

Rotary News

India

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Rotary
District 3212



PROJECT FOCUS

Goal Setting / Effective Public Speaking

Project Focus is a pioneering project of Rotary Club of Virudhunagar (RID 3212), which aims at helping the school and college students, the former to achieve their goals and the latter to overcome their fear of public speaking.

Goal Setting For school students

Size: Minimum 50 Students – Maximum 500 Students

Duration: 2 Hours

Medium of Training: Tamil & English

Audience: Government, Government Aided and Private school students

This programme guides the school children to fix their goals and focus on them to taste success and contentment in their lives. Through this initiative, JCI Area Trainer, Rtn. M.A.P.R. Rengasamy, facilitates the students to develop action plans and work towards realizing their dreams. Through mentorship, educational resources and other forms of support, this transformative initiative is dedicated to helping students achieve their full potential.

Effective Public Speaking For college students

Size: Minimum 20 Students – Maximum 60 Students

Duration: 6 Hours

Medium of Training: Tamil & English

Audience: Government and Private college Students

This programme empowers the youth to come out of their fear, hesitation and anxiety in public speaking. It emphasizes the importance of effective communication skills in their personal, professional and family life. It regulates their pattern of speaking, delivery skills, presentation tactics and content drafting. Overall, it equips the college students to crack their placement interviews with confidence.

LEKHA 24x Oct 24/ Rotary/ITV

Total no. of occurrences of Project Focus	Project Focus	Within RID 3212	Beyond RID 3212	No. of beneficiaries
		No. of occurrences	No. of occurrences	
95	Goal Setting Schools	26	10	5989
	Effective Public Speaking – Colleges	27	32	2833

IDHAYAM
PROMISE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS



Faculty
Rtn.M.A.P.R. Rengasamy
99444 11961

Do you want to conduct
Project Focus
in your Town/City/District?
We are waiting to partner with you.

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Rotary 
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E-version rate Reduced

From July 1, 2024, our E-version subscription has been revised from

₹420 to ₹320

Thumbs up for design changes in *Rotary News*

The font choices in the new-look magazine are bold and unique, and they really make the entire magazine stand out. The cover picture in the August issue is eye-catching. I couldn't resist picking up the magazine as the visual is really creative and striking... it made me want to read more. The reduction in the e-version's price will be beneficial as more non-Rotarians can access this journal, thus boosting our public image.

*Jitendra Kulkarni
RC Jabalpur West — D 3261*

The cover photo of the August issue is outstanding, attractive and appealing. Also, the new design of Club Matters is very creative and this change is most welcome. Another new feature I find is innovative



design of headlines and a change in the fonts used.

Piyush Doshi, RC Belur — D 3291

The new style in the layout of articles and the use of new and different fonts in *Rotary News* is very nice. Kudos

*Ch Veeraiah
RC Singarakonda — D 3150*

I go through *Rotary News* just after receiving it and spend two hours till I finish reading it at a stretch. This magazine provides ideas about service projects which any club can adopt with a limited budget. My club has adopted some government schools to instal play facilities. The journal gives wonderful information for Rotarians to keep themselves updated.

Dr BK Jha, RC Ranchi Mid Town — D 3250

I am past president of my club. Your article on diagnosis of breast cancer (September issue) is interesting and it is news to me that a new device is available for screening women. I would like to know more about this device, its availability and the cost so that my club can also do this detection.

Please give me the contact details of Dr Indira and Dr Geetha Manjunath.

*Dr KS Ramalingam
RC Tuticorin — D 3212*

We don't have their contact details but you can go to their website www.nira-mai.com and ask for help. Or you can call Kashinath Prabhu, a member of RC Bangalore Lakeside who

is in charge of the project. (98456 83875). Do let us know when you replicate this project, we'd love to publish it.

— Editor

With reference to the letter by Jaideep Malaviya (Sept issue), his guess is right. The owner of Presidency Hotel, Kochi, where he saw *Rotary News* is a Rotarian — Philip Mathew — from RC Cochin.

*Joseph Malieckal
RC Cochin — D 3201*

A transformative project

The cover photo of the September issue depicting the covered faces of sex workers whose lives are

being transformed by *Project Sakhi* initiated by RC Bharuch is really striking.

The Editor's note is an eye-opener on the need to really implement DEI; she has highlighted the recent death of a doctor in Kolkata, the sexual harassment of women wrestlers and women in the Malayalam film industry etc. Congrats to Sangkoo Yun who has been chosen RIPN for 2026–27.

RI President Stephanie Urchick relates some precious moments connected to her family, that she enjoyed recently in Slovakia. RID Anirudha Roychowdhury has dwelt on the need to educate all people to make the world a better

place. TRF chair Mark Maloney focuses on the Rotary legacy of giving, while TRF trustee Bharat Pandya shows how Indian Rotarians proved this legacy by becoming the second highest contributors to TRF.

Apart from the *Sakhi* project, other articles on Rotary helping the victims of Wayanad, breast cancer, eyecare in Mauritius and 90 years of RC Bangalore are all informative.

All photos are colourful too. As a whole, the September issue is superb and kudos to the editorial team for their exemplary work.

*Philip Mulappone MT
RC Trivandrum
Suburban — D 3211*

LETTERS

I read the article *When Rotarians became sakhis of sex workers* with interest. An innovative idea promoted by Rizwana Zamindar of RC Bharuch and she deserves appreciation.

The Rotarians have rejuvenated the lives of underprivileged women who were pushed into the flesh trade due to poverty. Now they have the opportunity to get educated and get employed through skilling for which the club may approach the corporates for CSR funding. RC Bharuch members deserve high praise for doing this project successfully.

S Mohan, RC Madurai West — D 3000

The deluge of muddy water, a result of nature's wrath, has swallowed Chooralmala and Mundakkai villages in Wayanad. Hundreds of people died, many went missing and properties disappeared. At this critical time, the Rotarians from five Rotary clubs in RID 3204 and neighbouring clubs joined hands with the government machinery and have done commendable service that was appreciated by all.

Medical camps were held, bio-toilets were set up and essential disposable materials were distributed. By their timely action, Kerala's Rotarians have

lived up to Rotary's motto of *Service Above Self*, and Rotary's public image has certainly soared.

*VRT Dorairaja
RC Tiruchirapalli —
D 3000*

In the September issue it was interesting to read the article *RID 3233 takes special children to Tirupati* by train from Chennai. Even for able-bodied people, it is very difficult to have Balaji's darshan, due to the heavy rush of pilgrims every day, and the long wait involved. Hence, it was delightful to see a large number of special children being taken to Tirumala from Chennai, and brought back home safely.

Hats off to DG Mahaveer Bothra and his district for their noble thinking of arranging such an event.

*N Jagatheesan
RC Eluru — D 3020*

Mobile heart care, a boon to villagers
Congratulations to the editor and her team for the new look magazine.

RID 3212's vision to lift the quality of life in rural Tamil Nadu by providing a Rotary Heart Care Bus to serve the villagers in this region through regular screening camps is noteworthy.

In partnership with RC Las Vegas Won, RID

5300, they have done this humanitarian work and deserve high appreciation. By doing so, they are on track to realise the bold vision of former TN chief minister K Kamaraj.

Jaishree's article *Donkey Libraries in Ethiopia* and Kiran Zehra's article on pink autos were both very good. Congrats to RID 3233. Rasheeda's article *Sustainable livelihood project for mentally disturbed women* was superb. The humanitarian work done by RID 3132 and RC Miami Airport, RID 6990, deserve high appreciation.

*Daniel Chittilappilly
RC Kaloor — D 3201*

A noble project in Ethiopia

Great to read the article titled *Donkey Libraries in Ethiopia* (Aug issue). Rotary can do magic for the children of poor countries who are unable to access educational facilities. This is noble work done by RC Addis Ababa Central Mella with the help of RC NC Hickory, RID 7660, USA.

The article gives useful information to Rotarians on how to help poor children by donating books and sending volunteers to provide basic education.

*TD Bhatia, RC Mayur
Vihar — D 3012*

On the cover: PRIP Rajendra Saboo with a special child at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
Photo: Rasheeda Bhagat

Have you read **Rotary News Plus?**

Every month we bring out the online publication **ROTARY NEWS PLUS** to feature your projects. This is sent by mid-month to every subscribing member whose email ID we have.

Read **Rotary News Plus** on our website www.rotarynewsonline.org

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor:

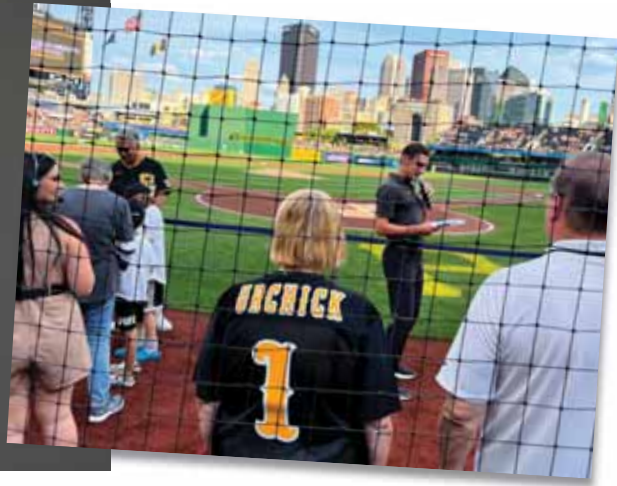
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WHATSAPP MESSAGES WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.

RI President Stephanie Urchick dons a baseball jersey during a July fundraiser for PolioPlus at the home of the Pittsburgh Pirates.



It takes a team

With World Polio Day on Oct 24, I'm proudly rooting for Rotary as we team up around the world to End Polio Now.

I had the honour of attending a Strike Out Polio event in July at PNC Park, home of the Pittsburgh Pirates MLB team. The Rotary Club of Delmont-Salem hosted the event, which raised \$1.3 million for PolioPlus.

Later in the summer, I joined members of our Rotary family in supporting the Más Millas Menos Polio (More Miles Less Polio) bike ride. Felipe Meza Chávez and his team rode all the way from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to One Rotary Center in Evanston, Illinois, to raise money and awareness. The ride took 12 days, and Felipe and his team collected more than \$100,000 to support the fight against polio. It was a joy to greet them as they arrived in Evanston.

And I was thrilled to see Team End Polio raise global awareness around the 2024 Paris Olympics. This world-class roster of athletes, global leaders, and polio eradication supporters came together to advocate for a world where no child has to live in fear of being paralysed by polio. Some of the athletes on Team End Polio are polio survivors themselves, adding weight to their advocacy.

These are just a few examples of the many ways Rotary has teamed up recently to End Polio Now. It is vital that we continue to seek out and recruit teammates in polio eradication, especially after

the challenges our eradication efforts have faced this year.

The Rotary world was heartbroken to learn about the tragic passing in August of Aidan O'Leary, director for polio eradication at the World Health Organisation.

I knew Aidan and worked with him directly. He was a tireless advocate in the fight against polio and a kind, genuine man. We will remember him both for his advocacy and his warmth.

But where there is hardship, there is also hope. I feel hopeful whenever I consider the countless ways Rotary supports the fight every day to eradicate polio.

As people of action, we don't have the luxury of giving in to despair, even in the face of tragedy. The best way to honour Aidan's memory is by teaming up and reaching our goal to End Polio Now.

We made a promise to the children of the world and their families. It is incumbent upon us, together with our global partners, to end this threat once and for all.

There are so many ways we can team up to eradicate polio. You can donate to the End Polio Now campaign, join or initiate a PolioPlus Society in your club or district, or take inspiration from the fundraisers I mentioned above.

I encourage Rotary members around the world to continue to seek out new teammates, so that together, we end polio.

Stephanie A Urchick
President, Rotary International



The joy of giving...

Breathes there a man... much more so, a woman... with a soul so dead, who is not happy to receive a gift... however big or small it might be? That would be a rare species indeed. But, while getting details for an article in this issue, and talking to leaders of the Rotary Club of Bombay Bay View, I was struck by the exact opposite... joy in giving. Giving not a huge sum of money, or a gift that costs the earth... but a moderate gift to an unknown person.

We were discussing the several projects the club does in a few Adivasi villages in Palghar district near Mumbai. One of them involved a group wedding for Adivasi couples, and each couple getting a kit of household articles and groceries as a wedding gift. When I asked how easy or difficult it was to find the money to fund such welfare projects, the president laughed and said: "Oh, money is never a problem. Our club members are happy to fund these projects."

Then, she excitedly related how money comes pouring in even from Rotarians who are not members of her club. To fund the marriage gift kits, she reached out to her sister-in-law, who is a member of RC Mumbai Royales. When the latter posted this on her WhatsApp group, there was instant response. People were actually fighting to give money; somebody wanted to give utensils, another wanted to buy the grocery kits, etc. One Rotarian topped the chart; her husband tagged along with her as she went shopping for these gifts. She had a list of items needed, but she volunteered to buy much more than what was listed, saying: 'Now that my

husband is here, he will pay for everything; so I'll buy much more!'

While several husbands reading this will chuckle quietly, or maybe wince, recalling shopping expeditions with their wives that pinched their pockets, just think about the generosity of this woman. She was not even shopping for herself, but this was certainly her *joie de vivre* moment, as the French would call it. She was truly experiencing the joy of living, and that too to bring a smile on an unknown person's lips!

But, while the good people want to bring joy to others, there are others who thoughtlessly and brutally do not hesitate to take away even the little that people have. Like the hope of mothers of little children in Afghanistan that their kids will grow up to be healthy adults and free from crippling diseases such as polio. The UN has reported that the Taliban, which is now ruling Afghanistan, has banned the administration of door-to-door polio drops in that beleaguered country. Latest reports say negotiations are on to allow polio immunisation at least in designated places such as mosques. Only time will tell how effective or disastrous this will be. The WHO reports that in this endemic country, the number of polio cases are already going up — 18 so far this year, compared to only six in 2023. In this alarming scenario, Rotarians will have to work that much harder to achieve their dream of a polio-free world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rasheeda Bhagat".

Rasheeda Bhagat

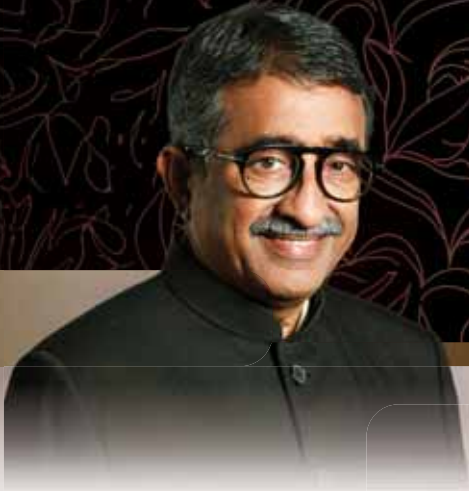
Membership Summary

As on September 1, 2024

Source: RI South Asia Office

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	139	5,886	5.64	54	69	32	254
2982	91	3,928	5.63	27	361	90	188
3000	148	6,249	11.97	60	740	231	217
3011	139	5,365	31.00	63	1,324	209	41
3012	163	4,038	24.17	52	671	103	61
3020	84	4,961	8.12	32	640	114	351
3030	100	5,592	16.18	54	819	488	387
3040	98	2,344	14.59	32	555	55	214
3053	75	3,124	16.93	23	331	39	131
3055	83	3,395	12.58	44	653	55	379
3056	87	3,753	25.15	18	140	98	201
3060	102	5,046	15.87	49	1,856	73	148
3070	116	3,069	15.25	32	179	59	63
3080	109	4,434	13.35	54	1,309	173	127
3090	134	2,695	7.16	19	345	355	173
3100	117	2,264	10.87	13	57	35	151
3110	137	3,704	11.77	15	88	69	112
3120	90	3,750	15.81	37	450	31	57
3131	141	5,636	34.99	106	1,932	283	185
3132	97	3,793	14.58	26	299	120	217
3141	119	6,298	27.95	106	1,777	185	244
3142	115	4,066	23.00	52	1,467	123	99
3150	108	4,031	12.60	79	1,178	115	130
3160	79	2,545	9.86	24	105	95	82
3170	145	6,673	15.24	86	1,016	176	182
3181	88	3,707	10.90	37	366	92	122
3182	85	3,664	10.64	45	211	104	104
3191	95	3,434	19.34	64	1,521	138	36
3192	89	3,605	21.44	49	1,188	148	40
3201	170	6,598	9.99	96	1,454	105	95
3203	97	5,051	7.27	32	495	133	39
3204	81	2,633	8.17	18	100	14	14
3211	161	5,199	8.83	7	52	23	135
3212	122	4,641	10.71	79	405	206	153
3231	94	3,672	7.38	26	276	39	417
3233	87	2,999	18.04	41	1,072	47	63
3234	95	3,589	23.93	54	1,353	85	41
3240	99	3,557	16.76	35	557	47	244
3250	112	4,404	23.25	29	386	58	192
3261	109	3,506	24.90	17	90	27	45
3262	115	3,858	15.73	80	733	645	288
3291	144	3,805	27.33	NA	NA	84	763
India Total	4,659	174,561		1,866	28,620	5,401	7,185
3220	70	1,948	16.12	77	3,034	136	77
3271	111	1,471	21.07	102	419	275	28
0063 (3272)	85	1,170	20.60	47	295	23	49
0064 (3281)	283	5,889	18.07	190	1,001	118	211
0065 (3282)	149	2,988	9.24	166	1,115	24	47
3292	159	5,477	19.39	154	4,816	118	139
S Asia Total	5,516	193,504	16.00	2,602	39,300	6,095	7,736

Director speak



The power to transform lives

Dear Rotarians,
As we progress through this Rotary year, I am filled with pride and optimism for the impact we are making in our communities. Each of you embodies the spirit of service that Rotary stands for, and together, we are lifting lives and creating lasting change. Our collective efforts are turning our vision into reality, and as we move into the next phase of the year, our focus shifts to one of the most critical areas: economic and community development.

Economic and community development is about creating opportunities for people to sustain themselves with dignity. While poverty has plagued our country for centuries, our enduring national spirit is slowly but surely driving us back to our past glory. The streets are filled with vendors — selling vegetables, fruits, snacks, repairing mobiles, stitching clothes, and crafting handmade goods — each a testament to the resilience of those striving to make a living, despite limited resources. Although they may cause disruptions and offend our sensibilities, their relentless determination is something we must recognise and support.

For centuries, India has shaped the world with wisdom, offering knowledge and philosophies. Today, our people manage global enterprises and contribute to economies worldwide. Yet at home, while we see a revival of the entrepreneurial spirit, many still struggle to rise out of poverty. As Rotarians, we have the power to change this. Every opportunity we create not only lifts an individual out of poverty but also transforms entire families, paving the way for a future where our children can thrive in a secure and prosperous world.

I have witnessed firsthand the talent, compassion and dedication of Rotarians during my visits to districts and clubs. Our members are eager to surpass their previous efforts, with a natural desire to help others. Our leaders are focused on enriching the club experience, which builds stronger connections and leads to greater participation in events and projects. I can confidently say that not a moment passes in Rotary without someone, somewhere, benefiting directly from the efforts and contributions of a

Rotarian. No other organisation can claim this kind of global impact.

Project Positive Health is a national initiative aimed at raising awareness about the importance of walking, exercising and eating right. I encourage you all to embrace these healthy habits and promote them among your family and friends. Another crucial focus for us is DEI — Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. While we are a diverse nation, equity and inclusion still need attention. It's time we take deliberate steps to embed these values into our clubs and communities. A more equal and inclusive society is our safeguard against internal conflicts.

In closing, I want to express my deep gratitude for your support. Rotary's impact is felt across the globe, and it's your commitment that makes this possible. As we continue our journey, let's stay united in our mission to serve, uplift and inspire. We will make this year one of remarkable achievements and lasting change, and continue crafting the *Magic of Rotary*.

