

Rotary

NEWS

INDIA
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Memorable moments



Above: RI President Shekhar Mehta met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Delhi and discussed, over a 45-minute meeting, various development programmes, where Rotary can work with the GoI. Rashi Mehta, Rajya Sabha MP PDG Vivek Tankha (RID 3261) and PDG Ashish Desai (RID 3054) were also present.

Below: RI President Mehta assumes charge at the Rotary International headquarters, One Rotary Center, in Evanston, USA.



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12 Erode Rotarians build a ₹20-crore hospital in a record 45 days

RI President Shekhar Mehta handed over a 401-bed state-of-the art Covid hospital built by Rotarians in Erode to the Erode Government Medical College Hospital.

18 10 years of giving hope to burn victims

RC Coimbatore Metropolis has transformed the lives of over 600 burn survivors through its Hope after Fire project launched in 2012.

20 RC Delhi South launches Beti Siksha

After providing scholarships to 273 girls last year, the club has expanded the project to cover 500 girls.

24 RI Prez announces recognition for membership growth

Under the *Each One Bring One* scheme, Rotarians will get special pins for introducing new members.

38 Solar lights keep elephants away in Assam villages

RC Digboi installed solar street lamps in 10 villages which were frequently being attacked by elephants.

42 Rotary flag flutters on the Annapurna summit

Bhagwan Chawale from RC Pune Gandhi Bhavan conquers the Mt Annapurna.

62 Kishori Amonkar, The Lonely Perfectionist

With her unique voice, she carved a niche in classical music, including films.

68 Chefs go down childhood culinary lane

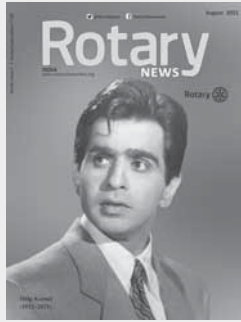
Check out these long-forgotten recipes that take you through a kaleidoscope of memories of your mother's cooking.

On the cover: RI President Shekhar Mehta with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Delightful tribute to Dilip Kumar

I was delighted to view the cover photo of Dilip Kumar in the August issue. His memory will be cherished by movie buffs. Both the obit pieces on the veteran actor are excellent. RI President's message dwells on the need to keep Rotarians constantly engaged. The Editor's note on the importance of women's empowerment and RI Directors' messages on environment, membership retention and inducting more women into Rotary are all good.



the DEI mantra on which past president Holger Knaack had laid emphasis are really important. My compliment to PRIP Saboo, who headed and encouraged medical missions to Africa and India to help the poor and needy. He is an epitome of dedication, and humility and his article *Saluting our doctors* is interesting.

Raj Kumar Kapoor
RC Roopnagar — D 3080

Glad to read the noble work of two Delhi clubs in constructing a check dam in Rajasthan to benefit 700 households. *Saluting our doctors* by PRIP Rajendra Saboo and the services rendered by RC Tirupur are noteworthy. All other articles including the one on Africa's climate crisis and a wedding reception creating a rural eye hospital in Odisha, and Club Hop photos are good. Congrats for a good job.

Philip Mulappone MT
RC Trivandrum Suburban — D 3211

I fail to understand why *Rotary News* has given enormous coverage to Dilip Kumar. Are we running short of Rotary projects for coverage? Or Rotarians who have transformed communities with their dedicated work? Even Rotaractors are doing amazing work, which can be featured.

Sandeep Goel, RC Karnal Midtown — D 3080

Dilip Kumar was a complete actor and there is no one to match him. He really had style, substance and more; he was stunningly handsome and a versatile actor, very serious and choosy when it came to accepting film roles. He was adored by all, especially Bollywood actresses like Vyjayanthimala, Madhubala, Noor Jehan etc. Noor Jehan, his heroine in *Jugnu*, once went to the extent of shoving others aside to hug Dilip.

President Mehta's vision to empower girls and

I simply loved the obit feature *Style, Substance and more* on the legendary actor Dilip Kumar written by Editor Rasheeda Bhagat.

Kriti Makhija, RC Delhi South — D 3012

An insight into the life of Dilip Kumar in the cover story is wonderful. This edition is enough for the coming generation to know about the veteran actor. *Powered by the Sun* by Preeti Mehra is well-written with primary information to set up a solar photovoltaic system at home.

Mohan P Shaji, RC Cherthala Green City — D 3211

An excellent issue, right from serious, thought-provoking articles to delightful pages recalling the great thespian Dilip Kumar with lovely pictures. These are the highlights of the August issue. The editorial on DEI is timely and inclusion of women in sport must be taken up as a mission in Rotary programmes.

Abhay Kishore Sandwar
RC Dhanbad Midtown — D 3250

Compliments on yet another wonderful issue; I loved the fact that you dared, so deservingly, to put the great Dilip Kumar, a non-Rotary person, on the cover! This is what 'regional' really means in a Rotary regional magazine! Your small but very meaningful personal

Let's promote diversity and women's empowerment

President Mehta's mantra to empower girls through club projects across India like scholarships, giving bicycles, toilets in schools; his vision to increase membership from 1.2 to 1.3 million, are noteworthy. Of the six new members inducted in our club, three are

women and they are fully involved in club activities.

Col Vijayakumar (Retd) RC Alleppey Greater — D 3211

The August editorial on DEI inspires Rotarians to follow RI's new mantra, on girls' empowerment. President Mehta makes membership growth a

priority; RID A S Venkatesh stresses on transforming new members into fine Rotarians; RID Mahesh Kotbagi stresses on environment-friendly initiatives like tree-planting, and PRIP Saboo salutes our doctors — all worthy messages.

KMK Murthy
RC Secunderabad — D 3150

LETTERS

touches to the magazine add value, like the apt title 'President Speaks' instead of President's Message. RN's continuing emphasis on range and depth of coverage of Rotary events and projects, along with non-Rotary subjects, such as books, is appreciated. Thanks for the Q&A with TRF Trustee Chair John Germ, which will clarify Rotarians' doubts.

Atul Bhide, RC Thane Hills — D 3142

I read your article on the great actor Dilip Kumar. The nostalgia, memories and events are really well-written. Thanks for such an excellent article.

*Uday Subhedar
RC Pune Metro — D 3131*

With due respect to Dilip Kumar, does *Rotary News* need film heroes on the cover? Please include real heroes — we have many in Rotary — and not reel heroes, as we are not a film magazine. Editor, it's all in your hands.

*Sham Phadnis, RC Kharghar
Midtown — D 3131*

Thanks for writing such a great article on Dilip Kumar. It was extremely well-written and did justice to the veteran actor.

*PN Mohan
RC Madras — D 3232*

I am happy President Mehta will recognise Rotarians who bring new members. His message *An engaged Rotarian is an asset forever* is timely. The Editor's note on a more equitable world through women's empowerment is inspiring.

*S Muniandi
RC Dindigul Fort — D 3000*

A 'Chak de' moment

Chak de India, say Odisha girls was heartwarming and inspirational. The timing was perfect as our country has made great progress in Tokyo Olympics. Odisha has taken a lead in reviving the fortunes of Indian hockey, and the women's hockey team success story is equal to winning a medal. Rotary should make it a point to empower sportswomen.

An inspiring RI President

The cover story *Dream weaver* ignited my mind. The life of President Mehta is a spectacle of true, selfless service.

*Dr Jayasekharan VP
RC Payyanur — D 3204*

I salute President Mehta for his message on the environment, as ecological projects are badly needed. As a professor, I will educate my students on environmentalism and saving our planet.

*Dr AR Johnson Durai
RC Cuddalore — D 2981*

President Mehta has given a clear message about our responsibilities. We have to update our projects on virtual platforms. I wish him a fulfilling year ahead.

Indra Goenka, RC Belur — D 3291

Let the better light shine by Preeti Mehra offers a practical approach with effective solution to save energy by switching over to energy-efficient LED and CFL light, to save 6 per cent in our electricity bill.

*Aswini Kar, RC Bhubaneswar
Meadows — D 3262*

Merit counts in Rotary News

Thanks for publishing our work in *Rotary News*. Your positive and quick action encourages Rotarians to share their work through our magazine. It is rightly said in Rotary circles that merit is the only criteria for getting published in *Rotary News*. Thank you. I will try to do even better and come back again.

*Manik Raj Singla
RC Patiala Midtown — D 3090*

KL Saigal, a genius

I was overwhelmed by the article on KL Saigal. I'd like to add that Jagmohan, the great singer, says in his autobiography that while learning music under Shambhu Maharaj (uncle of Birju Maharaj), "actually a dancer but also a great *ustaad of thumri and tappa gayaki*," he once met a "tall man" (Saigal) learning a new *thumri* 'Babul mora.'" Jagmohan too wanted to learn it, but Guruji said it would take 4 months. But Saigal, the genius, mastered it in just a few days.

*Satish Vyas
RC Bhavnagar — D 3060*

Thanks for sending three issues of *Rotary News* (May, June and July). All the pictures are eye candies as they capture the essence of Rotary. The articles are compelling you to read them.

*Sanjay Pahuja
RC Yamuna Nagar — D 3080*

Correction

Manish Motwani is not a recipient of the Service Above Self Award (page 11). The information, sent by RI Communications, was incorrect.

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor:

rotarynews@rosaonline.org; rushbhagat@gmail.com.

Mail your project details, along with hi-res photos,
to **rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com.**

Messages on your club/district projects, information and links on zoom meetings/webinar should be sent only by e-mail to the Editor at **rushbhagat@gmail.com** or **rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com**. WHATSAPP MESSAGES WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.

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

Remove barriers to education of girls



Greetings, my dear changemakers. I am sure you are having an enriching experience as you *Serve to Change Lives*. One of the ways you can make the greatest change in a person's life is to help them learn to read. Literacy opens up the world to us. It makes us better informed about life in our own communities and opens vistas to other cultures. Reading and writing connects people and gives us another way to express our love for one another.

September is Basic Education and Literacy Month in Rotary. Enhancing literacy skills is critical in our pursuit of reducing poverty, improving health and promoting peace. In fact, if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, it would result in a significant cut in global poverty rates.

Without education, illiterate children become illiterate adults. Today, 14 per cent of the world's adult population — 762 million people — lack basic reading and writing skills. Two-thirds of that group are women. Literacy and numeracy skills are essential to obtain better housing, healthcare and jobs over a lifetime.

Especially for girls and women, literacy can be a life-or-death issue. If all girls completed their primary education, there would be far fewer maternal deaths. And a child is more likely to survive past age 5 if he or she is born to a mother who can read.

Improving outcomes for more people worldwide is possible only if countries remove barriers to education for girls. The economic argument for doing so is clear: In some countries where schooling is geared toward boys, the cost of missed economic opportunity is more than \$1 billion per year.

Empowering people through education is among the boldest goals we have as Rotarians. We don't have to travel far from our homes to encounter those whose lives are being curtailed because they struggle with reading, rely on others to read for them, or cannot write anything more than their own name.

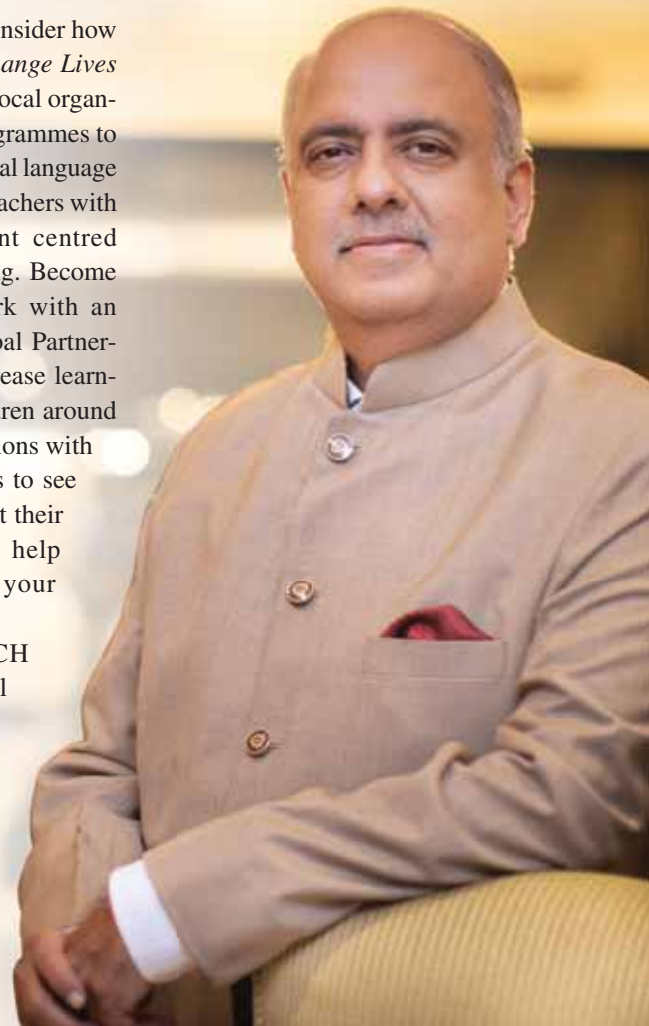
Starting this month, consider how your club can *Serve to Change Lives* through literacy: Support local organisations that offer free programmes to support adult literacy or local language learning, or that provide teachers with professional development centred around reading and writing. Become literacy mentors, or work with an organisation like the Global Partnership for Education to increase learning opportunities for children around the world. Have conversations with local schools and libraries to see how your club can support their existing programmes or help create needed ones in your community.

In India, the TEACH programme, a successful collaboration between

the country's Rotary clubs and its government, has demonstrated how to scale up literacy efforts to reach millions of children. And at a time when schools across India were closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme's e-learning component reached more than 100 million children through national television.

Literacy is the first step out of poverty. As Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai has noted, "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world."

Shekhar Mehta
President, Rotary International





Who will help Afghanistan's women?

As I watch horrific images emanating from Afghanistan of desperate women behind a barbed wire fence at the Kabul airport screaming for help saying “the Taliban are coming for us”, RI’s new focus on the girl child and DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) gain a sharper focus. Having visited and spent 10 days in Afghanistan in 2005 to report from there, my mind keeps going back to the vibrant women I had interacted with in the *Bagh-e-Zanana*, an exclusive garden for women in Kabul. Four years had gone by since the ouster of the Taliban, but the Afghan women continued to be haunted by their memory, and were terrified to talk to strangers lest they be Taliban informers. But once they knew that I was a journalist from India, they opened out their hearts, and admitted that they still had nightmares about the Taliban returning.

Well, the Taliban are back and in order to get international legitimacy are making politically correct statements on treating women decently, allowing girls’ education and women in offices. But going by past experience and the brutalisation of the Afghan women during their reign from 1995–96 to 2001, these statements ring untrue. Abaya-clad women journalists, including western ones, their heads covered, are courageously out on the streets of Kabul, interviewing the locals and the Taliban alike. In one video footage we can see the Taliban leader laughing his guts out when a woman reporter asks him if democratically-elected women politicians will be allowed in government. Then he asks her to “stop the video”.

CNN’s Clarissa Ward was also out in Kabul reporting from the ground and she and her crew were threatened by a Taliban, but managed to escape. The first woman

Afghan Air Force pilot Niloofar Rahmani, who now lives in the US, said she fears both for her family and the country’s women. She predicts that the world will soon witness the stoning of “a woman in a Kabul stadium for no reason at all”.

The brilliant Afghan novelist Khalid Hosseini, who poured his heart out on the social media as the Taliban effortlessly captured Afghanistan in a matter of days, wrote in a Facebook post that he feels “heartbroken, helpless”, and worries for the “millions of Afghans who have fled (from their homes). Where will they go? What will happen to them? But I worry the most about my fellow Afghan sisters. Women and girls stand to lose more than any other group. There are many lasting horrific images from the last time the Taliban ruled Afghanistan: the public beatings, cutting off of hands, executions inside stadiums, barbaric and senseless destruction of historical artifacts. But for me the lasting mental picture of the Taliban circa 1990s is that of the stick-holding Talib beating a burqa-clad woman. The Taliban systematically terrorised women. They took away their freedom of movement, their freedom to work, their right to education, their right to wear jewellery, to grow their nails or paint them, to laugh in public, to even show their faces.”

The title of Siba Shakib’s poignant book *Afghanistan where God comes only to weep*, comes to mind. It is about the courageous woman Shirin-Gol, who after her village is devastated by Russian bombs in 1979, flees as a child to Kabul first and then ends up in a refugee camp in Pakistan, is forced into a marriage to pay off her brother’s gambling debts, and ends up selling her body to feed her family after her unsuccessful attempt to get out of the country.

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Director

We need to increase awareness on organ donation

Not many Rotarians may be aware that India ranks second to the United States in doing the largest number of transplants in the world. However, there remains a huge gap between those requiring transplant surgery in India and those who get it. And this is mainly due to lack of awareness, ignorance, and access to appropriate organ donors and proper medical facilities.

India's organ donation is an estimated 0.65 per million population, and there is a crying need to promote awareness on voluntary pledge to donate organs. The government has set up the Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation at the national, zonal and regional levels to address this issue.

There are two types of organ donation, living and deceased donation. Under Indian laws, the donors and their families must agree for donating an organ. After death, the consent of an immediate family member is required. Incidentally, the Rotary Club of Pune Gandhi Bhavan, D 3131, holds a Guinness Record for making a record number of people sign up for organ donation from across 950 cities in 2018.

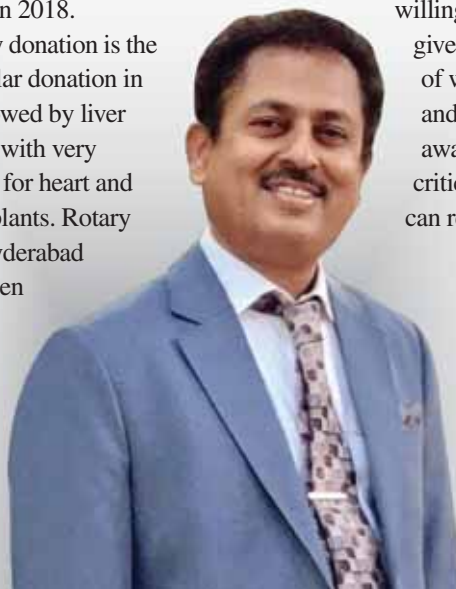
Kidney donation is the most popular donation in India, followed by liver transplant, with very few opting for heart and lung transplants. Rotary Club of Hyderabad has also been

instrumental in setting up one of the first-of-its-kind skin bank in Telangana to aid burn and trauma patients.

While there is no data available on the rate of organ donation in India, a huge disparity remains between the demand and supply. However, with increased awareness, we can expect a larger population to donate. In 1994, the Transplantation of Human Organs Act was passed to regulate the removal, storage and transplantation of human organs; this was amended in 2011 to address inadequacies.

Non-profit organisations like Rotary are actively working to raise awareness and simplify the process of organ donation, and also increase awareness about the need to donate to help people. We have to educate our local communities that the process of pledging to donate is quite simple. But the entire process needs to be transparent as cases have been reported in the past of sale of organs, particularly kidneys.

Unfortunately, in India, only 0.01 per cent of the population has shown willingness for organ donation and to give consent to donate organs. A lot of work is still required in this area, and we Rotarians need to spread awareness on this crucial and critical service that a human being can render after he or she passes on.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mahesh" with a stylized flourish underneath.

Dr Mahesh Kotbagi
RI Director, 2021-23

Speak

Let's aim for quality education for all children

The last few weeks have been hard. In addition to the pandemic, we were witness to an earthquake in Haiti, uncontrolled fire in Greece and the developments in Afghanistan. While our thoughts are with those affected, incidents like these only reinforce the relevance of organisations like Rotary. Rotarians have been working tirelessly to improve the lot of the less fortunate around the globe.

Our commitment to world peace is stronger than ever. Peace is not just an absence of war. There can be real peace only if each and every one in this world is assured of food, clothing and shelter. There can be peace only if we can create a disease-free world. There can be peace only if every one has access to affordable basic education. These are precisely the areas which Rotary clubs and Rotarians are focusing on in their quest to make this world a peaceful place.

To make a difference, one has to dream big and aim higher. We cannot be content with small changes as these changes may not last if they are not significant enough. Our service has to change lives. Large service projects, with significant impact, are the need of the hour. I urge every club to set their sights higher and soon you will realise that you have found a way to reach those goals. That is the magic of good intent and selfless thoughts.

Rotarians in India have pledged to make this nation fully literate and in this month, which is designated Basic Education and Literacy month, let every club do an activity that will



propel us closer to this goal. This pandemic may have pushed many children out of the education network and it is our duty to locate, identify and put them back in school. Let every child in this country have access to quality education. Let every school be a happy place that a child looks forward to going to. In short, let us make quality education available, accessible and affordable to every child in this country. A literate population can make a difference to several other spheres of activity as well.

We do not know what Rotary will be in future but it will depend, to a large extent, on what we do today. Let us do all we can to script our organisation's future.

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

AS Venkatesh
RI Director, 2021-23

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If you can dream it, you can do it



Malala Yousafzai is a young Pakistani activist for the education of girls and women. As a teenager, Malala, whom the world knows by her first name, courageously spoke out for the rights of girls to learn. Extremists in her country disagreed with Malala, and she was shot by a Taliban gunman on her way home from school.

But the attack didn't dissuade her; it made her more determined. As soon as she recuperated, she resumed her mission of education activism. Today the Malala Fund supports education through projects around the world.

Not only is Malala an inspiration for Rotary members, we also have some commonalities: a drive to do what is right, a passion for literacy, and the power to transform dreams into reality.

One of my life mottos is: If you can dream it, you can do it. This applies to everything Rotarians do, particularly with The Rotary Foundation. We literally make our dreams happen.

Like Malala, we know that literacy is, for many, the first step out of poverty. To put our vision into action, we first understand a community and the unique problems of its members, and then form a partnership with them. Next we join forces with others — exchanging ideas with clubs in other districts, and working with people and organisations outside of Rotary.

Our solution, in the form of a district grant or global grant, will be tailored for that community. And if it's a Rotary grant, you can bet it will be well-planned, strategic, and most of all, sustainable. We want that gift of literacy to not be a one-time book donation but a plan to transform a community over time.

Over the years, I have seen countless literacy efforts in Rotary, from national programmes to local projects. When the global Covid-19 pandemic hit last year, many clubs took action to help communities adjust to online schooling, including providing laptop computers. Rotary's solutions are endless, our volunteers tireless. And if I know Rotarians, I know that more solutions are being created as I write these words.

Rotary's passion for literacy and education projects is well-known. So is our commitment to make them happen. You, through Rotary, are a big part of helping people take their first step out of illiteracy, out of poverty, and into something much better. Remember, if you can dream it, you can do it — just like Malala.

