Saving mother and child** – A stall created awareness of mother's milk bank which nurtures the infants.
5. **Supporting education** – Some stalls were reserved for speech and higher education guidance by lecturers from educational institutes.
6. **Growing local economics** – Some stalls were made available for the 'Bachat guts' to boost the local economy. All the other stalls were allotted to the businessmen from the local area.
7. **Protecting environment** – A cleanliness campaign was conducted by Rotarians through FM Radio Mirchi which stressed on the need to maintain cleanliness in Wardha. ■

RC Baroda Metro empowers girls

Team Rotary News

The vocational services team of RC Baroda Metro (2021–22) conducted a training programme for 28 adolescent girls who had dropped out before Class 10, or could not study beyond Class 10 for family reasons, to give them skills for employment, self-employment and also become efficient homemakers. Going by the National Family Health Survey of GoI conducted in 2019–21, the club found that out of every 100 girls who started education in Class 1 in Gujarat, only 45 reached Class 12. The various reasons were workload at home, distance between home and school and lack of water and toilet facilities.

While carrying out some community outreach programmes in Dajipura village near Vadodara, the need for such a training programme for girls was found by club members Sharmishtha Desai and Maneesha Shukul, both doctors. Chatting with a few adolescent girls they found they wished to study further. The principal of the secondary school in the village also

expressed a deep concern regarding these girls' inability to pursue further studies due to lack of high school facilities. She was willing to extend help to give some skills to the girls through a training programme to be conducted by the Rotarians.

So both Sharmishtha and Maneesha prepared a short-term training programme module for enhancing household and vocational skills of these girls, the club's board found suitable funding, and the programme was launched in February keeping in mind this year's RI theme *Serve to change lives*.

"We have worked with the confidence that the training and empowerment of these adolescent girls will influence not only the present but also the future of the country," said Dr Sharmishtha, one of the project coordinators.

The other coordinator, Dr Maneesha said that the project was titled *Indushree-kushal grihini* (efficient homemaker)

Girls learn to make salad.





A resource person teaches the girls to make juice.

We have worked with the confidence that the training and empowerment of these adolescent girls will influence not only the present but also the future of the country.

Dr Sharmishtha Desai
Project Coordinator

resources, home decoration, and getting the ‘best out of waste’. The 28 girls who attended and completed the programme were given notebooks, stationery, etc. As part of their ‘home work’ they were asked to make a budget for their family, put in groups and given event management assignments like organising a birthday party. “They were very enthusiastic; they were guided to make a shoe rack from old cardboard cartons which they covered with old newspapers. These were later used in their school. They learned to make paper bags

and was a six-day certificate course. The programme was conducted at the Dajipur school, near Vadodara. Inaugurated by RC Baroda Metro president Vrajesh Jindal, the faculty comprised professors from the Home Science department of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Vadodara and other experts from different fields, as well as some Rotarians.

The topics covered in the course included nutritious food, event management, salad-making and vegetable carving, personal sanitation and hygiene, pregnancy and neonatal care, caring for children and elderly members of the family, housekeeping, personality development, communication, consumer education, management of



Sharmishtha Desai (R) and Shivangi Parikh demonstrate how to make a paper bag.



A vegetable carving class in progress.



DG Santosh Pradhan (L) and PRID Manoj Desai with a student.



Girls learn to make paper bags.

which could be made for commercial purposes. An oral test was also taken at the end of the course. Their enthusiasm and confidence were visible by the end of the course,” said Dr Sharmistha.

RID 3060 DG Santosh Pradhan and his wife Sunetra, PRID Manoj Desai, club president Jindal, secretary Sandeep Grover and other club members attended the valedictory session.

Dr Maneesha said that the feedback from the participants “was very heartening. They said they had learnt so many new things and were grateful to our club’s Rotarians for helping them in this way. They were keen to participate in the next level programme of our club.”

Dr Sharmistha added that as the club members came into contact with the school’s authorities for doing this project, “we realised that the school needed many facilities and equipment for the students. Our president has announced a donation of ₹12,000 to the school for repairing its electricity network. Apart from electrical fittings, he also donated cupboards and tables for the classrooms.” ■

Bewitching Brazil

Mahesh Kotbagi

A little reggae, marimba music, some samba and soccer... and of course Shakira's haunting melody from the FIFA world championship... 'Brazil, lalalalala'. The word 'Brazil' comes from the Portuguese word for brazilwood, a tree that once grew in abundance along the Brazilian coast. Brasilia is the capital of this largest South American country, which is fifth largest in the world. Its most famous and populous city is Sao Paulo. A soccer-crazy nation, it is also called the Land of the Holy Cross, a name given by its former Portuguese colonists, as it is home to

RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi and Amita with Rotarians at Canela.



“Christ the Redeemer”, one of the seven wonders of the world. However, before colonisation, the natives called their country Pindorama.

Brazilians are highly energetic, warm-hearted and joyful people, and they get to dance ball and play music at a young age. My Rotarian friends from RID 4680, Brazil, came at midnight with the Indian flag to receive me at the airport as I was representing RI President Shekhar

Mehta. In the course of the next one week, I learnt that language cannot be a barrier in building friendship. As RIPR, it was overwhelming to receive the ‘Scroll of Honor’ from two beautiful cities, Canela and Gramoda, both scenic hill resorts.

Amazon forests are scattered across the country with craggy mountains and long sandy beaches attracting thousands of tourists; while the culinary hubs tickle our taste buds with cocoa, coffee,

chocolates and grills. Nei Coutinho, a young-hearted man of 81 years, assisted me during my entire visit. A sumptuous Italian feast by PRID Mario Cesar Martins De Camargo, along with many senior leaders, made that great evening memorable. We often say ‘cheese’ while taking pictures. Brazilians don’t need that prompting as they are ever smiling, happy souls.

*The writer is an
RI Director*



Preserving our environment a collective responsibility

Jaishree

It is high time that each one of us in this planet realise that our environment is our collective responsibility and everyone have a role to play in preserving and protecting it in every possible way with a sensible approach," said climate activist Vandana Shiva addressing a session on 'Supporting Environment' chaired by RI Director Virpi Honkala at the Hyderabad presidential conference. "It is not just 'climate disaster', rather a 'health disaster' for our earth and there is no Planet B. Science is increasingly recognising

our philosophy that the earth is a living system, and the denial of this fact is proving to be disastrous for all its inhabitants," she said. Condemning the mindless felling of trees, she warned that the elements of nature are all inter-related and has an impact on our very possibility to exist on this planet.

Referring to India's most powerful forest conservation measure, the Chipko Movement, Vandana said that the concept of "hugging a tree to defend it was so powerful, it brought in a new consciousness to the country

Environment activist Vandana Shiva (R) with RI Director Virpi Honkala from Finland.

that put environment at its centre. These are not timber mines, these are sources of our soil, water, our breath, said the women activists, defending the reckless deforestation that was denuding much of the forest cover." The movement originated in 1973 in a remote village Reni in the Himalayas, and went on to become a rallying point for many future environment protection movements all over the world.

The horrendous heatwave, the Kedarnath disaster of 2013, the Rishi-Ganga disaster that destroyed Reni, the village where the Chipko movement had started, and the several natural calamities which have become more frequent than ever before should alert us to be proactive in our environment conservation efforts. "Climate change is the defining crisis of our time and it is happening even more quickly than we feared."

Citing the recent rise in chronic diseases, Vandana said, "it is the impact of producing highly toxic agricultural materials that are carcinogenic. We are polluting our soil and turning our precious land into a desert."

Another hazard is the new varieties of seeds, industrial farming and the chemicals used therein causing gluten allergies. "But our ancient varieties are much better and grow very well. Seeds are not an invention of a chemical company. Seeds are a story of evolution, an innovation of



our ancestors. Our land has created 200,000 rice varieties,” she pointed out, and enlisted Rotary’s partnership for helping farming communities.

Encouraging organic farming she said that it will address all the nutrient deficiencies of the soil. The organic matter added to the soil creates humus that can hold water. “One per cent humus can hold 160,000 litres of water per hectare. Almost 97 per cent of the world’s soil is on the verge of desertification. If we work in sync with the laws of the earth to re-green the earth, maximise biodiversity and photosynthesis, the earth will perform miracles for us. Let us use the wisdom of our ancestors to create a world that is liveable for future generations of

all species. The health of our planet is related to our health because we are made of the same *pancha boothas* that our earth is made of. So every harm made to the planet is a harm made to ourself,” said Vandana.

Moderating a panel discussion at the session DGE Sandip Agarwalla recalled RI President Shekhar Mehta’s commitment to save and restore mangroves across the world at the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 held in Glasgow. “Over 20 countries that participated in the discussions have agreed to work with Rotary for the cause.”

Talking about how mangroves help in fighting climate change, panellist M Adarsh Reddy, DFO, Mumbai Mangrove Conservation Unit, said that

mangrove ecosystems have the highest potential for carbon sequestration and helps in faster removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Encroachments and debris dumping were the challenges in mangrove preservation in coastal Maharashtra, he pointed out.

Natwest Foundation head Sunil N Kumar and climate activist Licipriya Kangujam were the other panellists. Sunil Kumar said that the industrial sector should take care of GHG emissions and largely switch over to renewable energy. Thirteen-year-old Licipriya spoke about her campaigns for climate action in India, to pass new laws to curb the high pollution levels and to make lessons on climate change mandatory in schools. ■

Doing good with TRF help

Eye care on wheels

Team Rotary News

Jaishree



RI Director AS Venkatesh, club advisor Ajay Agarwal, DG Sunil Phatak and DGND Akhil Mishra with members of RC Rourkela Queens after the inauguration of the van.

RI Director A S Venkatesh inaugurated a mobile eye clinic of RC Rourkela Queens, RID 3261, during his recent visit to Sambalpur, Odisha. The mobile clinic Drishti aims to bring eye care to the

doorsteps of people in the rural and semi urban areas which do not have eye clinics in their vicinity. RC Butwal Central, Nepal, RID 3292, was its international partner and the club was supported by TRF and RIDs 3012, 3053 and 3070.

“This is our maiden global grant project,” smiles Rashmi Agrawal, president of the all-women’s club with 46 members. The vehicle is equipped with an auto refractometer, a tonometer to check eye pressure and other state-of-the-art equipment. She thanks PDG Ranjit Singh Saini and DRFC Deepak Mehta for guiding her club in availing the GG.

Eye camps will be regularly planned with the support of Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital, Rourkela, which will also take care of training the technicians and bear the operating costs such as consumables, salaries to staff, doctors, driver and other technicians, fuel and maintenance cost, and other incidental expenses. All corrective treatments including surgeries will be done at the hospital at nominal cost. Spectacles will be given free of cost.

