

# Rotary NEWS

INDIA  
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**VISAKHA VISTA**  
 New horizon  
 Rotary Institute - 2022  
 Zone 4,5,6,7



**9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2022**

REGISTER HERE  
[rotaryinstitute2022.com](http://rotaryinstitute2022.com)

Venue

**Radisson Blu Resort**

Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh



30<sup>th</sup> Nov to 1<sup>st</sup> Dec, 2022

**GETS/GNTS**

W Abu Dhabi- Yas Island  
 United Arab Emirates

8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2022

**GOLF TOURNAMENT**

07:00 AM

**TRF Seminar & Dinner**

3:00 PM to 10:30 PM

9<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2022

- DG Mid-Year Review Meet
- District Trainers Seminar
- Women in Rotary
- Rotaractors Seminar

09:30 AM to 01:00 PM

**Lunch**

01:00 PM

**Institute Inauguration**

03:00 PM to 6:00 PM

**Dinner/Entertainment**

07:00 PM

10<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2022

**Service Projects Inauguration**

**Rotary Institute**

10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

**Lunch Dinner/Entertainment**

01:00 PM 07:00 PM

11<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2022

**Run to read (10k Run)**

6:00 AM

**Rotary Institute**

10:00 AM to 01:00 PM

**Lunch**

01:00 PM



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For a healthier, happier you



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## District Wise TRF Contributions as on August 2022-23 (Interim Results)

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution
<b>India</b>					
2981	7,998	127	0	625	8,750
2982	5,095	1,099	2,001	14,538	22,733
3000	4,580	1,361	0	0	5,941
3011	7,344	100	127	44,582	52,152
3012	541	0	0	21,810	22,351
3020	5,443	160	30,000	0	35,603
3030	5,274	43	0	1,150	6,468
3040	4,412	258	0	5,747	10,416
3053	19,068	0	0	0	19,068
3054	2,664	0	0	0	2,664
3060	17,208	125	0	38,072	55,405
3070	11,136	100	8,400	2,975	22,612
3080	5,083	1,397	0	0	6,480
3090	1,098	0	2,190	0	3,288
3100	17,248	0	0	0	17,248
3110	3,233	229	2,025	242,000	247,487
3120	4,089	0	0	0	4,089
3131	73,282	381	22,785	73,316	169,765
3132	9,508	583	25,000	0	35,090
3141	290,163	27,200	1,000	8,114	326,477
3142	43,442	1,100	0	25	44,567
3150	8,581	1,109	0	313	10,003
3160	945	1,063	0	0	2,009
3170	26,906	10,636	506	0	38,048
3181	28,565	6	25	399	28,995
3182	5,482	253	0	0	5,735
3190	7,425	95	0	735	8,255
3201	22,837	531	0	251,245	274,613
3203	744	387	0	11,522	12,653
3204	3,575	0	0	152	3,727
3211	46,406	0	0	1,049	47,455
3212	7,287	10,041	0	31,646	48,974
3231	39,331	18,248	32,025	525	90,129
3232	24,659	3,051	0	16,312	44,022
3240	10,582	6,073	1,000	0	17,655
3250	2,449	75	0	10,500	13,024
3261	290	13	0	200	503
3262	530	23	0	27,471	28,023
3291	18,827	13	15,033	0	33,873
<b>India Total</b>	<b>793,330</b>	<b>85,879</b>	<b>142,118</b>	<b>805,023</b>	<b>1,826,350</b>
3220	Sri Lanka	6,221	211	0	6,431
3271	Pakistan	25	25	0	300
3272	Pakistan	300	0	0	5,300
3281	Bangladesh	29,277	393	20,000	57,023
3282	Bangladesh	575	1,000	0	4,381
3292	Nepal	3,248	907	0	13,481
<b>South Asia Total</b>	<b>832,976</b>	<b>88,415</b>	<b>162,118</b>	<b>829,758</b>	<b>1,913,267</b>

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

Source: RI South Asia Office

## LETTERS

### A well-packaged journal

September issue has a unique shot from a Miyawaki forest done by RID 2981. RI President Jennifer Jones' speech on 'the power of taking uncomfortable chances' is motivating. Editor's note on the need to eliminate inequality and oppression in society is interesting.

The article *Where attending school is a luxury* clearly shows the pathetic condition of tribals in villages. Other articles like *Don't water the weeds*, *Tamil Nadu projects bowl over RI Prez Jones*, *Member engagement crucial*, *Flood victims receive help from Valsad*, *Our knees make us athletes*, are all good. The picture pages *India welcomes Prez Jones* are colourful and attractive.

*Philip Mulappone MT  
RC Trivandrum  
Suburban — D 3211*

It was heart-touching to read the story of Shadaab, an Afghan heart patient, in the feature on fixing pacemakers,

### Correction

RIDE T N Subramanian will be director for zones 4 and 7; while RIDE Anirudha Roy Chowdhury will be in charge of zones 5 and 6. Their zones were wrongly mentioned in the September issue. The error is regretted.

*Editor*

an impressive project initiated by Dr Vijaya Bharat at Jamshedpur (August issue). She is doing a great social work by providing artificial heart to needy patients. The interview of TRF Trustee Geeta Manek is inspirational.

*Dr Jagdish Vaghasia  
RC Surat East — D 3060*

### Spotlight on DEI

In her candid August message, President Jones has turned the spotlight on DEI in the Rotary hierarchy and called for efforts to diversify Rotary's membership. When 'people of action' are committed to big goals, we, Rotarians, will work hard and strive to realise these objectives.

For the first time, Rotary India will have seven women governors next year and Jones congratulated them at the goal-setting *Lakshya* conclave in Pune. The cover story on RC Jamshedpur tying up with Tata Main Hospital for fixing pacemakers on the hearts of patients is really touching.

*S Muniandi, RC Dindigul  
Fort — D 3000*

RI President Jennifer has touched upon many aspects of Rotary in her August message and in her address at the closing session of the Houston Convention. The most important was about the engagement of new members.

I recall PRIP Glen Kinross's words: "Each time we lose a member, that too a newly joined one, our

assets are diminished." The clubs can improve the retention rate, if only they educate new members about the opportunities available to serve their communities. As Jones says, we have to listen to new members with immense respect about what their expectations are from the club.

*R Srinivasan, RC Madurai  
Midtown — D 3000*

### Picture says it all

My heart was filled with pride as a Rotarian, when my 14-year-old son, Samarth, pointed to me the cover photo of the August issue — a smiling patient on a hospital bed. He said in most magazines he reads, the cover page contains pictures of Bollywood stars, sports personalities and political leaders, but this Rotary magazine had the picture of a smiling man who appeared to be in a hospital. Why is that, he asked.

When I told him that, he is a heart patient fitted with a pacemaker sponsored by Rotary, my son replied that the smile on his face showed how much difference this surgery had made to his life. I was not only impressed by his observation but also proud of the life-saving projects Rotary clubs do throughout the world. Kudos to *Rotary News* for portraying our service projects in such detail and the right perspective, enhancing Rotary's public image.

*R Murali Krishna  
RC Berhampur — D 3262*

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor: [rotarynews@rosaonline.org](mailto:rotarynews@rosaonline.org); [rushbhagat@gmail.com](mailto:rushbhagat@gmail.com).

Mail your project details, along with hi-res photos, to [rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com).

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**On the cover:** Queen Elizabeth II during her coronation in 1953.

# Shining a spotlight on polio

In August, I was proud to visit Pakistan and highlight Rotary's top goal, eradicating polio. It was also a tremendous opportunity to spotlight female health workers who are playing a critical role in protecting children from this vaccine-preventable disease.

This month, as we celebrate World Polio Day, we are shining a spotlight on our more than 30-year effort to lead the first global polio eradication campaign and our success in forming partnerships capable of completing this massive goal. We all know that this is one of the most ambitious global health initiatives in history and that we've reduced polio cases by more than 99.9 per cent worldwide.

Pakistan is one of only two countries in the world where wild polio-virus remains endemic. (The other is

neighbouring Afghanistan.) I was able to witness and take part in vaccination campaigns in Pakistan, and soon after I left, a monumental nationwide immunisation campaign took place, focused on 43 million children under the age of 5. I saw the incredible work of Rotary members on the ground. More than 60 per cent of vaccinators in Pakistan are women, and they are doing a remarkable job building trust and convincing mothers to vaccinate their children.

Seeing it all firsthand, I know that the will exists across the Rotary world to end polio, and I'm confident that we have the strategy. The Pakistani media has been very supportive of our efforts as well, and this is making a difference. This month, a new global pledging moment at the World Health Summit in Berlin promises to pull

What I saw in Pakistan convinced me that we can and must finish the job, but it will only happen if we remain committed to a strategy that's working and back it with all necessary resources.

together more resources to fund these time-sensitive eradication efforts. Now it is up to us to do our part and raise \$50 million this year to earn the full 2-to-1 match from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

There's great cause for optimism on the polio front — but also some staggering new events that have further raised the stakes. Over the past few months, new polio outbreaks have occurred in Israel, the United Kingdom and, most recently, in the New York City area. These stories are frightening, but in every case, the response is clear — vaccines work, and if polio is spreading, we need to make sure the most at-risk people have kept their vaccinations up to date.

Most importantly, we need to eradicate this virus now. If polio exists anywhere, it can spread everywhere. What I saw in Pakistan convinced me that we can and must finish the job, but it will only happen if we remain committed to a strategy that's working and back it with all necessary resources.

Through our commitment, generosity and sheer determination, we will #EndPolio.

**Jennifer Jones**

President, Rotary International

Khaula Jamil



RI President Jennifer Jones interacts with a child after giving him a polio vaccine at a home in Karachi, Pakistan.



## Leadership lessons from Queen Elizabeth II

**A**scribe it to the ironic times in which we live that a world torn apart by aggression, strife, war, and divided so deeply along regional, communal and class lines, where the havoc caused by the Covid pandemic coupled with ferocious natural disasters have sent several nations reeling under a great economic shock, over 400 world leaders came together in solemn solidarity last month. Irrespective of the various hues of differences they wear on their sleeves, they came together in a respectful and dignified group to pay their homage to the British Queen Elizabeth II, who passed away at the age of 96.

Even more ironic, the woman in whose memory they stood so respectfully, did not wield any great political power to draw them in. In fact she was often berated and criticised strongly for being a symbol of the dark colonial power that the British empire had once wielded, and the atrocities it had inflicted, on so many countries, including India. History is replete with the dark deeds of the British empire that looted and impoverished its colonies, while torturing thousands of its “native subjects”.

And yet, that very Britain, which went on to form the Commonwealth of nations and head it, was represented by the Queen with such equanimity, dignity, charisma and grace... all the elements that come so magically together to form what is called the “soft power” of a person, that her passing away left most of

the world reeling under a feeling of irreparable loss. And it wasn't mourning of the kind we saw erupting for Princess Diana, who was snatched away in the prime of her life by a gruesome road accident. If there was ever an untimely death, that was it. But the Queen had lived a full life... nine decades and more.

The legacy Elizabeth leaves behind for world leaders to ponder over and emulate is the stoic and dignified manner in which public resentment, criticism, and brickbats can be handled, without losing one's sense of calmness. Another lesson she leaves behind is that when acrimony is at its dizzy high, silence can do a lot to tide over the storm. Her total lack of arrogance and anger, at least in public, holds a valuable lesson too. Of course, it can be argued that all this was ingrained into her by relentless tutoring and training over long years, and especially once it was known that she would be a future Queen of England. Unfortunately, in today's politics, neither education, training nor a sense of decency and dignity are considered prerequisite for leadership roles.

Small wonder then that today's world is throwing up fewer and fewer leaders at the helm of nations who can draw unadulterated respect, affection and admiration.

Isn't it saddening to think that the brand of mystique and magic that the British Queen spontaneously generated, through her mere presence and persona, might be something that is disappearing...

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

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Printed by PT Prabhakar at Rasi Graphics Pvt Ltd, 40, Peters Road, Royapettah, Chennai - 600 014, India, and published by PT Prabhakar on behalf of Rotary News Trust from Dugar Towers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr, 34, Marshalls Road, Egmore, Chennai 600 008. Editor: Rasheeda Bhagat.

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Website



# Director

## The role of UN today

foundation providing education and humanitarian aid.

The UN, along with its specialised agencies, provides a platform for people with different opinions to interact and seek methods to forge a middle ground. Despite polarisation between its member states, it has arbitrated and successfully mediated in many disputes. Many nations' military truces and ceasefire agreements have been upheld by the UN peacekeepers. Though the organisation has been facing challenges in the last couple of years, like climate crisis, food insecurity, the Covid pandemic, and the Ukraine war, its relevance has increased.

India's global contributions to UN have been monumental and a source of pride for South Asia and all peace-loving democracies. During the Covid recovery phase, India acted as a pharmacy for the world.

India strongly supports UN's purposes and principles and has made significant contributions to implementing the UN's Charter goals and evolution of its specialised programmes and agencies.

As the UN marks 77 years of existence, we have every reason to celebrate all that our comity of nations has achieved. We must ensure that it remains effective and relevant in a dynamic changing new world.

**Dr Mahesh Kotbagi**  
RI Director, 2021-23

**U**nited Nations Day is celebrated each year on October 24 since 1945 to mark its promotion of human rights, diversity and progress across countries. On this day, most UN signatories came together to sign the founding document — the UN Charter. Rotary has influenced the formation of UN and Rotarians have played a leading role in communicating its ideals. When the UN Charter was written, Rotary was one of the 42 organisations invited to serve as consultants, at the San Francisco Conference.

Since its inception, UN has impacted the lives of people on issues like human rights, peace and security, development, disease prevention, gender equality, education, humanitarian assistance, etc. The body has been at the forefront to ensure a secure, prosperous and equitable world, from supporting major decolonisation efforts across Africa and Asia to providing a critical platform for discourse through the cold war; from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger to addressing the pressing challenge of climate change.

Rotary and UN share a vision for peace and critical humanitarian issues. On many occasions, UN bodies like UNICEF and Rotary partner to provide lifesaving medicine, clean drinking water, educational material, etc to children and families in developing countries.

Rotary's seat at the United Nations' General Assembly signifies its efforts to foster goodwill and peace across boundaries. Rotary is the largest non-government



# Speak

## Think long-term, beyond your year

One of the privileges I have is the opportunity to meet and interact with several Rotarians from around our region. During my interactions, the one thing that stands out is that the vision of club leaders rarely goes beyond one year.

We tend to look at projects that can be conceived and executed in one year. This, while undermining our collective ability, also limits our impact. Eradication of polio would not have been possible if it had been a short-term objective. Our fund-raising plans, project ideas and the difference they can make are all limited by our reluctance to think long-term. Are we satisfied with paying school fees of a few deserving children or can we dream of constructing a school for such underprivileged children? Are we going to fund the cost of a heart surgery or can we plan to construct a hospital ward?

These are some of the thoughts that I want each one of you to ponder over. The key to unlocking our full potential lies in our willingness to think long-term. Our President Jennifer Jones has urged us to *Imagine Rotary*. We imagine things that aren't there presently! To be able to imagine something more impactful might mean a few fundamental changes to our thought process. To start with, we need to look beyond a year. Secondly, our



vision should not be restricted to the resources we have with us at present. As is said, you find the cause, means will follow. Thirdly, we should be ready to collaborate with other organisations, maybe other Rotary clubs too.

You can imagine the difference we, as an organisation, can make, if all the clubs in our region adopt this. Rotary's visibility will also be much higher, probably resulting in more people wanting to be a part of us. Let us shed our inhibitions and apprehensions and start imagining big. The time to be bold is now. I am sure we can.

**AS Venkatesh**  
RI Director, 2021–23

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Magazine

## Fulfilling our promise

Who are your Rotary heroes? One of mine was Clem Renouf, 1978–79 RI president. I related to Sir Clem, who died in 2020, in many ways. We shared the same profession and Australian nationality and a passion for polio eradication. It was Clem’s leadership that first put us on track to embrace the cause, mobilising what is today a global partnership that has led us to the cusp of eradicating a human disease for only the second time in history.



What Rotary and its partners have achieved is nothing short of remarkable. We have helped reduce polio cases by 99.9 per cent worldwide, immunising more than 2 billion children across 122 countries. Last year alone, more than 370 million children were vaccinated across 30 countries, using more than 1 billion doses of oral polio vaccine. As a result, we are seeing near historic lows in the number of cases. In August 2020, the World Health Organisation certified the African region free of wild poliovirus, an incredible achievement for Rotary members and a huge step on the road to eradication.

But remember that as long as polio exists anywhere, it is a threat to people everywhere, especially to young children. You may have heard about importations of the disease to Malawi and Mozambique, detection of poliovirus in sewage in the UK, and a recent case in the US.

To stay agile, Rotary and its partners are deploying a new polio vaccine, novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), to fight outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus, also known as variant poliovirus, which continues to threaten children in Africa, as well as several countries in Asia and the Middle East, including Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Rotary is as active as ever. We are calling on every member to take action and be part of this historic fight. Take the fight to your clubs and communities on World Polio Day, October 24. Keep raising awareness of the importance of polio eradication and Rotary’s critical role in that effort by holding events and fundraisers. Don’t forget that contributions toward the goal of \$50 million per year for polio eradication will be matched 2-to-1 by our generous partner, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Like Sir Clem, we can all be Rotary heroes, each playing a part in our organisation’s great legacy. Through giving, raising awareness and funds, and providing hands-on service, each of us brings Rotary a step closer to fulfilling our promise to the children of the world by eradicating polio for good.

**Ian HS Riseley**

Foundation Trustee Chair

## A foodie’s delight

**EVA Remijan-Toba**



From food stalls to fine dining, the culinary scene in Melbourne is so international that hungry visitors have choices within choices. Case in point: At least three districts claim to be the Australian city’s Little Saigon. So when you come for the 2023 Rotary International Convention May 27–31, don’t forget to bring your appetite and sense of adventure.

Which way to Little Saigon? That depends. You could head to Richmond, Footscray, or Springvale. Each is a hub for Vietnamese communities and cuisine, offering an abundance of restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores to explore. With a mix of traditional Vietnamese food as well as Australian-inspired fusion, you can’t go wrong whichever direction you choose.

A short tram ride north will take you to the suburb of Brunswick, the heart of the Melbourne area’s Middle Eastern food scene. With Lebanese, Turkish, Syrian and Iraqi fare featured at markets, restaurants, takeouts and bakeries, this multicultural district offers an array of options. Finish your meal at Café Coco with great coffee and, if you fancy a smoke, an aromatic shisha.

For Italian food, take a stroll down Lygon Street. There, you will find Melbourne’s Little Italy, where the city’s cafe culture comes to life. Make sure to stop for an espresso before heading to dinner at 400 Gradi. Famous for its pizza, the restaurant earned the Best Pizzeria in Oceania title three years in a row. To complete your Italian adventure, top off the night with some refreshing gelato from one of the area’s numerous dessert spots.

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[convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org).

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## Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 36,995

Rotaract clubs : 11,449

Interact clubs : 18,601

RCCs : 12,480

Rotary members : 1,192,376

Rotaract members: 204,103

Interact members : 427,823

As on September 18, 2022

## Membership Summary

As on September 1, 2022 (Interim)

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	135	6,685	8.02	63	290	55	242
2982	78	3,571	7.28	48	1,208	98	73
3000	132	5,379	9.57	99	1,548	308	214
3011	122	4,571	27.37	81	3,075	133	36
3012	149	3,727	23.18	72	1,450	85	61
3020	83	5,021	7.39	33	697	168	350
3030	98	5,269	15.13	126	2,343	358	380
3040	111	2,688	14.55	59	888	85	185
3053	74	2,956	17.32	36	522	54	128
3054	172	7,073	20.39	116	7,623	200	571
3060	105	4,938	14.95	65	2,403	80	152
3070	127	3,245	16.02	48	730	61	59
3080	107	4,311	13.43	148	2,457	209	117
3090	102	2,523	7.06	46	726	112	164
3100	100	2,132	9.85	14	83	28	151
3110	150	3,787	12.09	14	98	27	106
3120	90	3,675	16.30	66	602	36	55
3131	143	5,740	24.30	120	2,701	247	143
3132	90	3,639	12.92	35	612	126	167
3141	108	6,023	26.52	145	9,229	193	110
3142	103	3,885	21.13	85	2,132	145	87
3150	109	4,357	13.17	147	1,950	151	119
3160	78	2,727	9.64	30	320	20	82
3170	146	6,590	15.84	99	1,800	262	176
3181	87	3,584	9.79	35	449	199	116
3182	88	3,645	9.44	45	165	132	106
3190	165	6,807	19.23	207	9,974	274	72
3201	165	6,415	9.85	126	2,383	105	87
3203	94	5,013	8.18	74	838	235	38
3204	73	2,518	9.05	23	201	32	13
3211	155	5,174	8.68	8	102	29	133
3212	128	4,863	11.76	84	3,531	293	153
3231	95	3,520	8.21	34	299	99	417
3232	174	7,636	19.04	133	19,110	237	100
3240	110	3,734	17.19	68	1,487	413	226
3250	105	3,996	21.25	66	1,188	78	188
3261	93	3,316	19.18	17	50	25	44
3262	129	4,233	14.98	76	816	653	277
3291	159	4,087	24.74	137	2,039	106	680
<b>India Total</b>	<b>4,532</b>	<b>173,053</b>		<b>2,928</b>	<b>88,119</b>	<b>6,151</b>	<b>6,578</b>
3220	72	2,095	16.04	95	6,210	144	76
3271	142	3,118	17.70	152	2,438	192	25
3272	161	1,779	18.61	70	988	22	47
3281	309	8,661	18.67	279	2,678	156	207
3282	182	3,682	10.56	202	1,667	49	47
3292	155	5,962	18.00	176	5,130	142	131
<b>S Asia Total</b>	<b>5,553</b>	<b>198,350</b>		<b>3,902</b>	<b>107,230</b>	<b>6,856</b>	<b>7,111</b>

Source: RI South Asia Office

# Why Indians loved the Queen, even while hating British Raj

Rasheeda Bhagat

Expectedly, the passing away of Queen Elizabeth II was received by most Indians with a heavy heart and a feeling of loss... loss that comes when an era ends. Don't get me wrong; it wasn't as though the entire nation erupted into a symphony of collective mourning. There were the expected bitter comments on social media about the "evil British empire" that the Queen represented... one which had enslaved and colonised India for long decades, looted our treasures, particularly the Kohinoor diamond, and inflicted untold tyranny and misery on Indian "subjects".