John F Germ
Foundation Trustee Chair

Cultural bonanza

Miyoki Walker



Whether you are drawn to classical art or contemporary, photography or architecture, Houston has a museum for you. During the 2022 Rotary International Convention, June 4–8, plan a day trip to the city's museum district: Its 19 museums include the Contemporary Arts Museum; the Menil Collection, a 30-acre campus featuring free and fully accessible galleries; and Children's Museum Houston, one of the best of its kind in the United States.

With nearly 70,000 art pieces spread across three buildings — which are connected by interactive art tunnels — the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, ranges from ancient art to 20th-century sculptures by Henri Matisse and Joan Miró. It isn't possible to view it all in one visit, so pace yourself and make a plan for what you most want to see.

The Rothko Chapel, commissioned by John and Dominique de Menil, who were known as pioneers of Houston's art scene, has been a must-see destination since it opened its doors in 1971. Its 14 large abstract paintings by Mark Rothko and its intentional architectural choices are meant to provoke spiritual exploration and social change.

Ready to reconnect with nature? Head to the Houston Museum of Natural Science, where you can take a stroll through the Cockrell Butterfly Center, peek underneath the Rainforest Conservatory's waterfall, and listen to entomologists speak about the plethora of creatures on display. And if you've always been curious about what cricket chips taste like, you're in luck — just grab a snack from the insect vending machine.

Learn more and register at
convention.rotary.org.



Membership Summary

As on August 1, 2021

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	128	5,807	7.35	31	51	225
2982	76	3,373	7.03	44	97	68
3000	132	5,164	9.43	88	259	213
3011	121	4,410	27.71	68	113	36
3012	127	3,952	26.44	59	75	59
3020	76	4,255	6.51	26	166	350
3030	94	4,859	14.47	114	226	359
3040	102	2,536	14.31	40	78	196
3053	66	2,724	16.23	29	48	116
3054	183	7,345	20.12	99	167	562
3060	112	4,957	14.65	62	67	147
3070	120	3,177	15.33	34	23	58
3080	94	3,767	12.16	124	156	113
3090	88	2,223	4.27	32	17	123
3100	103	2,268	9.92	8	19	146
3110	133	3,516	10.18	11	15	106
3120	84	3,397	15.96	57	30	55
3131	135	4,900	22.8	98	223	131
3132	88	3,355	10.25	28	122	165
3141	116	6,061	26.28	131	175	100
3142	101	3,466	20.83	74	137	80
3150	114	4,038	13.32	74	135	118
3160	76	2,439	6.85	14	20	82
3170	137	5,910	13.87	82	236	171
3181	85	3,310	8.79	31	193	115
3182	84	3,143	9.51	42	124	104
3190	154	6,155	18.23	146	187	67
3201	151	5,774	8.83	92	87	54
3203	84	4,205	7.44	71	232	36
3204	61	1,944	6.07	16	22	13
3211	145	4,642	7.76	6	24	133
3212	141	5,102	11.9	74	204	153
3231	96	3,463	7.65	28	81	419
3232	144	7,254	16.75	105	209	97
3240	99	3,404	15.19	55	402	214
3250	102	3,702	19.94	59	73	184
3261	82	2,944	17.66	14	23	44
3262	116	3,877	13.03	62	47	80
3291	163	3,901	22.46	127	93	637
India Total	4,313	1,60,719		2,355	4,656	6,129
3220	76	2,283	16.51	86	131	74
3271	122	1,984	16.43	89	134	24
3272	146	1,863	17.34	45	18	47
3281	299	8,102	18.71	261	144	208
3282	169	3,800	11.55	196	46	47
3292	152	5,941	16.55	164	125	127
S Asia Total	5,277	1,84,692		3,196	5,254	6,656

Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs	:	36,787
Rotaract clubs	:	10,408
Interact clubs	:	16,393
*RCCs	:	11,769
Rotary members	:	1,181,919
Rotaract members	:	221,650
Interact members	:	377,039

As on August 18, 2021

Erode Rotarians build a ₹20 crore hospital in a record 45 days

Rasheeda Bhagat

I am absolutely awestruck and speechless... and am experiencing such a great feeling as I stand here before you at this wonderful hospital. A hospital that has been built and equipped at a cost of ₹20 crore, and in just 45 days," said RI President Shekhar Mehta, participating in an event where a 401-bed state-of-the-art Covid hospital built by Rotarians in Erode was handed over to the Erode Government Medical College Hospital.

Totally overwhelmed at the magnitude, timing and lightning speed of the project, he told PDG Dr EK Sagadhevan, RID 3203, the moving spirit behind the project: "You have not made only my day, but my whole year as RI president. For it takes a lot of courage to embark on a project of this magnitude and to complete it with such finesse in such a short time is not only a Rotary feat but an engineering marvel."

Mehta said that he was a builder by profession and "normally, just the

foundation takes around 40–45 days in a building. But here you have constructed an entire building in 45 days. Not just the building, you've also equipped it as a hospital to the last oxygen supply level. This is simply remarkable and I am sure it will go into the annals of Rotary history as one of the best projects ever done. In my 36 years in Rotary, I don't think I have seen a single project of this magnitude."

Another big positive was that the extra beds would allow the training

RI President Shekhar Mehta, RIDs Mahesh Kotbagi and AS Venkatesh at the hospital. Also present (from L): DG K Sundharalingam (2982), Rtn KK Vijayachandran, S Senguttuvan, PDGs A Karthikeyan (3203), EK Sagadhevan (3203), Kishore Kumar (3020), C Sivagnanaselvam (2982), P M Sivashankaran (3203), DG Shanmugasundaram (3203), DGN Dr S Sundararajan (3203) and PDG KA Kuriachan (3201).





Seated (from L): Rotary Health Care Trust President S Senguttuvan, RID Venkatesh, DG Shanmugasundaram, RI President Mehta, RID Kotbagi and PDG Kishore Kumar Cherukkumali. Standing (from L): V Rajamanickam, the Trust's vice-president; PDG Sivashankaran (mentor); V Mohanraj (treasurer); G. Shanmugam (founder trustee); PDG Dr Sagadhevan (founder chairman); KK Vijayachandhran (joint secretary) and MK Sivakumar (founder trustee).

of 150 additional doctors through this medical college hospital.

In a lighter vein, he referred to Sagadhevan's speech where he had said the hospital project team had decided to take it to this magnitude because Mehta always urged Rotarians to make bigger and bolder projects. "Well, I keep saying this all the time and am so happy that it has made such a big impact here."

Earlier, giving details of the genesis of the hospital project, PDG Sagadhevan said that during the second wave of the Covid pandemic in May, when there were no hospital beds available in the region — Coimbatore, Salem and

Erode — "and people were going from one hospital to another in ambulances, hooked to oxygen machines, and sometimes even dying because they could not get an ICU bed," Rtn Sivabalan, a member of RC Erode, approached the dean of the Govt Hospital Dr Mani. He offered to donate 75 Covid beds from Rotary, but the dean wondered where he would put all those beds and suggested that the Rotarians also give a hospital building to put those beds. This is a teaching hospital and is located in a gigantic campus stretching to 300 acres in Erode.

Huge CSR donations

Sagadhevan added that this hospital had 1,000 beds but not one was available for patients during the height of the second wave. "We felt that if the predicted third wave comes, this region should have additional capacity to treat Covid patients." The government hospital provided the land, and soon what began as a ₹75 lakh project exploded into a ₹20 crore project, which included two TRF global grants totalling around ₹1.5 crore (\$200,000). As the Rotarians went into a huddle to

raise the money — ₹14.5 crore for the building and the remaining ₹5.5 crore for medical equipment — the builder, Rtn K Nandagopal, an AKS member from RC Tirupur South, suggested that precast technology should be used as the hospital needed to come up at the earliest. "As we had no money to begin with, he himself came forward to donate ₹1 crore for this project. We formed a trust — Rotary Health Care Trust — and without any hesitation 125 Rotarians from Erode donated ₹5 lakh each, and we made all of them trustees."

Next, they tapped CSR funds and managed to get ₹2 crore from **Shakthi Masala group**, ₹2 crore from the **Olirum Erode Foundation**, and ₹1 crore from **Nani Agro Foods** which makes Aditya masala.

Sagadhevan is the Founder trustee, S Senguttuvan, past president of RC Erode, is the president of the Trust, Sivabalan the secretary, and everybody who donated a substantial amount is either an executive trustee or a trustee. He added that there were no corners cut in equipping the hospital, and all the beds have oxygen supply; there are

**In my 36 years in Rotary,
I don't think I have seen a single
project of this magnitude.**

Shekhar Mehta
RI President

58 ICU beds, 58 dialysis beds. "Once Covid is behind us, this will be converted into a non-Covid Rotary specialty hospital, with consultation rooms, four operation theatres, etc. The hospital has been designed keeping future possibilities in mind," he added.

Striking an emotional note, he said what had enthused the core team involved in the project the most was the thought that "this permanent hospital will continue to save lives beyond our lifetime; that is our objective. As we worked day and night to bring it up in record time, there were 1,000 Covid cases in this government hospital, and our family members were most anxious about the danger of our getting infected, but we continued and completed the project."

He also thanked DG K Shanmughasundaram, and PDG PM Sivashankaran for their "total involvement and support", adding that this unique project had achieved the double objective of not only enhancing Rotary's public image, but also growing Rotary. "As the construction began, many non-Rotarians contributed ₹5 lakh for it, and later joined Rotary; over 100 new members have been added by

**In India, we make temples,
but today you have created a
temple of service, hope and
healing in an incredible short
span of 45 days.**

Mahesh Kotbagi
RI Director

RCs Erode and Erode Central thanks to this project." Rotarians from other neighbouring districts have contributed ₹2 lakh and joined as trustees; the Trust now has 11 executive trustees, 125 trustees and over 200 members.

He added, "We find several times that club members don't contribute for projects; but this time the money came in from club members in Erode, neighbouring clubs, our entire district (3203) and also neighbouring districts, with several PDGs contributing." Money has come from other countries too; anybody from any country could contribute and become a trustee.

Addressing the meet, Dr Mani, dean of the hospital, said that during the second wave, as people were dying for lack of hospital beds with oxygen "I was in extreme agony and could not sleep. But I believe in two things — prayers, and gratitude. I am extremely thankful to Rotary and Rotarians who came forward to help us in our time of need. I sleep much better now because I have an additional 401 beds, thanks to Rotary."

But, he added, having built such a quality hospital, the Rotarians needed to do him another favour. "At some point I will go, but you should promise me that you will maintain the hospital that you have built."

A temple of hope and healing
RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, a doctor himself who runs a hospital in Pune, said: "I am speechless, and don't have the words today. In India, we make temples, but today you have created a temple of service, hope and healing in an incredible short span of 45 days. Collecting ₹20 crore in 45 days is akin to collecting half a crore of rupees a day. I would urge you to add to the

RI President Mehta hands over the Rotary hospital's key to the Erode Government Hospital dean Dr Mani in the presence of RIDs Kotbagi, Venkatesh and members of the Rotary Health Care Trust.



existing capacity and make the area 1 lakh sqft.”

Recalling his own anxiety and agony during the second wave of Covid at his Pune hospital, Kotbagi said that one day when one of his staff members told him that “we have 160 patients in ICU and in the next four hours we will run out of liquid oxygen, my heart skipped a beat. I became breathless when I heard this. We doctors are in an industry where day in and day out we deal with people who come with pain, suffering, agony. Creating a hospital is a tough job, but running a hospital and maintaining it is tougher.” Hence Dr Mani, the dean, had done a very smart thing by asking Rotary to also maintain the hospital and “I assure him that Rotary will do this.”

RI Director AS Venkatesh, referring to Dr Mani’s words that he could not sleep during the worst phase of the second wave of Covid, congratulated the Rotarians for “this amazing project. You have done great service by coming forward to help him. A true Rotarian is one, who when he sees a child not going to a school, thinks about not just putting her in school, but building a school for that child. You have done the same by

building a hospital to put the beds you had originally offered, and come to the rescue of Dr Mani.”

Referring to President Mehta’s oft-repeated mantra of “do more and grow more” Venkatesh said: “He is never satisfied with doing anything small, and he doesn’t hesitate to tell us so on our face. That is the kind of inspiration and motivation he has given all Rotarians. Today you have made him proud by doing this project and proving that if you find a good cause, the money will come, as it did — all of ₹20 crore. And you achieved the amazing feat of

Four records

PDG EK Sagadhevan said that even as the project was expanding, the trustees were aware that they were going to create a record of sorts in building a hospital of 69,200 sqft in a record time of 45 days with precast, innovative technology. “So we applied for four records; their representatives came and inspected the site even as the

construction was going on and we have managed to enter four record books, for being the largest hospital built through precast technology in a record time of 45 days.”

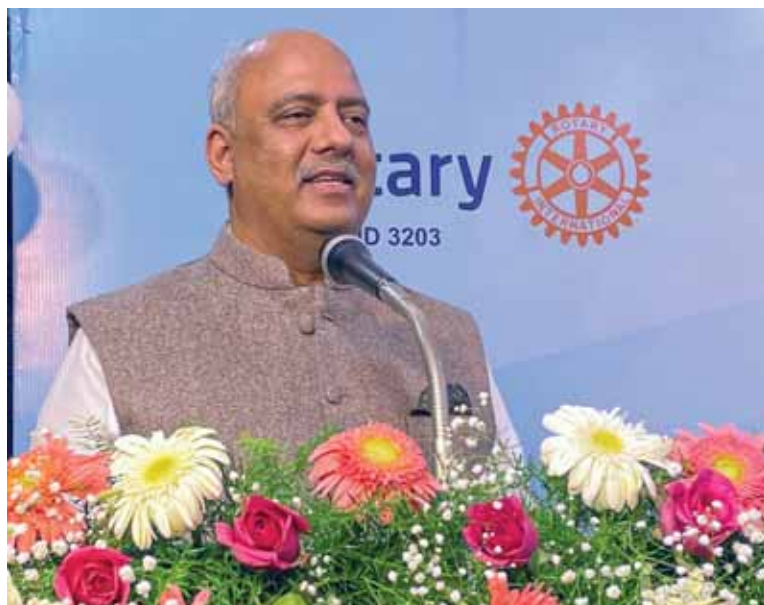
This project has been certified in the Elite World Record, Asian Records Academy, Indian Records Academy and Tamilan Book of Records.

building a hospital in 45 days using new technology.”

Addressing the meet, TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty said all those who donated for this project “have made a magnanimous gesture, but what satisfies me is that TRF has also supported this project by sanctioning two GGs, each around ₹75 lakh for equipping the hospital. I congratulate you Rotarians for your enthusiasm and ingenuity in coming up with such a unique project.”

Mehta had the last word when he said: “If there is a third wave of Covid... I hope it doesn’t happen, but if it does, how well you would have served the community and what a huge contribution you would have made in saving lives by creating this hospital. Thank you RID Venky and Dr Saga for the leadership you provide in your region... I salute you both.”

He had always maintained that “the greatest reward for service is the opportunity to do more service. And in this journey of service there are no goals to reach, only milestones to cross. Now the next project you do can’t be smaller, it has to be bigger and bolder.” If this was done, Mehta promised to come once again to inaugurate such a project during his presidential year.



Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

RI President on the move



RI President Shekhar Mehta being received at the Coimbatore airport by PDG A Karthikeyan in the presence of PDGs AV Pathy, KA Kuriachan and Rtn S Senguttuvan. PDG Kishore Kumar is also seen.

Below: (From L) RID A S Venkatesh, RI President Mehta and RID Mahesh Kotbagi enjoy a traditional meal.





Above: President Mehta felicitates contributors to the Each One Bring One programme at Erode in the presence of RID Mahesh Kotbagi (third from R) and DG K Shanmugasundaram (RID 3203).



Left: President Mehta with RIDs Venkatesh and Kotbagi at the Erode hospital; (above) with RID Venkatesh at the Chennai airport.

10 years of giving hope to burn victims

Jaishree

Over 600 burn victims have benefited immensely since 2012 through *Hope after Fire* (HAF), a unique flagship project of RC Coimbatore Metropolis, RID 3201, being implemented in partnership with the Ganga Hospital, Coimbatore.

Leading the project is club member Dr S Raja Sabapathy, director of the hospital and head of its reconstructive surgery wing. He points out that following a series of surgical reconstructions, the victims are able to return home in a much better condition and, more importantly, able to use their limbs to do productive work.

The 1,000th surgery under the project was performed in July '21 on Nikki Devi by Dr Sabapathy. Nikki and her husband, both hailing from UP, are migrant workers settled in Erode with their two children. Five years ago, a major fire accident while cooking left Nikki's face disfigured. The fingers of her left arm got plastered together rendering

the arm totally useless. "We have done the first stage of a very major surgery and in six months, following a couple of more procedures, she will be fine," smiles Dr Sabapathy.

These surgeries are carried out free for needy patients, says Palaniappan, president, RC Coimbatore Metropolis. The club takes care of the hospital expenses and the consumables, while the hospital contributes by waiving surgeons' fees and other professional charges. The project value until Aug '21 is **₹6.29 crore (\$845,276)**. Successive leaders of the club have wholeheartedly supported it through regular fundraising (about ₹3.99 crore) and the hospital has contributed its services worth ₹2.3 crore since 2012. Until August 2021, 1,010 reconstructive surgeries have been performed on 606 burn victims.

"We are keen to not only keep it going but also expand its reach significantly to cover many more such people. Money is not a constraint.





We want to spread awareness about HAF so that more people benefit from this initiative.

Palaniappan

President

RC Coimbatore Metropolis



Clockwise: Dr S Raja Sabapathy, director, Ganga Hospital, Coimbatore; Nikki Devi on whom the 1000th surgery of the *Hope after Fire* project was performed; Thilagavathy, a beneficiary of *Hope after Fire*, is now able to lead a near-normal life, participating in household chores and helping her husband in his weaving activities; Srija, whose feet were badly burnt, walking with special shoes after a series of reconstructive surgeries.



We want to spread awareness about HAF so that more people benefit from this initiative,” says Palaniappan.

“Most of the fire accident survivors wish they were dead rather than alive and face societal rejection. Disfigured and deformed, they battle depression and older people face the additional challenge of earning a livelihood,” says the surgeon. With right treatment such disfigurement can be corrected. But it requires more than just one sitting, and a lot of patience and resolve, he adds.

HAF has earned accolades from senior Rotary leaders such as PRIPs Rajendra Saboo and K R Ravindran and PRID C Basker for the functional transformation brought about in the survivors. Most of these beneficiaries are leading near-normal lives and even contributing to the family’s financial wellbeing, says Dr Sabapathy with quite pride.

“Each patient we have treated has a story to tell. But when we see the visible outcome and the immense joy the cure gives the patients and the people surrounding them, it is then we realise the power and magic of Rotary,” he adds. HAF has been shortlisted for the *British Medical Journal’s* South Asia Award and he is hopeful of winning it. ■

RC Delhi South launches Beti Siksha

Rasheeda Bhagat

In Rotary year 2020–21, our club members spontaneously decided to take up a project to empower girls because it is common knowledge that even after 73 years of Independence, the birth of a girl child is not welcomed in many Indian homes. Quite often she is neglected from birth and faces discrimination, humiliation, and oppression all through; be it in her education or healthcare,” says Kriti Makhija, secretary (20–21) of Rotary Club of Delhi South, RID 3011.

Keeping in mind the kind of barriers that girls from lower-middle classes encounter, even when it comes to primary education, and adhering to

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*’, “and to further our commitment to the education and independence of women of tomorrow, we launched a project titled *Beti ko Shiksha aur Samman*. The project had the objective to give scholarships to 200 girls from underprivileged families,” she says.

The scheme involves paying the monthly fees of around ₹1,000 per child for 200 girls from marginalised families to ensure they remain in school and achieve their full potential.

This project was the brainchild of Anil K Agarwal, who was then the club’s president-elect. RC Delhi South





has 64 members and is in its 53rd year, being the second oldest Rotary club in Delhi. "I'm proud to tell you that almost 40 per cent of leadership positions in our club are held by women," Kriti beams.

When the details of this project were discussed with club members, they embraced the project enthusiastically, and "in the very first year of the project, we received an overwhelming response from our members and donors, who are mostly their friends and family members."



A whopping amount of ₹32.76 lakh poured in; "enough to provide scholarships to 273 children, which was above our target of 200," smiles Kriti. She says the club members worked tirelessly to get the money required from their circle of friends, family and acquaintances. "The solidarity amongst the members, who worked together closely for this community welfare project to empower girls from needy families was exemplary," adds Agarwal.

To identify the right students, who were not exactly poor, but came from lower-middle class families, at the same time ensuring that the candidates were bright and keen to pursue a quality education, the club drew up a plan. "The girls we selected do not actually come from slums, they are above the poverty line, and are already in school, but faced the danger of being pulled out because their family were under financial pressure and struggling to pay their fees. They were actually interested in keeping their daughters in school and money was the only criterion between the girls and a quality education," she adds.

The scheme itself had clear guidelines; the beneficiaries had to have merit and a decent academic performance record, be from Class 6 to 8, and score consistently at least 65 per cent in their results. "Or else, they should have extraordinary talent in fields such as arts, sports, music etc. And the family income of the student should not exceed ₹20,000 a month," says Agarwal, the club president.

The girls selected for scholarships were from NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Committee) schools, and the Rotarians reached out to the NDMC to identify 200 meritorious

girl students from the NDMC schools in the locality.

Once the 200 girls were identified from about 23 NDMC schools, the club started paying the monthly fee of ₹1,000 from Jan 2021.

What is admirable is this project is both long-drawn and sustainable. “We have decided that once we pick a girl for scholarship, we will see her through high school,” says Kriti. To ensure that the child continues to do well in her class, once the Covid restrictions are lifted, a group of Rotarians who form the core committee of this project, will meet the beneficiaries at regular intervals and monitor their progress. “We will receive the quarterly report card of every student supported by us, so we can track their progress and support them with any intervention, where required. We will also remain in touch with their teachers to identify their needs and progress.”

Both Agarwal and Kriti are passionate about their project and want it to be a sustainable one, with the objective of seeing the girl complete her schooling. So will the brighter ones be helped through college also, I ask Kriti.

“We have not yet thought about that. In the second leg, we want to get those who reach high school, some counselling for vocational training so that they can be financially independent. But yes, in the near future we might come up with a project where



we could support a much smaller number of really talented girls through college or a vocational training course,’ she responds.

Incidentally, both Agarwal and Kriti have really worked hard for the *Beti Siksha* project, and raised almost 80 per cent of the funds finally put together. “We are happy to note that with our support, their needs such as Wi-Fi for online classes, books, course materials, stationary etc are being met,” says Agarwal.