“We have invited other Rotary clubs and our RCCs to make use of the mobile clinic for their service projects,” says Rashmi. ■

Paul Harris Challenge Awards

Paul Harris Membership Challenge

| Platinum | | |
|----------|----------------------------|---------|
| Ranking | District Governor | Members |
| 1 | Ajay Madan (3080) | 434 |
| 2 | Prabhakar K (3150) | 323 |
| 3 | Ashok Kumar Mangal (3054) | 307 |
| 4 | Sridhar Jagannathan (3232) | 302 |
| 5 | Mahmood Fazal (3190) | 255 |



Clockwise from Above: RID 3080 DG Ajay Madan (L) gets award from RI President Shekhar Mehta and RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi in the presence of PDGs Manmohan Singh and Praveen Goyal; RID 3160 DG Thirupathi Naidu (4th from L) being felicitated by President Mehta and RID Kotbagi in the presence of PRID Kamal Sanghvi, PDGs K Sreerama Murthy (2nd from L), Chinnapa Reddy (3rd from R) and DGE Vommina Satish Babu (2nd from R); RID 3262 DG Santanu Kumar Pani and Jharana being felicitated; RID 3060 DG Santosh Pradhan and Sunetra being felicitated by President Mehta in the presence of PDG Ravee Dhotre.



Gold

| District Governor | Members |
|----------------------------|---------|
| K Srinivasan (3211) | 232 |
| Col Mahendra Mishra (3040) | 227 |
| W M Nirmal Raghavan (3231) | 224 |
| Sanjay Malviya (3053) | 219 |
| Rama Rao M (3020) | 219 |
| Santosh S Pradhan (3060) | 213 |
| Gaurishkumar Dhond (3170) | 212 |

Silver

| District Governor | Members |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Thirupathi Vykuntam Naidu (3160) | 197 |
| S Balaji (2981) | 189 |
| Anup Mittal (3011) | 186 |
| Sunil D Phatak (3261) | 165 |
| Dr Upinder Singh Ghai (3070) | 161 |

Grow Rotary Silver Plaque

RI Districts 3070, 3170, 3204, 3262

Grow Rotary Gold Plaque

RI Districts 3053, 3080, 3291, 3040



Clockwise from Above: President Mehta felicitates RID 3204 DG Dr Rajesh Subash and Dr Deeshma; PRID Sanghvi felicitates RID 3070 DG Dr U S Ghai in the presence of President Mehta; RID 3054 DG Ashok Mangal and Pushpa receive the award from President Mehta. PDG Bina Desai is on the right; RID 3232 DG J Sridhar and DGN Ravi Raman receive the district award; President Mehta felicitates RID 3150 DG K Prabhakar (L).



Kashmir medical camp conducts 2,500 surgeries

Dr Rajiv Pradhan

Way back in 2012, PRIP Rajendra Saboo initiated a medical camp at Udampur in Jammu for which I was the project chairman. The then deputy commissioner Pandurang Pole supported our project. A couple of years later, as district collector Pole called me again from Latur, Maharashtra, requesting Rotary to organise a medical camp in Udgir taluk. This camp opened up a new model of doing a project without a global grant.

In August 2021, I received another call from Pole who was now divisional

commissioner of Kashmir. He sought Rotary's help in organising a mega medical camp in Kashmir. We started planning. PDG Dr Girish Gune, RID 3131, a surgeon and veteran of several medical missions, was the project coordinator and Dr Madhav Ambekar, eye surgeon, was associate coordinator. Pole appointed Dr J Talat as the nodal person to coordinate with Rotary for the medical camp.

Dr Ambekar, Dr Rupali Ashtaputre and Dr Anil Sakhare went to Kashmir in September to study the availability of medical equipment, operation

theatres in government hospitals and fill the logistics gap. We started working on the basis of their report and the project dates (May 11–18) were fixed.

Camps at four places

With the UT government deciding to do surgical camp at four places, namely Baramulla, Sopore, Kupwara and Ganderbal, we exchanged ideas through weekly zoom meetings. Dr Talat and her team interacted with multiple agencies to fulfill the requirements of the camp. We needed more theatres, OT tables and surgical



Rtn Dr Shekhar Kognulkar (R), anaesthesiologist and Rtn Dr Abhay Shete (second from L), gynaecologist, with local doctors, performing a surgery.

equipment. Finally, 14 OT tables were made available and critical equipment such as microscopes were brought from other states, and around 150 OT and nursing staff from other revenue districts joined our team. All the pre and post-operative medicines were also procured. ASHA workers and government staff identified 9,000 patients across Kashmir for surgery.

DGs Om Prakash Motipawale (3132), Pankaj Shah (3131), Dr U S Ghai (3070) and Santosh Pradhan (3060) supported the camp with funds. Transport, accommodation and food were arranged for the patients and their caregivers.

A mega Rotary team

Forty-two doctors participated in the four camps across Kashmir. Most of them had been part of medical missions to Africa and other parts of India. PDGs Harish Motwani, Ravindra Salunke, Subodh Joshi and DGN Swati Herkal volunteered at the camp sites.

The perception of safety and sensitivity in Kashmir was a major issue. A few doctors opted out. But luckily, we could replace them with new team members quickly. The ground situation in Kashmir appeared normal, and doctors and Rotarians could work without fear as they were working in government hospitals and housed in state guest houses. Government doctors and nursing staff also worked with the visiting doctors.

Rtn DN Sharma travelled from Udhampur to Ganderbal with his team of eye surgeons and assistants in the ambulance of the Rotary Eye Hospital. Many of the patients, coming from remote areas, were operated for cataract. Gynaecologist Dr Anil Sakhare, not only performed surgeries, but also trained local junior surgeons.

Dentist Dr Rupali Ashtaputre, ENT surgeon Dr Ajay Mahajan, eye surgeons Dr Pawar Rajesh, Dr Anand

Khadke, gynaecologist Prakash Patel and general surgeon Jenish Modi zealously worked from dawn to dusk.

The team led by PDG Gune consisted of veteran surgeon Major General GS Vohra, gynaecologist Fasiha Aziz, orthopaedicians Dr Shashikant Ganjale and Devendra Paliwal, plastic surgeon Chanjiv Mehta, urologists Santosh Palkar and Milind Joshi.

A morale booster

A complicated surgery — laparoscopic cholecystectomy — was done on a young girl. The senior surgeon of Baramulla Medical College found the going tough. Dr Gune finished his first operation on the other table and soon joined the team. He took over but realised that she had congenital deformity in the gall bladder. The operation which began at noon, got over by 4pm. The news of its success spread all over, boosting the morale of the entire team.

Our eye team in Kupwara led by Dr Ambekar included Dr Rahul Phase, Dr Pankaj Shah and my wife Uma. Plastic surgeon Sagar Gundewar did a great job; Dr Milind Shah and Abhaye Shete were busy with hysterectomies and so was general surgeon Viridi Anilkumar with various other surgeries. ENT surgeon Sanjay Manthale performed ear surgeries, perhaps a first time in the hospital.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the medical camp at Sopore. He urged us to do a similar project in South Kashmir in August-September 2022, assuring us that the administration will provide all necessary support. We did complicated surgeries including incisional hernia, laparoscopic removal of gall bladders, plastic surgeries, hysterectomies, cataract and eye procedures.

Divisional commissioner Pole extended the camp till June 2 following record registrations and instructed all hospitals to continue with the



Plastic surgeon Rtn Dr Sagar Gundewar's young patient Faiza Bano is all smiles after treatment.

surgeries even after the 'Rotary camp' was over. DG Dr Ghai chartered a new club in Baramulla and Leh during the camp. There was significant interest among the local doctors to join Rotary. I was amazed to see a large turnout of women from remote villages, lining up for tubectomies.

Around 2,500 surgeries were performed at the camp. Never before have I seen such a huge success story in the 30-plus medical mission projects I had participated in the past, either in Africa or India. The cumulative value of the project could easily be over ₹50 crore, if we put together the large number of surgeries, cost of medical supplies, equipment, food and lodging expenses for patients and doctors, transport, and the long hours of professional work by hundreds of government staff.

Rotarians once again proved that they can do wonders by forging a public-NGO partnership in executing service projects.

The writer is PDG, RID 3132, and project director of this camp

Karnataka Rotarians install 27,500 computers in colleges

Team Rotary News

In early 2021, the Karnataka Education Department approached Rotarians in the state to set up 8,000 desktop computers that were being donated by Cognizant. “The task was not simple. The logistics would be a nightmare, considering over 500 colleges, spread over the entire state of Karnataka, were the beneficiaries. Many of the colleges did not have a proper computer lab set up till then. The task of procuring and loading the software licences, testing each desktop, the logistics of transporting them to individual colleges was daunting and

everyone realised the enormity of the task on hand. To execute the project, funds, people and a good project management practice were required,” says PDG Rajendra Rai.

The carrot was that successful installation of these desktops in a record time of three months would bring in an additional 12,000 computers from Infosys.

When the request was initially made, the district leadership of RID 3190 immediately responded with a resounding yes, without even waiting for confirmation from other Rotary

districts in Karnataka. Such was the confidence in fellow Rotarians that the support would be unconditional, and collaboration would be automatic. A project team was immediately formed consisting of Rai and two senior Rotarians — Mohan Ramanathan and Jayaraman Subramaniam — to execute the project. The other four Rotary districts immediately joined in and identified DLCC of each district as leaders.

The project was titled *Sahakarita* and till now over 27,500 computers (12,500 from Cognizant and 15,000 from Infosys) have been installed at

The first batch of 1,500 desktops being flagged off in the presence of Jayaraman Subramaniam; Ashwathnarayana, State Minister for Higher Education; PDG H Rajendra Rai; Mohan Ramanathan; Kishore Jagirdar; Prof Narayanaprasad and Pradeep, commissioner, Department of Collegiate Education.



500 colleges including polytechnics. These are not discarded or outdated computers. Most of them have Intel Core i3, some i5 and even i7 processors, with 8 GB RAM and 500 GB hard disk space, says Subramaniam. These were initially used by programmers who got their replacement laptops during Covid lockdown period to work from home and so are high-end functional computers. Typically, each machine, including the software licence, would cost over ₹30,000.

If set up at market rates these computer labs would have cost ₹70 crore, he added. But RI District 3190 Rotarians could get the software licence at a nominal cost thanks to their long connect with Microsoft through their project to provide refurbished computers to schools, thus a lot of money was saved. Districts 3160, 3170, 3181, 3182 and 3190 participated in this project.

The Trusts of Rotary Bangalore Whitefield Central and Rotary Bangalore Lakeside handled the donations. Apart from Rotaractors, the Deshpande Foundation at Hubli, joined hands with Rotary to help with the project.



New computers being installed in a college lab.

The association between Rotary and these educational institutions continues. “We will soon see as many Rotaract clubs installed in these colleges and the youth power will become part of Rotary. Infosys is also offering their learning material with over 5,000 courses to all these colleges with the Rotary logo,” Subramaniam added.