And yet the British monarch's soft power... her elegance, grace, unmatched dignity and charisma, and above all, that infectious smile, which never waned with her advancing years, gained her global respect, including in India.

Her long reign of 70 years had its share of jeers and criticism, catcalls, anger and fury, more in the United Kingdom than elsewhere, with thousands of British citizens often asking why the exchequer was spending so much on the

British monarchy, whose members they accused of doing little other than prancing around ceremoniously, wrapped in the luxuries provided by the taxpayers' money.

That dislike and resentment for the monarchy, represented for seven decades by Elizabeth, came to a crescendo in 1997 when Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris. Never known to be on the best of terms with Diana, the Queen, who was in her Balmoral Castle in Scotland at that time, gave no signal she'd return to London for the funeral. After all, Diana was no longer a royalty, after a divorce with Charles, then Prince of Wales. But the outpouring of grief at the princess's death not only in Britain but across the world, left the British royalty stunned.

This turned out to be the worst crisis of her long reign; the tornado of public grief only sharpened the recrimination against the royal family, particularly the Queen, as she did not rush back to London. Ultimately, perhaps due to pressure from the media, which painted her as an uncaring and cold-hearted human being, with headlines such as *Where is the Queen, Do they care*, etc, or the mountains of bouquets that piled up outside Buckingham Palace, the Queen decided to act.

As debates raged on whether the Queen would even attend her former daughter-in-law's funeral, Elizabeth's trademarks... astute sense of duty and how to do the right thing at the right time, came to the fore. Perhaps Diana being the mother of a future British king ultimately helped the decision of the woman who had been tutored so assiduously in her duties as a British monarch.

The Queen did return to London a day before the funeral, and her masterstroke was a live broadcast to her subjects, which went a long way to mollify the angry British citizens. In that heartwarming, spontaneous speech, she talked about dealing with grief and loss and how everybody tries "in our different ways to cope. It is not easy to express a sense of loss, since the initial shock is often succeeded by a mixture of other feelings — disbelief, incomprehension, anger and concern for those who remain. We have all felt those emotions



Queen Elizabeth II  
with Prince Philip  
on their wedding.

in these last few days. So what I say to you now, as your Queen and as a grandmother, I say from my heart.” A warm tribute to Diana as an “exceptional and gifted human being” followed. Significantly, she added, that “lessons would be learnt” from the whole tragedy. This was damage control at its best and saved the day for the royal family. It made her appear far from cold-hearted. She was human after all, proclaimed that speech.

**Q**ueen Elizabeth was the 42<sup>nd</sup> in a line of kings and queens of first England, then Britain, then the United Kingdom. She was also the queen and head of state of 15 other countries, from Fiji, Australia and New Zealand to the Bahamas and Canada, which were all once part of the former British empire. Heading the Commonwealth for seven decades meant being a leader of 54 countries with a population of 2.1 billion people, comprising a third of the global population. The numbers speak for themselves. She wielded no political power over these people, and yet she was looked upon as a charismatic leader with a magic persona that attracted hordes of people wherever she went.

In her own country too, she had neither political or decision-making power in the real sense of the word. But she held the right to be consulted, and is believed to have warned or cautioned and even ticked off an odd PM in her own royal, restrained style. During her reign she saw and “advised” 15 British prime ministers, the latest being Liz Truss.

She is said to have shared a “special relationship” with her first prime minister, Winston Churchill, who is not exactly popular in India, having made such acerbic comments against India, particularly Mahatma Gandhi in pre-independence India. Remember his infamous quip when he was briefed about the Bengal famine of 1943 killing nearly 3 million Indians from hunger and malnutrition related diseases? He said petulantly: “Why hasn’t Gandhi died yet?”



**H**er marriage to Prince Philip of Greece, the impoverished nephew of the deposed king of Greece, is an interesting story, and shows the young Elizabeth had her own mind and was no royal pushover. A commentary in *The Guardian* says: “Five years older than Elizabeth, handsome and of royal birth, Philip was not in the list of the top dozen eligible suitors and there were attempts by her parents to put her off him. Even palace servants sneered at him when he turned up to stay at weekends because of the holes in his shoes, his lack of spare clothes and unsavoury relatives.” But she stood her ground, accepted his proposal, and the rest is history.

Interestingly Elizabeth’s reign straddled the presidency of 14 US presidents — from



**Clockwise from top left**  
Queen Elizabeth with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi. ● (From R) PM Jawaharlal Nehru, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Prince Philip, President Rajendra Prasad and S Radhakrishnan.  
● With Princess Diana.  
● With Barack and Michelle Obama. ● With Bill Clinton.

Truman to Joe Biden, and she met them all, except Lyndon Johnson. When she passed away at the age of 96, flags at US government buildings flew at half-mast in recognition of the “indefinable yet undeniable” soft power she wielded in all parts of the world. It’s a tribute to her unmatched dignity, grace and elegance that the Democrats and Republicans, who are ready to jump at each other’s throats in a jiffy in the US, were both fond of the British Queen.

Americans having “respect” for a monarch seems to be a ridiculous idea, but if ever they did respect a monarch, then that was Queen Elizabeth. Several accounts from the memoirs of celebrities and highly respected public figures such as Michelle Obama, show that despite all the protocol that her position demanded, the Queen was not a stiff and stuffy figure. In her memoir, Michelle recalls that while visiting the Queen, she made a blunder by putting her hand on the Queen’s back; protocol demands one should not touch the Queen. Only later she discovered she had committed “an epic faux pas” but the Queen “appeared okay with it, too,

because when I touched her, she only pulled closer, pressing a gloved hand lightly on the small of my back.”

Bill Clinton astutely observed: “Her majesty impressed me as someone who, but for the circumstance of her birth, might have become a successful politician or diplomat. As it was, she had to be both, without quite seeming to be either.” She was one of the most widely travelled people, with her duties making her criss-cross across the Commonwealth and several other countries. But she never played politics, show exasperation in public or make any controversial remarks. Her statements were balanced and her words well measured.

Nelson Mandela enjoyed a very close relationship with the Queen in the years after his release from prison, and was on first name basis with her. They also talked on the phone frequently, had mutual respect and affection and he had a special name for her — Motlalepula — which means ‘to come with rain’, which referred to the torrential rain she brought on her visit to South Africa after a long dry spell.

With Nelson Mandela.

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Nelson Mandela enjoyed a very close relationship with the Queen, was on first name basis with her and they talked on the phone frequently.

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Coming to India and the Queen, the question begging an answer is that if Indians had suffered for such long years under British rule and the country was impoverished by its rulers who took away such immense wealth out of India, why was Queen Elizabeth not a hated figure here? It’s a complex question with multiple answers. For one, Elizabeth acceded to the throne only in 1952 when her father King George VI died and her coronation took place only in 1953. India was already an independent country when she became Queen.

Also, by the time the colonisation, and exploitation of India took place, the English monarchy was well on its way to becoming a mere figure-head power. It was the powerful East India company, and a huge network of politicians and powerful officials, who set about the task of monetising the British colonies around the world, India being one of its more treasured “conquests”.

Popular writer Robin Artisson expressed it well in a post after the demise of the Queen, when he wrote: “I write for my friends outside of





the UK... a lot of people seem intent on pinning the last 400 years of colonial evil on Queen Elizabeth, or on her son (now king) Charles. I don't think this is coherent or historically supportable. Your enemy — the thing that actually colonized or murdered people, or exploited people — is Capitalism. And Capital is not one family, or even a collection of families; it is a terrible evil that disperses itself into every corner of life. Perhaps being blamed for centuries of evil that there's no way a person could have done anything about (or reversed) is one of the risks that comes with becoming a head of state or a figurehead. In the United States, we ignore the actual power brokers of capital and blame everything on the President, who is actually quite limited in his own power to affect much systemic change. Perhaps this is just human; we want a face and a name to hate and blame." Uncannily familiar, isn't it?

Such interesting historic perspectives remind us that it was not Elizabeth who colonised any nation or declared war on any country. It was her country's prime ministers and politicians who did so. She only played the role she had inherited, that of a symbolic and ceremonial figurehead... with matchless grace, dignity and elegance. She showed no trace of arrogance or was hoity-toity as could have been expected from such a powerful royal.

**A**nd all this bang in the midst of the scandals and upheavals the royal family that she presided over faced over the years of her reign. She had to deal with a number of failed marriages — that of Charles, Anne, Andrew — with a furious Diana spilling all the royal secrets to the media in candid



With Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Zail Singh.

interviews, and making the British monarchy hated more than ever. The royal soap opera continued in the last few years with Andrew, widely regarded as her favourite son, being forced to relinquish royal duties thanks to his friendship with an American paedophile, and last, but not the least, Prince Harry's estrangement from the royal family following his marriage to the American actress Meghan Markle.

But the stoic Elizabeth laboured on, even as her advancing years forced her to take a break from her regular public engagements. During her platinum jubilee celebrations, she could make only two brief appearances on the Buckingham Palace balcony.

It is a miracle that when she passed on, she managed to retain the affection and respect of most of the British people, who had jeered at and mocked the royal family mercilessly. The outpouring of public emotion as the Queen's funeral, the first State one since Churchill's in 1965, was under way, the 400-odd world leaders who attended it, was astounding. Even though her death rekindled conversation about Britain's dark colonial past, it was

mourned as the passing of an era. The overwhelming sense of loss the UK and the world felt, was a huge tribute to the Queen's sense of diligence and duty, her grace and charm, and her "soft power", that comes from a special smile, a particular brand of elegance and charisma. As the UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres said in his tribute, "Queen Elizabeth was a pillar without peer on the world stage. A reassuring and inspiring presence, she was an anchor of stability across decades of often turbulent history."

It was Elizabeth's mystique and magic that made the bulk of Indians forget, temporarily at least, horrific memories of the British Raj and spontaneously join Prime Minister Narendra Modi, when he called her a "stalwart of our times" in his tribute, adding "she personified dignity and decency in public life."

And no eyebrows were raised when the Indian government announced a day of mourning for the Queen.

Designed by  
Krishnapratheesh S

# British royalty's Rotary connection

## Team Rotary News

As the world focuses on the demise of Queen Elizabeth II and ascension of Prince Charles to the throne, the deep connect the British Royal family has with Rotary has come under the spotlight. King Charles III is an honorary member of RC Banchory Ternan, RID 1010, Scotland, from 1992, and just this June he was given the Rotary Award of Honor by outgoing RI President Shekhar Mehta in Rwanda for his dedication to sustainability and biodiversity.

Charles has also been a committed advocate of global polio eradication efforts. In 2003, he had participated in a Polio NID programme in a village near Delhi. In 2013, during another visit to India, sporting the End Polio Now



King Charles III at a Polio NID near Delhi in 2003.

scarf, he had acknowledged Rotary's tremendous efforts in eradicating polio in the country. In 2018 at the Commonwealth Leaders Summit he had praised Rotary for its polio eradication efforts.

His sister Princess Anne had addressed the Toronto Convention on polio. She is an honorary member of RC Elgin, Scotland. The late Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip was an honorary member

of the Rotary clubs of London, Edinburgh, King's Lynn, Windsor St George and Windsor and Eton. RI presented the Queen, the Rotary Award of Honor at the Buckingham Palace in 2013 on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her coronation. She was a supporter of Rotary's polio eradication and humanitarian missions.

Condoling the Queen's passing RI President Jennifer Jones commended Queen Elizabeth's "dedication to humanitarian causes and unwavering commitment to peace and the environment (which) deeply inspired Rotary members around the world, especially those in the Commonwealth countries." ■



Past RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi present a Rotary banner to King Charles at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali, Rwanda.

# Rotary Rain Run supports cervical cancer detection

Kiran Zehra

The Rotary Rain Run is a much-anticipated event in Goa, and one of the premium marathons in the country, drawing runners from across the world, says Nikhil Shah, secretary, RC Porvorim, RID 3170. Organised by the club annually in August, this monsoon marathon, in its 10<sup>th</sup> edition, saw a participation of 3,000 runners. The club partnered with Goa Tourism, the Indian Army, and the Indian Navy's Base Support Facility (Goa) for this event. "It was a proud moment for us to have the Army and the Navy partner with us for this run. They have excellent logistics, which greatly helped in its success," says event chairman Avinash Parmar.

Shah adds that partnering with the Goa Tourism Department was a great opportunity for Rotary. "There's something special about a tourist destination like Goa hosting a special event. Everyone, including the non-runners, turned up to cheer the runners and this helped in enhancing Rotary's public image."



Funds raised from the registration each year have been used by the club for community development projects in Porvorim. Shah adds that this year's run was held to support early detection and cure of cervical and breast cancer in women. "Proceeds from the event will be used to develop our flagship initiative — the Prakash Cancer Aid Project (PCAP), which works for women's health, cancer awareness, and detection. So far, we have conducted over 160 counselling camps through this project, and

3,500 women have taken the PAP smear test." It supports 20 cancer patients with treatment apart from providing counselling on general healthcare and hygiene for women.

The club tied up with Timing Technologies India which uses the RFID (radio-frequency identification) technology to track the participants' running time. "They set up the system infrastructure and timing points, coordinated logistics, and embedded timing chips in participants' bibs," explains Shah.

The Rotary Rain Run had three categories, 5, 10 and 21km (half marathon). The 10km and half marathon were timed events. Participants in the 5km, 10km and 21km races were awarded medals and t-shirts. All participants were given breakfast and water. The brand ambassadors for the run this year were Pradeep Kumbhar, a para athlete from Mumbai, and Mariola Mathias, a cancer survivor from Panaji. The marathon was flagged off at the Sports Authority of Goa's athletic stadium in Bambolim. ■

Doing good with TRF help

## PUNE ROTARIANS TRANSFORM PINGORI VILLAGE

**Rasheeda Bhagat**



**P**ingori is a small village situated in the Sahyadri mountain ranges in the Western Ghats, about 66km from Pune, known for its Wagheshwari temple and rich cultural history. The rainy season brings out the natural beauty of this village, located in rain shadow areas of this mountain range. But the annual rainfall is inadequate to meet the farming needs of the 1,300-odd villagers.

The main occupation here is farming and according to Baba Shinde, past president of Rotary Club of Aundh, Pune, RI District 3131, which has adopted and dramatically transformed this village and its water bodies, the average landholding of the local farmers is barely 1–2 acres. With limited water availability the



**(From L) Ajay Deshkar, Sukhanand Joshi, Datta Deshkar, Bhavana Ulangwar, Vinay Kanitkar, Sadanand Nayak, Vasant Malunjkar and Baba Shinde, from RC Aundh and RC Pimpri Elite, on the banks of the Jai Ganesh Lake in Pingori.**

farmers have been growing only bajra, jowar and common vegetables, as the available water is inadequate for paddy cultivation. Very little wheat is grown here.

In 2014, the desperate water situation in Pingori village was brought to the notice of the members of RC Aundh. "There was acute shortage of even drinking water for both the villagers as well as their milch animals in summer, a dire situation as milk provides the main source of income and sustenance for the villagers. Every year, there was water shortage for irrigation after February as its wells and *odhas* used to dry up due to the low water table in this village, which has an annual rainfall of 400mm, inadequate to take care of the village's farming needs. The farmers could hardly cultivate one crop, and there was no grazing grass for the cows and buffalos

adversely affecting the milk production in the village," says Shinde.

There was no health facility for the villagers either, and the local school had no computer facility to improve the teaching quality for students. Students, including girls, had to walk long distances, from 3 to 5km, to come to school. With income levels abysmally low, the villagers could hardly give any attention to cleanliness and hygiene.

**R**C Aundh decided to adopt Pingori village under its Happy Villages programme in 2014, setting about in right earnest to focus on its first priority to improve the water situation. The club took the help of Meena Borate, who was then leading the WASH team of RID 3131. With assistance

Two huge water tanks to store

**2.5**

**crore**  
litres and

**4**

**crore**  
litres of water  
built at a cost of

**₹78**

**lakh**  
through club's  
1<sup>st</sup> global grant

from Dutta Deshkar, a member of RC Aundh, it was decided to reconstruct the check dam on Darjibuwacha Nala which was in a damaged condition. Under the leadership of then club president Pravin Lakhe, the members, along with the Pingori gram panchayat, raised the required sum of ₹5.5 lakh for this project. After the dam was rebuilt, it could store nearly 30 lakh litres of water in the very first rainy season. Thanks to this initiative, many wells in the surrounding farms got recharged and the water table in the entire zone increased significantly. This helped farmers in surrounding areas to go in for the second or the rabi crop.

Having tasted sweet success with its very first water project, the enthused club members took up a tree plantation drive during 2015–16, and next year, the challenge of arresting the run-off of water from this hilly terrain

Past president  
of RC Aundh  
Bhavana  
Ulangwar  
with women  
Rotarians.





by building trenches along the slopes to hold the water and allow it to seep into the ground, instead of running off in a continuous stream.

**E**xplains past president of RC Aundh Ravindra Ulangwar, “Since Pingori village is located on large hilly slopes, the rainwater runs off, and doesn’t get into the ground. So we undertook a project to arrest this water and soak it into the ground, by establishing what are called continuous counter trenches on the foot hills of Pingori.”

During 2016–17, the club went in for its first global grant project, under the leadership of RC Pune Hillside, along with other partner clubs such as RCs Pune Kothrud and Mahad. Under this unique GG project, two huge water storage tanks, with a capacity to store 4 crore and 2.5 crore litres of water each, were developed. Borate, a member of RC Pune Hills, with the help of her friend Mansi Nadkarni (originally from Pune), brought RC Muscatine, US, RID 8000, as an international partner for this GG. The project was done by RC Aundh under the leadership of Fora Diwanji, the club’s first woman president.

Past president of RC Aundh Ravi Ulangwar, Rohit Shinde, manager of the shop, Bhavana Ulangwar and Hemant Chaudhary.

This unique project was completed at a cost of ₹78 lakh, with the NGO Janhit Patsansta, contributing a substantial sum of ₹17 lakh. The constant challenge while doing all water projects in Pingori was to conserve the maximum amount of water and prevent its loss in any and every possible way. “We realised the need for developing in this village a sustainable water source. So during the construction of these two water tanks, special treatment was given to the bottom surface of the tank to prevent water seepage.” Umesh Naik, a member of RC Pune Hillside, used his

expertise in waterproofing to make both these tanks watertight and prevent water loss. These water tanks proved to be the lifeline of the village, and now provide a year-long source of water for both drinking and irrigation, he adds.

The Dagduseth Halwai temple in Pune also supported Pingori village to carry out the desilting of the Ganesh Sagar lake, which additionally helped preserve lakhs of litres of rainwater. Now the farmers of Pingori were able to go comfortably for a second crop during the rabi season increasing their farm income.

**I**n subsequent years, RC Aundh implemented a cleanliness drive, along with a mega tree plantation drive, planting over 5,000 trees. They even conducted medical check-up camps for the villagers, with focus on arresting malnutrition, vitamin and iron deficiency in women. Several farmers were diagnosed with cataract and also had dental problems. Now a health centre has been opened in the village and basic health problems are taken care of there.