As a girl child education goes beyond schooling and towards making her independent and empowered, the club members also realised the importance of imparting knowledge and skills “to compete in the labour

market; learn socio-emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world; make decisions about their own lives; and contribute to their communities and the world.”

Towards this goal, in RY 21–22 the club plans to implement another layer of support... career counselling for girl students from 10th–12th classes to guide them in choosing and planning their future — either further education or choosing their area of work. “We are also evaluating the possibility of tying up with institutions to get psychometric testing done for girl students to be able to identify their core strengths and areas of interest,” she added.

The gung-ho core committee members of this project plan to expand it to include 500 or more girl students in 2021–22. “This will empower the young girls to get proper education, know, understand and avail government schemes/benefits which are available but often go begging because of lack of awareness.”

Through this project the hope is a spiral-down effect — late marriage and hence prevention of motherhood at a young and tender age, better nutrition and healthcare, few children, and overall empowerment of women. ■



Gordon McInally

selected 2023–24 RI President



Gordon R McInally, a member of RC South Queensferry, Lothian, Scotland, is the selection of the Nominating Committee for President of Rotary International for 2023–24. He will be declared the president-nominee on October 1 if no challenging candidates have been suggested.

McInally lauded Rotary’s ability to adapt technologically during the Covid-19 pandemic, saying the approach should continue and be combined with the best of our past practices as Rotary seeks to grow and increase engagement.

“We have learnt there is a willingness within communities to care for one another,” he says, “and we must ensure that we encourage people who have recently embraced the concept of volunteering to join us to allow them to continue giving service.”

McInally says that senior leaders’ ability to communicate directly with club members online will be one positive legacy of the changes Rotary has had to make. But, he adds, “face-to-face

meetings remain important, as they encourage greater interaction.”

The best way to increase membership is engagement, according to McInally. To better support clubs, he says, Rotary International, regional leaders and district teams all need to engage with them. Engagement through social media will reinforce Rotary’s brand and showcase the opportunities that come with it. And engagement with governments, corporations, and other organisations will lead to meaningful partnerships. With better engagement, “we will grow Rotary both by way of membership and in our ability to provide meaningful service.”

He adds, “Membership is the lifeblood of our organisation. I would encourage the use of the flexibility now available to establish new-style clubs that would appeal to a different demographic.”

McInally, a graduate of dental surgery at the University of Dundee, owned and operated his own dental practice

in Edinburgh. He was the chair of the British Paedodontic Society and has held various academic positions. He has also served as a Presbytery elder, chair of Queensferry Parish Congregational Board and commissioner to the church’s general assembly.

A Rotary member since 1984, McInally has been president and vice-president of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland. He has also served as RI director and as member or chair of several committees. He is currently an adviser to the 2022 Houston Convention Committee and vice-chair of the Operations Review Committee.

McInally and his wife, Heather, are Major Donors and Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation. They are also members of the Bequest Society. ■



Medical equipment for Covid centre in Mumbai

Team Rotary News

Medical equipment worth ₹20 lakh were donated by RC New Bombay Seaside, RID 3142, to the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation for treating patients at

its Covid care centre in Vashi, Mumbai. This project was done with support from GN Hearing India which had donated for this cause under its CSR funding. The critical care equipment



were handed over to the corporation commissioner Abhijit Bangar by DG Mayuresh Warke and Sunil Vinzanekar, MD of GN Hearing India.

“This CSR activity is a good example of organisations coming together to do something good for the community,” said the DG. ■

Rotary Prez announces recognition for membership growth

V Muthukumaran

Setting a three-point working agenda for Rotarians in zone-4, 5, 6 and 7 (Indian subcontinent) for his presidential year, RI President Shekhar Mehta declared that EOBO (Each One Bring One) pins and ‘thank you’ certificates will be given to those who bring in new members. The thank you note will be signed by Mehta and RI general secretary, and those who bring 25 new members will have their photos displayed in the Virtual Hall of Fame at the RI headquarters in Evanston.

In a freewheeling *tete-a-tete* over zoom with DGs, zonal and district membership coordinators, regional leaders and club presidents, Mehta called upon them to also focus on two other priority areas — empowering

girls and Rotary Days of Service, in which clubs can unite to showcase signature projects of their district once every quarter to enhance Rotary’s public image at a mega event in which non-Rotarians participate in large numbers.

During his visit to the installation events at RIDs 3011 (Delhi), 3141 (Mumbai), and 3131 (Pune), he had persuaded the new governors to raise their membership target to over 2,000 net growth (for each district) this year, he said. “While we have added 40,000 new members in the last 10–12 years, we have inducted over 10,000 Rotarians last year (2020–21) alone across our four zones.” And in the first 25 days of the current year, the zones had already inducted over 10,000 new members.

If only each club adopts EOBO, “we can grow more to do more and really move mountains,” he added.

Recalling his meeting with UP chief minister, the MoU with Haryana government, the e-learning content for 1,000 schools in Punjab; and the resolve to do 10 per cent of GoI’s projects in check dams and water bodies in the next five years, he said he will be writing to PM Narendra Modi on Rotary India’s ambition to usher in *Saakshar Bharat* (literate India) by 2025.

Mehta urged governors to seek the help of Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) and Rotary India Humanity (RIHF) for getting sponsors and finding the right resource persons for project implementation across Rotary’s seven focus areas.

While serving humanity is Rotary’s business, “membership is our greatest asset and gets the highest priority as it is the raw material with which we come out with our finished product, that is, service,” said PRID Kamal Sanghvi,



RI President Shekhar Mehta (R) with RID AS Venkatesh.

membership chair at RI. The new mantra in the bylanes of the Rotary world is EOBO and “our zones have risen up to his challenge as in just one month (Jan 23-Feb 23, 2021) we inducted over 6,000 new members under the Paul Harris Membership Challenge.”

NextGen clubs

Calling for a flexible approach in forming clubs, he said, “each district must have at least 10–15 e-clubs as we are opening up to diversify our membership under the new DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) policy. We need to bring in more women in our clubs as they form just 24 per cent of our global membership as against 48 per cent of the world population. In India, women’s membership is much lower at 14–16 per cent.” He mooted the idea of forming Rotary clubs in apartment clusters and residential colonies as part of diversification.

Sanghvi urged DGs to “excite the Rotaractors” to join Rotary clubs and impress each of them to bring at least one Rotarian and a Rotaractor. “We need to be consistent in increasing our brand messaging and visibility through high-impact projects and showcasing our work to a larger audience.” To retain members, club presidents must give opportunities for members to get involved in service projects.

Rotarians, clubs, DGs and district membership chairs (DMCs) who bring in new members will be given appreciation letters signed by Mehta with recognition pins of graded value (Level-1, 2, 3 etc) based on the number of new members they sponsor over time. Likewise, star certifications with pins will be given to DGs and DMCs if they form 10 new clubs and in multiples thereafter. Districts and clubs that achieved 100 per cent retention will get a specially-designed pin with certificate signed by RI president.

“EOBO has become the new religion of Rotary; thanks to Mehta for



RID Mahesh Kotbagi (L) with PRID Kamal Sanghvi.

coming out with a game-changing concept,” he said. Rotarians can also refer their relatives and friends in other cities and towns for membership and get duly rewarded, he added.

Sync data with websites

For clubs to get RI recognition, they have to sync all their uploaded data (membership, projects and programmes) on *rotary.org* with *rotaryindia.org* by using the authorised vendor Roster on Wheels, said RID Mahesh Kotbagi. Clubs must actively upload their projects and performance at *rotaryindia.org*, he said, and added that from Aug 19, a Master Class programme will be held every Wednesday for DGs, district leaders and club presidents on making effective use of this portal and the Rotary India App.

Another priority area is Rotary Days of Service in which during every quarter, a few clubs may join to showcase a mega project of the district for the benefit of the larger public as this would boost the public image of Rotary, thus attracting new members in the process. Each district or a group of clubs can host 3–4 such events in a quarter so that the general public can appreciate the work being done by Rotary.

Empowering girls

In his presentation, RID A S Venkatesh said **132 million girls** dropped out of school in the last few years across India, which was an alarming situation. All the focus areas of Rotary can be leveraged to empower girls. These include sending them back to school through the Asha Kiran programme, distribution of educational aids, building gender-segregated toilets, gifting bicycles and installing solar lamps in rural homes. “The three As — availability, accessibility and affordability — are critical elements for any project to empower girls/women,” he said. Also, skill development programmes can be designed to provide a regular source of income for them, he said.

A range of advocacy programmes such as talk shows, rallies, *nukkad* performance, puppet shows and flash mobs can be implemented with the help of Rotaractors, said Venkatesh. Mehta intervened to point out that DGs can share ideas and give suggestions on means to empower rural women by uploading their views and plans on *rotaryindia.org*. Around 1,200 club presidents, PDGs, governors and Rotary coordinators took part in the webinar. ■

A Marathon Man

Rajendra Saboo

Ever energetic and enthusiastic, never tiring, physically and emotionally, a man of a long race, was Carlo Ravizza. Possessing multi-skills, some of them family traits, he had an active 96-year life span. I have always enjoyed his company as a companion and co-traveller on his Rotary journey.

Carlo was born in Milan, Italy to a prosperous family. His father, also Carlo, was born in St Gallen, Switzerland. Carlo senior migrated to Milan after World War I. Growing up in a bilingual environment and attending different international schools, Carlo became a linguist and quickly learned French, English and Portuguese. Carlo's father was an architect, and his son inherited the business as also the values of honesty and integrity. Expanding his undertaking, and facing tension, at times he neglected his family. A friend advised him to join Rotary to ease his tension. Thus, in 1971 he became a member of the Rotary Club of Milano Sud-Ovest, Italy. Soon he became its president for 1972–74, and

district governor in 1977–78. I was district governor in 1976–77 and we met around that period. I was Rotary International director in 1981–83 and he in 1984–86. During these years we had frequent interactions. I used to travel to South Germany on business through Zurich. Frequently, I would break for 2–3 days in Luzern in Switzerland. Carlo had his home and office around Luzern, and I would visit him for lunch. If Usha was with me Rossana would also join. And they enjoyed cooking vegetarian food for us. Of course, we talked substantially about Rotary, including its philosophy. We both shared the feeling that Rotary had been a teacher in life.

When I got nominated as RI president I had to quickly decide the Convention committee. The Convention was originally slated to be in Barcelona but the city was not ready and likely it would be changed, the alternative option being Orlando, Florida, US. I appointed Carlo vice-chairman of the Convention. As an

architect and civil engineer, he would check the feasibility at Barcelona and if the venue was Orlando, he would help in site logistics. I had full confidence in him and his multiple skills.

In the meanwhile, Carlo's Rotary career got disturbed. For RI president (1993–94) his name was proposed by his district. Instead, Robert Barth of Switzerland got nominated. I, as RI president, was attending the combined Rotary Institute for RIBI and Europe in 1991 at London. Carlo expressed to me his total disappointment. Speaking at the Institute, he openly expressed his emotions of depression with tears in his eyes. Later, I consoled him that with his qualities and experience he surely would get the chance when the Nominating Committee would think of Europe.

He did get nominated in 1998 to become the RI president for 1999–2000. In fact, this, being the advent of the

new millennium, it became a very significant year. At his International Assembly he announced the forward looking theme “Rotary 2000: Act with Consistency, Credibility, Continuity”.

Carlo chose Jonathan Majjiyagbe, who later became RI president, as his aide. Carlo had been impressed by Jon's performance as TRF trustee appointed earlier by RI President Robert Barth. Also Carlo and Jonathan were good friends. Carlo confided that he wanted to have an intellectual, enlightened and knowledgeable Rotary leader from Africa. Jonathan filled that slot and became his confidant and adviser. As RI president, Carlo flowed the idea of a three-year term for an RI president in the future. The idea was incompatible. Nonetheless, that was his vision.

Carlo visited India many times. He was passionate about polio eradication. India was

PRIP Rajendra Saboo with PRIP Carlo Ravizza and his wife Rossana during one of their visits to Delhi.





PRIP Ravizza, as TRF chair, along with the then RI President Glenn Estess (fourth from R), at the RI Presidential Polio Summit held in Delhi in 2004, for which the then President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam was the chief guest. Also seen (from L): Vinita Gupta, PRIP Saboo, Rossana, PRID Sushil Gupta, PRID Sudarshan Agarwal and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee.

the world capital of polio virus transmission and Carlo visited it before getting into the presidency circuit. Carlo and Rossana came to attend the Rotary Institute 1998 under the chairmanship of Kalyan Banerjee, then RI director. They arrived few days earlier to attend the 7th Rotary Awards for Service to Humanity on Dec 9, 1998. After the Institute Carlo and Rossana left for Italy.

Within a few days, Carlo, with Rossana, returned as RI president-nominee to attend the CoL in Delhi from Jan 12–16, 1998. Thereafter, as friend, Carlo and Rossana came to Chandigarh. He did participate as chief guest at the installation of an Interact club in a school and also at the career seminar. They left Chandigarh for Delhi, accompanied by me, and we halted at late PRID YP Das's

residence at Ambala. We stayed in Delhi and watched the famous Republic Day parade.

Carlo as RI president-elect went to Pakistan in January 1999 and on Jan 29, from Lahore they crossed the Wagha (Attari border) and DG Riaz and DGN Akhnoor bid them farewell. With DG Arun Kapur and other District 3070 leaders, and their wives, I received them. They walked a few metres from Pakistan to India and at common land, got the salutation from the border police of both the countries. After a big meeting in Amritsar Carlo and Rossana, escorted by me, took the Shatabdi to New Delhi. DG Sanjeev Khanna, Sushil Gupta, DGE Ranjan Dhingra and other Rotary leaders received us at the station.

Carlo as RI president came to Kolkata on April 2, 1999, and was received by RI President Shekhar Mehta, then DGE in Carlo's team.

The couple stayed under Shekhar's care visiting projects and inaugurating a Rotary hospital.

As TRF chair he came to Delhi to attend the RI Presidential Polio Summit in August 2004, joining RI President Glenn Estess. The event was held under the leadership of then RI Director Sushil Gupta. President of India APJ Abdul Kalam was the chief guest and PRIP Banerjee was also there. We visited both the President of India and also Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Carlo had come to attend the Rotary Institute in Chennai in December 2002. Addressing the audience, mostly past governors, he said, "I have done 55 district conferences as RI president's representative..." Later, as a friend, I told him that most of the past governors had not served as RI president's representative even once. He immediately realised what he had done

and sincerely thanked me for the advice.

I knew Carlo as a practical visionary. He had a vision and being a civil engineer realised that visions need foundation on reality. Yet he never compromised his ideals. At times he was misunderstood as rough but within he had an angelic heart. Rossana always neutralised his exterior. She has been an extremely warmhearted person. She always called me Mr President. Usha and I remember the couple as one of our best friends.

Once in Evanston, I asked him where he went for his morning walk. He said, "To Chicago, about 15 miles away." On asking how did he return, he replied, "Same, walking." Indeed, Carlo was a marathon walker. Not winning against anyone but challenging himself. He was truly a marathoner in life.

The writer is a past RI president

Home turf bids adieu to President Shekhar

Rasheeda Bhagat

At a glittering, gala event organised in Kolkata by the chairman of global membership Kamal Sanghvi, senior Rotary leaders from India felicitated RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rashi on the first day of his assuming charge as RI president.

The participants included RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi and his wife Amita, TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty, several district governors, past district governors and members of Rotary Club of Calcutta Mahanagar, Mehta's home club.

Responding to the warm wishes and encomiums showered on him in an event filled with nostalgia, walk down memory lane, music and dance, Mehta was, for a moment, at a loss for words. But he soon regained his composure, reiterated his dreams for Rotary — a much higher membership achieved through the “Each one bring one” initiative, bigger and bolder projects, working passionately and relentlessly to take Rotary's public image to a pinnacle, so that it becomes the NGO of choice for those who want to help the less fortunate.

Mehta said that though he would be leaving for Evanston in a week or two, he would continue to live up to his reputation to wake up many of them late at night to discuss ideas and projects he had in mind for Rotary.

He thanked everyone present at the meet for their support to him, without which, he said, he would not have made it to RI's top-most post.



Clockwise: RI President Shekhar Mehta launches RC Calcutta Mahanagar, his home club's MHM programme by distributing menstrual hygiene kits to adolescent schoolgirls. Rashi, Amita and RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi are also present; PDG John Daniel with Shobha Kishore, Amita, Rashi and Sonal in an entertainment programme; An invocation dance; RI President Mehta and Rashi greet the delegates; Rashi gives a piece of cake to PRID Kamal Sanghvi. TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty, Amita, Sonal, RID Kotbagi and RI President Mehta are also seen.





From left: RID Kotbagi and Amita being felicitated by PDG Kishore Kumar and Shobha;

(From L) PRID Kamal Sanghvi, Amita, Rashi, RI President Mehta, RID Kotbagi and Sonal.

Below: RID Kotbagi and Amita with PRID Kamal Sanghvi and Sonal.





RI President Mehta and Rashi.



Above: RI President Mehta and Rashi pose for photographs with district leaders.

Left: (From L) PRID Kamal Sanghvi, RID Kotbagi, RI President Mehta, Rashi, Amita, Sonal and Shobha.



Rotary-Rotaract synergy in RID 3291

Jaishree

Rotary clubs in RID 3291 are creating a role model by associating with Rotaract clubs to implement service projects and design various programmes. “It has been an exciting journey for Rotaractors since the start of this year,” says DRR Arka Kumar Nag as he leads the district’s Rotaract team to work with Rotarians. He was invited as a guest of honour for the installation of DG Prabir Chatterjee and a special guest for the installation of 15 Rotary club presidents, all of which he considers a “great honour”. Rotarians have also attended his installation as DRR, he says.

Rotaract’s elevated status was a landmark decision approved by the 2019 CoL to make Rotary more appealing to young professionals,

thanks to PRIP Barry Rassin who formally proposed the move for Rotary membership to include both Rotary and Rotaract and batted for Rotarians to treat Rotaractors as equals and engage them in their community activities. The fallout of the CoL saw several positive policy changes including one which encourages Rotaractors to serve alongside Rotarians on district and RI committees.

Each of the 18 Rotary committees in RID 3291 has a Rotaractor as co-chair. “This has enhanced the morale of Rotaractors. It gives us an opportunity to contribute effectively to Rotary’s overall goals. For instance, the co-chair of the Rotary Interact Committee who is a Rotaractor is responsible for adding

more Interactors and Interact clubs. This becomes easy as Rotaractors can connect easily with schoolchildren,” says Nag. On the other hand, PDGs have been appointed as chief advisors and mentors at the district Rotaract council.

Rotary and Rotaract clubs are working together in three significant service projects in RID 3291 — a mega blood donation camp; an empowerment programme for girls/women called *Veerangana*, that includes life-skill training, self-defence workshops and legal counselling; and the *Hariyali* project that aims to plant 10,000 saplings across the district by the year-end. “It was good to accompany our DG and assistant governors to various project sites. I have learnt a lot from such visits on designing and implementing service projects, choosing deserving beneficiaries and sourcing supplies at competitive rates.”

The Rotary-Rotaract team is setting up a high school for tribal children at Pakur village. The school will be run by a Christian missionary and will have houses (groups) named after the four Indian RI presidents — PRIPs Nitish Laharry, Rajendra Saboo, Kalyan Banerjee and RI President Shekhar Mehta, and the auditorium will be named after Paul Harris. The foundation for the school was laid in mid-August.

Nag, a dual member, joined RAC Tollyunge in 2017 and served as its



DRR Arka Kumar Nag (R) with RI President Shekhar Mehta and RID 3291 DG Prabir Chatterjee (L).



DRR Nag and DG Chatterjee in one of the *Veerangana* programmes of the district.

president for three consecutive years. He joined RC Tollygunge this year as a Rotarian and serves as the club's Conflict Management chair. He is an advocate by profession.

As a Rotaractor he led his club to honour the artists who make huge Durga idols for *pandals* across Kolkata during Durga Puja. "We did this with guidance from our parent

The co-chair of the Rotary Interact Committee who is a Rotaractor is responsible for adding more Interactors and Interact clubs. This becomes easy as Rotaractors can connect easily with schoolchildren.

club, RC Tollygunge, and the state Labour department."

Other Rotaract projects done during his leadership include fixing 500 taps and controlling flow of water from the open pipes across Kolkata; providing books in Braille and white canes to the visually-challenged; and creating legal awareness in the community in association with RotaLaw (Research Organisation for Teaching and Advancement of Law).

As DRR his agenda includes organising eye wellness camps throughout the year and distributing spectacles. "Initially we have begun eye-screening for police personnel and municipal corporation workers in Kolkata and the Sundarbans. We aim to donate 20,000 spectacles through our Rotaract clubs and based on the programme's success, RI President Mehta has promised to help us expand it nationwide," he says.