Raju Subramanian
RI Director, 2023–25

A global peace gathering

Attending the Rotary International Convention in Calgary is a way to support peace. When you walk the House of Friendship, meeting fellow members and learning about clubs' concerns, you add to international understanding. Members spread peace when they write their hopes on paper cranes that they suspend from the peace tree in the Peace Park exhibit. Rotary has promoted peace since its early days: At the fifth convention in Houston in 1914 a month before World War I, members voted to back an international peace movement.

In Singapore in May, RI marked 25 years since it announced the Rotary Peace Centers programme. "To believe in peace is to have



hope, and to do so, one must be both stubborn and optimistic and be eager to persist and make a difference," Rotary Peace Fellow María Antonia Pérez said.

Conventions inspire action with prominent speakers that have included United Nations peace messenger and conservationist Jane Goodall in 2009. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for opposing apartheid, spoke that year at a preconvention peace symposium.

While Rotary has its convention as a peacebuilding symbol, Calgary has its Peace Bridge of red metal where thousands of Canadians and visitors walk, bike, and stop for selfies each day. Its name memorialises fallen military members' sacrifices.

Inside the convention, the Peace Park by the Rotary Action Group for Peace has provided an oasis of contemplation. Plus, in Singapore it had a top snapshot spot among a garden of peace poles and paper flowers. Choose Calgary, June 21–25, to contribute to a more peaceful world.

Learn more and register at
convention.rotary.org

Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs	: 36,635	Rotary members:	1,163,664
Rotaract clubs	: 8,938	Rotaract members	: 118,727
Interact clubs	: 15,195	Interact members	: 349,577
RCCs	: 13,588		

As on September 17, 2024

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Magazine

Message from TRF Trustee Chair

Remembering a hero of polio eradication

World Polio Day, on Oct 24, is a time to celebrate progress and rededicate ourselves to finishing the job of eradicating the disease. Let's also honour the countless Rotarians and Rotaractors who have championed the cause. One such hero was John Sever.

Sever, who died in April at age 92, was a member of the Rotary Club of Potomac, Maryland. An infectious disease specialist at the US National Institutes of Health, Sever recommended in 1979 that Rotary make polio eradication a global goal, expanding what began as a national vaccine campaign in the Philippines.

It is hard to imagine where we would stand today without Sever's decades of leadership, expertise and advocacy. In August, I was honoured to present his family with the International Service Award for a Polio-Free World and a crystal recognition piece in Sever's name.

What he helped initiate, PolioPlus, became an example of implementing an action plan in Rotary. Thanks to him — and the volunteerism and generosity of countless others — polio cases have decreased by more than 99 per cent since 1988.

The path to our goal could not have been predicted and may take longer than expected. There are sometimes setbacks, as we experienced with increased cases in Pakistan and Afghanistan this year.

But we get back on our feet. This year, we ended an outbreak of wild poliovirus in Malawi and Mozambique that was caused by an importation from Pakistan in 2021, and we decreased variant poliovirus cases. Rotary and our partners stay flexible, developing new tactics while staying focused on the long-term goal with optimism.

Delivering a polio-free world with stronger health systems and communities is not only right for humanity but also a smart investment in future generations. It will be Rotary's greatest gift to the world.

Countless heroes have followed Sever's lead — from the club president who organised her first End Polio Now fundraiser to the advocates, donors and volunteers. We are all part of this story.

With your support, this year's World Polio Day will be the greatest ever. Donate to End Polio Now at rotary.org/donate. Your gift will be tripled, thanks to the 2-to-1 match by the Gates Foundation. Join or initiate a PolioPlus Society in your club or district. Raise awareness in your community about how we will eradicate a human disease for only the second time in history.

Whatever you do, do it for future generations who will live without this debilitating disease. Let us deliver on our promise to the world's children and end polio forever.



Mark Maloney (left) presents John Sever's wife, Gerane (centre), with the International Service Award for a Polio-Free World. IPPC chair Michael McGovern is on the right.

Mark Daniel Maloney
TRF Trustee Chair



**Past RI President
Rajendra Saboo
at his office in the
Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan.**

The Raja of **Rotary hearts**

Rasheeda Bhagat

As past RI President Raja Saboo completes 90 years, *Rotary News* takes a look at his contribution in spearheading mega service projects, mentoring Rotarians and creating leaders.

Anybody travelling to Chandigarh for a Rotary-associated visit is bound to hear about Rajendra Saboo's contributions to Rotary, not only as RI President, RI director, district governor or club president... but right from his early years.

And if you are there for any project or event associated with the iconic Rotary Club of Chandigarh, then you will definitely meet the man, who recently completed 90, with no visible signs of any dilution in his zeal, passion and love for all things associated with Rotary, and the myriad ways in which Rotary has touched and continues to touch so many lives in the Tricity of Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula. You will also witness first-hand the genuine affection and respect that his club members have for him, and the eagerness with which they look up to him for support, approval and encouragement.

Over the last decade I've heard a lot about how Saboo has cast a magical spell over Rotarians in Chandigarh, particularly his club, by conceptualising, supporting and spearheading community service projects related especially to education and healthcare in the Tricity. And, that even at 90, he doesn't miss a single club meet, if he is in town. To find out more, I land in Chandigarh on a hot and sultry August afternoon, as questions brim in my head, with, I must admit, a tinge of scepticism which becomes a constant companion of journalists after long years in the profession, to try and get a glimpse of the Saboo magic,



see some iconic projects and meet his club members.

Over a hectic two days, and a round of a few projects RC Chandigarh, RID 3080, has done and with which the former RI President is still actively associated, that leaves me gasping for breath, Saboo marches along briskly and merrily with the little group taking me around. He shows no sign of any fatigue while we walk through the long, shining and spanking clean corridors of the third school of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, built under his leadership as the chair, or negotiate the tricky, uneven and crowded paths, nooks and corners of the huge and sprawling Dr B R Ambedkar State Institute of Medical Sciences Hospital in Mohali. At this hospital, thanks to Saboo's encouragement and support, RC Chandigarh president-elect Abha Sharma's dream conceived a few years ago as club secretary, was executed last year by the club's IPP Anil Chadda. The result is a state-of-the-art human milk bank, where even more precious than the latest equipment and the spanking new facilities, is the passion and commitment of hospital director Dr Bhavneet Bharti, who was encouraged by Abha to join her club so that together they could give a concrete shape to their dream human milk bank. (Read details about this project in a subsequent issue.) "But we couldn't have done it without PRIP Saboo and PDG Madhukar Malhotra's support," says Abha.

With excitement, enthusiasm and energy of a strapping young lad, firmly refusing any hand extended to support him while he climbs up or alights stairs, Saboo



Above: Signing a copy of his book — *My life journey, a personal memoir*.

Below: PRIP Saboo greets Mother Teresa at an event in Kolkata. PRIP Robert Barth is on the right.





Above: PRIP Saboo with PDG Madhukar Malhotra (third from R) at the leprosy colony.



Left: At the human milk bank with IPP Anil Chadda (L), Dr Bhavneet Bharti (third from R) and PDG Malhotra.

Below: Interacting with students at the Bhavan Vidyalaya. Also seen: PDG Malhotra and Bhavan Principal Vineeta Arora.



The many seeds Usha Saboo sowed

In a freewheeling chat with Usha at their beautiful home in Chandigarh, where, as past RI President KR Ravindran says, the couple have entertained with such love, care and fine hospitality, not only national leaders and international Rotary seniors, but hundreds of ordinary Rotarians, I ask her about the role she has played in Rajendra Saboo's Rotary journey. She smiles and says, "So many lovely things begin with just a small seed or an idea." She relates the story of how on a dark evening, while stepping out from her car, she heard a shriek. "It was a man with leprosy, dressed in rags and bleeding from wounds, and all I could see were his two eyes." Totally shaken, she discussed this with everyone she could — the Red Cross and Inner Wheel with whom she was associated, and top officials of Chandigarh.

She had learnt that evening from that man that there were

“

On his own, Raja could have done nothing, but thanks to support from RC Chandigarh members, all these seeds have blossomed into good projects.



Wedding photograph of PRIP Saboo and Usha.

about 80 or 90 people like him, living in dilapidated thatch huts near the river, and begged to eke out a living. "There were men, women and children. Absolutely shocked, I told Raja that Rotary should do something."

The result from that little seed sown in 1971 is a beautiful colony which now houses 172 people; those afflicted with the disease have long been cured with adequate medical care. They have been given goats for livelihood by RC Chandigarh. The inmates of the colony have built a temple; I came away with images of smiling children and healthy adults living in clean, pucca homes.

Similarly, adds Usha, so many other Rotary projects were born from small ideas. "That is the power of a seed. Long ago, when we visited the PGIMER in Chandigarh,

we found patient's relatives lying in the corridors or under the trees. You and I can go to a private ward, where our relatives can stay. But the relatives of low-income patients had no place to stay. So I told Raja that if your club is looking for a project, there is one right here. That is how the PGI Serai came up in 1986 for the patients' relatives."

Having worked with the Red Cross and being a member of Inner Wheel, Usha had also seen people dying for want of blood at a time when there was no voluntary blood donation. "People were so scared to give blood; so in 1973 when Chandigarh hosted the first district conference, we set up a van to collect blood from willing delegates. Now of course the Rotary Blood Bank Resource Centre is a project RC Chandigarh members are so proud about."

Another major club project — *Gift of life: Rotary Heartline* — came about from another “small seed”. Usha recalls that once a domestic helper told her about his little daughter who lived in Delhi, getting breathless. “I said why don’t you bring her to Chandigarh. We got her checked at the PGI and found she had a hole in the heart. The surgery cost around ₹40,000 or so, which was a lot of money then, but I paid for it.”

After two years he returned and said his little son also had the same problem. Once he was also helped, the news spread “that we were organising free surgeries and people with sick children started lining up at our door. I told Raja: ‘There must be a purpose, why is god sending these people to us?’ She also took up the matter with Inner Wheel and they did organise an odd operation here and there, “but we didn’t have that kind of money and other projects started suffering. Finally Rotary took it up and the *Rotary Heartline* project was born. And then we started going to Africa where this problem is huge. So African children started coming and we also did heart operations on Pakistani children.”

She adds ruefully, “PDG Madhukar has just returned from a medical mission; we couldn’t go because the children don’t allow us anymore.”

Cheering up, she smiles... “just see how the seeds of kindness, giving, and support from others grow into plants and trees. If you have a strong desire, sincerity, and if your mind and heart are big enough, there is no lack of support. On his own, Raja could have done nothing, but thanks to support from his club members, all these seeds have blossomed into good projects.”



With Hollywood legend Audrey Hepburn.

shows me around the Bhavan, with which he has been associated right from 1978, and headed as its chairman from 1996. Later we drive to the plush third Vidyalaya of the Bhavan in New Chandigarh, a dream of Saboo that PDG Malhotra, as the organisation’s secretary, worked so hard to execute. The result is a fantastic school located on a beautifully landscaped five-acre campus that can compete with the best not only in India but across the world with the most modern facilities and equipment,

and where a swimming pool is now going to come up.

But it is while Saboo is interacting with the special children — there are 60 of them at the Bhavan — and children in classrooms at the Vidyalaya that you see the sparkle in his eye and the special smile on his face to which the children respond with immediate spontaneity. It is the same connect that Rotarians who have worked with him on medical missions in Africa and India or other service projects have seen for themselves over the years.



With the Chancellor of Germany Dr Helmut Kohl.

When I comment on these magical vibes with children, Vineeta Arora, senior principal of all the three Bhavan schools, nods enthusiastically and says, “Yes, children have this unique gift of recognising genuine affection from people.” Asked how she would sum up Saboo’s contribution to the Bhavan and its schools, she says simply, “Well, the Bhavan has been an inseparable part of Mr Saboo’s journey in both Rotary and life.”

On my way from the airport to the hotel, we make a stop at the colony for leprosy patients that is one of the iconic projects that Saboo had initiated and nurtured in the early years. But as in most service projects he initiated, it was his wife Usha, who had first planted the seed of this project in his mind. (see Box on Usha’s contribution).

But the one mega project which is synonymous with Rajendra Saboo is the 30-odd Rotary medical missions done in Africa and India. Here too, Usha “sowed the seed of an idea” as she puts it, to fill a void in his Rotary life after the hectic two years spent in Evanston as incoming and then serving RI President, and then TRF chair and trustee.

After his return to India, PDG Dr Madhav Borate had invited Saboo for a conference in Pune where a team of doctors from the US had come to conduct a polio camp. “As his term as TRF chair was ending, I asked him *ab kya karongey*, and he said “*sochengey*” (I will think about it). When he told me about the American doctors who come to Pune annually to do polio



PRIP Saboo and Usha being received by former US President George H W Bush at the Oval Office.



At a medical mission in Africa.



Above: PRIP Saboo with PRID O P Vaish.

Below: Usha and PRIP Saboo with their grandchildren.



camps, I said we also have no shortage of doctors. At that time Africa was in the news for hunger, polio and HIV/AIDS, so why can't we help there," recalls Usha. A member of the American team of doctors was of Indian origin — Nandalal — who had some connection with Uganda. He said he could organise a medical mission for Indian Rotary doctors there. "Just see how an idea was born from the Pune conference and how everything came together to execute it," she smiles.

But, "even though all these service projects, be it the leprosy colony, medical missions, the blood resource centre, the PGI Serai, Heartline, Peace Monument, Diwali sweets for jawans etc are like his babies and our entire family is so proud of his work in Rotary, if the club members hadn't supported the projects wholeheartedly, nothing could have been done. We have a very good club, they take up seriously every idea you give. Now we have an ongoing project to give 125 food packets to TB patients every month; I have personally gone there a couple of times. It's not only our club, every Rotary club in India is doing community service because the need is there. If you keep your eyes, ears, mind and heart open, you have opportunities to do *seva* (service) everywhere."

When I exclaim that though she always says "our club", she herself is not a Rotarian and yet has made such a huge contribution to Rotary, Usha laughs and says, "I never felt the need to join Rotary, because I am a Rotarian at heart and in mind. Honestly, whatever project our club wants to do... from collecting money to giving time, to hosting anybody... earlier GSE teams used to come... I am always there for Rotary."

PRIPs Banerjee and Ravindran on Saboo



With PRIP K R Ravindran (L) and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee (R) at the zone institute in Chennai.

While most Rotarians focus on past RI President Rajendra Saboo's contributions to Rotary after serving in senior positions, past RI President Kalyan Banerjee thinks that "Raja's greatest contribution has been that in the early years, 1965–85, and even a decade later, he helped hold India as one cohesive unit of all Rotarians. There were both colleagues and competitors those days. Raja's gift was to keep them all together in a loose assemblage. This even when he had not yet been chosen as president. But he stood out as Rotary's icon even when others were around."

He also highlights Saboo's ability to choose the right people. "Raja knew the people and the people knew him. He rightly helped in the choice of (PRIP) KR Ravindran to become a TRF

trustee when even all of Sri Lanka hardly knew Ravi. And when he or others faced legal or other challenges, Raja knew which Rotarian, who, where, and how, could help Rotary achieve peace and carry on."

Ravindran says the phrase 'larger than life' is most fitting for Saboo. "Raja is a visionary, dreamer, a builder; a man of enlightenment. His charisma, wholehearted generosity and profound leadership are evident through his journey. He has shown through example that one can thrive in life, business and Rotary without compromising integrity, always keeping promises, dealing fairly and displaying decency and empathy."

Banerjee adds that Rotary's Peace Programme, "perhaps Rotary's most significant contribution to world peace today, was a brainchild emanating from Raja. Over the last quarter of a century, I think it's been

Rotary's most lasting contribution to bring people together."

Ravindran says, "Raja captivates you with his extravagant charm, intense generosity, and a whole-souled view of friendship." Calling him "a legend without the myth," he says often legends "intertwine fact and myth to beguile, impress and inspire. Raja, however, is a leader whose story is grounded in reality. His ability to inspire unyielding loyalty, as he did with me and others, is a testament to this exceptional leadership qualities."

Yet again, the last word has to go to spouse Usha; commenting on the "pivotal role played by his lovely, gentle spouse Usha", Ravindran says in "many ways she is the 'force' behind Raja's accomplishments. Her disarming ways, a look from her, or a mere nod, was enough to guide Raja's decision."

Usha thinks Saboo's strongest qualities include "giving hundred per cent to whatever he does, total integrity and fairness. He has taken to heart the core values of Rotary such as fairness and integrity, right from the time he became a Rotarian (1966)." In those days, as even now, India was famous for election issues. "When contesting for governorship he told our club members that you can visit clubs but if I hear anything about bribing or offering free rooms during district conference or any wrong doing, I will withdraw my candidature. He was very strict on integrity and this was observed also for director and president's positions."

She adds, "Taking the side of right and not bothering about what will be the result, has been his principle always, in life, business, family and Rotary."

Club presidents admire Saboo's junoon for service

I meet RC Chandigarh past presidents at the Rotary House, where a Hall of Fame has been created with the memorabilia from Saboo's Rotary journey, specially as RI President. PDG Madhukar Malhotra,



PRIP Saboo with past presidents of RC Chandigarh, including two PDGs from the club - Madhukar Malhotra (second from R) and Praveen Goyal (fourth from R).

who has worked closely with Saboo over long years, be it in the planning and execution of the medical missions or as secretary — Saboo is the chairman — of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, finds him “an amazing person. It is his passion to do good which has impressed me so much, whether it is his theme as RI President — Look beyond yourself — or the Rotary motto ‘Service Above Self’, he has walked the talk. It’s not that I’ve always been a yes person... I’ve also had differences with him, but I guess he must have decided

ki banda tau kaam karney wala hei, isko laga do, yeh bhi fans jayega (This guy is a doer; let me give him work, he will get engrossed in it)!”

He makes it clear that even though “it’s such a pleasure working with him, he is a hard taskmaster. During the medical missions, he’d get up at 5am and say come for a walk... his energy levels were immense, and it was difficult to keep pace with him.”

On his involvement with the Bhavan schools, where Malhotra is the secretary, the PDG says

that initially Saboo tried to get him interested in trying for an RI director’s position. “But when I said that I am not interested, he said get involved in the Bhavan schools where you’ll have to go twice a week for 1–2 hours... and now it has become a full-time assignment! This is my 13th year.”

IPP Anil Chadda says Saboo has the rare combination of being “a visionary, totally supportive and an uncanny ability to find solutions to any problem you bring to him. How he does it, I don’t know, but he has both the experience and vision to convert any idea into reality.” Giving the example of the milk bank project which was on the anvil for two years, and was executed last year under Chadda’s leadership, he says, “he just said Anil, *yeh kaam karna hei*, and we did it. That is his leadership.”

Another past president who has worked with Saboo earlier in his business and watched him from close quarters is Charanjit Singh. “He walks the talk; he brings out the best in people, and does so by discussing things threadbare and helps you find a solution. Being a visionary, he can

PRIP Saboo interacting with a special child at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.





(From L) Club president Jatinder Kapur, PRIP Saboo and Bhavan Principal Vineeta Arora interacting with special children.

imagine people's needs. In his earlier years he was temperamental, and would lose temper at times, but that was because he expected nothing less than excellence from those who worked with him."

Singh recalls that on his journey to becoming RI President, when Saboo faced some challenges, "one day I walked into his room and found a slip of paper with his handwriting. I thought it was a prayer but it was a quote from Swami Vivekananda which said: 'Give me power equal to my task'. I think this very inspiring quote is also the key to his success in both life and Rotary.

PDG Praveen Goyal admires Saboo's "sincerity, commitment and his being a hard taskmaster. I have learnt from him that when we promise somebody something, then it has to be done."

President of the club Jatinder Kapur says he met Saboo as a Rotaractor in 1978, and even then as club secretary and president, "when I wrote to him — there was no email in those days — I always got a reply. He is a beacon of light for our club; if we are commanding so much respect and are doing such great projects, it is all thanks to him. And he is so humble; he always says you are my president, attends every club meeting and if he wants to leave early, he always seeks permission."