Now it was time for the Rotarians to turn their attention

A special drive  
to plant  
**15,000**  
trees

to girl students studying in the Wagheshwari school, who had to walk between 3 and 5km to attend school. This naturally led to high rates of absenteeism in girl students. So the club started giving bicycles to girls; the initiative began under the presidentship of Hemant Choudhary (2014–15) and was continued by his successor Ulangwar the next year. Till now around 300 bicycles have been given to the girls and this has improved their retention rate. When the beneficiaries pass out, the bicycles are passed on to the junior students, so that a bigger number of girls can get access to education. Rotaract Club of Aundh has also donated bicycles to girl students coming from far away.

**O**nce sufficient water reserves were available in the village, judicious and optimum use of that water had to be assured so that its benefits could be far reaching. It helped that in 2017–18, Baba Shinde, who originally hails from Pingori village, became the club president. Under his leadership, the further greening of Pingori and improving the villagers' lifestyle took place. With help from Sandesh Sawant from RC Pune Sports City, the club jointly implemented a drip irrigation system project, which was done through a global grant with RC Fort Collins Breakfast from Colorado, US, RID 5440, as the international partner. This







(From L) Vasant Malunjkar; Baba Shinde, RCC chair; Datta Deshkar, water management expert; Sadanand Nayak; Vinay Kaniitkar; Hemant Choudhary; Sumita Sinha; and Bhavana Ulangwar.

project, meant to benefit a large number of farmers, was done over a 40-acre area, and it enabled many small and marginal farmers to grow vegetables and other rabi crops.

Shinde explains that the average landholding in Pingori is only around one acre, and without help to augment the region's water resources, the small and marginal farmers had really been struggling to make ends meet earlier.

He continued the mega tree plantation drive that was undertaken by their club in 2015–16 during the tenure of president Deepak Toshniwal on the hill slopes on the outskirts of the Pingori area. Past president Shinde says these are mainly native varieties and shade giving trees, which need less water and which have helped to arrest the erosion of top layers of the soil during monsoons and also to retain

water. Over a period of time some 15,000 custard apple trees were planted and the Rotarians are helping the farmers to market the fruits in Pune.

The same year RC Aundh also established a computer lab with 10 desktop computers and internet facility at the Wagheshwari school, provided necessary furniture and upgraded the lab room with the required civil engineering work. This facility was created in memory of PDG Subhash Saraf from the donation made by his family.

Next came an endeavour for the environment; with help from RC Pune West and Dr Satish Pande, the Ela Habitat bird sanctuary was set up at an eight-acre plot, where nearly 30,000 litres of water are saved every month thanks to the water conservation measures taken by these Rotarians. "This

sanctuary is home to about 250 indigenous varieties of trees and 48 species of birds. Thanks to the water bodies, animals such as foxes, hyenas and chinkaras, among others, come here to drink water. Specially designed water dispensers are kept under the trees for squirrels and rodents. This habitat has also established a medical facility for villagers."

**T**oday, Pingori has been transformed into a happy village and water tankers, which were a necessity here to meet the people's water needs, are no longer required. Having made Pingori water sufficient, and upgrading the school and arresting school dropouts, especially among girls, the Rotarians of Pune turned their attention to helping farmers market their produce. This was possible as Pingori is barely 60km from a big city like Pune, where there is perennial demand for fresh vegetables and milk.

In 2018–19, under the leadership of club president Dr Prashant Khankhoje, Shinde, who is now the RCC chairman, took one more path-breaking initiative, by starting an outlet at Amanora Park in Pune to sell Pingori farmers' produce, such as fruits, vegetables and milk. "Amanora Park is one of the largest gated communities in Pune. This outlet received very good response from the residents of the area as the vegetables and fruits were both fresh

Farmers' income  
for every litre of  
milk has gone  
up from  
**₹28**  
to  
**₹33**



At the Wageshwari school.

and of very good quality,” says Ulangwar. A spin-off effect was that this initiative, apart from giving Pingori’s farmers a good price for their produce, also helped give employment to several youngsters from Pingori, who bring the produce from the village to Pune.

With the outlet being called ‘Pingori Farm outlet’, it also created a brand for the farmers’ produce. As dairy farming is one of the major activities in the village, the Rotarians have also donated 25 cows to the villagers and a common shed at a cost of ₹24 lakh under *Project Kamadhenu* to augment their milk production.

**W**hile all was going well for the villagers of Pingori, they were hit hard by the Covid pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns post-March 2020. Its impact was particularly devastating for the farmers of Pingori as they depended entirely on the Pune market to sell their farm produce such as fruits, vegetables and milk. They lost their most stable source of income. Once again, the godfathers of this village — Rotarians from RC Aundh — came to their rescue by buying vegetables and fruits directly from the farmers by forming a Whatsapp group through which members could place their orders. Youth from the village would deliver the vegetables, fruits and milk twice a week. Due to the freshness and good quality of

the produce, these became very popular and many non-Rotarians also started ordering this produce. The volume increased and slowly a team of youngsters from Pingori started bringing the produce in a tempo and displaying it at the Akashganga society in Aundh twice a day. This mobile service also became very popular as citizens could get high-quality vegetables and fruits at very reasonable prices at their doorsteps.

As the pandemic conditions improved, the sale of fresh leafy vegetables and fruits such as pomegranate, guava, papaya, etc from the Pingori outlet soared. The milk produced by the dairy farmers was also a big hit, and the volume soared as the Pune market could easily absorb Pingori’s quality produce. In 2020–21, under the presidentship of Kukund Surkutwar, one more Pingori Farms outlet was started in another prominent locality of Pune expanding the farmers’ direct market linkage. By now the Rotarians had encouraged Pingori’s women to add value to their wares by preparing delicious home-made food items. So along with providing employment to the youngsters engaged in transporting and marketing the farmers’ output, the Rotarians were helping the women too.

It was now time to set up a permanent shop for the Pingori produce. “Along with Baba Shinde I took the initiative, and we told the members that whoever is interested in investing in such a shop can contribute ₹2 lakh. Eight

Rotarians came forward and with ₹16 lakh we set up a permanent shop and Rohit Shinde, who is in his late 20s, came forward to manage this shop and moved to Pune.”

“Without any investment, we gave him a managing partnership of 50 per cent in the shop; slowly we are giving him more responsibility to spread this initiative to other localities in Pune,” says Ulangwar. The products now come nicely packed bearing the Pingori Farms label and this has now become a popular brand in the city.

Rohit Shinde, who manages this outlet, is happy to expand his horizon by shifting from Pingori to Pune. With a degree in engineering, earlier he used to work in a small shop in the village, while also farming on his two-acre land. He used to grow jowar, bajra, pulses, custard apple and had even fig trees. His total income used to be ₹20,000 a month. He now gets ₹20,000 a month for managing the Pingori outlet, and also 50 per cent share from the profits.

Adds Shinde: “Today this shop sells fresh vegetables, fruits, grocery items and cereals from Pingori, apart from providing home delivery to customers. The Pingori shop is equipped with modern gadgets like the POS system, electronic weighing machines with in-built billing memo, and powered by digital payments systems like Gpay, debit and credit cards. This initiative has resulted in all-round growth for Pingori village increasing the farmers’

CSR grant of  
**₹42.1**  
lakh  
from IT major  
ATOS for  
the club's  
Kamadhenu  
project

income, generating employment for some youngsters.” The women’s self-help group here has also benefitted as they are supplying homemade foods like pappads, *sevai*, pickles, chutneys etc to these outlets. Milk is also collected and processed from farmers daily to distribute in Pune city, along with Pingori ghee, paneer and curd.

But it is milk which is the most stable and fast-moving item in this outlet. Each outlet sells around 50 litres a day of milk produced by the Pingori farmers. Says Rohit, “We pay the farmers ₹33–35 per litre of milk, and after processing it, sell it at ₹56 a litre, taking into consideration the transportation and processing cost. There is demand for the Pingori milk because its quality is very good. The farmers are happy because earlier they used to get only ₹28 per litre; now they earn at least ₹5

extra for every one litre they produce.”

Witnessing Pingori’s development, former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis visited Pingori in 2019 and gave it an award as an *adarsh gram*.

Pingori’s happy march continues with the club, under its present president Bhavana Ulangwar, donating water tanks for both drinking water and toilets at the Wagheshwari school. Shinde adds that recently, along with RC Pune Sports City, RC Aundh received a CSR grant for ₹42.1 lakh from a leading IT firm ATOS, for its *Kamadheu* project at Pingori. Under this project, 25 marginal women farmers will be gifted a cow each and the cows will be jointly reared in the common cowshed by a self-help group formed by these beneficiaries. The cowshed will be equipped with solar power and a milking

machine. The income generated by the sale of milk from this project will be shared equally by all the beneficiary women, to make them economically self-reliant.

*Bhoomi pooja* for the cowshed was conducted last year by the then RID 3131 governor Pankaj Shah, and work will begin soon.

Shinde, whose ties with Pingori village remain robust, and who visits it once a week, says “the transformation of Pingori village and its inhabitants into economically self-reliant people is a wonderful example of the happy village concept in the Rotary world. It also demonstrates how complete transformation of a village can be achieved with consistent and sustainable efforts by Rotary clubs, who take villagers and other stakeholders as their partners.”

Designed by  
N Krishnamurthy

One of the water  
tanks built by  
Rotary.



# RILM helps NCERT receive UNESCO award

## Team Rotary News

**N**CERT was awarded UNESCO's King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the e-learning content for Classes 1–12 being aired on 12 'PM e-Vidya' DTH TV channels. The content, comprising 2,000 episodes of 30-minute slots, was put together by Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) after an MoU was signed between Rotary India Humanity Foundation (RIHF) and NCERT in June 2020 in the presence of the then Union HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and education secretary Anita Karwal.

RILM also created the audio-visual content for GoI's 'Diksha', the national platform for school education.

Amarendra P Behera, joint director of CIET-NCERT, received the



NCERT director Hrushikesh Senapaty (L) and PDG Ranjan Dhingra (R) signing the MoU.

award at Paris in July this year. In an interview he thanked the Rotarians “who had worked tirelessly across the years in promoting e-learning. The UNESCO award and Rotary’s contribution is a matter of pride for the country.”

Earlier in his letter to PRIP Shekhar Mehta, he had said that the initiative will bridge the digital divide for the vast majority of underprivileged children who do not have access to online education through smartphones, but have a TV at home. ■

## Doing good with TRF help

# Facilitating cataract surgery for 1,000 patients in Wardha



DG Anand Jhunjunuwala (second from R) and DRFC Mahesh Mokalkar (third from R) at the Vinoba Bhawe hospital.

**R**otary Club of Gandhi City, Wardha, RID 3030, in association with RC Bahia, Brazil, RID 4391, established an ophthalmic operation theatre at the Acharya Vinoba Bhawe Rural Hospital in Sawangi Meghe village near Wardha, Maharashtra. The global grant project helped install a phaco and an A-scan machine, and a digital microscope, costing ₹45 lakh. The objective is to provide cataract refractive surgery to 1,000 less privileged patients.

DG Dr Anand Jhunjunuwala inaugurated the OT in the presence of DRFC Mahesh Mokalkar, club president Shailesh Sinhal and secretary Saket Bagrodia. ■

# Fighting for disability rights from the wheelchair

Jaishree



Sunita Sancheti and her family in front of the famous clock tower, Zeitglockenturm, in Switzerland's capital Bern.

People must be empathetic to the needs of the disabled. Disability is not a curse. It can happen to anyone; an accident or old age can render one disabled in various forms. But it must not be a barrier to one's independence," says Neenu Kewlani.

"When you have a supportive family and friends, your disability will not matter much. They will work their way around to make you comfortable and included at every turn. My family is simply amazing," says Sunita Sancheti.

Both of them have been disability rights activists for over 20 years now, not missing any opportunity to make their voices heard. They are the new members of RC Mumbai Bravehearts, RID 3141. "Rotary has given us a broader platform to help reach a wider audience," says Neenu who is wheelchair-bound after a bout of polio when she was nine months old.

In August when the club had organised a badminton and table tennis tournament fundraiser, Sunita put together an exhibition match with 12 physically-challenged persons playing the 'Badminton on Wheels'. "The aim was to send out the message that physical disability need not restrict one's personal growth, and also sensitise agencies to provide accessible infrastructure to suit all people," she says.

Sunita is paralysed waist down after a botched surgery for treating a tumour on the spinal cord when she was 16. She is comfortable on her wheelchair now, having undergone special training to manage on her own at a rehab centre in the UK, after nine years of struggle. "I was frustrated at first when I started using the wheelchair as it was bulky and ill-fitted. Back then there was no rehab centre in India that would prepare a person to manage her disabilities."



Sunita and Neenu Kewlani during their induction into RC Mumbai Bravehearts. PDG Prafull Sharma (seated, second from L) and club president Khuzem Sakarwala (standing, third from R) are also seen.

She would find it difficult to shift from her wheelchair to bed, or to move from room to room; and would have severe body ache due to its structure, until she enrolled for sessions at a rehab centre in London that taught her to manage on her own, and choose the right wheelchair. “I understood that one wheelchair does not suit all. It must be

custom-made and extremely user-friendly, bearing in mind that it will be used by a helper as well as the disabled person. Mine is personalised; it doesn’t have handbars and I can shift effortlessly from it to a chair or bed; the adjustable seat and other controls help me operate it easily.”

Sunita recalls her recent tour to Switzerland where she was able to

go on the gondola, visit the museum, parks and other places as they were all accessible. The only hitch was that she lost her wheelchair that was put in her check-in baggage while boarding at Mumbai. Says Sunita: “It is not like a toothbrush/toothpaste that can be replaced. For me it is much more personal with personal settings.”

But the Swiss airport lent her a standby until hers could be traced ten days later. “They delivered mine at my doorstep there.” But it was broken and misaligned and she continued to use the airport’s wheelchair for the rest of her stay. “This is in sharp contrast to what I experienced at the Mumbai airport when I returned.” As hers was unusable, the airport authorities refused to let her take the airport wheelchair home although she promised to return it after use.

Recalling her visit to the Taj Mahal she said, “We visited Agra a day after Stephen Hawking went. So when he was there at the Taj, it had ramps everywhere and was wheelchair-friendly. But when we went

## Ideas for a disabled-friendly ambience

Speaking to *Rotary News*, wheelchair-bound Rotarians Neenu Kewlani and Sunita Sancheti reiterate few ideas to tick off for a barrier-free, inclusive ambience.

Railings, grab bars, anti-skid flooring and larger doorway in public washrooms.

Low floor buses and removal of bollards on footpaths and at the entrance to parks. Ramps in

beaches to access the seashore. Gently inclined ramps/wide elevators to access government buildings and railway stations.

Disabled-friendly washrooms in the lobby area in apartment complexes.

“There should be a talent pool of designers sensitive to the disabled’s challenges and build accessible infrastructure to include all people of the society,” says Sunita.



Sunita at the *Badminton on Wheels* tournament.

the ramps had vanished. That is our mindset.”

Sunita bats for more rehab centres in India to help the disabled cope better with challenges. She strongly advocates that there should be no discrimination in schools for the physically-challenged, the deaf or the mute. “We want to be in the mainstream. Only then other children will grow up understanding our challenges and learn to adapt to various situations.”

While in Class 12 she was rendered paraplegic and was not allowed to write her Board exams which she completed a year later. She is now proficient in filing IT returns and looking after the accounts of her family-run business. She counsels people like her, practises yoga and plays para badminton. “I had won a state-level silver in badminton back then. Post the accident, my friends compelled me to play, pooh-poohing my excuse of being on

a wheelchair. Now I am as comfortable as any other able-bodied person playing the game.” She has even done scuba diving in a swimming pool.

The two feisty women have also done a course in wedding planning and event management. “This helped me plan my nephew’s wedding, and we saved ₹5 lakh,” says Neenu, a public speaker and an entrepreneur.

For her, disabled is not just the orthopaedically challenged. It includes a wider spectrum — speech-impaired, blind, people with mental disabilities, the elderly and full-term pregnant women too. Even short-statured and obese people come under this category. “All these people need some sort of accessibility assistance,” she says. For the blind, there must be auditory assistance, and proper signages at strategic places to help the deaf and the mute. “Even if you hire me on a government quota, if I am unable to

come to the office, what good is that job for me,” she asks.

### Disabled-friendly buildings

Building codes spell out that all buildings must be disabled-friendly and accessible. But all these are on paper only, she laments. As a norm, international airports/star hotels/IT offices abide by the global standards and they mostly engage experts in designing their building. “But the so-called experts do not apply their mind in designing disabled-friendly public places.”

Neenu cites difficult situations. “The bathroom door might be wide, the washbasin low, but the mirror will be placed at a height suitable for a normal person. Being confined to a wheelchair, how are we supposed to stand up to look into the mirror? And, when a cupboard is installed beneath the washbasin, I can’t draw my wheelchair close to the washbasin.”

The railway platforms are a nightmare, she adds. “I have seen people crawl down the stairs at railway station. That is so undignified and inhuman. It is a struggle to climb into a train because of the wide gap between the platform and the coach.”

Sunita and Neenu have travelled across 28 state capitals and 40 cities covering 19,000km in 84 days promoting accessibility and advocating disability rights. “There are active organisations fighting for our rights. But then there is so much to be heard. We have been shouting slogans, doing events, filed PILs and presented papers to government departments. But the reality is that until it hurts you, you will not think about the challenges. Empathy is the key,” she says.

To give them more platforms and heighten the impact, club president Khuzem Sakarwala encourages the two women to make presentations at various Rotary clubs. ■





Announcing this year's Programs of Scale grant recipient

# Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria

Saving the lives of mothers and children

The Rotary Foundation's 2022 Programs of Scale grant supports a member-led effort to save the lives of more mothers and newborns in Nigeria. Rotary Districts 1860 (Germany) and 9110, 9125, 9141, and 9142 (Nigeria); the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health; and Nigerian federal and state ministries of health, medical associations, and community leaders are working together to reduce the

maternal and neonatal mortality rates in four Nigerian states by 25%. The \$2 million grant, combined with funding from Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and in-kind donations from other global organizations, will enable the program to expand health education for families as well as access to quality clinical care for pregnant women, mothers, and babies.

Go to [Rotary.org](https://Rotary.org) to read about how the program will build on past successes to help more families thrive.

Learn more about Programs of Scale [rotary.org/programsofscale](https://rotary.org/programsofscale).



# Ahmedabad Interactors raise funds for Ukraine and Pakistan

Kiran Zehra

From starting a canteen to dedicating after-school hours to tutoring elderly people on online shopping, to selling *bhel puri* and *pani puri*, three Interact clubs sponsored by RC Ahmedabad Greater, RID 3054, have been working hard to raise funds for children in war-hit Ukraine and flood-affected Pakistan.

Interactors of the Vishwabharati Girls' High School, Thaltej, Ahmedabad, raised €51 (about ₹5,000) for Ukraine by teaching elderly people to use their smartphones, filling up banking forms, giving information, and helping them pay property and water taxes, electricity and cooking gas bills online, all for a minimum fee. "These students belong to lower middle-income families and already have a lot of responsibility given by their parents and yet decided to think beyond themselves. Even though it's not a lot, they wanted to do their bit," says Arup Sinha, Interact chair of RC Ahmedabad Greater.

Talking about the plight of the children in Ukraine, Priyanka Prajapathi, president of the Interact Club of the Vishwabharati school, says, "Many children are hiding in basements to escape bomb attacks, some have had to witness the death of their loved ones, and some had to flee their homes. Our



problems don't even come close to what they are facing."

It all began when Rathod Khushi Haresh, a member of the Interact club, was asked at a club meeting why she wasn't wearing the school uniform. "I had to choose between my uniform and books because my parents couldn't afford both," says Khushi. When the club learn about her situation, the Interactors came up with *Project Khushi*, and raised ₹2,000. Khushi got a new set of uniform for ₹1,000, while the other ₹1,000 was used as a seed fund for the children of Ukraine.

"On the last day of fundraising, all the Interact club members were out the entire day, sensitising the community about the situation of the Ukrainian children and we appealed to everyone to think of their suffering and donate from their heart and not just their pockets," says Priyanka.

The Interactors of Abhijat Vidya Vihar School started a cafeteria in the campus and placed a donation box near the payment counter and urged visitors to donate generously. "Being children and trying to raise money to help Ukrainian kids had an emotional



effect on people. Teachers and students who visited our cafeteria were always ready to donate extra for the cause," says Jay Patel, club president. This initiative generated ₹2,500 (€31). "This gave us the confidence to do more," he adds. Next, the club sold snacks like *vada pav*, *bhel puri* and *pani puri*, handmade paper bags, etc to local sweet shops. "This helped us raise another €80. This was a learning experience for us. We learnt marketing skills and understood that selling takes planning," he says.

