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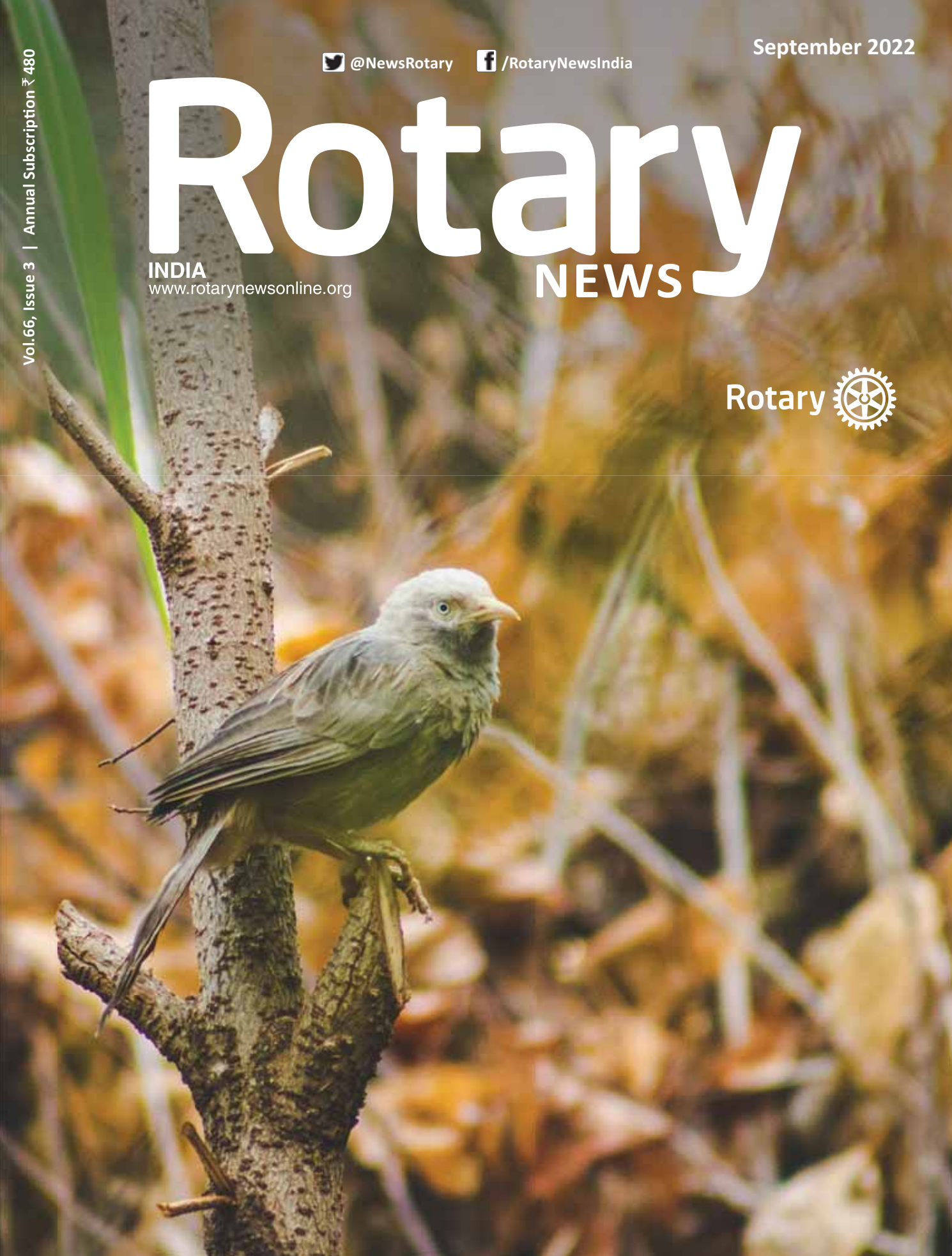
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September 2022

# Rotary

## NEWS

INDIA  
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# Inside

12

Where attending school is a luxury

18

Don't water the weeds: President Jones' advice to incoming leaders

24

Tamil Nadu projects bowl over RI Prez Jones

32

Literacy projects galore

44

Member engagement crucial, essential

46

Tell your incredible stories to the world

48

Changing the world with one story at a time

52

Striking a chord with Annets

54

Flood victims receive help from RC Valsad

56

A peace advocate, tea grandmaster, Rotarian

64

Our knees make us athletes

72

Time for toy libraries

74

Goan Rhapsody



## LETTERS

### An exemplary service project

The cover photo of a heart patient fitted with a pacemaker depicts the humanitarian deed carried out by RC Jamshedpur. I was delighted to go through the noble work done by the club in keeping hearts of over 200 patients ticking through their project under the guidance of Dr Vijaya Bharat. Glad to note that both incoming and outgoing RI presidents visited the RNT office, Chennai. President Jones describes well the importance of DEI across the Rotary hierarchy and the necessity of bringing in more women and young Rotarians into our organisation. The Editor has given a detailed account of the new RI Prez in her note which is interesting. RID Mahesh Kotbagi has dwelt on 'Imagine Rotary'. RID AS Venkatesh has focused on embracing change by getting out of our comfort zones. TRF trustee chair Ian Riseley tells us how Rotary funds are being utilised.

Other articles like *There is no limit to unleashing women's potential in Rotary*, *RID 3232 excels in projects...*, *When a village adoption project helped save a young girl*, and *Rotary's mission is to change lives* are all excellent. *Lakshya* moments are captured well in the photos.

*Philip Mulappone MT*  
RC Trivandrum Suburban — D 3211

The cover story titled *RC Jamshedpur keeps hearts ticking through an exemplary project* is soul-stirring. Rtn Dr Vijaya Bharat's noble work speaks volumes of her dedication and compassion. A film should be made on this project, so that the world knows about her contribution. The role of Rtn N L Rungta towards this project is commendable. The story on Rotary Breast Milk Bank was educational, the pictures of *Lakshya Moments* were a



visual treat. *Project Vignettes* and *Club Hop* photos were catchy.

*Anju Rathor*  
RC Chaibasa — D 3250

I was delighted to read that two serving RI presidents visited the RNT office. The new layout for *Inside* page looks neat and appealing to the eye. The focus on DEI is noteworthy as it has come at a time when the world is talking about it in the aftermath of Covid.

The thought of PRIP Shekhar Mehta on the value Rotary brings and how we aren't capitalising on it is worth pondering over. The story of Rotarians from RC Colombo joining the protest against corruption and how Rotary India has reached out to the island nation shows our commitment to help Sri Lanka during this crisis.

I loved the interview with TRF Trustee Geeta Manek. It is such an

inspiration to read her work and about her roots in India. The 'wedding celebration' of President Jones and DGN Nick Krayacich in Pune was awesome.

*Vivek Khandelwal*  
RC Deonar — D 3141

The cover photo of RI President Jennifer Jones (July'22) was fantastic. As the Editor points out, her broad smile, cheerful demeanour and sparkling eyes tell you a lot about her personality. Dr Rajiv Pradhan's article — *Kashmir medical camp conducts 2,500 surgeries* — was very interesting. Kudos to the team.

*Daniel Chittilappilly*  
RC Kaloor — D 3201

We welcome our new Rotary President Jones and will work hard to accomplish her proposals so that her year is remembered as one of the best Rotary years we have had so far. Editor Rasheeda Bhagat has nicely captured the persona of Jones in apt words. Her statement that we need well qualified and competent women for all leadership positions in Rotary is noteworthy. It is the right time to embrace the DEI mantra and expand the membership of Rotary.

*S Muniandi*  
RC Dindigul Fort — D 3000

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor: [rotarynews@rosaonline.org](mailto:rotarynews@rosaonline.org); [rushbhagat@gmail.com](mailto:rushbhagat@gmail.com). Mail your project details, along with hi-res photos, to [rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com).

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**On the cover:** A shot from a Miyawaki forest being created by RID 2981.

# Rotarians!

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## Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 36,953

Rotaract clubs : 11,404

Interact clubs : 18,507

RCCs : 12,411

Rotary members : 1,184,996

Rotaract members: 206,175

Interact members : 425,661

*As on August 18, 2022*

## Membership Summary

As on August 1, 2022 (Interim)

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	135	6,656	7.84	63	55	240
2982	77	3,400	7.03	47	98	73
3000	132	5,257	9.44	99	306	214
3011	119	4,484	27.23	78	121	36
3012	148	3,688	23.18	71	83	61
3020	78	4,548	6.75	33	168	350
3030	98	5,149	15.09	126	358	380
3040	111	2,602	14.41	57	84	183
3053	74	2,931	17.30	36	51	127
3054	169	6,930	20.25	109	195	571
3060	105	4,841	15.04	65	80	151
3070	122	3,155	15.69	48	55	59
3080	107	4,290	12.96	147	207	117
3090	101	2,511	6.77	46	109	162
3100	100	2,129	9.77	14	28	151
3110	148	3,738	11.66	14	24	106
3120	90	3,693	16.76	66	34	55
3131	143	5,457	23.93	120	244	143
3132	90	3,547	11.93	34	126	167
3141	108	5,815	25.90	144	189	107
3142	103	3,753	21.26	84	144	86
3150	110	4,287	13.30	144	149	119
3160	78	2,736	10.01	30	20	82
3170	145	6,370	15.24	99	262	176
3181	87	3,418	9.57	35	198	116
3182	88	3,556	9.28	45	132	105
3190	163	6,585	19.09	204	273	72
3201	164	6,354	9.82	126	104	87
3203	94	4,709	7.88	74	234	37
3204	73	2,484	8.98	23	32	13
3211	155	5,123	8.55	7	28	133
3212	128	4,793	11.60	83	292	153
3231	94	3,414	7.88	34	99	417
3232	172	7,551	18.88	132	233	100
3240	108	3,653	16.64	67	412	226
3250	103	3,895	21.36	66	77	186
3261	93	3,289	19.09	17	25	44
3262	129	4,185	14.96	76	652	273
3291	159	4,029	24.75	137	103	674
<b>India Total</b>	<b>4,573</b>	<b>170,997</b>		<b>2,995</b>	<b>6,228</b>	<b>6,628</b>
3220	72	1,992	15.56	95	144	76
3271	133	2,895	17.03	152	186	25
3272	161	1,740	18.79	70	22	47
3281	309	8,915	18.38	279	156	207
3282	180	3,649	10.66	202	49	47
3292	153	5,853	17.87	176	140	131
<b>S Asia Total</b>	<b>5,509</b>	<b>194,049</b>		<b>3,874</b>	<b>6,781</b>	<b>7,085</b>

Source: RI South Asia Office

# The power of taking uncomfortable chances



RI President Jennifer Jones and her husband, Nick Krayacich, talk with Náthali Batzibal, a student they support through the Guatemala Literacy Project, during April visit. Since 1997, the project has improved education in rural areas of the country by providing books, teacher training and scholarships. Former scholarship recipient Rosa Ixcoy (**bottom, right**), also supported by Jones and Krayacich, with her daughter and mother. Pictures: James Rodríguez



**R**ecently, Nick and I spent time in Guatemala, where we met wonderful fellow Rotary members and families who unofficially adopted me as “Tía Jennifer.” On the third day, after visiting Patzún in the mountainous western highlands, we set out for Lake Atitlán, which we needed to reach by nightfall. If we took a back road we could get there faster. Locals told us it had just been repaved and assured us, “You’ll have no problem.”

At first, it was a breeze. We wound through misty green coffee and corn fields covering the hillside like a patchwork quilt. But at a river crossing, we found a bridge washed

away. The only way to continue would be to ford the river in our small bus. There were a few tense moments, but we decided to give it a try and, thankfully, we made it across safely.

This adventure reminds me of two important truths in Rotary. One, we rely on local, on-the-ground expertise to do what we do best. And two, sometimes you have to take uncomfortable chances to reach important goals.

Every day, I am honoured to learn from our Rotary family. Every lesson is an opportunity to grow, and each story adds a chapter to our collective *Imagine Rotary* year.

**Jennifer Jones**

President, Rotary International



## Independence from inequity, oppression...

Another Independence Day has come and gone, this more special than others, being the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our freedom. Over 75 years, as we have moved towards progress and development, explosion of industrial output, excellence in science and technology, particularly IT, the struggle Indian leaders underwent under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, for our freedom, seems to be losing its gleam. Especially among the younger generation. Hence the call for *Har ghar Tiranga* by the prime minister was timely. This year we saw lakhs of youngsters celebrating the *joie de vivre* and passion of living in an independent country by hoisting the tricolour and also wearing it on their social media DPs.

True, people shouldn't be expected to wear their patriotism on their sleeves, as pride in one's motherland is deeply ingrained in your very being, and doesn't need to be proclaimed from rooftops.

But every celebration is also time for stock-taking and self-introspection. Heart of hearts, are we really happy at the pace with which India has progressed during these 75 years? We might have created an impressive number of billionaires to adorn the pages of *Forbes* magazine, detailing the richest in the world. But in these 75 years, have we not seen an explosion in the number of the poor and disadvantaged, oppressed and suppressed? The millions for whom day-to-day living and putting together just two modest meals for their families is a huge struggle? Can we imagine what kind of a celebration of Independence it would have been for child labourers, the young girls/women sucked into trafficking, tens of thousands of women facing domestic violence in overt and covert ways, for whom slogans or homilies of equity and gender justice remain just that... slogans? What about

the girl child who has dreams of a good education and a successful career, but who has to be pulled out from school for various reasons, principally economic, and pushed into an early marriage and motherhood at a tender age, because the social conditioning of her parents is to pass on the "responsibility" of a daughter to her husband's family?

You as Rotarians of India have an incredible opportunity of setting right some of the wrongs mentioned above for as many disadvantaged families as you can, one project and one club at a time. Many of you are doing just that. You have embraced with gusto PRIP Shekhar Mehta's passionate call to empower girls. We at *Rotary News* know all about the passion with which you do your projects — building segregated toilets for girls, so that they may remain in school, embracing health projects to mend tiny hearts, breathing life into them; rejuvenating water bodies so that arid farm lands can once again turn green and prosperous; and skilling tens of thousands of underprivileged women to boost their income. RID 3231 alone will be giving training and sewing machines to over 3 lakh women in 10 years. This is the power of big and sustainable projects.

Every drop counts. Working in tandem with government, we can slowly march towards an India where there's Independence from want and poverty, inequity, injustice and oppression. A country where the head is held high and the mind is without fear. Jai ho!

What the Rotary leadership in Sri Lanka has done by forging a partnership with UNICEF to collect funds to help its children and families devastated by the deep economic crisis is commendable. This is an excellent opportunity for all of us to help our distressed neighbour.

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Website



# Director

## Making literacy an achievable dream

without addressing its estimated 287 million illiterate adults. Rotary works actively on adult literacy, and RILM has developed tools to help adults get functional literacy, such as reading street signs, writing their names, etc.

RILM's Happy Schools programme provides infrastructural and co-scholastic facilities in state-funded schools to provide a positive environment to get better attendance, higher retention and improved concentration. Through Rotary clubs and districts, RILM has successfully transformed 3,112 government and government-aided schools across the country.

Rotary aims to create a student-centred, purpose-driven, inclusive and real education system in which teachers, curriculum, pedagogies, assessments and learners are made future-ready. Ahead of Teachers' Day and Rotary Literacy Month, I extend my greetings to the teaching fraternity for their selfless service in nurturing young minds. My gratitude to all Rotary clubs and districts which have innovated and ensured the education journey of students even during the pandemic.

Let us together create a system that makes children's lives better and turns them into leaders who will impact their communities, nation and the world.

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

**E**ducation can help children realise their true potential and achieve their dreams. But when denied an education opportunity, their dreams are shattered. UNICEF reports that globally schoolchildren have lost an estimated 1.8 trillion hours of in-person classes, thanks to Covid. Thus India, already grappling with problems such as lack of infrastructure, gender disparity and access to internet, faces new challenges.

Rotary has a history of tackling the world's most challenging humanitarian issues and an example is the Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM), which aims to achieve total literacy through quality education. In Jan 2021, RILM partnered with CRY to bring back to school dropouts, out-of-school and laggard children under the 'Asha Kiran' programme. Rotary continues to support the GoI by providing e-learning modules broadcast through 12 national TV channels of NCERT for Classes 1-12, also available on GoI's mobile app Diksha.

We also want to improve teacher training, more important than ever to ensure collaborative learning, and adult literacy. To sharpen and upgrade teachers' skills to be digitally savvy, in a five-day workshop, RILM trained 70,000 teachers in Maharashtra and 5,000 in Delhi to use e-learning tools. We want to create a standardised teacher-training module that will create an inclusive and vibrant ecosystem.

RILM's success in improving literacy levels in Indian children notwithstanding, it'll be difficult to achieve total literacy



# Speak

## Time to green Rotary

Two developments in our organisation in recent times have a far-reaching impact on the path it will take in the coming years. One is the change in the status of Rotaract and the other is the inclusion of Environment as our seventh area of focus.

Rotarians in our region have to quickly understand the implications of the change in the policy towards Rotaract so that we fully leverage this to Rotary's benefit. While Rotaract is another membership type, now with far greater autonomy, we still have to help them assimilate this change to ensure that we collectively move in the right direction. They will need our help to ensure sustainable growth, applying for global grants and executing service projects which are larger than the ones they may have previously handled. A point worth remembering is that in our region the membership in Rotaract is predominantly institution-based and the transition needs to be handled carefully. Rotarians will have to consciously mentor Rotaract members without being intrusive. The onus is on Rotary leadership across our districts to ensure this.

The second development is about the Environment. This has got the imagination of Rotarians and during my travel to various districts, I have been noticing a lot of interest in advocating judicious use of our natural resources such as water, soil and air. We need to take giant strides in this area. It is also a fact



that the younger generation are more invested in this and are keen to play a role. Rotary is all about member engagement and this affords us the opportunity to attract, engage and retain younger members. This cannot happen by chance. We should plan, involve these younger members and execute projects. We would thereby be addressing a variety of important aspects such as membership diversity, member engagement and retention. In short, it's a great opportunity.