Encouraged by Mehta's suggestion Nag is battling to transition

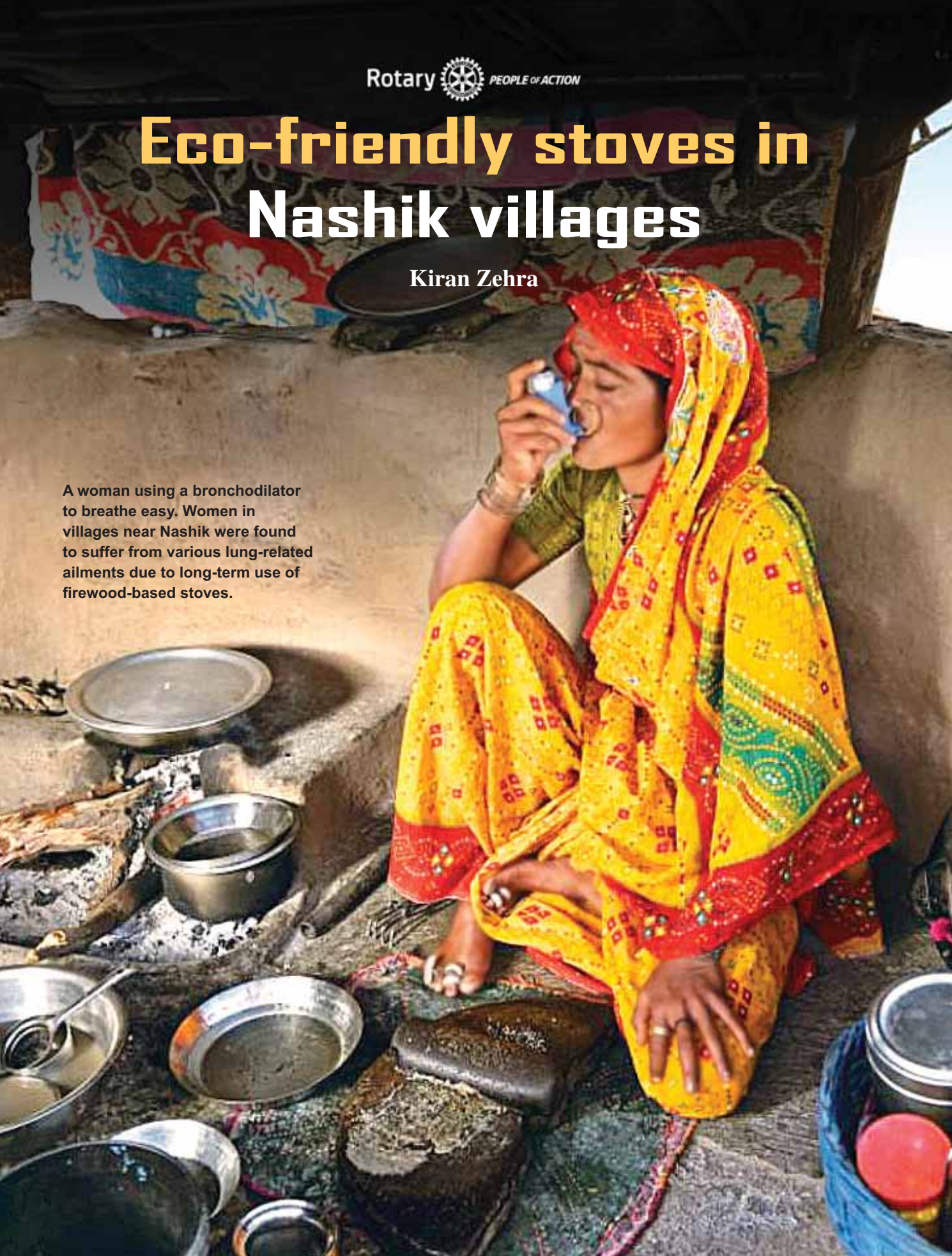
more Rotaractors into Rotary as dual members. The district had 47 dual members last year and he is hopeful of adding a considerable number this year. "We have a target to increase Rotaract membership to 1 million by 2029. When I updated the president that we Rotaractors will also work on *Each one, bring one* (EOBO), he modified it as EOBOR — that is each Rotaractor bring one dual member to Rotary. Then both Rotaract and Rotary membership will increase," says the DRR.

Nag is keen on Rotaract branding and plans to enhance Rotary and Rotaract's public image in all possible ways. The Rotary-Rotaract clubs are planning to distribute benches and desks to schools as suggested by Rotaract co-chair Ravi Vadlamani. All the furniture will sport the Rotary and Rotaract logos. The logos will also be printed on the tree guards to be installed around each of the 10,000 saplings to be planted. ■

Eco-friendly stoves in Nashik villages

Kiran Zehra

A woman using a bronchodilator to breathe easy. Women in villages near Nashik were found to suffer from various lung-related ailments due to long-term use of firewood-based stoves.





Members of RC Nasik after distributing smoke-free stoves in a village.

Smoke-free *chulhas* (cooking stoves) in Zari, Ambas, Behedpada, Navinpada, and Palshikhurd villages near Nashik, Maharashtra, have improved the lives of village women by drastically reducing toxic indoor air pollution and eliminating firewood. All thanks to RC Nasik, RID 3030, that distributed 250 smoke-free stoves to these villages.

Located 150km from Nashik, there is no black-topped road to connect with these villages, which are tucked in the heart of the Peth forest, a part of the Western Ghats. “The amount of firewood consumption for cooking has increased over the years, which is worrisome, and the lack of pucca roads makes it logistically challenging

By switching over to the new eco-friendly stove, the daily firewood consumption in these houses came down to 1.5kg from 5–7 kg.

to reach government schemes to poor households. Reaching LPG cylinders to them is also difficult when people have to travel several kilometers on bad roads,” says Praful Bardiya, in charge of CSR projects (2020–21).

A year ago, when the club did a life sustainability survey in the five hamlets, they found a direct link between the villagers’ health and the rapid deforestation. “Women complained of blurred vision, cough and chest congestion. We were shocked to find that the smoke was affecting infants too,” says Vivek Pendse, former club director, Village Adoption. The study revealed that a large number of trees were felled for use as firewood for cooking. “There are 50 houses in each village and on average, each of them requires wood from three trees a year. Which meant that 150 trees were being cut down in these villages annually,” he adds.

Following this study, a series of meetings was held with the villagers, especially the women, to sensitise them about the health hazards from traditional stoves. Using club funds, two smoke-free stoves were given to two families in each of the villages as a pilot project. By switching over to the new eco-friendly stove, the daily firewood consumption in these

houses came down to 1.5kg from 5–7 kg. “Women using the new stoves were thrilled and the village headmen requested that all households — around 250 — be provided with these new stoves.”

The club’s CSR team roped in Autocomp India which contributed ₹3 lakh to purchase new smokeless stoves from a local dealer. When the lockdown was lifted in June 2021, IPP Mugdha Lele and Bardiya, along with a few club members and company officials, distributed the new stoves to beneficiaries. “This project has improved our women’s quality of life as they are no longer exposed to smoke or other noxious fumes,” smiles Nanda, a homemaker at Ambas village. In each hamlet, close to 1,000 villagers will benefit from this eco-friendly project. Moreover, thousands of trees were saved from being axed,” smiles Pendse.

Covid vaccination camp

In a joint initiative, RC Nasik’s Rotary Charitable Trust, HCG Manavata Hospital and Indian Valve carried out a vaccination drive in which around 630 underprivileged people were vaccinated. A team of 40 Rotarians and 10 Rotaractors from RAC JDC Bytco College, Nashik, implemented the project. ■

RID 3141 builds low-cost houses for Palghar villagers

Team Rotary News

An ambitious low-cost housing project *Aashiyana* of RID 3141 for Adivasi families living in mud-reef huts across various *padas* (hamlets) in the Palghar district of Maharashtra has so far completed 110 pucca, concrete houses, while 215 units are under construction. The project team led by district project director Raj Khosla has got consent to deliver 425 houses. “Soon work on the balance 100 houses will start. Thanks to the large-heartedness and continued support of district Rotarians, we have got fresh commitments to build new houses which will be taken up in due course,” said IPDG Sunnil Mehra.

Khosla was assigned the task of initiating the project by contacting the local authorities for permission, roping in architects and selecting the building contractors. Before the initial forays, he had to convince the Adivasi beneficiaries to take advantage of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PM’s Housing Scheme) that provides low-cost homes to the rural poor. The *Aashiyana* project was implemented under the ambit of this scheme.

The GoI gave a subsidy of ₹1.2 lakh for a unit cost of ₹2 lakh and the project hit a stumbling block at the early stages itself as no contractor

was willing to work under the existing terms of the housing scheme. District secretary Anil Jain devised a “brilliant idea of conducting a fundraiser called ‘game of housie’ that was played across the district by rolling the dices. And one of the conditions is that to participate in this game, a club has to sponsor a house. In the first month itself, 50 houses were committed by the district clubs, and the game was a phenomenal success,” said Mehra.

Aashayein ‘Dil mein hogi’

But the money raised was not enough and Ann Mini Khosla curated a musical fundraiser titled *Aashayein dil mein hogi* (Hope in the heart) which collected sizeable CSR funds from the corporates.

The project team worked with the zilla parishad officials to release the government portion of funding, convinced the homeowners to demolish their existing dwellings and got the right contractors for the housing project. RCs Palghar, Dahanu and Wada helped the team to hold meetings with local officials including the gram panchayat sarpanch.

“Completing the first 50 houses was the toughest. But after the initial struggle, the *Aashiyana* team set up an excellent system and from there on the construction went smoothly,” said Mehra. Utmost care was taken in designing the house to ensure optimum use of available space and provide an aesthetic look.

One of the beneficiaries of the *Aashiyana* housing project in their old home.



A joyful moment

While handing over the first house, DG Mehra felt embarrassed, though happy, after a beneficiary, an 80-year-old woman bent and touched his feet as a token of gratitude to Rotary. She broke a coconut, did a small puja before entering the house. After completing the ritual, she took out a box of *pedas*, and put a piece in Mehra's mouth. "She was happy to step into her very own new home for the first time in her life."

The club presidents who went to hand over the completed houses announced a number of service projects for the beneficiaries — a 3H Project (health, hunger and hygiene) where food grains and reusable sanitary pads were distributed; around 1,600 children were given nutritious food to tackle malnourishment; bore wells were dug and pipelines laid for supply of tap water to all houses; and



A low-cost home built under Project Aashiyana with its new owner.

construction of community and medical centres for the Adivasi families was announced. Rtn Dilip Shah from RC

Bombay Hanging Gardens provided tube lights and fans to be installed at the Rotary Aashiyana houses. ■

Rotary Oxybanks save Covid patients in Odisha



IPDG Saumya Rajan Mishra handing over oxygen cylinders and medical accessories to a Rotary club for the Oxybank.

During the Covid second wave, like most other cities, Bhubaneswar was also reeling under oxygen shortage and with surging demand, price of oxygen cylinders skyrocketed and black marketing for the lifesaving gas was rampant.

In this scenario RID 3262 led by the then DG Saumya Rajan Mishra floated an idea to set up Oxybanks through Rotary clubs across the district. Project coordinators

Pradeep Panda and S S Khadgaray worked out the strategy to procure 500 oxygen cylinders from Mumbai to be distributed among various Rotary clubs in the district. The clubs will in turn satisfy the oxygen needs of Covid patients under home isolation and in rural areas. The cylinders costing ₹16,000 each in the market was procured by the clubs at ₹8,400 after negotiations from the district office.

"The cylinders were due to arrive in Bhubaneswar by May-end. But the delivery was delayed due to cyclone Yaas on

the Odisha coast disrupting the transport system," said Smita Sinha, a member of RC Baramunda. Two Rotarians who had oxygen plants — Subranshu Samantaray, a member of RC Cuttack Midtown and Debabrata Swain — helped in refilling the cylinders free of cost.

The initiative was appreciated by RI President Shekhar Mehta and Rotary India Covid Task Force chair Ashok Mahajan. ■



Solar lights keep elephants away in Assam villages

Kiran Zehra



A father accompanies his child back home from school. With the streets well-lit, the villagers no longer fear being attacked by elephants at night.

Living in constant fear of wild elephants, villagers living in mud huts at Kherjan and Dhekiajan, a cluster of 10 villages to the east of Digboi in Tinsukia district of Assam, seek refuge at concrete homes during night. “Some of us even stopped going to paddy fields as the animals had destroyed our crops,” says Rikiraj Gogoi, a village youth.


His village lies close to the forest and was once an elephant corridor. “Deforestation and steady encroachment of elephant corridors have led to a spurt in human-wildlife conflict in villages near Digboi,” says Satyakam Dowerah, IPP, RC Digboi, RID 3240. The club decided to help the ten villages after five people were killed by elephants in the last two years. To scare away the animals, they burst crackers and beat drums; and keep night-long vigil to guard their agricultural land.

As the villages shine brightly at night with solar lamps in full glow, the elephants have stopped invading our crops and rampaging homes.

Joychanda Borah
Village headman

“But nothing could stop the elephants from ransacking the villages. We had stopped cultivating paddy, fruits and vegetables as all of it had become fodder for the beasts,” says Gogoi.

During a meeting with the villagers “we explained to them that the elephants are now confined to less space due to loss of habitat, poaching and their traditional routes being encroached upon through human settlements and construction activities,” says Dowerah. Two virtual seminars were held to find a solution to the challenge. One suggestion was to illuminate the streets to deter the animals from entering the villages. “We also came across a scheme by the



Women are back to work at the paddy fields.

Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy that offered a ray of hope for the villagers,” he says.

Soon the officials at Assam Energy

Development Agency (AEDA) were roped in, and *Project Pohar* (‘light’ in Assamese) took shape. The club decided to install 100 LED lamps powered by 12Watts photovoltaic cells. These PV cells are charged by lithium batteries at vantage spots across ten villages. “We got the solar lights at ₹2.7 lakh under the subsidised AEDA scheme, which otherwise would have cost us a whopping ₹27 lakh.” Dowerah got ₹2 lakh from the RID 3240 Foundation, thanks to IPDG Subhasish Chatterjee, and the club mobilised the balance ₹70,000 through member donations.

AEDA has taken up the installation of these lamps and will also maintain them for five years. Village youth were involved in the field supervision of the project. “They were given training on cleaning the lamps

and erecting a high mast lamp.” Meetings were held with the villagers after the installations for the smooth custody transfer of these lightings, and two teams were formed to take care of their regular upkeep.

Tuskers stay away

As the villages shine brightly in the night with solar lamps in full glow, “the elephants have stopped invading our crops and rampaging homes. Rotary has done for us, what the government could not do for years,” says the elderly village headman Joychanda Borah. While the older people have returned to farming, the youth now attend evening college in Digboi without fear of being chased by wild elephants while returning home late night. The club plans to take up this solar lamp project in other villages facing similar problems. ■



A solar street light being installed.



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9/12/2021	DG Nominee Training Seminar (Includes Accommodation @ Raddison Blu / Chariot Beach Resort - for 9th Night Only)	@ Raddison Blu	--	25,000
9/12/2021	DG Mid-Year Review Meet	@ Raddison Blu	4,000	7,000
9/12/2021	District Trainers Seminar	@ Raddison Blu	4,000	7,000
9/12/2021	Council on Legislation	@ Raddison Blu	4,000	7,000
9/12/2021	The Rotary Foundation Dinner	@ Raddison Blu	4,000	6,000
10/12/2021	The Rotary Foundation Seminar	@ Raddison Blu	3,000	6,000
10-12/12/2021	Rotary Institute 2021 - Mahabs 21	@ Four Points Convention Centre	19,000	30,000

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Rotary flag flutters on the Annapurna summit

Jaishree

Meet Bhagwan Chawale (39) who recently scaled the Mt Annapurna, the 10th tallest mountain in the world. He is a member of RC Pune Gandhi Bhavan, RID 3131.

Mt Annapurna is a massif on the Nepal-Himalayas with one peak 8,091 m tall and other ranges 7,000 m high. “We were an 87-member team. But only 67 of us could reach the summit as the rest had to discontinue due to health issues,” he says. This trek had two unique

achievements — Priyanka Mohite, a mountaineer from Satara became the first Indian woman to scale this mountain and “we broke a record by having eight Indians reach the summit against an earlier record of four.”

Chawale had earlier climbed the Everest in 2018 after a failed attempt the previous year. “In 2017, I was just 100 m away from the peak.” He had to abandon the last leg due to harsh weather, and the death of two of his teammates added to his misery.

For the recent expedition he and his fellow climbers left Pokhara, Nepal, by May-end and completed acclimatisation rotations for a week in each camp before reaching the peak on April 16. “We were fortunate not to experience any casualty this time because Mt Annapurna is quite formidable. Words cannot describe the elation I felt when I stood there at the top. All those discomforts — treacherous slopes, cold winds, avalanches and frost bites — just blurred. It felt like being on top of the

Bhagwan Chawale holding the Rotary flag atop the Mt Annapurna.



world, and I had goosebumps when I planted both Rotary and Indian flags there,” says Chawale proudly.

However, the mounds of garbage dumps on these mountains caused him worry. “People should be a little more sensitive to keep this fragile environment clean and at least clear their garbage while they descend to the base camp,” he says. He did collect and bring down abandoned oxygen bottles, tents, cans and wrappers. “We have to deposit \$1,000 as refundable garbage fee which is forfeited if we do not bring back our waste. But mountaineers bring back a small amount of waste to reclaim



the deposit,” he adds. Cleaning campaigns are regularly organised and sometimes those who descend with garbage get monetary compensation.

Talking about expenses, Chawale says he spent around ₹14 lakh for this expedition. His Rotary club had helped with ₹50,000. “In addition to support from friends and family I took a loan and also dug into my savings. Whenever I plan an expedition, I get into a shoestring mode and save as much as possible,” he smiles, adding that the Everest expedition cost him \$11,000 to get a permit from the Nepal Mountaineering Association and an overall ₹30 lakh for the climb. His daily fitness regimen includes three hours of running, cycling and strength training.

Chawale, a development manager at LIC, Pune, developed



Chawale proudly displays the Indian national flag on reaching the summit of Mt Everest.



a passion for mountaineering and other adventurous activities during his college days when he was an NCC cadet. He is a national winner with a gold medal in rifle shooting and a bronze in yachting. A triathlon athlete, he organises adventure camps over weekends. His other mountaineering expeditions include scaling the Kanchenjunga, Dhaulagiri, Stoke Kangri and Bagirathi-2 peaks of the Himalayas and Vanarlingi, Vajir, Lingana and Tailbaila on the Sahyadri ranges.

“My elder daughter, Raj Nandini, is my biggest fan and she loves to accompany me on short treks. My wife who was initially reluctant, is my best cheer leader now,” he says. He is now preparing for the next climb up Mt Manaslu on the Nepal-Himalayas, a 40-day expedition beginning on Sept 4. ■

RC Bombay enables complex paediatric heart surgery

Rasheeda Bhagat

When 4-year-old child Hemant Naik, whose family lives in a Mumbai slum area in Ghatkopar, required a complex heart surgery, RC Mumbai Ghatkopar, RID 3141, referred him to RC Bombay, which has an ongoing global grant to fund children's heart surgery. "The child was referred to the Kokilaben Ambani Hospital for a complex heart surgery; he had already undergone four balloon procedures and an open heart surgical procedure at the Wadia Hospital earlier," says past president and director in charge of global grants for RC Bombay, V K Jatia.

The child was born with a very complicated heart disorder which required intervention in several stages. This was a very complicated surgery with high risk. The parents were explained the risks before surgery and counselled. DGE Sandip Agarwalla (RID 3141), a member of RC Bombay, explains that this child was born with a complex condition known as the hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS). "If left on their own without treatment, such babies won't survive. The left side of the heart can't be fixed, so the goal of the surgeries is to rebuild parts of the heart and 'redirect' the way the blood flows."

Jatia adds that the child was due for the last surgery in the series, which is known as the Fontan procedure. "Children get this after the Glenn procedure, usually when they are 18 to 36 months old. In the Fontan procedure, which is a type of open-heart surgery, the goal is to make blood from the lower part of the body go directly to the lungs. This lets the blood pick up oxygen without having to pass through the heart."

In babies with hypoplastic left heart syndrome, low-oxygen blood from the lower part of the body mixes with high-oxygen blood. After the Fontan procedure, low-oxygen blood and high-oxygen blood no longer mix. This lets the heart deliver only high-oxygen blood to the body, he adds.

Thanking RC Mumbai Ghatkopar for referring the child Hemant to them, and Rotary Ann Natasha Sejpal of RC Mumbai Lakers for coordinating the entire process, Jatia said, "We were all very relieved to learn that all our efforts have borne fruit; the surgery was successful and the child has gone home."

The cost of surgery — around ₹2.75 lakh was given from RC Bombay's GG, and additional expenses for pre-operative check-up and PPE kits etc amounting to ₹40,000 were borne by the parents.

Jatia adds that RC Bombay has so far sponsored 270 paediatric heart surgeries, spending a total of ₹2.36 crore, in hospitals in Mumbai as well as the Haria Rotary Hospital in Vapi, Gujarat. ■

4-year-old Hemant Naik



Helping Covid patients fight anxiety

Kiran Zehra

In most cases, Covid patients suffer mental agony and depression during quarantine and hence need counselling along with recreation to overcome the psychological stress, says Mohammed Tasleel, past president, RC Bangalore Manyata, RID 3190. Under Project *Co-heal*, the club has set up a Covid care centre at the Rajiv Gandhi Medical Hospital in a tie-up with Presidency University, Bengaluru, and Globals, an IT firm. The uniqueness of this centre worth ₹1.75 crore is that it has a recreation centre for asymptomatic and mildly-affected patients being admitted here for preliminary care.

The centre provides holistic treatment for Covid patients. “Quarantine is a must to control the spread of the virus, but patients mustn’t suffer mental agony because of the misconceptions and stigma attached to Covid. Some people think they are going to die. These thoughts affect their recovery,” explains Tasleel. When the state-of-the-art facility was being put together “along with 70 oxygen beds, 15 general beds, and 15 high



Mohammed Tasleel, past president of RC Bangalore Manyata, distributing a grocery kit to a family.

dependency units (HDU), BiPAP machines, oxygen concentrators, a doctor’s lounge, lab and pharmacy, we set up a recreation centre for patients to keep themselves busy during the isolation period.”

Dr Shoba, Director at School of Home Science, Maharani University, and member of RC Bangalore Platinum City, has been counselling patients at this centre. “There is no magical treatment or pills for patients suffering from psychological symptoms. If they test positive, they

begin to drown in uncertainty and this could lead to various other complications,” she points out.

Sagar who was admitted at the centre along with his 10-year-old-son Niruta says, “I was worried about my son. I kept asking doctors and nurses about his condition. I felt better after the online counselling sessions, yoga, breathing and mental health strengthening exercises. These sessions helped me to overcome anxiety. I could also enjoy a game of carrom

or chess with my son... something I hadn’t done in a long time.” Even after being discharged from the hospital “my son and I play these games together,” he smiles.

The centre, set up in less than a week, is recognised by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike which is bearing the cost of medicines and other consumables at this facility. While the Suhas General and Charitable Hospital, Bengaluru, is overseeing the operations of the facility, the

Rotary club through its Trust is providing meals to its patients and staff. “We ensure that non-medical staff (house-keeping and security) are also paid salaries. The centre provides lodging to the medical and non-medical staff,” says Tasleel. Oxygen flowmeters and pipelines offer round-the-clock service and patients who develop complications are referred to larger hospitals. Oxygen concentrators are sent to patients’ home if they could not



Covid patients performing relaxing exercises at the Covid care centre set up by the club.

be accommodated due to non-availability of beds. Karnataka chief minister

Basavaraj Bommai inaugurated the centre. The club has created a portal

www.healthdiaries.org for the public to register for Covid vaccination. ■

Making the visually-challenged digital-savvy

Team Rotary News

Seated (from L)
Parimala Bhat, founder Snehankit Helpline; Kedar Vidwans, president, RC Thane West; DGE Kailash Jethani and Jayant Joshi, club secretary, with the beneficiaries.



Rotary Club of Thane West, RID 3142, along with RCs Thane Green City, Khargar Midtown and Creekside, distributed *Braille Me* devices to 15 visually-challenged people in Thane and Mumbai.

Braille Me is a sleek, multi lingual digital Braille display device that helps the visually-challenged access books, files and notes. It can work as

a stand-alone or can be connected to a computer or a smart phone.