The money raised was sent to RC Tarragona Tarraco August, RID 2202,



**Clockwise:** Interactors making seedballs; An Interactor giving tuitions; A uniform being gifted to a child under *Project Khushi* of Interact Club of Vishwabharati Girls High School in the presence of the school principal Gaurangi M Soyantar and trustee Ashish Shukla; Canteen Day at Interact Club of Abhijat Vidhyavihar.



Spain, to partially fund a trip to Spain for 20 war-traumatised children from Ukraine. Acknowledging the donation, club member Salvador Olive said, “It is a pleasure to see how these Interactors have gone all out to raise funds to help children in a country so far away from them, and all this under the supervision of Rotarians from clubs in different countries. This is the magic of Rotary!” The Ukrainian children would enjoy a month of physical and psychological support and pampering in Spain as an antidote to the trauma they experienced.

While these two clubs raised €162 for Ukrainian children, the Interact club of Vishwabharati English Medium School hosted a Canteen Day and sold sandwiches and *poha* to raise ₹3,700 for Pakistani children

## A solution to stop spitting in public

Prayagraj Mehta, president of the Interact Club of Vishwa Bharati English Medium School, was tired and upset “to see a family member spit outside the car when we went on drives. So, I decided to do something about it.” He began working on

a solution to discourage spitting in public places and designed a ‘biodegradable spittoon’ which can be easily fitted inside a car or bike. He was recently felicitated with the Youth Innovator Award for his innovation by Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel.

affected by floods. “It is not a very big amount but we hope it would help few children access food and water, or a toy or a book,” says club member Kavya Dave. Unfortunately, the funds could not be sent to Pakistan due to international payment restrictions. “We are working on alternative options,” says Sinha.

The Interact clubs organise at least two projects every year — one that helps their school or community, and another that promotes international understanding. “We Rotarians guide them through the projects. But with the way they had raised these amounts, you can tell that they do not need much handholding,” he adds. ■

# A one-day RYLA for transgenders

## Team Rotary News

In an effort to support the transgender community, RID 3232 conducted a one-day RYLA programme, titled Pride RYLA, for 63 transgenders below the age of 30 years. “The initiative focused on building communication and friendship, learning problem-solving skills and discovering strategies to become a good leader,” says Asha Marina, the district’s RYLA chair.

The event began with an ice-breaking session “to make them feel relaxed and get to know more people from their community who want to



DG N Nandakumar and PDG G Chandramohan with Rotarians and RYLA participants.

bring about change,” says Asha. Other sessions dwelt on entrepreneurship, banking procedures for micro loans and skill development programmes organised by Indian Bank.

DG Dr N Nandakumar shared his thoughts on ‘Diversity, Equity and Inclusion’. PDG ISAK Nazar explained the importance of grabbing opportunities. “This platform is an

opportunity for you to learn something new, hence use this to help more people from your community,” he said.

The participants were treated to a sumptuous lunch, after which they were engaged in an NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) healing session that helps the unconscious mind to make healthy choices. All the participants got RYLA certificates and gifts. ■

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# 33 years of restoring eyesight in Sangamner

Jaishree

Every year, for the past 33 years, we have been performing at least 1,000 cataract surgeries for the underprivileged through our Rotary Eye Hospital,” says AG Dilip Malpani, a member of RC Sangamner, RID 3132. The hospital, established in 1989, has expanded over the years, thanks to two matching grants from the UK and US clubs, and two global grants from American and Swiss Rotary clubs.

The land was provided by the municipality and with generous donations from the public and club members the hospital took shape. Equipment was added with support from the National Associations for the Blind and Sightsavers

International. Today the hospital boasts of all modern equipment, and full-time qualified surgeons. Two outreach vans visit surrounding villages regularly to conduct screening camps and bring patients with cataract or other eye-related disorders to the hospital for further treatment which is done free of charge. Income from paid surgeries at the hospital helps meet the monthly expenses of ₹8 lakh, and this cross subsidisation also supports replacement of outdated/worn out machines.

Recently a mega squint surgery camp helped fix this disorder in 51 young girls. “This surgery has improved the external appearance of the girls and will boost their



self-confidence. The others were schoolchildren and they will now go back to school with renewed confidence,” he says. The camp provided medicines and spectacles for 150 patients. Since its existence, the hospital has gifted eyesight to over 25,000 economically weak patients across five villages.

The 45-year-old club, through a GG, recently distributed 655



IPDG Om Prakash Motipawale (fifth from L), Rtn Krishna Boob (eighth from L), 2021-22 club president Yogesh Gade and AG Dilip Malpani (second from R) at an event to distribute grinding machines.



**Patients at the Rotary Eye Hospital of RC Sangamner.**

computer tablets with pre-loaded audio-visual content of the syllabus to 33 zilla parishad schools. This will benefit 1,900 first-generation students from marginal families. These schools have just 1–2 teachers

to handle 4–5 classes. The project will definitely help these students in improving their learning and understanding of various subjects, says Malpani. RC Poona North, RID 3131, was its synergy partner and

RC Miao-Li Tung Flower, RID 3500, Taiwan, was the international partner for the project. RCs Panchgani and Akluj also contributed to the cause.

With the support of district funds and member contributions, the club donated sewing machines to 61 families that had lost their earning members to Covid. Training in tailoring was arranged for them. “Today they are able to earn at least ₹500 a day, a small sum, but something to boost their confidence and hope. We are also planning to get them orders,” he smiles. Enthused by the success of this project, the club distributed *atta chakki* (grinding machines), sponsored by Rtn Krishna Boob from Pune, to 111 Covid-affected families to support their livelihood.

Every year, during Diwali, the club, along with its Rotaract club, distributes food packets, sweets and clothes to at least 200 families. ■

## Cows to help women generate income

### Team Rotary News

**R**otary Club of Arkalgud Mid-town, RID 3182, recently donated cows to 65 women at Arkalgud, a town near Hassan in Karnataka. The project was implemented under the club’s Samruddhi Women’s Empowerment project to help under-privileged women earn

a livelihood and provide them economic and social stability.

The project, initiated last Rotary year under the leadership of the then club president BC Shashidhar, was done through a global grant with the support of RC West Springfield, RID 7890, US, and TRF. The bovines were distributed



DRFC P Narayana and PDG M G Ramachandramurthy donate a cow to a woman.

in the presence of PDG M G Ramachandramurthy and DRFC P Narayana. Shashidhar, club president B R Rajeev, secretary B C Manju and treasurer

Kumar Hanyal were among those present at the distribution event. DG Dr Jayagowri Hadigal appreciated the club for the initiative. ■

# Cycle rally in Delhi creates cancer awareness

**Kiran Zehra**

**P**ink and blue buntings zig-zagged across the street while the crowd cheered for the 300 women cyclists who participated in the *Hope on the Wheels* cycle rally, an initiative by Delhi NCR Fellowship for Cycling, RID 3011, a part of RI's Fellowship for Cycling to Serve. The event was organised in association with the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre (RGCIRC) and Delhi

Wheels, a cyclists' club, to create cancer awareness.

Starting at RGCIRC, the 20km rally travelled through Delhi's quintessential landmarks, and stopped at two camps where over 100 under-privileged women were screened for breast cancer.

DG Ashok Kantoor dedicated the rally to RI President Jennifer Jones, calling her an "inspiration for every woman battling cancer. This rally not only supports our cause to create awareness but also

helps us spread the message that timely detection, screening and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can reduce the risk of cancer."

Three medical teams headed by the director of RGCIRC Dr Gouri Kapoor taught the women cyclists to self-screen for certain cancers. She urged them "to seek professional help as early as possible in case of any symptoms or concerns. Early detection helps in identifying cancer while it is curable, preventing mortality and

reducing morbidity and treatment cost."

Narinder Kumar Lamba, the fellowship's president, explains, "every year there's a community component, and the Delhi NCR Fellowship for Cycling partners with various organisations to support a cause. It inspires us to do more and helps us look forward to the next year's event." Last year

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Early detection helps in identifying cancer while it is curable, preventing mortality and reducing morbidity and treatment cost.

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DG Ashok Kantoor (third from L) flagging off the cycle rally at RGCIRC.







Women participating in the *Hope on the Wheels* cycle rally to create cancer awareness.

**Below:** Sixty-six year old participant Rajni Tacker with her husband Ashok Tacker.



the *Ride to End Polio* rally raised \$10,000.

“The objective of our Fellowship is to develop and promote worldwide friendship through cycling competitively and recreationally. We could choose a cause that serves our community locally or globally. You might not be a cyclist or it may not be your favourite sport but seeing people out there on cycles creates a buzz and people are curious to find out what is going on,” he adds.

Sixty-six-year-old participant Rajni Tacker, a member of RC Delhi South East, RID 3011, says that she is “addicted to cycling.” She started cycling when she was eight and to her, this rally is a way of “inspiring

women and girls to take care of themselves” She completed the rally in 90 minutes but “I wasn’t feeling tired. It was fun. Other cyclists said to me ‘Rajni we want to be as fit as you when we are your age.’”

Rotary, she says, “recognises the fact that common interests help form special bonds of friendship and opens additional opportunities for Rotarians. I have found a new family in Rotary. I feel heard and respected which is the only thing that matters at my age.”

All cyclists were provided with pink jackets sporting the Rotary, Cycling Fellowship and RGCIRC logos on the back. “This also worked as a public image exercise,” says Lamba. ■

# District 3110



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District Governor, RID 3110



**Mrs. Anita & Rtn. Sumit Goyal**  
RC Agra Sapphire

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**Rtn. Ajay Kumar Gupta  
& Mrs. Deepti Gupta**  
RC Kanpur Metro



**Rtn. Dr. Shahjahan Begum  
& Mr. M.T. Siddiq**  
RC Bareilly Heritage



**Rtn. Dr. Deepika G. Atray  
& Dr. Neeraj Atray**  
RC Kashipur Corbett

Membership Development



**Rtn. Neerav Nimesh Agarwal**  
Chair, District Membership Committee

This year 2<sup>nd</sup> time in a row, our District has achieved  
**Highest Membership Growth**  
in Zone 6

Highest New Members Added: **176**

Highest Growth Rate: **4.9%**

**Total Members : 3787**

(As on 1st Sept, 2022)



# District 3110 in ACTION



**Rtn. Raj Mehrotra**  
CDS (Admin)

# Prez Jones inaugurates a radiation centre in Pune

Jaishree

I can feel what these women are going through. I wouldn't be standing here today if I had not received prompt treatment then. So don't underestimate whose life you are going to be changing in a profound way," said RI President Jennifer Jones, referring to the breast cancer patients awaiting their turn at the oncology department, and recalling her treatment for breast cancer 15 years ago. She was inaugurating a radiation

centre in the presence of RI directors Dr Mahesh Kotbagi and AS Venkatesh, TRF trustee Dr Bharat Pandya and RID 3131 DG Dr Anil Parmar at the Surya Sahyadri Hospital in Kasba Peth, Pune, during her visit to India in early August. She thanked Pandya and the Rotarians "for making this facility possible as it gives the same kind of sophisticated treatment to a person with less or no economic means." The hospital has eight branches — six in

Pune and one each in Nashik and Karad, Maharashtra.

RC Pune Pristine set up this radiation therapy centre worth \$860,000 (₹6.9 crore) at the hospital through a global grant with guidance from DRFC Girish Gune. RC Pune Central and RC Yarmouth, RID 7780, were the partners.

There are four hospitals in Pune offering radiation therapy, but at commercial rates. "This will be the only facility across Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad

**From L: PDG Ravee Dhotre, RID Dr Mahesh Kotbagi, RI President Jennifer Jones, TRF Trustee Dr Bharat Pandya, RC Pune Central past president M L Rathi, DG Dr Anil Parmar, Project contact Sudin Apte, Dr Hema Parmar, RID A S Venkatesh, Vinita Venkatesh and DGN Dr Nick Krayacich at the new radiation centre. DRFC Girish Gune, RC Pune Pristine president Amod Phadke and Nitin Mulay are seen in the back row. Dr M H Sanjay, head of Radiation Oncology, is seen on the left.**



and Pavek to offer radiation treatment, which would typically cost around ₹2 lakh (\$2,500), free to the underprivileged under the PM's Ayushman Bharat scheme, said project coordinator Sudin Apte. Over 10,000 patients a year will benefit from it taking the project's impact value to at least \$20 million. "I had checked the last five years GG data with TRF. This is probably Asia's largest GG," he said, prompting Jones to comment in a lighter vein, "You must have gone through the Foundation's minutes more than the trustees."

Kotbagi said that the district had contributed \$2.2 million to TRF last Rotary year. "This project has shown us what the Foundation can do if we Rotarians open our hearts and purses liberally for it."

Pandya said, "When people say thank you for sparing your time, I would say thank you for inviting me here because we are able to see what the Foundation is doing for the transformation of a community. It is

heartening to see from this project how much families Rotary can save and it gives me goosebumps to realise that our TRF makes it all possible for the people world over."

### Genesis

The club's association with the hospital goes back to the setting up of a neuro rehabilitation centre in 2019. "Dr Charudutt Apte, CMD of the hospital, requested us to provide more such facilities with a promise to extend free treatments to patients referred by us at the hospital," said Sudin Apte. A 10-year partnership MoU was inked between Rotary and the hospital by PDG Ravee Dhotre and Dr Apte respectively.

RCs Pune Pristine and Pune Central subsequently did several projects there. Pristine set up a Covid ICU and chemotherapy ward, and sponsored paediatric heart surgeries for 175 children through a grant and CSR funding, while RC Pune Central set up 12 dialysis machines at the

hospital's nephrology ward. A cardiac diagnostics facility was installed by RC Pune Pashan.

### Donors

An additional ₹4.8 crore for construction of bunker and other ancillary equipment was funded by RC Pune Pristine and the hospital. The Pune Neurosciences Trust and Research Society, an NGO and now an institutional AKS member, donated ₹1.3 crore, and additionally contributed to the civil infrastructure. The Nag Foundation supported with ₹50 lakh. AKS member Nitin Desai contributed ₹1.3 crore and Madhusudan Rathi, an industrialist, donated ₹55 lakh from his family trust.

President Jones unveiled a partnership for co-branding the hospital with Rotary and naming it 'Rotary-Surya Sahyadri Hospital'. "This building radiates hope," said Jones' spouse DGN Dr Nick Krayacich, impressed with the new radiation therapy machine.

Picture by Jaishree





# We're better people, thanks to Rotary: **RI President**

**Kiran Zehra**

**W**ho, here, is not a better person because you are part of Rotary? Because of the opportunities it has given you to give back, to do service and fellowship? I think each one of us has a story with Rotary — things in our lives that are so special and important that we would have never experienced without Rotary,” said RI President Jennifer Jones, addressing Rotarians of RIDs 2981, 2982, 3000, 3231 and 3232 in Chennai as part of her India visit.

Calling service ‘the cornerstone of Rotary,’ she thanked them for the “good work you do in your communities and throughout the world. We are not only people of action but also people of purpose and influence.”

She recounted witnessing an open heart surgery at a hospital in Ma’an, Jordan, where she attended a district conference along with her husband Nick Krayacich.

Dressed in hospital greens she “stood without moving a muscle,” and watched Rtn Mark Turpentine perform the surgery. She leaned forward and saw the patient lying on the table covered from head to toe with a sheet and “only a square opening in the area where the doctor was operating. There was an anaesthetist and a nurse in the room. As he was stitching, every once in a while, he would take his hand underneath the patient’s heart, jiggle it and ask the anaesthetist to ‘warm it up a little’, then he would resume stitching. This jiggle-warming-stitching continued.

**Above**  
RI President Jennifer Jones and DGN Nick Krayacich with RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, Sumedha and DG Dr N Nandakumar, and Vinita and RI Director AS Venkatesh.

When he noticed Jones in the room, he invited her to take a closer look. “He introduced me to the patient, six-year-old Salma, a Syrian refugee. After the final stitch, he told the anaesthetist to ‘warm it up.’ And, at that moment, little Salma’s heart started to beat... I got to see her come back to life. That day I realised I am a better person because of Rotary.”

Talking about membership retention, she said that it is important to “make the members fall in love with Rotary. It shouldn’t be about ticking off numbers. We must make them feel welcome, and proud that they have an equal contribution to make in this organisation.”

DG Dr N Nandakumar, RID 3232, thanked the RI president “for inspiring us and

reminding us about the care and comfort of our members. Truly Rotary has touched our lives and changed us for the better.”

Earlier Jones met Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin and briefed him about Rotary’s polio eradication programmes and its various humanitarian initiatives being implemented across the state, including the mega hepatitis vaccination campaign launched by the district.

### A rendezvous with Rotaractors

The RI president received a rousing welcome at the Ethiraj College in Chennai, where she met Rotaractors of RID 3232. “Your energy is electric! I was told this district is home to the largest number of Rotaractors — all of 29,000! And Ethiraj College has the biggest female Rotaract club. Nick and I had no idea what to expect till we walked in through the door and experienced your crazy energy... and I love it,” she said. She thanked DRR Goutham Raj and Meera Sharma, past president of RAC Madras Central, for “the incredible programme.”



President Jones meets Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin. Also present (from L): PDG S Muthupalaniappan, DGN Krayacich, Rtn Saran Vel Jayaraman, past president, RC Chennai Coastal, RID Venkatesh, DG Nandakumar, his wife Sumedha and district secretary Shriram Duvvuri.

Her theme *Imagine Rotary*, she said, is “powerful, because it gives you Rotaractors the opportunity to think about what you want for your community and our world.” Urging Rotaractors to dream big, she said, “with Rotaract you have a chance to become a better public speaker, understand how various governments work, develop leadership and professional skills, and have fun through service.”

Applauding them for their strong social media knowledge and presence, Jones said, “Rotaractors could finish designing a project in a month over quick chats on WhatsApp. Whereas Rotarians would

form committees and take 3–6 months to complete the same project.”

Talking about DEI she said, “Diversity is our strength and Rotaract has already figured it out. Be it gender equity or diverse membership, you have led the way forward.” She was delighted to learn that the district’s Rotaract membership has 50 per cent women. “The future of our organisation is sitting right here. You bring great energy, positive leadership, efficacy and quickness in solving the world’s most pressing problems and challenge us to think differently about how we do our Rotary business. Together we can achieve great things.”

**Below**  
Jones interacting with DRR Goutham Raj in the presence of DG Nandakumar and DGN Krayacich.

Jones recalled the time when she accompanied her husband DGN Krayacich to a medical mission in the Amazon. “I met many Rotarians from different parts of the world. The internationality of Rotary inspired me and I understood that irrespective of our nationalities, backgrounds, religious beliefs... as Rotary members we all want the same things for our families, our countries and Rotary helps us achieve these goals.” ■



Kiran Zehra

# Fabulous to see TRF's good work: Ian Riseley

V Muthukumaran



From L: TRF Trustee Chair Ian Riseley, Trustee Dr Bharat Pandya, Juliet Riseley, IPDG J Sridhar and RI Director A S Venkatesh at the new dialysis centre. Former DRFC M Ambalavanan is also seen.

# A

fter visiting two medical projects in Chennai initiated by PDGs J Sridhar and S Muthupalaniappan, RID 3232, during their terms, TRF trustee chair Ian Riseley exclaimed, “What a wonderful, fabulous day it has been. All these medical facilities were made possible with the generosity of Rotarians who chose The Rotary Foundation to donate and do good in the world through our global grants.”

Launching the 82<sup>nd</sup> Orange Vision Centre at Vinayagapuram, a northern suburb of Chennai, on the premises of MN Eye Hospitals, Riseley noted that RID 3232 had availed/applied for 16 global grants worth \$3.4 million in partnership with five other RI districts to set up 200 vision centres. “*Project Orange* is definitely a scalable, long-term sustainable initiative that will last for decades,” he said. He commended Muthupalaniappan for his dedication in rolling

out the eye clinics in a phased manner. In his address, TRF trustee Bharat Pandya said, “Out of the five sense organs, eyes are unique and of great significance to our lives. Eyes mirror our souls and this eye-care project is a fine example of how TRF meets the genuine needs of people.” PDG Muthu believed in doing big projects, but in critical areas, and saw them through right from the stage of conception to execution. *Project Orange* had set a great example for other districts to emulate,



while taking up global grant projects, he added.

In his presentation, Muthupalaniappan said the eyecare centres were mooted five years back, in 2017, with the aim to help the GoI achieve its goal of *Vision 2020*, to set up 20,000 vision centres at a cost of ₹3,000 crore. “But we have only around 1,000 such centres to tackle avoidable blindness in India.” Given the brand value of Rotary and the intrinsic strength of its clubs, “around 17 hospitals have partnered with us to roll out vision centres across TN and Andhra Pradesh. Top hospitals including Sankara Nethralaya, Dr Agarwal’s Eye Hospital and

Aravind Hospital have tied up with us.”