As can be seen, both the factors mentioned above have a connection that together will guarantee Rotary's future. All we need to do is to *Imagine a new Rotary!*

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

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

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution
<b>India</b>					
2981	4,229	127	0	625	4,981
2982	3,714	987	1,000	1,413	7,114
3000	1,706	1,361	0	0	3,067
3011	3,589	0	0	41,494	45,083
3012	23	0	0	21,715	21,739
3020	1,457	160	0	0	1,617
3030	4,697	30	0	1,050	5,778
3040	1,818	154	0	3,607	5,579
3053	15,254	0	0	0	15,254
3054	1,635	0	0	0	1,635
3060	2,292	25	0	0	2,317
3070	125	100	0	2,350	2,575
3080	2,869	0	0	0	2,869
3090	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
3100	6,751	0	0	0	6,751
3110	38	0	2,025	242,000	244,063
3120	0	0	0	0	0
3131	29,961	205	22,785	72,618	125,569
3132	4,858	300	25,000	0	30,158
3141	141,272	27,200	1,000	1,620	171,092
3142	31,933	1,000	0	25	32,958
3150	3,427	1,109	0	0	4,536
3160	797	1,000	0	0	1,797
3170	3,629	2,308	506	0	6,444
3181	24,862	0	25	0	24,887
3182	622	253	0	0	875
3190	4,808	0	0	735	5,543
3201	13,618	225	0	251,053	264,896
3203	445	348	0	11,522	12,316
3204	1,220	0	0	152	1,372
3211	37,298	0	0	1,049	38,348
3212	6,433	6,358	0	31,646	44,436
3231	31,874	14,217	30,886	525	77,502
3232	12,845	1,454	0	695	14,994
3240	7,063	6,073	1,000	0	14,136
3250	1,699	25	0	0	1,724
3261	290	13	0	0	303
3262	422	0	0	0	422
3291	12,703	0	15,033	0	27,736
<b>India Total</b>	<b>423,279</b>	<b>65,031</b>	<b>99,261</b>	<b>685,895</b>	<b>1,273,466</b>
3220	Sri Lanka	75	0	0	75
3271	Pakistan	25	0	250	275
3272	Pakistan	200	0	5,000	5,200
3281	Bangladesh	2,306	181	0	5,980
3282	Bangladesh	325	0	2,806	3,131
3292	Nepal	1,984	525	4,068	6,577
<b>South Asia Total</b>	<b>428,194</b>	<b>65,737</b>	<b>99,261</b>	<b>701,512</b>	<b>1,294,704</b>

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

Source: RI South Asia Office.

## For those who cannot read these words

One of my favourite books, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson, muses on the creation of the universe and how a tiny speck of it we call Earth went from being a fiery ball with seas of molten rock to the lush green-and-blue home we know today. Bryson's argument is that it is a miracle that we — our planet and our species — have survived. "We enjoy not only the privilege of existence," Bryson writes, "but also the singular ability to appreciate it and even, in a multitude of ways, to make it better."



We are fortunate to be able to read his words or any others. And we are fortunate to be part of an organisation that is making our world a better place by helping those who can't read them. There are an estimated 773 million illiterate adults — most of them women — who can't read these words or write their own name. They are at a clear disadvantage in life, with limited opportunities to work. And this situation isn't their fault.

Rotary has not forgotten them. In September, let's celebrate Basic Education and Literacy month by looking at the long-term impact Rotary and The Rotary Foundation are making and how we are finding ways to lend a hand in the effort.

Last year alone, TRF approved 104 global grants totaling \$6.3 million for basic education and literacy projects, according to preliminary figures. This is on top of decades of work in our clubs and districts. As an Australian, I'm especially proud of the work of Dick Walker, a past district governor from Queensland, who used a Foundation matching grant to develop the concentrated language encounter method that has been adopted by educational leaders around the world.

At the community level, our clubs are well-known for book drives that have changed the lives of so many children. But when we gather many clubs and districts together and work on large-scale Rotary Foundation projects, we have the potential to impact entire communities for generations.

The opportunities for Rotary to make a difference in literacy are boundless. Once basic reading and writing is achieved, it opens a path to other types of literacy, such as numerical literacy, digital literacy and financial literacy.

Let's not squander our opportunity to improve our corner of the universe. I encourage you to think big about literacy and education and change the world — this month and beyond.

**Ian HS Riseley**  
Foundation Trustee Chair

## TRF enables impactful projects

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Lead the way by making your investment in The Rotary Foundation. Together let us continue doing wonderful work through our Foundation.

**Dr Bharat Pandya**  
TRF Trustee, 2022–26

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# Where attending school is a luxury

Rasheeda Bhagat

**F**ollowing the devastation caused to several areas in and around Bengaluru, due to the recent heavy rains, Rotarians from a few clubs in the metro were pained to read about the plight of the tribal residents of a bunch of 28-odd tribal hamlets about 250km from the city.

“We found that these hamlets in HD Kote and Hunsuru taluks were severely affected, resulting in the loss of livelihoods of the villagers and affected their children very badly,” says Kashinath Prabhu, past president of RC Bangalore Lakeside, who is now DLCC, RI District 3190.

The district literacy committee, in collaboration with a few clubs in the district and donors, decided to raise over ₹3.5 lakh for a project they conceived, titled *Chaitanya*. Through this relief initiative it was decided to distribute educational aids such as notebooks, stationery boxes, etc, along with tarpaulins for the homes of over 1,000 students from 28 of these hamlets.

To identify the beneficiaries, the committee identified local volunteers and NGOs, and also sought their help

with the distribution of the education material and tarpaulins to cover the badly damaged and leaking roofs. Prabhu explains that these hamlets are located on the borders of Mysuru in Karnataka and access to them is rather difficult. “We distributed 75 tarpaulins, over 4,500 notebooks and 250 instrument boxes to the students. It’s a long distance so we started from Bengaluru at 4.30am and returned home the next morning only around 2am.”

The most tragic aspect of the schooling and general living conditions of the children here is that since the parents are engaged in farming or work

as daily wagers in coffee plantations or paddy fields, work often takes them away from the villages and this work is seasonal. “So when the parents do find work, they go to the site and stay there for seven days or more. In the meanwhile,

they cannot leave their children alone and unattended at home, so the entire family goes to the place where work and livelihood are available.”

The result is that even though government has built small schools in these villages, for several days children do not attend school, as they are away from the village with their parents. “While interacting with the locals and NGO representatives, we learnt the sad fact that during season, when work is available for the villagers, entire schools are empty, because the children are not in their homes,” says Gurunagesh, chairman of this project.

**Below:** One of the tribal hamlets where Rotary clubs are executing welfare projects.





### High dropout rate

Very often, the result of such long absence from school is that by the time the children reach Class 5, they are not able to cope with their studies, having missed so much of schooling and tend to drop out. This not only pushes up the drop-out rate, it often sucks the child into working on the fields along with their parents, augmenting the child labour force.

Says Prabhu, “While planning and executing this project, we found that these children and parents both need counselling sessions, which will make them understand the importance of attending school regularly, so that the child doesn’t have to drop out from school and continues till high school.”

Poverty, lack of adequate employment and paltry income and the resultant frustration drives parents into drinking, further jeopardising the children’s future.

**Above:** Rotarians Srinath Gupta, Gurunagesh, Anil Dsouza, Kashinath Prabhu and Mangala, a contact from a local NGO, with children in a tribal village.

In these hamlets, the Rotarians from Rotary Clubs of Rotary Bangalore South (lead club), Rotary Bangalore Koramangala and Rotary Bangalore Palmville, who raised funds for this project, found that the needs of these villagers went much beyond learning aids and tarpaulin.

“When we visited the villages, we found there are no lights and the solar lights that they have been given are rendered useless when it rains continuously and there is no sunlight. Their basic hygiene and sanitation are also terrible; it’s a forest area and the homes have no toilets so there is open defecation. And they do not have access to clean drinking water either, making the inhabitants susceptible to water-related diseases,” says Gurunagesh.

After visiting the villages and interacting with the children, their parents and other locals, Prabhu and other Rotarians are





now thinking of expanding the scope of this project to include health, water, hygiene and sanitation, and extend additional support to ensure the children’s continuing education. “Of course we realise it is not a one day or one week job; we have to make it long term and involve the government and others as our partners, as what we are aiming for is giving access to counselling both to the children as well as the parents and bringing about a change in their mindset.”

### **Government ashram schools**

The positive factor is that to promote better learning the government has built a few residential schools, known as ashram schools, in which about 200–300 students

stay, and the Rotarians feel that more such residential schools should be built so that the children don’t have to miss their education when the parents leave the village for work. They are confident of doing advocacy with the government for more such schools — right now there is only one such school in each taluk — with the promise that Rotarians will give a helping hand in these schools through educational aids, e-learning facilities and other support systems.

“We could see that the children staying in an ashram school look healthier, as they get proper food, and are able to get schooling for four months after which they go home for a week or so,” says Prabhu.

**Above:**  
Rotarians  
Soumya Nair,  
AK Sugunan  
and Roshan  
Jacob with the  
villagers.

The Rotarians who joined this relief initiative included A K Sugunan, Roshan Jacob, Soumya Nair, Srinath Gupta, S Ramakrishna, Anil Dsouza and Pandu Kumar. Now hoping to take up the possibilities of helping these tribals much more, he says this relief initiative “gave us an immense sense of fulfilment, satisfaction and a resolve to do more in this well-deserving geography. It not only brought us close to ground reality of the situation in these tribal colonies, but also gave us more insight on other potential service opportunities that we can take up such as shelter homes, health and hygiene, counselling sessions, etc.”

Designed by  
N Krishnamurthy





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##### MCA (2 years)

Dual Degree Programs

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##### BCA + MCA (3+2 years)

Banking Technology

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# Don't water the weeds: **President Jones'** advice to incoming leaders

**Rasheeda Bhagat**



Vinita and RI Director A S Venkatesh greet RI President Jennifer Jones and her spouse DGN Dr Nick Krayacich at the Lakshya programme in Pune.

**R**I President Jennifer Jones' invaluable advice to the incoming district leaders at the goal-setting seminar *Lakshya* in Pune was brief and simple: "Don't water the weeds; concentrate on the flowers."

Responding to a question from DGE Jayashree Mohanty, RI District 3262, on her one important advice to make their year as district chiefs memorable and impactful, Jones recalled a piece of advice she had herself received from a PDG — Don't water the weeds. DGE Jayashree had sought her advice for the seven women DGs in her batch of 2023–24.

Said Jones: "This is the best piece of advice I have received from a past district governor, it's not specific to women but can be a tool in your tool box. There are so many people who may get in your way during your term as leaders. People who are going to just nitpick, and bombard you with issues you really don't need to talk about. By doing this they will try to capitalise on all of your time. But if you spend all your time focusing on watering the weeds, you take away time from the flowers, people who want to nurture or work with you. So when someone gets negative on you... you know all about... when they go low, we go high!"

She added: "It's hard to do this, I'll tell you because in my inbox I get a lot of people saying so many negative things..."

Saying how wonderful it was to meet and interact with all the governors, DGEs and

DGNs in person, "I'd like to share with the DGNs that my husband Nick (Krayacich) is going to be your classmate as DG, and I look forward to travelling to Orlando in two years and spend time with your partners (at the international assembly) because I will be a part of the partner programme!"

Referring to the overall goal of **\$36.84 million** for TRF giving for 2022–23, she said, "I know the goal you have set for your zones is huge but I know you can do it. We raise the money because we know the immense good the incredible engine, our Rotary Foundation, allows us to do through projects that touch lives."

**S**he next went on to explain how she has structured her tours around the globe during her presidential year, when she will travel to different parts of the world and connect with people. "Those of you who know me know that I am a storyteller and I love a good story, and it is by telling our stories that we can ensure our organisation will grow, thrive and survive. Telling the world of the good work we do is important, so that other people will want to join us."

To do so, she had created the *Imagine Impact* tour, that "touches on every single responsibility and role that all of you have focused on in the last few days here at this training event. I am doing at the international level what you



More than  
**1,500**  
Peace Fellows  
in the world

do at the national, regional and local level."

Her objective is to describe the large-scale impact of Rotary's work in seven different areas of focus, with the eighth one being of course polio. "We are so close... by the end of 2023 we believe we will be able to stop the transmission of the wild poliovirus which will allow the declaration of our world as polio free by 2026. And that will be the time to stand up and celebrate like none other."

Jones said it was important to get "social media and other media influencers to tell our story at the national level to those who don't know about us." Hence there was a media and PR aspect of the *Imagine Impact* tour, which will also talk about TRF and showcase the impact of the large-scale projects Rotarians do at the grassroots level.

Showcasing these would trigger the membership aspect; "I firmly believe that when we tell our stories, likeminded people will want to join us. After India, the first stop is next week in Pakistan where we meet frontline female health workers to tell the story of polio, of women who go door-to-door to gain the trust of mothers and ensure immunisation. We are going to meet these women and tell them two incredible words: 'Thank you'. We know that these women put themselves in harm's way every day; not an easy task."

She would also be meeting Rotary's partners in the global polio eradication effort, particularly from the WHO. "We know the power of partnerships,

Total TRF goal  
for 2022–23:  
**\$36.84**  
million



with WHO, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation, etc, is something that makes a big difference in the work we do; we can't do it alone. We are going to document that story on the social media."

**T**he next tour will be to Zambia, where Rotary has its first programme of scale to eradicate malaria from that country. "We have put in \$2 million, The Gates Foundation

\$2 million and World Vision another \$2 million." While this \$6 million can't eradicate malaria completely, it would go a long way in setting up a public health infrastructure, replicating what Rotary did in polio in more than 70 countries, setting up a sustainable infrastructure.

Their next tour stop will be Uganda where the very first Rotary peace centre in Africa is coming up. "We are going there to meet with peace fellows to learn about their journey, and to help tell their story. We have

RI Board had set a clear goal —

**30**

per cent of female leadership by 2023

more than 1,500 peace fellows who now have our DNA running through them as they take on office in government and other places." The highlight of that tour will be following one of the peace fellows to a refugee camp where he has set up a Rotaract club.

She will also visit the South Pacific islands to talk about maternal and child health and the immunisation of children there. In a huge immunisation drive, Rotarians from Australia and New Zealand are immunising 100,000 children there against several diseases. "This is thinking big and to celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> year in Rotary. We are going to Guatemala to focus on basic education; there is a wonderful programme there supported by 600 Rotary clubs to raise awareness on the education of young girls and boys as well. This is critically important in that country because of the very dangerous migration path that happens into the US." Educating them will encourage such youngsters to stay in their own country. "For the girls it means a chance not to become child brides, and not get pregnant at an early age, and for both boys and girls this education might lead to entrepreneurship so that they can start their own businesses or be employed somewhere else."

In the South Pacific islands in a huge drive, Rotarians from Australia and New Zealand are immunising

**100,000** children

**S**he will also visit Haiti where a group of Rotarians have said they will provide clean water to every man,

woman and child there. This would take over a decade and over a billion dollars, but the first pilot programmes have been set up. “We want to see that project because it has the potential to work and if it works there, it will work in other places as well.” The idea of doing large-scale sustainable projects was to examine the possibility of replicating them in other parts of the world, Jones added.

The last part of her tour will be in Mexico and is related to the environment by focusing on the breeding of bees and butterflies by setting up rooftop gardens. “We are people of action, purpose and influence. Every single one of you in this room can open doors to service, membership and raising funds, to make a difference. On your graduation day I thank you. Rotary brings in leaders and makes them even better leaders after training sessions like this one.”

Jones was next asked a question on the upper age limit for Rotaractors and the apprehension that lower dues would come in the way of their joining a Rotary club where the dues are much higher. She explained the great importance she was giving to Rotaractors with a “very special emphasis on positions of leadership”, such as a seat on international committees, including the convention committee, “one of the most coveted of all our committees”, and sending them as the president’s representatives to district conferences. “We know that they have the ability to ignite and inspire us as much as anybody else.”

Yes, the upper age limit for Rotaract has been eliminated, and while she understood the concern about their conversion to Rotary

## In last 10 years 1.2 million joined Rotary... and left

RI President Jennifer Jones acknowledged and appreciated the Indian region for being, along with many African countries, the fastest growing region in the world of Rotary, but then people are also leaving equally fast.

One startling piece of statistic all Rotarians needed to keep in their tool kit was that in the last 10 years, 1.2 million members have joined Rotary. “That means that 1.2 million people have also left. What this shows us is that people do want to come into Rotary

but the problem is that they join but they don’t stay. So what is our call of action? We need to be better with how we deal with our members. And more focused on their comfort and care. When someone joins our organisation, we need to ask them what they want and then deliver on that promise. Whether it is service, fellowship, events; that’s how we will grow. If you want responsible members, you need to give them responsibility. Keeping them engaged is critical.”

from Rotaract, “it will be interesting to know after the introduction of annual dues for Rotaract, whether they stay or leave. We do know that the conversion rate from Rotaract to Rotary is now only five per cent. It’s impossible in my mind to understand how it can be so low.” But then there were many issues faced by youngsters who were starting a family, building a career, etc.

The main idea was to retain Rotaractors within the Rotary family; and eventually “when a Rotaract club becomes a Rotary club, wouldn’t it be a victory? Hopefully they will become Rotarians one day,” but meanwhile even if they remain in Rotaract, “it gives us an opportunity to keep them closer and give them a meaningful experience. We’ll have to wait and see how that plays out.”

She reiterated her resolve to keep the spotlight on the empowerment of girls, the programme initiated by outgoing president Shekhar Mehta, and

said that every single part of the world had different kinds of challenges when it came to gender equity. But one thing was certain; “empowered girls became empowered women!”