The device is equipped with 6-dot Braille cells, Bluetooth and an SD card facility. “The visually-challenged can now send messages on WhatsApp or SMS using this device. It also helps them in sharing text files and Excel sheets,” says Sadhana Vaze, the

project lead and a past president of RC Thane West. RC Thane West is celebrating its golden jubilee this year and “we plan to distribute this device to 50 people to mark the occasion,” she says, adding that each device costs ₹30,000. Snehankit, an NGO working towards empowering the visually-challenged, is helping the club in identifying the beneficiaries. ■

Rotary to help in Uttarakhand's progress

Team Rotary News



RI President Shekhar Mehta in discussion with Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami. Rashi Mehta, RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, PRID Kamal Sanghvi, PDGs Vivek Tankha and Hemant Arora; and DG Ajay Madan are also present.

Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has sought the help of Rotary in providing self-employment to the hill state's youth and thus, arrest the trend of migration from rural areas to cities and other states. This was conveyed to RI President Shekhar Mehta when he led a delegation to call on CM Dhami at his residence in Dehradun.

During a wide-ranging discussion, Dhami urged Rotary to help the state in education, health, environment and

water conservation. He said it was important to stop the migration from border areas in Uttarakhand as "people living in these areas have a special role as border guards". The discussion also extended to areas such as providing tele-medicine facilities to remote villages, e-learning, martial arts training for girls and literacy campaign, among others.

Praising Dhami for promoting saplings instead of presenting bouquets as gifts, Mehta said that over 10,000 trees will be planted in Uttarakhand by

Rotary clubs. "All efforts will be made by the clubs to extend cooperation to the state government," he assured the CM.

Mehta was accompanied by Rashi, RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, PRID Kamal Sanghvi, Rajya Sabha member PDG Vivek Tankha, ITV Media Network founder-chairman Kartikeya Sharma, DG Ajay Madan, PDGs Hemant K Arora, Arun Sharma, Ravi Langer and Rtns Rajeev Agarwal, Sunita Dharma, Savita Madan, Pavitra Arora and Sushant Ahuja. ■

Yogi Adityanath praises Rotary for "nation-building"



RI President Mehta meets UP CM Yogi Adityanath in the presence of ministers Jai Pratap Singh (R) and Satish Chandra Dwivedi (second from L); and Arvind Vikram Chaudhary, IPP, RC Gorakhpur.

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath appreciated Rotary's active role in nation-building and its contribution towards social progress during his meeting with RI President Shekhar Mehta in Lucknow. Mehta was felicitated and accorded the status of official guest of the state by the CM.

During the meeting they discussed speedy development in areas such as health,

literacy, water and sanitation "where Rotary can work with the government of the most populous state in India," said Mehta.

Also present during the meeting were Jai Pratap Singh, state minister for Health and Family Welfare, Satish Chandra Dwivedi, minister of state for Primary Education; and Rtn Arvind Vikram Chaudhary, immediate past president, RC Gorakhpur, RID 3120. ■

Rotarians shine in the Tokyo Olympics

Team Rotary News

Rotarian Wang Chi-lin and his partner Lee Chang won gold by beating Li Junhui and Liu Yuchen of China in the men's doubles badminton final at the Tokyo Olympics. Wang is a member of RC Unity Taipei, RID 3521. He becomes the third Rotarian to have won gold at the Olympics after Duke Kahanamoku from RC Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, for the 100-metre freestyle swimming at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, and Tapio Korjus from RC Lapua Kiviristi,

Finland, for javelin throw at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

In India, Rotarian PR Sreejesh, the goalkeeper of the Indian hockey team which won the bronze medal at the Olympics, was the star of the game by saving two penalty corners in the last 50 seconds of the game. He is a member of RC Kizhakkambalam, RID 3201. UAE-based Indian entrepreneur Dr Shamsheer Vayalil has announced ₹1 crore reward for the goalkeeper. ■



Indian hockey team goalkeeper PR Sreejesh

A state-of-the-art dialysis centre in Chennai

DG J Sridhar (fifth from R) at the new dialysis centre. DRFC M Ambalavanan (second from R), RC Chennai Capital president Rajiv Sampat and Rtn Vinod Saraogi are also seen.



With an aim to make dialysis services affordable for the poor, RC Chennai Capital, RID 3232, jointly with Madras West Round Table 10 and Sathyalok Charitable Trust, established the

Sathyalok Charitable Trust Dialysis Centre in Porur, Chennai, at the cost of ₹3 crore. The centre is set to offer dialysis at ₹375 per session.

The 5,000 sqft centre with 20 beds will be operated and

managed by the Tamil Nadu Kidney Research (TANKER) Foundation and cater to 40 patients a day. DG J Sridhar, RID 3232, was present at the inauguration. ■

Meet your



A R Ravindra Bhat

Hotelier-builder, RC Central Mysore, RID 3181

He'll transform Puttur into a clean city

More than 70 out of 85 clubs in his district have resumed weekly physical meetings and 100 per cent of the members are vaccinated. "By August-end, we will charter at least 10 clubs, and I am confident of adding 20 new clubs before the end of this Rotary year. I am hopeful of a net increase of 1,400 members to take the total membership to 4,000 during my year," says Ravindra Bhat.

His ambitious plan is to turn Puttur into a mega 'Clean Environment City', where wet, dry and hazardous waste will be segregated and recycled through a bio-composting process to make tonnes of organic manure for agricultural and other uses. "We have signed an MoU with the Puttur municipality which has given two acres of land to us to install the machinery and take up the recycling process." This pilot project (GG: ₹8.92 crore) will see the local residents joining hands with Rotary to make this town green and beautiful, he says. "There will be no dump yards or landfill sites once it is implemented."

Another pet project of his is to give a facelift to burial grounds across the district. Through a mix of DDF and global grant, 40 cemeteries will be revamped with amenities for the relatives of the deceased, he says. Three major hospitals in Mysuru, including JSS Hospital, will get medical equipment and other facilities through a global grant project (\$125,000). Bhat is working to rope in at least 50 per cent of Anns into Rotary by forming exclusive clubs for them. As schools and colleges were closed due to lockdown, "I am still collecting data on the number of Rotaractors and Interactors. But at least 50 new Rotaract clubs will be formed." His target for TRF giving is \$500,000. A former Rotaractor, he joined Rotary in 2002 sponsored by his hotelier-friend Rtn NP Vishwanath.



Pankaj Shah

Engineer, RC Pune Sarasbaug, RID 3131

Promoting Rotary Action Groups

One way to increase membership and get newly-inducted Rotarians involved in service activities is to promote various Action Groups being encouraged by Rotary International, says Pankaj Shah. "We need to create awareness on these action groups which take up exclusive activities like trekking, cycling and other joint endeavours that develop bonding among members." His goals include 30 new clubs, and 1,000 new Rotarians which will take the membership to 4,700-plus. He is also focusing on satellite clubs that are flexible enough to suit the needs of young professionals.

As schools and colleges are closed in the pandemic, "I will be chartering 20 community-based Rotaract clubs with net increase of 500-plus Rotaractors."

One of his thrust areas will be starting 10-12 dialysis centres through a mix of GG and CSR funding. "We will also revamp and increase capacity of the existing 10 centres set up by Rotary in the past at major hospitals by providing modern dialysis equipment," he says.

Once the ongoing project of 12 Happy Villages is completed, "we will do a community assessment and based on the needs of the local people, another set of 10 Happy Villages will be taken up for rural transformation," explains Shah. The district will also implement 25 Happy Schools in rural areas with the aim to increase their enrolment ratio. "Pandemics will come and go, but Rotary's service projects are creating an impact in villages," he says. His target for TRF giving is \$2 million. "The overall membership will double in western India in the next 10 years," he predicts. Shah was 'self-inspired to do social service' which led him to join Rotary in 2009.

Governors

V Muthukumaran



Santosh Pradhan

Air-conditioning, RC Udhna, RID 3060

Urban forests to bloom in Gujarat

Each One Bring One is a revolutionary concept devised by RI President Shekhar Mehta and “this EOBO concept has already done wonders in my district,” says Santosh Pradhan. In July alone, the district has added 500 new members, and “we will have a net increase of 1,500 which will push our membership to around 6,400 by the end of this Rotary year.” He will charter 5–6 new clubs to take the total number to 118.

Pradhan has tied up with local NGOs to create 5–7 urban forests in cities and towns across Gujarat. “The Miyawaki concept will be adapted to Gujarati topography to develop social forestry which will be the landmarks of cities,” he says. The funding will be through member contributions.

The district has signed an MoU with the Gujarat government to provide micro loans to at least 50,000 rural women to give them a livelihood. For empowering girls, impactful projects will be taken up under the leadership of PDG Deepak Agrawal. On the Rotaract front, he is confident of adding 15–20 new clubs, and 250 Rotaractors taking the total to 75 clubs with over 2,250 members. He aims to collect \$1.5 million for TRF.

Though he became a Rotaractor in 1990, “I lost touch with Rotary when I shifted to this place in Gujarat. However, during a train journey, Rtn Dharmesh Kachiwala, a past president, impressed me so much that I joined my home club in 2008,” he smiles.



Fazal Mahmood

Architect, RC Bangalore Metro, RID 3190

Looking for new opportunities in the pandemic

He is another Rotaractor who has become a district governor. When things get tough, the tough gets going, says Fazal Mahmood, as he gets ready to motivate the clubs and district team to spread out and take up “impactful service projects in villages despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.” The health crisis has also opened up many opportunities for Rotarians to get involved in community projects, thus shoring up Rotary’s public image. Recently, he formed an exclusive satellite club for the transgender community, “probably the first such group in Rotary for this marginalised section.” He aims to charter 25 new and achieve a 30 per cent growth in membership.

Project *Zero Hunger* is distributing groceries, food packets and other essentials to migrant and underprivileged families on a daily basis. On birthdays, festivals and special occasions, Rotarians and their families sponsor meals for attendants of patients at hospitals in Bengaluru. “The Anns of the clubs led by the district’s First Lady prepare food at homes and deliver it to hospitals,” says Mahmood. Under Project *Hosa Belaku* (New Light), each club will take care of a slum and a nearby police station by setting up all the civic amenities they need for social development.

Another innovation, Project *Sahayoga* (collaboration), enables two city clubs to partner with a rural club to do projects under seven focus areas in that village. The district will allot a DDF of \$1,000 for each such project. He aims to collect \$1.25 million for TRF. A Programme of Scale is on the cards for teaching schoolchildren English language for effective communication. After being a Rotaractor from 1979-88, he turned Rotarian in 1993 to give wings to his dreams.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Africa's Agents of Change

Jeff Ruby

In the last week of February, in Kampala, Uganda, 15 Rotary Peace Fellows gathered at Makerere University for the inaugural session of Rotary International's new peace center. Among them, the peace center's first cohort represented 11 countries and spoke, in addition to English, a dozen African languages, including Luganda, Swahili, and Zulu. "Coming from diverse backgrounds, and yet with a shared desire for peace in Africa, they are the epitome of unity in diversity," said Anne Nkutu, a member of the Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya, RID 9211, and the host area coordinator for the Makerere University peace centre.

With an average age of 40 when they were admitted to the programme, the fellows are not novice peacemakers. These are established professionals with a minimum of five years of experience in peace and development. They arrived at Makerere University — home to an established programme in peace and conflict studies — already working on an initiative, or with an idea for one, that promotes peace or social change within their workplace or community. "The fellows are more interested in the practical side of peacebuilding," said Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala, the director of the peace centre. "They want to see how things are done, as opposed to our regular students, who are more interested in the theoretical aspects. So the fellows come off as, and indeed are, change agents."

Prior to arriving at Makerere, the peace fellows began their studies with a two-week online session, the first

stage in Rotary's new yearlong certificate programme in peacebuilding, conflict transformation and development. (The peace centre at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, which previously offered a three-month version of the certificate programme, has also adopted this new model.) Following the 10-week session in Kampala, they will return home to begin implementing their social change initiatives, checking in periodically with their instructors and fellow students. They will return to Makerere in early 2022 to complete the programme.

Earlier this year, as they prepared to depart for Kampala, *Rotary* magazine spoke with six of the peace fellows via Zoom and WhatsApp. The conversations were a crash course in African history and politics. They were also an inspiration, offering a glimpse of the possibilities that lie ahead for

Africa once these peace fellows — and those to follow in the years ahead — complete their studies at Makerere and disperse across the continent to share what they have learned.

Patience Rusare

The first time Patience Rusare encountered tribalism in her native Zimbabwe, she was in first grade. As members of the Shona tribe living in Bulawayo — a city dominated by the Ndebele people — her family didn't speak the local language as well as their neighbours. "I answered a question in class, and the other kids laughed and called me a derogatory name," recalls Rusare, now 32. "I went home and asked my parents: Is something wrong with us? You could see that the tensions were coming from home, and the children were bringing them to school."



Twenty-five years later, Rusare is an editor and a senior political journalist for *The Patriot*, a newspaper based in Harare. In 2013, after years of writing business stories, she changed her focus. She began covering conflicts, whether political crises in Lesotho and Mali in 2014 and 2015, hostile Ugandan elections in 2016, or a coup d'état in her native Zimbabwe in 2017, often tracing underlying issues back decades to explain the current climate.

"People were not making informed decisions," Rusare says. "And that lack of information can make people desperate and easy to manipulate." As she wrote in an unbiased manner, she began to see a direct correlation between the information in her stories and public policy. In Lesotho, Rusare says, mediation from a Botswana-based intragovernmental organisation called the Southern African Development Community led to a resolution that was influenced by a story that she had written for *The Patriot*. "I feel like I really made positive change in the world there," she says. "They have some lasting peace in Lesotho."



In 2019, in hopes of learning "the nitty-gritty of peace dealings," she got a master's degree in peace, leadership, and conflict resolution. "I made a commitment to myself to use the media to create a more just and peaceful world," Rusare says.

As special elections, rescheduled from 2020, approach in Zimbabwe, the same tribal conflict that Rusare witnessed as a child rages on. Through her social change initiative, Rusare wants to change the approach of journalism in Zimbabwe. "We've got to get rid of the idea of 'if it bleeds, it leads,' and work as peace practitioners," she says. "A positive peace story can get people to buy a newspaper if it's a good enough human-interest story." Her plan is to train 20 journalists in the art of conflict reporting — a group of Ndebele and Shona journalists, working together — and charge each one to go out and mentor journalists among their own people until the approach extends across the country and beyond.

"I don't want my children to go through what I went through," says Rusare of her 8-year-old and 3-year-old. "I want them to grow up in an environment where all people love each other regardless of the ethnic groups they belong to. They will know that we are all diverse, but we are all one."

Peter Pal

It's simply not in Peter Pal's personality to talk about trauma. When he speaks of harrowing experiences — fleeing a civil war in his native Sudan in 1989, seeing loved ones and friends die, spending 11 years in a refugee camp in Ethiopia with no goal beyond survival — it's with a surprising, matter-of-fact frankness. "You learn to live through it so that you can be strong," he says.

So when Pal tells you about the day in 2001 when he left the camp and immigrated to Australia, you might think he would never look back. You'd be wrong.

"I want to give South Sudan stability and improve the lives of people there," says Pal, 52. "If I have the opportunity to help, I will. Because I am one of them."

As a community educator for the Victorian Electoral Commission in southeastern Australia, Pal is trained in peacebuilding and diplomacy. "The electoral process is critical for good government, for choosing the right leadership and learning to exercise democracy," he says. "People have the right to make the final decision about what's right for them." When he heard about the Rotary Peace Fellowship, he recognised an opportunity to use his skill set on a global level — and take it back to his home country nearly 8,000 miles away.

On a 2017 trip to South Sudan, Pal was shocked to find that formerly healthy rural areas had been urbanised without the necessary health facilities and educational opportunities. Small towns had been completely neglected by the government. He envisions combating this neglect by promoting peace — not simply the absence of war and tribal infighting, but a day-to-day stability where essential services such as healthcare, food and water are available. "Without these things, people will always fight amongst themselves," says Pal. "Only when there is this kind of peace do you have the opportunity to plant seeds of education."

As part of his social change initiative, Pal plans to engage with professional peacebuilders to explore alternative dispute resolution. Of particular focus is the need to restore dignity for the most vulnerable victims of South Sudan's continued crisis: mothers and children. "Ignorance continues to dehumanise them in Africa," Pal says. "Women continue to give birth to children who don't really flourish. And though they're not part of the politics, they are the ones who suffer when people die in a reckless war."

Despite all that Pal has experienced, he remains hopeful. And why not? Twenty years ago, he escaped a violent civil war in Africa, and now he has returned on a peacebuilding mission. “If we are not optimistic, we will all be stuck focusing on what’s in our own hand rather than looking into alternatives that can be applied for the betterment of all society,” he says. “Not just in South Sudan, but for Africa and the world.”

Jew Moonde

A democratic country in southern Africa, Zambia is not known for its record on women’s rights. As Jew Moonde explains, the country’s deeply embedded patriarchal values have traditionally subjugated women in a variety of ways, some of them violent, some systemic. Gender discrimination has been woven into the fabric of Zambian society, he says, and as a result, when election time arrives, women’s voices are not heard.

“Women have not gotten a fair share of participation in the electoral process,” says Moonde, 50, the peace and conflict manager of the Electoral Commission of Zambia. “And if women are not engaged in the political process, their grievances will continue building up. It is time for women to take a stand politically.”

Zambia’s recent elections have been marred by violence and intimidation, which breaks Moonde’s heart. For nearly half his life, the Lusaka native has been a consultant with the Zambia Centre for Inter-Party Dialogue (ZCID); working with this Lusaka-based NGO, he’s dedicated to building an infrastructure to ensure free and fair elections, whether by meeting with politicians to sensitise them to the gender imbalance or training people on how to manage conflict in the electoral process. After two decades, many of ZCID’s legal reform proposals have been passed into law by parliament.

But getting women involved in the political process is only a part of



Fikiri Nzoyisenga



Catherine Baine-Omugisha



The peace fellows visited Kampala’s densely populated slums and the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement near Uganda’s border with South Sudan.

Paul Mushaho



Patience Rusare



Moonde’s mission. He wants to get the younger generation on board, too. “Politics is predominantly for old folks in Zambia,” says Moonde, who has degrees in psychology and peace and conflict studies. “Unemployed youths are the implementers of violence, and they’re also the victims.” To engage them, ZCID focuses on social media outreach and youth-oriented community radio stations; it also helps young people develop skills that might one day help them find a rewarding career. “If you want change to come, empower people with the knowledge that they have the right to something,” says Moonde.

If all goes as planned during his peace fellowship, Moonde wants to acquire the knowledge to help transform ZCID into a statutory body: a permanent peace structure that provides an official platform for dialogue and mediation in Zambian politics. “I start hearing politicians talking and youths talking, exercising their rights to expression,” says Moonde. “It shows us that what we do has an impact on people. No one will help Zambians unless they do it themselves.”

Paul Mushaho

There are more than 11,000 Rotaract clubs worldwide; one of them is in a refugee settlement in Africa. Founded in 2016 in Nakivale — a huge rural camp in southwest Uganda where about 150,000 people live in more than 75 villages spread across an area roughly the size of Kolkata — the club has members from half a dozen African countries. “Nakivale is like a mini-United Nations,” says Paul Mushaho, the club’s co-founder. “People have fled their homes because of war and had trauma on the way here.”

In 2016, Mushaho, a student with degrees in business information systems and computer engineering, fled his native Democratic Republic of

Congo after receiving death threats from a Mai-Mai militia group. Almost as soon as he arrived in Nakivale, Mushaho saw opportunities to improve the refugees’ quality of life. Two of his earliest projects were a money-transfer service and a beekeeping business that sold honey. That second project caught the eye of Rotarians in Kampala.

Soon, with an assist from the American Refugee Committee (known today as Alight) and Rotary clubs in Uganda and Minnesota, Mushaho was launching his own Rotaract Club in Nakivale. Its members have taught farming and masonry skills, planted trees, established a women’s community centre, and delivered blankets and mattresses to people who have taken in orphaned children. “I tell them: All we have given you is a sign of appreciation for all you do in the community,” Mushaho says.

A charismatic 29-year-old, Mushaho has an almost supernatural ability to find ways to help. When he saw that the camp’s elderly population found themselves marginalised, he organised lunches where they could share their experiences as former diplomats, engineers, teachers, and doctors. When he noticed that young refugees of different nationalities weren’t interacting, he helped organise a soccer tournament. More recently, Mushaho’s team made and delivered 14,000 masks and 8,000 bars of soap to slow the spread of Covid-19 in Nakivale. “I see people who are happy, simply by receiving what they are supposed to get,” says Mushaho. “We are creating hope in people who have lost their hope.”

In 2018, Mushaho was invited to the United Nations Africa headquarters in Nairobi, where he was honoured as one of six Rotary People of Action: Young Innovators. “Our refugee community realised our local challenges needed local solutions,” he said in his speech.



Jew Moonde (right), walking with the peace fellows through a Kampala slum.

“We are not beggars; we are a generation of change and inspiration.”

In Makerere, Mushaho sees a reflection of his environment in Nakivale, where he was surrounded by innovative, multicultural people who were full of ideas and energy, all of them seeking ways to break barriers that inhibited promoting peace. “The fellowship aligns closely to what I am doing in the camp,” says Mushaho. “When I go back, I will know how to tackle different challenges in different communities based on their norms and beliefs. My dreams and hopes are delighted.”

Catherine Baine-Omugisha

“If people are not calm, no one is going to get anywhere,” says Catherine Baine-Omugisha. In this instance, the 45-year-old Kampala attorney is referring to her legal specialty — conflict mitigation and appropriate dispute

resolution in family issues — but she might as well be talking about her own personal path.

With her composed demeanor and pragmatic approach, Baine-Omugisha rose through the male-dominated world of law in Uganda, serving as a magistrate, a lecturer, a technical adviser in the ministry of justice and constitutional affairs, and, currently, a private practitioner with her own consulting firm in Kampala.

Through it all, her approach has been the same: Maintain composure. Listen, encourage others, and seek solutions. Be open to exploring a new way of doing things. Test it. If it works, embrace it. In 2000, while serving as a magistrate at Masaka chief magistrate court in southern Uganda, Baine-Omugisha joined a pilot programme called the Chain Linked Initiative; to enhance access to criminal justice, it encouraged

collaboration among police, prosecutors, prisons, probation officers, welfare agencies and the judiciary. The programme worked so well that it was rolled out nationwide.

Now she is hoping her fellowship will enable her to apply that spirit of cooperation on a larger scale. “In Uganda, at the moment, we are dealing with issues of respect for the rule of law, respect for human rights, and corruption,” says Baine-Omugisha. Her principal concern is domestic violence, an ongoing problem that stems from a combination of factors: cultural and gender biases, economic hardships, and a lack of awareness about what actually constitutes domestic violence. In educating community leaders about domestic violence’s triggers and effects, as well as its legal and policy framework, she hopes to shift the focus to prevention, rather than addressing it after the fact.