In the last one year, the project team has seen ‘impactful results’ as the newly opened centres were now running on operational profits, had turned self-sustainable, and each HVC (hybrid vision centre) served around 60,000 people in the nearby areas, he said. At present 36 clubs across seven RI districts and 10 foreign clubs and districts are involved in *Project Orange* which has an ambitious target of opening at least 1,000 HVCs in the next few years across India.

While RC Chennai Towers has invested \$10,000 at

RID 3232 has  
availed

**16**

global grants  
worth

**\$3.4**

million  
to set

up 200 vision  
centres in the  
phase-1 of  
*Project Orange*

the new centre, RC Chennai Capital has invested \$50,000 for a cluster of 25 HVCs with PDG Muthu and spouse Kamala giving a Term Gift of \$30,000 for this cluster being implemented with a GG worth \$381,718. The global partner is RC Bukit Jalil Kuala Lumpur, RID 3300.

### GGs reaching out

Earlier, inaugurating a dialysis centre with five machines at the Cancer Detection Centre being run by the RYA Madras Cosmo Foundation, a local NGO, Riseley said as a “tenacious and determined leader”, IPDG Sridhar led from the front to set up 135 dialysis machines across

**Trustee Chair Riseley and Trustee Pandya ride bikes at the newly inaugurated vision centre in Chennai. Also seen are (from L) PDG ISAK Nazar, DG Dr N Nandakumar, Project Orange chair Ganesh Suppiah, along with PDG Muthupalaniappan (3<sup>rd</sup> from R) and Dr Sumedha Nandakumar.**





From L: Ambalavanan, DG Nandakumar, RC Chennai Towers project chair R M Suresh, Trustee Pandya, Trustee Chair Riseley, Juliet, DRFC B Dakshayani, PDG Muthupalaniappan and club president Satish Jupiter.

16 hospitals and medical centres in Chennai. “In this new centre, small clubs have come together to do a GG project (\$58,000) which will immensely benefit the people of Chennai,” he said. Fourteen small clubs led by RC Chennai Mugappair have pooled in \$23,000 and PDG Abirami Ramanathan had contributed \$36,000 as Term Gift for setting up the new dialysis centre. Their global partner is RC Carlingford, RID 9685, Australia.

While Bangalore Rotarians displayed their generosity to Riseley a day before in doing community projects, Chennai clubs have demonstrated the impact of TRF in reaching out to large communities through GGs, said Pandya. “The burden of kidney disease is so huge in India, seen as the diabetic capital of the world, that

as against the demand of 180,000 machines we have only 45,000 units. PDG Sridhar’s initiative in setting up dialysis centres will motivate other governors and RI districts to take up this much-needed medical project.”

Ramanathan said he was bowled over by the brilliant idea of Sridhar in meeting this huge demand-supply gap as kidney patients are rising exponentially in Chennai.

Sridhar pointed out that 51 clubs in RID 3232 are implementing the dialysis project through partnerships and GG-funding, apart from concentrating on other focus areas of Rotary with a holistic approach in community service. Project chair Siva Ilangovan said “each of the five machines can do two cycles a day, thus 10 needy patients will benefit every day. We will charge ₹400 per

cycle against the market rate of ₹1,350 per session and are in talks with the government to implement the CM’s Insurance Scheme that will allow free treatment to poor patients.”

RC Chennai Mugappair has started doing the spade-work for donating five more machines to a charitable hospital, he said. RYA Madras Cosmo project secretary Umesh Agarwal said their multispecialty hospital located nearby has nine machines which have done over 50,000 cycles in the last 10 years benefiting mostly the poor, who are wholly subsidised with free service. DG N Nandakumar, RI director A S Venkatesh, DRFC B Dakshayani, DGE Ravi Raman, PDG ISAK Nazar, club presidents and district office-bearers were present during the project launches.

**135**  
dialysis  
machines  
installed across  
**16**  
hospitals and  
medical  
centres in  
Chennai

Pictures by V Muthukumaran

# A Rotary Study Centre

## Team Rotary News

**A** former deputy collector from Tirumangalam, Madurai district of Tamil Nadu, has teamed with Rotary to realise his vision to coach rural students for competitive exams and make them eligible for the UPSC and a career in the bureaucracy. Over the last 18 years, K Gurusamy is running a study centre-cum-library with the support of his wife Gnanavalli. Their Gurusamy Gnanavalli Trust is popular around Madurai villages.

“Instead of enjoying his time after retirement, Gurusamy has dedicated his life to help students prepare for competitive exams at his study centre,” says Jayanthi Seenivasan, former president, Rotary E-Club of Chennai. Even their pension amount is used for running the study centre. Now, RC Tirumangalam, RID 3000, led by its president A Kadar Oli, has partnered



Sundaresh Gurusamy presents a memento to AG Anuradha V Giri, charter president, Rotary E-club of Chennai, in the presence of Jayanthi Raja Seenivasan (second from R). PDG Raja Seenivasan, RID 3000 DG I Jerald and Gurusamy Gnanavalli Trust founder K Gurusamy are also present.

with the trust to open a study centre at Lalapuram village near Madurai.

DG I Jerald and Raja Seenivasan were the chief guests at the inauguration of the study centre. Rotarians from RIDs 3000, 3212 and

3232 participated. G Venkatesh, the son of Gurusamy and past president, Rotary E-Club of Chennai, who lives in the US, and PDG Seenivasan played key roles in linking RC Tirumangalam with Gurusamy. ■

## An eye camp in Kakinada



Rotarians with patients after the cataract surgery at the hospital.

**A**round 300 patients were screened at a mega eye check-up camp conducted by RC Kakinada Golden Jubilee, RID 3020, in Uppada Kottapally village, mostly inhabited by fishermen families. Cataract surgeries were performed on 62 patients at the Sri Kiran Eye Institute, Kakinada. The eye camp and surgeries were part of a global grant project worth \$40,000. “We provided two eye testing machines to the eye institute,” said G K Srinivas, past president of the club which roped in RC Souhegan Valley (Nashua), RID 7870, US, as its global partner for the medical project. ■

# Meet your



**Kailash Jethani**

Real estate  
RC Thane East, RID 3142



**I Jerald**

Power electronics  
RC Tiruchirappalli Rock City, RID 3000

## Leadership workshops for Rotarians

Under projects tiled *FAB 10*, clubs will come together to do high-impact, high-visibility service in Thane and neighbourhood. “Projects like urban slum adoption, Happy Streets, Digi Walkathon, marathon for causes, bus *adda* (depots) and *bachha* party for balwadis and anganwadis, have great visibility and will showcase Rotary to the public,” says Kailash Jethani. Through Digi Walkathon, an app, Rotarians, their families and relatives have earned points worth ₹30 lakh till now which will be translated into CSR funds for service projects. Looking forward to add 600 new members, taking the headcount to over 4,000, Jethani says the focus will be “solely on neighbourhoods, not rural areas.” He wants to add 650 new Rotaractors to the existing 2,800.

Around 5–6 GG projects (\$250,000) are in the pipeline across literacy, environment, water and sanitation, and economic and community development. With the aim to evoke a sense of commitment to Rotary, “we are doing a series of *Netrutva* (leadership) seminars and workshops. Two celebrities — one from the outside and the other a Rotarian — will share the podium to recall their success journey.” He aims to collect \$600,000 for TRF.

The growing ratio of weak to strong clubs is worrying him. “I have well-meaning officers to analyse this problem. If the weak clubs can realise their true potential, we can be successful in retention,” says Jethani. He joined Rotary in 2005 to serve and enjoy the fellowship.

## Empowering Rotarians to grow Rotary

Instead of augmenting clubs and adding new members, Jerald is keen to “strengthen the inner characteristics of a Rotarian so that he or she is financially and physically strong, and with good family bonding, to contribute to the growth of Rotary.” At the same time, he adds, “the clubs must engage the new members so that they stay involved.” Having 5,400 Rotarians across 132 clubs, he wants to start five new clubs with a net membership growth of 5 per cent. Jerald is confident of adding at least 500 Rotaractors. “The newly imposed RI dues are not a big problem here as most of the Rotaractors are ready to pay.”

Each club will start a Rotary Study Centre in a village to coach rural youth for competitive exams for the government jobs from the VAOs to the topmost IAS officers. “We are working on a three-year sustainability basis and hope that at least 3–4 aspirants in each centre are successful in this period,” he says. Around one lakh saplings will be distributed to create at least 25 acres of Miyawaki forests; and 50 acres of ponds/water bodies will be restored. “Funds will be generated through member contribution, public donation and CSR funding. We have not applied for GGs.” For TRF giving, he is aiming at \$1 million. Jerald has lined up educational workshops related to savings, financial management, insurance for Rotarians and a master health check-up for spouses. He joined Rotary in 1999 influenced by a business competitor.

# Governors

V Muthukumaran



**V P Kalta**

Life insurance  
RC Shimla, RID 3080



**Ashok Kantoor**

Chartered accountant  
RC Delhi West, RID 3011

## Clubs will take up rural projects in a big way

Retention is the biggest problem as out of 1,400 new members who joined Rotary last year, “most of them left for want of orientation programmes and engagement,” says VP Kalta. “I am against haphazard growth. We need a systematic approach to retain new members.” With a net membership target of 800, he is confident of forming 18 new clubs taking the total number to 125 and the headcount to over 5,000 by June next year. “My focus will be on chartering 50 satellite clubs in small towns and rural areas.” On the Rotaract front, he wants to start 50 new clubs and induct at least 650 new Rotaractors.

*Rotary chalo gaon ke aur* (Let Rotary go to villages) is the district theme of the year. Each club will adopt a village to implement community projects. “In the first two months, we got a good feedback as vocational centres skill rural women and youth for employment.” Two healthcare vans are visiting clubs to hold medical camps in remote areas. “Three check dams (GG: ₹40–50 lakh each) will be constructed; a blood bank at the district hospital, Saranpur, UP (GG: ₹25 lakh); RC Panipat Midtown will open a dialysis centre (GG: ₹35 lakh); and each club will be doing a Happy School.” His target for TRF giving is \$500,000. Kalta was instrumental in setting up Rotary Ashray, a building next to IGMC Hospital, Shimla, that offers personalised care to cancer patients. He joined Rotary in 2000 as a charter member of RC Rampur Bushar.

## Cent per cent digitalised district

From July 1, all the 122 clubs have digitalised their daily operations and even during governor’s visit, “the projects are narrated through online presentations. We are the first district to convert to 100 per cent digitalisation with the aim to save the environment,” says Ashok Kantoor. Four new clubs were formed and the charter is under process for the fifth one. The headcount will be raised by 550 to over 5,000. Clubs willing to start vocational centres will get help from the Delhi government and municipal body for identifying space for the project. To facilitate delivery for pregnant women, nursing, childcare, paediatric ward and an OT will be set up at a municipal building in Fatehpur, Beri, at a cost of ₹2 crore through CSR funds and member contributions.

A 700-year-old Satpula lake in Saket will be revived (GG/CSR: ₹60–70 lakh); and other water bodies will be rejuvenated. Around 1,000 defunct borewells in parks will be converted into RWH pits (₹50 lakh) to recharge groundwater; and handwash stations will be installed across 100 schools. Already 42 such units were installed. His TRF giving target is \$1.2 million. Celebrating his silver jubilee in Rotary, Kantoor recalls, “when I took my children to a doctor in 1997, I saw a Rotary wheel on his desk and got curious, and my journey began.”

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

### RID 3231 plants saplings



DG JKN Palani plants a sapling as other Rotarians look on.

Aimed at combating many environmental issues Rotarians from RID 3231 planted 10,000 of the totally planned one lakh saplings on the banks of a lake near Katpadi, Tamil Nadu. DG JKN Palani and district environment chair Josep Annaiya were present at the event. ■

### Club honours young sports star



Club member Praveen Agarwal handing over the cheque to Divyanshi Gautam.

A felicitation ceremony was organised for Under-13 state badminton winner Divyanshi Gautam by RC Agra, RID 3110, and the Prakhar Agarwal Badminton Academy. Divyanshi received ₹51,000 from Praveen Agarwal, member of the club and director of the Prakhar Agarwal Memorial. ■

### RID 3011 goes paperless



DG Ashok Kantoor

In its bid to protect the environment, RID 3011 is turning digital. All documents, process of reporting, newsletters and social media related to the district will be available on digital platforms. ■

### A blood donation camp in Asansol



Club secretary Sujata Mukherjee gives a certificate to a donor as club president Tapas Ghose (to her left) looks on.

A blood donation camp was organised by RC Asansol Greater, RID 3240, on International Doctors' Day. The camp collected 40 units of blood and distributed food packets, coffee, milk and raincoats to the donors. ■

## Team Rotary News

Setting new benchmarks for his RID 3160, IPDG Thirupathi Naidu is happy to have achieved all that he aimed for at the start of his tenure. He had inducted 400 new Rotarians, including 125 women, and chartered five new clubs. Naidu was instrumental in executing service projects worth ₹25 crore by the district clubs. “We installed 5,000 refurbished computers in government colleges. PRIP Shekhar Mehta laid the foundation for a blood bank and an ICU ambulance at Hospet,” he said. The ICU ambulance (₹48 lakh) was sponsored by Naidu in memory of his late father V Rami Reddy.

Around 1.5 lakh Covid vaccine doses were administered with the support of Infosys and Cognizant Technologies. Around 30,000 physiotherapies



PRIP Shekhar Mehta, RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi and his spouse Amita, along with PDG Ravi Vadlamani, IPDG V Thirupathi Naidu, his spouse Nirmala and RC Hospet past president Rajesh Korishettar in front of the ambulance sponsored by Naidu.

were done by various medical centres run by the club.

“Under a global grant project, we have done 138 paediatric heart surgeries at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, in a joint project with RID 3150. We

paid ₹2.1 crore to the hospital for the surgeries,” he said. The dialysis centres in RID 3160 have done 5,000 sessions for patients. Naidu collected \$37,000 from the clubs for TRF, “probably the highest so far from the district.” ■

## Project Sahyog scales new heights

IPDG Ajay Madan greets a recipient of a prosthetic arm.



Following the success of *Project Sahyog* that provides artificial limbs to amputees in RID 3080, launched in Aug 2021, DG V P Kalta has adopted it as a district project for all clubs to emulate. So far, the project has rehabilitated over 155 amputees at an average cost of ₹35,000

per patient. The project was conceived by Rtn Salil Dev Singh Bali and launched by IPDG Ajay Madan in August 2021.

The project funding came from donors and companies. “We provide high-quality artificial limbs to handicapped persons who had lost an arm

or leg, so that they restart earning their livelihood and can live with dignity,” said project chair Salil Bali. The technical team was led by Rtn Dr V J S Vohra, a prosthetic expert with 40 years of experience in this field.

Initially, 10 amputees employed as auto drivers,

security guard, domestic help, etc, were fixed with artificial limbs. “Encouraged by its success, we extended the project across the district and 55 out of 100 clubs participated in identifying the potential beneficiaries and sponsoring artificial limbs for them,” he said. ■

# A Restaurant on Wheels at Asansol

G Singh

Most commuters who travel by trains do not have a pleasant experience with the quality of food served by the catering services. The food is often not tasty and doesn't compensate the money spent on its purchase.

The Asansol division of the West Bengal Railways has transformed two abandoned train coaches into spacious restaurants with both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dining facilities.

Christened Restaurant on Wheels, the two coaches that operate as two different restaurants have a steam engine at the front reminding one of the glorious era of the Indian Railways. The Railways officers claim that this Restaurant on Wheels is among the first-of-its-kind in India where old coaches have been refurbished into food joints.

Located outside the Asansol railway station, around 210km from Kolkata, the facility was inaugurated by the then local BJP MP Babul Supriyo in February 2020.

The originality of the coaches was retained while changing their decor. The

Railways aims to generate ₹50 lakhs of non-fare revenue from these restaurants in the next five years.

## Veg and non-veg dishes

The two restaurants — Chai Chun and Wow! Bhojan — in the two coaches serve vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. Chai Chun offers various snacks and a variety of teas including the high premium Darjeeling tea, while Wow! Bhojan serves non-veg cuisines for lunch and dinner.

“We have a seating capacity of 55–60 people and the coach has been further bifurcated into air-conditioned and non-AC areas. We have a kitchen attached where we cook over 300 food items, mostly non-vegetarian. Apart from travellers, families from the neighbouring areas visit here regularly to enjoy the experience of dining in a railway coach. The restaurants are great photo-op venues too,” said Farhan Ansari, an employee.

## Happy customers

Customers too offer good reviews about the eateries. “I came here after

watching a YouTube video on it. The interiors have been beautifully done and the food is tasty and affordable,” said Ajay Mitra, 34, a software engineer who had come from Kolkata, adding that more such joints outside big railway stations should be opened as they would give a unique dining experience to people travelling from distant areas. Customers also suggested that the food can be supplied to passing trains because of the strategic location. “The Railways have developed the eateries in their own land which is just outside the railway station. It should encourage online booking for the food so that it can be delivered once the train reaches the station. It will not only add revenue for the government but also create more livelihood opportunities for locals.”

## Pandemic challenge

The restaurants, however, faced constant shutdowns since inauguration due to the Covid pandemic restrictions and that has badly affected their business. The services were resumed







by mid-2021 when the situation improved after the second wave.

The employees of both the restaurants conceded that the eateries were a massive hit prior to the pandemic. “We had long queues of people waiting to get a table. We had to ask them to make prior bookings to avoid the rush. We even placed chairs outside the food

joints to help people sit while waiting in the queue,” said Kumar Thapa, the chef of Wow! Bhojan.

“When the train services were reduced and reorganised during the pandemic to avoid crowds people have also stopped dining out frequently due to financial constraints and fear of contracting the virus.”

Farhan said that they needed more promotion and visibility to scale up their business. “Sustained social media campaign will go a long way in making the eateries popular. The biggest advantage for us is the strategic location right outside the railway station but we mostly get local customers as outsiders aren’t aware about its existence.” ■

## Doing good with TRF help

# A dialysis centre for Muzaffarnagar

## Team Rotary News



RIDE Anirudha Roy Chowdhury inaugurating the dialysis centre in the presence of DG Dinesh Kumar Sharma (third from R) and PDG Manish Sharda (third from L).

**R**C Muzaffarnagar Midtown, RID 3100, installed three dialysis machines at the Muzaffarnagar Medical College through a global grant. RC Singapore Heartlands was the international partner and the project cost was ₹20.32 lakh. Twelve Rotary districts from India also extended support for the project.

RIDE Anirudha Roy Chowdhury inaugurated the centre in the presence of DG Dinesh Kumar Sharma, PDG Manish Sharda and AG Siddharth Singhal. ■

# Neonatal unit, a pride of RC Tiruchengode

V Muthukumaran

**S**aving mothers and babies is not just a goal for Rotarians at RC Tiruchengode, RID 2982, but a guiding mantra in their project execution. This ongoing project at the neonatal ward of the government hospital, Tiruchengode, is providing maternity and child care, a focus area of Rotary, benefiting at least 100 expectant and lactating mothers, and 60–70 newborns every month.

Now that *Project Saving Mothers and Babies* has become the talk of the town, mothers of infants with critical problems are referred by private hospitals from nearby Erode, Salem, Namakkal, Sankagiri and Mettur, the western belt of Tamil Nadu, to GH, Tiruchengode. “With Rotary having installed high-tech diagnostic facilities at the neonatal ward through global grants over the years, the PHCs in nearby towns direct some of the pregnant women with complications to this hospital for safe delivery,” says project chair PDG T Shanmugasundaram.

Back in 2008–09, the club set up the neonatal ward at the GH at a cost of ₹4 lakh. “We began this maternity ward with a limited facility and equipment. But given the surge in demand for neonatal care, we upgraded it with two global grants worth ₹80 lakh in



A child being treated on the Criticool equipment at the government hospital.

2020,” he recalls. RC Sao Paulo Sul, Brazil, RID 4420, two US clubs from RID 6060, and RID 9570, Australia, were the global partners. High-tech devices such as infant ventilator with humidifier, colour doppler, high-flow nasal canula (two units), BiPAP and C-PAP machines, infusion pump, multi para monitor (two units) and otoacoustic emission (OAE) were installed at the neonatal ward boosting its medical services.

### A lifesaving device

One of the equipment, CritiCool (₹20 lakh) envelops a newborn with special blankets to bring down its temperature from around 36.5 degree

Celsius (normal) to 32–33 degree C through a gradual 72-hour process. “The temperature is then raised gradually in a 12-hour process so that blood flows normally to the baby’s brain and other organs,” explains Shanmugasundaram. “This ultratech device is not available in any other district HQ or medical college hospitals, but is found only at the Institute of Child Health, Egmore, in Chennai.” In the last two years, CritiCool saved 12 low-weight, anaemic babies, and more than 1,500 infants and 5,000 mothers benefitted from the upgraded neonatal unit at the maternity wing over the last 10 years, says K Ramesh, club president.