Past president Jaspal Singh Siddhu has learnt humility from him, and Youth Services director Tina Virk finds him "a role model who has proved by his continuous presence and dedication that service is possible always, despite age or ill health. If our club does a *langar* in a slum area,

he is there to serve! I am inspired by his energy and enthusiasm."

President-elect Abha Sharma says Saboo has created so many leaders and marvels at how active Saboo was during the Covid pandemic. "I was then club secretary and every morning at 7 he would call us up and ask what have you planned, where are you reaching relief today. And he would follow up through the day... he is meticulous, looks at all the details, and yet always sees the big picture. That is the beauty of his personality. But above all it is his passion... a kind of *junoon* for service that makes him so unique."

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat and Rajendra Saboo's library

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Eyecare training for Nigerian doctors

Jaishree



Ophthalmologist Dr Ufuoma Olumodeji (L) screens an infant for retinopathy of prematurity disorder.

Ophthalmologists in Nigeria will now take ROP (retinopathy of prematurity) seriously, thanks to a team of eyecare experts undergoing a vocational training programme (VTT) at Radhatri Nethralaya, an eye hospital in Chennai.

ROP is a potentially blinding disorder that affects preterm babies weighing less than 3 pounds at birth. It is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in children worldwide, and yet largely neglected in developing countries, says Dr Vasumathy Vedantham, vitreoretinal surgeon and director of Radhatri Nethralaya. India is seeing epidemic levels of the disorder, because greater access to neonatal intensive care units has improved survival rates of premature infants, but without sophisticated oxygen regulation, she adds. Babies are more likely to get ROP if they get excess oxygen while being treated for breathing problems.

A four-member team from Nigeria comprising two optometrists, an ophthalmic nurse and an ophthalmologist underwent training at the hospital for ROP and other paediatric eye disorders. The VTT programme was arranged by RC Meenambakkam, RID 3234, through a global grant. The medical team was identified and supported by RC Ota, RID 9112. “A chance interaction in Dubai with Rtn Dr Wole Kukoyi of Nigeria while in transit for the Rotary convention in Houston resulted in this VTT,” says B Dakshayani, DRFC chair, RIDs 3233 and 3234. The training lasted for 15 days where the visiting team learned about ROP, squint and lazy eye syndromes, corneal opacities, allergies and childhood cataract. Dr Vasumathy, a member of RC Chennai Towers, led the training along with her husband, Dr Praveen Krishna, a paediatric ophthalmologist and squint specialist.

Highlighting the challenges related to paediatric eyecare in Nigeria, Solu Sotunde, team leader of the visiting group, says that awareness among caregivers on paediatric eye problems, especially ROP, is insufficient, and there are too few trained ophthalmologists and dedicated ROP coordinators.



The eyecare team from Nigeria with DRFC chair B Dakshayani (seated, second from L), Dr Vasumathy Vedantham (second from right), District VTT chair Radhika Satyanarayana (second from R, back row) and Dr Praveen Krishna (back row, left) at the Radhatri Nethralaya, Chennai.

“Africa’s situation today mirrors India’s a decade ago,” says Dr Vasumathy. She recalls that when she started ROP screening in Chennai “in 2007 there was no such programme in government hospitals here. Paediatricians would argue with me saying that there is no such thing as ROP in babies; you are wasting our time.” However, a landmark Supreme Court judgement awarding ₹3 crore compensation to a baby who was not screened for ROP changed the scenario and heightened awareness of

the disorder. “But we still have a long way to go. We have only 150 ROP specialists in India.” She has trained seven teams in her hospital to identify and treat ROP. The treatment varies from laser to injections and surgery, depending on the severity of the disorder.

While laser treatment typically costs ₹40,000 for both the eyes, “we have subsidised it to ₹10,000. But we do not charge low-income parents because they come from government hospitals; if we ask them to pay they may refuse treatment for their baby,” she says. Rotary has supported the hospital with a GG in 2016 which helped treat 330 babies. To date, the hospital has treated 4,000 babies.

The visiting team was given hands-on lessons in identifying and treating various childhood eye disorders. They also participated in eye camps in the surrounding villages and schools for the differently-abled. “It has been an enlightening experience. In Nigeria we do not have much data. Coming to India has given us practical knowledge on how to do fieldwork, sensitise people and detect a problem at an initial stage,” says optometrist Dr Sharon Enemuoh.

Ophthalmologist Dr Ufuoma Olumodeji found “working in the OT, handling infants and babies, particularly instructive.” Dr Vasumathy taught her to use imaging devices to screen infants. “Ideally you need one-year training to screen and treat babies with ROP. Infants are not given anaesthesia and their eyes are so very delicate. Special skill is required to hold the baby, use the camera on the eyes, check the monitor and record the findings,” she says. The VTT provided new learning opportunities for Mira Akpakpan, an ophthalmic nurse who “has never been exposed to preterm babies.”

The visit to India was a first for all the team members. Sharon loved the beach and the Indian culture. As for food, she loved the local chicken biryani while Mira enjoyed chicken fried rice. Solu was “blown by the hospitality of the Rotarians. We visited a couple of Rotary clubs and everyone was polite and helpful.”

This is the second VTT project of RC Meenambakkam, the earlier one being a paediatric cardiology training programme at the Madras Medical Mission Hospital for a team from Uganda. ■



Coming to India has given us practical knowledge on how to do fieldwork, sensitise people and to detect an issue at an initial stage.

Dr Sharon Enemuoh
Optometrist

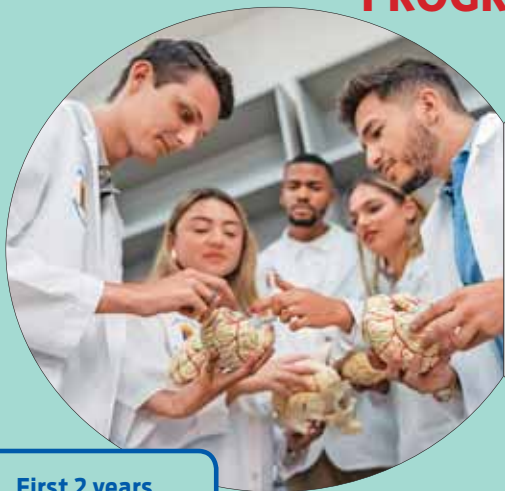


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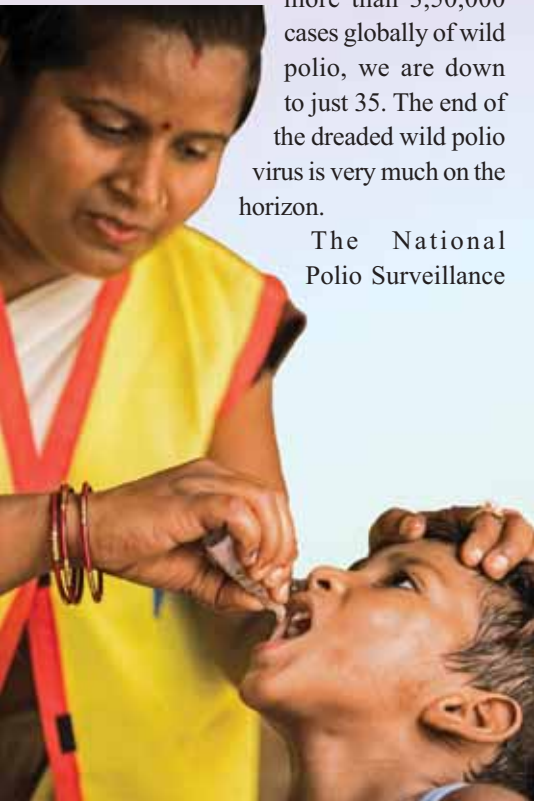
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Renewing the fight against Polio

Deepak Kapur

The occurrence of two Vaccine Derived Polio (VDPV) cases in India has alarmed all of us. India has been free of the wild polio virus (WPV) since January 14, 2011. The two WPV-endemic countries in the world are Pakistan with 17 cases and Afghanistan with 18 cases to date. Unfortunately, VDPV cases are prevalent in many parts of the world. A new vaccine, nOPV has helped address outbreaks of VDPV. But the job is not yet done. It is time that all Rotarians rededicate themselves to Rotary's goal of a polio-free world, which is very much in sight. From more than 3,50,000 cases globally of wild polio, we are down to just 35. The end of the dreaded wild polio virus is very much on the horizon.

The National Polio Surveillance



Project (NPSP) is conducting special surveillance of immunodeficient children, who are at enhanced risk of contracting polio in Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, etc. This is a unique surveillance activity in India. The detection of the variant polio in an immunodeficient child each in Kerala and Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) is not too alarming a development, since this is to be expected in such children whose bodies do not make antibodies even after administration of the vaccine. Such children, unfortunately, do not normally live beyond two years of age. The variant case detected in Meghalaya has presented with ambiguous VDPV.

The biggest dangers in India are:

- Possibility of importation of the WPV from Pakistan and Afghanistan
- Possibility of importation and circulation of VDPV2
- Sub-optimal immunisation levels in 270 revenue districts across the country. The national average of polio immunisation is around 90 per cent, which still leaves 10 per cent of the cohort of 26 million children who have never received a dose of the polio vaccine
- Missed new-born children (out of around 2.5 million) who have not received the birth dose
- Several pockets in various parts of the country where immunisation levels are well below the national average of 90 per cent. NPSP is currently making a list of such

pockets, which would be shared with Rotary once it is ready

- The national average of 90 per cent immunisation is likely to be diluted by migrants from Myanmar, Bangladesh, etc.

Rotarians in India must concentrate on keeping the wild polio virus out. We must work in collaboration with the government and our partners — WHO, UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and GAVI to keep our immunisation levels at 100 per cent, so that no child falls prey to the vaccine derived polio virus. To do this, we should go back to the principles that we have so efficiently employed in the past: Collaborate with the government at the state and district level to achieve 100 per cent immunization; meet regularly with the partners at the state and district level for concerted action; keep up our advocacy efforts with political and religious leaders and bureaucrats; and set up immunisation booths on NIDs and SNIDs.

PRID Michael McGovern, chair of the International PolioPlus Committee, has constituted the following Ad Hoc India National PolioPlus Operations Committee to help districts in India face the challenge posed by polio:

Chairman: PDG Deepak Kapur

Advisors: RI Director Anirudha Roychowdhury and PRID Ashok Mahajan

Members: RID 3132 PDG Dr Rajiv Pradhan, Lokesh Gupta, RID 3182 PDG Dr P Narayana, Ajay Saxena and RID 3291 PDG Shyamashree Sen.

Let us resolve to not fritter away the gains from the dramatic progress that we have made in trying to eradicate polio from the world. We must keep up the promise of a polio-free world that we have made to the children of the world.

The writer is chairman of the India National PolioPlus Committee.

Literacy programme for jail inmates

Rasheeda Bhagat

In an interesting initiative, Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) has launched a motivating programme for prison inmates in West Bengal through a comprehensive literacy project. “Thanks to the initiative and help from my friend Imran Zaki, an eminent social worker in Kolkata and Sanjay Singh, ADG, Correctional Homes,

West Bengal, RILM has been able to give the gift of literacy to about 800 prison inmates from eight correctional homes in West Bengal through our adult literacy programme,” says past RI President Shekhar Mehta.

There is always some degree of risk in implementing rehabilitative welfare measures for prison inmates but with

Prisoners at a literacy training session.



the help of Singh, who is always ready to embrace novel ideas which would benefit prisoners, RILM was able to implement its each-one-teach-one project in these eight correctional homes.

Overcoming the challenges and even risks inherent in mixing prisoners of different categories, through this literacy project, several online orientation sessions were conducted and educated prisoners were encouraged to conduct literacy sessions inside the jail premises. Based on the RILM model, over 50 educated jail inmates took upon the challenging but rewarding task of making the non-literate prisoners literate with the help of a user-friendly toolkit developed by RILM, Mehta said.

He visited one of the correctional homes and had a brief interaction with the non-literate jail inmates, during which he explained to them about the RILM Adult Literacy programme and how the initiative could help them gain confidence in their day-to-day lives. The online orientation sessions were conducted using laptops/computers. The prison authorities and educated inmates volunteered to teach the non-literate prisoners and they were taken through the programme details and taught how to implement this project so that their fellow inmates can gradually gain access to the magic world of words and numbers.

It required sustained efforts from the RILM team to ensure successful implementation of Phase-1 of this programme in 2023–24. Mehta was happy to be told that as the literacy programme “began to take roots within the prison walls, the transformation



Prisoners with their learning kits designed by RILM.

was palpable. Adult literacy programmes promote a positive life and it had a profound impact on the inmates. Many participants have reported a significant relief from mental worries, finding solace in the structure and focus that knowledge brings. The sessions have not only provided an educational outlet but have also sparked a desire among others to join, highlighting the programme's success in creating a positive learning environment," he added.

In a heartening response through an official letter, the ADG thanked the RILM for conducting this programme in eight correctional homes. The feedback said, "Through this programme the inmates are having a good time and getting rid of their mental worries. Most of them are happy to participate in the learning in their free time. They learn the



PRIP Shekhar Mehta with social worker Imran Zaki (third from left), ADG Sanjay Singh (sixth from L) and RILM and prison officials.



alphabets, numbers and how to make words, how to write their names, their father's names, how to sign letters and make small calculations. They have also learnt some common basic words.”

A big positive in the feedback from the prison authorities was

that many of the newly literate inmates were now trying to read newspapers and story books. “They were even engaging in some basic talk on ethics and moral values, discipline and punctuality and many have expressed their interest to participate more in this literacy

programme. Their enthusiasm and zeal to learn more is really heart-warming.” The course module is appropriate for the adult inmates and the programme is now proceeding in full steam.

The success of the programme has led to its expansion, with permission granted to extend the initiative to 18 more correctional homes across West Bengal.

“As it extends its reach, this programme is bound to reshape the future for countless individuals, as we all know that learning and education can open doors to a totally different world.”

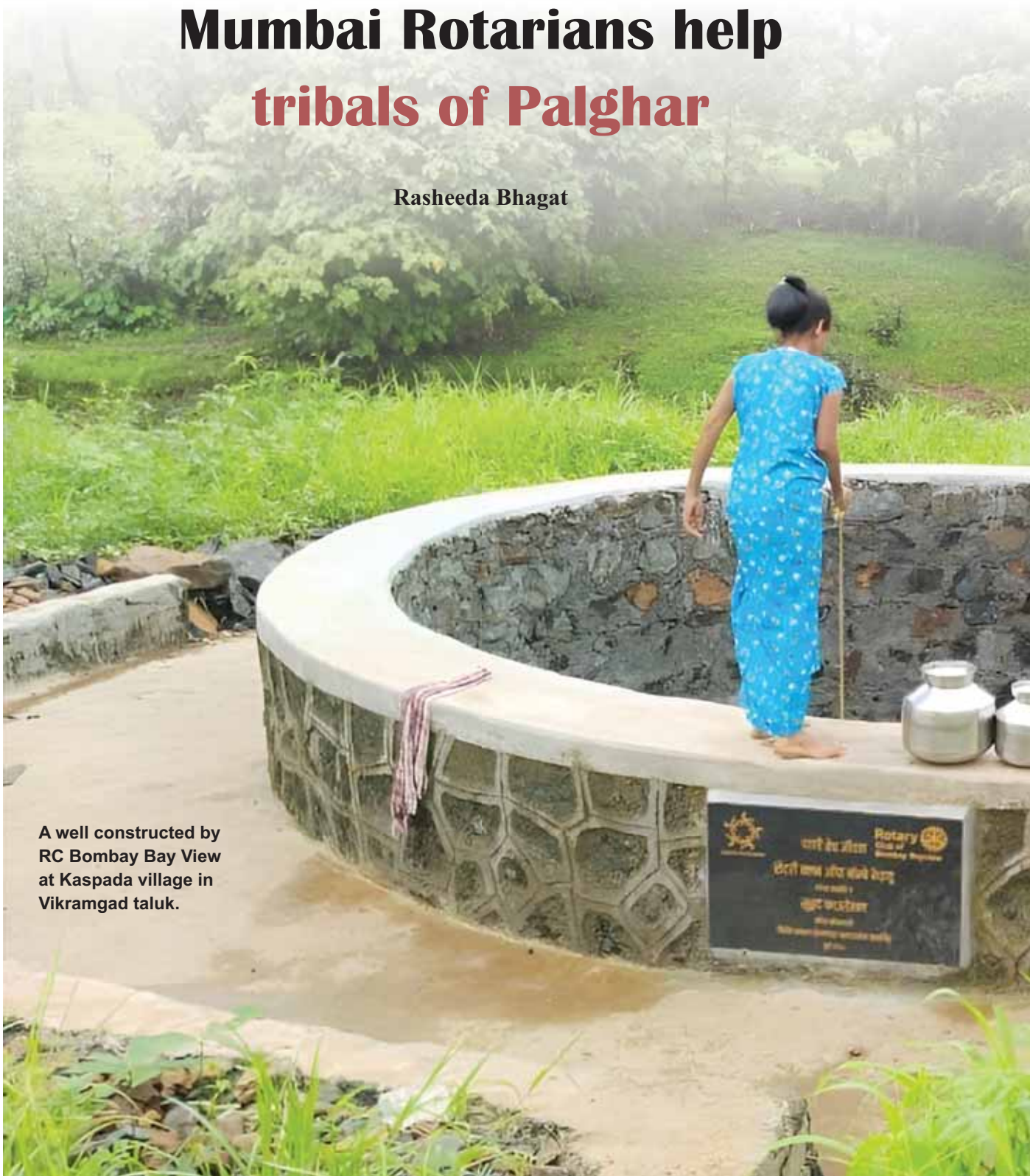
Till now women have not been covered in the first phase; hopefully in the second phase, the prison authorities will extend this programme to women inmates too, Mehta added. ■



The newly literate inmates were even engaging in some basic talk on ethics and moral values, discipline and punctuality and many have expressed their interest to participate more in this literacy programme.

Mumbai Rotarians help tribals of Palghar

Rasheeda Bhagat



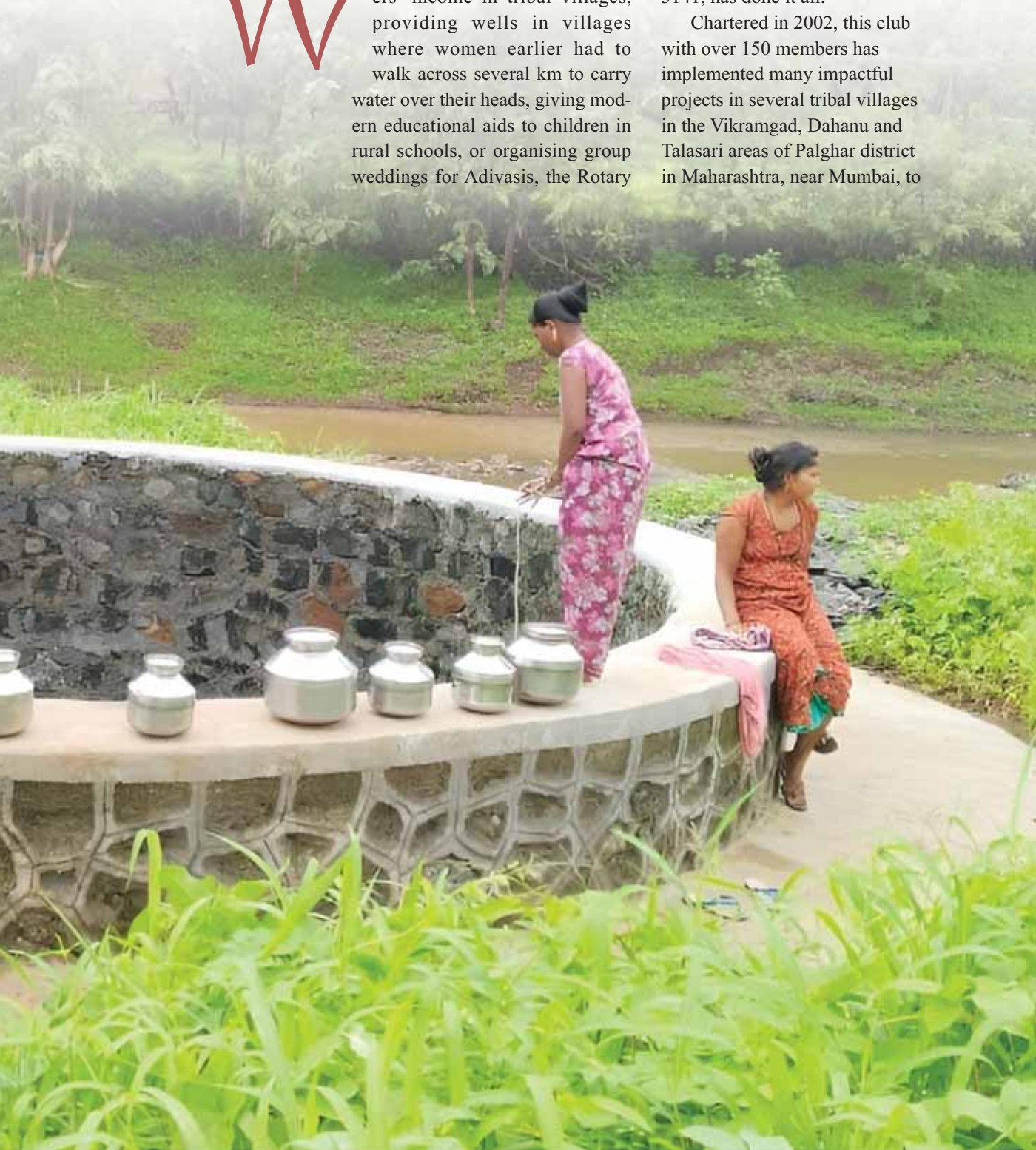
A well constructed by RC Bombay Bay View at Kaspada village in Vikramgad taluk.