There is a southern African philosophy called *ubuntu* that says, “I am because you are.” It’s a reminder that no one can exist alone. Baine-Omugisha says the fellowship has helped her rediscover that concept’s value as a homegrown peace approach, and she plans to put it into effect. “I may not single-handedly change Uganda’s direction,” she says. “But every intervention I make to change the ordinary citizen’s outlook toward human rights is a good contribution. If we have a number of people doing that, we can bring about significant change.”

Fikiri Nzoyisenga

While growing up, whenever Fikiri Nzoyisenga washed dishes, his friends could not stop laughing: Why are you doing the dishes? That is for the woman to do. He just shrugged. In his home, chores were for girls and boys, just as his father and stepmother shared the cooking and other domestic tasks. “This was not normal,” says Nzoyisenga.

The gift of a new Peace Center

In April, as the peace centre at Makerere University hosted its inaugural class of peace fellows, The Rotary Foundation announced that the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation has pledged \$15.5 million to start a Rotary Peace Center in the Middle East or North Africa.

“Rotary has for a long time looked at how we can make a tangible contribution to the one area of the world where the element of peace has seemed so elusive,” said KR Ravindran, the 2020–21 Rotary Foundation trustee chair. “Now that opportunity has come our way, thanks to the immense generosity of the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation. We will take full advantage to create a centre where we can inspire our peace fellows to give flight to their spirit and equip them to be able to support action that will bring about peace and goodwill.”

The Rotary Foundation will select a partner educational institution to host the Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center in 2024, and the first Rotary Peace Fellows are expected to start studying there in early 2026. The new

center will offer a professional development certificate programme focused on peacebuilding and development issues in the region. The gift from the Walter Foundation, which is based in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, will fund the centre’s start-up costs and operating expenses, as well as an endowment that will provide peace fellowships in perpetuity for as many as 40 students each year.

Otto Walter was born in Germany in 1907 and worked as a lawyer. After the Nazi government enacted laws that pushed Jewish professionals out of their jobs, Walter was disbarred. He immigrated to the United States in 1936 and settled in New York. Because his law degree wasn’t recognised in his new home, Walter earned a licence as a certified public accountant and started an accounting firm.

Confronted with various legal issues in his business, Walter began attending evening classes at New York Law School, where he graduated with a JD in 1954. The next year, he started a law firm that, with the support of his wife, Frances Doonan Walter, grew to employ 40 lawyers. He became a

member of the Rotary Club of New York in 1971.

Later, Otto and Fran focused on their philanthropic foundation, becoming personally involved in the grants they funded. After the Walters’ deaths in 2003, Frank Helman, a law colleague and friend, became president and director of their foundation. He and his wife, Martha “Marty” Helman, the current president of the foundation, helped shepherd the \$15.5 million gift to The Rotary Foundation. The Helmans are members of the Rotary Club of Boothbay Harbor.

“The Walter Foundation can imagine no better way to remember Otto and Fran and their legacy than through a Rotary Peace Center in the Middle East, a part of the world that has been torn by conflict,” says Marty Helman, who also serves as chair of The Rotary Foundation’s Peace Centers Major Gifts Initiative Committee. “The Walter Foundation is a small family foundation. We needed the partnership with Rotary to create a world-class peace center.”

Ryan Hyland

“Things were very different in my household than in others.” It was also different in another way: With his father a member of the majority Hutu group and his stepmother a Tutsi, their marriage was forbidden. “They did it anyway,” says their son, “to show there was no problem with that.”

In the staunchly patriarchal country of Burundi, his family’s defiant example made a huge impression. “The way I was raised by my father and stepmother shaped what I became,” says Nzoyisenga, 36, the founder and executive director of Semerera, a Bujumbura-based youth coalition

against gender-based violence that works in three provinces in Burundi. “Women in my community used to face many challenges linked to our Burundi culture that considered women inferior to men,” he says. “So I wanted to be an advocate for women’s rights.”

Nzoyisenga survived an unstable childhood that included civil wars in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (where he lived for five years), went on to study law, and began volunteering for women’s empowerment organisations. It was only a matter of time before he became a community organiser. Through Spark MicroGrants,

he led programmes that empowered nearly 3,000 households from more than two dozen villages across Burundi. With Semerera, a team of 14 has assisted more than 8,200 women and girls through socioeconomic initiatives, leadership empowerment, and free legal support to victims of abuse and discrimination.

Nzoyisenga does not overlook another crucial element to change: educating men on gender inequalities. “We cannot talk about peace without giving all people the opportunity to live with dignity and contribute to the development of their communities,” he

says. “We are part of the problem, so we must be part of the solution.”

After completing his Rotary fellowship, Nzoysisenga plans to expand his work to two more provinces of Burundi, where he will mentor other young people through campaigns around peaceful cohabitation, cohesion, and human rights. “My father taught me tolerance and acceptance, and respecting others no matter their differences,” he says. “In time, we hope more men and women in Burundi will come to understand that things need to change.”

As they completed their 10-week, on-site session at Makerere University, the peace fellows provided an update about their time at Rotary’s new peace center. Or at least they tried to. “I can’t explain in words what an amazing experience this has been for me,” said Rusare. “The fellowship has made me more determined to pursue my social change initiative on peace journalism. The design is finally taking shape.”

She praised her teachers, who shared “practical experiences that made it easy to grasp many theoretical approaches” to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Moonde provided a detailed outline of those approaches; they included instruction in analytical methods drawn from the business world; sessions led by representatives from the Institute for Economics and Peace (a Rotary partner); and an introduction to indigenous traditions, such as the *Mato Oput* ceremony — which involves the drinking of a bitter herb — practised by the Acholi people of northern Uganda.

Though pandemic restrictions led to the cancellation of a planned trip to Rwanda, the peace fellows had many opportunities for work in the field, including visiting the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement near Uganda’s border

with South Sudan and meeting with survivors of the disastrous landslides in the country’s Bududa district. “These excursions enabled us to have firsthand engagements on peacebuilding and conflict transformation in communities affected by migration and environmental disasters, as well as gender-based violence,” said Baine-Omugisha.

The fellows also interacted with local Rotarians, who worked with the peace centre’s host area committee to serve as counsellors to the new arrivals. “They showed them around Kampala, and invited the fellows to their homes and clubs,” said Nkutu. “Despite living in a country with a history of conflict, Rotarians have not been clear on how they can get involved. The peace center has generated interest in learning about the different ways Rotarians can promote peace and conflict prevention.”

“The inaugural cohort is very warm,” added Nambalirwa Nkabala. “They quickly settled in comfortably with each other. They have harnessed their differences in personalities and cultures for the good by being a support system to each other.” That camaraderie — a literal fellowship — among the peace fellows will sustain them through 2021 as they work on their initiatives in their home countries. It will also serve as a model for the next cohort of peace fellows at Makerere.

“Having a peace centre at Makerere University means a lot to Africa,” Mushaho told *The Wave*, the monthly newsletter published by District 9211 (Tanzania and Uganda). “It’s a great opportunity for Africans to learn and understand that peace is the foundation of every development.”

The peace fellows will return to Makerere in early 2022. We’ll check back with them then to see what they have achieved — and what lies ahead for Rotary and Africa.

Pictures by Tobin Jones
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Meet the other Makerere Peace Fellows

Olusina Ajao

Nigeria; security and crisis management

Eleanor Curl

United Kingdom; psychosocial support and trauma treatment

Sunny Dada

Nigeria; conflict transformation and violence prevention

Ronald Kasule

Uganda; disability rights and inclusion advocacy

Pinkie Mothibedi

Botswana; community empowerment and social justice

Stephen Sempande

Uganda; youth protection and social service development

Thomas Sithole

Zimbabwe; media and information literacy

Nobantu Taylor

Liberia; civil society engagement and skill-building

Amina Warsame

Somalia; gender equality and human rights policy

The 2023–24 application for fellowships at all Rotary Peace Centers will be available in February 2022. Candidates will have until May 15, 2022 to submit their completed application to The Rotary Foundation. Districts must submit endorsements to The Rotary Foundation by July 1. For more information, go to rotary.org/peace-fellowships.



Junior Chamber International Vice President JOINED Rotary International.



JCI Vice President Kaveen Kumar Kumaravel was inducted in Rotary Erode Central by Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta in the presence of RI Director A.S Venkatesh, EPNC PDG Dr. Saga, 3203 District Governor Rtn. MD. K Shanmugasundaram and Rotary Erode Central President Rtn. MD. V. Rajamanickam."



" I joined Rotary because of its rich history of 116 years of Service, Integrity, Friendship, Business and Leadership Opportunities all over the World. "
- Kaveen Kumar Kumaravel

Rotary Club of Erode Central,
No.1 Major Contributor for
Rotary World Record Project –
Rotary Speciality Hospital
at Perundurai, Erode.



Rtn. MD. V. Rajamanickam
President, Rotary Erode Central , RID 3203 .
Rotary Athma- Modern Crematorium- Since 2008
Rotary Blood Bank-Erode Central
93630 26986, 99441 15000

JOIN ROTARY TO SERVE



Powered by the wind

Preeti Mehra

A simple wind-powered device can serve energy needs of a home

In today's world, at home or at the workplace, energy has become the basic source to power every one of our requirements — be it a light bulb, refrigerator, mixer, mobile or laptop. And with the climate change crises looming over our heads and being felt across the world, even in our cities, deriving a large portion of this energy from renewable sources would be the best bet. Apart from reducing electricity bills, it would be one massive step to communicate to the world our commitment to going green.

In the last issue, we spoke about the easiest way to set up a solar energy system at home and bask in the blessings offered by the sun. This time let's look at other non-conventional energy sources. Some of them may not be suitable for a city home, but others could very well fit the bill. For instance, wind energy. It is now being considered as an option for home use and there are young minds bringing this innovation to our doorstep.

But before going into wind energy, I thought my experience in rural Bihar may be an interesting digression into doing things the green way. Some years ago, large tracts of West Champaran district were off the grid and the villagers

had no electricity. During the day they did without power and at night they lit kerosene lanterns or used diesel gensets for larger applications. Children found it difficult to study after dusk, there was no TV for entertainment and people walked miles to get their mobiles charged.

Then one day a few young men who came from the region and were now professionals in their own right, decided to light up the area with renewable energy. Through their research they zeroed in on rice husk that was widely available. They set up several small husk-powered power plants across the region, trained

locals in how to manage them and generated electricity that lit up the villages at night. The power supply charged phones, worked television sets, and even allowed shops to be open till late hours. When I visited the area, I saw first-hand how this initiative had changed the lives of the people.



As time went by, and their needs increased, the villagers wanted power 24x7. So, the youngsters developed a hybrid system that provided power through a solar system during the day and through husk at night. They even provided a livelihood for unemployed women who then turned the residue from the husk into agarbattis. The company, Husk Power Systems, has expanded its reach today to other states and countries. Despite challenges, it has stuck to its renewable energy agenda.

This story illustrates the power of ideas and the initiative that goes into problem-solving

through clean energy. Similarly, there are youngsters who have taken to setting up household wind energy units as a challenge because they see its immense potential in coastal areas, hilly regions and wherever wind speed is good. Two brothers, Arun and Anup George from Kerala, have developed their own product which made it to the UN Innovation Summit in 2019. They manufacture from scratch the 'Made in India' off-grid 1kW Avatar small wind turbine. This provides a daily output of 5kWh at mean (average) wind speeds of 5.5 m/s and can be

installed on any rooftop, big or small, as it requires about 25 per cent of the space an equivalent solar system would require.

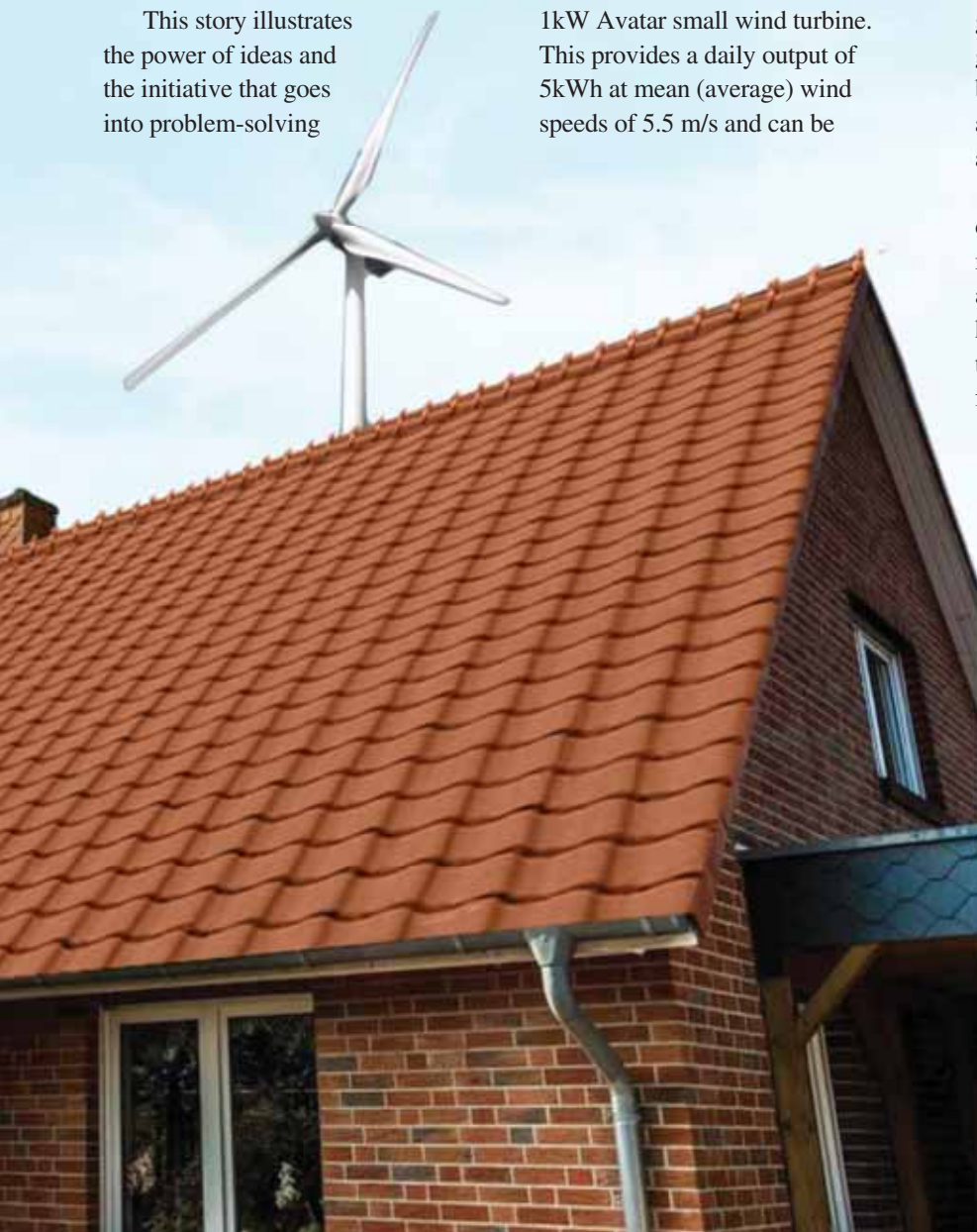
Arun, the CEO of Avant Garde Innovations, to whom I spoke for this column, says that the Avatar-1, which generates 5kWh/ day at mean windspeed of 5.5 m/s, can power 14 LED lamps of 10W each; two laptops of 50W each; two LED TVs (100W); one 165-litre refrigerator; four fans 75W each and a water purifier (100W). There are other models that generate higher levels of power and go up to 25 kWh/day. Avatar has been installed in various locations across the country, in flats, farms, and also at Leh for the Indian army.

Arun emphasised the advantages of wind versus solar, in that the former generates power during the day and night, has lower space utilisation, higher efficiency, longer life of battery, low maintenance and is unaffected by rainfall, snowfall or clouds. He feels the Avatar competes easily with rooftop solar installations as it is affordable at ₹60,000 onwards.

However, there are also other brands in the market, many of which are assembled and sold by traders. It is best to thoroughly research the market before opting for a product.

Alternate sources of energy are in sharp focus following the code red warning for humanity issued recently by the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It literally asks nations and citizens to act now to avert climatic disaster and save the Earth. Wind power could be a welcome addition to the effort.

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



within her *gharana*. According to Raja, “Kishori was not only a formidable musician, but also the chief ideologue of the romanticist movement — by the power of her intellect, erudition, and excellent articulation in at least three languages, including English. She was, incidentally, known to possess one of the finest private libraries on musicology and aesthetics. She held audiences spellbound at seminars and conferences, as much as she did on the concert platform.” Raja went on

to describe her as a romanticist, whose interpretations of ragas gave them a spice hitherto unattempted in her orthodoxly cerebral school.

Kishori’s dalliance with cinema music

was no more than a mild flirtation. Her mother certainly prevented it from blooming into a full-blown affair, by threatening her with the dire consequence of being denied a final look at her physical remains when the time came, should she continue to pursue her tinsel dream.

The next Kishori Amonkar song to captivate me was the bandish *Sahela re* in the raga *Bhup* or *Bhupali*, one of her favourite ragas, along with *Bageshri*. This song in Kishori’s voice has captivated generations of listeners. Hers is a beautiful interpretation, sentimental, sensuous almost, very different from the clinical treatment the



With music director and classical flautist Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia.

raga received in her *gharana*. For this deviation from the norm, and for borrowing from other *gharanas*, Kishori was deemed a rebel, a charge she dismissed, even denouncing the *gharana* system as artificial and stifling of creativity. She believed the musician should be totally free to pursue the beauty of raga music unhindered by any restrictions other than

the grammatical boundaries of the raga.

Though I love *Sahela re* by Kishori for its delicately feminine appeal — described by some as the artist’s foray into a romantic interpretation of the raga, my favourite renderings in that mode across genres primarily include the exciting explorations I grew up enjoying from great Carnatic vocalists like Maharajapuram

For borrowing from other *gharanas*, Kishori was deemed a rebel, a charge she dismissed, even denouncing the *gharana* system as artificial and stifling of creativity.





Viswanatha Iyer and ML Vasanthakumari and the incomparable Lata Mangeshkar's *Jyoti Kalash Chhalke* from the movie *Bhabhi ki Chudiyen* in the 1950s. In recent years, I have found the multifaceted Sriram Parasuram's portrayal of the raga (both *Bhup* and *Mohanam*, its southern parallel) both evocative and pure of enunciation — in voice as well as on violin strings.

As she evolved as a musician, Kishori became more and more convinced that music must have emotion at



With santoor maestro Shivkumar Sharma.

She held audiences spellbound at seminars and conferences, as much as she did on the concert platform.

its core, that to truly find a raga in its true colours was to plumb its emotional depths, that without that emotional quotient, music stayed at a mundane level of technical mastery at

best. To her the musical notes had distinct personalities, were in fact persons that spoke to her, sang to her.

Anyone who has listened to Kishori Amonkar regularly and witnessed her on-stage demeanour will agree with Raja. The loneliness was palpable. Hours before the concert, she started preparing to focus totally on merging with the music, with the ragas she started practising weeks ahead of the programme, so that she could move into a trance once she started singing. The trance was all important to her, the reason why



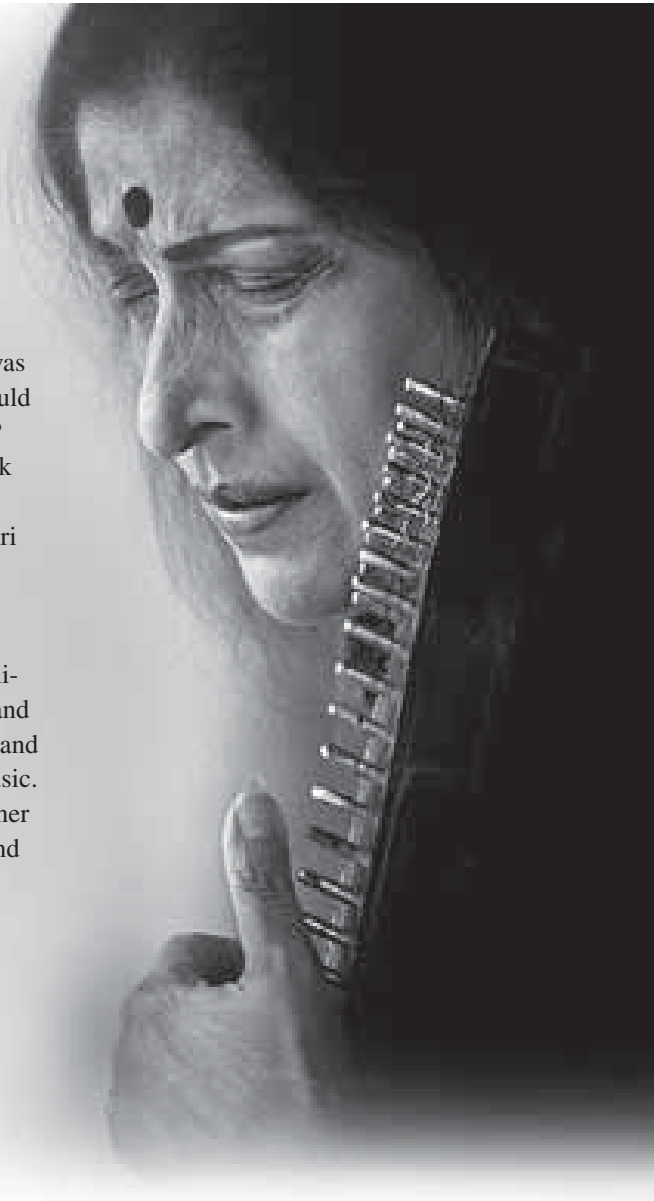
she allowed nobody to enter her green room, the reason why she made no secret of her annoyance when people in the audience including senior artists moved around or greeted one another. “How can I go into a trance if they do that?” she would ask. *Sadhana* was sacred to her; it was never mere practice. It was an act of complete devotion to the music. She likewise made a clear distinction between a guru and a teacher. The guru showed you a path, and left you to explore it on your own.

Achieving a state of total self-forgetfulness on stage was not always easy. Kishori often took a long time to warm up in a concert. As a result, her music could seem desultory and listless while she was struggling for that complete merger with the *sur*, the precise arrival at the perfect *shadja* or *rishabha* or *nishada*. Audiences, even diehard fans, could

grow impatient while this lonely perfectionist went in search of musical *nirvana* — and getting lost in byways and allies. When she did hit that pluperfect note, it was sheer bliss. Who could complain after that?

To quote Deepak Raja once again, “Listening to Kishori Amonkar, one was immediately struck by a sense of deep loneliness... a loneliness rendered rich and luminous, bearable and ennobled by the music. It gathered the listener in with its beauty and left one longing for more.”