As for the ways and means to attract more women into Rotary, Jones said that most Rotarians were business professionals, and if “in your own company, if you had an underperforming market share, what would you do? Evolve a strategy to fix it. We too have an underperforming market share, in that despite 50 per cent of the world’s population being women, with many of them being quality business professionals, we have not managed to tap them. So we will have to think how to target that group.”

The RI Board had set a clear goal... “to have **30 per cent of female leadership** by 2023 at the highest level in our organisation. We have to put a goal in order to achieve it. And then take required steps to make it happen... how many women



From L: RID Venkatesh, PDG ISAK Nazar, RI President Jones, RID Mahesh Kotbagi and Lakshya chairman PDG Ashish Ajmera.

are there on the board of directors, trustees, how many do we select as training leaders or district governors, and so on. We are keeping a pulse on these numbers to see where the trend is going.

I know this year, in your region there is one woman governor, but next year there are going to be seven. Isn't that wonderful? But we need to make sure they are qualified and talented and this is an incredible talented

In Guatemala

**600**

Rotary clubs are focusing on basic education of girls and boys to prevent dangerous migration to the US

group of seven women that you have here.”

Addressing the incoming district governors, RI director A S Venkatesh urged them to set their goals. “See and decide for yourself where you would like to be after one year. A lot of planning has been done at this training event; now go ahead and achieve your goals.”

RI director Mahesh Kotbagi added to the assembled leaders in the hall, “Our region is rising in Rotary at a great pace and we have a membership of 150,000-plus. That shows all of you are performers.”

Pictures by  
Rasheeda Bhagat

Designed by  
N Krishnamurthy

## DGs set a TRF goal of \$36.84 million

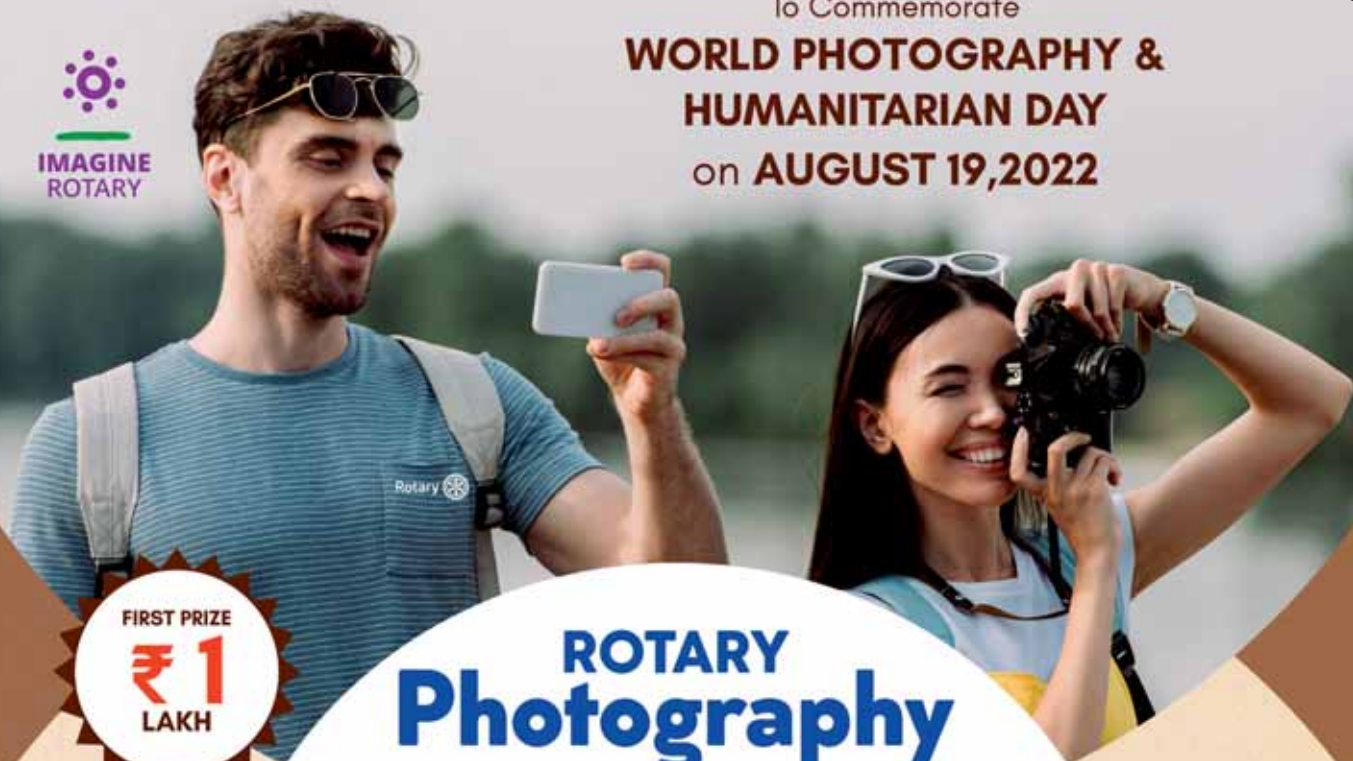
At the concluding event of the goal-setting seminar *Lakshya* in Pune presided over by RI President Jennifer Jones, TRF trustee Bharat Pandya announced that the DGs for 2022–23 had set the overall total target for TRF giving at \$36.84 million.

Of this, the goal for Annual Fund has been set at \$10.88 million; Polio Fund \$2.02 million; and Endowment Fund is \$4.87 million.

Incidentally **\$36.84 million**, if achieved, would be the highest ever amount raised for TRF by India and Nepal.



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 RI PRESIDENT



**A.S. VENKATESH**  
 RI DIRECTOR



**Dr. MAHESH KOTBAGI**  
 RI DIRECTOR



**MD. B. ELANGKUMARAN**  
 DISTRICT GOVERNOR  
 RID 3203



**PDG. Dr. E.K. SAGADHEVAN**  
 CHAIRMAN



**Rtn. M.D. EASWARAN**  
 PRESIDENT  
 RC ERODE CENTRAL

ORGANIZED BY

**ROTARY FREEDOM INDIA TRUST, ROTARY CLUB OF ERODE CENTRAL - RID 3203.**

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# Tamil Nadu projects bowl over RI Prez Jones

**Rasheeda Bhagat**

**W**e have been in Chennai just for 90 minutes, and I am seeing so many incredible projects being inaugurated tonight. I know every single one of the projects you do and every single dollar you spend promotes world peace and understanding. Because

it is not just the absence of war, but also the absence of want... want for clean water and sanitation, a good meal and education... leads to peace. You're tackling the needs and problems in your communities in a brilliant fashion."

With these words of high praise, RI President Jennifer Jones, barely a couple of hours within

her landing in Chennai, inaugurated a bunch of large, meaningful and high-impact projects of clubs from RI Districts 2981, 2982, 3000, 3231 and 3232.

The oldest club in south India, RC Madras launched several projects that evening, including one focusing on women and children's health. Giving details, club member Bobby Balakrishna, chairman of health projects, said women in rural India always neglected their health and wellbeing, even while taking good care of their families. "Keeping that in mind, our club has adopted five villages in a radius of 70km around Chennai, where we will focus on women and children's health, by providing regular

RI President Jennifer Jones with RID 2981 DG V Selvanathan and his team, at the launch of the district's Miyawaki forest project.





medical check-up and referrals to suitable hospitals when required.”

That evening an ultrasound machine was being donated to the Government Periyar Hospital in Mayiladuthurai, courtesy MacDermid Alpha, which has donated ₹24 lakh for this equipment, and has been helping the club even during Covid times for welfare projects with additional funds. This is a district headquarters hospital with 612 beds providing healthcare to about one million people, he added.

Cancer detection remains a priority in women’s screening and recently, the club donated mammography equipment

worth ₹75 lakh to the ACS Medical College Hospital in Chennai. “We are in the process of donating another mammography machine costing \$120,000 to a Devakottai hospital, that covers the population of five big towns,” added club president Jayshree Sridhar. Medical camps will be conducted for screening about 10,000 women for breast cancer, and a mobile diagnostic van will also be given to the Chennai Corporation to address the health challenges that women face.

Giving details of the third club project being inaugurated, president-elect of the club, Sundaresan Ravi said it was a WinS project; the club had joined hands with the district — RID 3232 — to build 165 toilets, in segregated blocks, in five schools, and group handwashing stations. For girl students, sanitary napkin changing rooms equipped with a sanitary pad dispenser and disposal equipment consistent with UNICEF standards will be given. This project, costing ₹1 crore, will impact around 9,600 children.

Past president of the club PN Mohan said that during his year (2017–18) when he read a Niti Aayog report giving the “scary statistics that said 21 cities in India have gone dry, and these include the four large

RC Madras  
restored  
**7**  
lakes, benefitting  
**8,00,000**  
people and  
**1,000**  
acres of  
farmland.  
Cost:  
**₹4 crore**

**73**  
clubs of RID  
2981 created  
**16,00,000**  
sqft area  
Miyawaki  
forests with  
a commitment  
to maintain  
it for  
**33**  
years

cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai, I thought our club should start restoring lakes in Chennai.” So far seven lakes have been restored at a cost of ₹4 crore, totally benefitting 8 lakh people and 1,000 acres of farmland. “We’ve just completed the seventh lake at Sithalapakkam, which is a 200-acre lake benefitting more than 200,000 people, and 500 acres of farm land, which President Jones is inaugurating today,” he added.

Giving details of the C-Arm project, the next from the club, at the 40-year-old, 200-bed non-profit Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital in Chennai, Dr Bala Ramachandran said an image intensifier or C-Arm “allows you to take x-rays before and during surgery, to aid the surgeon and is used extensively in general, neuro, paediatric, ortho and other surgeries. Along with it, other essential patient monitors for paediatric emergency and ICU were being donated. This project was done under a GG worth \$78,000 or ₹64 lakh.”

President Jayshree added that during the pandemic, RC Madras had launched a Covid vaccination bus which “has helped vaccinate lakhs of people. With Covid and vaccination coming to an end, it will now become a women’s





health bus, and will be used in rural areas.”

On TRF giving, past president Mohan Raman said that last year the club had raised and donated \$540,000. Over the last few years this single club “has contributed over \$2 million to TRF and received \$10 million from it for our projects.” But, he added, the club was facing some teething problems with GGs, details of which would be shared with the RI leadership later. “If these are sorted out, \$500,000 will soon become \$1 million.”

President-nominee Chellakrishna gave details of the next water and sanitation project to make three villages open defecation-free, “an area of continuous focus at RCM since 2014. We are trying to transform 14

villages by building 1,680 toilets, impacting 10,000 residents. In three villages we’ll construct 180 toilets to benefit over 1,000 people, and are working with the NGO Nalanda to create awareness so that people use toilets and other good practices like handwashing. This project costing ₹50 lakh would be completed in six months.”

### **Project Shakti – RC Madras East**

Introducing the iconic projects done by his club RC Madras East, its president TV Ramakumar said the club with 118 members “has been run from the very beginning on the highest values of retention and engagement of members, and on the principle that a happy and engaged Rotarian never

**Above:** President Jones, RC Madras president-elect Sundaresan Ravi, club president Jayshree Sridhar, secretary Asha Mathan, RID 3232 DG N Nandakumar and RID AS Venkatesh.

leaves Rotary. We try and engage a maximum number of persons in our service projects every year, and have done so far projects worth ₹60 crore, including 31 GGs worth ₹14.06 crore or \$2 million (at different exchange rates), impacting over 1 lakh lives.”

Its projects included feeding the poor, setting up smart or e-learning classroom in over 200 schools, renovation and upgradation of 25 schools affected by floods, and a heart surgery project titled *Tiny Hearts*, in partnership with the Apollo Hospitals for infants under which so far 500 heart surgeries have been done. Through Project *Drishti*, smart vision glasses with artificial intelligence have been given to 300 persons, each costing ₹30,000, cataract surgeries planned for 500 this year, along with blood donation camps and organ donation awareness programmes.

The club has also done environmental and water conservation and augmentation projects such as restoration of lakes, temples and community ponds to increase the water table, and set up Miyawaki urban forests. RC Madras East is known for its vocational service projects. “We have two community colleges where we enhance vocational skills through bakery, nurse and lab technicians training where 100 per cent job placement is done. We also have accounting, plumbing, tailoring and other

# Thank you for the work you do: Jones

Addressing the Rotarians, President Jones thanked them “for the incredible work you do in your communities. I urge you to tell your stories to people to make them understand what our Rotary family does, what you do every day to touch other people’s lives in very profound ways.”

She said Rotarians “are often being told to do our good work quietly and not seek attention, and while that is noble, it really has kept us quiet and in the background.”

When surveys were conducted about “the awareness of our organisation in the world, out of the 10 persons we asked, only two had some familiarity with our organisation. I don’t know about you, but my heart broke when I heard about that. Doing good in the world is part of our DNA, but we need the rest of the world to hear about it so that when we invite people of the quality we want into Rotary to be members, they know who we are and we don’t get the question what is Rotary.”

Rotary did not want only good people or people of action; “I’ve added on two more phrases to that, we are people of purpose and influence. There is no greater example of the influence we have, in a positive way, than what we have seen in this room today.”

The RI president asked the assembled Rotarians from the districts of Tamil Nadu to imagine the impact of their work... “when a young child is able to use a restroom and not miss school because of her menstrual cycle, think of the impact that will have. Think of the young boy who has access to clean water and doesn’t get sick, is able to go to school, learn, grow and thrive. Think of the young mum who was diagnosed with breast cancer fairly early, got treated and was able to have a family. Everything you

told us tonight will impact generations to come. You’ll never know the true impact of your work, but I do hope that when you put your head to the pillow in the night, you know that lives have been changed, lives have been saved, families are intact and communities are growing and thriving because of the work you have done.”



President Jones with RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi and Amita.

training and job fairs,” Ramakumar added.

Another flagship project of the club is *Wings to Fly*, in which more than 40,000 children from Corporation schools participate and each year 8 to 10 children are taken overseas on an educational trip fully funded by the club. This year, apart from a sports meet for Corporation children, many new initiatives in membership, TRF contributions, and corporate partnership through CSR funding are on the cards.

Of the two GG projects being done this year, one is *Shakti*, an initiative to combat the alarming rise in cancer cases in women, through which an x-ray mammography system will be donated to the Voluntary Health Services in Chennai, along with training for the staff to use it. The cost is \$80,000.

### **Miyawaki forest by RID 2981**

An impressive, large-scale project inaugurated was the setting up of Miyawaki forests in a massive area of 16 lakh sqft in the districts of Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur, Cuddalore and Puducherry. A unique environment protection and conservation project conceptualised by PDG S Balaji Babu (2020–21), this green venture was initiated to help this region which had suffered

immense damage to its natural resources following not only the effects of the Tsunami in 2004, but also the devastation caused by hurricane Gaja and cyclone Thane, all within a short span of time.

During PDG Babu’s year, more than 73 Rotary clubs contributed to this project and the good news was that the project did not end with his year as DG in 2020–21. The involved Rotary clubs have committed to maintaining this green forest for 33 years, including fencing and water supply, as Miyawaki forests provide food and shelter to numerous species of plants, birds and animals, promote biodiversity, create a denser forest area, generate higher oxygen supply, bring more rain and reduce pollution.

**94**  
clubs of RID 3231  
will economically  
empower  
**360**  
women every  
year, taking the  
total number  
to nearly  
**34,000**

RID 2982 has also generated and used CSR funds to provide screening equipment for cervical cancer, hearing, etc to government hospitals around Salem, Namakkal, Krishnagiri and Belur. Clubs in the district have also worked with government hospitals to combat hearing impairment in villages.

### **RID 3231 —**

#### **Empowering women**

Presenting details of RID 3231’s basic education and literacy project, DG JKN Palani said the clubs were working on literacy in government schools, community and economic development, environment and women’s empowerment.

One district project “to empower women involves



President Jones with Sandhya Arunkumar (L), member of RC Madras East, club president TV Ramakumar, secretary Prabhuram Venkatramani and DG N Nandakumar.



President Jones inaugurates a sewing machine distribution programme of RID 3231 in the presence of DG JKN Palani (in red shirt) and PDG Abirami Ramanathan (R). DGN Nick Krayacich and RI Director AS Venkatesh are also present.

training every month 30 women, by each of our 94 clubs, in tailoring, and sewing machines will be gifted to them. Every year, each club will help 360 women, so the

total number will be 34,000. In 10 years our district hopes to economically empower three lakh women,” said Palani. The Rotarians will also use their personal contacts with

companies and organisations to get job orders for these women.

In a major project to conserve water and our environment, rainwater harvesting awareness is being spread in the community, “and apart from restoring and maintaining water bodies, we will be planting 17 lakh saplings,” said Palani. Other projects include supporting child and maternal health initiatives in public hospitals, providing hygienic food, teaching yoga and building toilets and other basic infrastructure in schools, giving tablets to the students and conducting regular health screening camps. RYLA programmes were conducted regularly for Rotaract and Interact clubs.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

## From RI South Asia Office desk

### Timeline to apply for Program of Scale grant

Each year Programs of Scale will support a competitive grant process resulting in one award of \$2 million from The Rotary Foundation that is distributed over 3–5 years to a club or district sponsored programme showing success and readiness to expand to help more people in more places.

### Programs of Scale grant application key dates

- **June 2022:** Competitive grant process begins
- **August 2022:** Concept notes due
- **October 2022:** Invitation to submit proposal
- **February 2023:** Site visits (virtual and/or in-person)
- **April 2023:** Award decision.

For more details, please refer <https://my.rotary.org/en/take-action/apply-grants/programs-scale-grants> or write to [programsofscale@rotary.org](mailto:programsofscale@rotary.org).