All the 70 members donate liberally for the neonatal projects throughout the year. “We have done projects worth over ₹1.5 crore at the GH. On festivals and special occasions, we present gifts to pregnant women,” he says. The 45-year-old club has also installed RO plants, oxygen cylinders, set up a blood bank, human milk bank and post-maternity ward. “During the Covid pandemic, we have done projects worth ₹15 lakh at the hospital. Each year, the club gives \$12,000–\$15,000 to TRF and has six major donors.” Recently, the doctors have asked for a biowaste incinerator which will be donated shortly. ■



**From L:** CMO Dr Thenmozhi, health services joint director Dr Shanthi, then Namakkal district collector K Megraj, former TN minister P Thangamani, beneficiary mother with her baby, PDG T Shanmugasundaram and Dr Prakash.

## Paediatric heart check-up camp in Tuticorin

### Team Rotary News

RC Spic Nagar, RID 3212, has been organising paediatric heart check-up camps for five years, with a break in 2020 owing to the Covid pandemic. The ‘Golden Heart’ camp, as it is called, was organised this year in August to commemorate the club’s golden jubilee. It was held at the Spic Nagar Medical Centre in Tuticorin, in association with SPIC, Greenstar Fertilisers and the Apollo, Children’s Hospital, Chennai. Dr Neville A G Solomon, chief cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon from Apollo, Chennai, along with 12 doctors and paramedical staff, screened the young patients.

Prior to the camp the club members led by president S Arunjayakumar spread awareness about the camp at the PHCs and 20 schools in the town and its surrounding villages. “We got in touch with the doctors at the PHCs and the school management to identify children with breathing difficulties, low weight and other symptoms pertaining to heart ailments,” he said. PDG H Shajahan and AG Rathakrishnan were present at the camp which was inaugurated by Ashwin C Muthiah, founder/chairman of AM International Holdings.



PDG H Shajahan (R) and members of RC Spic Nagar oversee a young patient being checked at the medical camp.

Ninety children were screened and 11 children with cardiac ailments, accompanied by their parents, were sent to the Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, for surgical treatment. All medical expenses were funded by AM Foundation, SPIC and Greenstar Fertilisers. The club arranged transport to and from the camp venue, breakfast and lunch for all registrants.

A blood donation and a general medical camp for adults, in association with the Lions Club of Spic Nagar, also formed part of this health camp. ■



# Early lessons in environmental care

Preeti Mehra

*Teach your toddler to respect nature.*

It is rightly said that inculcating good ideas in a child begins at home. Surrounding the home with eco-friendly options teaches children to embrace a cleaner and greener lifestyle right from their growing years. Indeed, sowing the seeds of environment consciousness in your tiny tot is a responsibility that you must include in your manual of good parenting in today's world.

Understandably, this is not a simple task for busy working couples who have to sometimes take their kids to a mall instead of a park. In fact, I know young parents who say they are forced to take their three-year-olds to a mall every weekend so that they have space to run around as the scorching summer sun does not permit a picnic or a trip to the park. True, hot summers can be quite a challenge but there are other options. Why not a swimming pool where the heat will be less of an issue and the child will learn a lifetime environment-friendly skill?

This is just one example of a hot summer

option, but there are many others for the entire year. For example, you could grow plants at home and use the weekend for overturning the soil even as you involve your children and explain to them how plants grow. On every birthday of the little one, you could make it a ritual to plant a tree and invite family and friends for the tree planting ceremony cum birthday party. You could spend the rest of the year and years

ahead to watch the sapling grow and inculcate in your child the importance of trees and their crucial role in our lives.

The basic idea is to introduce your child to the outdoors as much as possible, be it the park, the sea, hills or the forest, and make them aware of the vastness of the sky, the oceans, continents, and geographies that make up the earth. A weekend out of town to discover

nature could not only be a welcome change but could also help the child learn more about rural environs.

Animals too could be introduced at an early age to your child through picture books, stuffed toys, or real-life experiences. Bird watching trips, visits to animal sanctuaries, biodiversity parks could be both instructive and enlightening. Keeping an aquarium at home or adopting a pet could contribute to a holistic



learning environment where knowledge is not a chore but a pleasure. Tasks like feeding the fish or brushing a dog automatically connects children with the habit of nurturing and understanding the beings with whom we share this planet. Being in sync with nature is an important learning that bypasses kids who live in a fast-paced world.

Little children are extremely impressionable. If they are taught environment-friendly values from an early age, they will grow up as better citizens. Saving water and turning off the tap while brushing their teeth, or not letting the tap or shower run when not in use, are lessons learnt that become

almost like reflex action throughout life.

Then again, the habit of waste segregation. It should be like a family doctrine that children are taught to follow from an early age. But don't make it into a chore. It might not be a bad idea to place brightly coloured bins and involve the little one by asking him or her to label them as dry or wet waste. So, the child knows that paper and cardboard go into the bin marked dry. If she or he has eaten a banana, the peel goes into the green, wet garbage bin and so on. It could become a game in itself before going to bed. Let children dispose of litter they have generated in its appropriate disposal bin.

Allow the toddler to accompany you sometimes to the compost pit, if there is one, even as you explain the finer points of composting.

These are just a few ideas. You could add to these by explaining to the child why you choose organic cotton for their clothes, why you avoid plastic cups and plates on their picnics, why you use natural decorations and natural cleaners in the house. They will understand. And of course, if they do bring the occasional plastic toy, bottle, or plastic bag, explain to them gently that plastics must be avoided. If you reprimand them severely, then their fascination for the 'not allowed' may only grow.

Another fact you must reckon is that children grow up observing the actions of grown-ups. So, it is important to ensure that all the people involved in bringing up children follow basic green rules. If adults in the house throw garbage outside the bin, or eats and throws paper plates from the car window onto the road, the child may follow the example.

It is not difficult to be environment conscious. It is just that the luxuries human beings have invented subsumes them so much that they sometimes forget that they must respect nature or invite its wrath.

*The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues*



## A Rotary blood bank moves to new premises

### Team Rotary News

**F**or better accessibility to both patients and donors, the Rotary Challa Blood Bank being run by RC Hyderabad Deccan, RID 3150, was shifted to the Zoi Hospitals, Somajiguda, in the city. Earlier, it was operating from the premises of the Challa Nursing Home in Ameerpet.



From L: Sharmila Jain, the blood bank's managing trustee; Sailesh Gumidelli; assistant governor GSS Prakash; RC Hyderabad Deccan president Vandith Reddy; DGN Sharath Choudhary; Dr Ramesh, MD, Zoi Hospitals; DG Rajasekhar Reddy Talla and his spouse Uma Devi at the Rotary Challa Blood Bank.

The blood bank, providing blood and its components either free or at subsidised cost to less privileged patients, has all the modern facilities for component separation and has a fully equipped blood donation van. Over the years, the club had invested ₹2 crore in the blood bank, funded partly by a global grant to the tune of \$99,000 and the balance through the club's service account.

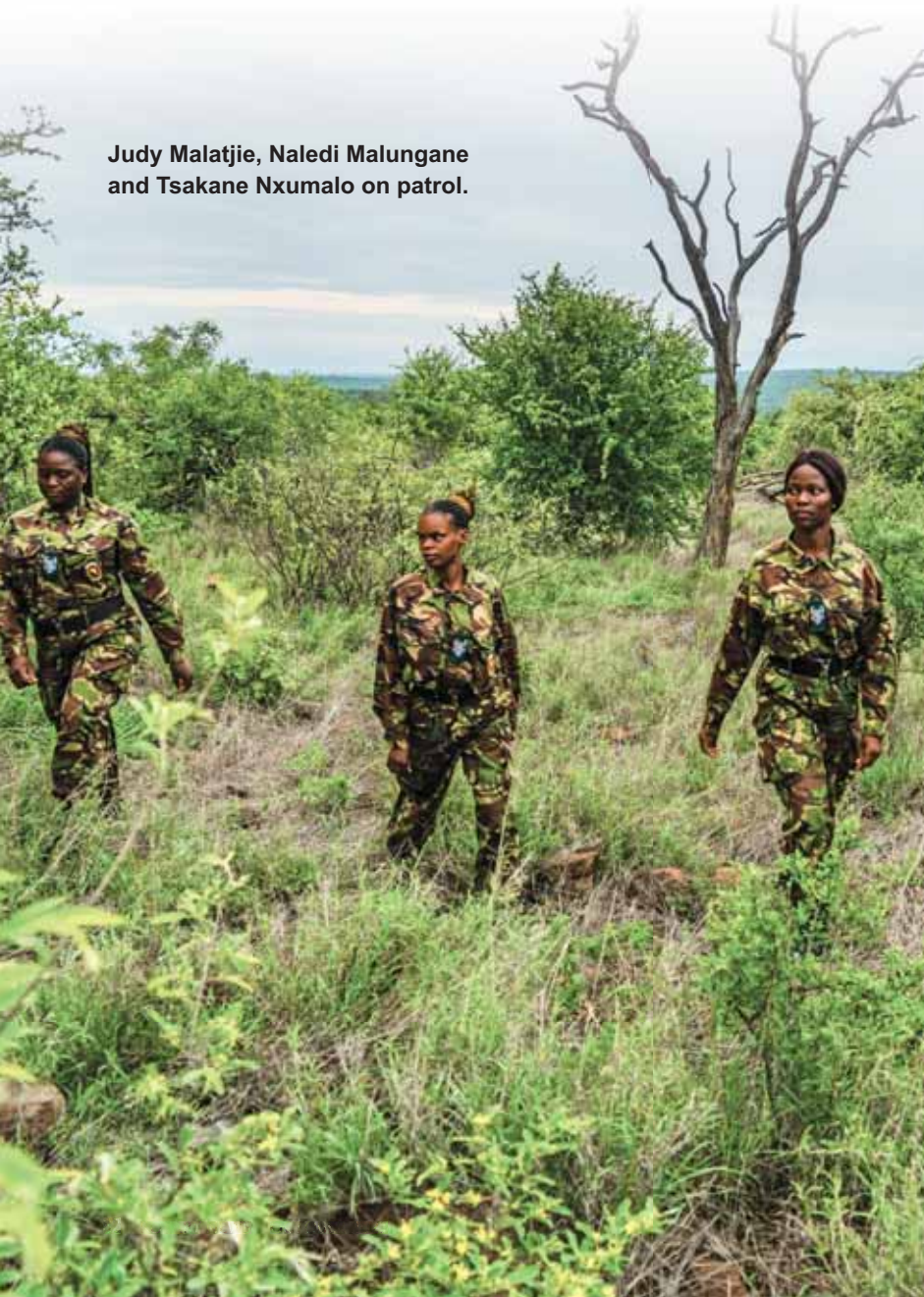
The 10-year-old centre has collected over 15,000 units of blood which was used mostly to benefit the disadvantaged. DG Rajasekhar Reddy Talla inaugurated the new premises of the blood bank in the presence of its chairman DGN Sharath Choudhary, managing trustee Sharmila Jain, club president Vandith Reddy, past president Vishwanath and AG Sailesh Gumidelli among others. ■

# White Rhinos and Black Mambas

**Nick Dall**

*Can an all-female anti-poaching unit  
stop wildlife crime in an African game  
preserve — without guns?*

**Judy Malatjie, Naledi Malungane  
and Tsakane Nxumalo on patrol.**



**D**ressed in a baggy green camouflage uniform and black work boots, long ponytail swinging against her back, Tsakane Nxumalo, 26, and her partner Naledi Malungane, 21, stride alongside an elephant-proof electric fence that is 7-feet-high and nearly 100 miles long. The potent, honey-like odour of purple-pod cluster-leaf trees hangs heavy in the humid summer air, while overhead a yellow-billed hornbill swoops to perch on the skeleton of a dead leadwood tree. Tsakane and Naledi are members of the Black Mambas Anti-Poaching Unit. Named after a snake that is native to the region and long, fast and highly venomous, the Mambas strive to protect the animals of the Balule Nature Reserve within Greater Kruger National Park, a South African wilderness that is about the size of Israel.

Tsakane and Naledi, who both grew up near the unit's headquarters but only got to know each other since they became Mambas, are checking, as they do every day of their 21-day shift, for breaches in the fence. Mostly this entails collecting rocks to shore up the places where animals such as warthogs and leopards have tried to burrow their way under, but periodically they come across a spot where humans have cut the fence to hunt animals for bushmeat or, worse, poach rhinos for their horns.

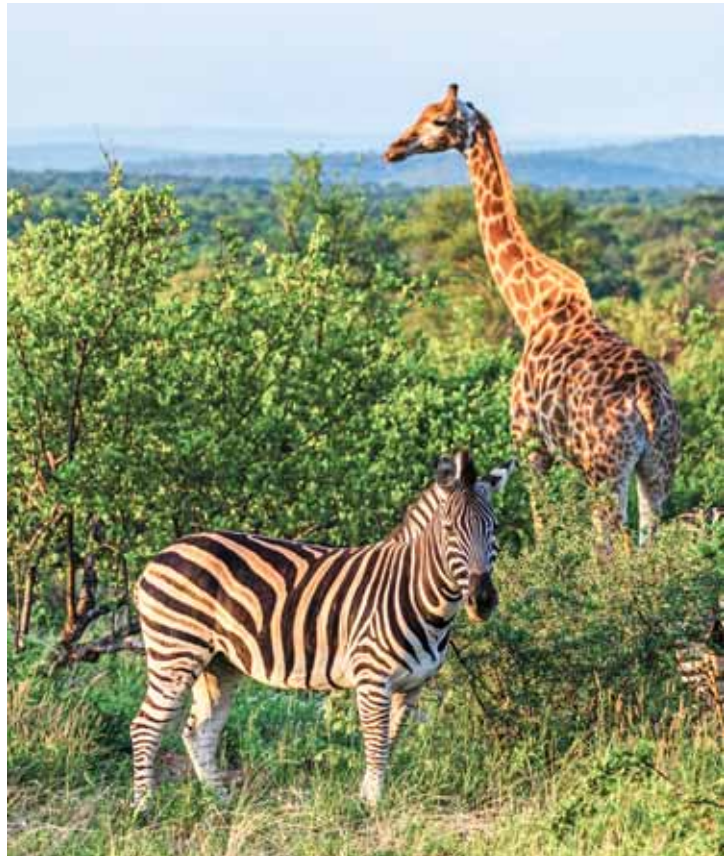
In 2013, when the first Mambas began patrolling the reserve, they quickly discovered that rhino poaching was only part of the problem. The park was also losing hundreds of animals of all species to snares every year. "It was embarrassing," recalls Craig Spencer, 48, as he sits by a bushveld braai (barbecue) and talks over the calls of a nearby hyena. A maverick South African conservationist, he was head warden of Balule, a private animal preserve. "I should have known what was happening

under my nose. It took the Mambas to show me what was going on.”

White rhinos have been hunted almost to extinction in Africa. Of the continent’s 18,000 remaining white rhinos, nearly 90 per cent are in South Africa, the species’ last best hope. Kruger is home to by far the biggest white rhino population, as well as about 300 of the world’s 5,600 remaining black rhinos.

The rhinoceros horn is prized in some countries, used as a traditional medicine and a status symbol. According to the Wildlife Justice Commission, a horn fetches an average of \$4,000 per pound in Africa, and as much as \$8,000 per pound in Asia; given that a set of white rhino horns typically weighs 11 pounds, it’s worth between \$44,000 and \$88,000. South Africa’s per capita income is about \$5,000 per year and its pre-Covid-19 unemployment rate was about 29 per cent. Therefore, a rhino, sadly, is a tempting target. In 2017, poachers killed more than 500 rhinos in Greater Kruger National Park, including 17 in Balule.

“Poachers make me angry,” Tsakane says, because they are killing the animals that all South Africans should be preserving for future generations. While Tsakane is fully aware that some people poach only out of a desperation to feed their families, her commitment to the cause is unwavering. She points out that it would be



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**The black mambas name symbolises how seriously they took their opportunity to enter an industry that had previously been off-limits to women.**

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devastating for both tourism and conservation to lose a member of what’s called the “Big Five,” an old hunting term that refers to the five most sought-after animals in Africa: lions, leopards, elephants, buffalo, and rhinos. Rhinos, along with elephants, are keystone megaherbivores that shape the landscape in ways that benefit other species. And the big animals in any ecosystem are usually the canaries in the coal mine, to abuse the phrase. “If we can’t prevent keystone species from going extinct,” says Tom Tochterman, “other species are also doomed.”

Since 2009, when he had an “aha!” moment during his first photo safari in South Africa, Tochterman, 60, has been a passionate supporter of this nature reserve. A retired real estate developer and a member of the Rotary Club of Chelan, Washington, he has since founded a nonprofit

called Rhino Mercy, which strives to fight rhino poaching, and developed a luxury photo-safari programme that helps to fund conservation work. He also earned a PhD by researching the influence of cognitive dissonance on the consumption of natural resources and ecosystem degradation.

In addition, Tochterman was a founding member of the Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species (RAGES), which has the goal of improving the lives of people by improving the habitats and lives of endangered animals of all types. He welcomes the recent addition of protecting the environment to Rotary International’s Areas of Focus. “We firmly believe that healthy landscapes contribute to healthy communities,” he says, adding that “the Mambas have shown that the reverse is also true.”

In 2010, Tochterman was at a bush camp, sitting around a campfire with Spencer, the former game warden who is now his close friend and partner, drinking rum and coke and talking long into the night, when they lit a spark that would grow to become the Mambas. “Across Africa, the default response to poaching has been to bring in more men with more guns,” Tochterman says. “And it hasn’t worked anywhere.” It dawned on them that the only way to change the narrative was to shape the minds of the next generation, and that the best way to reach the children was through their mothers.

Tochterman and Spencer eventually learned about a government programme to employ women as environmental monitors in conventional agriculture; they thought they could maybe stretch the job description to include “game ranger,” but senior management at South African National Parks questioned the concept of unarmed women operating in areas where lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants and buffalo roam free. Tochterman was told on more than one occasion that this was a “stupid, dumb idea” that “could only have come from America.”

When the two men were finally given a chance to put their theory into action, the candidates shortlisted by bureaucrats in the government programme were told what the job would entail — and they all quit. So Spencer and Tochterman got permission from the local chiefs to go into communities near the park and look for the right kind of people. The Black Mambas name was chosen by the first group, says Tochterman, symbolising “how seriously they took their opportunity to enter an industry that had previously been off-limits to women. They wanted to make a statement that they were not window dressing.”

Word quickly spread, and within months the Mambas were receiving unsolicited applications from local women almost every day. Since the beginning, the day-to-day operations of the Mambas have been managed by Spencer’s nonprofit, Transfrontier Africa. Tochterman was key in building and financing the Mambas’ operations hub as well as the separate compound where the women stay during their shifts. He had also spent six years in the military police, so he was able to provide training in skills such

as handcuffing a person. Tochterman’s Rhino Mercy nonprofit acts as the Mambas’ international fundraising arm, and it has brought them financial security. The government recently stopped funding the women’s basic salaries (around \$450 per month), which was a small fraction of the total cost of the programme. Tochterman says that all told, employing one Mamba costs upwards of \$50,000 per year.

**N**kateko Mzimba, who was part of the Mambas’ second cohort in 2014, remembers many men in her hometown teasing her about the job and belittling her chances of survival in what they deemed to be a man’s world. Their predictions very nearly came true when, during her first few months with the Mambas, she and two colleagues were repeatedly charged by a pride of lions and had to be rescued from a tree by a passing vehicle. “I tried to quit,” she remembers. “But after counselling I decided to stay and prove the doubters wrong.” Looking back, Nkateko, now a sergeant who

Tsakane Nxumalo scans the horizon at sunset.





will soon qualify as a professional field guide, realises that the whole situation could have been avoided if she had better read the lions' behaviour.

Nkateko now ensures that every patrol includes a veteran Mamba and that armed response is always on standby. (The Mambas' every move is tracked from a central operations room.) In their first year, it was not uncommon for the Mambas to find 70 snares in a day. They also came across several "bushmeat kitchens," large operations for butchering and drying meat, within the reserve itself.

One full moon night in 2015, a patrol of Mambas responded to the sound of gunfire and startled a group of poachers who had just killed a rhino. After briefly giving chase in their vehicle, the Mambas returned to the scene to find two rhinos dead and a third one wounded. Despite the best efforts of emergency veterinarians, the third, too, succumbed. The only small mercy of this grisly episode was that the poachers didn't get their prize.