W

hether it is enhancing farmers' income in tribal villages, providing wells in villages where women earlier had to walk across several km to carry water over their heads, giving modern educational aids to children in rural schools, or organising group weddings for Adivasis, the Rotary

Club of Bombay Bay View, RID 3141, has done it all.

Chartered in 2002, this club with over 150 members has implemented many impactful projects in several tribal villages in the Vikramgad, Dahanu and Talasari areas of Palghar district in Maharashtra, near Mumbai, to



bring about a meaningful difference in the lives of Adivasi children and adults.

Club president Rajni Barasia, who has been heading community service projects of the club for almost a decade, says one of the most satisfying projects they have done is providing wells in villages in this area where the water, in available water sources, normally dries up between January and May. Till the monsoon rains recharge these sources, women earlier had to trudge along, sometimes over hilly terrain, at least a couple of km to fetch water for their household needs.

She explains how last year the club constructed a well for the 85 families of Kaspada village, which is about three hours' drive from Mumbai. "These people were facing water shortage from February to June (till the monsoon rains arrive) and the women spent a lot of time in getting the required water for their homes," says Rajni.

Getting labour (*shramdaan*) from the locals, and armed with the required funds of ₹6.5 lakh, which is on the higher side but needed as this is a hilly terrain and the digging has to be deeper to find a water source, the club constructed a well. Thanks to this well, the villagers were able to tide over the drought months, and "with a reliable water source around the year, the families can have now kitchen gardens, enhancing their nutrition and food security. The project has significantly improved health, hygiene, and overall quality of life for the community, freeing up time for the women for other productive activities," she adds.

Thanks to the success of that project, one more well has been constructed this year in another village, and one more will come up in December, "as my donor has given us money for two wells. More water is required as

Playground equipment

₹9.75

lakh,

15

zilla

parishad schools

26

smart classrooms in

21

zilla

parishad schools.

₹14.25

lakh

there is paddy cultivation in that area." Till now, adds club secretary Rackhee Mehta, 10 wells have been built, and all of them are yielding water during the drought months too, which is a big boon for the women. "In return for the *shramdaan* from the villagers for constructing wells, we give them *kesar* mango saplings in exchange," she adds.

The cost for putting up a well ranges from ₹4 to 6.5 lakh, being on the higher side if the terrain is mountainous. Asked how they raise money, Rajni smiles and says, "All our club members are very passionate when it comes to any project related to water and we've never faced dearth of funding for water-related projects."

Augmenting farmer's income is always on their minds, says Rajni. Asked if they see agri distress and have heard cases of farmers' suicides in this drought-prone belt of Maharashtra which is infamous for farmers' suicides, she says, "No, we haven't heard of any farmers committing suicide in the areas we have been working. But there is certainly need and scope for improving the income of farmers. Right now, most farmers go in for one crop — mainly rice, and that too using traditional methods of farming. So now we are in a discussion with NGOs who are working in the agri sector about the possibility of holding farming classes or training sessions in these Adivasi villages. We want to give them information and knowledge about modern farming practices that can increase their income."

To help low-income and marginal farmers, the club has distributed about 2,000 *kesar* mango and other saplings to the farmers to improve their income from their farms, and also improve

nutritional levels by consuming this nutritious fruit.

Another donor, who has contributed over ₹3 lakh, has requested them to also give out 1,000 kesar mango saplings to small farmers in 24 blocks in five districts of Gujarat which has been done. “The aim is not only to promote environmental sustainability and support local ecosystems, while also providing economic opportunities through mango cultivation, but also to make a contribution to fighting

2,000
kesar mango saplings
in Palghar villages;

1,000
saplings,
five districts
in Gujarat



Children enjoying the swing installed by the club in a zilla parishad school.





the malnutrition among the tribal population in some villages.”

The club has also done projects related to education, handing over playground equipment worth ₹9.75 lakh in 15 zilla parishad schools. In July, through the project titled ‘Fit and fun’, these equipment were given to schools in the remote areas of Dahanu and Talasari taluks in Palghar, benefiting over 2,050 underprivileged tribal students. The aim of this project “is to encourage outdoor activities, support physical well-being, and foster holistic development in students,” Rajni adds.

In another project 26 smart classrooms were gifted to 21 zilla parishad schools and a community library with digital learning tools was set up. In this project, valued at ₹14.25 lakh, 26 classrooms were equipped with 50” smart TVs, e-learning software kits, etc to address the challenge of a disproportionate teacher-student ratio that afflicts most of rural India, and to also “foster a more interactive and engaging learning environment for the children,” says Rackhee.

“In addition, we have distributed, over the last eight years, around 300 bicycles to students who come from far-flung areas, so that they can spend less time on walking to the school and devote more time to learning,” she adds.

Giving out solar lights in areas where electric supply is erratic is another project; “in some villages, many homes have no lights, and this helps them illuminate three light bulbs.”

And a fan too, I hope, I ask? Rajni responds, “You’ll be surprised; most homes have no fans, so when somebody asks for a fan, we

Group marriage of 35 tribal couples organised by the club.



Club president Rajni Barasia (third from L) and secretary Rackhee Mehta (L) with students, all set to plant mango saplings in a village.

never say 'no'. We somehow find the funds!"

Saving a fun project for the last, the club has also organised a group marriage for some 35 tribal couples. As a gift, the newlyweds are given several household items. "For doing so, we reach out also to members outside our club. When I told my sister-in-law, a member of RC Mumbai Royales, that we needed to collect some money to give household items to these newlywed couples, she put it out on their WhatsApp group. There was instant response; people were actually fighting to give money; somebody wanted to give utensils, another wanted to give the grocery kits, and so on," laughs Rajni.

She relates an incident when a Mumbai Royales member went out shopping to buy the gifts for the newlywed couples. Apparently, the husband also accompanied her; "we had given her a list of items we needed, but she insisted on buying much more, saying now that my husband is here, he will pay for everything, so I am going to buy much more! It is so heartening for us to hear such stories, as there are so many good people out there to help a good cause!"

Rackhee says that one woman gave 25 sets of imitation jewellery which all the brides wore, and they were all looking so pretty.

The president adds that the Inner Wheel Club is also helping them; "our motto is that *kahi se bhi paisa aaye, kaam toh karna hi hei* (Let the money come from anywhere; we have to do our service projects)."

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Rotary Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul

The 2025 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference led by RI President Stephanie Urchick in Istanbul, Turkey, during **February 20–22, 2025**, will be an opportunity for the Rotary community and partners to build on Rotary's contribution to promoting peace by exploring: Peace in a polarised world; Technology, media and peacebuilding; Environmental issues in peacebuilding; and Making peace last.

The conference will also recognise the launch of the new Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center in partnership with the Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul.

The three-day conference includes keynote speakers, panel discussions and breakout sessions that will highlight the many ways Rotarians and community leaders can advocate for peace; share stories, insights and ideas about building peace locally and globally; and foster meaningful conversations on promoting peace within our communities and beyond.

Visit www.rotary.org/istanbul25 to register for the Peace Conference and book your accommodation. Email: Istanbul25@rotary.org

Conference venue: **Hilton Istanbul Bomonti Hotel & Conference Center**



Rice, roti and Rotary

Kiran Zehra

For Hari Krishna Tripathi, a former executive engineer from the Electricity Department, Lakhimpur, Uttar Pradesh, and his wife Madhulika, a dedicated social worker, mornings are far from typical. At the break of dawn, the Rotarian couple begin preparing for another day of running the *Rotary Annapurna Rasoi* (kitchen), a lifeline for hundreds of daily wage workers in Lakhimpur.

The idea for the *Rasoi* was sparked by a chance conversation he had with a rickshaw puller who, suffering from severe stomach pain, confessed that he often skipped meals because he simply could not afford them. The Tripathis were touched by the plight of the man and realised the pressing need to provide affordable, nutritious food to daily wage earners in the area. They pitched the idea to their club and in 2021, when the Covid pandemic hit the second time, RC Lakhimpur Kheri, RID 3120, spearheaded by the Tripathi couple, stepped up with “a simple yet transformative idea of a community kitchen that would provide nutritious meals for just ₹10,” says Tripathi.

“For those making as little as ₹500 a day, spending ₹80 or more for

a meal at a *dhaba* was unaffordable. The ₹10-meal is more than just food, it provides relief and a sense of security,” he adds.

The *Rotary Annapurna Rasoi* started modestly with small donations from Rotary members and individual contributors. Understanding that large donations might be difficult for many, Hari Krishna and Madhulika encouraged people to give what they

could. Today, the monthly operation cost of the *Rasoi* is approximately ₹1 lakh, including salaries of two women who cook the meals. Every day, they prepare 30–35kg of rice and 10kg of dal, feeding around 300 daily visitors who rely on this essential service.

“I make around ₹500 a day,” says Mukesh (55), a regular at the *Rasoi*. “If I spend ₹100 on food, I take home



Rickshaw pullers eating the ₹10 meal.



People waiting in line to buy a meal.



Madhulika Tripathi (R) at a stall exhibiting her students' handmade crafts.

less money for my family. With a ₹10 meal, I can save more and do more for them. This meal helps stretch my earnings.”

“The meals are simple but wholesome,” says Madhulika. Rotis and sabzi, rice with dal, *rajma*, or *kadhi* form the daily staple. “On special occasions, like Diwali and Navratri, the *Rasoi* goes a step further, offering a variety of dishes, fruits and a sweet to mark the festive spirit,” she adds. Madhulika ensures that those who come late, after the

Rasoi is closed, don't leave hungry. She prepares additional food in her own kitchen to feed anyone who might still be hungry.

Vocational training initiative

The Sankalp Hobby Classes, run by the Tripathi couple, empower young women with essential skills for financial independence. With 25 sewing machines funded through a global grant support with RID 5610, USA, the centre provides hands-on training in sewing, embroidery,

mehndi, craft and beauty care.

“Thanks to the sewing classes, I now earn close to ₹4,000 a month, which helps me support my family and my daughter's education,” says Jothi Poonam, a beneficiary. Recently, the centre held an art exhibition featuring students' work, with proceeds going toward its development.

Madhulika credits her husband's “quiet and steady presence” in managing the accounts and logistics of both the *Rasoi* and the vocational centre. “When there are delays in payments or urgent material is needed, he steps in, often dipping into his own pocket. We couldn't have come this far without him,” she says.

Recently, PRIP Shekhar Mehta visited both the *Rotary Rasoi* and the Sankalp Hobby Classes in Lakhimpur. “He was impressed by what he saw and appreciated our dedication. He also served meals,” smiles Madhulika. For the Tripathis “this is simply the essence of being Rotarians. We are doing what every Rotarian does. It is absolutely fulfilling to experience the joy of service,” she says. ■



PRIP Shekhar Mehta serves a meal at the Rotary Rasoi. IPDG Sunil Bansal (second from R) and Madhulika are also seen.

This Rotarian is on a **greening spree**

Rasheeda Bhagat

Give a gift that keeps giving.... This is the motto of the charitable trust that Janet Yegneswaran, a past president (2017–18) of the Rotary Club of Bangalore Koramangala (RCBG), RID 3191, set up in memory and name of her late husband Rajanet Yegneswaran, a Rotarian of the same club, some 20 years ago.

The gift mentioned here is a tree, and her efforts over two decades have helped in the planting of over 97,000 trees in

Bengaluru, rest of Karnataka and even Tamil Nadu. Apart from greening our planet and saving the ecosystem for future generations, these trees, planted through different projects such as agroforestry, giving succour to the victims of natural disasters, creating a 'food forest' on barren land etc, have given hope to thousands of people.

This work through her project called *Reforest India* has also helped her forge

**The Trees for Free team
with its founder Janet
Yegneswaran (R).**



a partnership with a corporate like Bosch India, which has put her in charge of a community development centre supported by it in the Anekal region of Karnataka, which operates in some 30 villages. This centre works in areas such as computer education for poor children, activities that promote empowerment of women, greening the earth, and so on.

Deeply engrossed in community work, and constantly on the move to gauge the needs of the local community, her recent discussion with the representative of the Bosch India Foundation, led to a healthcare project by her club. "I was telling them about the lack of healthcare facilities in Gowrenahalli, a village about 30km from Bengaluru. And they expressed interest in doing a mega medical camp in the village in partnership with our club." As the community services director of her club for seven years, before she became club president in 2017–18, this Rotarian has a lot of experience in conducting rural health camps in villages.

In this health camp, attended by 132 villagers, a good number of dental, eye and other medical problems were detected by the team of doctors who did the screening. Dental problems such as filling of cavities, extraction of problematic teeth and cleaning of teeth were attended to. Screening was also done for defective vision and other eye ailments and 40 people were prescribed spectacles "which will be given free by the club. Five cataract patients were identified and our club members will also support their operation, under our club's avoidable blindness project," she says.

An estimated ₹50,000 was spent at this camp where most of the work by the professionals was of a voluntary nature; the cost was shared by the club and the Foundation.

But other incidental fallouts from this project are more important. One was that while organising this camp, volunteers from the Bosch Foundation went "from house-to-house inviting residents to the camp, assisting the physician with blood pressure measurements, distributing medicines, documenting patient details, etc. They were really enthused by this kind of community service work; this was a first-of-its-kind work for them, and I am sure that this will encourage at least some of them to become future Rotarians, because they have now got a taste of the kind of work Rotary does," says Janet.

She herself, while talking to the local panchayat leaders, found that a village primary school here, with 100 children, requires a lot of work. "The building, including the toilets, requires renovation and painting. That itself will cost some ₹4 lakh. The students do not have desks and benches. Panchayat members told me that many schools in this area require renovation. The toilets in two schools with 500 students in both the Kannada and Urdu medium are in very bad shape and require rebuilding."

Janet plans to visit 30 schools in the region and collect details of the work and funds required. "Our medical camp has highlighted the urgent need for repairing the dilapidated and dingy-looking school buildings in the taluk. We hope that once you write this article in *Rotary News*, it will inspire other Rotary

Janet Yegneswaran, past president, RC Bangalore Koramangala, hugging a tree she planted 15 years ago.





“

Janet's efforts over two decades have helped in the planting of over 97,000 trees in Bengaluru, rest of Karnataka and even Tamil Nadu.



A sapling being planted in the 'food forest' in a Kadenahalli village, Kolar district.

clubs in our region, corporates and other stakeholders to contribute towards the renovation of these critical educational facilities, making a meaningful impact on the lives of the children and the community as a whole. We are witnessing first-hand the vast potential for Rotary's service in village areas, as there is considerable scope for impactful projects in rural India," she adds.

Greening initiatives

Meanwhile, her passion for greening the earth continues. Her charitable trust's work done so far has been in different categories. The first is agro-forestry where up to 10 fruit trees are planted on the "periphery of the land belonging to marginal farmers so that they can continue cultivation and also get extra income from fruit trees... local fruit and coconut trees."

In another scheme, trees are planted in areas affected by natural disasters. "We planted 2,000 coconut trees in 2019 in Thanjavur for the farmers who had lost coconut trees during the Gaja cyclone, and 1,000 fruit and forest trees a little earlier on the banks of Cauvery river when it experienced continuous landslides," says this passionate environmentalist.

An interesting project done by her Trust is starting a Food Forest on a six-acre barren land "neglected by farmers, which has already started yielding results. While planting trees in villages, we noticed a lot of land lying barren because the farmers were unable to afford the infrastructure required for sustainable farming and the government schemes did not reach them due to lack of education and the intervention of middlemen."

So this 'food forest' was planted on a neglected farmer's land in Kadenahalli village in the Kolar district of Karnataka. "We started from scratch, reinforced the fencing, rejuvenated the borewell, built a water storage body, tilled and levelled the land, refurbished the watchman's shed, and irrigated the land with drip and sprinklers."

Various types of fruit trees and flowering bushes were planted and bee boxes put up. The area between the fruit trees is being cultivated with vegetables, greens, etc. This has been created as a model integrated farm to build awareness and give training to farmers and others who are interested. Inhouse training has also been given to interns of XIME College in Bengaluru (https://youtu.be/JhKv8ScSg_Y). Corporate volunteers



**A dental procedure
at a health camp in
Gowrenahalli village.**



also come and give *shramdaan* for the Foundation's greening initiatives.

A champion whose 20-year efforts have seen over 97,000 trees springing to life, including at the Army Institute of Fashion Design, schools, colleges and residential complexes, Janet says she strictly follows a couple of norms for planting trees. "We only go to places where people are there to look after the trees we have planted, and more important, a water source is available to sustain their growth. And we keep track of every tree planted." The trees planted by her team are flourishing on Indian Army, Air Force and Railway land, in schools, colleges, government buildings, and gated communities where resident welfare associations undertake the responsibility of looking after the trees.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



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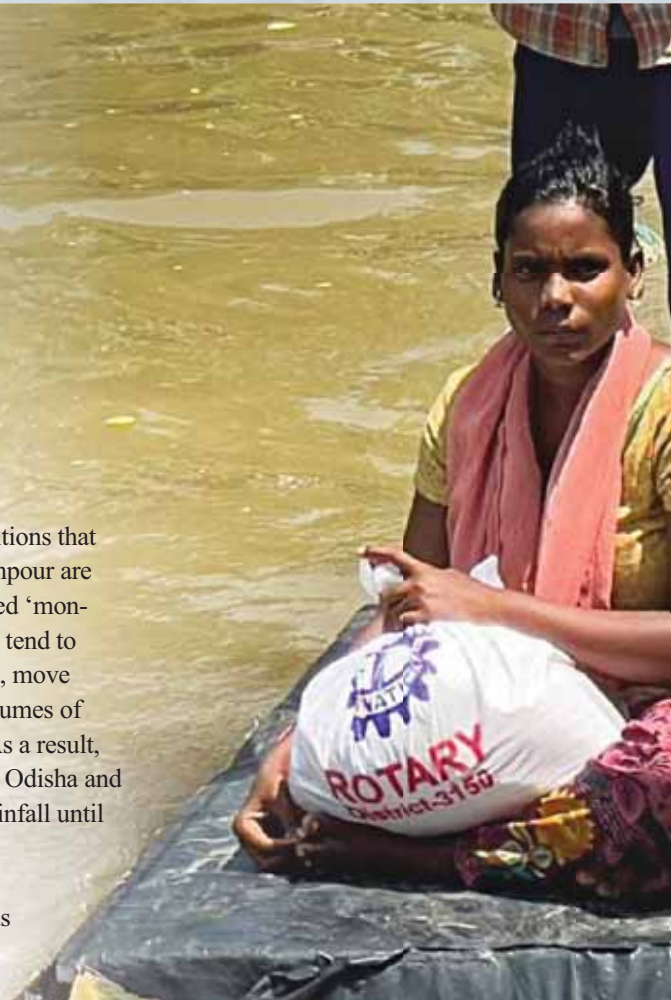
Rotary responds to AP-Telangana flood crisis

Jaishree

The recent depression over the Bay of Bengal caused widespread flooding across Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Telangana. The rainfall which began on August 30 intensified through the first week of September, with AP bearing the brunt. Over 27 per cent of the state's annual rainfall occurred in just 48 hours; an IMD report explains that this extreme weather event was driven by a land-based cyclone, which drew moisture from both the Arabian Sea and the land heat of eastern India, the combination of which led to the two states witnessing an astonishing 500mm of rain in just 24 hours on August 31.