### Learning Center courses

Rotary’s online Learning Center offers several courses to assist you in leadership role. Take the new Fundraising Basics course for tips on identifying and cultivating donors. Visit the Foundation Giving learning topic to find brochure ideas, reference guides, PPTs and fundraising tools that your colleagues

have posted. Find a list of all available courses in the course catalog we catalogue.

### Contribution and recognition guidelines

- All contributions to RF (I) are eligible for 50 per cent deduction under section 80G of IT Act, 1961.
- PAN must be provided for every contribution.
- Corporate letter is required if contribution is being made from donor’s business/trust account.
- Online contribution to RF(I) can be made via [rotary.org](http://rotary.org) by using credit/debit card or net banking option.
- Use My Rotary login to avoid duplicate ID generation and receive timely credit of the contribution.
- In the absence of My Rotary login, one can contribute ‘As a Guest’ using the email address registered with Rotary to avoid duplicate ID generation.
- To get 80G tax benefit, select currency as ‘Indian Rupee’ (INR) while making online payment.
- Recognition points transferable by donor vide Transfer Request Form — min 100 points /PHF.
- Allow for 4 to 5 weeks’ time for shipping of recognitions. More in peak period. ■



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# Stephanie Urchick chosen 2024–25 RI president



Stephanie Urchick of RC McMurray, Pennsylvania, USA, has been chosen by the Nominating Committee as RI president for 2024–25. She will be the second woman RI president. She will be declared president-nominee on Oct 1, if no challenging candidates come forward.

With the world facing incredible challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic, disasters driven by climate change and conflict in many regions, Urchick says Rotary's leaders can offer a vision and a plan for overcoming these challenges.

“Measures taken by Rotary leadership to survive and end critical challenges often make our organisation stronger and more resilient for future events. This kind of essential leadership also creates new levels of cooperation, even among rivals, when Rotarians pull together as people of action to serve and solve a crisis,” she says. Making regionalisation a priority is crucial, says Urchick. “Because Rotary operates in more than 200 countries and regions, it is vital to recognise that the organisation has the potential to become more efficient and effective by understanding

and reacting to how regional differences affect the way Rotarians work to address providing service, promoting integrity, and advancing world understanding, goodwill and peace.”

Urchick is partner and chief operating officer of Doctors at Work LLC, a consulting and training company. She holds a doctorate in leadership studies from Indiana University, Pennsylvania. She is active on numerous community boards and committees, and has been honoured by organisations including Zonta International and the Sons of the American Revolution.

A Rotarian since 1991, Urchick has travelled to Vietnam to help build a primary school and to the Dominican Republic to install water filters. She studies several Slavic languages, has mentored new Rotarians in Ukraine, and coordinated a Rotary Foundation grant project in Poland.

She has served Rotary in many roles, including as a director, The Rotary Foundation trustee and chair of the RI Strategic Planning Committee and the TRF's Centennial Celebration Committee. She currently serves on the Election Review and Operations Review Committees. She is a Major Donor and a member of the Bequest Society.

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## RI Directors-elect for Zones 4, 5, 6 & 7

### Raju Subramanian, RIDE for Zones 4 & 7



T N Subramanian (Raju Subramanian) is the RI director-elect for zones 4 & 7. A charter member of RC Deonar, RID 3141, he served as governor of the then undivided 3140 during 2009–10.

He is a regional Rotary Foundation chair. He has served as chairman of the 2019 zone institute (Indore), and the RI Constitution and Bylaws Committee in 2018–19. Subramanian was the vice-chairman of the Council on Legislation held in April 2022. He and his spouse Vidhya are members of the Arch Klumph and the Paul Harris Societies. Subramanian is a senior counsel practicing in the Supreme Court and various high courts.■

### Anirudha Roy Chowdhury, RIDE for Zones 5 & 6



Anirudha Roy Chowdhury is a charter member of RC Calcutta Megacity, RID 3291, and was DG in 2007–08 of an undivided 3290 comprising 187 clubs in India and Nepal. During his tenure, he added 450 members and 11 new clubs, and the district contributed a record \$613,000 to TRF. He was a Rotary Public Image coordinator during 2021–22, and has served as assistant Rotary coordinator and assistant Rotary Foundation coordinator. Currently he is serving as a member of TRF's Cadre of Technical Advisers. Chowdhury is a recipient of RI's Service above Self Award and the Citation for Meritorious Services Award, and TRF's Distinguished Service Award. He and his spouse Shipra are third level Major Donors and Bequest Society members.■

He is a regional Rotary Foundation chair. He has served as chairman of the 2019 zone institute (Indore), and the RI Constitution and Bylaws Committee in 2018–19. Subramanian was the vice-chairman of the Council on Legislation held in April 2022. He and his spouse Vidhya are members of the Arch Klumph and the Paul Harris Societies. Subramanian is a senior counsel practicing in the Supreme Court and various high courts.■

# Literacy projects galore

Rasheeda Bhagat



**I**n Chennai, RI President Jennifer Jones inaugurated in just a couple of hours, a bunch of education projects that ranged from providing basic infrastructure to schools to sophisticated e-learning projects involving smart classrooms, interactive panels and slick technology.

One of the most impressive projects launched by President Jones was Gurukool, the signature project done by Rotary Club of Guindy, RID 3232. She showed a lot of interest in the interactive way in which this project hopes to engage children through smart and shiny panels. Giving the details

club president S Rameshbabu said, “In India, according to government sources, 150 million children are out of schools, but even more worrisome is the fact that nearly one third of the enrolled children drop out before completing elementary school. We imagined an India where every child gets to go



RI President Jennifer Jones tries the smart board of *Project Gurukool* in the presence of RC Guindy president Ramesh Babu, DG N Nandakumar, club secretary Radha Krish, community services director Suresh Kumar and community services (health) director Dr Anuradha.





President Jones, RIDs Mahesh Kotbagi and AS Venkatesh with DG I Jerald and his spouse Margaret, PDG RVN Kannan and Rotarians of RID 3000.

to school and remain there to complete education; an India where school going becomes an inviting, interesting and rewarding experience, so that children look forward to going to school to see how best imagination gets transformed into reality.”

The title of the project, conceptualised by past president Neelakantan Loganathan, was a play on the traditional Indian term for a place of learning ‘Gurukul’. The focus area of the project launched by the 100-plus-member-club was literacy and basic education. “Our club has shown good growth and minimum attrition. We have diversity and our member engagement programmes are curated to include equity and diversity. We’ve given generous contributions to TRF, and done numerous socially relevant projects through

several GGs for vision care, neo natal ventilator and a breast milk bank for babies, a cleft palate project for babies in Mauritius, palliative care for elderly at Malaysia, fight against Covid, and dialysis systems.”

Gurukool’s main aim was to harness technology to make the delivery of education more interesting and effective, and it encompasses putting up smart classroom in schools where students come mostly from economically backward classes, with many of them being first generation learners. Conceived to better the quality and delivery of education, this project will also aid dyslexia identification and remediation. Club secretary Radha Krish said the equipment will have interactive panels, 65-inch screens in every classroom along with self-contained programmes

**150**  
Rotary study centres to be put up by RID 3000, to give info on government exams

Gurukool's first phase will give

**75**  
smart classrooms with interactive panels in three schools; cost

**₹1.25**  
crore

and applications to simulate real life situations to deepen understanding.

“In the first phase, we have targeted 75 classrooms in three schools. The project estimate is ₹1.25 crore or \$125,000. With every passing year, new beneficiaries will gain from it. We intend making this a GG project to supplement our contribution by participation from Rotary clubs in Japan, Malaysia and Mauritius, along with CSR funds from an Indian corporate,” she said, adding that thousands of children will be helped and those who have never been to school will be skilled and empowered to imagine a better world.

### Rotary Study Centres by RID 3000

Introducing the flagship programmes of District 3000, DG I Jerald said



these included Rotary study centres, setting up Miyawaki forests, restoring ponds and water bodies. “We have 135 clubs and they are involved in these three areas; we aim to plant 2 lakh saplings and restore ponds over 200 acres.”

To enable people from small towns get good government jobs, “I have requested each club to create one Rotary study centre, the main objective of which is to give talented people in the local community

information and knowledge about government competitive examinations. We have intelligent people in smaller towns but they lack information and resources to prepare properly for the examinations, cracking which remains a dream for them,” he said.

So he has requested all the clubs to identify a village and set up a centre, with proper infrastructure which will cost around \$4,000 (₹3.2 lakh). Some clubs had come

**2,000**

students to benefit from RC Chennai Presidency's e-learning facilities in

**45**

schools

forward to set up 2 or 3 such centres. “Our aim is to create 150 such centres, which will have a centralised administration and disseminate regular information about forthcoming exams, how to prepare for them and emerge successful. The principle is... instead of giving fish, train them to fish. It is not a big value, but a big impact project, that will go a long way in helping local people get into good government positions.



President Jones with DG Nandakumar (R) and PDG Babu Peram (L) and members of RC Madras Presidency.



This is an ideal project to create and improve the public image of Rotary. It is a long-term, sustainable district project. Today 20 clubs

are ready with the centres, which RI President Jones is inaugurating.”

Jerald later told *Rotary News* that the clubs have three options; construct their own building for this centre, which costs around ₹15 lakh; five clubs have already done this. The other options are to lease either government or private buildings for a 10-year period.”

#### Schools and Smiles: RC Madras

Giving details of the *Schools and Smiles* project initiated in 2004 for the restoration of 100 schools, some of which had been inaugurated by past RI presidents including Wilf Wilkinson, PDG Benjamin Cherian said under this GG project done by RC Madras, e-learning facilities given to “each one of these schools have motivated

the children to attend schools as classes get more interesting with e-learning content. Attendance has grown threefold, and we at RCM plan to continue this literacy project for many years.” Four more restored schools were inaugurated that evening by President Jones.

#### E-learning in 45 schools: RC Chennai Presidency

President Jones next launched a \$55,000 GG project of RC Chennai Presidency, to set up e-learning facilities in 45 schools in and around Chennai. Every year 2,000 students benefit from the project which has been done with CSR funds from tech major CTS.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

## Policemen guarding vaccinators shot down in Pak

### Team Rotary News



**A**nti-vaccine militants gun down policemen guarding polio vaccinators at Kot Azam, Tank district, in north-west Pakistan. The two gunmen had been hiding near a water channel before opening fire on the guards and then,

fled on a motorbike; they spared the vaccinators.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two polio-endemic countries now. Pakistan reported its first case of polio in 15 months in April 2022. Since then, 13 more cases have been

declared — all in North Waziristan, bordering Afghanistan.

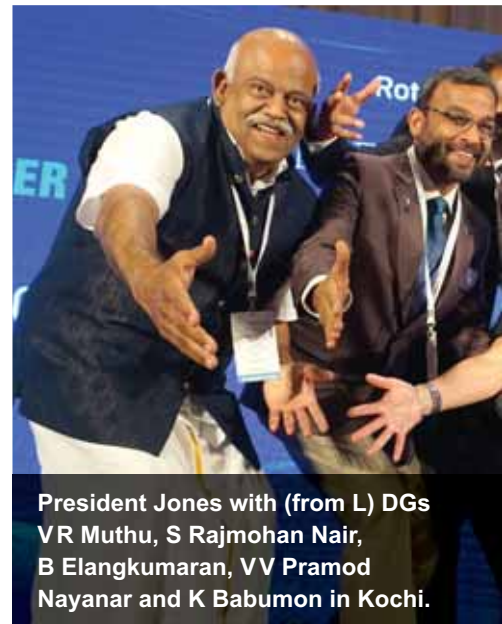
Many polio workers and their guards have been killed by militants in Pakistan over anti-vaccine sentiment, which includes a belief that the vaccines contain pig fat, and claims that the vaccination is a Western plot to sterilise Muslims.

Meanwhile, while Europe was declared polio-free in 2003, polio virus was detected in sewage samples in London in June this year. An urgent vaccination drive has been organised in Greater London to cover all children aged one to nine. They will be offered the inactivated vaccine — which contains a dead virus and has no risk of spreading. This is the form of polio vaccine the UK has used since 2004. ■

# India welcomes Prez Jones



Past RI President Shekhar Mehta greets  
President Jones and Krayacich in Pune.



President Jones with (from L) DGs  
VR Muthu, S Rajmohan Nair,  
B Elangkumaran, VV Pramod  
Nayanar and K Babumon in Kochi.

**Right:** RI President Jennifer Jones with a student who received a bicycle under the 'Tring a smile' project of the RI districts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

**Below:** President Jones and her spouse DGN Nick Krayacich with dancers in Kochi, Kerala.



With RI Director A S Venkatesh.



President Jones and DGN Krayacich pose for a photograph with a Rotaractor at a Rotaract meet in Chennai. DRR Gowtham Raj is also seen.



President Jones and Krayacich with DGs Pawan Agarwal (3110), Ashok Kantoor (3011), Dr Balwant Singh Chirana (3054), Dr Lalit Khanna (3012), Dinesh Kumar Sharma (3100), Dr Dushyant Choudhary (3070) and Shashank Rastogi (3261) in Delhi.



**Above:** With RI Director AS Venkatesh, PRID PT Prabhakar, his spouse Nalini and DG N Nandakumar in Chennai.

**Right:** President Jones and Krayacich all set to go on a cruise on the Ganga river in Varanasi. Also seen: Kavita Agarwal, PDG Dr Pramod Kumar and DG Anil Agarwal.

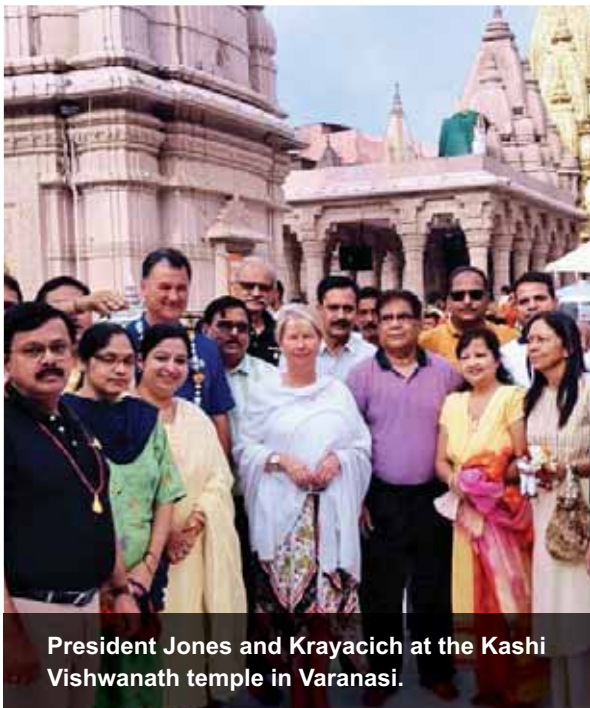




RC Varanasi Central member Sanjay Gupta presents a memento to President Jones and Krayacich.



RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi, President Jones, Krayacich and DG Kantoor with Rotaractors in Delhi.



President Jones and Krayacich at the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi.



With RIDE T N Subramanian.



**Above:** President Jones with PDGs S Krishnaswami and JB Kamdar in Chennai.

**Right:** Vinita Venkatesh with spouses of DGs at the Spouses session in Lakshya programme in Pune.

**Below:** (from L) PDG Prashant Deshmukh, PRID Kamal Sanghvi, Shipra and RIDE Anirudha Roy Chowdhury, and TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty. PDG Sam Patibandla is also seen.



With Annets in Chennai.





Sumedha Nandakumar celebrates her birthday with President Jones, Krayacich, RIDE TN Subramanian, DG Nandakumar, RIDs Kotbagi and Venkatesh in Chennai.



Kiran Zehra

**Above:** President Jones with RID Venkatesh in Chennai.

**Below:** President Jones and Krayacich in Delhi.



V Muthukumar



Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat, Jaishree and special arrangement

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

# District 3110



**Prachi & Pawan Agarwal**  
District Governor, RID 3110



**AKS Announcement of DG Pawan Agarwal  
& First Lady Prachi Agarwal**



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& Mrs. Anjali Arora**  
RC Kashipur



**Rtn. Tauseeq Ahmad**  
RC Kanpur



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& Mrs. (Dr.) Abha Mittal**  
RC Aligarh



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RC Aligarh Friends

New Clubs



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



Highest net membership growth of 120 members in Zone 6



# RI District 3110 in Action



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

# Member engagement crucial, essential

**Jaishree**

**R**I President Jennifer Jones and her husband DGN Nick Krayacich, along with RI Directors Mahesh Kotbagi and AS Venkatesh, were in Pune for *Lakshya* and a two-day event organised by RI districts 3131, 3132, 3141, 3142, 3170 and 3030.

Addressing the college of governors of the six districts, Jones emphasised retention of members. “Last year president Shekhar requested ‘each one bring one’, and for the first time in over six years, we finished with net growth. Now we need to keep those numbers. Members walk in through the front door, only to walk out through the back door. We have been having 1.2 million members for more than a decade. We brought 1 million members in and also lost 1 million members, and so we stayed static. We are good at growing Rotary but we have to work on keeping our members.”

Quoting an Interactor, whom she met in Australia a couple of years ago, who said to her, ‘Jennifer, if you want responsible children, you need to give them responsibilities,’ she said, “if you want responsible members, you need to give them responsibilities. When people fall in love with our organisation they will not walk away.”

Urging district leaders to do meaningful service projects she recalled her brother Dave’s remark while helping her prepare for a media interview. “He said, ‘In order to live in the kind of society that you want, you have to help build it.’ We are the people who can change the world, and make a

difference. Let’s assess our communities’ needs and make them stronger.”