Knowing that the Mambas have played a part in reducing poaching feels "really amazing," says Tsakane, more so because it's a job that she says she grew up thinking was "supposed to be done by men." To this day, many in the conservation industry in South Africa still feel that women have no place in the anti-poaching arena and that conducting unarmed patrols in Big Five areas is foolhardy. "I don't think men would want to work unarmed in a Big Five area," says Tsakane with a laugh. "A man would come up with so many reasons why he needs a gun. But for us it's more about reading the animals' behaviour. We understand that it's not really about guns."

Through their community connections, the Mambas are also helping to change the cops-and-robbers narrative that has plagued the conservation movement in South Africa since its



inception. While nature conservation is often depicted as noble protectors of the environment doing battle with evil poachers and exploiters, this ignores more complex social, political and economic realities. Shortly after the land that would become the Kruger National Park was set aside and protected in 1898, some 3,000 people belonging to the Tsonga ethnic group were forcibly removed from the land. Fences were erected, national borders that had previously been recognised only on maps were enforced, and people were fined or imprisoned for "trespassing" on the land they had always lived on and hunting the animals they had always eaten. During apartheid, the fences became more impenetrable and the sentences harsher.

This history is vital to understanding how rangers and poachers can come from the same communities — or families. And it's why many of the people who have lived their entire

lives on the fringes of one of the world's most iconic national parks know almost nothing about it.

Tsakane had been to Kruger a few times, but had no real affinity with the bush. After passing a panel interview and a fitness test with flying colours, she and eight other recruits, including Naledi, began their basic training. Training was hard, she says, involving exercises such as "running the whole day in the sun with only a small bottle of water." Now she looks back on that time with appreciation: "Training gave me that go-ahead, that I can be more and do more."

After racking up thousands of kilometres of foot patrols in Big Five areas, Tsakane loves the bush and remains devoted to the cause. She's not alone — all of the women from her cohort are still Mambas. And they're proud to pass on what they've learned. "We won't only teach our own kids; we will tell other girls that they can

# On the wild side

The Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species (RAGES) helps clubs and districts design environmental projects. The group launched in 2015 with the support of famed conservationist Jane Goodall boasts nearly 1,000 members across 71 countries.

“Healthy landscapes lead to healthy communities,” says Tom Tochtermann, who chairs the action group. “Rotary is all about healthy, safe, and prosperous communities. Without a healthy landscape, the cards are stacked against you.”

Put your club’s project on the map; visit [rag4es.org](http://rag4es.org) to submit the details.

## Mountain gorillas Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda



Only about 1,000 mountain gorillas remain in the world, although the numbers are slowly increasing due to conservation efforts. Mountain gorillas have thicker fur than other great apes to help them survive the colder weather at higher elevations. Their biggest threats are habitat loss, political instability and human encroachment; because mountain gorillas share more than 98 per cent of their DNA with humans, they are susceptible to human diseases such as flu and pneumonia.

The Mountain Gorilla Conservation Society of Canada, led by Rotarian Raemonde

Bezenar, is working to increase the number of wildlife veterinarians through scholarships in wildlife health and management at universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. The Rotary clubs of Edmonton Riverview, Alberta, and Kampala Munyonyo, Uganda, worked with RAGES to secure three global grant scholarships for the wildlife health programme.

## Pollinators Guatemala

More than 75 per cent of the world’s leading food crops rely on pollinators, whether bees, birds, butterflies, beetles or bats. Pollinators are also responsible for much of the world’s oils, fibres and raw materials. But habitat loss, climate variability and pesticides are hastening the decline of these species.

The Rotary Club of Carpinteria Morning launched the *Save Me Peace* Project in the Lake Atitlán basin, where a number of hummingbird species are threatened. Through the citizen-science initiative, club members taught schoolchildren about the importance of pollinators and their habitats. The club partnered with RAGES to host a virtual symposium on pollinators at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

## Great apes Cameroon

Habitat destruction threatens Africa’s great apes — gorillas,

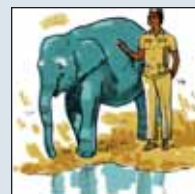


chimpanzees and bonobos — due to logging for tropical hardwood and the illegal commercial bushmeat trade. Subsistence hunters have killed wild animals to provide food for their families for thousands of years, but today, commercial hunters kill entire primate families, putting the long-term prospects of these animals at risk.

Ape Action Africa, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pickering, Ontario, rescues orphaned great apes, and local community members are among the caregivers for the young animals in Cameroon’s Mefou primate sanctuary. The organisation also educates local schoolchildren about bushmeat, logging, conservation, and other environmental issues, and is working to identify areas to protect as habitat so that the animals can be released back into the wild.

## Orangutans and pygmy elephants Indonesia and Malaysia

Orangutans used to live across Southeast Asia, but today they exist only in fragmented forest patches on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. The animals’ preferred habitat has given way to plantations of acacia, rubber, and palm: Indonesia and Malaysia produce 90 per cent of the world’s palm oil, which is found in half of the world’s supermarket products. Habitat destruction has similarly affected the Bornean pygmy elephant, an Asian elephant subspecies which is found only in Borneo and



has an estimated population of fewer than 1,500.

Orangutan Appeal UK works with the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Malaysian Borneo to care for orphaned animals. The organisation, founded by Susan Sheward of the Rotary Club of Bookham & Horsley, England, funds staff at the centre and supports a wildlife rescue unit, reforestation efforts and habitat protection.

### Rhinos South Africa

Every 22 hours a rhino is killed for its horns in South Africa,



home to the majority of the world's rhinos. Poachers killed more than 1,000 rhinos each year between 2013 and 2017. Rhino horns are used in traditional Chinese medicine and, increasingly, as a status symbol; sophisticated international criminal gangs are often behind the poaching.

The Chipembere Rhino Foundation (chipembere means 'rhinoceros' in Shona, an African language) supports anti-poaching efforts by providing specially trained tracking and apprehension dogs, technology for monitoring rhinos, and ranger equipment. The Rotary Club of Kenton on Sea, South Africa, is a longtime supporter of the organisation. Rhino Mercy, which Tochtermann founded, co-developed the Black Mambas anti-poaching unit, the first all-female group of its kind in South Africa, and supports environmental education and scientific research.

do anything," Tsakane says. "We are telling every lady out there that you can do more, you can be more." While they never go home in their uniforms (a poacher could steal one from a clothesline and use it to infiltrate the park), Tsakane makes no attempt to hide what she does. "You have to be proud of what you do," she explains. "This inspires others to walk tall. I've always known I could do a lot. But the Mambas really brought it out of me."

The Mambas' salary is considered quite good for the area, so in addition to using her income to support her mother and her sister, Tsakane has been paying her own university fees. She recently completed the first year of a teaching degree online. Nkateko uses her income to fund and run a food pantry for hungry neighbours — which further aids in reducing poaching.

A typical day for the Mambas involves rising at dawn for a fence patrol or snare sweep (both on foot) and conducting nightly observations from a blind or vehicle. Gunshots, torchlight, and the smell of tobacco smoke are all telltale signs of poacher activity, but these days Tsakane says the Mambas are more likely to be interrupted by a leopard or a herd of elephants. "They are so peaceful at night," she says. "Sometimes they block the way, but we never rush them."

Weekly tasks for the Mambas include searching the compounds where reserve staff and contractors live, conducting roadblocks, and speaking to tourists and local communities about the importance of wildlife conservation. "If nothing happens on a patrol, that is a big success," Tsakane says. "If I don't find any snares, that is a bonus because it means that no one has come in to plant a new snare and no one has cut the fence since I last checked it. It's a huge relief."

The Mambas programme got a boost in 2015 with the arrival of

Lewyn Maefala, an energetic nature conservation student with an infectious laugh. Lewyn did a yearlong practicum with Spencer's nonprofit for her coursework at the Tshwane University of Technology and hasn't left since. She noticed that although the Mambas were patrolling fences and protecting the animals from poachers, they weren't doing much prevention work in the communities the poachers came from. Within a few months, Lewyn received permission to teach an environmental education programme for students at four local primary schools.

Calling her programme the Bush Babies, Lewyn focused on using animals that the students were likely to come across in the field as a way to teach about ecosystems conservation. "We talk about the animals and how they fit into the local culture," she says, giving the example of the Shai people in Ghana, who love "dancing to elephants," their totem animal. But the Bush Babies also learn why animals need clean water and healthy trees to survive. And they are taught to unlearn the belief, passed down from their elders, that snakes and scorpions should be killed. "Just the other day, some of my Bush Babies found a puff adder," Maefala says. "Together we released it into the wild, far away from the community. That would never have happened a few years ago."

By 2017, Lewyn had expanded the programme to include 10 schools, two grade levels, and more than 1,000 students. She also took advantage of the same government-funded environmental monitors initiative to hire several young men and women to teach the Bush Babies. Never one to sit still, Lewyn has integrated the programme with the school curriculum (math students, for example, might record the species, age and sex of all the animals they see on a game drive and use that data to create a mini-census)

and started a vegetable-gardening project where children oversee the entire process, from mulching the soil to cooking the produce. She has also initiated a Bush Grannies programme, which taps into local grandmothers' deep wells of knowledge, and teamed up with a local organisation affiliated with Scouts South Africa to ensure that her programme also reaches adolescents. Last year over 1,500 teens attended Scout meetings at the Bush Babies Environmental Education Centre. Says Spencer appreciatively, "Lewyn has taken the Bush Babies to the moon."

By the time Tsakane joined the Mambas in 2019, the programme was at full capacity (36 Mambas including the Bush Babies team), and community attitudes about female rangers had softened considerably. "When I go home to my village, the other women ask me if there are any vacancies at the Mambas," she says. "It feels really good to change mindsets, to show people that women can make a real difference in the fight against poaching."

Aided by a combination of Covid-19 related travel restrictions, which have made it harder to move rhino horns across borders, an apparent reduction in demand for the horns in Southeast Asia, and the fact that there are fewer



rhinos left to kill, there is evidence that rhino poaching has slowed. In the first half of 2021, poachers killed 249 rhinos in South Africa — a considerable decline from 2013 to 2017, when they killed more than 1,000 per year. And within the Mambas' territory, poachers have killed just one rhino since the beginning of 2020.

The Mambas now plan to implement a formal high school and/or vocational training programme in the near future, and to expand across South Africa and beyond, in places where the demand has been strong not only to protect land but to involve more women. The only thing holding them back has been the lack of funding to make it happen. "We will continue to strengthen our programmes despite the complications brought on by the global pandemic to ecotourism and conservation initiatives in general," Tochterman says.

Lewyn's Bush Babies programme has inspired two members of its first graduating class to pursue nature conservation degrees. She would love to see every school in the province implement her programme, and she

also has her eye on a 100-seat bus ("Imagine taking 100 kids to see the Kruger Park!") and a "really big" Bush Babies resource centre with a library and internet access. "Finding the people to run the programme isn't a problem," she says. "I could find a hundred people tomorrow, but we barely have enough money to run the programme in 10 schools."

This, says Tsakane, is just one more obstacle that must be overcome. "We need to have Mambas working across the park," she says. "If the rhinos go extinct, the poachers will move on to the elephants, the pangolins, the lion-bone trade. We need the elephants to trample over trees so the impalas can eat. The lions need the impalas to survive. Conservation is about saving all the animals. This is why the work we are doing is so important."

*Nick Dall is a freelance writer based in Cape Town, South Africa*

*Pictures by Bobby Neptune*

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**If the rhinos go extinct,  
the poachers will move  
on to the elephants, the  
pangolins, the lion-bone  
trade. Conservation  
is about saving all  
the animals.**

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# Grand Onam lunch at old age home

Team Rotary News



**O**nam, a festival of Kerala, was celebrated by the Rotarians of RC Coimbatore Monarks, RID 3201, with 80 inmates of an old age home being run by the Eeera Nenjam Trust. Delicious food was served

to the elderly on the premises of the National Urban Livelihood Mission of the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation. Club president A Abishek, secretary CN Sharavana and AG Sashi Kumar were present at the venue.

In the first week of every month, the club is providing lunch to 180 children near Podanur under the project *Smile with Meal*. This ongoing project is being sponsored by club member Gurumurthy Vignesh. ■

## From RI South Asia Office desk

### Global Grant contribution

Cash contributions to global grants should not be sent prior to the grant's approval. If the application is not approved, the contributions will be credited to the Annual Fund-SHARE and cannot be reallocated after that. All GG contributions are considered irrevocable contributions to TRF and will not be refunded.

### Disaster Response Grants

During the pandemic, TRF had approved and disbursed disaster response grant to districts to provide help to communities. The Foundation assumes that these grant funds have been utilised for the purpose for which it was disbursed and requests districts to send the final report for these grants. The reports must be filed manually and are not available in the Grants Center.

### Changes to Rotaract Giving Certificate

Rotaract clubs now have more flexibility in achieving recognition for donating to TRF.

Beginning Rotary year 2022–23, clubs whose members contribute a total of at least US\$100 to the Foundation will receive the Rotaract Giving Certificate. There is no longer a minimum number of members who must participate, and members of Rotaract clubs can contribute as a group or individually.

### Major Donor recognition guidelines

- Available only for personal contribution. Only spouse contribution can be linked for major donor recognition.
- In case of a contribution made by a family-controlled company or a

family-trust, it may officially provide in writing that the actual credit be given to the owner/trustee.

- Major Donor recognition is not processed automatically and needs to be reported to RI Staff along with engraving instructions from donor.
- Foundation Recognition Points are generated for contribution to APF, PolioPlus and GGs. No recognition points for Endowment Fund, Directed Gifts and CSR Gifts.

### Guidelines for reclassification of contributions

All requests must be received within 60 days of the gift date and must be for the current fiscal year. The request must be initiated personally by the donor. Reclassifications from the Annual Fund to GG cash contributions will not be permitted. ■



Wordsworld

## Litfest in the mountains



Sandhya Rao

The Ooty Litfest saw some interesting interactions, from a 'lapsed revolutionary' to celebrity grandmas.

I am not a writer. I don't know why I am here.' That's how Gita Ramaswamy began her conversation onstage. At the end of the session, she received a standing ovation from the audience. She, clearly, was the star of this year's edition of the Ooty Literary Festival (OLF) held over September 9 and 10 at the colonial, Gothic-style Nilgiri Library, around since about 1869. What she was clarifying was that her legitimate job description was editor and publisher of the Hyderabad Book Trust (HBT) that since 1980 has been making available to readers scores of affordably priced books originally in and translated

into Telugu. However, she was at Ooty not just because of her HBT connection, but more because of the book she had written, *Land, Guns, Caste, Woman*.

*Land, Guns, Caste, Woman*. This loaded title was primarily the reason I picked up the book at my local bookstore. That, and the tagline: *The Memoir of a Lapsed Revolutionary*. I did not know who Gita Ramaswamy was but the moment I started reading — which was at once — I was hooked: 'This is the story of my reckoning with myself and the world around me. I was born into a Tamil Brahmin family with roots in Kerala. For over five decades, the rugged Deccan landscape of Hyderabad and its surrounding districts has been my home. While burning the bra was considered radical in the West, in my family, wearing one when I was fourteen made me a slut. My younger days were marked by small insurrections and a passion for mathematics. I gravitated towards the Naxalite movement in the 1970s and went underground during the Emergency. My parents thought I had been brainwashed.'

First estranged from her family, then disillusioned by the movement, Gita Ramaswamy says HBT 'worked like a drug against my depression. I soon became the face of HBT and I still am. Yet I could not settle into this role. The revolution I lived for and dreamt of was still not at hand. I was restless. I was thirty.' Her life's course changed once again when, in 1984, she went to Ibrahimpatnam, southwest of Hyderabad, and met people from Dalit communities crushed within the tentacles of feudalism and landlessness. There she discovered her purpose and for the next ten years traversed the villages in the region, fearlessly and successfully leading land struggles

through legal means, and moving against bonded labour.

'They accepted me and gave me so much love,' says Gita when asked how she coped not just with a life radically different from that of a 'savarna', a Brahmin, but with the circumstances. 'I could not but return that love.' The Reddy landlords, she writes, 'pressed huge stones on the backs of people for hours as "punishment"; in some villages, newly-wed madiga brides were first brought to the dora's gadi for their 'breaking in'; the breasts of lactating women labourers were pressed to check if they really needed to feed their infants... such stories abound in each village among the poor and the dalits.' It's not hard to imagine that given the kind of work she was involved in, her own life was often in danger. Written simply, transparently, and in great detail after much reflection, *Land, Guns, Caste, Woman* opened my eyes to many realities in India that we either do not know about or, more possibly, choose to ignore.



Now, Gita Ramaswamy's work is entirely focused on HBT which, after some years of regularly publishing a range of titles, was badly hit during the pandemic and is struggling to find its feet once more. In an interaction on the subject of small, independent publishers with writer Jerry Pinto on the second day, she said she was keen to publish an anthology of writings of Adivasis from the two Telugu-speaking states, but sourcing funds for the project was posing a challenge. "In two years, you will launch this book at this very venue," said Jerry as he set off an on-the-spot crowdsourcing drive by committing ₹25,000 himself. Hands in the gathering went up swiftly and, in a matter of minutes, a five-figure amount was totted up, much of it in cash.

Down-to-earth and inspiring in an entirely different way was Shobha De, who had read out a very small bit from her book *Seventy... and to hell with it* at dinner the night before. It's not surprising that her session drew the biggest crowd as she

recounted and regaled, all the while taking her listeners seriously. The public persona and woman inside seemed to cohabit comfortably, she seemed to know and respect who she was, and all that she shared came across as genuine and heartfelt. Nor did she fuss when people clamoured for selfies.

Shobha De says she's been journalling since age 12, and although she never 'dreamt' of being a writer, clearly her observations of life and people and the experiences she's had inspired the many books she's written, including those she's produced to mark the many decades of her life. It's impossible to believe she will be 75 — yes — in January and she's planned something for that as well, including an Elvis party: 'I love Elvis!' Her advice to women? Be economically independent, never have a joint account, be in charge of your own money.

Which brings us to *The Education of Yuri*. "This book is going to win the Booker!" Arthy Muthanna Singh, the warm-hearted, jabberwocky coordinator of the OLF didn't tire of repeating. Luckily for us, Jerry Pinto — the same — usually always carries copies of his books for eager beavers like myself to buy — at a discount, always — and sign. Speaking about the book which has only just been published, he said he wished readers would want the book not to end... like there are some books that are so wonderful to read that when you get close to the end you keep checking to see how many more pages remain and you slow down the pace of reading so the book lasts longer. Well, I have just started reading the book, and I'm already reading it slowly so that it lasts really, really long. It's that absorbing.

Some of you may have read his brilliant *Em and the Big Hoom*. If



Gita Ramaswamy, author of *Land, Guns, Caste, Woman*.

you haven't. please do. By the way, when you come to know that he was commissioned to write *Surviving Women* to twin with Shobha De's *Surviving Men*, you see the range of his writing Jerry Pinto offers, apart from being a walking talking encyclopaedia. His sister Andrea is one too.

One last thing, about the OLF. It was started in 2015, the brainchild of a longtime resident of the Nilgiris, Yash Muthanna. Even as she broke the news to her family, she bumped into a fellow longtime resident, Geetha Srinivasan on the steps of the library and thereby hangs a tale. The OLF has now seen seven editions. The founders' closeness to nature is reflected in trees of various heights planted as saplings by various individuals recognised by the OLF for their contributions to literature. This year's awardee was Gita Wolf, the founder of Tara Books. Although affectionately referred to as the 'grandmas who started the OLF', Yash Muthanna and Geetha Srinivasan are hardly typically 'grandmotherly' in their limitless energy and enthusiasm. They are an inspiration on how to keep growing — gracefully, creatively, actively and hospitably.

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



The Nilgiri Library, Ooty Litfest venue.

# RC Chandigarh celebrates I-Day with 75 welfare projects

Jaishree



**Above:** PRIP Rajendra Saboo (back row, centre) and PDG Praveen Goyal (back row, left) with club members after distributing story books to children at a slum colony in Chandigarh.  
**Below:** Usha Saboo distributes gifts to children.



Rotary Club of Chandigarh, RID 3080, executed 75 humanitarian projects in five days to commemorate 75 years of India's freedom. These projects, categorised under five divisions — physical/mental health, academic and creative activities, and awareness sessions — were performed at Saketri Colony, a slum area in the city with 650 residents.

The club has been focusing on various developmental programmes for the people here since 2018. "It all began on a cold winter New Year's night in 2016 when we, along with our mentor Usha Saboo, went to the slum to distribute woollen blankets. Deeply affected by the plight of the people there, Usha suggested that we focus on a holistic development of the colony," said project chairperson Neenu Vij. Two years later in 2018, the club



began working on programmes that included health and hygiene, education, advocacy and skill development. After-school coaching classes are conducted for 120 children from the colony and the club members celebrate festivals with the residents. Resource persons from SEWA, an NGO, and Bhavan's Vidyalaya work with the club to provide support.