The atmospheric conditions that created this torrential downpour are part of a phenomenon called 'monsoon lows'. These systems tend to sustain without weakening, move slowly and dump huge volumes of rainfall in a short period. As a result, these two states, as well as Odisha and Gujarat, all faced heavy rainfall until September 12.

The rapid rise in river water levels and the surplus discharge from dams intensified the crisis. Floodwaters inundated villages, cutting off access to essential services and necessitating mass evacuations. Among the hardest hit areas were Andhra's Guntur and



Above: A woman crossing the flood waters in a makeshift raft after collecting a Rotary relief kit.



Bapatla district collector J Venkata Murali inspecting the provisions ready for distribution to the flood victims. DGE SV Raam Prasad (R) and RC Piduguralla Lime City president Ashok Babu (second from L) are also seen.

Telangana's Khammam district, where the Wyrta river and Madhira lake overflowed, causing further devastation, said Sharath Choudary, district governor of RI district 3150 comprising Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Crops worth ₹5,000 crore were damaged, severely impacting small farmers. Emergency services, including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), were mobilised to rescue stranded residents and house them in relief camps.

DG Choudary spearheaded *Project Aapadbandhu* (protector against danger) — a large-scale disaster relief



initiative. With contributions from 40 Rotary clubs, the project raised funds, procured supplies, and packed 5,000 emergency kits for distribution in flood-affected areas. “Rotarians navigated flooded villages by boat or waded through waist-deep water to deliver aid.” These kits contained essential groceries for a week. Rotary Clubs of Piduguralla Lime City and Tenali in AP, and RC Khammam in Telangana, were the coordinating agencies for the distribution of the relief kits.

To prevent duplication and looting of the kits, coupons were first distributed among the people and relief kits were given in exchange for the coupons. This ensured that every family received the much-needed relief package. The local residential associations and NGOs pitched in with around 4,000 blankets and bedsheets.

The Rotary emergency kits were particularly crucial for the Adivasi families on the banks of the Krishna River, said Anita Reddy, a member of RC Smart Hyderabad. These families were marooned for 17 days since the

The collector personally inspected the packets for expiry dates in one of our distribution sites. When he saw our work and zeal, he was totally impressed and promised to help us.

Sharath Choudary
District Governor, RID 3150

start of the rain and “we reached out to them with the kits in boats.”

A member of RC Banjara Hills who is in the edible oil trade contributed this commodity to the relief kit. Some members in the textile business gave clothes and bedsheets. “What was gratifying was that we pooled in enough funds the first day, procured and packed the material in the next two days, distributed coupons on the fourth day and by the fifth day we completed distribution of kits in major areas. Almost all Rotarians

Below: Rotarians of RID 3020 on a tractor to deliver relief kits in Vijayawada.



participated in the relief activities,” said Choudary who is participating in a disaster relief project for the seventh time. The district clubs have so far contributed around ₹50 lakh and “the money is still coming in,” he said.

Project Aapadbhandu was appreciated by the district collector and the state government officials. “The collector personally visited one of our distribution sites and inspected the packets for expiry dates. When he saw our work and zeal, he was totally impressed and promised to help us.”

By September 14, the floodwater had not yet receded in many areas, particularly the river and canal banks, and people remained in relief camps. “We have a significant amount of money left and our relief plans for



PDG Raja Sekhar Reddy (third from R) and Rotarians of RID 3150 on a boat after distributing Rotary emergency kits to flood victims.

the second phase include long-term rehabilitation services, such as helping people re-establish businesses, providing vocational skills training, and organising medical camps in the flood-affected areas.”

Krishna district in coastal Andhra Pradesh also experienced severe flooding. Vijayawada recorded over 29cm rainfall in a single day, marking “one of the worst calamities in the history of the Krishna River,” says a media report.

In response, the eight Rotary clubs of Krishna district which fall under RID 3020, came together to distribute food in the various relief camps that housed around three lakh displaced people. “Meanwhile, the district collector requested us to provide milk as the Vijaya Dairy, a local milk plant in Vijayawada, was submerged, and there was acute shortage of milk,” said RID 3020 DG Venkateswara Rao. The Rotarians, through their contacts, immediately sourced 5,000 milk packets from Jersey Dairy, 30km from Vijayawada.

“Almost all Rotary clubs contributed funds and we distributed kits containing clothes, blankets, sanitary pads, mosquito nets etc, all worth ₹40 lakh, to the people, even in remote areas,” he said. The district has recently received Disaster Response Grant of \$25,000 from TRF. “We will be distributing flood relief kits each worth ₹2,000 to 1,800 families,” he added. RC Amaravati donated ₹3 lakh, and one of its members gave ₹1 crore, to the CM’s Relief Fund.

“As the waters recede and communities begin to rebuild, we believe that our long-term rehabilitation efforts will play a vital role in helping families recover from this devastating event,” said Rao. ■

RID 3020 has received Disaster Response Grant of \$25,000 from TRF and will use the funds to provide flood relief kits to 1,800 families.

Dr M Venkateswara Rao
District Governor, RID 3020



RID 3150 DG Sharath Choudary and DGE Raam Prasad at a distribution site.

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Usha and I met Heather and Glen Kinross in March-April 1978 at the Rotary International Assembly in Boca Raton, Florida, US, as we both were Group Discussion Leaders. Next year, we again met in the same role at the same place. I became RI director for 1981–83 and Glen became RI director for 1982–84. For RI President-elect Bill Skelton, Glen became the vice-president and chairman of the executive committee of the Board of Directors. Through the Rotary platform, we became close friends, visiting RI conventions, a remarkable one being the Rome convention, where Clem Renouf was the RI President. We met at RI Assemblies as well.

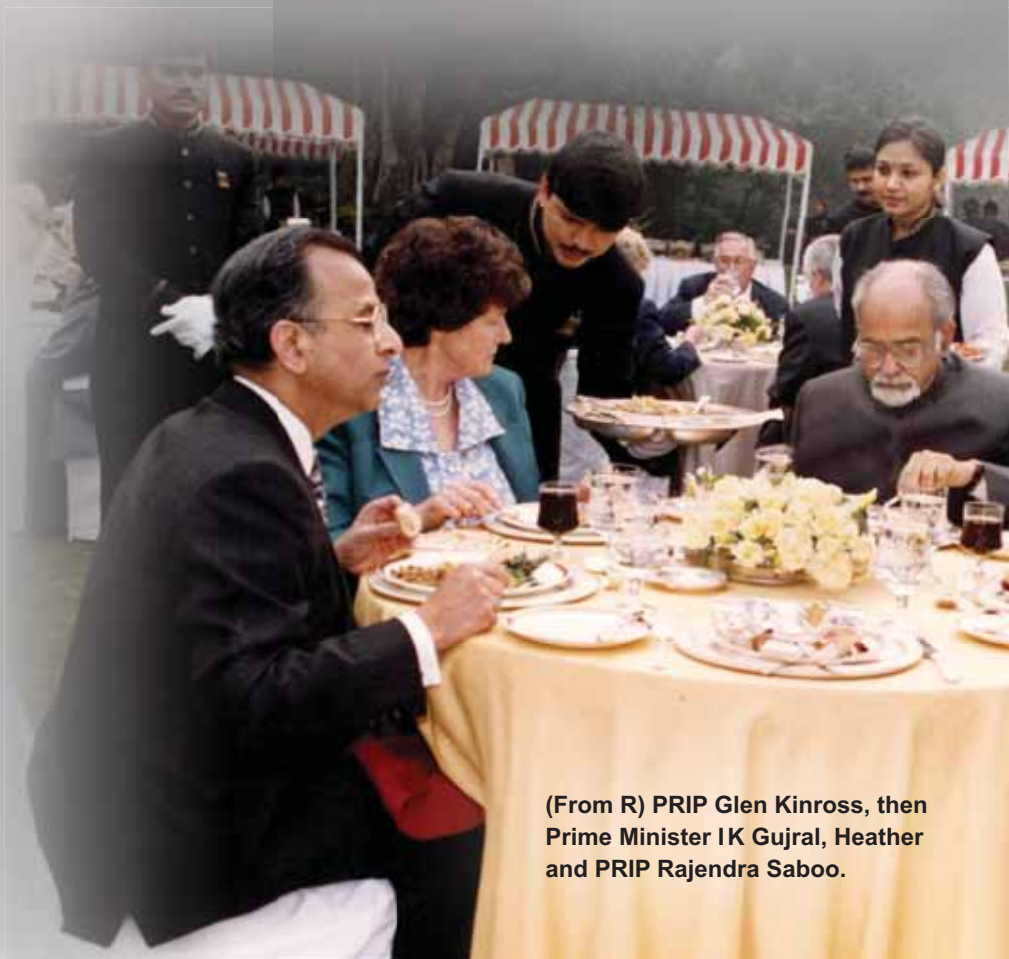
In 1997, when Glen was the RI President-elect, we met at the Glasgow Convention in Scotland where the Rotary Peace Center programme was presented. Then I was the Chairman of The Rotary Foundation and Luis Giay was RI President. One of the universities selected for the centre was University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. On every visit there, I always met Glen and his family.

On January 10, 1998, Glen came to Chandigarh accompanied by his wife Heather. He sadly lost her in October 1998, following heart surgery. Also present were PRIP Clem Renouf and his wife Firth and PRID TD Griley who served as RI director when I was RI president; they had come specially for this occasion. They came by train, and we had booked two coaches for them. They stayed at the Punjab Raj Bhavan and came to our home for lunch which was served in our lawn. District governor was Ramesh Bhargava and our (RC Chandigarh) club president was Sunil Khera.

Having known IK Gujral, former Ambassador of India to

Glen Kinross a thorough gentleman

Rajendra Saboo



(From R) PRIP Glen Kinross, then Prime Minister IK Gujral, Heather and PRIP Rajendra Saboo.

the Soviet Union and the Union Minister of External Affairs, I had asked him to host the Council on Legislation in Delhi in 1998. On January 12, we again met in New Delhi at the luncheon hosted by the then Prime Minister Gujral, for President Glen. Rotary's CoL in Delhi was the first ever held in India. PRIP Ray Klinginsmith was the chairman of CoL and Glen's aide was John C Carrick.

In December 2010, Glen again came to Chandigarh as the RI President's representative and addressed the district conference, which was attended by then Union Minister of HR and Telecom Kapil Sibal, Haryana Governor Jagannath



(From L) Glen Kinross, Heather, Usha and Rajendra Saboo.

Pahadia and editor-in-chief of *The Tribune* Raj Chengappa. The then DG Madhukar Malhotra had got in touch with the RI President's office formally requesting to appoint Glen as RI. President Ray Klinginsmith's representative to the discon.

Whenever Usha and I visited Australia, we always visited his home, with our very close friend for five decades Clem Renouf. At their home, we had a vegetarian breakfast. For lunch and dinner, we all used to go to an Indian restaurant for food. We also attended the club meeting of RC Hamilton, Brisbane, and met some Indian Rotary members of his club. We also talked about cricket matches between India and Australia.

In 1990, I visited the Peace Park in Canberra, Australia, where the Peace Monument was established by Rotary. When Glen came to Chandigarh, he saw the Peace Monument at Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh.

In March 1992, we travelled to Australia to visit the home of RI Treasurer-Director Kevin Hardes. We drove to Brisbane, the home of my mentor Sir Clem Renouf and

my friend Glen Kinross. They had organised a meeting for our visit. We met at the Rotary Indianapolis Convention in 1998, the Rotary Singapore Convention in 1999, the RI Institute, Brisbane, in 2003 and at the Rotary Convention Brisbane.

In March 2008, I visited Australia to attend a conference organised by Rotary Club of Forster, New South Wales. My aide for the conference was PDG John Boag from my year as RI President in 1991-92 who later became RI Director during 2012-14. There we stayed at Glen's home in Brisbane and went together to attend the conference. We also visited Clem's home, I met his wife Firth, who had a collection of theme pins of all RI Presidents. She said, "Raja, I don't have yours." I immediately gave one to her.

I will always remember Glen Kinross as a thorough gentleman. Usha and I will miss him. His name remains synonymous with superior quality, innovation and achievement.

The writer is a past President of Rotary International



A heart care bus to help health camps in villages of RID 3212

Rasheeda Bhagat

In order to provide free and quality heart care to the villagers in all the seven revenue districts that come under RI District 3212, the district has acquired a state-of-the-art healthcare bus costing over ₹1 crore.

RID 3212 PDG V R Muthu said that during his term as district governor (2022–23), this project was conceived under a global grant amounting to \$121,000 (over ₹1 crore) with an American club, RC Las Vegas Won (RID 5300), being the international partner.

“According to WHO statistics, 75 per cent of deaths from heart attacks and strokes occur in developing countries. We all know that healthcare facilities, leave alone medical care in specialties such as cardiology, neurology, etc, are lacking in rural areas. Hence we decided to get a modern, fully equipped heart care bus — which we have named Karmaveerar Kamarajar Heart Care Bus — that can visit different villages and conduct screening camps for the villagers to test them for possible ailments,” he said.

This airconditioned bus named after a former chief minister of Tamil Nadu is equipped with an ECG machine, ultrasound diagnostic system and a defibrillator, and comes with power back-up and an audio visual system enabling the playing of video snippets connected to heart care. The bus is manned by a team comprising qualified doctors, nurses, Echo and ECG technicians, and volunteers from RID 3212, and a couple of other persons to ensure smooth conduct of the camp being executed by a Rotary club.



DG Meerankhan Saleem and PDG V R Muthu at the inauguration of the heart care bus.

PDG Muthu said this bus will be stationed at the Kauvery Hospital in Tirunelveli, and since its launch two months ago, it has completed 10 health camps held in different villages. The clubs in RID 3212, which plan to hold screening camps in villages, have to book this bus 20 days prior to the camp, after preparing the venue, getting the necessary permissions and organising the logistics. Asked if the clubs have to pay anything to press the bus into service, Muthu said: "All they will have to pay is the cost of fuel to take it from the Kauvery Hospital to the camp site!"

During the camps, the beneficiaries are screened for hypertension, diabetes, heart-related ailments and given a general medical check-up too. During the 10 heart camps held with the aid of this heart care bus, 1,346 individuals have been screened, 623 people have availed the ECG facility and 387 people undergone Echo cardiogram tests; "70 villagers have been diagnosed with some medical problems requiring further treatment at a hospital and advised



A baby being screened for heart disorder inside the bus.

appropriately. We are pleased to note that our bus has been booked by Rotary clubs in our district till March 2025. We think it's not only our responsibility, but also a privilege to be able to serve the healthcare needs of fellow Indians who do not have adequate access to quality medical facilities," he added.

If anybody requires medical procedures related to serious heart

conditions, Rotary will help the person gain access to government funds that have been earmarked for the healthcare requirements of the needy, he said.

More details about the planning of medical camps using this special bus can be got by the district Rotarians from T Sudalaivel, a member of RC Virudhunagar Idhayam. Mobile no: 97509 55445. ■

Cancer care diet for children



On July 1 this year, RC Thane Ghodbunder Road, RID 3142, launched *Project Annapurna* at the St Jude Childcare Centre in Parel, Mumbai, to provide nutritional support to 100 children undergoing cancer treatment at the Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. "We aim to provide nourishing diet packs to 100 families with children battling cancer every week for the entire year," said project coordinator Shankar Bhagat. Each carefully curated pack costs ₹500 and the total project cost is estimated at ₹26 lakh. The initiative will benefit less privileged children undergoing treatment at the Tata Memorial Hospital and staying at all the 20 St Jude centres across Mumbai. ■

Rotary installs AEDs to save lives

Dr Akshay Mehta

A 70-year-old architect was on a morning walk along Bandra's Carter Road; he suddenly fumbled and collapsed on the pavement. Onlookers rush to him and respond in the usual way, some suggesting to sprinkle water,

some suggesting taking him to the hospital, etc.

Fortunately, among the passersby was a gentleman, Sameer Firasta, well trained in such situations. He tapped both the shoulders of the victim and watched his upper abdomen for signs of breathing. "No response, no breathing!"

Dr Akshay Mehta (third from L), IPP of RC Bombay Airport, with IPDG Arun Bhargava (third from R) in front of the art structure symbolising saving a life through CPR.



DISET 37141
Rotary
YOUR HANDS CAN SAVE
Cardiac Arrest Awareness and CPR Training
ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY AIRPORT
Presented by DR AKSHAY MEHTA
Sponsored by
CSR GRANT FROM SCHILLER IN
SRIHARI PURI FAMILY
Created by MIPALJI PI THAKKAR
Initiated by RYU DO ARUN BHARGAVA
1st June 2024

he said and quickly concluded that the victim had a cardiac arrest. Then he took the crucial three steps so important for survival of a cardiac arrest victim.

First, he called for help, specifically for someone to run and get an AED machine from the nearby Otters club. Then he started pumping the chest the way he was taught — 2" deep, 100 times a minute. This ensured that the brain got blood and did not die. The third step was to use the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) machine to give an electric shock to the victim.

He did it, and lo and behold, this became the first instance in Mumbai of a non-medical, lay person using an AED machine, besides timely and proper CPR, to successfully revive a victim.

When a cardiac arrest occurs, the treatment has to be on the spot as every second counts. If the person's heart has stopped beating, and if the brain does not get blood, in few minutes it will die.

Shifting the victim to the hospital (usually considerable minutes away) without sending the blood to the brain usually results in the victim being declared "dead on arrival" by the hospital.

Hence the duty of a bystander is to start pumping the chest on the spot to give blood to the brain and prevent it from damage or death. The second important step is to revive the heart by giving an electric shock with the help of an AED. Mouth-to-mouth breathing is not required to be done by a bystander as per latest guidelines. AEDs are meant to be used by the public who can be easily trained to use them when required.

We, members of the Rotary Club of Bombay Airport (RCBA), organised a unique musical programme in which a medical consultants

group called “Tuning Folks” enthralled the audience with a musical performance. RCBA felicitated Sameer Firasta, the saviour mentioned above, his trainer Sumaiya from the Revive Heart Foundation and also the lucky survivor. The audience was so moved by the true story of this great save by Firasta and the possibility of more such success stories in the future that there was a spontaneous promise of funding 64 AEDs by people in the audience! So RCBA decided to install these machines at various public places like railway stations, besides training people to recognise and respond to cardiac arrest.

AEDs at railway stations

Twenty of these AEDs were installed in Mumbai suburban railway stations, some of which see a footfall of more than 10 lakh people a day. The staff and RPF personnel were trained to administer CPR and use the device. Thanks to this project, in August, a 41-year-old commuter who fell unconscious at the Marine Lines Railway Station was saved by the station superintendent who performed CPR and used the newly-installed AED. “I was able to save a life, thanks to the training I had received on how to operate the AED which was conducted by RC Bombay Airport,” he was quoted saying by a newspaper.