Jones poignantly narrated her interaction with a customs officer in the US when she was DG in 2007–08. “As I live in Ontario, Canada, I had to cross the border several times to visit Rotary clubs in the US which was part of my district. As I did this one day, I met a customs officer who asked me the regular questions such as my citizenship and other details.” When she said that she was going for a Rotary meeting he wanted to know what is Rotary. “When I told him the whole gamut of what we are doing including our work in polio, HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB, he said, you mean to tell me that there are that many people in the world who have that much extra time on their hands? And I said, No sir, there are that many people in the world with no time on their hands. With tears in his eyes he said, what you are doing is incredible work. Please thank the people involved in such work. So here I am to thank you for all that you do. Also, thank you for your generosity.”

## **A tete a tete with club presidents**

Earlier, the RI president met the club presidents of the six districts. Putting them at ease, she said, “As you started this new journey you would have had butterflies in your stomach,

you’d be a bit nervous about what is in store for you as you move ahead. You know what, I am a little nervous too. But rest assured, we are going to have great opportunities.” She herself had loved leading her club. “The hardest

**RI President  
Jennifer Jones**





Monica and DG Anand Jhunjhunuwala (RID 3030), Malini and DG Sandip Agarwalla (3141), Sandhya and DG Venkatesh Deshpande (3170), DGs Anil Parmar (3131) and Rukmesh Jakhotiya (3132).

thing for me was ending the year and sitting back again. I could have done that role year after year after year.”

She recalled the deadly 9/11 attack that brought down the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in the US when she was club president. “It was 9 am and I was watching television and saw the first plane hitting the first tower. I was devastated. When I lived in Manhattan, I used to go up to the top of the tower to watch the sunset. Then moments later the second plane hit.” Her club was scheduled to meet for lunch that afternoon as was the norm. “We all met to share the experience and be together to show our solidarity. All of us stood facing the American flag and sang their national anthem with gusto, with tears streaming down our faces. That day we realised that in our organisation we exist without borders or boundaries, and what happens to someone, somewhere else, also happens to us. That’s the gift of our great organisation. It brings us all together — different cultures, different religions — all into such a big harmony. We represent the best of our world in what we do.”

Talking about the Covid pandemic, she noted, “When the world stepped down, we stepped up. We were able to reach out to our communities and

do things that others couldn’t, even governments — such as providing PPE, oxygen concentrators, and various other things. That was profound. We even jumped on to virtual platforms to stay connected. But nothing can take away the joy of being together face-to-face.”

Club leaders should make their clubs attractive for all members. “My husband Nick’s club meets twice a month. They have a service project one week, and a social meeting the other week. This way all the members are happy and engaged. We must find meaningful engagement for all our members, and make it an inclusive experience for them.”

The ‘empowering girls’ focus of past president Shekhar Mehta very much aligns with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, she noted. “We have seen Rotary clubs across the world explode with initiatives for empowering girls which we will continue this year and next year under president Gordon (McInally) too.”

Talking about DEI, Jones said, “We need to hear from all genders, cultures, races and sexual orientation.” She recalled an interaction with her club’s past president Mark Vafer who has a hearing deficiency but is an expert lip reader. “When I am talking to someone in his presence, I have to make

sure that I am facing him so that Mark understands what I am saying. This is all about inclusion, how we can accommodate people of varying needs. Mark for instance can bring a different perspective on disability. Similarly, when there is a visually impaired person in a club, he may need assistance. Likewise a member who has difficulty climbing stairs. So when we are talking about diversity, equity and inclusion, we must also consider all such aspects too.”

She added that she is not such a huge fan of gender-specific clubs. “A well-rounded club should include everyone — working together in harmony, not isolating. I’d encourage us to be warm and welcoming to the entire population.”

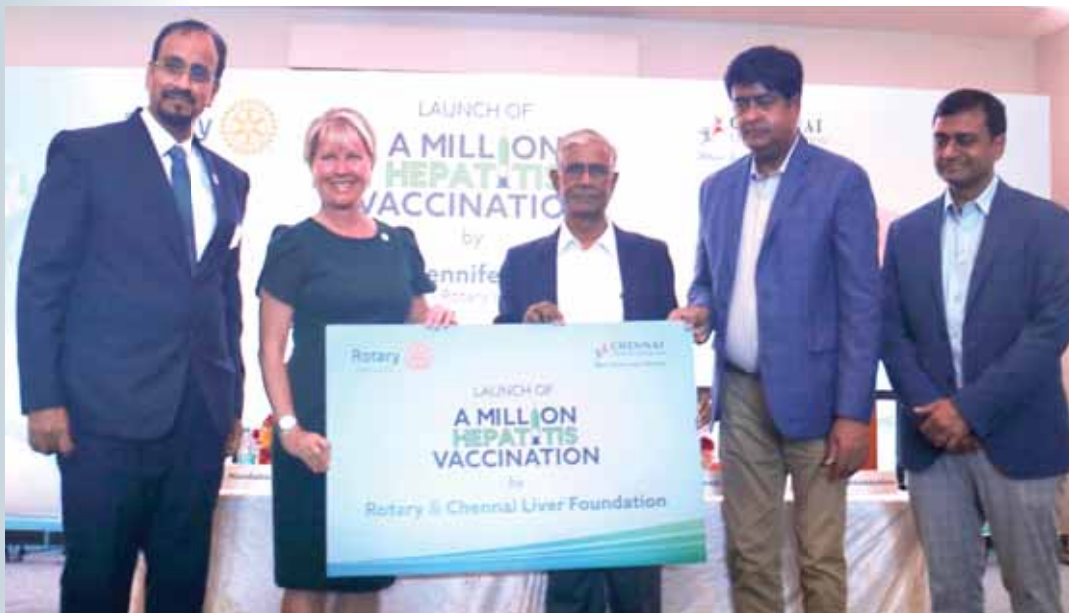
Krayacich, replying to a question from a Rotarian’s spouse on how he handles the pressure of being the spouse of the world president, said, “Honestly there is no pressure. I view this as an honour and a privilege. Your support is crucial for the success of the club. I have been club president twice and I enjoyed great support from my partner.”

Jones felicitated the AKS members. Kotbagi and Venkatesh complimented the DGs for the district performances in service projects, membership and TRF support.

Pictures by Jaishree

# Tell your incredible stories to the world: Jones

**V Muthukumaran**



RI President Jennifer Jones launches the hepatitis vaccination programme in the presence of RI Director AS Venkatesh, DG Dr N Nandakumar, Dr RP Shanmugam, founder-trustee, CLF, and its trustee Rtn Dr S Vivekanandan.

**T**he incredible work being done by Rotary in this part of the world needs to be told to a wider audience through impactful stories. Rotary is in our DNA and let the world know our work and contributions,” said RI President Jennifer Jones at a meeting hosted jointly by RIDs 3232, 3231, 2981, 2982 and 3000 in Chennai.

She launched five ambitious projects in the fields of healthcare, women’s empowerment and environment. RID 2981 donated a Rotary Mobile

Hospital (₹70 lakh) to the Vinayaga Mission Medical College and Hospital, Karaikal. The project is the brain-child of PDG R Balaji Babu (2020–21) and RC Le Bourget Aulnay Sous Bois, RID 1770, France, is its global partner.

A rally was flagged off by the RI president to create awareness on the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle). It was jointly organised by RCs Krishnagiri, Sankagiri, Salem Wings and Hosur, RID 2982.

RCs Chennai IT City and Chennai Towers donated wet grinders worth ₹25 lakh to 50 differently-abled

women. “We will scale it up to 100 families in the next phase,” said event chair Kathir Ganapathiappan from RC Guindy. Under Project *Pollinator*, RID 3232 will be setting up 200 bee hotels (₹15 lakh) to attract bees and facilitate cross-pollination in flowers. The district will also be setting up 100 air quality monitoring gadgets (₹1.75 crore) across Chennai, said its environment chair SM Balasubramanian. Four I-Breast equipment will screen 14,000 women for breast cancer across the city. The GG project (₹40 lakh) is executed by RC Madras Chenna Patna,

in partnership with RC Cataraqui Kingston, Ontario, RID 6400.

### Rapid fire Q&A

What would you do differently, if you are a club president now, asked RI director AS Venkatesh to Jones; her reply: “I will ask the club members what they want to do and give them meaningful responsibilities so that they fall in love with Rotary.”

Being a woman in Rotary is an advantage or disadvantage, was the next question. Recalling her handling questions from the 17-member nominating committee for the RI president’s post two years ago, Jones said the majority of them were moved by her qualifications, rather than being caught in the web of gender issues. “Women bring diverse perspectives to Rotary, which opens up a big opportunity for them,” she said and dismissed the stereotyped view that Rotary is a ‘man’s world’. Answering Venkatesh’s question on what she doesn’t like about Rotary in India, Jones replied, “The rivalry among Rotarians during elections. Honest conversation is the way out. Apply the Four-Way Test to resolve all the contentious issues.”

The RI director appreciated the mammoth projects executed by PDGs J Sridhar and S Muthupalaniappan, RID 3232, during their tenure — 134 dialysis centres set up in Chennai hospitals last year; and before that, over 100 eyecare clinics set up across the city. RI director Mahesh Kotbagi appreciated the service projects showcased by the five districts.

DGs N Nandakumar, JKN Palani, V Selvanathan, P Saravanan and I Jerald felicitated the RI president.

### Hepatitis vaccination drive

Jones launched ‘A million hepatitis vaccination’ drive which is jointly done by RID 3232 and the Chennai Liver Foundation (CLF). “Rotary has a good health infrastructure in place through its polio eradication efforts which will help us in the fight against hepatitis,” she noted. Rotary clubs will work closely with the community and the government to scale up the hepatitis vaccination drive, said DG Nandakumar. Giving details of the vaccination drive, Dr RP Shanmugam, gastroenterologist and founder, CLF, said “viral hepatitis is a silent killer — nine out of 10 patients don’t know about it — as the virus can sit in the liver without the knowledge of the patient for over

25 years. It manifests itself at the age of 45 or above and by that time 70 per cent of the liver is damaged and beyond recovery.”

### Meet with women Rotarians

The district’s women Rotarians had an exclusive session titled *Sheroes* with the RI president. “Take good care of your health and strike the right work-life balance,” said Jones to them. Earlier Vinita, spouse of RI director Venkatesh, introduced Jones to the audience saying that the RI president has smashed every glass ceiling with a stamp of accomplishment to reach the topmost post in Rotary, “like a warrior princess”.

Launching *Project Shakti*, a project to screen in the next five years at least one million women for breast cancer, Jones recalled her traumatic experience as a breast cancer survivor. “After eight chemotherapy and 21 radiation sessions, I recovered from cancer fully and emerged with a new purpose in life,” she said, adding how important it is to get diagnosed early, so that the disease can be cured fully.

*Project Vahini* was launched, in partnership with the DORAI Foundation, to train 250 women to drive cars, so that they can be employed in hotels and corporates for regular income. Under *Project Sundari*, 100 women were enrolled in a beautician course in a tie-up with Naturals, a salon group. “Now they are ready either to start a new venture or join a beauty parlour. Among them, 20 are speech and hearing-impaired,” said project director Sharada Sundaram from RC Madras Central Aadithya.

DRFC B Dakshayani said that the district has 26 per cent women members (around 1,500) and “we are aiming to add 1,000 new members and five all-women’s club by the year end.” District 3232 stands third in the world in TRF giving and has committed \$2.15 million for the current year.

Pictures: V Muthukumaran



President Jones with (from L) DGs JKN Palani (3231), V Selvanathan (2981), N Nandakumar (3232), P Saravanan (2982) and I Jerald (3000).

# Changing the world with one story at a time

**Jaishree**

**O**ne of the things I love most is storytelling. Our ability to tell our stories in a compelling way affects how our organisation is perceived,” said RI President

Jennifer Jones, addressing Rotarians at Kochi as part of her *Imagine Impact* India tour. The three-day programme was hosted by five Rotary districts — 3201, 3203, 3204, 3211

**RI President Jennifer Jones and her spouse DGN Dr Nick Krayacich performing a Kerala-style ritual for prosperity as PDG Madhav Chandran guides them.**



and 3212 — comprising Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

“For so long we were told to do our good work quietly, and not for recognition. Sometime ago when we did a survey we found that out of 10 people, only two have heard of us before. We don’t want to tell our stories for recognitions and accolades, but to open the doors for others to join us,” she added.

Referring to an incident mentioned by Sujata, spouse of event chairman PDG Madhav Chandran, in her introduction of the RI president earlier, Jones added, “the power of a great story is that it doesn’t have to be your own. When you were recounting my story of the gratitude journal, you brought me to tears.”

She went on to relate two incidents to drive home the power of effective storytelling. The first one was when she, along with her husband DGN Nick Krayacich (a doctor), had visited a remote island to provide medical consultation to the local people. “Two young men came in at two different points, each with exactly the same symptoms. They both talked about a ‘fever in their belly’. Nick asked them probing questions — when do they have ‘the fever’ and when they don’t. It seemed that the only time when they did not have ‘the fever’ was when they had their one or two weekly meals. They did not need a diagnosis; they needed food. So when we returned home we shared our story and so many people, from Rotary and outside, joined us to help. Now children and their families in that village are able to access food, thanks to our food programme. This is the power of words, asking people to join us and be part of creating solutions for the good of our communities and our world.”

Another tale she related was about the Golf Day that helped raise \$5.25 million in a single day for the Polio Fund. At the 2016 Rotary convention, Jones and Krayacich were in the greenroom where she was preparing to



## ₹100-crore service projects

**R**I President Jennifer Jones soft launched service projects worth ₹100 crore to be implemented by RIDs 3201, 3203, 3204, 3211 and 3212 this year in their respective regions. These include: construction of 500 houses (₹30 crore); Rotary model roads (₹10 crore); health-care for schoolchildren (₹2 crore); civil service training and medical courses for students (₹2 crore); sponsoring marriage expenses for the less privileged (₹10 crore); a pet crematorium (₹60 lakh); Rotary Miyawaki forests (₹1 crore); knee replacement surgeries (₹2 crore);

heart and ophthalmic surgeries (₹60 lakh); initiatives under the Rotary Police Engagement (₹10 lakh); dialysis machines (₹80 lakh); 200 paediatric heart surgeries (₹1 crore); bicycles to 1,000 girls (₹80 lakh); mobile heart-care clinic (₹1.1 crore); breast cancer diagnosis and treatment (₹1 crore); and a cancer care hospital (₹60 crore).

An Alco scan van worth ₹55 lakh was inaugurated by Jones. The van with facilities to analyse saliva samples to detect use of narcotics is part of RID 3211's Rotary Police Engagement initiative.

She launched 'Tring a smile' — a joint project of all the five districts

to gift bicycles to 1,000 girls. Addressing 100 students who had gathered to receive their bicycles, she said, "An educated girl is an empowered girl. These new bicycles will take you to school where you can focus on your future."

The RI president visited the Ernakulam Government Hospital where the Rotary clubs of Kochi have provided sophisticated medical facilities worth ₹30 crore, including a human milk bank and a dialysis centre, and have planned to renovate a waiting room this year.

interview Jack Niclaus, one of the greatest golfers of all time and a polio survivor. Krayacich shared his dream with Niclaus to organise a 'Golf Day' with four golfers and raise \$1 million for polio. "Niclaus told Nick, 'If you can organise that I will give you the entire day.' And it wasn't \$1 million or four golfers; it was eight golfers, and we raised \$5.25 million!" Acknowledging RID 3132 PDG Parag Sheth's presence in the audience, Jones said that he was one of the golfers who participated in the event, and also shared how Niclaus gave Sheth expert tips in hitting a sand shot.

Jones called the five host governors (she called her DGs 'my babies') to the dais and asked each of them how they imagine the year ahead. RID 3204 DG Elangkumaran imagines completion of a ₹60-crore cancer care hospital in his district during this year. DG Pramod Nayanar (3203)

dreams of total eradication of polio and DG Rajmohan Nair (3201) envisions "a phenomenal increase in Rotary's membership in India, leading to more contribution to TRF and more global grants for India". DG VR Muthu (3212) sees an increase in major donors and RYLAs to promote entrepreneurship in youngsters.

"The dreams of all these leaders are not the same. It proves that there is no one way of looking at Rotary, but many ways where we can transform communities," said the RI president.

RI director AS Venkatesh said, "This is an incredible opportunity to listen to one of the most inspirational leaders in Rotary. Till now I thought my grandmother is the world's best storyteller, but President Jones beats her. Her real-life stories inspire us to do more, and non-Rotarians to join Rotary." He added that Zone 5 comprising Tamil Nadu and

Kerala has 7 per cent of India's population, but 34 per cent of Rotary's population in India. "With 52,000 Rotarians, this is probably the largest zone in RI." India is probably one country that does more than 100 per cent of what we thought we can. We do more than our own expectations... be it membership, contribution to TRF or the magnitude of our service projects and, more importantly, the commitment and involvement of each one of you. When you choose to give your time, a non-renewable resource, to Rotary there cannot be a better investment from you for a cause."

RI director Mahesh Kotbagi appreciated the grandeur of the reception for the RI president and complimented the five district governors for their efforts and dedication. "It gives out a clear message that together we can work impactfully and showcase more effectively the strength

Zone 5 — Tamil Nadu and Kerala — has

**7**

per cent of India's population but

**34**

per cent of Rotary India's population



From L: Event chairman Madhav Chandran and host DGs V V Pramod Nayanar, S Rajmohan Nair, B Elangkumaran, K Babumon and V R Muthu felicitate President Jones in the presence of her spouse Krayacich and RIDs Mahesh Kotbagi and A S Venkatesh.

of Rotary. When we all come together we can do better service projects, handsome TRF contributions and also resolve conflicts easily.”

Talking about Jones’ leadership, he said that she “is unique in that she is down to earth, sincere and dedicated.

We must take a leaf out of her book and make ourselves approachable for our team.” Complimenting her husband DGN Krayacich’s “extraordinary” support, he said, “that shows how much important and valuable a partner’s support is.”