Appreciating Rotary’s partnership with two tech giants such as Cognizant and Infosys, PRID Kamal Sanghvi said with this project Rotary had extended its footprint in over 500 institutions. PDG Rai, member, RILM, said that in keeping with its vision, RILM was executing mega projects, “quickly and with a professional approach to shape the future of our youth.” ■

RID 3012 gifts bicycles to girl students

Aimed at empowering the girl students and help them commute to school comfortably RID 3012 organised a bicycle distribution programme. Rotary clubs provided bicycles to 305 girl students belonging to underprivileged families at the JKG International School, Ghaziabad. Former Army chief Gen V K Singh, Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, inaugurated the project in the presence of DG Ashok Aggarwal.

DG Agarwal had earlier distributed bicycles to 124 girl students from three schools at the Hindu Girls Inter College. ■



Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways Gen V K Singh with school girls at the bicycle distribution event.



DG Dr Rajendra Agarwal (standing, fifth from L) at the thalassaemic awareness event, along with RC Bombay Bandra president Ramu Vedaraman, secretary Abbas Shahiwala and Rotaractors.

As colleges in Mumbai are sizzling with energy and enthusiasm after a nearly two-year Covid lockdown, RC Bombay Bandra, RID 3141, is making the best use of new opportunities to expand its Rotaract power. Following an event on drug abuse hosted by the club at the RD National College, Bandra West, its principal Dr Neha Jagtiani and staff wanted to revive their Rotaract club which wound up in 2010 as “they could not carry it further at that time due to some reasons,” said Ramu S Vedaraman, club president. “After seeing our presentation, the college wanted to

resume Rotaract activities and during the visit of DG Dr Rajendra Agarwal, a thalassaemia awareness event was conducted at the college. We selected a president and a Rotaract board then, following which we reactivated RAC RD National College in June.”

Getting a new lease of life with 40 charter members, “this Rotaract

club has drawn up an ambitious plan to induct 600 new Rotaractors in the next few years which is quite possible as the college offers diverse courses across the arts, science and engineering streams to over 6,000 students,” said Vedaraman. During the one-day thalassaemia camp, around 100 students were screened and reports given.

Another club, RAC Father Agnel Engineering College, used to conduct a 22km-marathon called *Heart & Sole Run* for all age groups to sensitise the public on cardiac fitness and healthy lifestyle. “This is an eight-year-old club sponsored by us which hosts this annual marathon with support from other NGOs at the Bandstand area of Bandra.

Rotary-Rotaract synergy in Mumbai

V Muthukumar

Last year (March 2021), they got 600 online registrations for the marathon held through a hybrid process,” said Abbas Shahiwala, club secretary and youth services director.

The participants uploaded their screenshots and video clips on Strava, Nike apps and other social media platforms to register their presence. “Preparations are on to conduct a physical marathon, the fifth edition, this time around as colleges have opened and normal life has resumed,” said Rohit Nair, vice-president, RAC Father Agnel Engineering College.

A couple of field events, *Trek-Footslog* and a beach clean-up programme, have infused a new wave of interest among Rotaractors at this engineering college. “We took 200 school students accompanied by teachers to the Kothaligad Fort as a one-day excursion which was a great experience for us too. Secondly, with the help of 170 volunteers, including Rotaractors, we removed litter and garbage weighing around 350kg from the Girgaon Chowpatty beach by tying up with Change is Us, an NGO, that gave immense satisfaction to our colleagues,” said Nair.

In an offbeat event, they hosted a stand-up comedy, *Mic drop Alfresco*, with Raunaq Rajani, a standup comedian, which attracted 200 attendees. “A flea market was held on the sidelines. Artistes from different genres such as rap and poetry recital also performed in an open-air theatre at our college quadrangle which saw around 180 registrations,” he said. Most of the funding for Rotaract projects and events are done through a mix of private sponsors, in-kind donations from companies and mentoring from their parent, RC Bombay Bandra.

Prosthetic limbs

On its part, the parent Rotary club will facilitate the induction of more Rotaractors and expand their activities on college campuses, “where there is a huge potential for growth,” said Vedaraman. Chartered in 1990, the club has 36 members and is known for donating prosthetic limbs to about 15 cancer survivors at the Ernest Borges Memorial Home every year. Here patients from the Tata Memorial Hospital are accommodated for palliative care, he said.

A technical team at the special home designs the artificial limbs that are custom-made to suit the specific needs of each patient after consultations with the doctors. “We have gifted the machines worth ₹5 lakh to the Borges Home long time back and now we sponsor the making of prosthetic limbs each year,” said Shahiwala. The club has an annual budget of ₹1.2 lakh for making such limbs.

Over the years, the club has availed five district grants for service projects, and “we have applied for a maiden global grant worth \$40,000 for installing water filtration units to meet the drinking water needs of 30 government schools in Palghar district. This project will benefit 2,500 students once it is done,” added Vedaraman. ■



Club secretary Shahiwala (right), medical service director Rattan Mukhi and president-elect Ishrat Sayed with a Borges Home inmate who was given a prosthetic limb.

A municipal school in Karur gets a facelift

Team Rotary News

RC Karur Texcity, RID 3000, has constructed a new block at the Municipal Higher Secondary School in Karur with a CSR and global grant support. It was inaugurated recently by State Electricity Minister V Senthil Balaji.

The school was started in 1880 as a middle school and in 1978 higher secondary classes were introduced. "It flourished as one of the prominent schools in the town in the 1980s, when it had a strength of 4,000 students. Since 2000 the student strength steadily dwindled due to its aging infrastructure," says L John, a past president of the club and a former headmaster of the school. PRID C Basker and former Vice-Chancellor of Anna University V C Kulandaiswamy are among the many distinguished alumni of this school, he adds.

In 2019 when John requested the then club president A J Suriyanarayana to help upgrade the school, the latter, in concurrence with the members, agreed to undertake the project to commemorate the club's



PRID C Basker (second from R) with (from L) past presidents L John, A J Suriyanarayana and club president P Prabhakaran.

silver jubilee, and a committee was formed with PDG P Gopalakrishnan, past presidents L John, V Ramesh, L Subbiah, N Anandan and S Elamathi as members.

The foundation stone for the new block was laid in June 2020 in the presence of PRID Basker. Karur Vysya Bank donated ₹2.06 crore for construction of the classroom block and gave ₹24 lakh to TRF. RC Freshwater Bay, RID 9455, Australia,

contributed ₹71.61 lakh for setting up smart class facilities, renovation of existing building and landscaping, and providing classroom furniture, CCTV cameras and a genset, taking the total cost of the project to ₹2.77 crore.

The new KVB Rotary Block, constructed after demolishing a dilapidated wing, consists of two floors built on a total 1,490 sqm area. It includes 16 classrooms, two laboratories, a staff room,

separate toilet blocks for students, staff, and the differently-abled, a 1,000-litre capacity water tank and a water pump. The architectural façade of the original building which was designed in 1909 was preserved.

"Now the school is at par with any other private school and can cater to the educational needs of children from different economic strata," smiles club president P Prabhakaran. ■

Project Vignettes

Team Rotary News

State-of-the-art OT at Mumbai hospital



DG Rajendra Agarwal (L) inaugurates the renovated hospital.

RC Bombay Airport, RID 3141, helped renovate the modular operation theatre complex at the Brahmakumaris' Global Hospital & Research Centre managing BSES MG Hospital, Mumbai. The new complex houses four state-of-the-art operation theatres.

A hybrid vision centre in Chennai



PDG S Muthupalaniappan and his wife Kamala with club members at the Orange Hybrid Vision Centre.

With RC Gold Coast, RID 9640, Australia, as GG partner, RC Chennai Hallmark, RID 3232, inaugurated a Hybrid Vision Centre set up under Project Orange in Guduvancheri, a suburb near Chennai. This centre, established in coordination with the Pammal Sankara Eye hospital, will cater to 60,000 residents.

Rotary Health Care Centre in a village



DG Ashok Aggarwal (L) and M L Badoli, MLA, inaugurating the Rotary Healthcare Centre.

A Rotary Health Care Centre with two toilets was constructed at Badkhalsa, a village near Sonapat, by RC Kundli, RID 3012. The club also renovated the village anganwadi. The total project cost was ₹16 lakh.

Enhancing Rotary's public image



A flyover on NH4 beautified by RI District 3231.

RID 3231 has painted the walls of a flyover on NH4 near Ranipet in Tamil Nadu with cultural landmarks of the state along with Rotary's logo. Nearly 14,000 vehicles pass through this flyover daily and "it enhances Rotary's public image," says DG Nirmal Raghavan. The project cost ₹1 crore.

Rotary sponsors epilepsy surgery in Pune

Jaishree

A 21-year-old married woman (name withheld on request) was sent back to her parents' home in Osmanabad, Maharashtra by her husband's family as she suffered from frequent seizures due to epilepsy. But today her father is a happy man despite the setback because she is totally cured following a brain surgery which was beyond his means.

"No more seizures, and no more anti-epileptic drugs. My daughter can now live a normal, healthy life without fear and the doctor has said that she can even take a job," he says. The family has put the failed marriage behind them.

For Appa Nimbargi of Akkalkot, Solapur, the surgery "brought reincarnation for my son. I am so happy that he can now be as normal like his

other friends and without any fear of epileptic attacks."

Thanks to RC Pune Baner, RID 3131, four epilepsy patients, including the above mentioned two, are cured of epilepsy. The club is all set to sponsor the life-changing surgical treatment for the fifth patient, an eight-year-old girl, soon.

These patients were identified for surgery following an epilepsy

From L: Rtn Vikram Jadhav, RC Pune Baner president Sanket Saraf and Rtn Satyanarayan Kabra with a young patient and her parents at the hospital ward.



screening camp organised by the club in association with the Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital in the city. “The four of them are cured for a long term. The doctor has certified that they can live a regular life like you and me,” says Sanket Saraf, president of this 11-year-old club with 40 members.

The club has signed an MoU with the hospital for providing surgical cure for less privileged epileptic patients at a subsidised cost which will be borne by the club.

It all began when neurosurgeon Dr Nilesh Kurwale was looking for support to break the barriers surrounding the treatment of epilepsy, a neurological disorder which causes abnormal brain activity resulting in seizures. “Often people are apprehensive about brain surgery. But it gives the most amazing cure for epilepsy and has an 80 per cent success rate. There is hardly much awareness about it, even among the medical fraternity,” says the doctor who heads the hospital’s neurology department.

With the Bajaj Foundation coming on board as sponsor, the hospital agreed to open an epilepsy centre

If clubs can organise epilepsy screening camps, or even talk about the surgery, people will certainly come forward to get their children cured of the disorder.

Dr Nilesh Kurwale
neurosurgeon, Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital, Pune



Neurosurgeon Dr Nilesh Kurwale receives the Vocational Excellence Award from club president Saraf in the presence of DGN Manjoo Phadke and Rtn Aniruddha Joshi.

there. He and his team of specialists perform around 150 such surgeries a year, says Surhuda Kulkarni, member of RC Pune Baner.

Only the screening procedure prior to the surgery is a lengthy process. “The surgery is not complicated and the patient will stop getting seizures from day one,” assures Dr Kurwale. Post-surgical follow up includes just three visits to the clinic, and “the patient is cured for life”. There is a wide belief among people that epilepsy can cure on its own. But it only hampers a person’s normal life, making him/her heavily drug dependent, he says.