Meanwhile heart health related education, along with CPR training, continued in schools and parks, the latter being a programme called “Walk with the Doc” in which 14 Rotary clubs participated across seven parks with the involvement of five cardiologists of the city. RCBA also trained five of its members as certified ‘Heart Marshals’ who can save a life anywhere, anytime.

A beautiful art structure, symbolising the saving of a life through CPR, was installed at the Bandra Bandstand Promenade. It also has signboards depicting the steps of resuscitation and use of AED machines for public education.

The writer is an interventional cardiologist and IPP of RC Bombay Airport, RI District 3141

Rotary Foundation (India) receives Best CSR Partner Award

Team Rotary News



From L: Environmentalist Peepal Baba, natural farming expert Subhash Palekar, TRF head Sanjay Parmar and senior programme associate (CSR) Bhawna Verma from RI South Asia Office, Nest Man of India Rajesh Khatri and CSR storytelling veteran Pavan Kaushik.

The Rotary Foundation (India) was honoured with the ‘Best CSR Implementing Partner (Global Organisation) Award’ at the 14th India CSR Awards held in New Delhi on August 22.

RFI chair PRID Kamal Sanghvi said, “This recognition is a proud moment for RF(I) and a reflection of the tireless efforts made by Rotary clubs and districts across the country. Their dedication to executing impactful CSR projects has brought us to this milestone. I encourage all Rotarians to continue this meaningful work, as the potential for getting CSR funds in India is immense. Together, we can scale

new heights and further strengthen Rotary’s ability to make lasting change.”

Since 2016, RFI has been playing a pivotal role in fostering strong corporate relationships. Over the last three years alone, the organisation has seen an impressive 81 per cent growth in the number of projects done in collaboration with over 300 corporates across India, and supporting 390 plus initiatives worth \$21 million by March, 2024.

The India CSR Awards, initiated in 2011 by the India CSR Network, recognises outstanding projects that stand out for their innovation, sustainability and potential for scale. ■



Garbage van operated by RC Pune Central.



RC Pune Central raises ₹1.2 crore in 45 minutes

Jaishree



Club's past presidents Uday Dharmadikari (R) and Ajay Chitnis at a wheelchair distribution event.

In just 45 minutes, Rotary Club of Pune Central, RID 3131, garnered an impressive commitment for ₹1.2 crore from its 118 members during its annual 'Spirit of Giving' event. This unique fundraising festival, now a staple of the 40-year-old club, draws contributions each year to support its various service projects.

"Unlike conventional fundraising methods, this programme allows our members to connect with a cause that resonates with them, encouraging both financial support and personal involvement," says Uday Dharmadikari, past president of the club.

Held every August, the event coincides with a regular club meeting where its president presents the proposed service projects for the Rotary year. Members then pledge contributions for the projects that inspire them the most. "Each member offers whatever he can, whether it is ₹10,000 or ₹20 lakh, and gets directly involved in the project's execution," he explains. Notably, "the programme's highest single contribution — ₹40–45 lakh — consistently comes from our past president Madhusudan Rathi who pioneered this initiative during his tenure in 1998–99."

The club circulates a notification to its members whenever a project is ready for execution, and the contributions follow. "It's more than just a fundraising exercise; it's about cultivating a spirit of collective giving, where every contribution, big or small, is a step towards making a tangible

difference in the lives of those in need,” says Dharmadikari.

The funds raised have enabled the club to undertake impactful projects such as cataract and congenital heart surgeries, installing e-learning systems in schools, building check dams and reforestation initiatives. “Our members Rathi, Nitin Desai and Shona Nag made the largest contributions for establishing the ₹7 crore-worth radiation centre at the Surya Sahyadri Hospital,” he adds. Over the years, the club has provided ambulances and school buses to villages in Mulshi taluk, spectacles for inmates in Yerwada Jail and wheelchairs for the physically-challenged.” This year’s projects focus on cancer care, water, environment initiatives, eyecare and congenital heart disease.

Since 2017, Gonvadi village in Mulshi taluk near Pune sports a clean look, thanks to a garbage van that visits the doorsteps of the 3,000 households and 14 restaurants and eateries, collects and segregates the waste and disposes it into a centralised garbage depot in the village.

The vehicle, sponsored by Rathi, is operated and maintained by the club. “We have adopted this village and have been providing essential services here for many years now,” says Dharmadikari.

The club recently hosted *Mr RCPC*, an event designed to strengthen camaraderie among members. The membership spans generations, the youngest being 38, and the oldest is Rathi at 86. The Rotary Anns were the judges for the programme. Shashi Talwar (84) won the title and the programme attracted three new members to the club. ■

Interact grows in RID 3090

Manik Raj Singla

Interact clubs in RID 3090 has grown from seven to 382 in three years from 2021 and here is how we did it. I started my Interact chairmanship of the district on July 1, 2021, and served for three years until June 2024. The invaluable support of 125 Rotary clubs gave a gigantic boost taking the count to 382 in the three years, making RID 3090 rank third in India and fourth in South Asia.

We convinced school authorities saying that while the school focuses on developing the intelligence quotient of students, Rotary will give a platform to sharpen their emotional, social and adversity quotient, preparing them as future leaders.

Every year, Interact clubs are required to complete at least two community service projects, one of which furthers international understanding and goodwill. Interactors develop a network of friendships with local and overseas clubs and learn leadership skills, personal integrity and respect for others. They understand the value of individual responsibility and hard work, and advancing international relationship. As one of the most significant programmes of Rotary, with over 14,000 Interact clubs in 109 countries (as of July 2024) Interact has become a worldwide phenomenon with over 3,40,000 youngsters involved therein.

We installed Interact clubs in government, semi-government, aided and private schools. Good Interactors become great Rotaractors, who then become generous Rotarians. Events such as RYLA, career counselling, competitions

such as Spell Bee, public speaking, essay writing, painting, and sports tournaments were organised for Interactors in schools.

Challenges

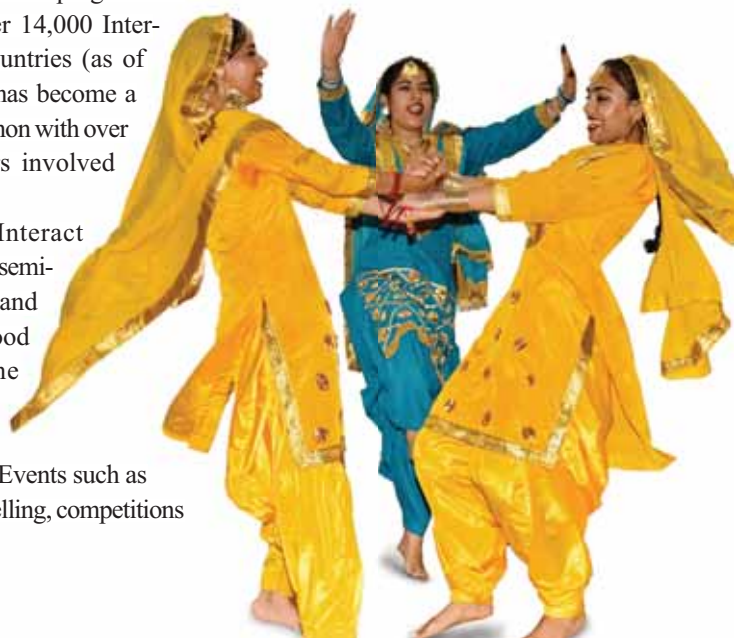
During these three years, I understood the causes which are major setbacks to the growth and development of Interact.

- Lack of knowledge among schools and institutions about Interact
- Focusing on increasing the number of clubs rather than making existing clubs vibrant
- No continuity of programmes as a new team takes over every year. The new leaders do not coordinate with the previous team
- New DGs focus on chartering new clubs and not on nurturing existing ones.

Way forward

Interactors should be given adequate opportunities to evolve and develop leadership skills. Rotarians must educate schools and institutions about the significance of Interact in shaping students.

*The writer is member of
RC Patiala Mid town, RID 3090*



Mobile cancer care screens 4,000 women

V Muthukumaran

Vimala (49), a farm hand, was unaware that she had cancer until she was examined at the mobile cancer screening unit, being run by RC Mettupalayam, RID 3203.

The mammography bus had come to her neighbouring village near Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, to screen women for breast and cervical cancer. “I was asymptomatic, hence did not feel the need to go through such a medical procedure. But following an awareness campaign by Rotarians, I went for the screening inside the diagnostic bus. I was shocked to know that I had an early-stage cancerous lesion on the cervix.” She then underwent a minor surgery to remove the lesion at a hospital in Coimbatore. Ditto is the case of Rani (58), her friend, who was detected with a tumorous lump in her breast at the Rotary camp.

Project HEAL — High awareness, Early detection, Affordable treatment and Low mortality — has so far conducted over 100 mobile cancer screening camps benefiting 4,000 women (through over 6,000 screenings). “Among those screened, 500 were referred for further tests, scans and evaluation at the Kovai Medical Centre and Hospital (KMCH), our partner in this mega initiative to screen rural women for cancer,” says Dr D Vijayagiri, child specialist-cum-laparoscopic surgeon who conceived of and started the cancer detection camps during his



PRIP Shekhar Mehta at the Project HEAL camp at Perundurai taluk, Erode (TN), along with (from L) PDG A Karthikeyan and Dr D Vijayagiri, past president, RC Mettupalayam and secretary, Project HEAL Trust.

tenure as club president (2019–20). During the tests at the KMCH, 40 women were found to have early stage cancer, “and all of them either underwent surgery or follow-up treatment at the hospital,” he says.

Major hurdles

Recalling the initial hurdles in the way of the mobile cancer care bus, Project HEAL Trust chief operating officer Suresh Ananthakrishnan says, “we formed this Trust



in December 2019 and placed an order for a digital mammography unit (₹1.15 crore) from Siemens, Germany, in February 2020. But Covid struck and the shipment of the machine was delayed. We got the unit in October 2020 and again its installation in a customised bus was also stalled due to the pandemic.” The first HEAL camp was held in April 2021, followed by two more cancer screenings in that month itself, “after which we had a temporary shutdown of the project for six months due to another peak Covid wave.”

However, the mobile cancer screenings gathered pace in 2023–24. “We had over 50 HEAL camps in this period covering women in the rural areas of Coimbatore,” says Ananthakrishnan. Now, the nine-year-old global grant project is extended till 2030, and on an average “we hold 5–8 camps that will do 600 screenings reaching out to 300 beneficiaries who were examined for both breast (mammogram) and cervical (Pap smear test) cancer.”

The mobile clinic is stationed at the KMCH and a six-member-team comprising two doctors and four technicians from the hospital will

conduct the examination of women during the camps, being held mostly in the rural areas of Coimbatore and Mettupalayam, covering both RIDs 3201 and 3203. “The high-tech vehicle will cover villages around the 100km radius from its base hospital and can be reached in just a two-hour drive. Before we identify a location for Project HEAL, we rope in the local Rotary club and active NGOs in that region to hold awareness camps at factories, mills, panchayats, community halls, schools and among village SHGs, to sensitise women on the need for cancer screening,” explains the COO.

But the main challenge is that, “only 50 per cent of those attending the awareness sessions agree to visit the cancer screening camps. We have to motivate rural women to come for the examination as they feel either awkward or embarrassed to get their private parts examined,” says Dr Vijayagiri. “Sometimes many women drop out due to last minute hesitation or social reservations.” In a HEAL camp, nearly 10 per cent of those screened are being asked to undergo

further tests at the KMCH “as the scan images may not be clear, or there may be signs of cancerous lesions.” If it is a mammogram follow-up, “they will have either ultrasound test or biopsy, and if it is to do with a Pap smear, the patient will go through colposcopy or the required biopsy.” Free surgery is done on patients if the follow-up tests point to early-stage cancer. “But for non-malignant tumours, cysts or infectious lesions, general treatment is also done at the hospital,” explains Ananthakrishnan.

Spadework

During the pre-PETS in Dec 2018, when the then DGE A Karthikeyan sought suggestions for ‘an impactful project’ that will benefit a large number of people, “I came out with the idea of Project HEAL as this would provide cancer screening at the doorsteps of rural women who don’t have access to modern healthcare or can’t afford to travel to cities for medical care,” recalls Vijayagiri.

“I am happy to note that 40 women have undergone free surgery or treatment for cancer, and are now leading a happy life with their families,” smiles PDG Karthikeyan.

The total project cost ₹3.3 crore; and the funds came from DDF (\$20,000), Karthikeyan’s contribution (\$15,000), CSR funds from Eence Aromatics (\$33,800), club members (\$71,000), and TRF’s matching grant (\$82,000).

RC Juárez Campestre, RID 4110, Mexico, is the global partner. Besides, there are over 100 individual and corporate donors, and 50 Rotarians from 23 Rotary clubs in RID 3203 who have sponsored the project. The project team held a series of fundraiser events and launched crowdfunding portals to fund the cancer care camps and the funds were collected in just four months. ■

RC Tirupur Bharati charter president S Rajalakshmi hands over certificates to women beneficiaries at the 100th camp at the SGK Hospital, Mettupalayam. Also seen are (from L) Dr Vijayagiri, project coordinator KP Nageswaran and Project HEAL Trust COO Suresh Ananthakrishnan.



Meet



Mohan Parashar
Auditing
RC Jalore, RID 3055

Your

Governors

Kiran Zehra

Focus on RCC

His most cherished Rotary memory is participating in the friendship exchange programme in 2014, which took Mohan Parashar to South Alabama, RID 6880, USA. This experience, he believes, offers life-transforming exposure, and he encourages every Rotarian to be part of it.

His primary focus is to give a boost to Rotary Community Corps (RCCs) in his district. "RCCs are the best way to engage in rural areas because RCC members, being part of the villages they serve, understand the exact needs of their communities and can work precisely towards fulfilling them."

Parashar advises his presidents to focus on the quality of members over numbers, and the importance of educating new members about Rotary's impactful projects, particularly the End Polio Now campaign. He encourages presidents to "look beyond your club and district, and learn from projects outside the district."

He is proud that his district is "living the DEI mantra. We have a club for blind members, and there is no difference between them and any other Rotarian." He is also proud of the district's women membership. The district's TRF goal for the year is \$200,000. Parashar joined Rotary in 1996.



Suresh Babu
Medical Practice
RC Ootacamund,
RID 3203



Neerav Nimesh Agarwal
Real Estate
RC Mathura Central,
RID 3011



Dev Anand
Auditing
RC Udupi Midtown,
RID 3182

Winner of the Annual Fund Challenge

A Rotarian since 1999, Suresh Babu has thoroughly enjoyed his time in Rotary. He currently oversees 97 clubs in his district and plans to increase this number to 105. His district has already achieved the \$100 per club Annual Fund Challenge and is set to be recognised with the Early Achiever Award.

For new members, Suresh Babu emphasises the importance of instilling a strong understanding of Rotary. “Knowledgeable Rotarians who grasp the essence of Rotary are more likely to stay committed and improve the Rotary experience for others,” he says.

He advocates orientation programmes for new members. He suggests that even Rotarians who have been members for 3 to 5 years should participate in these programmes to deepen their understanding and engagement.

With only 7.3 per cent women members in his district, he sees a clear need to increase female representation. “While we have made progress in DEI with the inclusion of differently-abled and transgender members, there is still significant work ahead,” he says.

His district aims to contribute \$450,000 to TRF.

Transition challenge from Rotaractor to Rotarian

Initially not inclined to join Rotary and inactive for the first three years, Neerav Nimesh Agarwal later understood the significant impact of Rotary when his club built toilets, renovated classrooms and provided electricity at the Janaki Devi School in Mathura, increasing the school’s strength from 150 to 600 girls.

“With recent changes granting Rotaractors more access to The Rotary Foundation, a lower annual fee and eliminating age limit, the question arises as to why Rotaractors might choose to leave their clubs to join a Rotary club. This transition issue needs to be addressed,” he says.

On DEI, he says, “it is important to focus on inclusion and equity. There is a need to address the reluctance of clubs where the average age of members is over 60 years, to welcome women. Some of these clubs prefer separate women’s clubs.” He also notes that while some women prefer all-women’s clubs, “it’s important to encourage them to join gender-neutral clubs.”

Agarwal suggests inviting potential members to participate in projects, discussing past initiatives with them, and creating an archive of projects to present to new members to inspire them to become Rotarians.

His district’s TRF goal stands at \$555,000.

CSR awareness is need of the hour

He jokes that sometimes his wife feels jealous because he gives more time to Rotary than to her. Dev Anand stresses the importance of having members from different classifications, “especially leaders from different professional fields, to enhance Rotary’s public image.”

For member retention, he advocates orientation programmes. Regarding DEI, Anand highlights the diversity in his district but is concerned about the low percentage of women members. He aims to raise it from 11 per cent to 33 per cent by encouraging Rotarian spouses to join.

Anand sees a lack of CSR projects in his district because of limited awareness about the concept. He strongly believes that “club presidents should be trained to approach companies and know the nitty-gritty of the partnership.” He plans to have 100 Paul Harris Society (PHS) members across his district. The TRF target for his district is \$300,000. He has been a Rotarian since 1988.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

club matters

RID 2981



RID 3030



RID 3000



RID 3060

RC Pondicherry Legacy — RID 2981

Around 125 units of blood was collected at a blood donation camp at NCR Corporation India, and donated to the Government Hospital, Villupuram.



RID 3020

RC Nagpur South East — RID 3030

Two mobile hospitals were flagged off jointly with the Jeevan Aadhar Bahuuddeshiya Sanstha and Shalinitai Meghe Hospital in the remote Vidarbha areas.

RC Gandarvakottai — RID 3000

Food packets were distributed to physically-challenged as the first project for the new Rotary year.

RC Visakhatpatnam — RID 3020

DG M Venkateswara Rao visited a grocery shop set up by tribal women with club's support at Sambhuvanipalem, a city outskirts.

RC Wadhwan Metro — D 3060

Nutritious food, iron and calcium tablets were distributed to 30 pregnant women. A doctor advised them on healthy diet.



RID 3070



RID 3110



RID 3080



RID 3120

RC Jammu Elite – RID 3070

Around 50 saplings were planted at the Government Middle School, Mussa Chak, in RS PuraÓ taluk, Jammu, followed by an environment session.

RC Ambala Industrial Area – RID 3080

Nine students contested in an oratory competition on the topic 'Future India' at the B D Senior Secondary School, Ambala Cantonment.



RID 3100

RC Moradabad Mid Town – RID 3100

Over 370 children were examined at a three-day eye check-up camp held jointly with the C L Gupta Eye Institute. Treatment was provided to those with eye disorder.

RC Kanpur Aryans – RID 3110

Over 150 fruit-bearing trees were planted at the Green Belt area in partnership with New Angel Hospital to mark World Environment Day.

RC Pride Mau – RID 3120

The club gave raincoats to 50 rickshaw pullers near bus stops and at the railway station.

Staying up days and nights with stories



We dip into an assortment of books old and new, and discover there's something for everyone.



Sandhya Rao

This time, my online library delivered two vastly different books. The first, a surprise, was a potboiler by none other than Louisa May Alcott. Yes, you read that right. None other than the individual whose hugely popular titles, *Little Women*, *Little Men* and *Jo's Boys*, enthralled readers for more than a hundred and odd years after the death of the author. (Are they still on the TBR list of young people? Not sure.) The book in question is *A Long Fatal Love Chase*. What could be more risqué than a title like that! However, coming from the pen of Louisa May Alcott?

It appears she regularly wrote potboilers that were serialised in magazines in order to keep the home fires burning. This book was published only in 1995, long after Louisa's death, when the manuscript was

unearthed by editor Kent Bicknell who then smoothed it out and had it published. Why was it not published when it was written, in 1866, upon the specific request of a Bostonian pulp fiction publisher named James R Elliot? After all he had published her 'dynamic thrillers' in the past. Louisa has recorded in her journal that it was too long and too sensational even for Elliot! Bicknell writes in a note at the end of the novel that readers of that time may have been 'startled by the contemporary issues with which the novel grapples: a woman's right to be independent and free, the healing power of intimate female-female as well as female-male friendships, the psychological dynamics of abusive relationships, priestly celibacy, divorce, bigamy, suicide and murder...'