To celebrate Independence Day this year Neenu and Dr Seema Gupta, project co-chair, along with SEWA coordinator Simranjit Singh, decided to reach out to the colony residents with 75 welfare projects over five days. Usha and PRIP Rajendra Saboo immediately agreed to the plan and extended financial support, said Neenu. All members contributed their bit for the projects. "The

benevolent Rotarians contributed funds, and the doctors, teachers and artists in our club contributed their skills. It was a perfect teamwork which helped in creating a festive ambience."

Sports and quiz competitions, workshops on creative thinking, drawing, wax painting and clay modelling for children; and sessions on financial literacy, health and personal grooming for women and adolescent girls; and dance and music competitions were some of the notable programmes. The residents were sensitised on basics such as traffic rules, substance abuse, ethics and moral values, etiquette and personal hygiene. Budding artists from the colony were taken to an exhibition of the artworks and paintings at

the Lalit Kala Akademi, Chandigarh chapter.

The 'Har ghar bageecha' (a nursery in every house) campaign organised by the club was a big hit among the children. They were thrilled to have their own library and plants, and a birthday decorations bank. The club members donated books to inculcate reading habit in the children and encouraged them to exchange the books among themselves after reading. The colony residents cheered for the winners of the 'Saketri Queen' and 'Healthy Baby' contests.

"These five days gave us an opportunity to interact closely with the colony residents, giving us an insight into what they actually need and how we can help them grow," said Neenu. ■

## A champion blood donor and polio warrior

### Team Rotary News



PDG Srikanth  
Chatrapathy,  
RID 3190

**B**lood donation was his forte. PDG Srikanth Chatrapathy had donated blood 52 times and had organised blood donation camps regularly through his home club, RC Bangalore Downtown, RID 3190. "My brother was so passionate for the cause that he would also organise blood donation camps in partnership with TTK Blood Bank and various other organisations. He was much known for championing blood

donation as his life's mission," says PDG Madhura Chatrapathy. PDG Srikanth Chatrapathy passed away in Nov 2021.

RC Bangalore Downtown organised a blood donation camp, in association with the Indian Red Cross Society, at the CMR University, Bengaluru, on August 25, commemorating his birthday under the initiative of past president Jagadeesh Reddy. It was a

landmark programme with a participation of large number of students. "The club has decided to continue the legacy left behind by my brother," says Madhura who is also a member of the same club.

PDG Srikanth Chatrapathy was equally committed to the cause of polio eradication, contributing \$100 to the Polio Fund every month. He was conferred End Polio Fellow recently by TRF. ■

# RC Dimapur, a boon to Naga children

V Muthukumaran

Networking and leveraging the district grant projects have helped RC Dimapur, RID 3240, a relatively small club with 63 members in Nagaland, to overcome the constraints of distance and remoteness to reach out to 109 Naga children suffering from congenital heart diseases. “Through *Gift of Life*, a global grant project, we had sent children below 12 years to Fortis Hospital and National Heart Institute, both in New Delhi, in partnership with a Delhi club since 2006–07. Later on, district project, *Heart-to-Heart*, helped us to send poor children to the Durgapur Mission

Hospital, near Kolkata,” says Pradip Kumar Jain, chair, paediatric heart surgeries.

Having marked the club’s golden jubilee last year (2021–22) with marquee events, Jain, who is also the club’s Foundation chair, says, “we get around 15–20 requests from families of children having congenital heart defects each year. Such heart disease is more prevalent in the lower economic strata of Nagaland society. But we have just two hospitals in the entire northeast and the cost of surgery here is prohibitive.” So, after the district project got over, the club

continued with the Heart-to-Heart programme after tying up with the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur. PDGs Ashok Agarwal, RID 3240, and Shashi Varvandar, RID 3261, took up all the “support work for us to sustain this very critical project for Naga children,” says Jain. Over the last four years, 48 children underwent surgery at the Raipur hospital where “everything is free and they don’t ask for any back papers or medical reports. Food, lodging and other facilities are all given free at the Sathya Sai hospital.” Dr Atul Prabhu, cardiac surgeon from the Raipur hospital, visited the

RI Director A S Venkatesh (centre) with (from L) Sanjana Agarwal, DG Mohan Shyam Konwar, PDG Chandu Agarwal, Mamta Bucha, past president Bajrang Bucha and Pankaj Modi.



club in 2018 and again this year for screening children in need of surgery.

### First matching grant

A youth educational centre with two computers was set up with a matching grant (₹2 lakh) in 2003, thanks to its global partner RC North Phoenix, US, RID 5490, and TRF. The centre trained around 250 youth in basic computer skills in a year. “We also got a district grant of ₹2 lakh and by the time we wound up this centre in 2018, we had 15 computers and trained close to 4,000 students.”

Some of its permanent facilities — three drinking water kiosks (₹24 lakh); a public toilet (₹10 lakh); and six Happy Schools at an overall cost of ₹40 lakh — have brought visibility to the club in this area. “All the Happy Schools have now got handwash stations, libraries, and renovated compound walls, thus benefiting 2,500 children in Dimapur,” says Jain. The club holds an artificial limb fitment camp (lower limbs) each year. It has distributed prosthetics to 800 amputees in the last 20 years.



RI Director Venkatesh, (seated left of the speaker) along with club members, at the inauguration of a Happy School.

Recalling a mammoth project, club president Manish Kumar Jain says, “a week-long mega medical camp was conducted at the district hospital, Dimapur, in 2015–16. Around 7,000 patients were screened and over 200 eye surgeries were done. All the facilities including food and accommodation were taken care of by the club.”

Speaking at the golden jubilee event, RID A S Venkatesh urged

the Dimapur Rotarians to aim for grand projects “which will make a big difference to your community. You have to expand the scale and reach of the service for the remote people in Nagaland to benefit.” The then DG Dr Mohan Shyam Konwar, Golden Jubilee Committee chair PDG Chandu Agarwal and then club president Bajrang Bucha were among those present. ■

## Affordable eyecare in Delhi

### Team Rotary News

**R**otary Club of Delhi Ananta, RID 3012, has set up an eyecare centre at its Rotary Ananta Charitable Hospital built in Feb this year at Greater Noida. The eyecare centre, inaugurated virtually by RI President Jennifer Jones in July, will offer surgeries to treat cataract, squint and glaucoma at nominal cost through the club’s Rotary Ananta Welfare Trust.

DG Dr Lalit Khanna and PDG Alok Gupta were present at the inauguration event. RC Karachi, RID 3271, supported the eyecare centre through a global grant. Over 200 people availed treatment at a mega medical camp organised at the four-storeyed hospital in commemoration of the inauguration. ■



DG Dr Lalit Khanna and his wife Neelu inaugurate the eyecare centre in the presence of PDG Alok Gupta (R).

# For a healthier, happier you

## Bharat and Shalan Savur

Seasons change, times change and so do we. We grow older, perhaps wiser! The thing is not to get stuck and set in old ways that don't improve our health and wellbeing. I read in the book *Wrist Assured* on the great cricketer G Vishwanath that one word from his brother-in-law Sunil Gavaskar made him quit drinking. That's the way to go. Cigarettes, alcohol, drugs are no friends of our body. Get rid of them and we make friends with a good life. Without any substance fogging your body and mind, you actually taste the goodness of food, see things around you more clearly, smell subtle scents and, overall, after the withdrawal phase, you will appreciate all that you are, and... it's great to be alive.

Healing is not something you have to 'make happen.' It is a natural, ongoing process. If you accidentally cut your finger, it starts to heal immediately. One little cut and your healing mechanism intensifies. This knowledge and perspective helps. The question is: what activities or habits can I shed, start or tweak to make myself healthier and happier?

### Eat when hungry

In the past year, I'd started having lunch at noon and dinner at 6pm — earlier by an hour or two. It felt good. Recently, I suddenly felt hungry at 5pm. Pondering whether I should have a biscuit, it suddenly struck me: why not have an earlier dinner? And the feeling of fulfillment after the meal was something special. I still have two meals a day except, now, there's a rider to them — eat when you're hungry.

Healer Preetha tells us, "The body is not an eating machine. Eat only when your digestive fire asks for food, not when your tongue demands it, and eat right." Apparently, we have live mechanisms called immune globulins. "They are antibodies that fight diseases and they are all protein. So, the right amount of protein in the diet enhances immunity," she explains.

### Use your golden energy hours for yourself

Some of us are at our most energetic at 3am., some at 7am, some between 4–6pm, some are night owls. Identify your best energy-hours. Don't misuse them by checking your Whatsapp messages, completing chores or watching a movie. These are your golden hours when your physical and mental faculties are at their peak. Use them for something you feel passionate about — craft, art, volunteer work.

Speaking of volunteer work, I'm struck by Ranjit Yadav, a sub-inspector in Ayodhya. Every morning he rises early, puts on his uniform and off he goes to his own street school informally called Apna School, and from 7–9am, teaches 60 underprivileged children to read and write Hindi and English. This teacher-in-uniform, as he is affectionately called, teaches Mathematics too. Their school premises are under the welcoming branches of a tree — shades of ancient India.

Doing something you're truly passionate about is a great healing pick-me-up. Here are 16 broad categories which may point you to your passion: Learning, teaching, creative pursuits, personal enhancement, contemplation,

helping others, self-cleansing body, mind, spirit, problem solving, health and fitness, career growth, managing finance, children, animals and birds, environment, and de-cluttering.

It's all about disentangling ourselves from the unsatisfactory and mildly irritating issues to move forward in a more focused way towards what matters most. A healthy passion sets a healthy pattern.

### Forget everything while exercising

One student told me, "I have an appointment at 12.30, so shall I just cycle today?" We normally finish our session at 1pm. "No," I said intuitively. "We'll do all the other exercises first and cycle last."



“Okay,” she said. I don’t know how it happened. Maybe the urgency made our movements swifter. But we did the entire session including 40 minutes of cycling in record time. My student was energised and laughing. “It is the best exercise class I’ve ever had,” she exclaimed. And I realised it was not only because we’d exercised at a faster pace but because she didn’t talk while exercising, and didn’t look at her cell-phone and say apologetically, “I have to take this call.” She forgot everything except exercising. Do exactly that and see how your sessions sparkle, how your body tingles, and how your mind comes alive. Tip: Even in your non-exercising hours, do some fun lunges as you wait for the milk to boil; get up from your work desk and do some jumping jacks. Try a wall sit-and-stand. Bring new life to your lifestyle.

### The just-enough rule

I was taken aback to read an article which laid out how many hours of

sleep, how much fibre, how many minutes to read and so on. It was all about numbers. What stunned me was a nutritionist advising people to have 4–5 bowls of dal per meal to get in the right amount of protein. That is a lot of protein — it can give a gripping pain below your belly button and bloat your stomach! It’s better to follow the just-enough rule for almost anything:

- \* Sleep: If your emotions are controlled, your mood, grasping ability, memory and attention span are good, it means you are getting quality night sleep. Tip: 20 minutes of *Yoga Nidra* meditation is a lovely way to fall asleep. It keeps the mind from planning, worrying, calculating and lulls it into sleep. I know of a woman who falls asleep to nursery rhymes. Choose what suits you.
- \* Sun: It’s healing to get 10–20 minutes of sunlight daily — all the little niggles, aches, discomforts, fatigue, depressive thoughts

dissolve in its warmth. Sunlight kills bad bacteria and that’s a great health booster.

- \* Fibre: A medium bowl of oats in milk with a pinch of salt once a day is a super way to feel full. It also makes for good elimination the next morning. Fibre binds fat and sugar and doesn’t allow the body to absorb their calories; it’s good news for those with diabetes and those who want to lose weight. Carrots, beetroots and ladies finger are super fibre foods and should be taken regularly. Fibre reduces risk of cancer.
- \* Sounds: There’s something healing about nature’s sounds. Spend time at the seashore, amidst mountains, next to a running stream or a fountain. Listen until you feel as if even your bones have given up all their tension and you’ve moved physically, mentally, emotionally from stress to rest and to your own immensely pleasing wellness zone.
- \* Backache/headache: If you wake up to a backache, try sleeping on your back with a pillow under your knees. And if you wake up with a headache, it could be due to sleeping in a huddled position. Sleep with shoulders squared. Never go back to sleep once you’re awake. Both aches vanish when you stand up and walk around for a minute.

Prune both your burdens and expectations, and a new life with more meaning, space and clarity will unfold. Keep learning and fine-tuning your thoughts and ways, and you’ll always come up smiling. Then generously share all that you’ve learnt and see how other people’s minds and lives light up too.

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



## RC Veppur — RID 2981



A loudspeaker (₹70,000) was donated to the Government HS School, Veppur, as assured by charter president Abu Syed during his tenure.

## RI District — 3020



Interactors staged a cycle rally to spread the message of patriotism. Rotarians from RCs Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada flagged off the rallies.

## RI District — 3000



An MoU was signed between DG I Jerald and NRS IAS Academy for training rural students through 20 Rotary Study Centres for competitive exams.

## RC Bhusawal Railcity — RID 3030



Around 1,500 cloth bags were distributed to the public during a plastic-free campaign. Sarees given by Rotarians were transformed into eco-friendly bags.

## RC Kundli — RID 3012



Over 40 desk-benches were donated to a senior secondary school at Rasoi village. Drinking water facilities, handwash stations and a toilet for girls will also be set up.

## RC Ahmedabad Supreme — RID 3054



A Rotary Supreme Wall of Humanity was installed at a busy locality through which families and restaurants can donate freshly prepared leftover food for the less privileged.

## RC Surat East — RID 3060



Over 300 people were examined in a cancer check-up camp. Breast scans, Pap Smear tests and PSA tests were done. Oral examination was done on some patients.

## RC Muzaffarnagar Vishal — RID 3100



Water bottles and handkerchiefs were gifted to 108 children at the Bal Mandir School in the presence of club president Pawan Kumar Goel.

## RC Yamunanagar Riviera — RID 3080



Fifty saplings were planted on a ground behind the Government Middle School, Dayalgarh. School principal, village sarpanch and Rotarians took part.

## RC Agra — RID 3110



Around 270 students of Government Composite School, Basai Khurd, were screened for oral hygiene at a dental camp. Among them, 150 had dental issues for which medicines were given.

## RC Faridkot — RID 3090



Vitamin supplements were distributed to children at an anganwadi in the presence of club president Aarsh Sachar and secretary Arvind Chhabra.

## RC Siddharthnagar — RID 3120



Plates were given for 100 students at the Government Primary School, Sanai Khurd, in the presence of BEO Dharmendra Kumar Pal and Rotarians.

## RC Pune Royal — RID 3131



A bone density camp was held for 140 railway porters at the Pune station. The project cost ₹3 lakh. The camp was arranged through Rtn Dr Yogesh Khandalkar.

## RC Bhalki Fort — RID 3160



Around 100 people benefitted from an eye testing and cataract screening camp. Thirty patients were chosen for surgery. Over the decade, 5,400 patients were examined.

## Rotary E-Club Empowering Youth — RID 3132



This cause-based club was formed at a hybrid meeting with PDG Tom Gump, RID 4950, US, giving a lecture. Charter president Nandini Jaggi took charge.

## RC Gajendragad — RID 3170



Over 1,000 students were screened at a dental camp at the Government Girls High School by Rotarian doctors TH Shankar and Komal R Raibagi.

## RC New Bombay Seaside — RID 3142



Eight motorised ICU beds (₹10 lakh) sponsored by GN Hearing India were donated to the Acharya Shri Naneshwar Hospital, Belapur. Joint medical camps will be held.

## RC Ivory City Mysuru — RID 3181



Umbrellas were distributed to 50 vegetable vendors in the presence of PDG Ravi Vadlamani and club president MN Ramesh.



## RC Coimbatore East — RID 3201

Smart classrooms (₹15 lakh) were set up at the Karaiyur PU Elementary School. Buildings were renovated, new toilets built, computers, fans, RO unit and CCTVs were installed.



## RC Tuticorin Trailblazers — RID 3212

PDG Jacintha Dharma inaugurated a toilet block (₹1 lakh) at the Caldwell HS School. DRFC (2021–22) S Periannan, then DS Alexander Manuel and past AG Guna Singh were present.



## RC Mettupalayam Prime — RID 3203

Over 120 patients were screened for breast cancer. Hundred diabetic foot patients were examined by a plastic surgeon.



## RC Jamshedpur Dalma — RID 3250

On the eve of 75<sup>th</sup> I-Day, the club painted a locomotive engine in tri-colour. It was showcased at the Tatanagar Railway Station to enhance Rotary's image.



## RC Alleppey Greater — RID 3211

Onam kits worth ₹80,000 were distributed to less privileged families in two villages at an event presided over by club president Vijayakumar.



## RC Jabalipuram — RID 3261

Around 1,500 volunteers participated in a walkathon held in partnership with MP Power Management Company to promote environment protection.



Compiled by V Muthukumaran

# Why do developed nations have tiny bathrooms?



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

For the last two weeks I have been travelling in Western Europe, which is supposed to comprise developed countries. Economists and others use all sorts of fancy criteria like per capita income, hospital beds and doctors per capita, schools and teachers per capita, etc to judge if a country is developed or not. They say more is better and less is worse. India does badly on these counts.

Fair enough, but now to this list of per capita this and per capita that, I want to add another criterion: per capita bathrooms. Having lived abroad for several months in the past and having travelled abroad a fair bit, I can say with confidence that the moment you add this criterion, even the most developed country can slide down many notches.

Europe, including the UK, fares very badly. Even a country like Switzerland is not an exception. I know because my son lives there, in a prosperous town and in a good locality. The houses there are beautiful, overlooking Lake Geneva. They are old, have the most beautiful doors and windows and grand old flooring. The rooms are large and airy. In other words, all that you could wish for in an apartment.

But all these gorgeous apartments have a major deficiency: they have only one bathroom with a small shower and a separate toilet. Just one. Not just

that. They are also very tiny. Whereas the average size of a bathroom with a western commode in India is 40sqft, in the 'developed' countries of Europe, it is half, or less than half of that. Or, as the saying goes, you can't swing a cat in there. My son's apartment is no exception. In fact, I once stayed in a hotel in central London, a fairly posh one, where the bathroom was so small that the walls were almost touching my shoulders.

Over the years I have done some research on this strange preference for one tiny bathroom in an otherwise luxurious apartment or house. At first I thought it was because real estate was expensive so they didn't want to

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waste money on rooms which a person occupies for a short while every day. Even if there are four or five adults in the house it's just about an hour a day. So why waste space and money? But this turned out not to be the case. Real estate in India is more costly in relative terms and we still have very large bathrooms. The real reason, I was told, is the high cost of plumbing. Or maybe they are just unhygienic.

But there's one thing you have to hand it to the Europeans. Regardless of how small the bathrooms are, there's always a tub that uses up a huge amount of water. That suggests they bathe much less frequently, which is understandable given how cold it gets. What is less easy to understand, however, is how they manage in summer when it can get very hot. But now they do have showers in some places which is good. But there's a problem: you have to stand in the tub to have one. That can be quite tricky and dangerous as well.

Nor, as it happens, do these people have the concept of attached bathrooms. These are accessible through the corridor or passage. That can make life quite embarrassing for non-European women. So here's my suggestion to the World Bank which decides which country is developed and which is not: add attached bathrooms to your criteria. ■

# In Brief



## Retailer donates big to fight climate change

Yvon Chouinard, an American retailer and

founder of clothing brand Patagonia, has donated the entire \$3 billion of his apparel company's valuation to fight climate change. Recently the brand donated \$10 million it has saved in corporate tax cuts to the same cause.



## Run for WWF

Robert Pope, a British marathoner and a Guinness Record holder for the fastest runner in the 2018 London Marathon in two hours and 36 minutes, dressed as Forrest Gump (movie character), recently ran a

distance equivalent to the width of Ireland in less than 24 hours to raise funds for the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF).



## Cleaning the Pacific

The Ocean Clean-up, a non-profit, has removed over 100 tonnes of plastic from the Pacific Ocean using its prototype cleaning system called System 02. It used over 45 extractions to sweep an area of 3,000 sqkm.



## A blood test to detect 50 types of cancer

Grail, an American biotechnology company, has developed a simple blood test called the Galleri Test to detect more than 50 types of cancer through a blood sample by looking in the DNA for cancer cells that shed into the bloodstream.



## Price tag on carbon emissions

The Indian government has passed a conservation bill in the Lok Sabha making it easier to put a price on carbon emissions. While the bill encourages the use of non-fossil fuel it also includes penalties for corporations who aren't using an adequate amount of renewable energy sources to power their operations.



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