The entire treatment costs around ₹3 lakh. People spend at least ₹2,000–3,000 a month for AEDs alone. Add to it the doctor visits, loss of earnings and the after-effects of the drugs. “Surgical treatment comes at a cost of two-and-a-half years of your medical treatment and it is safer and cheaper,” he claims.

The surgeon screened 25 patients at the camp and 12 were identified for surgery which will be sponsored

by the club with the support of its corporate and individual donors. “Presently we have about ₹7 lakh earmarked for the treatment,” says Surhuda. The hospital also recommends patients to the club, which picks up the medical bills.

The estimated cost of treatment for the shortlisted patients is ₹2 crore and “we are progressing in phases depending on the availability of funds. We have all papers in place and donations are coming in,” assures Saraf. The club recently organised the ‘Walk for a cause’ to raise funds and awareness about the surgical cure for epilepsy.

“Rotary with its vast network of influential people can spread the good word just like how they took up congenital heart surgeries in a big way. If clubs can organise epilepsy screening camps, or even talk about the epileptic surgery, people will certainly come forward to get their children cured of the disorder. And it also helps as many Rotarians are also doctors. They have the reach and the capacity,” adds Dr Kurwale. ■

Lessons in nutrition for pregnant and lactating women

Kiran Zehra

She ate what we ate. Some dal, rice and vegetables whenever we could afford it,” says Mahalakshmi, mother of 18-month-old Varsha. “I had no idea she was not receiving enough nutrition until she had diarrhoea and we had to rush her to the hospital. My daughter weighed five kilos, while doctors said that she should weigh at least seven kilos.” Mahalakshmi’s family could not afford three meals a day and “buying fruits and vegetables was out of the question.”

She was introduced to the *First 1000 Days* programme, an integrated nutrition project of RC Bengaluru Platinum City (RCBPC), RID 3190, handled by a social worker from Surdenpura village in Rajanakunte, 28 km from Bengaluru. The comprehensive, household-based initiative aims to improve the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age. After 12 months of enrolling in the programme “Varsha looks healthy and active now and is gaining weight steadily,” smiles Mahalakshmi.

“The term ‘acute malnutrition’ or ‘severe wasting’ sounds alien to mothers from underprivileged and

rural backgrounds in India. They not only lack nutritional knowledge, but have zero idea about how a mother’s malnutrition during pregnancy adversely affects her child’s survival, growth and development,

and her access to nutrition,” says Dr Shobha G, a nutritionist, and member of RCBPC. When it comes to the health of mothers and infants, particularly in rural areas, “we must do beyond what PHCs and ASHA workers do.”

As a professor of Human Development at the VHD College of Home Science, Shobha came across the increasing issues of acute malnutrition in young mothers through a research programme carried out by her students. “I approached my club with the statistics and we began work on the project immediately.” The club launched the two-year initiative at Surdenpura with sponsorship support from MCKS Trust, a city-based charitable trust.

Nutri-milk being served to a young mother.



But women from the village weren't convinced to join the programme. "This concerned their baby and they weren't willing to risk anything," says club president Nisha Bellare. With the help of People's Trust, a local NGO, the club gained the trust of the rural community. To ensure the project's sustainability, "we had to make sure that all the women participated in the classes regularly. So, we allowed the families of the pregnant women to attend the programme. They could bring their children, mother-in-law, or any family member to the classes. Sometimes we had the entire family of a participant come and see what we were doing," she adds.

Shobha explained to them that the first 1,000 days of life provide a unique opportunity to establish the foundation for lifelong nutrition, health and development of their soon-to-be-born babies. "My students created brochures about the programme in the regional language with a chart to measure neonatal milestones." A food pyramid was also displayed to show how much of what should be eaten to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.

Shobha says that "50–55 per cent of both rural and urban women enter pregnancy in an anaemic state." To address this issue the club partnered with Aspirar Sphere, an NGO that is addressing iron deficiency through its iron-rich chocolates. "I tested the efficiency of the chocolate myself," quips Shobha who took a pre and post-chocolate consumption blood test to determine her iron level. "My iron level went up by 2 per cent in just one month. So, we began distributing the bite-sized chocolates to the mothers-to-be at Surdenpura."

Next, the club partnered with the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, to provide the women with monthly supply of nutritional



L to R: Club members Rachna Bhotika, Uma Khemuka, Dr Payel Biswas Soo, club president Nisha Bellare, club members Dr Shobha G and Upasana Singh at the inauguration of the project.

50–55 per cent of pregnant women in both rural and urban areas are anaemic.

laddoos made with ghee, wheat flour, dried fruits and nuts. The university also gave them seeds and saplings (drumstick, guava, papaya, curry leaves, etc) of food that can be grown in the backyard of their homes. In association with the Mitu Foundation, Bengaluru, the club distributed woolen sweaters to the pregnant woman. A special awareness programme on breastfeeding was also conducted. A healthy recipe contest was held for these women and "we were surprised to see the number of things that can be made with something as simple as ragi," says Shobha.

The programme includes complementary nutritious meals for both mother and child, nutri-milk for the infants, sanitation and hygiene education, nutrition assessment, counselling, and support through a WhatsApp mothers' group.

After the initial hesitancy the village women are now opening up to the team from RCBPC about various other issues they face at home. In a one-to-one session Shobha was shocked to know that "a girl as young as 19 was going to deliver her third baby, while another woman was forced by her husband to ask the doctor how soon after her delivery will she be able to have sex with her husband. She wept saying even in pain she had to oblige him. Although I advised her to voice her feelings strongly to her husband, I realised that more than counselling the women, we have to educate men to look beyond a woman's body," she added. ■

Apply Yourself

As members of the family of Rotary, we are people of purpose, people of influence and people of action. Each year, committees that support Rotary and The Rotary Foundation focus on putting Rotary's strategic priorities into action, challenging us to increase our impact, expand our reach, enhance participant engagement, and increase our ability to adapt.

Would you like to contribute to Rotary's success? We are searching for qualified Rotarians and Rotaractors to apply their leadership skills to serve on a committee in the 2023–24 Rotary year. These positions offer an opportunity for you to share your vocational expertise and skill set and help ensure diverse perspectives within each committee.

Candidates with areas of expertise as detailed in the chart are encouraged to apply. The number of openings is limited. If you are not selected this year, we encourage you to apply again next year.

All committees correspond via email and on virtual platforms, typically with one mandatory in-person meeting per year. Dual members of both Rotary and Rotaract are especially encouraged to apply.

To be considered for committee membership or recommend someone for an appointment, visit on.rotary.org/application2022. Applicants must be registered on My Rotary at my.rotary.org and should make sure their My Rotary profile includes current contact information. Applications are due by **August 15**.

| Area of Expertise | Function on Committee | Prerequisites | Openings & Commitment |
|-------------------|--|--|---|
| Audit | Advise leadership on financial reports, internal and external auditing, and the system of internal control | Independence, appropriate business experience, and demonstrated financial literacy in accounting, auditing, banking, insurance, investment, risk management, executive management, or audit governance | One position for a six-year term |
| Communications | Advise leadership on communication with key audiences | Professional background and experience in brand strategy, strategic planning, marketing, public relations, media, or a communications-related field | Two positions for three-year terms |
| Finance | Advise the RI Board on Rotary's finances, including budgets, investment policy and sustainability measures | Professional background in a finance-related field; nonprofit experience preferred. Candidates should have experience in financial matters at the club and district levels. | Two positions for three-year terms |
| Learning | Advise leadership on Rotary's leadership training programme for Rotarians, clubs and districts with a special emphasis on training for district governors | Significant training or education experience with a preference for leadership development | Two to four positions for three-year terms |
| Operations Review | Monitor the effectiveness, and implementation of operations and all internal systems; advise the Executive Committee on compensation matters; and perform other oversight functions as requested | Experience in management, leadership development, or financial management, and a thorough knowledge of Rotary's operations. Appointments are limited to past RI directors | One position for a six-year term |

| Area of Expertise | Function | Prerequisites | Openings |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| Rotaract | Advise leadership on matters related to Rotaract | Rotarians: Experience working with Rotaract; direct experience as a mentor or Rotaract adviser or district chair. Rotaract alumni are strong candidates Rotaractors: Leadership at the club, district, or international level. Strong candidates who have served as a district Rotaract representative, organised projects, or attended a Rotaract Preconvention. Age restrictions may apply | One to four positions for terms of varying length |
| Strategic Planning | Review Rotary’s strategic plan and associated measures; advise leadership on other matters of long-term significance | 10+ years of experience in strategy development, monitoring and implementation, and strong understanding of RI and Rotary Foundation programmes and services | Two positions with four-year terms |

Serving can open doors for Rotary members

Serving Rotary as an international committee member is a great way to gain global contacts and experience in your industry while using your professional skills to help the organisation. Previous leadership experience in Rotary isn’t required, just the skills and willingness to serve. Here’s how four Rotary members took a nontraditional path to gain international leadership experience.



Enedely Escobar-King
Rotary Club of Panamá Norte, Panama;

Committee: Strategic Planning, 2020–24

Professional background
I worked most of my professional life with the UN/UNICEF in

positions where strategic planning was my bread and butter. My work experience took me to multiple continents. I thought I could be of use to Rotary, given that knowledge.

Rotary background

I joined Rotary in 2015 and became very involved with project activities with my club, including playing an instrumental role in organising an Interact club in the secondary school I attended. Besides participating in several Rotary conventions, my experience has been at the club and district level.

Why I was interested in international committee experience

This opportunity allowed me to see the organisation from a different perspective. I got to know Rotarians from other districts, whom I otherwise might not have met.



Amanda Wendt
Rotary Club of Melbourne, Australia

Since joining Rotary at age 26 in 2010, Amanda Wendt had been a club president, served as district public image chair, travelled with her district on a humanitarian trip to Cambodia, and

spoken at a Rotary convention breakout and zone institute. But as far as formal leadership roles in Rotary beyond the district level, she had none.

“That quickly changed,” she says, when she became aware of the opportunity to serve on Rotary’s international committees after a chance conversation in 2017. “I jumped

at the opportunity to put my professional experience to use.” In her career, Amanda, a marketing and communications specialist, coaches entrepreneurs and leaders on building their brands. Since earning a bachelor’s degree in business, with an emphasis in marketing, in 2005, she has led marketing campaigns — producing social media, video and photography, digital content, advertising, and more. She has managed large-scale behaviour change programmes to achieve government policy reform, and she coaches organisations on attracting millennials as staff and customers.

Amanda decided to leverage her expertise by applying to serve on Rotary’s Communications Committee. She held that role for 2018–21 and served as the committee’s vice-chair in 2019–20. “These opportunities to gain experience are far and beyond what most young professionals get to experience in their workplace,” she says. “It’s truly one of Rotary’s competitive advantages.”