This loneliness, plus the deep pain and anguish she suffered as a girl growing up, whenever she witnessed the humiliating treatment her mother was meted out during her



Listening to Kishori Amonkar, one was immediately struck by a sense of deep loneliness rendered rich and luminous, bearable and ennobled by the music.

performance career, must have led to Kishori’s temper tantrums and idiosyncratic behaviour once she established herself and reached diva status. She could drive organisers round the bend with her sometimes extravagant, eccentric demands — as when she insisted on a *white* Mercedes Benz

and a luxury suite with white walls in a five-star hotel, when on a concert visit to Bengaluru — or the inordinate time she took over aligning her tanpuras and completing sound checks before the start of her performances. The wait was more often than not totally worth it, as she fulfilled the immense





Membership Referral Reward Pin

This year the focus is on Membership Growth, and our target is to take it to 1.3 million members. Our RI President Shekhar Mehta has launched EOBO (Each One Bring One) campaign, and Rotary India has specially designed Membership Award Pins for members, clubs and districts based on their performance.

For this, each club has to get enrolled and enable Membership Data Sync from *Rotary.org* to *Rotaryindia.org* by selecting Roster on Wheels as a vendor in *rotary.org*.

Who can sync data: Club president/ secretary/executive secretary is authorised to enable this feature in *rotary.org*

Steps for data sync

1. Login to *www.rotary.org*
2. Manage> Club & District Administration > Club Administration

3. Scroll down to > Club & Member Data > Designate a club management vendor
4. Scroll down > Club Management Systems > Edit
5. Edit Club Management> Scroll Down> Add Vendor
6. Select Vendor > Drop down list > Roster on wheels > Vendor Access Level > View only access> Club Intends to use Vendors service
7. Scroll Down>tick the box of Certification > Click 'I Agree'

If you have any difficulty in doing this, please get in touch with the help desk at *support@rotaryindia.org*

Please note that when a club leader logs in to *www.rotaryindia.org*, he/she can check whether the club is ROTARY SYNC enabled or disabled on the top of the dashboard.

Membership Referral Reward Pin

Rotarians who refer a member to any club or district other than his own for the first time will be recognised with a pin. Here is the link to claim the Membership referral reward pin — <https://eobo.rotaryindia.org/>.

A Rotarian, his/her partner, or Rotaractor can claim a referral reward using this link.

Steps for Membership Referral Reward Pin

The Rotarian has to select the district, club and the person he has referred and choose the proper sponsor from the club. He will get three attempts to identify the sponsors. Then the system will block him from claiming the referral reward for that particular referred person. He can continue claiming the reward for other referrals. ■

THE ALL-MEMBER SURVEY IS COMING IN NOVEMBER

This is your chance to tell us what you like, what you don't like, and what you want from your Rotary membership.

To make sure you receive the survey, update your email address at my.rotary.org/profile/me.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

Rotary 

Chefs go down childhood culinary lane

Sharmila Chand

Chefs talk about their mothers as their source of inspiration. Here they go down memory lane and share their stories of love in the form of interesting recipes. Enjoy their memorabilia with some delicious home-style dishes.

Nolen gur payesh



Suvaranjan Banerjee

*Executive chef, Grand Mercure
Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall*

Growing up, *Nolen gur payesh* was my favourite dessert. Watching my mother cook the *payesh* is one of the fondest cooking memories that I have. Even when only available in the winters, my mother ensures that a small jar is saved for my birthday which falls in August. She taught me the importance of going that extra mile for someone's happiness and when I began my culinary journey, I knew that was exactly what I wanted to do for my guests.

Ingredients

- ◆ 1 ltr full fat milk
- ◆ 50 gm gobindobhog rice
- ◆ ½ cup nolen gur/dark palm jaggery
- ◆ 1–2 pods cardamom
- ◆ One bay leaf
- ◆ 10–12 cashew nuts and raisins
- ◆ ½ tsp ghee

Method

- Wash and soak the rice in water. After 30 minutes strain and spread it to dry.

- Heat a pan with 1/2 tsp ghee add dry rice and sauté for 1 min and keep it aside.
- Take a heavy bottom pot and boil the milk. Once it boils add cardamom and bay leaf and boil it for 5 minutes on low flame.
- Add rice to the milk and keep cooking on low flame until the rice is fully cooked. Stir occasionally so that the milk does not stick to the bottom.
- Once the rice is fully cooked and soft then add cashew nuts, raisins and Nolen gur to it. Mix well and cook for another 5-10 minutes till it thickens to desired consistency. Switch off the flame.
- Allow the kheer to cool down completely and serve at room temperature or cold.

Sattu Ka Paratha

Neelabh Sahay

*Executive chef, Novotel Kolkata
Hotel and Residences*

My mother has this knack of adding her own twist to traditional Indian dishes. Here I share one of the most famous dishes for which she is well known in the family — *Sattu ke parathe* and *aloo tamatar ki subzi*.

Ingredients

For the dough

- ◆ 100 gm wheat flour
- ◆ 100 gm all-purpose flour
- ◆ ½ teaspoon of salt
- ◆ ½ teaspoon of carom seeds
- ◆ 2 tablespoon oil

Warm water, as required to knead the dough

For the stuffing

- ◆ ½ cup roasted brown chickpeas flour
- ◆ 1 small onion, finely chopped
- ◆ 1 inch ginger, grated
- ◆ 1 teaspoon garlic, finely chopped
- ◆ 2 green chillies, finely chopped
- ◆ ½ tablespoon mango pickle, heaped
- ◆ 1 teaspoon mustard oil
- ◆ Salt to taste
- ◆ 1 tablespoon water
- ◆ Oil to fry the parathas

Method

- To prepare the dough, measure all the dry ingredients and put them in a large mixing bowl. Mix all the ingredients well. Add oil into the mixing bowl followed by water to make a soft dough. Cover the dough with a kitchen towel or muslin cloth and let it rest for half an hour.
- To prepare the stuffing, take roasted chickpea flour in a bowl, add chopped onions, garlic, grated ginger and green chillies. Mix well. Add salt, chopped coriander, mango pickle and mustard oil into the mixture.
- To prepare the paratha knead the dough for a minute and divide them into equal portions. Now roll the portions lightly in between the palm of

and put pressure on the top to make flat rounds. Divide the stuffing into four portions. Put the stuffing at the centre of the extended round disc of the dough. Now seal the stuffing by gathering all the sides. Sprinkle some wheat flour on the rolling board. Roll the stuffed dough carefully into a thick paratha.

- Once the pan is hot put the rolled paratha on it and dry roast it from both the sides. Drizzle some oil and spread on the top too. Shallow fry the parathas from both sides. Cook the paratha on medium flame until it gets cooked perfectly and golden spots appear on both the sides.
- Enjoy the paratha with aloo ki subzi.

Aloo ki subzi

Ingredients

- ◆ 500 gm potato
- ◆ 1 tsp of cumin
- ◆ 1 tbsp of chopped ginger
- ◆ 1 tsp turmeric
- ◆ 2 tsp red chili powder
- ◆ 1 tsp dhania powder
- ◆ 100 gm chopped tomato
- ◆ Salt to taste
- ◆ 2 tbsp chopped coriander
- ◆ 50 ml mustard oil

Method

- Dice the potatoes into pieces, wash and keep aside.
- Heat oil in a pan and add whole cumin. Let them crackle. Now add chopped ginger and sauté it for a while. When the ginger turns golden add tomatoes, salt

and all the powdered spices. Cook the masala till the oil floats on the surface.

- Now add potatoes and stir it for 5 min. Add required amount of water and cover the pan.
- Cook the subzi till potatoes are soft and tend to break. Add chopped coriander leaves.

Lasooni palak paneer



Gaurav Lavnia

Executive chef, Sheraton New Delhi Hotel

My culinary love story finds its roots in my mother's den. I have always noticed her passion for the food she cooked, starting from grinding masalas to buying fresh seasonal vegetables. She always prepares Lasooni palak paneer on my birthday. It's fragrant, full of home ground spices. I love to have it with tawa parathas.

Ingredients

- ◆ 30 gms ghee
- ◆ 2 gms cumin seed
- ◆ 2 gms whole red chilli
- ◆ 40 gms paneer, diced
- ◆ 1 gm asafoetida
- ◆ 30 gms chopped garlic
- ◆ 30 gms chopped onion
- ◆ 3 gms black pepper powder



- ◆ 2 gms cumin powder
- ◆ 3 gms salt
- ◆ 450 gms washed and shredded spinach
- ◆ 100 gms spinach puree
- ◆ 2 gms slit green chilly
- ◆ 10 gms brown garlic
- ◆ 2 gms ginger juliennes
- ◆ 8 gms butter

Method

- Blanch the spinach and keep it aside. Heat ghee in a frying pan and add hing and red chilli. When it crackles, add chopped garlic and let it brown. Add onions and saute till translucent. Then add cumin powder, black pepper and salt. Add the diced paneer and blanched spinach and saute. Next add the spinach puree and simmer for 2 minutes. Add the slit green chillies and ginger juliennes.
- Stir well and serve. Garnish with butter and browned garlic.

Chainsoo (Uttarakhand style black gram)

Sudershan Bhandari

Executive chef, Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place

My mother has been an inspiration and a motivator throughout my life. Her recipes are very close to my heart. Chainsoo is one dish that my mother used to cook for me during my small and big triumphs. This recipe brings sweet memories of

her which I will cherish forever.

Ingredients

- ◆ ½ cup urad dal (whole)
- ◆ ½ teaspoon coriander powder
- ◆ ½ teaspoon cumin powder
- ◆ ½ teaspoon red chilli powder
- ◆ ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder
- ◆ ¼ teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- ◆ 2 teaspoon vegetable oil
- ◆ 1¼ cup water
- ◆ 2 dry red chillies
- ◆ Salt to taste

Cooking Method

- Heat a pan and dry roast black gram for a few minutes until you can smell the aroma. Set aside. Once it cools down, grind it to a fine dry mixture.
- Take a heavy base pan. Heat vegetable oil and temper it with dry red chillies and pepper corns. Add coriander powder, cumin powder, red chilli powder, turmeric powder, salt with 2 tablespoons of water and fry for a minute. Add the ground black gram, mix it up and then add water. Cook on a medium to low flame for 20–30 minutes, stir occasionally until it thickens. Once it is done, switch off the gas and serve hot with steamed rice.



Patta gobhi kheer



Gaurav Mathur

Executive chef, WelcomHotel Dwarka

Born and raised in a Kayastha Mathur family, we had a tradition to fast once a week, preferably on Tuesdays. During our fasts, my grandmother used to put together a wholesome kheer rich in iron and nutrients. It was made of patta gobhi (green cabbage). The dish is very close to my heart as I recollect my childhood memories while making it.

Ingredients

- ◆ 500 gms shredded green cabbage
- ◆ 1½ ltr full cream milk
- ◆ 200 gms sugar
- ◆ 20 gms puffed lotus seed
- ◆ 20 gms raisins
- ◆ 10 gms charoli seeds (chironji)
- ◆ 5 ml saffron water
- ◆ 15 ml ghee

Method

- Blanch cabbage and squeeze water. Keep aside.
- Boil milk. Let it simmer for 25–30 minutes. Add cabbage and sugar. Let it simmer for another 10–12 minutes.
- Finish with sautéed dry fruits in ghee.
- Garnish with saffron water and serve warm.

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

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District Wise TRF Contributions as on July 2021

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contributions
India					
2981	11,223	486	0	135,135	146,844
2982	12,686	260	0	0	12,946
3000	177	11	0	0	188
3011	2,205	280	0	2,027	4,512
3012	10,907	3,734	19,000	0	33,641
3020	308	253	0	4,620	5,181
3030	2,218	0	0	0	2,218
3040	71	0	0	2,701	2,773
3053	565	0	0	0	565
3054	1,400	84	0	500	1,984
3060	6,042	28	0	47,014	53,084
3070	336	0	0	738	1,074
3080	2,486	154	0	0	2,640
3090	3,956	0	0	0	3,956
3100	4,157	0	0	0	4,157
3110	35	0	0	0	35
3120	2,167	0	0	0	2,167
3131	97,807	8,885	30,000	4,151	140,843
3132	5,832	137	5,000	0	10,969
3141	134,315	27	0	148	134,490
3142	27,709	105	0	24	27,838
3150	5,241	1,050	0	1,764	8,055
3160	4,120	321	17,264	0	21,704
3170	17,473	2,248	1,196	1,227	22,144
3181	1,113	0	0	0	1,113
3182	1,266	0	0	0	1,266
3190	20,286	3,266	0	0	23,552
3201	8,020	526	0	1,848	10,394
3203	2,944	1,070	2,072	119,060	125,147
3204	245	0	0	1,036	1,281
3211	10	280	0	0	290
3212	3,220	133	1,036	0	4,389
3231	3,263	28	0	0	3,291
3232	18,122	8,329	1,500	26,857	54,808
3240	9,101	267	0	401	9,769
3250	367	0	1,036	0	1,403
3261	2,183	14	0	0	2,197
3262	1,623	0	0	0	1,623
3291	1,865	39	5,541	0	7,444
India Total	427,066	32,014	83,644	349,249	891,974
3220 Sri Lanka	5,949	473	1,510	0	7,932
3271 Pakistan	308	316	0	1,155	1,780
3272 Pakistan	707	60	0	0	767
3281 Bangladesh	5,244	825	0	0	6,069
3292 Nepal	10,395	1,100	0	2,155	13,650
South Asia Total	449,669	34,789	85,154	352,559	922,171

*Figures may not be accurate as the system is being migrated to ERP platform.

Source: RI South Asia Office



Wordsworld

Books can be like a hockey team



Sandhya Rao

Random picks, varied styles, absorbing yarns... each uniquely examining the fundamental human need to belong.

We've been uplifted, and the icing on the cake was the calm, confident, graceful gold medal-winning demeanour of Neeraj Chopra. So young, so dignified in execution and victory. Then came news of some people 'celebrating' the defeat of the women's hockey team in the semi-final. They stood outside the Haridwar home of a player and hurled offensive remarks against the family, apparently 'protesting' the presence of dalits in the Indian team. Yet, this team is quintessential India: a representation of the

myriad-hued multitude that is this nation.

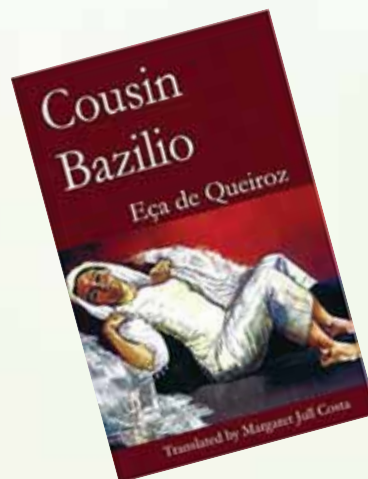
The package of books laid out today is, in a way, like the Indian women's hockey team — each selection is unique, and together they convey a sense of belonging in different ways. Importantly, each voice sings its own song. *The Woman in the White Kimono* by Ana Johns, based on the true experiences of the author's father, unravels the story of the central character, Tori Kovac, whose father dies, leaving behind a life-changing letter for her: she has a half-sister in Japan.

Tori's search for this sibling is the crux of this debut novel. Admittedly, it is not always great writing, but the story is emotional and evokes images of Japan that seem almost Indian. That's the thing about 'real' stories, even when fictionalised — they bring you home.

The second book — they've been listed in random order, no preferences intended — is *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett. Slow, unremarkable, emotionless, 'yaar, nothing happens!' — these were some of the comments in our book club. But everybody agreed the writing was lucid. The book is named after the house in which the central characters live. The mother runs off to India, leaving bereft her husband and two children, Maeve and Danny in the care of housekeepers. Eventually, the father remarries, bringing Andrea and her two children into the narrative.

It's not as if Maeve and Danny particularly love their house, but to Andrea the house is a trophy and any previous thing connected to it, unpalatable. She orders M and D to leave. This is about as dramatic as the novel gets as it goes on to explore relationships: between people, between people and things; people and memories; the past and the present; between hope and expectation. The writing compels you to read every word and, especially if you have a 'house' in your personal history, reflect upon it and the stories that may lie hidden in its walls.

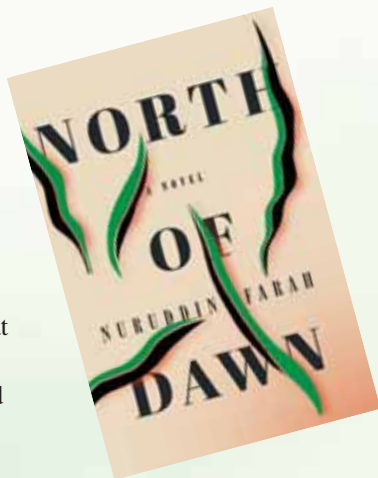
You wouldn't be off the mark if you thought 'Hamlet!' upon reading the name *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell. This is a story inspired by Shakespeare's son who died young; four years later, Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. Rooted in fact, it dramatically reveals a broad canvas of sixteenth century England even as it tunnels deep into details so minute you hear every breath exhaled, feel the juice ooze from plums, hear the scratch of every word paper. Read for yourself: 'Hamnet starts awake, the mattress rustling beneath him. Something has woken him — a noise, a bang, a shout — but he doesn't know what. He can tell, by the long reaches of the sun into the room, it must be near evening. What is he



doing here, asleep on the bed? He twists his head and then he remembers everything. A form lies flat, next to him, head twisted to one side. Judith's face is waxen and still, a sheen of sweat making it glimmer like glass. Her chest rises and falls at uneven intervals. Hamnet swallows, his throat closed and tight. His tongue feels furred, ungainly, too large to fit in his mouth. He scrambles upright, the room blurring around him. A pain enters the back of his head and crouches there, snarling, like a cornered rat.'

Nothing is known about the real Hamnet but he is heroed here, in 'a great work of imaginative recreation and a great story,' writes Dominic Dromgoole. 'It is also a moral achievement to have transformed that young child from being a literary footnote into someone so tenderly alive that part of you wishes he had survived, and *Hamlet* never been written.' In the end, you cannot help but wonder how on earth Maggie O'Farrell created this masterpiece.

Right now, though, I am under the spell of *North of Dawn* by Somali writer Nuruddin Farah: 'As his eyes move from the face of a Caucasian woman to a man with Middle Eastern features, and from a woman in a sari to an African man



in an agbada, Mugdi is sad that scenes such as this, where a variety of races congregate at a public arena, are unavailable in Mogadiscio. As he watches the expressions on the faces of some of the Norwegians, he can spot some whose gentle features stiffen, turning ugly when they come face-to-face with a Muslim woman in full Islamic gear. Maybe a woman with a Muslim headscarf is seen as a threat, whereas a sari-wearing woman is viewed as unusual and fascinating in this part of the world. Mugdi remembers reading about a judge in the state of Georgia in the US who barred a woman with a headscarf from entering his court. Would the same judge turn away a Jewish man with a yarmulke or a nun in her habit?'

It is very much a story of our times, beset with conflicts and confusion particularly

around ideas of faith and fundamentalism. Farah tackles the subject head-on by premising the story on the experiences of a Somali couple, Mugdi and Gacala, having escaped from troubles in their country, now well-adjusted to living in Oslo, Norway, with their two children.

However, when their son grows up to become a jihadist, and dies in a terrorist attack, and they are forced to look after his wife and her two children, everything changes for them. As *The Oprah Magazine* observed, 'The political becomes personal in this beautifully affecting tale.' In tone, tale and telling, it's completely different from the other books laid out today.

The fifth book is a completely different cup of tea. This is *Cousin Bazilio* by the Portuguese novelist Eca de Queiroz, in English translation by Margaret Jull Costa. Although first published in 1878, it never feels dated. Richly

descriptive, languorously sensuous, and exuding the languidness of siestas on humid afternoons, as in: 'Luiza yawned and stretched. It was such a bore having to get dressed! She would have liked simply to be dozing off in a pink marble bath full of warm, perfumed water! Or else to be rocking gently in a silken hammock, with all the windows closed, listening to music! She shook off one slipper and sat looking fondly at her small, milk-white foot with its tracery of blue veins, thinking about all kinds of things ...'

In its own way, this tale parading cuckolds and mistresses, hypocrisy and deceit, blackmail and sentimentality, is also founded on a yearning to belong — to somebody, to a set, to high society. The characters materialise before your eyes and even if you have never visited Lisbon, the city comes alive.

Lucky you; so many books to choose from! What you read, how much, and when, is your privilege. What matters is that you take a shot. After all, like in sport, it doesn't matter if you win or lose, it's how you play the game.

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

Designed by
Krishnapratheesh



Develop the wonderful elixir... **gratitude**

Bharat and Shalan Savur

There's nothing like a little physical pain to keep your mind off your emotional problems," says Snoopy. It's true. You may have experienced it like I did... news arrives that a cousin you grew up with is in hospital with Covid. An hour later, your lower back hurts, your voice turns raspy. Emotions shy off distress, but the body doesn't. What do you do? Dr John E Sarno, professor of rehabilitation medicine in New York, says, "Consciously and forcefully shift your attention to what is worrying you" — in this case, your cousin's well-being. It's not pleasant thinking of him being on oxygen. It hurts and the body reflects it.

Intense worry itself causes mild oxygen deprivation which then causes the pain in a vulnerable part of the body. But when you face up to it, and say, 'this is worrying me,' it sends a message to the brain — 'this is not a physical affliction, but an emotional one.' Gradually, the pain eases and then ceases.