DG Muthu gave a cheque for ₹25 lakh to scale-up his contribution to the AKS. Event secretary DGN Sudhi Jabbar proposed the vote of thanks.

Pictures by Jaishree

2023 Convention

# Get wild

## EVA Remijan-Toba

From koalas to kangaroos, Australia is home to some fascinating wildlife. Melbourne is no exception. The urban area’s wild side includes non-native red foxes (considered pests) and a colony of penguins (much loved). While you’re in town for the 2023 RI Convention May 27–31, recharge between break-out sessions with a stroll through the parks to get up close with nature.

Head to the Melbourne Gardens, part of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and an oasis in the heart of the city since 1846. The 94-acre Melbourne Gardens is located between the convention’s two venues, on the south bank of the Yarra River. Walk

around tranquil lakes, learn about conservation, and explore more than 8,500 plant species, including camellias, rainforest flora, cacti and succulents, and roses. Don’t forget to look up;



A fairy penguin peeks out from the underbrush on Phillip Island.

Melbourne has dozens of bird species, including sulfur-crested cockatoos.

At about a foot tall, little penguins (also known as blue or fairy penguins) are the smallest of all penguins. The closest viewing spot, at St Kilda Pier, is under construction. But you can catch them on parade two hours south at Phillip Island.

A short drive or train ride out of the city will take you to Dandenong Ranges National Park, where you can venture through the rainforest, hike to Olinda Falls, or climb the 1000 Steps, known officially as the Kokoda Track Memorial Walk. The park’s volcanic hills are home to the mountain ash, the world’s tallest flowering tree, and its wildlife includes wallabies, lyrebirds and wombats.

Learn more and register at [convention.rotary.org](http://convention.rotary.org).

# American drama in real life

Rajendra Saboo



Usha and I were ready for a much-needed vacation after a hiatus of almost two-and-a-half years due to the pandemic. Thankfully, we were spared from Covid due to the care of our children here, Yasho and Anu. Feeling fit and fine, we left for Washington on May 25 to spend time with our family — Jai, Pallabi and Shivani.

While there, we also attended the annual Rotary International convention in Houston, which was interesting and purposeful, attended by about 12,000 Rotarians from all over the world. Besides meeting our friends after a long time and participating in the programme, we heard experts speak on a polio-free world and the environment and Rotary Peace Fellows on Ukraine and world peace. Very few were wearing masks. Before leaving Houston, we came to know that many had tested Covid-positive. Keeping our own safety in place, we reached Washington and despite all our precautions, we both tested

Covid-positive the next day. We recovered well with the affectionate caring of Jai and Pallabi.

Then a drama in real life happened. Pallabi drove me to the mall to buy a Father's Day gift. We were in the store when suddenly gunshots were heard and alarms started beeping. With presence of mind, we ran to the nearby elevator and locked ourselves in. In pin-drop silence, Pallabi sent an SMS to Jai about our ordeal. Meanwhile, I prayed and prayed. After what seemed to be an eternity, the police asked us to come out of the elevator and proceed to our car. Two gangs had had a fight and had started shooting at each other — all due to the easy access to guns in the US.

Next, we reached London. Usha and I have visited London several times since 1957. However, this visit was especially fun-filled. The highlight was watching the finals at the Wimbledon, the Mecca of tennis, where, to our delight, Novak Djokovic won his 21<sup>st</sup> Grand Slam title.

One evening, we watched Shakespeare's famous play *Julius Caesar* at the original Globe Theatre, which has a history of 400 years. For two-and-a-half hours, I was captivated and transported in history. The famous words by Julius Caesar, 'Et tu Brute', brought back memories of my school days in Kolkata when I was studying Shakespeare.

On July 12, at the Oval, we enjoyed the first cricket ODI between India and England and were thrilled by India's victory. The Oval was the first ground in England to host Test cricket in 1880.

We returned to Chandigarh with a mixed bag of memories of enjoyment, adventure and a horrendous experience. Joseph Wirthlin has said, 'Some memories are unforgettable, remaining ever vivid and heartwarming.'

©The Tribune  
The writer is a past  
Rotary International president



**Below:** DAR Shilpa Bothra explains *Project Stain Free*, an MHM programme, to RI President Jennifer Jones. RIDE TN Subramanian is seen on the right.



## Striking a chord with Annets

**V Muthukumar**

**D**reams are part of our life and once we strive to realise those wonderful dreams, leaders emerge in the world, said RI President Jennifer Jones during a lively interaction with members of District Annets Council (DAC), RID 3232. “So, you are the future

leaders of Rotary and I can see the incredible capacity to do service in you which is amazing at your age,” she said.

She recalled the journey of PDG Rekha Shetty, the second woman governor in Asia, from being an Annet to leading her district as governor, and said

her rise in the Rotary hierarchy is an inspiration to children of Rotarians. She called all Annets below 15 to the dais, and asked them to spell out their dreams and ambitions. Amongst replies such as I want to be a doctor, engineer, IAS officer, take on my parent’s business,





**Above:** President Jones along with Chennai Annets, DAR Shilpa Bothra (to her right), DG Dr N Nandakumar and DAC chairperson Shraavan Prashanth in the back row.



architect, join the army, aeronautics, IT technocrat, et al, one boy stood out with a different view.

“I want to become a scientist to invent new things and change the world.” “Wow!” exclaimed Jones, “this is what Rotarians are striving to do now”.

Earlier, DAC chairperson Rtn Shraavan Prashanth, charter president of RC Chennai Amethyst, formed in 2019 with Annets-turned-Rotarians, said Annets must be mentored in the right way by Rotarians so that they become leaders and achieve their mission in life.

Started in 2014 during the tenure of PDG ISAK Nazar, the DAC has enlarged its activity through projects like annual *Annadhanam* (mass feeding), cleaning the beach, trekking and RYLA camps, etc, which enabled the 200-member council to aim bigger and bolder in project outreach, he said. There are around 100 Annet clubs in Chennai.

District Annet Representative Shilpa Bothra said, “we are imagining big to build friendship, do service and learn what is not taught in schools.” She compared President Jones to a *singapenn* (lioness) as she is a trailblazer showing the way for other women to follow, she added.

A cupboard was installed by Jones under *Project Stain Free* which would assist girls in menstrual

hygiene. The DAC will be donating 500 cupboards to government schools to stock sanitary napkins. For the first time, the DAC, Chennai, has given a commitment to TRF and “Annets will keep up that promise,” she said.

### Transformation

Rtn Rajesh Kumar from RC Madras Connemara, recalled that he was a shy boy and an introvert till “I became a member of DAC. I am the youngest member in my Rotary club when I joined in 2015.”

Another Rotarian, Dilip Kumar from RC Anna Nagar West, who was also the charter secretary of the Annets Club of Anna Nagar West, said, “my business has improved a lot now after my bonding with the Annets. This is an easy way to connect with people.” A Rotarian for three years, Aeshna, said that she now has several opportunities to interact with great people, thanks to “my grooming at the Annets Council.” At 27, she led RC Chennai Amethyst as the youngest club president in India, in 2020–21.

DG Dr N Nandakumar, S Muthupalaniappan, PDGs Nazar, Chandramohan, Rekha Shetty, RIDE TN Subramanian and AKS member M Ambalavanan were present at this interactive session.

Pictures by  
V Muthukumaran

# Flood victims receive help from RC Valsad

**Kiran Zehra**

**A** month after the flooding of the Auranga river in the city of Valsad, Gujarat, that upturned lives and destroyed hundreds of homes across the region, members of RC Valsad, RID 3060, “are still there, working with other Rotary clubs and NGOs to provide comfort and support to those in need. This is a challenging situation, and we are working closely with the local administration to provide relief,” says Swati Shah, the club president. But she admits that the road to total recovery is indeed long.

The club has spent close to ₹12 lakh on the relief efforts and helped nearly 8,000 people affected by the floods.

More than 400 people were evacuated from the low-lying areas, and “club members helped them by providing a place to stay, food, relief supplies and some members even sat down and consoled those crying uncontrollably to give them emotional support. We served them piping hot tea and biscuits while we assessed the situation,” she says. The club also made a list of prescription

medications, spectacles, wheelchairs, and other medical equipment left behind by the devastated citizens in the rush to get to safety. “These were essential things that they needed and we made the necessary arrangements,” she adds.

Rotarians distributed 6,000 food packets, 2,000 biscuit packets, 800 packs of dry snacks, and 6,000 litres of drinking water in six places around Valsad that were worst hit by the flood. A survey was done to identify families that needed food supplies urgently. In association with Reliance Foundation and the Rotaract Club of Valsad, the club distributed coupons for ration kits that included rice, dal, oil, wheat flour, tea, sugar and spices. On the first day, 558 kits were distributed at Hanuman Bhagda and Kashmir Nagar followed by 500 kits to the people of Vavfaliya Abrama and Vejalpore villages near Valsad.



**Rotaractors distributing clothes to the flood victims in Valsad.**

When the rainwater receded there grew a need for other necessities like blankets, mats and clothes. Members pitched in again and arranged 300 washable mats, 600 blankets and mosquito nets. RCs Surat Tapi and Vapi helped the club donate saris to 400 women. Swati says “one beneficiary was so overwhelmed that she could barely find the words to thank me, as she told me that the floods had taken away all they owned, leaving them just with the clothes they were wearing and that they hadn’t changed their saris in three days. It was a humbling experience.”

Students in Valsad who had lost their study material in the floods received raincoats, geometry boxes, notebooks and textbooks. PDG Dr Nilax Mufti, and Rotarian doctors Dhara Ashra and Mitesh Modi led a series of health camps throughout Valsad following a spike in the incidence of fever, flu, diarrhoea and dengue cases. Over 500 people were screened at the camps and patients were given medicines.



**Above:** Valsad district collector Kshipra Agre interacting with a beneficiary as club member Sanober Sharoff, who sponsored the bicycles for underprivileged students, and club secretary Nirali Gajjar (right) look on.

**Below:** Club member Rajesh Patel and Rtr Raj Patel distributing food in a flood-hit area.



### Help for students

RC Valsad paid the outstanding fees of students who could not afford to pay their final term fees. “These students wanted to join government schools to continue their education but, weren’t able to get their TCs because of the outstanding amount. We identified and paid the fees for nine such students,” says Nirali Gajjar, the club secretary. A total amount of ₹30,500 was spent to help these students. Recently the club distributed 55 bicycles to underprivileged students. ■


# A peace advocate, **tea grandmaster,**

Go Tamitami and Wen Huang





# Rotarian



**Genshitsu Sen demonstrates the Urasenke school style of tea making. “Chadō cleanses the mind and promotes humility and courtesy,” he says.**

In July 2011, Genshitsu Sen, the former grandmaster of the Urasenke tea tradition and a member of RC Kyoto, Japan, travelled to Hawaii, where 60 years earlier he had established the first Urasenke chapter outside his native land to promote the practice of *chadō* — literally, “the Way of Tea” — and through it, to spread the message of peace, reconciliation and brotherhood.

On that trip, Sen had a special mission. He had been invited to perform a devotional tea offering ceremony at the USS *Arizona* Memorial in Pearl Harbor to console the souls of all the war dead. The media hailed it a symbol of the healing process between the US and Japan, whose bitter enmity had cost so many lives and massive destruction during World War II.

For Sen, this tea offering ceremony was also very personal.

In 1943, he was drafted into the Imperial Japanese Navy and became a pilot in its air force division. In the last days of the war, the Japanese naval command assigned him to the Special Attack Force, which was tasked to fly suicide missions against Allied naval vessels. Fortunately, a hidden hand intervened to save him, but before he could discover who had kept him from climbing into a cockpit for the last time, the end of the war arrived. Many of his comrades had plunged to their death, taking the lives of an estimated 7,000 American, British, and Australian sailors. The toll among the attacking pilots was also severe — as many as 3,800 flew to certain death.

The faces of those comrades still live in Sen’s memory, along with the other ghastly consequences of war. After it was over, he dedicated his life to rebuilding peace and harmony in the world, an ideal deeply embedded in the tea ceremony.

At Pearl Harbor, early in the morning of July 19, 2011, Sen was ushered into the gleaming white, open air memorial

that is built above the sunken hull of the *Arizona*. Nearly half of those killed in Japan's surprise attack on December 7, 1941 were members of the *Arizona* crew. Of the 1,177 fatalities aboard the ship, the remains of 1,102 crew members still lie entombed in the wreck. A news clip of Sen's visit shows the grandmaster moving purposefully, dressed in a black kimono which hung starkly beneath his solemn expression and thick mane of silver hair. He wore white split-toed socks in the Japanese tabi fashion. The elaborate tea service was laid out on a lacquered black table in the centre of the assembly room, where more than 200 Japanese and American guests, including politicians, war veterans, civic leaders, and Urasenke *chadō* practitioners, were gathered to witness the time-honoured Japanese ritual.

Employing a piece of square silk cloth known as *fukusa*, he purified the tea implements before placing green tea powder in a ceremonial bowl and ladling in hot water from a steaming kettle. With a bamboo whisk, Sen prepared two sacred portions — one *koicha*, or “thick tea,” and one *usucha*, or “thin tea.”

Once each bowl was prepared, he carried them to the memorial's inner shrine, where the names of American sailors who perished during the attack are carved into a towering memorial wall. There, he lifted his head toward the heavens and raised the bowl in outstretched arms as an offering to those lost souls. After a time, he lowered the bowl to a wooden offering table. Then, Sen joined his hands in prayer to make a final silent entreaty. He called into that hall, and into the hearts of the congregation, the spirit of peace and reconciliation. All eyes were on him and, in silence, the symbolism was deafening.

“I have lived 88 years, and this event here today is going to be the most memorable event for me personally,” Sen said at the end of the ceremony, adding that it is the responsibility of those alive today to confront the past and carry its lessons into the future.

**E**dwin Futa, a Japanese American who is originally from Hawaii, has known Sen for more than two decades. The tea offering at Pearl Harbor

resonated with Rotary members around the world, says Futa, who served as RI general secretary from 2000–11. “The event was broadcast in 32 countries, and many Rotarians, including myself, watched it or read about it. What Sen did embodies Rotary's perpetual quest for peace and our efforts to overcome division.”

### **Kyoto: capital of peace and tranquility**

Surrounded on three sides by mountains, Kyoto was the seat of the imperial court from 794 until 1868, when Emperor Meiji moved the country's political centre to Tokyo. Kyoto's deep history has endowed the city with 1,600 classic Buddhist temples, 400 Shinto shrines, palaces, gardens, and architectural treasures. Artistic expressions such as *kabuki*, *geisha* and *ikebana* (flower arrangements) flourished here, along with the martial traditions of samurai warriors.

During World War II, Kyoto was reportedly placed near the top of the list as a potential target for an atomic bomb attack. However, Henry L Stimson, the US secretary of war, maintained that the city should

**More than 200 Japanese and American guests witness the time-honoured Japanese ritual in the memorial's assembly room.**



be spared, fearing outrage from the Japanese people and the international community for destroying a city that stood as a shrine of Japanese art and culture. And second, though he never publicly acknowledged this motivation, Stimson had visited Kyoto with his wife in the 1920s and came away impressed by its beauty.

Call it realpolitik or sentiment. Either way, the first atomic bombs used in war rained down their massive destruction on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the glory of Kyoto was preserved. A cultural and spiritual hub, Kyoto today is a living museum of Japanese traditions, among them the ancient tea ceremony. The city is home to Japan's three prominent *chadō* schools, including the institution known as Urasenke.

### **Konnichian: "Hut of This Day"**

A light spring rain is falling on Kyoto's traditional wooden buildings with curving, elongated roofs, and its lush bamboo thickets are shrouded in mist, adding a mystical air to the tranquil gray surroundings.

Sen lives at the historical Urasenke *Konnichian* (Hut of This Day) tearoom compound in Kyoto, and the estate was established in 1646.

**Sen makes a ritual tea offering in prayer for peace at Angkor Wat, Cambodia.**



The cedar-roofed entry gate resembles a samurai helmet. From the gate, visitors follow a stone path that winds through a leafy green garden under a canopy of neatly manicured pines. By passing through the garden, it is expected that *chadō* participants leave all their worldly thoughts and desires behind as part of the transition from the stressful materialistic world to the sublime tranquility of a *chadō* gathering.

At the end of the path lies the porch of the main building, which houses a

variety of rustic tea rooms with plain clay walls. The unadorned architecture conveys the dignity of the family's ancestry of tea masters. The building's overall aesthetics mirror those of the Japanese *chadō* itself — simplicity, subtlety, and a deep sense of regard for nature and human fellowship.

Inside a small tea room, sliding doors made of wooden lattice and covered in a translucent Japanese paper allow natural light to filter in from the gardens just beyond. A lacquered black table cut low to the floor stands toward the back and is set with tea-making implements. In the centre of the room lies a hearth where glowing charcoal keeps the chill of the morning at bay. A lone incandescent lamp bathes the room with soft light, creating a solemn and mysterious atmosphere.

Sen, dressed in a grey robe, strides into the room, standing straight and putting his visitor at ease with his cheerful and sonorous laughter. Standing straight at 5ft 10 inches, he radiates the dignity of character for which he is known. His thick grey hair is combed neatly to the back, rendering his long eyebrows more prominent. His eyes exude gentility and warmth. One is intensely aware



Sen introduces *chadō* to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates.

that Sen, having turned 99 in April, has witnessed many turbulent events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is an oracle of history. One can't help bowing to his wisdom, vision and humanity.

### Urasenke traditions meet Rotary values

The conversation starts with Rotary. "I tell you, Rotary is a large part of my life," he says, his eyes sparkling. "My father introduced me to Rotary in 1954, when I was 31. I had a feeling that I would never be able to live my life without it. Rotary's values fit perfectly with the tenets of our Urasenke *chadō* tradition, such as *Wa* (harmony), *Kei* (respect), *Sei* (purity) and *Jaku* (tranquility). Therefore, as soon as my father spoke to me about the philosophy of Rotary, I already considered myself a member. Not long after, I joined RC Kyoto. I remember some senior members telling me that Rotary should not be a place for merely fun and enjoyment, but a place for self-cultivation, learning and serving our community. These words ring in my ears to this day, motivating me to dedicate my life to service and to reach out into the unknown and face challenges."