Amanda says serving on the Communications Committee is one of her favourite Rotary experiences so far. She enjoyed the opportunity to work with and learn from members around the world, rolling out global initiatives while learning about cultural nuances and localised programme considerations. “It furnished me with experiences, skills, and a network that young professionals are eager to achieve but may be waiting some time to realise in their career,” she says.

Her time on the Communications Committee led to additional speaking opportunities on Rotary’s brand and communications as well as on connecting with younger members. Now she’s getting additional district leadership experience, too: She’s serving as 2022–23 governor of District 9800.



Vino Sookloll

Rotary Club of Phoenix, Mauritius

Committee: Communications, 2020–23

Professional background

I am a branding and innovation, design, and marketing communications consultant. I’ve been running my own agency for the last 40 years, and served as the president of the Association of Communications Agencies of Mauritius.

I am a branding and innovation, design, and marketing communications consultant. I’ve been running my own agency for the last 40 years, and served as the president of the Association of Communications Agencies of Mauritius.

Rotary background: I became a charter member of the Rotary Club of Phoenix in 2003. I have been leading major communications projects for my club and the district (9220) for many years. In addition to becoming a Communications Committee member, in 2020 I became an assistant Rotary public image coordinator for Zone 22.

Why I was interested in international committee experience: Joining the committee allowed me to bring my concerns about improving the tools available for building a public image to the people working on these issues at the international level. This year I am chairing the Building the Rotary Brand subcommittee. I feel at home, surrounded by passionate members. I hope those joining next year will share that same spirit of continuous improvement.



Bobbe Barnes

Rotary Club of Fair Oaks Ranch, Texas

Committee: Audit, 2020–23

Professional background

I worked with Price Waterhouse in Toronto, then moved to academia in the account-

ing programmes at the University of Texas and University of Colorado. I later moved to Central Asia and became the technical accounting expert for a USAID project, working with international and local experts to develop a training programme for accountants. The programme is ongoing.

Rotary background: I joined the Rotary Club of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to expand my network and meet other local and expat leaders in the country. I became involved in the club by helping implement the financial aspects of the global grants we were awarded and serving as the liaison to the Rotaract club. After I returned home, I became a charter member of the Rotary Club of Fair Oaks Ranch.

Why I was interested in international committee experience: I wanted to serve beyond the club level in order to give Rotary what it had given me during my years overseas. I became involved in the district as a district treasurer and grants subcommittee chair. Then I saw that Rotary was calling for volunteers to serve on committees. I applied to serve on the Audit Committee as I found that best matched my expertise.

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From RI South Asia Office desk

Dear district governors 2022–23,

It must be a very exciting time for you now as you start your year as district governor of your respective districts. Your high level of enthusiasm will surely match your ambitious TRF goals and take Foundation to greater heights. Rotary leaders, including RI directors and trustee of our zones will be supporting you in your endeavours. The zone-wise team details are shared here for your reference

The Rotary Foundation Zonal Teams for RY 2022–23

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| RID Mahesh Kotbagi (Zone 4 & 7) | mahesh@kotbagihospital.com |
| RID A S Venkatesh (Zone 5 & 6) | venky.rotary@gmail.com |
| TRF Trustee Dr Bharat Pandya (Zone 4,5,6 & 7) | drbspandya@gmail.com |
| Zone-4, EMGA Deepak Gupta | deepak_gupta41@hotmail.com |
| Zone-4, EPNC Dr N Subramanian | drnsubra@yahoo.co.in |
| Zone-4, RRFC TN Subramanian | rtn.subramanian@gmail.com |
| Zone-5, EMGA R Madhav Chandran | madhav.chandran@ymail.com |
| Zone-5, EPNC Chinnadurai Abdullah | drchinnaduraiabdullah@gmail.com |
| Zone-5, RRFC John Daniel | rtn.johndaniel@gmail.com |
| Zone-6, EMGA Rajiv Sharma | rtnrajiv3030@gmail.com |
| Zone-6, EPNC Shyamashree Sen | shyamashreesen.rotary@gmail.com |
| Zone-6, RRFC Basu Dev Golyan | bdg3292nepal@gmail.com |
| Zone-7, EMGA Suresh Hari | 3190dgooffice2018@gmail.com |
| Zone-7, EPNC Bharath Kumar | pdgbharath@yahoo.com |
| Zone-7, RRFC Manjunath Shetty | manjunathshetty@gmail.com |

TRF-Area of Focus, Major Gift Initiative Committee members

PDG Sunil Zachariah — Disease Prevention and Treatment
PDG Ashok Panjwani — Support Environment

Wish you a very successful year in 2022–23.

G'day, Melbourne



With the conclusion of the 2022 RI Convention in Houston on June 8 — Rotary's first in-person convention since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic — attention now turns to next year's host city, Melbourne, Australia.

The 2023 convention will take place May 27–31 inside the Rod Laver Arena and the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, which are located in vibrant riverfront precincts. This marks the second time Melbourne is hosting a Rotary Convention. The first was in 1993.

Melbourne is the coastal capital of the southeastern state of Victoria. It's the second-largest city in both Australia and Oceania with a metro population of more than five million. Melbourne is also one of the world's most culturally diverse cities. According to the city government, around 140 cultures are represented in Melbourne, from the Indigenous inhabitants to more recent migrants from Europe, Asia and Africa. Widely regarded as Australia's cultural capital, Melbourne is a UNESCO City of Literature and is home to performing arts, live music venues and cultural attractions. The *Economist Intelligence Unit* has ranked Melbourne as one of the world's most livable cities, based in part on its cultural attributes.

Mary Barry, past president of the Rotary Club of Melbourne, chairs the Host Organisation Committee. The Rotary Club of Melbourne was chartered in April 1921, the first in Australia. The country now has more than 1,000 clubs and nearly 25,000 members. It has previously hosted four Rotary conventions, most recently in Sydney in 2014.

Learn more and register at
convention.rotary.org.

Funding education of children of widows

V Muthukumar



Gaj Singh, former Rajya Sabha MP, giving a cheque to a woman in the presence of project coordinator C P Sancheti (L) and past president Lavendra Singh (R).

After enduring the daily grind, hardships and turmoil, Vandana Acharya (45), a widow and mother of Class 8 boy Mayank, is able to heave a sigh of relief and can even smile a bit. For, she is a beneficiary of an Assistance to Widows Programme (AWP) of RC Jodhpur, RID 3053, which is presenting cheques to widowed mothers of students to cover their school fees and other educational expenses. “I shudder to think what would have happened to me and my son if Rotary has not intervened with this cash grant at a very critical time of our lives. We are forever indebted to Rotary,” says Vandana.

So far, 750 beneficiaries in Jodhpur have availed the cash assistance valued

at around ₹80 lakh over the last 10 years. AWP coordinator CP Sancheti who initiated the project with the support of RC Windsor, RID 6400, Canada, and its affiliated Canadian World Education Foundation (CWEF), a global NGO, goes down memory lane to recall the way AWP crystallised in August 2011.

Instant rapport

An elderly couple, Om Chandna and his wife, from Canada were touring Rajasthan in March 2011. They were looking for help to shift their luggage from the platform to the train coach at the Jaipur Railway Station as they were going to Jodhpur. Kapil Sancheti,

son of project coordinator, who was about to board the same rail carriage helped the couple with their luggage. While travelling with them, he noted that Chandna was having a Rotary pin on his lapel and informed him that his father too was a Rotarian, a member of RC Jodhpur. “Kapil invited the couple, members of RC Windsor, to our house in Jodhpur. I took them to our club and around some of our projects — Rotary School, Rotary Circle and other community initiatives being done by us,” says Sancheti.

Chandna was elated to see the multifarious projects being done in Jodhpur and expressed his wish to do a joint programme with our club. “After

a few months, Chandna informed me from Canada about the cash assistance programme his club was doing for widowed mothers of students at various schools in India and Kenya,” recalls Sancheti. He wanted to fund widowed mothers in Jodhpur who were struggling to educate their children through the CWEF. Already, the NGO was providing grants to mothers of 1,300 students in India each year at that time, Aug-Sep 2011, in a joint endeavour with RC Windsor.

The first grant

Following paper work and other formalities to kickstart the AWP, the NGO provided ₹2 lakh for widowed mothers of 31 children studying at the Rotary School, Jodhpur, in 2012–13. “We continued this for four years till 2016, when Chandna wanted to enlist more schools in the programme. We then added 16 Adarsh Vidya Mandirs. Each year, we are giving cheques worth ₹10–12 lakh

I shudder to think what would have happened to me and my son if Rotary has not intervened with this cash grant at a very critical time of our lives. We are forever indebted to Rotary.

Vandana Acharya
a beneficiary

to widowed mothers,” explains Sancheti. Both the Rotary club and Adarsh schools are contributing 10 per cent of the total annual grant which is deposited in an AWP bank account.

Through CWEF, the Jodhpur club funds children till they finish their

higher education. “The cheques from Rotary are a great boon for my daughter, Kusum, studying in Class 4. I am confident of a bright career for her, and her college education will also be funded by them,” says Suraj Kanwar (35).

A chartered accountant-turned-granite entrepreneur, Sancheti (72) is the chairman of 32-year-old Navjyoti Manovikas Kendra, a school for differently-abled with a strength of 104 children. “We run two colleges offering two-year diploma and B Ed courses for training teachers for this special school.” In 1997–98, he set up an ICU with four beds (₹8.5 lakh) at the Mahatma Gandhi Hospital, Jodhpur, in memory of his late mother Madan Kanwar Sancheti, and a few years later, added another ICU with six beds (₹15 lakh) adjacent to the existing unit. “I felt happy to motivate my relatives to set up three ICUs and two acute care wards, all worth ₹1 crore, at two government hospitals,” he says. ■

Drinking water for villages in the Sundarbans

Team Rotary News

RC Calcutta New Alipore, RID 3291, has installed a mini water treatment plant to supply purified drinking water at the Dakshin Akhratala village in the Sunderbans, West Bengal. The plant, that can purify 1,000 litres of water an hour, has 10 taps to provide pure drinking water to more than 300 families. The project was a joint collaboration with Ncourage Social Enterprise Foundation, a subsidiary of Tata Chemicals, and Maa Saroda Women & Rural Welfare Society of Sandeshkhali, an NGO working for people in the Sundarbans. The project was inaugurated by DG Prabir Chatterjee. ■





Pots and pans tell a story

Preeti Mehra

Let your cookware speak the language of health.

Essential to a truly healthy and green kitchen is not only the food you cook, but the cookware used for cooking it. There are several aspects of kitchen operations that even the best of cooks often ignore. Do the utensils used safeguard your health? Do they leach harmful chemicals or heavy metals into the food? Are your pots and pans made of eco-friendly material which can be easily recycled?

The various materials used in the manufacture of kitchenware come with their share of plusses and minuses. Some are better than the others. Still others are not desirable when cooking particular types of food. Till very recently there was very little focus on the use of cookware but of late there is growing realisation that one must choose from the different kinds of

cookware that are widely advertised and available in the market.