A Long Fatal Love Chase has all this and more presented in a breathless fashion but reflecting the sure, sophisticated hand of the accomplished writer Louisa was. Stephen King, writing in the *NYT*, says of the novel that it is 'a suspenseful and thoroughly charming story ... and it tends

to confirm Alcott's position as the country's most articulate 19th-century feminist.' A review in *Publishers Weekly* says, 'This romantic cliffhanger about a woman pursued by her ex-lover, a relentless stalker, seems sprung from today's headlines. This absorbing novel revises our image of a complex, prescient writer.'

Bookless in Baghdad is a collection of essays on books, writers, reviews, reviewers, literary festivals and much more by Shashi Tharoor whom we all know as reader, writer, former diplomat and politician who loves to engage in word pyrotechnics. Among other topics, he bemoans the fact that a genius such as the Russian writer Alexander Pushkin is so little known outside his own country, and is bemused by the fact that RK Narayan is made so much of. Clearly, he is not afraid of ruffling feathers considering Narayan is a national treasure. He reminds us why we love and enjoy PG Wodehouse so much in India, colonial hangover be damned!

Of personal interest is a short piece on reviewing, in the course of which he brings up the controversial matter of culture appropriation: that is, who may or may not represent or speak about a culture that s/he does not belong to. There's much to-ing and fro-ing on this in literary circles. I will quote a small passage in this



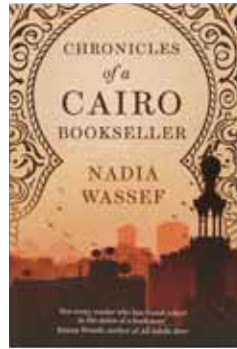
context, with a request to readers to reflect upon it: ‘The entire point about literature is that, while it may emerge from a specific culture, it must speak to readers of other linguistic and cultural traditions, for what endures in good writing is not culture specific. We read literature from other cultures all the time, and we do so because literature, whether or not from a society we know, serves to illuminate and deepen our appreciation of the human condition.’

This takes us directly to Nadia Wassef’s *Chronicles of a Cairo Bookseller* which resonated loudly and uniquely because of my own association with a bookstore in Chennai. Goodbooks, exclusively for children, was established in 2000 and so many of the things Nadia talks about bring back memories of the highs and lows of Goodbooks. When she mentions the fact that ever so often people would walk in to *borrow* books, not *buy* them, I am reminded of similar experiences. In fact, we even had a room dedicated to books from all our homes; it was a space for those who wanted to sit quietly and read. There are reports from all over the country of groups of young people getting together in parks and other public spaces to sit together and read silently. Goodbooks was fun while it lasted, but it ran out of viable economic steam. However, it nurtured an entire generation of young people who literally grew up at Goodbooks, participating in various workshops

and activities and reading away to glory. Although Nadia has since moved on, Diwan Bookstore, co-founded by her, survives and has gradually expanded to include several branches in Cairo.

Chronicles of a Cairo Bookseller

will also resonate at another level for many, particularly for those with colonial connections. When Nadia says, ‘Like many Egyptians who went to foreign-language schools, Hind (the author’s sister) and I learned and read in a language other than Arabic. Complicated and inaccessible, classical Arabic left us linguistically orphaned; English adopted us, and we accepted all too gladly’, many of us are likely to nod our heads in agreement. Then again, she writes, ‘I grew up with the promise of solidarity and unity. My mother was Coptic and my father was Muslim. They narrated history as a long arc, teaching Arabic, French and English not as inherently dominant languages but as recent manifestations of a long series of conquests of Egypt spanning millennia. It wasn’t personal, just colonial. But in recent decades, acceptance of otherness and tolerance of religious differences seem to have faded.’ (This book was published in 2021.) Sounds familiar?



And who is not familiar with *Arabian Nights*? It’s a staple in many libraries, the stories in them watered down for the consumption of children. Known as *Alf Layla wa Layla* in Arabic, the stories were sourced from Persian, Indian, Arabic and Greek

folklore. It is well-known that a certain Scheherazade told these stories to a king to escape death. Nadia provides the back story that there were two kings, Shahrayar and Shahzaman, who discovered they were being cuckolded by their queens. Shahrayar got so furious, he decided to marry and deflower a virgin every night and then behead her to extract revenge. This went on until Scheherazade appeared and told the king a story every night, leaving it on a cliffhanger so that he was forced to keep her alive to hear the rest of it. This went on for 1001 nights, at the end of which the king forgave her and they lived happily after.

Nadia does her own version of Scheherazade to negotiate the challenges of being a woman of power in a male-dominated society: ‘I had learned a Machiavellian lesson about managing men in this society: inspiring fear was more important than inspiring admiration. With time, I learned to deploy this power strategically, in doses. Curse words were like an arsenal of nuclear weapons: when everyone knows you have them, you don’t need to use them.’ As a scholar and regular client pointed out: ‘Your shelves have power. Use it wisely.’

Our shelves have power. Books have power. We must use them, wisely.

“ While literature may emerge from a specific culture, it must speak to readers of other linguistic and cultural traditions, for what endures in good writing is not culture specific.

The columnist is a children’s writer and senior journalist

A complete Rotarian

SR Madhu



Ramakrishna Raja, a complete Rotarian

Author : RV Rajan

Publishers : Creative Workshop,
Chennai.

Price : ₹300



On March 24, 2020, PDG Ramakrishna Raja passed away. Just a month earlier, he was honoured with the Doyen of Rotary Award by RI District 3230 on the diamond jubilee of the Rotary Club of Madras South. The club members were numbed with shock — they were so used to his wise guidance and mentorship over 60 years that his demise seemed unthinkable. Though of light build, he was often described as *Uyarntha Manidhan* (a tall personality in Tamil) because of his stature in Rotary, in business and social life. Every Rotary governor regarded him as a role model — for wisdom, maturity, fairness and dedication.

A slim biography on Raja by Rtn RV Rajan, titled *Ramakrishna Raja, a complete gentleman*, was released in Chennai on September 1 by N Murali, director of *The Hindu* group and president of the Music Academy. Former

adman Rajan is a past president of RC Madras South and its member for over 45 years. He was profoundly influenced by Ramakrishna Raja, like everyone else.

His book describes Raja's illustrious 60-year journey in Rotary and 31-year stint with the Music Academy, besides his many other roles as an entrepreneur (he ran a successful wire mesh company), business leader, friend, family head and mentor. "He was a *raja* (king) among Rotarians," said PDG S Krishnaswami.

Raja served as charter secretary of RC Madras South at age 23 in 1960; he became its president in 1968–69, district secretary in 1973–74, and district governor of RID 3230 in 1986–87. As governor, he launched Rotary's celebrated campaign against PolioPlus in the district, and also the war against drugs. He was treasurer of the Music Academy from 2005 till his death in 2020. "I couldn't have asked for a person with greater integrity, credibility and probity," said Murali.

He was warm and kind, enveloping everyone who came in contact with him. He was a people's person with a ready smile, a phenomenal memory for names



N Murali, director of *The Hindu* group, introducing PDG Ramakrishna Raja to former Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalitha.

and faces, and often went out of the way to help others — from offering blessings and support to just-anointed Rotary governors, to receiving guests at airports, hosting them at home, or coming up with unexpected gifts and thoughtful gestures.

PRIP Kalyan Banerjee said that in Chennai he always stayed in Raja's impeccable home. "Once, after an unsuccessful bid of mine for Rotary directorship, Ram rushed



Once, after an unsuccessful bid for Rotary directorship, Ram rushed from Chennai to Mumbai to cheer me up. Of all the unforgettable people I've met in Rotary, Raja was right there at the top of the list.

PRIP Kalyan Banerjee

from Chennai to Mumbai just to cheer me up." He asserted that of the unforgettable people he had met in Rotary, Raja "was right there, at the top of the list."

PRIP K R Ravindran met Raja long before "my Rotary days. Very early on, I realised that he was a man of wisdom, light and learning. I looked up to him. Several past RI presidents held him in high regard."

For PRID PT Prabhakar, PDG Raja was a source of great strength, support and guidance during "my tenure as director. His knowledge and experience helped me immensely."

Industrialist Suresh Krishna, a friend of Raja for over five decades, said, "To meet Ramakrishna is to like him. To know him is to respect and admire him." Industrialist and philanthropist R T Chari remembered that Raja introduced him to Rotary, and also the Music Academy, where Chari became a valuable member and set up a unique music archive.

Architect Tara Murali recalled that when her father MS Pattabhiraman appreciated the traditional swing in Raja's house, it was promptly gifted to him!

When Raja spoke about Rotary, he wasn't evangelistic, pedantic or philosophical. He was simple and practical. He told PRID AS Venkatesh: Let your family and your business be your first priorities. You will then be able to tackle Rotary challenges better.

Club member PDG Natarajan Nagoji said, "I tried to think like him. When I faced a challenge, I thought about how Raja would have tackled it." Writer, researcher and Raja's family friend Prema Srinivasan said, "I learned from him how to live with grace and purpose."

Tennis legend Ramanathan Krishnan, a Loyola classmate of



Very early on, I realised that he was a man of wisdom, light and learning. I looked up to him. Several past RI presidents held him in high regard.

PRIP K R Ravindran

Raja, recalled Raja receiving him at Tokyo airport on a cold winter night. (Krishnan was there for tennis, Raja for business.) He helped Krishnan choose his lifemate Lalitha, saying she would be a great support in his tennis career.

Raja visited his son Ranganath in the US late in 2019, to spend some time with his family, and also recover from some health issues. But he made it a point to return to Chennai in time for his club's diamond jubilee celebrations. Though visibly subdued at the event, he was elated at his club's achievements. After his death in March, RC Madras South instituted an annual award in his name.

Raja liked to quote CV George, the club's first district governor: "Let us not be prisoners of the past. Let us be pilgrims to the future." That slogan summed up his own approach to Rotary.

The book is available on Amazon or can be bought from Compuprint, Chennai. Phone: 63822 03140.

The writer is a member of RC Madras South, RID 3234

A wheelchair basketball tournament was held by RC Pondicherry Galaxy, RID 2981, to motivate the physically-challenged. The sports meet was conducted on the grounds of Indira Gandhi Sports School attracting a large number of participants from in and around Puducherry.

Club president K Murali, along with Rotarians, were present to encourage the teams who, despite their handicap, played the games with a competitive spirit. The club hosted the tournament at a cost of ₹32,000. ■



From RI South Asia

Recognition of district for exceptional grant reporting

At their April 2023 meeting, the TRF trustees decided to annually recognise districts that achieve at least 90 per cent compliance with grant reporting requirements during a Rotary year. Refer Section 34.050.3. in the TRF code of policies for further details.

Celebrating excellence in reporting

For Rotary year 2023–24, 59 districts worldwide were recognised with a certificate of appreciation signed by Trustee Chair Barry Rassin for exceptional grant reporting efforts. RID 3220 (Sri Lanka and the Maldives) from South Asia is one of the distinguished recipients of this award. Trustee Bharat Pandya joins Rotary's Stewardship Department in congratulating RID 3220 on this significant achievement.

Rotary encourages all districts to aim for reporting compliance above

90 per cent for club-sponsored GGs and 100 per cent compliance with district grants and district-sponsored GGs for 2024–25. Your dedication to transparent reporting and stewardship is instrumental in driving meaningful impact in your communities. Contact stewardship_department@rotary.org for more information.

Rotaract Giving Certificate

In 2023–24, there has been a significant increase in number of clubs that earned Rotaract Giving Certificate. A total of 882 Rotaract clubs contributed more than \$391,558 to TRF as compared to 640 clubs contributing approximately \$242,000 in 2022–23. The certificate recognises clubs whose members have contributed at least \$100 to TRF during the year. Each club will receive a certificate signed by 2023–24 Trustee Chair Barry Rassin.

Since 2019–20, Rotaractors have contributed over \$830,059 to TRF through the Rotaract Giving Certificate.

Major Donor recognition

- Major Donor recognition is available only for personal contribution. Only spouse contribution can be linked for the recognition.
- If a contribution is 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 contributions to Annual Fund, PolioPlus and Global Grants. No recognition points for Endowment Fund, Directed Gifts and CSR Gifts. ■

Project Vignettes

Team Rotary News

A pioneering neurologist

Dr Prithika Chari, past president of RC Madras Temple City, was the first neurologist (she is a qualified neuro surgeon too) to join the Apollo Hospitals in Chennai. She shaped the Neurology department and played an active role in creating clinical service systems, treatment protocols, started the EEG lab and initiated specialised Epilepsy services. A postage stamp has been released commemorating the 41st year of the Institute of Neurology at Apollo.



A pioneering neurologist

Neurologist Dr Prithika Chari (third from L) with Apollo Hospitals chairman Dr Prathap Reddy and its executive vice chairperson Preetha Reddy at the postage stamp release event.



Comfort for caregivers

Club members at one of the newly constructed dormitories at the Government Hospital, Mettupalayam.



Knowledge hubs for adults

PDG Rajendra Rai, along with club members and beneficiaries, at one of the adult literacy centres.

Comfort for caregivers

RC Mettupalayam Prime, RID 3203, in partnership with Helping Hearts Foundation and the Mettupalayam municipality, has built two gender-specific dormitories furnished with beds, toiletries and ceiling fans for caregivers at the Government Hospital. A library, TV and locker facilities will be added soon, said project chair Dr Aravinth Karthikeyan.

Bold and brave workshop

Under *Project Virangana*, an initiative by RID 3291, RC North Calcutta conducted a self-defence workshop at the Baghbazar Multipurpose Girls' School in North Kolkata. The workshop also included optimal diet and mental health.

Bold and brave workshop

Students attending a martial arts workshop.



Knowledge hubs for adults

RC Bangalore Palmville, RID 3191, along with the Focus Trust, set up five adult literacy centres in Kolar. PDG Rajendra Rai inaugurated the project.



Greenwashing or genuinely organic?

Preeti Mehra

Greenwashing and false claims by companies can mislead you when you go to buy a product. But there is hope...

Are the products on supermarket shelves marked 'green' genuinely green? In a world where consumers are becoming increasingly environment-conscious, there is no dearth of marketers luring unsuspecting shoppers with labels such as "organic, chemical-free, 100 per cent natural, sustainable" or even "vegan". These tags may appear on a range of goods, from food to cosmetics, and make half-true or often false claims.

Welcome to the world of greenwashing, a term that will gain increasing currency as the world grapples with climate change and environmental concerns. Greenwashing is when a company asserts that its practices and products are environment-friendly, but these claims are sometimes misleading or untrue.

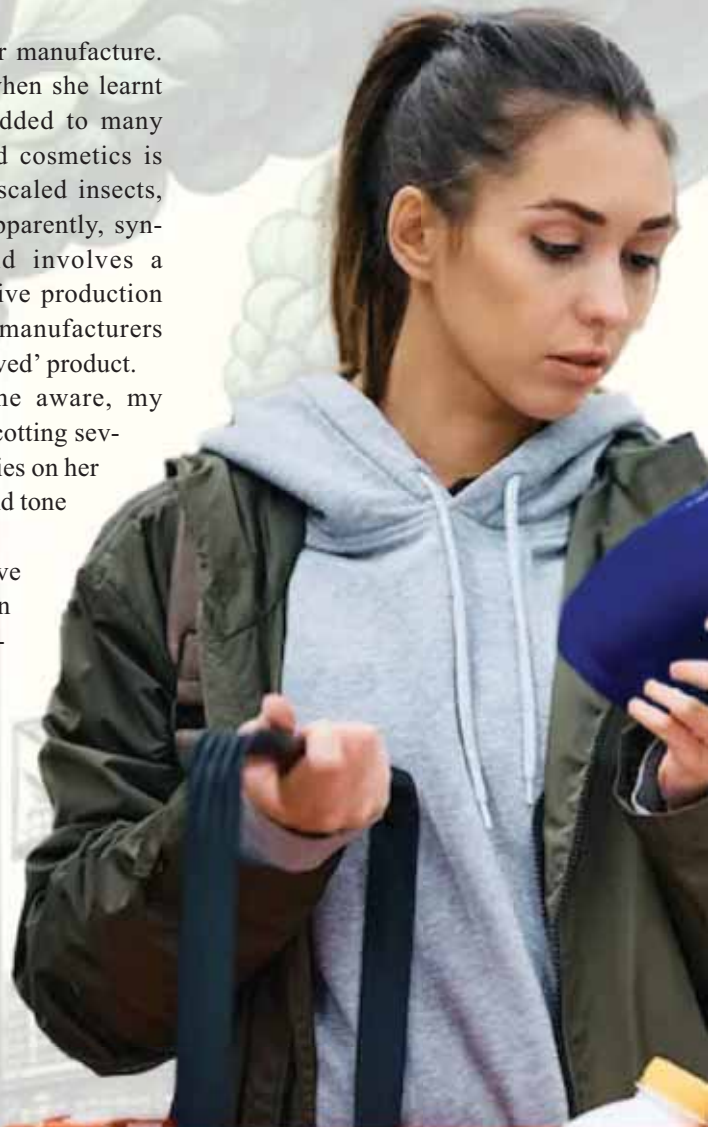
It is often all about clever marketing, which hides specific facts related to ingredients used. Thus, a colouring agent derived from an insect may be concealed in the fine print on the label so that consumers who are touchy about such things do not notice it.


A friend of mine, a recently converted vegan, is very fussy about the cosmetics she uses and is careful not to use products that harm or use living

creatures during their manufacture. Imagine her shock when she learnt that the 'carmine' added to many organically produced cosmetics is made from crushed scaled insects, including beetles. Apparently, synthetic carminic acid involves a complex and expensive production process, with most manufacturers using the 'insect-derived' product.

Since she became aware, my friend has begun boycotting several cosmetics and relies on her natural skin texture and tone to good effect!

Food products have also turned green in recent years. "Pesticide and fertilizer-free," scream labels from packaged pulses, fruits and vegetables. Can we trust these claims? Organic farming means crops cultivated without factory-produced pesticides, chemical fertilisers and





genetically modified seeds. It also means agricultural practices that follow rotational farming practices that replenish the land under cultivation. In short, organic farming involves eschewing modern methods, which boost production but also infuse unhealthy side effects into the eventual produce.

It would be impossible for us to inspect the fields where produce sold under a brand name is grown. Luckily, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has a new logo — the Unified India Organic — which will soon be on all certified organic products. The green coloured logo has one circle, a leaf, and a tick mark on it. It will replace the existing India Organic and Jaivik Bharat logos.

For vegetables, it is best to trust local organic farms you have visited, or your friends are familiar with. Unless a trusted brand name sells certified organic vegetables, you cannot be confident about the quality of your purchase. At the root of the problem is that organic vegetables and fruits sell at a premium, and the lure of passing off cheaper produce as organic incentivises many unscrupulous traders. Also, remember that organic veggies and fruits may not look as attractive and colourful as those treated with pesticides and fed on chemical fertilisers.

Since environmental impact influences consumer decisions, with a growing number willing to pay extra for eco-friendly products, many companies try to build brand loyalty by exaggerating their green efforts and environmental commitment. After processing several complaints over the last few years,

the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has drawn up guidelines to check greenwashing in advertisements. Simultaneously, under the Commerce Ministry, India's Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has released draft guidelines to target false or misleading environmental claims.

However, you can spot greenwashing by following a few guidelines set out by experts in the field. One tactic manufacturers employ is highlighting the positives while downplaying the negatives. So, the promoters of fast fashion (cheap, stylish and inexpensive clothing) will tell you how affordable it is, how it provides variety, and how it generates employment. But they won't tell you about the waste it generates, the water it consumes, or its carbon footprint.

The ground rule to follow is to look beyond the marketing hype. Don't be fooled by words like "natural, eco-friendly, sustainable and non-toxic". Minus any substantiation, such claims on product labels are vague and mean nothing. You should not be fooled by the words thrown at you unless they are backed by proof. For example, products made from paper are recyclable, but what of the trees cut to produce paper? The manufacturer replanting trees is not quite the same as the virgin forests destroyed to make the product.