"In 1954, I helped charter a new club in Kyoto — RC Kyoto-South. Many prominent people in the

community joined. I realised that to grow Rotary, we had to take action to help our community. Our accomplishments needed also to be recognised by our community. That was very important. Our club was chartered at the time of Japan's economic takeoff. The unbridled pace of economic development was poised to threaten our city. Many historical monuments and cultural sites faced demolition, and our environment suffered severe damage."

Sen and his fellow Rotary members reached out to the media to educate the public and businesses about the importance of preserving historical sites and the environment. His club hosted symposiums, inviting politicians, businesses and civic leaders for policy discussions. As a result, they were able to stop or divert construction projects that could have damaged or even erased Kyoto's historic character. "We became a strong community voice, and RC Kyoto-South quickly gained the trust and support of the people," he says.

In 1964, upon the death of his father, Sen acceded to the position of Urasenke grandmaster, representing the 15<sup>th</sup> generation in the Urasenke line. Despite his new responsibilities, he remained a dynamic member of Rotary and was elected president of the RC Kyoto.

Sen's work gained him wide recognition in the Rotary world. He served as an RI director from 1988 to 1990 and a TRF trustee from 1998 to 2002. In 2003–04, he chaired the committee for that year's RI Convention in Osaka, which drew more than 45,000 people from around the world, setting an attendance record. Promoting peace was a dominant theme; Sadako Ogata, a former Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, told the audience that her experiences as a scholar helped her understand the causes and consequences of conflict

### A life to honour those lost

Sen's peacebuilding mission was born of his experience in World War II. In 1943, He was a sophomore at the Kyoto-based Doshisha University when he entered the Imperial Japanese Navy's air force. A year later, in October 1944, when Japan was losing the war, the navy began forming the Special Attack Force. Sen joined 200 of his comrades in training for suicide missions designed to sink enemy ships with aircraft filled with explosives. But on the day appointed for his suicide run, as Sen was braced for death, a superior officer, out of the blue, scratched Sen's name off the mission

### Sen performs a devotional tea offering ceremony at the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor to console the souls of all the war dead.



## Drinking tea with the master

As for the secret of his longevity, Sen says he neither smokes nor drinks. When he was young, he dabbled in martial arts (judo) and trained for many years as an equestrian. In 1967, he was chosen as a reserve rider for Japan's national equestrian team, and has long served as president of the Japan Equestrian Federation. In 2008, he accompanied the Japanese equestrians to the Summer Olympics in Beijing.

In all these endeavours, "Tea drinking calms my mind," he says, while demonstrating the Urasenke style of teamaking. "When my mind is quiet, I read books, which enriches my knowledge and helps me concentrate."

Our tea prepared, Sen asks, "How is the taste?"

The lustrous concoction comprises a thick foam over the dark mixture of powdered green tea beneath. There is a sweetness in the astringency. Each sip brings a new sensation, the taste luxurious, but refined with a distinct flavour of the season.

The talk turns to Russia's invasion of Ukraine — Sen had been invited to address a group of 200 young Rotary members at the Hotel Okura in Kyoto about humanitarian relief efforts undertaken by Japanese clubs and districts. "The tragedy of my early years is repeating itself," he sighs.

While donations to help the people of Ukraine are important,

Sen believes that moral and spiritual support are equally needed. "Young people need to be more vocal in their opposition to wars," he says. "We must not forget about those who died during World War II. We are here today because of their sacrifice."

It is approaching noon. The morning mist has dissipated. A ray of sunshine announces itself by lighting up the *shoji* paper of the sliding doors. The damp air, along with the lingering fragrance of fresh soil and new plant life in the garden, reinforces the sense of serenity that envelops the place.

roster. The officer ordered him to stand down despite his repeated pleas to join his comrades. Instead, Sen was dispatched to a military unit in western Japan. After the war, Sen met with a former senior officer and asked why he had been spared. The officer replied,

"Think of it as your destiny." This is the burden Sen now carries with grace.

"It was a terrible feeling to have survived," he says. "My fellow officers and friends died, and my wife also passed in 1999, leaving me alone. For this reason, I often have an inexplicable

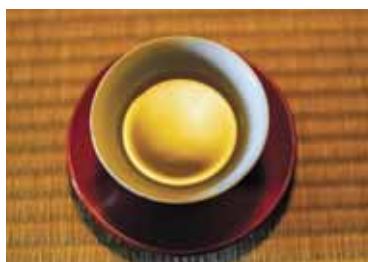
feeling that I have inherited the time of my comrades and those who should have lived. They transferred their lives to me. For their sake, I must also persevere, live well, and live long enough to fulfill my destiny."

Sen tilts his head upward and closes his eyes. An aura of sadness replaces his good humour as joy surrenders to a sense of loss and the isolation of old age.

After a brief moment, the silence ends. The cloud lifts. Sen opens his arms with a smile and says with the enthusiasm of a young man: "Because of the loss, I feel that Rotary is my family. It relieves me of my loneliness and makes me feel cherished. Whenever I attend club activities and meet with young Rotary members, I feel especially close to them, as if I were at home with my children. I thank Rotary and the *chadō* for making me young and giving me love and energy."

Pictures: Minmin Wu

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These images depict scenes from a formal tea ceremony in 2011 at the Okura Tokyo hotel.

# Meet your



**Sandip Agarwalla**  
Mining/solar energy  
RC Bombay, RID 3141



**K Babumon**  
Builder  
RC Sherthallai, RID 3211

## Clubs need to engage new members

If governors can guide club presidents in the right manner, we can see a dramatic change in retention figures, says Sandip Agarwalla. “We need to engage new members and meet their expectations. Clubs must hold pre-induction sessions where Rotary’s multifaceted role, global, national and district activities are explained to them.” He’s looking at a 10 per cent net membership growth. With 108 clubs having 5,700 Rotarians, “I am keen on organic growth. Some new clubs will be formed, but focus is on retention.”

Two of his biggest projects are adult literacy for 25,000 tribal women in Palghar district in partnership with TCS, already in progress, and a midday meal kitchen (₹10 crore) at Vikramgad taluk, part-funded by CSR-India grant. “Tribal women are being taught financial and digital literacy. The new kitchen will cater initially to 10,000 students of zilla parishad (ZP) schools, pregnant and lactating mothers.” Land is being acquired for construction, and ISKCON staff will run the kitchen. Around 500 paediatric heart surgeries are planned; 10 per cent will be done on African children.

Over 1,000 handwash stations (GG: ₹2 crore) were installed at 670 ZP schools. Safe drinking water units were put up at 146 of these schools; toilet blocks will either be renovated or built anew. His target for TRF giving is \$5 million. RID 3141 targets 25 GG projects this year. Agarwalla joined Rotary in 1991, inspired by his father, late PDG Santosh Kumar Agarwalla, while his grandfather was charter president of RC Dhanbad.

## Despite challenges, growth is vibrant

Covid pandemic and recurring floods are twin problems facing 158 clubs in the district comprising southern Kerala. “But the membership growth is vibrant here. I am confident of starting 20 new clubs and adding 1,000 new members, including 200 women, to take up the headcount to 6,200 in my district,” says Babumon. Also, 50 new Rotaract and 200 new Interact clubs are planned, along with induction of 1,000 Rotaractors and 4,000 Interactors.

*Project Amritam* (nectar) will conduct health and ENT camps for five lakh students of government, unaided and private schools. “We will sponsor surgeries and provide all medical services to students under this project,” he says. *Project Valsalyam* (affection) will pay the five-year tuition fees of 50 poor, but deserving MBBS students and provide free coaching to 100 students (₹60,000 each) for the civil services exams. “We will do 20 Happy Schools, worth ₹5 lakh each, through member contribution,” he says.

Two dialysis centres (five machines each) will come up at Thiruvananthapuram and Alleppey and 50 machines will be set up at government hospitals through a GG of ₹1.5 crore. *Project Parinayam* (evolution) will sponsor the marriage of 50 disabled couples, each getting ₹1 lakh. Like in the last year, 100 low-cost houses (₹6 lakh each) will be built for poor families and flood victims. Babumon aims \$1.5 million for TRF. He joined Rotary in 2000 inspired by his friend late Rtn V K Joy.

# Governors

V Muthukumaran



**Ajoy Kumar Law**

Pharma

RC Calcutta Dalhousie, RID 3291



**N Prakash Karanth**

Farming/real estate

RC Bantwal, RID 3181

## Non-functional clubs, retention are key challenges

**R**etention is a daunting task, for the district had a net membership growth of 200 despite adding over 450 new Rotarians, as 11 non-functional and six defaulting clubs (non-payment of dues) were shut down last year, says Ajoy K Law. Around 20 per cent of the 160 clubs in the district have less than 20 members. "It is a challenge to make them active." At least 12 new clubs and 450 new members will be added this year. On the Rotaract front, the goal is to form 15 new clubs and add 250 new Rotaractors. Currently, there are around 100 active Rotaract clubs with 3,000-plus Rotaractors.

One of his big-ticket projects is literacy where "the clubs will reach out to 30 lakh girls and rural women. Basic literacy will be taught at community halls and panchayat centres."

Eye camps will be held under Rotavision for those in the 40-55 age group and free spectacles will be given. VRX is providing CSR funds to screen around five lakh people, including tea garden workers of North Bengal. Free cataract surgeries will be done at the 12 Rotary eye hospitals. Law aims to collect \$3.5 million for TRF. Around 15-20 clubs have applied for GG projects. This DG joined Rotary in 1995 with the help of his friend, an ex-Rotarian, to become the charter member of RC Calcutta River Bank. In 2004, he switched to his present club as charter member.

## Public image-building key to sustain growth

**H**igh impact projects will draw public attention and will facilitate growth in membership," says Prakash Karanth. With 87 clubs having 3,500 Rotarians, he is aiming for a 10 per cent membership growth and wants to form 10 new clubs.

He wants to add 200 new Rotaractors to the current strength of 1,200. The district is planning a Rotary eye hospital (GG: \$180,000) in Puttur by Jan-Feb 2023; a blood bank (GG: ₹70-80 lakh) in Bantwal; and dialysis centre (GG: \$100,000) at the government hospital, Mysuru. Around 100 Happy Schools are being planned by various clubs, mostly funded by member contributions.

Around 400 health camps will be conducted across Dakshina Kannada, Chamarajnagar and Mysuru, reaching out to one lakh beneficiaries. "I have already given \$250,000 for TRF at *Lakshya*, the goal-setting conclave in Pune, and will contribute \$250,000 more for the year," says Karanth. He joined Rotary in 2011.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

# Our knees make us **athletes**

**Bharat and Shalan Savur**

**A**s a desert makes warriors and temples make worshippers, our knees make us athletes. Strong knees give us the confidence to advance like warriors and the humility to bend like worshippers. Many joggers are anxious to return to their active routine after being confined indoors by the

pandemic. Will we be able to run like we used to? Will our legs wobble? Yes, you will be able to run like you used to. No, your legs won't wobble. Don't let the wobble in the mind stop your start.

### **Take tips, take heart**

So, assemble your walking kit, start with slow and easy walk. As you

gather momentum, if the urge to run rises, run! Then, walk again. This is a great re-introduction. You'll be surprised how effortlessly you slip back into the old rhythm, how familiar it feels. A bit of caution: Since it's your first day, take just one round. Stop when you're on top. Your muscles retain memories of old movements, that's why it feels so familiar, so easy, but do not strain them. Give them a week to condition themselves.

Choose a knee-friendly surface — mud or grass, not concrete. You may not be able to avoid hip and side aches all together yet. Start doing crunches and planks to strengthen your core muscles, half squats for glutes, and floor rolls from left to right as well as leg raises to strengthen the back and knees. As key muscles get toned and conditioned, the aches will disappear. As you walk or run or rove, keep your shoulders squared. This posture helps avoiding aches.

Watch your food intake and lose weight if you've put on kilos. Obesity imposes a lot of pressure on the knees and heart. Avoid





breakfast before your run so that the body burns fat instead of the breakfast. And if you do need to eat, have carbs — porridge or poha — as the body burns them easily. Have protein — yoghurt, egg or few nuts — after your run. Sip water before, during and after your run as well as through the day. Heat waves and rising temperatures make hydrating even more vital.

You were 38 when you stopped running and are now 40; not to worry. Age is no hindrance if the attitude is not. As Heather Jones said, ‘Good things come to those who believe, better things come to those who are patient and the best things come to those who don’t give up.’

### **The arthritic knee**

Take my friend Deeds; she has always loved jogging on the beach, and did that till two years ago, when she was diagnosed with arthritis. When your knees hurt, even a free spirit has to curb its zeal. While she continued to dream about running, she replaced the beach with a stationary bike and a swimming pool, but a little too late. In severe pain, has been advised knee replacement. Her question is: Will I be able to jog on the beach again after this surgery?

Most people with knee replacement can resume many normal activities after about three months. Artificial knees are designed to mimic natural knees. So, they do need to be exercised to function properly. But the exercises have to be done under the watchful guidance of the doctor and physical therapist. The idea is to strengthen the muscles around the knees and maintain a bearable weight. Most medical experts recommend exercising 20–30 minutes two to three times a day. Do standing knee bends: Stand erect with crutches or walker: 1. Lift thigh and bend knee to the extent you can. Hold

5–10 seconds. 2. Straighten knee and lower leg, touch down floor with heel first. 3. Repeat as many times as advised.

Walk 30 minutes two to three times a day. It builds strength in the knees and burns calories. Swimming and stationary armchair cycling are fine too. A rough and ready timetable for recovery is: 3 months for the pain to subside. The doctor may suggest anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen, or NSAID creams. It takes a year for the swelling in the joints to disappear, and two years to heal completely.

It’s good to know these things as it helps to be prepared and plan your life over the next two years. There are a few things not to be done: Avoid: twisting and abrupt movements, jumping, high-impact exercises, putting on weight and fatty foods.

To ease the nagging pain, with the heel of your hand, press down on the muscle near the pain and hold it for several seconds. Then release. Do it several times. The pain will decrease or go away. This kind of self-help also dissipates helplessness.

A tip for those with joint issues but don’t need surgery. Sometimes, when there’s a flare-up, it is difficult to distinguish whether it’s your joints or muscles. It is important to know that flare-ups can occur in high humid conditions as during monsoons, extreme cold, and when temperatures fluctuate wildly — hot one day, cold the next. It can make the joints and muscles stiff and painful. The key difference is this: Muscle pains can flare-up anywhere in the body, arthritis flares up only in joints.

Muscle pain and stiffness can be drunk away. Water is the muscle’s best friend. Arthritis normally makes itself felt as joint stiffness in the morning and changes to a dull, continuous ache as the day progresses. Additionally, there is a gritty feeling when the joint

is moved and the area is painfully tender when touched.

Three practices bring relief to arthritic joints; fat-free food (no oil, ghee, butter. Steam, grill, broil, boil, bake or air-fry). Apply NSAID cream on the joint. A good night’s sleep always... always... always helps and even hastens the healing process. Exercise to improve function is a must. Please don’t miss a single day. Mobility in joints is crucial as it helps secrete the synovial fluid — a natural joint lubricant in the body.

### **Develop equanimity**

The best way to live with arthritis is to take the lament out of living. Emotional disturbances can trigger joint pains not only in the knees or knuckles but in the lower back as well. So be less emotional. Develop even-mindedness. Keep stress at arm’s length. Meditate daily, keep the mind so busy, so fulfilled that nothing upsets it. Teach it new tricks. Don’t let it idle, fret and fume, dredge out negative memories.

Get into creative pursuits. Write poetry, prose, a diary. Be a doodle duck. Sing. Explore your creativity, listen to inspiring talks. Creative pursuits are not just a way to pass your time today but an investment for tomorrow as well.

Get a children’s colouring book and don’t stay within the lines, make a mess; get science kits and mess around with them. Make your world a playground, a laboratory, a studio... go back to being a child. As you get younger, your joints will heal and grow younger too... and will run with you.

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

# On the racks



## In the shadow of a legend: Dilip Kumar

Author : Faisal Farooqui  
Publisher: Om International  
Pages : 186; ₹439

As an ardent Dilip Kumar fan, I was extremely excited to know that a book about the “ultimate method actor” as Satyajit Ray called the legend, was out just within a year of his death. I greedily laid my hands on *In the shadow of a legend: Dilip Kumar*

written by his long time adoring fan and spokesperson Faisal Farooqui, to get an additional insight into the man... beyond his fascinating biography/autobiography *Dilip Kumar: The Substance and the Shadow*, written by the film journalist Udaya Tara Nayan and published in 2014.

Call it sad or ironic, it is the author’s excessive admiration and awe for the man that comes in the way of the narrative being interesting or gripping. And most of the text descends to fawning admiration and mere hero worship of the man. But if as a reader you are willing to set aside these flaws, and are a real fan of that mesmerising charmer, that drop dead gorgeous pathan from Peshawar, you need to have a copy of this book in your library. For Faisal does give us some interesting and intimate anecdotes from the actor’s life, which make him come through as the endearing human being that he was... that dotting friends like Dharmendra talk about.

Read this book to find out how a great and established actor like Dilip would make time to inaugurate a random dermatologist’s clinic, attend a wedding, or any other event, just because he had promised he would do so. “This inspired trust, respect, honour and faith in his word.”

There are many gems in this book which talk about the mega star’s passion for reading all kinds of books, his love for literature and poetry, the earnest role and hard work he put into developing Jogger’s Park in Mumbai, and also his sheer joy in discovering the eternal melody ‘*Ae mere dil kahi aur chal*’ on YouTube on the author’s phone.