Eco-friendly material covers a large spectrum. Here we will be talking about those containers and vessels that can last long, be reused, refurbished and recycled, so that they can stay out of the landfill for the longest period. In the kitchen we have two kinds of containers — the ones we cook in and the ones in which we store the food. And then of course the vital accessories like ladles, spoons, straws and tea strainers.

Let's start with cooking containers. Of course, the safest ones are those that leach the least chemicals and heavy metals. Experts recommend brands that are constructed of ceramic-coated aluminium with stainless steel handles. Let's see what they say on how each material reacts to heat.

Cast iron vessels are among the most durable. Though they leach iron into the food, it is considered safe by experts. One option worth keeping in your kitchen is enamel or glass-coated cast iron vessels. It has all the qualities of cast iron cookware but does not leach iron into your food. Moreover, it works well for cooking acidic food because of the coating.

Stainless steel utensils are very popular in Indian kitchens since they are affordable, durable, light and easily washable. The good news is that they are relatively safe but before buying stainless steel it is worth enquiring from the dealer about the proportion of chromium and nickel in the product. Some brands have this information embossed on the surface. As a thumb rule, cookware with 18/8 or 18/10 is regarded "food-safe" since they are unlikely to leach into the food. These proportions indicate the chromium and nickel content in the product. Thus 18/8 stainless steel indicates it has 18 per cent chromium and 8 per cent nickel in addition to traces of carbon and iron. Stainless steel, it must be noted, is durable and can be recycled.

Glass cookware is non-toxic and safe. It is strongly recommended, particularly as bakeware. But opinions are divided on use of glass vessels over the stove. Of course, some brands are advertised as being safe enough to be used on any heat source be it the cooking range or an oven. However, the feedback from those who work in the kitchen is that glass vessels can be



used for specialised dishes only. They feel that they cannot endure sustained heat or sudden changes in temperature. On the plus side, glass is almost 100 per cent recyclable and great for storing food.

Copper vessels with stainless steel inner lining are also a good option. If the coating is either 18/8 or 18/10 stainless steel, it won't leach into the food. And copper's quick-heating properties ensures faster cooking and savings on energy consumption.

If you use non-stick cookware, you must be careful about its polytetrafluoroethylene coating. It is best to use wooden ladles to stir non-stick surfaces. It is always wise to avoid leaving such cookware on the heat for a long time.

There are other green rules that can be followed in the kitchen as well. For instance, it would be great if you get metal straws for family and guests instead of keeping throwaway plastic ones to pop into drinks. Washable recycled cloth kitchen napkins too are much more desirable compared to paper napkins, which are not recyclable and must only be used while travelling.

One of the activities every morning in a typical Indian kitchen is packing food

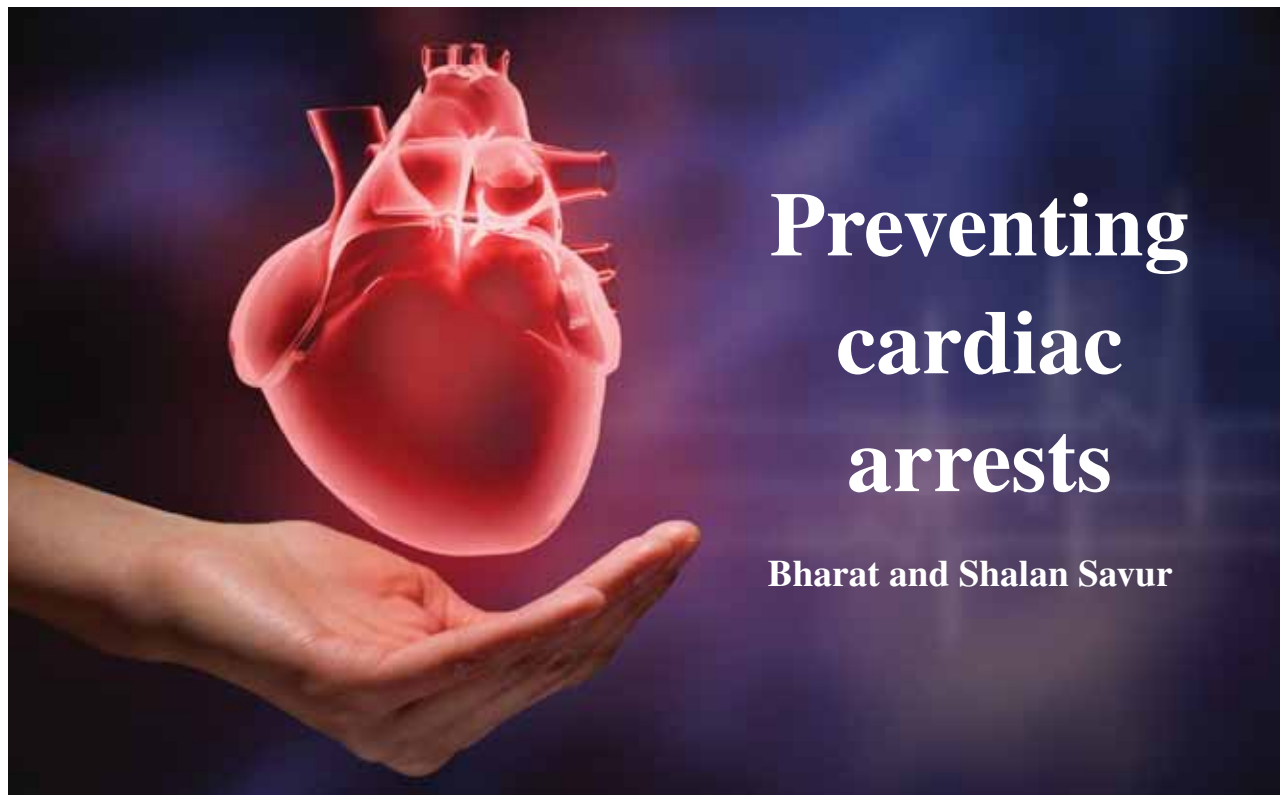


for members of the family who go to work or attend school or college. Using green options for this can reduce your footprint significantly. Mumbai dabbawallas tiffin box is extremely eco-friendly. It would be a great idea to replicate it, if possible. For school children or college going students, who have an aversion to a big lunch box, banana leaves are a great option for wrapping rotis or sandwiches. If foil is their choice of packing, insist that it is brought back and reused. Of course, ensure you buy recycled foil and not the virgin brands for packing your child's food.

As for children, the need to inculcate green values in them at an early age is the duty of every responsible parent. If that is done, we can ensure a green future for the next generation. Human beings are creatures of habit and only if we change our preferences as well as those of our growing children, will we be able to inhabit an eco-friendly world.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues





Preventing cardiac arrests

Bharat and Shalan Savur

Years and years ago when we, our friends and the world were much younger, we lost a dear pal when his heart gave way. He'd been suffering from cancer and, probably, his heart couldn't keep up in a weakened system. For days, we were in denial. The only consolation is that in our mind and the minds of many others who loved him, Raja will always remain young with jet black hair and a moustache that smiled along with his lips and eyes.

Raja was a good person. And so were singer Krishnakumar Kunnath, news reporter Kamal Khan, entrepreneur Pankhuri Shrivastava, and actors Siddharth Shukla and Amit Mishra. According to cardiologist Dr Manjinder Sandhu, in India around 12 lakh youngsters die from cardiac arrest every year. Those in their golden years do too, but about 30 per cent are under 45 years of age. The American Heart Association recommends all

20-year-olds to start taking steps to reduce the chance of getting a heart attack or having a cardiac arrest.

Tell-tale symptoms

Nobody can predict when it can happen. There are small red flags — pain in the chest or arms, breathlessness, profuse sweating, acute uneasiness and fatigue. It's best to dial your doctor. Keep your fingers crossed that it is just a bout of indigestion, gas, tight clothes, but consult your doctor alongside. Timely medical aid can make a difference. Actor Sunil Grover did and is back at work today.

Apparently, the two heart conditions are not the same. A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to the heart gets blocked. A cardiac arrest occurs when the heart goes through an electrical disturbance due to an imbalance between channels of sodium, potassium and calcium and just stops beating due to the malfunctioning. *Tip:* If you are a regular exerciser and get a twitch on your arm that doesn't stop,

check with your doctor. You may need calcium tablets. Don't neglect it.

As a society, we need to take care of our health and our emotional well-being too. If a person suffers a cardiac arrest and timely, proper action is taken, such as administering an electric shock, the patient's life can be saved. And when the person survives the heart episode, it is important that when he or she is non-productive or less productive for a certain time span, society should never make him or her feel worthless. Loneliness, helplessness, isolation and feeling useless are not friends of the heart.

Heart-friendly choices

Overall, we need to make lifestyle choices as well as emotional choices that are heart-friendly and life-enhancing. Being physically active is the key to a happy heart. When the body is fit, the heart needs to work slower. Dr Deepak Chopra's resting heart rate at age 74 is 65 beats per minute — a rate that a

fit 30-year-old would be proud of. He does yoga daily. Even if you don't have time to go through a structured exercise regime, just find ways to be active. Walk more, drive less. Use the stairs. Don't lower your activities to the level of your stamina. Rather, gradually, gently raise your stamina to the level of increased activity. *Tip:* Stand up and pace the room while talking on your cellphone.

Eat, don't be eaten

Eat your food, don't let your food eat you. Fresh vegetables, fruits and greens are great. Choose pulses for proteins — sprouted moong eaten raw or cooked makes amino acids more available to the body. Chickpeas are super too — they can even be just soaked and pressure-cooked with a bit of salt to make a delicious snack. If inclined, add chopped tomatoes, onions and the sweet-and-sour *bhel* chutney. Garnish with coriander leaves but avoid fried *sev*. In fact, avoid fried anything. Nuts and seeds are good too. If you powder them and make a mix, you can add 1–2 teaspoons to your *katori* of curd. *Caution:* Nuts and seeds can be heavy, so watch your overall intake. At meal times, stop when you're satisfied. Also, if you are allergic to any food, avoid it even if it makes it to the top of the superfoods chart. Eat rice, daliya, paratha or bread according to your preferences.

Invite well-being

Meditation opens a pathway to a greater awareness of yourself, a charted route to

a sense of quiet well-being. It relaxes body and mind, reduces the blood pressure level and even calms your emotional reactivity, thus, shrinking your stress response to a tolerable degree. I recommend doing the guided *Yoga Nidra* meditation session, several of which are available on Youtube. To meditate is to be your natural, greater self.

Preventing heartache

It is the greater self that helps us decide when not to expect, assume or demand and save us a lot of unnecessary heartache. It is not that we become fearful, but more discerning. Expecting, assuming, demanding lead to a bristling anger and arrogance that impose huge maintenance costs on our temperament and heart. Today's emphasis on getting answers fast reduces the windows to patience, moderation, acceptance which can be self-maintained without any cost. As writer Isabelle Holland reminds us, 'As long as you don't forgive, who and whatever it is will occupy rent-free space in your mind.'