Greenwashing also occurs when a company makes statements about its commitment to a cleaner planet. So, when a consumer picks up product X manufactured by a company that proclaims its environment-friendly status on the label, he/she is led to believe that the product must be green. This may only sometimes be the case. Similarly, nature-based imagery of forests, waterfalls and animals may be used to suggest that a product is 'natural'.

“

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has a new logo — one circle, a leaf, and a tick mark on it. It will replace the existing India Organic and Jaivik Bharat logos.

Even certifications on labels must be read carefully to ensure their authenticity. There have been instances when manufacturers have partnered with organisations that provide official-sounding green certificates for their products. One example often cited is the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) in US and Canada, launched by the logging industry to create the appearance of eco-friendly practices for consumers!

In India, the ASCI's new guidelines to check greenwashing in advertising will help. So, too, will the draft rules framed by the CCPA. Once approved, the rules will hopefully ensure "truthful, accurate and verifiable environmental claims, backed by evidence and disclosures." Ads will also be substantiated with QR codes or links to prove the green claims and green supply chain. The rules will apply to all advertisers, service providers, product sellers, ad agencies or endorsers.

That, along with the United India Organic certification, will be a significant step forward in ensuring that we buy organic products when we buy organic. Cheers to that! Do give a second look at the label when you buy an eco-friendly product next time.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues

Adult diapers for old age homes

Team Rotary News

The Rotary Club of Mapusa Elegance, RID 3170, has launched a programme to provide adult diapers to old age homes in and around Goa. “The biggest expense for old age homes every month is adult diapers which ensures hygiene and dignity of the elderly people. Even a small old age home with 10–15 residents ends up running a cost of ₹30,000 a month on adult diapers,” says the club’s past president Ajay Menon. To start with, the club donated 30 packets of adult diapers to St Joseph’s Old Age Home in Bastora, Goa, and has ordered 100 more packets.

“We have decided to make this a grassroots movement by asking for a simple donation of ₹600, which



Members of RC Mapusa Elegance handing over adult diapers to residents at the St Joseph’s Old Age Home, Goa.

is the cost of a packet, from philanthropists and Rotarians. Each packet of adult diapers that is donated by an

individual, corporate or entity, will be matched by us, to double the quantity,” he says. ■

Books and essentials make children happy



Members of RC Nagpur South East with students after gifting them school essentials.

In an outreach to socially disadvantaged students, RC Nagpur South East, RID 3030, distributed 6,000 books, 300 school bags, 500 water bottles, 300 lunch boxes, 300 geometry boxes and 175 uniforms to students in 23 zilla parishad and five urban schools in and around Nagpur.

The magic of Rotary was palpable “as we brought joy and inspired rural students to pursue learning,” said club president Vijay Bajare. The gifts brought instant smile on their faces.

“We want these children to break free from the shackles of poverty. Every child who received the school essentials went home happy feeling that she was worthy of love and support,” said Bajare. ■



From L: AG Prasanna Khajgiwale, DGE Sudheer Lature, club member Susheela Modak, project coordinator Bindu Shirsath and club president Sweety Panjabi with night school students and their teacher.

The Rotary E-Club of Empowering Youth, RID 3132, undertook literacy initiatives in August, benefiting the 25 night schools in Ahmednagar. Night schools serve as a vital resource for young adults who, despite financial constraints, are determined to pursue education while working to support themselves. The students, aged around 25–28, manage a delicate balance between daytime labour and nighttime learning, says Bindu Shirsath, the project coordinator. These schools typically operate for two hours every evening, with each accommodating around 100 students.

To support these adult learners, the Rotary E-Club provided an SSC Study App, particularly aimed at Class 10 students preparing for their board exams. “The app can be installed on their mobile phones or laptops, making it a convenient study tool for the students who are often pressed for time,” says Bindu. The app includes practice tests and question paper sets, giving students critical resources to enhance their exam readiness. DG Suresh Saboo and DGE Sudheer Lature distributed study material and stationery kits sponsored by the club to the adult learners.



Rotary E Club empowers night school learners

Jaishree

The club collaborated with RC Thane Ghodbunder, RID 3142, to organise online counselling sessions, addressing exam-related stress many of these students face. Experts from a cause-based club, Rotary Club of Addiction Prevention, RID 3141, highlighted the ill-effects of substance abuse and digital addiction, in an online programme that reached students of 15 night schools.


To further help the students, the club organised a skill development exhibition, where plumbers, carpenters, electricians and hospitality industry professionals shared information about their professions. “This provided students with real-world knowledge of potential career paths, fostering inspiration and practical advice.” On Teachers’ Day, the club honoured a

night school teacher with the Nation Builder Award. “This teacher has been pivotal in encouraging school dropouts to re-enrol and remain motivated to continue their education.”

The three-year-old e-club based in Ahmednagar has 12 members from across Maharashtra; two of them are based in the US and Canada. As the name suggests, the members engage in service activities aimed at empowering youngsters. “Early this year we provided ceiling fans to a school, and stationery kits and educational toys to students,” said club president Sweety Panjabi. The club has chartered a cause-based eco club that — executes projects related to environmental care in Ahmednagar, and an Interact Club for children with hearing and speech impairment. ■

Holistic health for longevity

Bharat & Shalan Savur



Swedish sweat in the 19th century is the fountain-head of modern calisthenics — the prime source and course of western exercises today. It is believed that Swedish landlords were aghast when they saw the stooped and sagging peasants' shoulders at work. The landlords wanted their subjects to be soldier-like in bearing. And hence, devised drills and movements on militarist lines. Erect spines and square shoulders were sought and taught through calisthenics.

But, the chest up, shoulders back and head erect posture quite often causes a painful back because of the constant unnatural pressure on the spine. Our shoulders were meant to shape naturally. Hence this draft is philosophically offensive and physiologically harmful to the majority who are neither soldiers nor athletes.

Because the vertical posture is not meant to be exaggerated.

The 20th century gave birth to the body beautiful belief — the age of the Barbie Doll and GI Joe. The science and the selling of these prototypes are good optics and the pivot of the entire appearance — casual, fitness apparel and parallel industries that cater to the social craving of those wannabes. Truly, marketing leisure and sports brands has never been so active. And commercially so profitable. But beauty is skin deep, holistic health whole and soul is our goal.

Though apparently they share a common address, the means and ends are way different. While we are at it, let's get some more clarity on a few common views — old or new, true or false.

False beliefs

The advent of alternate media like the internet and the mobile phone, and a host of influencers load us with outright fake news posing to be true. Examples:

- ~ Never drink a fluid while exercising, perhaps tops the all-time list. False because body cells depend on circulation to derive energy and simultaneously rid the body of waste products. Deprived of fluid, the muscles cannot perform. And in turn, put pressure on the heart. Hence, drink water or a nourishing fluid before and during exercise to avoid dehydration. And keep up with your quota of 2 or more litres through the day. Especially when you plan to exercise.
- ~ Sugar consumed before exercise enhances energy levels. False. In short, the only time you need sugar is after participating in a massive event like a marathon race, a full round of golf, tennis, etc.
- ~ Salt tablets prevent fatigue. A salt tablet is a solid piece of brine. And when it piles on the mucous membrane of the stomach, it can result in nausea and vomiting. Instead, add some salt to your food before you exercise and /or after your session. But don't overdo it. The body cannot store salt and an overdose could cause cramps and muscular weakness.

There are many more half-truths and myths. And we'll get to them — space permitting.

Body language

The human form basically and broadly falls into three types: Mesomorphs, ectomorphs and endomorphs. In plain English, this spells heavies, twiggies and

Beware of false tips... such as never drink a fluid while exercising. You need to drink water, or a nourishing fluid before, during and after exercise.

the in-betweens, respectively. Heavies are those large-boned, muscular guys. Perspiration is their milestone, competition, their religion, victory, their god! The problem comes when they become your fitness trainers and reference points. And if you are not a mesomorph yourself, you'll either bite the bullet — or quit being their game. There is a limit to test how many push-ups you can do when pushed. Indeed, there are easier ways to build muscles that work. Besides, we are not talking looks. We are talking lives here. And that is precisely where holistic health acquires a new inner dimension.

'Aerobic' is a micro-organism that exists only in the presence of atmospheric oxygen. And aerobic is the adjective that captures it. The ozone zone that all bodies need. The powerful bridge that links body and brain in healthful harmony. Hence, it is imperative to check your fitness level. The stake is beyond the sports field and that of the armed forces. You are probably among those that are not. Your longevity largely depends on the state of your heart. Check your fitness level by two simple tests:

~ Your grip is literally your grasp on life. It appears in almost every field

of activity. Lift yourself and hang free on the bar for as long as you can. Men and women who suspend themselves for zero to 20 seconds respectively are beginners. Men who hang up to 30 seconds, and women for 20 seconds are clocked into the intermediate class. The advanced state is 60-plus seconds for men and 40-plus seconds for women.

~ Check your inherent strength by lifting equal weights in each hand and walk for 90 seconds.

Consult your family doctor, first get fit aerobically and then incorporate these strengthening exercises for your body — especially its core muscles.

Hang loose, get stronger

Reach up as high as you can with your hands over your head. Feel your entire body stretch. Then with arms extended sideways, twist your trunk as far as you can in both directions. And dance to the rhythm of fast music in a manner that is in tune with its beat. Stretch and flex your limbs and torso thoroughly.

The wall front

Place your hands at shoulder level on a wall. Lean forward. Try and reach your chest to the wall. Return to go. Repeat 15 or 20 times. This is one set. Aim for three Benefits torso and arms.

Plank

Place your body facing the floor. Tuck your elbows under your shoulders. Raise your body with your toes to the position parallel to the floor. Hold position and aim for a one minute hold.



After achieving a minute, repeat 2 to 3 sets, two or more times a week. This is a total, or complete all-body exercise. It makes its cut in the gut too. And you can either do more reps or increase holding time as you progress. Want that lean and mean look? The plank's got it.

The onus of good health is now in your hands. Time to strengthen your body.

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



club matters



RID 3132



RID 3160



RID 3141



RID 3170

RC Solapur – RID 3132

School uniforms were distributed to children at a government school with project chairperson Shalini Singhal coordinating the event.

RC Mumbai Elegant – RID 3141

Project Step Forward distributed Jaipur foot (₹1.2 lakh) to 24 amputees at the Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti.



RID 3142

RC Bhiwandi Central – RID 3142

Food packets were distributed to 50 brick kiln workers and their families at Ovali village, Bhiwandi taluk.

RC Gulbarga Arya – RID 3160

Around 100 new mothers and pregnant women at the Government Hospital were educated by Dr Shashikala Pujari on pre- and post-natal care.

RC Honavar – RID 3170

Over 240 patients were screened at a dental camp held jointly with the KMC Hospital, Manipal, and Sangama Seva Trust in Kharwa village.



RID 3182



RID 3261



RID 3201



RID 3262

RC Karkala – RID 3182

Anti-dengue awareness seminar was held for students at the Vardhman Primary School, Sanoor, jointly with the state health department.

**Rotary E-Club
Metrodynamix – RID 3201**

Project Vinveli (₹3.2 lakh), a telescope making workshop for students of Panchayat Union Middle Schools, kindles their interest in astronomy. It has benefited over 500 children till now.



RID 3234

RC Nanganallur Elite – RID 3234

Around 100 saplings with tree guards were planted at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Meenambakkam, and the Army DGQA, Nanganallur; 100 palm seeds and 2,000 seed balls were distributed.

RC Raipur Queens – RID 3261

Protein supplements were given to post-natal mothers at Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar Hospital, Raipur, to ensure their and newborns' well-being.

RC Jajpur – RID 3262

PDGs Jayshree Mohanty and Ashok Mohapatra inaugurated Rotary Nagar, a housing colony developed by Rotarians and their friends for needy families.

Organ donation is a life-saving act that transforms the lives of countless individuals. In India, the need for increased awareness about deceased organ donation is critical. Despite advancements in medical technology and growing number of patients requiring transplants, there is a significant gap between demand for organs and their availability.

In India cultural and religious beliefs, coupled with lack of awareness and misinformation, contribute to the hesitancy in donating organs after death. Many families are unaware of the process and benefits of organ donation, leading to low consent rate for organ retrieval from deceased donors.

The potential impact of deceased organ donation is immense. A single donor can save up to eight lives by donating the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and intestines. Tissues such as corneas, skin and bones can enhance the quality of life for many more recipients. Educating the public about these possibilities is crucial in bridging the gap between organ supply and demand.

Public campaigns, incorporating the voices of transplant recipients and donor families can create a powerful narrative that resonates with the masses. Healthcare professionals should receive training to sensitively handle conversations about organ donation with grieving families. Additionally, integrating organ donation education into school curricula can foster a culture of giving from a young age.

Government initiatives play a vital role in this mission. The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) has been instrumental in promoting organ donation through policy frameworks and public awareness campaigns. Strengthening these efforts with collaborations between government, non-profits and the medical community can amplify the message. By addressing misconceptions, educating the public and fostering a culture of altruism, we can save countless lives and create a more compassionate and health-conscious nation.

Organ donation awareness is badly needed and PDG Bagh Singh Pannu from our district has volunteered to campaign at Srinagar, Leh and Ladakh recently. Deceased organ donation awareness programme is our flagship project in RID 3090. We will continue our efforts in this field.

The writer is a PDG and a nephrologist and is promoting organ donation for seven years.

Organ Donation Awareness is needed

Sandeep Chauhan



District Wise TRF Contribution

As on August, 2024

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

Source: RI South Asia Office

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution	
2981	28,498	1,120	0	38	29,656	
2982	21,987	3,247	100	9,487	34,820	
3000	15,268	1,717	0	238,096	255,081	
3011	19,959	3,847	1,000	100,602	125,408	
3012	360	101	500	0	961	
3020	17,752	4,481	10,000	2,738	34,971	
3030	2,293	138	1,000	0	3,431	
3040	1,283	88	0	13,574	14,946	
3053	11,011	0	0	0	11,011	
3055	10,762	42	1,000	9,048	20,852	
3056	2,691	0	0	133	2,824	
3060	85,975	1,000	299	36,985	124,259	
3070	5,477	0	0	0	5,477	
3080	7,974	3,502	10,241	3,609	25,326	
3090	1,301	30	0	0	1,331	
3100	7,189	1,543	0	3,265	11,997	
3110	1,519	24	0	0	1,543	
3120	7,864	100	8,337	0	16,302	
3131	207,783	3,830	12,000	36,053	259,665	
3132	24,526	200	0	4,569	29,294	
3141	212,115	8,511	51,000	474,979	746,605	
3142	173,534	9,601	0	33,805	216,940	
3150	50,675	1,899	6,250	250,100	308,923	
3160	2,670	1,071	0	3,287	7,028	
3170	21,404	11,388	0	974	33,766	
3181	14,925	2,173	0	0	17,098	
3182	4,201	108	0	0	4,309	
3191	12,349	1,564	0	0	13,913	
3192	14,968	1,349	0	1,976	18,293	
3201	27,983	2,571	0	27,290	57,844	
3203	16,348	1,398	15,000	4,601	37,347	
3204	3,390	224	0	0	3,614	
3211	8,688	525	0	3,048	12,261	
3212	99,891	7,285	0	43,875	151,052	
3231	11,065	2,785	30,238	0	44,088	
3233	5,999	1,589	0	5,383	12,971	
3234	36,726	3,324	9,566	62,269	111,885	
3240	56,797	3,113	35,000	7,437	102,346	
3250	104,329	1,141	1,000	870	107,340	
3261	985	0	0	5,205	6,190	
3262	6,205	100	0	0	6,305	
3291	46,338	2,181	15,000	6,514	70,033	
3220	Sri Lanka	25,383	37	0	3,775	29,195
3271	Pakistan	4,685	0	0	6,300	10,985
3292	Nepal	13,449	3,169	0	23,363	39,982
63	(former 3272)	200	283	0	0	483
64	(former 3281)	510	624	1,000	0	2,134
65	(former 3282)	164	500	0	0	664

* Undistricted



Sartorial standoff

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

LBW



Should old people wear new clothes? I ask this question in all seriousness because for the last ten years I have been engaged in a running battle with my wife over this. I prefer old clothes. Indeed I have done so all my life. Not just that. I also prefer the same colours — grey or khaki trousers, and a white or grey bush shirt. My determination to not deviate from this was reinforced about 30 years ago. Someone had presented me with a red shirt which I rarely wore. But one day I was obliged to wear it. I had to go to the railway station to bring someone. I was wearing khaki shorts that had been altered from my five-year-old khaki trousers.

While I was waiting for the train to arrive, a harassed looking fellow, with his wife and little boy in tow, asked me to carry his two suitcases. He had mistaken me for a porter because of my khaki shorts and red shirt. For about half-a-minute I toyed with the idea of obliging him but the train I was waiting for had come in. So I told him I would charge ₹150 which, three decades ago, was an absolute fortune. The fellow scurried off after cursing me.

But coming back to the original question, I think old people look quite ridiculous in the latest fashions or even very new clothes. This is my personal opinion so please don't get offended if you love new clothes. Go ahead and wear them to your heart's content. But I must also tell you that I have a friend who is two years older than me, or 75, who is always dressed like a model. I don't know how he can afford these clothes. An old Punjabi play from the 1960s comes to mind each time we meet. It was called "*Chadhi Jawani Buddhay Nu*".

It became a film in the 1970s. The interesting thing is that his wife, like me, is always in old clothes. She always manages to look dignified and elegant while my friend looks the opposite.

It's not just a liking for old clothes (which I now get from my sons in exchange for the new ones I buy for them). It's also that I don't like colourful clothes. About half a century ago I had a girlfriend who decided to get me coloured bush shirts. We went to a cloth shop which also had a resident tailor. She chose two pieces. One was yellow with black stripes and the other blue with checks.

When the stitched things came, she said I looked very nice. But I said I felt awful and a few months later we parted ways over her disapproval of everything I wore, said or did. I immediately gave away those clothes to a beggar, who gave the usual benediction: that my girlfriend should become my wife! Fortunately, the person who I eventually married, even though she has constantly grumbled, has never insisted that I change my sartorial preferences. The deal is that since I don't care what she wears, she shouldn't care what I wear. Believe me, it works.

There are, of course, special occasions when I wear something colourful and new. The last time I wore one was when my sons got married because they insisted. I gave in because I didn't want to be churlish and a spoilsport. I must admit that the photographs look quite nice. I haven't, however, worn those kurtas since and am waiting to hand them over to my sons. Both have absolutely deplorable taste when it comes to clothes. They will be happy to have them. ■



Rotary
District 3212



Rotary club of Virudhunagar

VIGNANA RATHAM

Science made easy

CROSSING OVER

606

PROGRAMS

ALL OVER TAMILNADU



SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY OF SCIENCE ON WHEELS

As on

31.08.2024

Total No. of
Schools Visited

590

Total No. of
Colleges Visited

16

Total No. of
Students Explored

1,73,499

Total No. of
Days Travelled

413

Total No. of
Teachers
Participated

7,463

Total No. of
Kilometres
Travelled

32,182

The idea of Vignana Ratham is to kindle student's interest towards Science. It is to aid students in understanding the magic of Science through creative and fun-filled experiments. RID 3212 wondered how good it would be to take the best brains to institutions in all corners of Tamil Nadu. As a result, a tie-up was made with Parikshan Trust of an Indian Scientist, Dr. Pasupathy. Mr.Arivarasan, Mr. Naveen Kumar and Mr. Satheesh were assigned to travel in Vignana Ratham and meet students of various schools every day. Numerous students benefit out of this programme and we believe that we have seeded the fervor required to bring out a Scientist from every institution we visited.

Science on Wheels Programs As on 31.08.2024

Within RID 3212 - 324 Programs

Beyond RID 3212 - 282 Programs

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Project Chairman
Rtn. R. Vadivel



Project Concept
Dr. Pasupathy

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