The sheath of understanding. We can't armour our emotions but we can sheath them with understanding. As health consultant Steve Ozanich says, "Truth changes as perception changes." This is so very important in today's context. We all know that more people

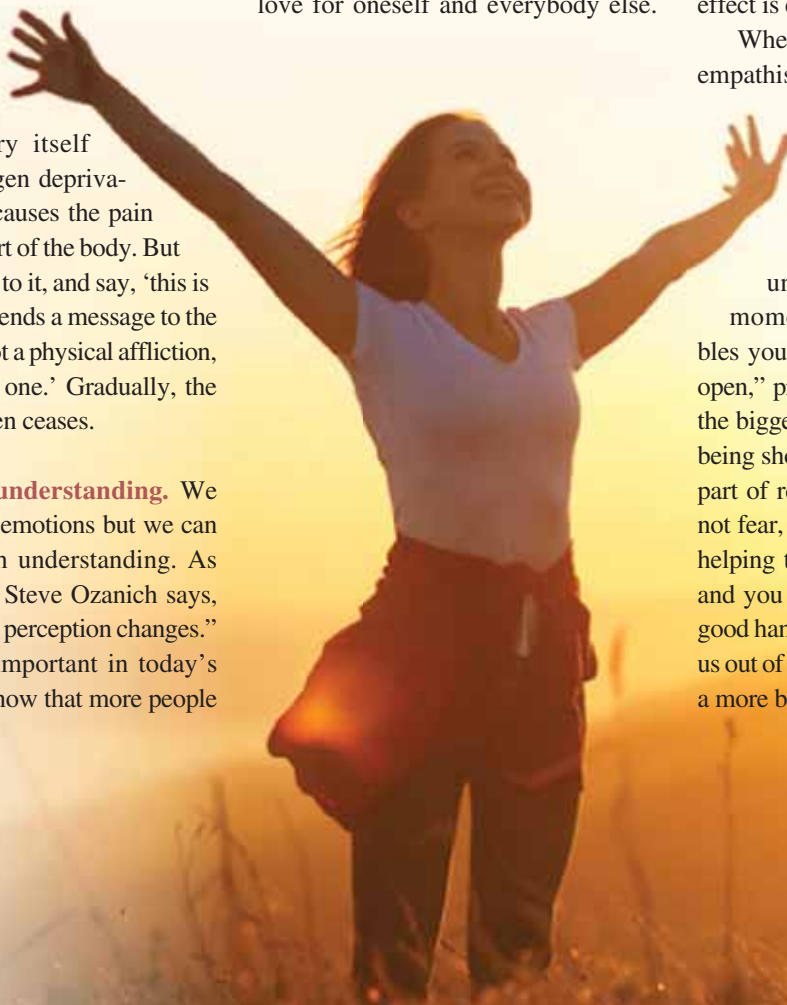
are undergoing anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, are beset by a constant fear of contracting Covid, or losing their loved ones. Sales of anti-depressants, tranquillisers, anti-psychotics and anti-migraine medications have all dramatically risen.

It's not a great picture, but it's our picture, and we've got to navigate through this entire maze of information with this clear, firm belief: 'I'm fit, I'm fine, I'm flourishing.' Living from a good place in our mind helps — a place where there's no fear, a place that emphasises good health, good thoughts, love for oneself and everybody else.

As Yogananda puts it so aptly, "The darkest mind, if you bring light to it, transforms." And the transformation is a delightful process; calmness replaces turmoil, healing insights overtake information and love eases out fear.

Let love be the driver. When you experience any resistance, any niggles of negativity that holds you back, tell yourself softly, 'Let love drive me.' The Wise say, "Love is the waking consciousness in the body. And the waking consciousness is you." Such a truth with its enormity gives you immense energy, and the effect is electric.

When love is the driver, you can empathise and sympathise with your cousin in hospital without being drawn into your own vortex of worry and fear. You accept the situation and it frees you from unwholesome thoughts. "The moment you accept what troubles you've been given, the door will open," promises Rumi. You get to see the bigger picture. The pictures we are being shown are real, yet they are only part of reality. Look again from love, not fear, and you see all those who are helping to heal all those who are sick and you know your loved ones are in good hands. A wider perspective draws us out of our self-referential brooding to a more balanced and serene state.



Banish any aching tiredness in body, worry in mind, lowness in spirit that you may be undergoing. Be born again. Be the one who reduces stress in your life and that of others. Build a bonfire every night by visualisation and cast all your fears into it. It's a great way to prepare for a new day, a new way of being.

Loosen the body. The body needs to relax before it rests. Ferry it to bed, tenderly make it lie down. Stretch it by extending your arms above and your legs below — like an exclamation mark being pulled at both ends. Feel the relief from top to toe. Then relax. Lying on your back, move your hand gently in circles over your stomach until you feel the body loosen. Some ancient traditions believe a circle symbolises creator and creation. The circle itself is still and the energy of creating moves inside its circumference. Everything moves in it — energy, health, order — the harbinger of balance. Now silently command each part of your body to relax — from toes to head. Or listen to a *Yoga Nidra* meditation recording on Youtube, relax your body and drift off to sleep.

Still the mind. Interestingly, when the mind feels fatigued, it requires not rest but something more — it needs stillness. It needs to stop thinking. The mind is not a race course, thoughts are not racehorses. But when they begin to behave what they are not, fog and fatigue set in. Racing thoughts are normally about lots of things to be taken care of within a short space of time. There's anxiety about not doing what one needs to do, not getting what one wants, not meeting a commitment and 101 things more. That there is a virus the world over does not help. So much energy is taken up by anxiety that we cannot sit or focus on our work, instead, we keep moving around restlessly, growing even more tired.

The moment you accept what troubles you've been given, the door will open.

Take charge and relax the mind. Sit comfortably, head and neck supported. Breathe slowly, deeply. Inhale through your nostrils to eight counts, exhale through your mouth to another eight counts. As you inhale, draw in your stomach; as you exhale, swell it out. Do this until you feel an easing. Now, visualise yourself as encased in a block of ice sitting in the sun. Let the warmth of the sun melt away your anxiety, aggression, tiredness and fear. Feel yourself melting inside and the cool stream running inside you. If any thoughts arise, let them come and go without clinging to them. It's all about being easy, no clinging, just sitting, body relaxed, thinking silent, mind still.

Gradually, you'll feel a lightening, an opening, a spaciousness in you. You'll feel an urge... Follow its directive. You'll find yourself willingly tackling tasks. It's amazing how those 101 things now shrink to 10. And when you complete doing one task, the 10 things magically become two. And everything seems doable, life seems livable. You're fine, life is fine.

Tone up the spirit. Often, the spirit wearies from feeling nothing is going our way and the world is against us. This gives rise to a feeling that there is never enough. There aren't enough biscuits in the packet. There isn't enough money in the bank. There isn't enough goodness and efficiency in people. Please understand, this comes from a disorganised mind that wears down the spirit. Such a mind needs to be kept busy organising things — daily accounts, paying bills, regular meals, exercise session,

bedtime, waking up. As it sees order in everyday life, the spirit tones up.

The spirit also needs a wonderful elixir — gratitude. Gratitude is a great recognition of the good life we are experiencing. It shifts our perception from burdens to blessings, from dissatisfaction to appreciation. Can you see how it tones and builds up the spirit? During the lockdown, being indoors all the times, many grumblers learnt the value of freedom; the day they run outdoors into the sunshine, into the rain without any fear, is the day they will know gratitude. It's a point to be noted that Archbishop and the Dalai Lama constantly thank everybody they encounter. The Archbishop also greets every new experience with a heartfelt 'Wonderful!' Brother David Steindl-Rast, a monk has got it right, "It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It is gratefulness that makes us happy."

And here's another spirit-toner that was recently forwarded to me. It's about a wonderful toning exercise. It goes: 'Stand on a comfortable surface where you have plenty of room on each side. With a five-pound potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax. Each day, you'll find that you can hold this position for just a little longer.

"After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-pound potato bags. Then try 50-pound potato bags and eventually try to get where you can lift a 100-pound potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute." ("I'm at this level," says the forwarder.)

"After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag."

Are you laughing? That's the spirit-toner we all need!

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

From RI South Asia Office desk

Fundraising highlights from South Asia for Rotary year 2020–21:

- ❖ India achieved the highest ever contribution of \$22.3 million and moved to No 3 position in the list of top-giving countries.

Arch Klumph Society members from South Asia region for Rotary year 2020–21

Taizoon Fakhruddin Khorakiwala and Edith Khorakiwala	(RID 3141)
Vinay and Rashmi Kulkarni	(RID 3131)
Banoo Jafer and Jafer Noman Sura	(RID 3141)
Rauzat and Saif Qureishi	(RID 3141)
Suresh and Kiran Poddar	(RID 3054)
M Ambalavanan	(RID 3232)
Ajay and Rooma Dubey	(RID 3131)
Khandkar Shafiqul Haque	(RID 3281)
Mituli Mahbub Hossain	(RID 3281)
Nikunj Pravin Jhaveri and Kanan Jhaveri	(RID 3141)
Ashok Kumar Mahansaria	(RID 3141)
Ashok Kumar and Bindu Mehra	(RID 3141)
Narendrakumar and Bhavani Mehta	(RID 3060)
Nitin and Harsha Mehta	(RID 3141)
PNB Murugadoss and Devi M	(RID 3212)
Dipti Ranjan and Indrani Patnaik	(RID 3261)
Ramesh and Asha Poddar	(RID 3141)
K R Ravindran and Vanathy Ravindran	(RID 3220)
Muhammad and Dilara Ajaz Saya	(RID 3271)
Srinivas T	(RID 3190)
SV Veerramani and Radha Veerramani	(RID 3232)
Irena Malabika and Tipu Munshi	(RID 3281)
Atos Global IT Solutions and Services Private Limited	(RID 3142)

- ❖ Annual Fund giving from South Asia increased by 17 per cent over the last Rotary year.
- ❖ Eight districts crossed \$1 million mark in total TRF contribution and are also featuring in world top 50 districts list.
- ❖ Total 23 new AKS members (including level change) from South Asia and 16 were from India.
- ❖ 73 per cent of the clubs in South Asia have contributed towards TRF in RY 2020–21.
- ❖ Donor participation remained at 33 per cent for South Asia.

Districts from South Asia in top 50 districts worldwide

District	2020–21* Total Contribution in US \$	Worldwide Rank
3141	\$3,525,764	1
3131	\$1,760,573	10
3232	\$1,739,390	11
3190	\$1,320,244	27
3201	\$1,292,207	29
3060	\$1,208,745	34
3281	\$1,024,779	44
3011	\$1,019,684	47

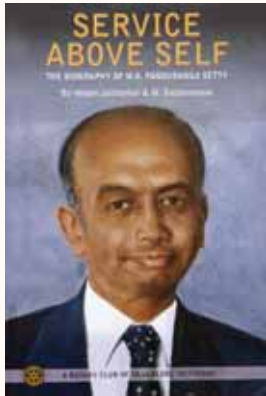
*Interim unaudited update

RY 2020–21* Top 5 Giving Clubs from South Asia

District	Club Name	Total TRF Contribution in US \$
3131	Pune Central	\$540,501.36
3141	Bombay Airport	\$437,577.44
3141	Bombay North	\$350,430.47
3141	Bombay Queen City	\$327,943.85
3141	Queen's Necklace	\$311,927.43

*Interim unaudited update

On the racks



Service Above Self – The Biography of

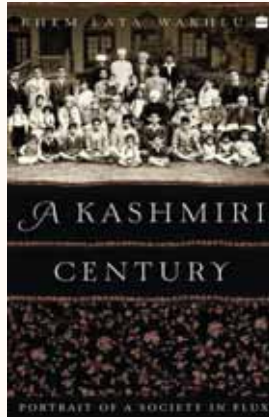
M K Panduranga Setty

Author : **Vedam Jaishankar
M Satyanarayan**

Publisher : **Vimal Publication**

Pages : **292**

With a foreword by RI President Shekhar Mehta, this book is an interesting account of the life of PRID Panduranga Setty. From his first trip to Switzerland as a nervous boy to becoming a well-known educationist and industrialist of Karnataka, this book narrates the story of Setty, his successful career and journey in the Rotary world. Over the years he learnt to appreciate the beauty of nature, followed an arduous work ethic, and took up charitable work. The book gives readers a ringside view of his life as a member of RC Bangalore for the last 54 years, his achievements and the service he has rendered. It also highlights how he developed a strong network of friends and rich experiences which aided him in doing good in the world.



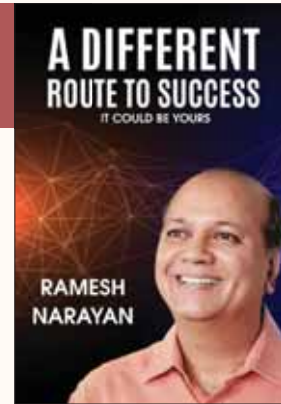
A Kashmiri Century

Author : **Khemlata Wakhlu**

Publisher : **HarperCollins**

Pages : **356; ₹388**

Written by former cabinet minister Khemlata Wakhlu, a Kashmiri, this book delves into the lives of Hindus and Muslims living in the valley. We get a glimpse of the Kashmir that Khemlata grew up in, its ethos and culture over several centuries. Having been ruled by kings from diverse faiths and cultures, the region has undergone various cycles of social, cultural and religious changes which have impacted the life of the Kashmiris. The stories in the book are an insight into Kashmiri society, its evolution and how the people dealt with the valley's bitter past. It highlights the natural beauty of the region, its contributions to Indian literature and its vibrant flora and fauna. The stories are based on the author's personal experiences and her intimate understanding of what it means to be a Kashmiri-speaking native.



A Different Route to Success

Author : **Ramesh Narayan**

Publisher : **Notion Press**

Pages : **110; ₹299**

Giving readers a peek into his professional life, the author examines the factors that contributed to his success in the advertising field. The founder of Canco Advertising was quite active in this field for well over two decades, before retiring at 50 for good. The author narrates anecdotes from his own life making the book an interesting read. He elaborates on what success means to him and the journey that took him to where he is today. Genius is not the only important thing that determines a person's success, Narayan states, and explains that practical learning is critical to attain professional goals. According to him there is "no one formula for success. Nor one route to this holy grail." The self-help book tells his success story in simple language with a mix of interesting anecdotes, honest insights and a different look at success.

Compiled by Kiran Zehra

RC Mannargudi Midtown — RID 2981



A health camp was held at the club's adopted village near Thirumeni lake in which around 200 Narikuravas, a homeless tribe, were screened for various ailments.

RC Kundli — RID 3012



Club members led by president Neelam Sehgal planted 50 saplings and protected them with tree guards at an industrial area in Kundli.

RC Karur — RID 3000



Medical equipment worth ₹26,000 were donated to the Kasturibai Municipal Maternity Hospital. Also, doctors and frontline staff were honoured by the club.

RC Nasik Godavari — D 3030



Interest-free micro loans up to ₹21,000 were given to 20 women to help them set up small businesses such as tailoring units and beauty parlours at homes.

RC Delhi Khubsurat — RID 3011



This all-women's club distributed sanitary pads, cosmetics and ayurvedic medicines to 120 women at the Leprosy Centre, Lajpat Nagar, to boost their confidence and provide nutrition.

RC Jaipur Bapu Nagar — RID 3054



Medical devices and electrical appliances costing ₹1.7 lakh were donated to a PHC at Manpur Macheri village through the club's RCC. Club president Narendra Mal Mathur and his family sponsored the project.

RC Pathankot Midtown — RID 3070



The club contributed ₹50,000 for the operation of a 2-day-old baby girl who was born with an under-developed food pipe at the Jaswal Children's Hospital, Pathankot. The infant is doing well.

RC Sanskriti Moradabad — RID 3100



Around 90 patients were screened in an eye camp at the Apollo Laser Eye Hospital. Rtn Dr Pallav Aggarwal conducted eye tests. Free cataract surgeries will be done on eight patients.

RC Chandigarh Midtown — RID 3080



Over 200 expectant mothers were screened for high risk pregnancy with testing for blood sugar, BP and other parameters. Club president Salil Chopra gave dry rations to 25 mothers who delivered on that day.

RC Agra Northeast — RID 3110



Over 200 trees were planted at the Guru Ka Taal Gurudwara, Sikandra, to mark the new Rotary year.

RC Sri Ganganagar City — RID 3090



PDG Vijay Gupta inaugurated an ambulance (GG: ₹25 lakh) with the support of RC Capalaba, Australia. IPP Shailesh Goyal and club president Sanjiv Garg contributed to the project.

RC Lucknow Baradari — RID 3120



Garments and toys were distributed to children at the Sishu Bal Griha, an orphanage, having around 50 inmates.

RC Guntur Vikas — RID 3150



The club members planted saplings to usher in a green landscape in the neighbourhood. A number of volunteers took part in the initiative.

RC Bangalore East — RID 3190

Laptops were donated to teachers at the Saraswathi Vidya Niketan High School, Dommasandra, and Swami Vivekananda High School, Neralur, for online teaching. Also, 550 food kits (₹3.85 lakh) were distributed to students.



RC Adoni — RID 3160



The club sponsored cataract operations for two patients. Sewing material worth ₹30,000 were given to 10 underprivileged women to help them earn a sustainable income from home.

RC Udamalpet — RID 3203

Around 330 people were inoculated at a Covid vaccination camp held at the Rotary House. The project enhanced the public image of Rotary in the vicinity.



RC Hubli Vidyanagar — RID 3170



Umbrellas with Rotary logo were distributed to 60 vegetable vendors at three locations in the city. The project cost ₹15,000.

RC Tirunelveli Twin City — RID 3212

Around 60 people were inoculated at the Covid vaccination camp held at the SCAD Primary School. A look-alike of former Tamilnadu CM MGR attracted the people.



RC Vellore North — RID 3231



Saplings were planted on the premises of the Auxilium College, Vellore, with the support of college principal and NCC students.

RC Rourkela Queens — RID 3261



With the help of RCC volunteer Sanjukta Bindu Barla, the club planted 300 saplings including fruit-bearing and medicinal plants at Birkera village, around 30km from the city.

RC Bongaigaon — RID 3240



Saplings were planted on the premises of Kripalya Child Care Institute at Dangtol village. The destitute children interacted with Rotarians and gave a dance performance.

RC Bhubaneswar Metro — RID 3262



Covid-related devices such as oximeter, nebuliser, inhaler and reusable PPE kit, besides ready-to-make snack items, were donated to five orphanages in and around the city.

RC Jamshedpur Midtown — RID 3250



Menstrual cups were donated to teachers at the Prem Jyoti Prangan. District chair (new generation) Simran Sagoo and Rtn Dr Renuka Choudhary spoke on its eco-friendly attributes.

RC Geetanjali Kolkata — RID 3291



Health camps at Amratala village in South 24 Parganas and Kajla tribal area, Barasat tehsil, screened over 250 villagers for ailments.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

Of drivers & journalists and their declining skills



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

Compared to its counterparts in most parts of the world, the middle class in India lives quite comfortably, what with access to cheap domestic help that it has. True, this help is no longer full-time as it was when we were growing up many years ago. Now it is 90 per cent part-time. It was in this context that last month I had written about the *mali*, or gardener, problem. Gone are the days when gardens were so large that you needed a full-time gardener. Now it is only the car, regardless of its size, that requires a full-time driver. So most people I know have one, not only because they have the money and because the traffic is so horrible, but also because they are old and getting older and, above all, parking is such a great problem. Indeed, drivers are more useful as parking valets. I often wonder why more malls, shopping streets and hospitals don't follow the five-star hotel mode of employing such attendants. When you consider it, a major reason for online shopping is that you don't have to find a place to park when you go shopping. And, increasingly, it is also the parking charges that can, depending on location and the time of the day, vary from ₹50 to 200 an hour.

I stopped driving 20 years ago after a doctor cousin explained to me what exactly driving for over half-an-hour does to our blood pressure. She made

me measure it when I came back from the office which was 45 minutes away then. Now it is 110 minutes away. So one working week, my wife, who is as good as any doctor when it comes to telling me what not to eat and drink, measured it. And lo! As my cousin had predicted, it was very high. Since I also used to smoke around ten cigarettes a day, my wife issued an edict: we will employ a driver.

Two weeks after he started working for us, my blood pressure was checked again. It was normal. So since then I have not driven, even though it now costs 20 times as much, up from ₹1,000 a month to ₹20,000. But as a percentage of our family earnings, the amount has actually come down

Arching her eyebrows my wife said: “Isn't that exactly like you journalists? All you fellows do now is Google, cut and paste and get paid more now for doing less work than you did 20 years ago.”

even though I am now retired and my income has halved. Clearly, the supply of drivers has increased very fast.

That's fine if you look at it only from the money point of view. But as always happens — mobile phone networks are an excellent example — when supply goes up very quickly, quality declines very sharply. It's not just the driving skills that fall short; these guys don't have any clue of the car's mechanism. Thus, over the last 20 years we have had six drivers, each worse than the previous one but earning more. Our current chap drives extremely well, or has begun to, after constant hectoring by me from the passenger seat in the front. But he has no idea of how the car works. Thankfully, he can change a tyre now, but only after we had paid a workshop to teach him.

I pointed this out to my wife who, as a professor, has become accustomed to dealing with the declining quality of her students. She arched her eyebrows and asked “Isn't that exactly like you journalists? All you fellows do now is Google and cut and paste and get paid more now for doing much less work than you did 20 years ago.”

She had, as usual, got to the core of the issue — that there was no difference between media people and drivers. I have decided to stop complaining about domestic help now. ■

In Brief



Tom Daley knits a medal case for his gold medal

After winning gold in the synchronised 10m platform diving at the Tokyo Olympics, Tom Daley, an LGBTQ icon, was spotted knitting while watching the women's 3m springboard final. Pictures of the star

diver watching the action while knitting went viral on social media. A photo of Daley knitting purple yarn shared by the official Olympics Twitter account got over 1.6 lakh 'likes' in a day. He shared a glimpse of the little woollen pouch he knit for his Olympic gold medal on his @madewithlovebytomdaley Instagram account which has over 4.2 lakh followers.



Take Covid vaccination, urges Jennifer Aniston

Hollywood actor Jennifer Aniston pleaded with her 37.7 million followers on Instagram to wear a mask and has cut ties with a few people over their vaccination

status. Saying "it's a real shame," she called out "a few people in my weekly routine who have refused or did not disclose (whether or not they had been vaccinated), and it was unfortunate." Vaccination, she said in an interview with *InStyle* magazine, is "your moral and professional obligation. It's tricky because everyone is entitled to their own opinion — but a lot of opinions don't feel based in anything except fear or propaganda."

Emperor Penguins in endangered list



In a bid to save the Emperor Penguins the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has proposed that the species be listed as threatened

under the Endangered Species Act. Although the species is not found within the United States, a listing under the Endangered Species Act would help federal agencies minimise harm to them from activities in their habitat, for example, from fishing. The USFWS study shows the decline of sea ice at the rate projected by climate models under current energy system would dramatically reduce penguin colonies making them quasi-extinct by 2100.

New hydrogel to treat Parkinson's



The Australian National University (ANU) in collaboration with The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health have developed a new hydrogel that could help in the

treatment of Parkinson's disease. Made from natural amino acids the gel will act as a gateway to safely transfer stem cells into the brain and restore damaged tissue by releasing a growth-enabling protein called GDNF (Glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor). The cost-effective technology is said to be easy to manufacture on a mass scale and could undergo clinical trials soon.



Solar buoy to test sea water

National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Chennai, has placed a high-tech buoy off the coast of Puducherry. Fitted with sensors, the buoy will automatically measure and transmit oxygen, water temperature, conductivity (salinity), depth, blue-green algae, turbidity, pH and chlorophyll levels in the sea through a computer model and the quality readings can be viewed through a smartphone app by anyone near the coast. The solar-powered buoy, anchored 1.5km from the coast, will also study atmospheric temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction, besides wave speed and direction of currents, and can withstand rough weather including six-metre high waves.

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