Listen to these warnings too: 'Emotional distress can cause a stress response in the body leading to increases in blood pressure and inflammation. Certain tendencies such as anger and hostility have been related to elevated risks of heart disease,' says Dr Deepak Chopra. Resolve not to get all mentally het up and inflamed. Cars do not start, payments do not arrive on time, harsh words are targeted at us, the weather pours cold water on our plans... the thing is not to add the slam of our anger, hostility and intolerance to an already grievous situation. Douglas Abrams who has a long association with greats such as Archbishop Tutu, the Dalai Lama and others, talks about '...eudemonic happiness which is characterised by self-understanding, meaning, growth and acceptance, including life's inevitable suffering, sadness and grief.'

**As long as you don't
forgive, who and whatever
it is will occupy rent-free
space in your mind.**

The open-hearted asana

All that we've discussed above points to strengthening and opening our heart. One yoga teacher points out that our very posture of sitting at our desks is of a semi-slouch. It constricts our chest, heart and our lungs. She advocates a wonderful practice to be done five times a day. Stand up, spread your arms out wide and laugh. Let the air and oxygen and the joy of being alive rush into your lungs. If you don't want to disturb anybody, stand in that open-hearted posture under the fan and breathe like one who has reached the mountain peak and is gazing in deep delight at the view. It's very refreshing. It drives out all the kinks, the tensions we don't even know we have accumulated.

Finally, while technology is a great aid and source of entertainment, do de-tech to detox. Let your eyes feast on the vast true life scenery of epic proportions outside your window or at a scenic retreat in the hills. Walk barefoot on the beach so that the earth's negative ions enter your body and dispel the free radicals that build up there due to daily stress; allow these negative ions to act positively and decrease the stress-caused inflammation.

Give your heart a good life, starting now.

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

**Our very posture of sitting at
our desks is of a semi-slouch.**

**It constricts our chest and
heart as well as our lungs**



Wordsworld

Behind the cover



Sandhya Rao

Surprises hide within the pages of seemingly unattractive looking books. Don't be fooled. Go beyond the jacket.

We are constantly admonished never to judge a book by its cover, yet I often catch myself doing precisely that. Mmmm, too dull. Uff, so boring. Naa, not interesting. Oho, so unsmart, the book must be even less smart. These and a whole lot of other similarly illogical thoughts present themselves when choosing books, be it at library or shop.

I remember being less picky as a child because all I wanted to do was read, 'looks' didn't matter. But yes, I preferred fat books to thin ones because they held the promise of juicy bites. This approach ruled well for a long time, right through

a period of irritating intellectual snobbery. Thankfully, that stage saw a decline and gradually gave way to the habit of looking inside the book, quickly perusing the first few paragraphs — but not the last! — to see if the introduction to the novel held my attention. And of course, the size of the font used for the text mattered too: if it made my eyes scrunch up to read, then the book was set aside, often-times, regretfully. The text needed to be easy on the eye, large enough and with sufficient space between the lines. Incidentally, they call this space between lines 'leading' in publishing parlance. Font size and leading are sometimes compromised in order to reduce the number of pages and so bring down the price of a book.

The other thing that is bothersome is the kind of paper used for the text: sometimes it is so thin that the printing on one side is seen on the other, making it a hodge-podge to read. This is particularly true of textbooks and definitely one reason why so many children put off books. Just as we refer to transparent clothes as 'see-through', the effect of such printing is referred to as 'show-through'.

Anyway, these side-bars aside, for the potential reader, it's a balancing act between the outside and the inside, with the inside carrying

the deciding vote. Judged by these standards, the front cover of *Tales from a Vending Machine* wouldn't win prizes for design, but that

lacuna is more than made up for by the author who has a number of awards ratcheted up against his books. The curious fact is that Kochi-based Anees Salim had written two books prior to this one: agents and publishers had rejected both of them.

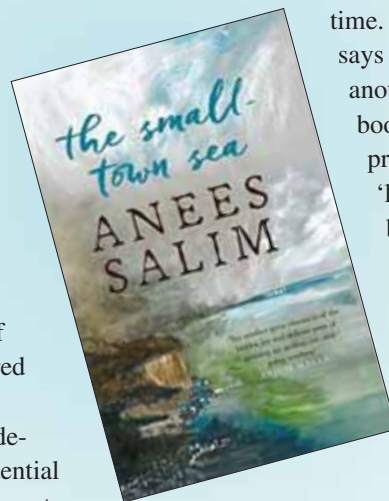
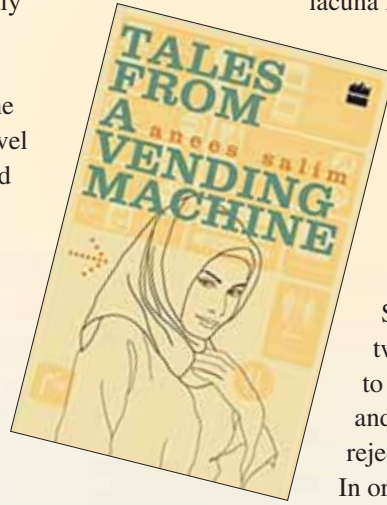
In order to get over his dejection, he decided to write something light and racy. That's what he says in a 2018 interview to the *Earthen Lamp Journal*: 'The deeper the wound, the bigger the dose of writing.' This was his coping mechanism, his therapy to combat depression.

It turned out to be the perfect antidote because, as he himself says, Salim wrote this book in less than six months, found an agent in five minutes, who then sold it to

a publisher in a week's time. And although he says he will never write another commercial book, this one proved to be his 'luck by chance' because thereafter, publishers lined up to add his book to their lists and his career as a writer blossomed. If

you want to know

how: *Vanity Bagh* received The Hindu Literary Prize in 2014, *The*



Blind Lady's Descendants won the 2015 Crossword Book Award and the Sahitya Akademi award in 2018, *The Small-Town Sea* was judged best fiction at the 2017 Bangalore Atta Galatta Litfest and won the Tata Literature Live Book of the Year Award. His latest, published in 2021, is *The Odd Book of Baby Names. Vending Machine* won its share of fame by being republished as *Fly, Hasina, Fly*, new cover and all!

Vending Machine is a darkly humorous novel woven around the character of Hasina Mansoor who works as a vending machine attendant at the departure lounge of the airport. She lives with her parents, twin sister, and little brother. Caught up in the dynamics of family relationships, Hasina is secretly in love with her cousin who lives upstairs, with his family. She is a peculiar character: you neither love her nor hate her nor do you understand her. But she sometimes makes you laugh out loud by the sheer ludicrousness of her observations and actions. Dig deep beneath the fluff and you hit a hard rock of hopelessness that underlines Hasina's life, but she herself has only a vague awareness of it.

Unpretentious, unambiguous, there's no real plot to Hasina's story, yet you flit with her as she watches flights land and take-off, from fantasy to reality to daydream to humdrum until you are arrested by the ridiculous. As, for instance, when she is once approached by 'a white-haired man dressed in a long kurta... he looked

so sad and uprooted and — you won't believe me — was barefoot'. Your grey cells begin to engage at this stage. Overwhelmed by pity she tells him 'in a polite and lowered voice, because my nice little heart bled at the sight of people whose faces were so evidently marked by the scars of penury. "Tea is forty rupees here. Inside the plane it is free." ... "You know who I am?" he asked, as if he had had a loss of memory and was not really sure of what he was doing in an airport lounge sans footwear... "I am a painter."' By now you think you know who she is talking about.

Hasina's voice goes on: 'So, my guess was close. (Of late, there had been a steady parade of people like him to Dubai, where they were building the tallest structure in the world.) ... I had a vision of him standing on a rope ladder draped over a large building, clutching a rung with one hand, running a paintbrush over the wall with the other while a cruel wind tried its best to send him flying to the ground.' You do know! It's M F Husain!

Take another instance, this time involving Saddam Hussein: 'They showed the hanging all day, the same short footage over and over

again; for a while I was under the impression that every time they hung him he refused to die and went defiantly back to the gallows and challenged them to hang him again.'

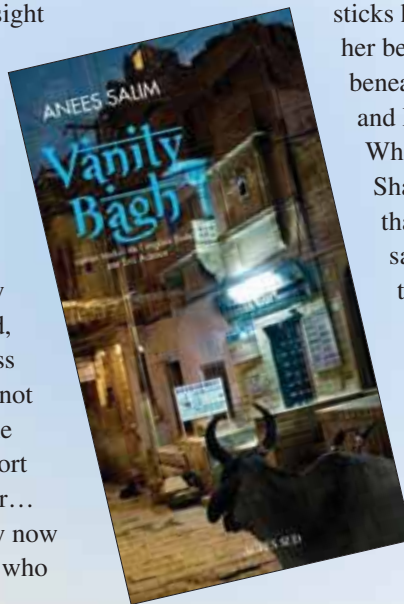
She feels sorry for him and sticks his picture above her bed and scrawls beneath it: 'I am young and I have a dream.' When her sister Shamla points out that Saddam never said anything like this, Hasina 'was so saddened by the hanging that I wanted to associate all good sayings with poor Saddam. "He said that just before Iraq attacked Kuwait.

I read that in *Femina*."

Shamla claims Rajiv Gandhi said this when Indira Gandhi died. Anyway, 'The next day, I went to the Internet café outside the airport and searched in Google for the man who claimed to be young and have the same dream every night. We were both wrong ... Those words were spoken by an American king named Martin Luther who died not very long after he had talked in public about his youth and the dream he had at night.'

Politically incorrect, darkly funny, politically and socially satiric yet grounded in harsh realities... all these layers combine to offer readers a healthy dose of perspective on life and how we live. It's a shot of perspective we could all do with in these polarising times.

The columnist is a children's writer and senior journalist



RC Pondicherry White Town — RID 2981



Club president Vaitheeswaran presented a cheque for ₹22,000 to children, Jeniliya and Jeslin, for their school fees.

RC Malegaon Fort — RID 3030



A karate camp was held at the Kakani Kanya Vidyalaya, Mohadi near Nashik. Club president Dr Arun Pathade spoke on the importance of self-defence for girls.

RC Madurai Midtown — RID 3000



An industrial visit to Ruby Foods was arranged for club members and Annets who had a first-hand glimpse of the enterprise.

RC Indore Greater — RID 3040



DG Col Mahendra Mishra inaugurated a two-day artificial limb fitment camp that benefitted 21 amputees. This was held in partnership with Inali Foundation, Pune.

RC Visakhapatnam — RID 3020



DG M Rama Rao inaugurated a digital library funded by AG Jagapathi Raju at Kranthi Nagar in the city.

RC Jammu Tawi — RID 3070



Dustbins were distributed to Sainik School, and Government Girls HR School, both in Nagrota, in the presence of DGE Dr Dushyant Chaudhary.

RC Uklana Mandi — RID 3090



Artificial limbs were fitted to 10 amputees in partnership with Bharat Vikas Parishad at a cost of ₹30,000.

RC Siddharthnagar — RID 3120



School bags, notebooks and stationery kits were distributed to students whose parents are daily wagers at a brick kiln.

RC Meerut Umang — RID 3100



A vaccination camp against cervical cancer was held at the Vardhaman Academy in the presence of DG Rajiv Singhal and CMO Akhilesh Mohan.

RC Lonavala — RID 3131



Two selfie points were installed at scenic spots with Rotary and club logos on selfie boards as part of public image building initiatives.

RC Agra — RID 3110



An awareness drive against tobacco consumption was done at the Paliwal Park to mark World No Tobacco Day. The district administration was requested to make the park a tobacco-free zone.

RC Ahmednagar Priyadarshini — RID 3132



The club sponsored ₹20,000 for a young girl from a less privileged family to pursue a two-year stenography course that will help her get better job offers.

RC Thane Down Town — RID 3142



DG Dr Mayuresh Warke inaugurated three classrooms at the Ashramshala school in Lokseva Foundation Trust, Valivare village in Murbad taluk, thanks to the CSR funds (₹20 lakh) from Zuventus Healthcare.

RC Bangalore South — RID 3190



Senior Citizens Sangha, sponsored by the club, has distributed 4,000 eco-friendly cloth bags carrying Rotary's Four-Way Test and seven focus areas as part of its public image initiatives.

RC Guntur Vikas — RID 3150



A motorcycle ambulance worth ₹1.8 lakh was donated to Covid frontline warriors in Guntur to continue their efforts in preventing the spread of the pandemic.

RC Cochin Beachside — RID 3201



A football tournament was conducted and prizes were distributed to VHS Pananghad, the winners, with the support of RCC.

RC Honavar — D 3170



A National Women's Chess Championship for the Visually-Challenged was conducted with the support of All India Chess Federation for Blind. Around 60 players participated.

RC Alleppey Greater — RID 3211



The club staged a flash mob in the town and on the beach involving 250 school students with the message 'Say no to war'.

RC Tirunelveli Suburbs — RID 3212



A sapling plantation drive was conducted at the Doordarshan office in Rameswaram in the presence of club president Muralidharan, secretary TV Suresh and other members.

RC Bilaspur Queens — RID 3261



A drawing competition was held for children in a slum colony to create awareness on World No Tobacco Day.

RC Orchid City Shillong — RID 3240



Meghalaya Governor Satyapal Malik presented Vocational Excellence Awards hosted by the club at the Durbar Hall of the Raj Bhavan.

RC Bhubaneswar Flamingo — RID 3262



A webinar, *Embrace*, on transgender issues was held with LGBTQ resource persons in the presence of Dr Smita Sinha, club president and district DEI chair.

RC Bokaro Midtown Couples — RID 3250



An eye clinic was opened at the Abha Seva Sadan, Kashi Jharia, for the residents of Pindrajora and nearby villages. Spectacles were distributed.

RC Calcutta West Ridge — RID 3291



Ten patients were identified for cataract surgery at an eye camp held along with RC Calcutta Mahanagar.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

ENHANCE PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

A CONVERSATION WITH
ISAAC B. OWOLABI

“We need to do everything we can to say, ‘We’re thankful you’re here. You matter to us.’”



Learn what your club can do at rotary.org/actionplan

Q. What do we mean by enhancing participant engagement?

ISAAC: Simply put, we enhance participant engagement when we meet people where they are, rather than just assuming they'll find a way to fit in. It goes far beyond saying, "Come on in! You're welcome!" Focusing on participants is far more proactive.

Q. Why is this such an important part of the Action Plan?

ISAAC: Rotary has offered me many opportunities to get involved, to learn new skills, and to lead. But I've also met a lot of people who feel there is no room for them to serve in Rotary. And we know we have a challenge when it comes to retaining members.

That's why making a concerted effort to engage participants is important. When participants don't find experiences that feel personally and professionally relevant, when they don't feel seen as individuals, they go elsewhere — and they have plenty of choices.

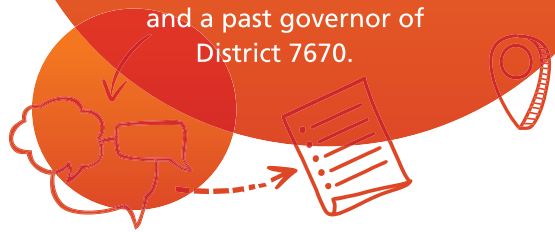
Q. Why are we talking about participants instead of Rotary members?

ISAAC: The word *participants* encompasses Rotary and Rotaract members as well as all others who engage in Rotary activities, such as family members, friends, and alumni. Thinking in terms of participants gets us to a new mindset. We begin to look at every encounter as an opportunity to show others what Rotary can do — and what they can do with us.

Q. What can clubs do to focus more on participants?

ISAAC: One word: Listen. As leaders in our professions and communities, we already know how important it is to listen — and how much effort it takes to listen in ways that feel genuine and authentic to those around us. We need to apply that same skill and determination to our Rotary involvement.

MEET ISAAC B. OWOLABI. A professor emeritus of business and marketing and also an ordained minister, Owolabi is a member of the Rotary Club of Asheville-Biltmore, North Carolina, and a past governor of District 7670.



Don't just give people a list of things you want to accomplish and ask them to check a box. Instead, ask participants if they're feeling engaged and heard, and if Rotary is meeting their expectations — and listen to what they say.

Another important step is to make sure everyone who engages with us knows that we value their participation. We need to do everything we can to say, "We're thankful you're here. You matter to us."

Q. You're a big believer in surveys. Why are they a useful tool for enhancing engagement?

ISAAC: Surveys are a relatively easy way to identify strengths and weaknesses. In my club, we conduct surveys every year to ask members how they want to be engaged and what community projects they are interested in. I'd also urge clubs to measure member engagement and satisfaction regularly so you can better understand what people are getting out of their Rotary experience.

But don't stop with your club. Consider surveying your community or sponsoring a town hall meeting where people can provide feedback about your projects and share their own ideas. When we engage with the community more broadly, we become known as the people who spot opportunities for positive change.

Let's make sure we see, value, and hear people. When we do that, we make Rotary stronger.

Tighten rules for snappier games



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

When the French Open ended this year someone asked me if I had watched the matches. I said no because I think the French Open, which is played on clay, is more a test of endurance than tennis skills. Opinions vary on this but I also think the bigger culprit, or indeed the main one, is the obsession with rulemaking in the western countries. They want to make more and more rules for everything. By and large, I must say, these rules have been good.

But in the area of sports they have tended to make different games very boring and predictable. It doesn't matter which game, cricket or hockey or tennis or football or whatever, over the last half century rules made by the West have had a deadening impact. As a result I now watch fewer tournaments, not least because there are so many of them. At first I thought the problem was me because I do love watching sporting contests. But gradually I realised that, for once, it wasn't I who had a problem. It was the straitjacketed rules that have taken the fun out of the sport.

Let me just focus on the problem of too many rules. Because of the paucity of space I will discuss only cricket and tennis, the two sports that I love the most. For the other sports you can do a similar exercise and you will see how the rules limit the level of contest. These rules have

reduced these sports to a zombie-like state.

Take cricket first. Until the end of the 1970s, there were very few rules that governed mainly the bowlers. These rules were for a no ball, a wide and LBW. As a result, the contests used to be more intense. Then gradually more rules were introduced. These were tiny changes — I won't bore you with the details — that had the effect of making the bat-ball contest uneven. The game became increasingly batting oriented because people like to watch the bowlers getting hammered. The moving force was TV. As the English batsman WG Grace is supposed to have told the bowler who got him out "They have come to see me bat, not to see you bowl." He refused to leave the field. That was over a 100 years

I can't understand why all these changes are necessary if the only effect they have is to dull down the games and make them last longer so that TV channels can rake in more ad revenue.

ago. To cut a long story short, let me just tell you how long the shortest rule book is — more than 200 pages. You can find it here. <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-laws-of-cricket/players-conduct>.

The same thing has happened to tennis also. All sorts of limiting features have been introduced that have made the game mind-numbingly monotonous. The French Open is the daddy of all such monotony. Tennis used to be a fast-paced peer game because not only are the balls a little larger, the quality of the felt is also different. At Wimbledon they mow the grass differently. The rackets are larger and much lighter, but aren't able to fully nullify the effect of larger balls, different felt, heavier clay and lawn restrictions. The US and Australian Open are only slightly better because the surfaces there offer more to players. For the life of me I can't understand why all these changes were necessary if the only effect they have had is to dull down the games and make them last longer so that TV channels can rake in more ad revenue.

I have a suggestion therefore. Let's go back to the sort of rules and conditions we had in the 1960s and 1970s. Let's see if the games become snappier or not. If not, I will say I am wrong. If yes, everyone will be better off. ■

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- B.F.A.
- B.C.A.
- B.Sc. Hons. (Forensic Science)
- B.Sc. Hons. (Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence)
- B.Sc. Hons. (Home Science)
- B.Sc. (Fashion Design)
- B.Sc. (Jewellery Design & Technology)
- B.B.A.
- BBA (Aviation and Tourism Management)

BACHELOR OF VOCATION (B.Voc.) PROGRAMMES

- B.Voc. (Office Management and Secretarial Practices)
- B.Voc. (Banking and Financial Services)
- B.Voc. (Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation)
- B.Voc. (Digital Marketing) *UGC Approved

INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES

- B.A. B.Ed.*
- B.Sc. B.Ed.*
- B.Sc. M.Sc. (Nano Science & Technology)

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- B.Sc. Hons. (Multimedia & Animation)
- B.C.A. (Bachelor of Computer Applications)
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- B.Lib.Sc. (Bachelor of Library and Information Science)
- M.A. (Digital Media and Communication)
- M.C.A. (Master of Computer Applications)
- M.B.A. (Dual Specialization, Trimester based)- Marketing, Finance, Production and Operation Management HR, IB, IT

POST GRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- M.A.- English, History, Economics, Psychology, French, Sociology, Geography, Mathematics, Political Science, Statistics, International Relations, Public Administration
- M.Sc.- Zoology, Chemistry, Microbiology, Botany, Biotechnology, Psychology, Environmental Science, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Economics, Statistics
- M.Com. - Accounting & Taxation, Business Studies, Financial Studies

PG - PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMES

- M.A.- Journalism & Mass Communication
- M.A./M.Sc. (Yogic Sciences)
- M.A./M.Com./M.Sc. (Fashion Design)
- M.A./M.Com./M.Sc. (Jewellery Design)
- M.F.A. - Applied Art (Graphic Design/Illustration), Print Making, History of Art, Painting, Sculpture (Portraiture, Creative Sculpture)
- M.S.W. (Master of Social Work)
- M.Sc. Home Science - Clothing and Textiles, Foods and Nutrition, Human Development
- M.B.A. (Semester Based) Human Resource Management; International Business; Retail Management; Tourism & Travel Management; Finance; Advertising & Brand Management; Business Analytics; Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Venture Development

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Commerce, Management

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