## Samaaj, Sarkaar, Bazaar

Author : Rohini Nilekani  
Publisher : Rohini Nilekani  
Pages : 264

Free download/Private distribution

In this book, the focus is on the ‘citizen-first’ approach when it comes to either society, government or the markets, as the author sums up her varied experiences in the civic sector over three decades. In this collection of her articles, speeches and experiences, she recalls the setting up of a public charitable trust Nagarik in 1992, for ensuring safe roads. That initiative crashed “because we were unable to sustain a momentum of citizen interest and involvement,” she says.

But over the years, her journey as a philanthropist evolved; she joined the board of the Ashoka Trust, a not-for-profit trust for the environment. She went on to co-found one of the best educational ventures for underprivileged children by funding Pratham Books “to democratise the joy of reading”. Watching children’s eyes light up when a good storybook is put into their hands gave her immense pleasure. A journalist by profession, Rohini Nilekani was now referred to as a “social entrepreneur” and in 2005, when she got “some serious money” through the sale of her Infosys shares, she put it all into Arghyam to support the water sector in India.

As she expresses deep concern on the degradation of the environment, depleting water resources and a plethora of problems faced by citizens, the author says they will have to demand good governance, by coming out of “lackadaisical attitude towards governance practices”. Only a strong *samaaj* will be able to get the desired results. A must read for those who believe in self-help through activism, struggle and belief.

Compiled by Rasheeda Bhagat  
Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



# UNICEF and Rotary partner to help Sri Lanka

Rasheeda Bhagat

As the economy of Sri Lanka collapsed leaving 21 million people without food and medicines, UNICEF and Rotary have forged a partnership to deliver life-saving medicines, clean drinking water, education material, and other critical supplies to children and families in the country. The project titled *Lifeline Sri Lanka* banks on Rotary's global network and the alumni from Sri Lanka's leading schools living overseas.

Explaining the initiative, past RI president KR Ravindran said "as 80 per cent of our medical supplies are imported, with foreign currency reserves running out because of the economic crisis, essential medicines are not available and our healthcare system is close to collapse. Lives are in peril, surgeries are being postponed and children and pregnant women are most at risk."

So Rotarians of Sri Lanka will drive donations into this fund from their friends and families and Sri Lanka's alumni. UNICEF will use the collected funds to procure essential medicines, medical equipment, water purifiers and school stationery to support vulnerable communities. The initiative was launched in Colombo where RI director AS Venkatesh participated, along with UNICEF's regional director for South Asia George Laryea-Adjei, Ravindran and



RI District 3220 DG Pubudu de Zoysa.

"UNICEF is delighted to partner with RI and this timely partnership comes at a time when families can no longer afford meals, medicine stocks are depleting rapidly, and schools do not have basic stationery. Time is of essence, and we need to urgently meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and provide timely support," said Laryea-Adjei.

Venkatesh added, "I was very happy to support the idea of this unique partnership when the RI Board met to discuss this proposal. Our Board is happy that Rotarians in Sri Lanka are playing a critical role in supporting their country in this time of distress."

Ravindran said it was significant that two "prestigious organisations" — Rotary and UNICEF — with a long-standing history of collaboration since 1988, especially in the polio eradication drive, had come together to help a "nation in distress. Such a unison mandates

**Above:** From L: UNICEF's deputy representative to Sri Lanka Emma Brigham; representative Christian Skoog; its regional director for South Asia George Laryea-Adjei; RI Director AS Venkatesh; RID 3220 DG Pubudu De Zoysa and Past RI President KR Ravindran.

absolute credibility, transparency and accountability for success and both organisations possess these attributes in abundance, giving Sri Lankans living all over the world an opportunity to donate for life-saving causes, knowing their funds are being put to the best use."

The donations will be given directly to UNICEF, which will buy medicines and supplies directly at the best prices, and ship them directly to Sri Lanka. "The government will clear the consignments for us on a priority basis and store it in their warehouses. A joint supervisory committee with a majority of members from Rotary and UNICEF will ensure proper distribution," said DG Pubudu.

To ensure transparency, details of every contribution and expenditure, along with the total of funds raised, will be displayed on the dedicated website.

Donations can be made on <https://lifelinesrilanka.rotary.unicef.org.au>. ■

# Recognising a woman's worth

Diana Schoberg

*Programs of Scale grant-winner Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria helps families by focusing on the fundamental needs of women.*



In March 1994, at the Anaheim Hilton and Towers, Emmanuel Adedolapo Lufadeju and Robert Zinser struck up a conversation. The two men were district governors-elect, and they had travelled to California — Lufadeju

from Nigeria and Zinser from Germany — for Rotary's annual International Assembly. As they spoke, the men discovered that their interests overlapped. Zinser listened intently as Lufadeju described a visit he'd recently made to a hospital

maternity ward in Nigeria. At the time, five out of 100 babies in that country died in their first 28 days. Lufadeju had learned that the high rate of newborn fatalities resulted, in part, from poor prenatal and maternal care.

Zinser spoke up. "I can help."

In 1995, Lufadeju and Zinser started a small maternal and child health-care project in Nigeria's northern state of Kaduna. Today, their interventions have spread across the country and are changing the lives of millions of families — all because of that serendipitous encounter 28 years ago. "The story of our project is a story of Rotary friendship," Lufadeju says. "I thought it was something I would do as governor and go away. But it has lasted the better part of my life."

In June, The Rotary Foundation announced that the programme, known as *Together for Healthy Families* in Nigeria, is receiving the Foundation's second \$2 million Programs of Scale grant, an award that will build on the programme's past success to accomplish even more in the future.

"This is really about changing the way societies and health systems address the fundamental needs of women," says John Townsend, chair of the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal,

and Child Health, and chair of the ethical review board at the Population Council. "And that's important because women are the drivers of family and development. If a woman dies or is seriously disabled, the entire family is affected."

Ultimately, *Together for Healthy Families* in Nigeria wants to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in the target local government areas by 25 per cent. To do so, it aims to improve maternal health and access to family planning services while strengthening health systems at the national, state and local levels. It also aims to increase the use of maternal care and family planning services by educating community members about their benefits, and to train healthcare workers to improve skills and track data on maternal and neonatal deaths so that interventions can be tailored to specific needs.

*Together for Healthy Families* in Nigeria is sponsored by Rotary District 1860 (Germany) in partnership with Districts 9110, 9125, 9141, and 9142 (Nigeria), as well as the Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health Action Group. Rotarians and Rotaractors in Nigeria coordinate project activities, oversee training, lead advocacy efforts, and engage with the government. Members in Germany lend their technical and administrative expertise

## Ready to scale up?

**P**rograms of Scale is a Foundation programme that awards grants to Rotary or Rotaract clubs or districts that have demonstrated evidence-based interventions in one of the areas of focus. The grants fund large-scale, high-impact projects that can attract partners while tapping into Rotary members' capacity and enthusiasm. The first Programs

of Scale grant was awarded in 2021 to Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, a programme led by Rotary members in Zambia and the United States.

If your club or district is interested in applying for the next Programs of Scale grant, start by considering the following questions:

- Is your project successfully achieving measurable outcomes,

and is that assessment based on strong evidence?

- Does the project solve a problem for the target population that can be sustained beyond the programme timeframe?
- Is there a clear and logical implementation plan to effectively grow the programme?
- Do the implementing partners have the ability and leadership to deliver a larger programme over several years?

- Are all stakeholders fully committed, including co-funders?

To learn more, visit [rotary.org/programsofscale](https://rotary.org/programsofscale).

### Key dates

**June 2022:** Grant competition launch

**August:** Concept notes due

**October:** Invitation to submit full proposal sent

**February 2023:** Site visit (virtual and/or in-person)

**April 2023:** Award decision

to support management, monitoring and evaluation. The group has applied for funding from Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, which has been contributing since the very first project, including \$1.36 million toward the most recent global grant project. "Right from the beginning, they were the co-funders," Zinser says. "Not once, but always. You can convince somebody once for co-funding, but if you convince them year after year, you are on the right track."

Nigeria is a prime location for maternal and child health work. The country accounts for 23 per cent of maternal deaths and 11 per cent of neonatal deaths worldwide, says

Jan-Peter Sander, the lead contact for the Programs of Scale grant. The Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health, which has targeted large projects in Nigeria, grew out of Zinser and Lufadeju's early work. "With interest because of (the grant), we will grow and grow," Zinser says.

As they plot their course forward, the programme's planners can find inspiration from their earlier progress. After their success in Kaduna, Rotary members in Nigeria and Germany partnered on a larger Foundation grant, which expanded the work to almost 100 local government areas across six states. "We were focusing on these local government areas because a majority

of births in Nigeria are delivered at home," Lufadeju says. "We got similar results: more women coming to clinics for deliveries, and more clinics built by the government to accommodate the increases in attendance."

Then, a prominent gynaecologist from Germany recommended focusing on quality assurance across the broad field of obstetrics: that is, quality of the facilities and equipment, quality of the process, and quality of the outcome. In 2008, Rotary members began collecting data on maternal deaths to help determine which interventions made the most sense — looking at not just how many mothers died but why. A scientific review, published in 2011, reported

that the project had reduced maternal mortality by 50 per cent. "That encouraged us," Lufadeju says.

Soon after, the federal government of Nigeria was working on Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response, a maternal death audit recommended by the World Health Organisation. Members of Rotary realised that their quality assurance work was similar, and they began collaborating with the government on that work. They had been working with a German statistician to translate their data into an electronic format, and in 2018 the digital platform that he developed was integrated into the Nigerian health system. The platform allows

## HPV Vaccination

A fourth programme team had been invited to submit a full proposal for the 2021–22 grant, but ultimately withdrew from the competition due to global supply chain issues. The Rotary Foundation applauds their efforts in programme design, as well as their acknowledgment that they would not be able to commit to implementation within the competition timeframe. The members from the Rotary Club of Padma Rajshahi, Bangladesh, supported by the Rotary clubs of North Columbus, Georgia, USA, and Kristiansand, Norway, as well as the Rotaract Club of Metropolitan Rajshahi, Bangladesh, continue to push forward with their programme design and remain committed to advocating for HPV vaccination when supplies are available. ■

statistics to be reported automatically, a first for the region, Lufadeju says.

In collaboration with the Nigerian government, what began as an eight-state electronic surveillance project spread nationwide. The Rotary project trained medical officers at the local, state and national levels on collecting and reviewing the data, and it supported government officials in introducing a bill, later passed by the Nigerian parliament, that required the accurate reporting of maternal deaths. “We have made maternal death in Nigeria a notifiable condition. It can no longer be hidden. It is now in the public,” Lufadeju says. “The government can use this information to employ more staff, do their budget, concentrate on areas of need, and make sure their national planning includes aspects of maternal health.”

*The Together for Healthy Families* in Nigeria program of scale will take the lessons learned from the previous phases and perfect the system in three Nigerian states and the federal capital territory.

“We want a good model that we can replicate in other states in the country, and in other parts

of Africa,” Lufadeju says. The collaboration is key to the project’s sustainability. “From the start, there was this connection with the government because we were thinking about sustainability and future funding,” he says. “If you want to do a project in Africa, if you do it without the government, traditional rulers, or political leaders, when you finish, the project dies.”

The programme builds on the comprehensive work that Rotary has done in eradicating polio in Nigeria, which “developed a sense of trust and a sense of scale,” Townsend says. “You’ve got to think about polio in a national, regional and global perspective, and certainly maternal health relates to that. This is something that requires a big scale, and Rotary in Nigeria is particularly well-placed.

There are clubs all over the country, its members are influential, and there are increasing numbers of women in leadership. And they are committed to doing things that really make a difference for society.”

### **Tsehai Loves Learning (Finalist)**

**Location:** Ethiopia  
**Areas of focus:** Basic education and literacy, peacebuilding and conflict prevention

**Proposal:** *Tsehai Loves Learning* is a popular national TV show produced by Whiz Kids Workshop that aims to improve school readiness with help from a six-year-old female giraffe sock puppet named Tsehai. The *Tsehai Loves Learning* curriculum has been successfully implemented in 40 public schools in Addis Ababa



and has already demonstrated improved learning and social-emotional outcomes in students. This project would expand the curriculum to other parts of the country by creating and distributing materials, training and motivating teachers, and developing a pilot peace education programme to understand its effectiveness and readiness for future scaling.

**Judges say:** Rotary’s potential to shift the community mindset around early childhood education in Ethiopia is strong, and Rotary members and Whiz Kids Workshop see great potential to scale to other countries.

**Rotary role:** The programme is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa-West, as well as seven other Rotary and Rotaract clubs in Ethiopia. Rotary members would serve as “literacy champions” by reading in schools as volunteers and distributing materials. Rotary members would also serve in technical advisory and advocacy roles with government stakeholders to ensure full adoption and sustainability.

### Primary partners

Ethiopia’s federal ministry of education, regional bureaus of education, and Whiz Kids Workshop, an Ethiopian social enterprise that focuses on pre-primary

educational media and play-based learning. It was co-founded by Bruktawit “Brukty” Tigabu, a member of the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa-West.

### Expected outcome

Increase school readiness and learning outcomes by 80 per cent to 90 per cent for more than 88,000 students in public schools in 11 cities.

**Sustainability tip:** The curriculum and characters are locally developed and aligned with the national early childhood development and education policy. Community engagement is core to programme’s success.

### Dementia care (Finalist)

**Location:** Italy

**Areas of focus:** Disease prevention and treatment

**Proposal:** The programme aims to improve the quality of life of elderly people with cognitive disorders by creating a new clinical path with quality public and voluntary services and by reducing the social stigma of dementia.

**Judges say:** The programme creates a new dimension of People of Action by supporting vulnerable populations in a country with a rapidly aging population. While the main community members being helped are people living with dementia,



this programme supports family members, particularly women, who are in the “sandwich” phase of caregiving for both their children and parents.

**Rotary role:** Members of the Rotary Club of Cesena, in partnership with members of the Rotaract Club of Cesena, the Rotary Club of Cesena-Valle del Savio, and the Rotary Club of Valle del Rubicone, would advocate on behalf of Alzheimer’s patients and work with programme partners on quality planning and supportive systems. The programme sponsors are already mobilising additional investments in dementia care from other organisations to prepare for future expansion.

**Primary partners:** The regional health authority

of Romagna (AUSL della Romagna) and the University of Bologna.

### Expected outcome

Increase new diagnoses of dementia by 10 per cent and diagnosed patients participating in rehabilitation services by 80 per cent. Reduce emergency room admissions of patients with dementia in crisis situations by at least 70 per cent.

**Sustainability tip:** By partnering with the regional health authority, the programme would become the strategic plan of the regional government and training would be included in certification and professional education requirements.

Illustrations by  
Gwen Keraval

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# Time for toy libraries

Preeti Mehra

*Play materials for children need to be carefully chosen to ensure they are safe and eco-friendly.*



for a phase out in toys and replacing them with safer alternatives.”

Even if a plastic toy is safe, that is, it is non-toxic, the other big ethical question is whether you should be encouraging the use of a material that is recognised universally as being intrinsically environment unfriendly. And where do the dolls and building bricks go when your child outgrows them? They inevitably end up in the garbage dump and finally in landfills.

But if you say no to plastic toys, are there any alternatives? Plenty, if you, as a parent, decide to look around or even make some yourselves. In fact, rural India itself has some interesting, eco-friendly alternatives that are amazing but sometimes need refining. Take the wooden top that spins on its axis, or the go-cart fashioned out of one of the most sustainable materials — bamboo. At the Nature Bazaar in Delhi, you can often find amazing alternative toys — rattles made of reed, filled with natural seeds that make an interesting sound. Or rag dolls of every size and colour entirely created from cloth scraps and woollen remnants, and fascinating stuffed animals and birds. These are all safe and washable. I remember an innovative sustainable ‘jungle safari’ that I bought for a child. It came in a cloth bag along with trees, different animals, a water body, rocks, all made with cotton and wool. Such toys can inspire children to let loose their

**G**o to any toy store and you can find the dominant presence of plastic in various hues and shapes. From dolls to building blocks, cricket bats for tiny tots to portable indoor slides, teething rings to bath toys, it is plastic all the way. It is almost as if a world without plastic would be one without toys.

Aggressive salespersons will assure you that the toys are made from a safe and non-toxic grade of plastic. But one has to take the sales pitch with a pinch of salt. In any case, most plastic toys are not labelled with

the chemicals they contain, and it is difficult to ascertain whether a colourful toy is safe or will leach harmful chemicals, should an infant or child put it in his/her mouth.

A 2021 report by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) found 25 per cent of children’s plastic toys containing harmful chemicals. The study noted that of the 419 chemicals found in hard, soft and foam plastic materials used in toys, 126 were potentially harmful to children’s health.

These included 31 plasticisers, 18 flame retardants and eight fragrances.

The study recommended “prioritising these substances







imagination and pick up the art of storytelling.

So, next time you wish to buy your child a gift, here are a few suggestions. It would be better to go in for a wooden cart or wooden blocks, cardboard jigsaw puzzles, rubber balls, or even wooden chessboards or board games.

Today, even some manufacturers are vowing to design safe and environment-friendly toys. For instance, Lego has promised hundred per cent sustainability for its bricks by 2030. Till then, if you do have these or other building blocks lying around, it would be good to keep them safely and pass them on to another child if yours has outgrown them. This goes for other toys too. If every residential area built its own children's toy library with donations, a much greener world would definitely await our children and us.

Unfortunately, in India we do not have stringent guidelines for children's toys, unlike some other countries. Toy-related injuries are also common.

Here are some recommendations:

- \* Toys made of fabric should be labelled as flame resistant or flame retardant.
- \* Stuffed toys should be washable.
- \* Painted toys must use lead-free paint.
- \* Art materials like paint and crayons should be non-toxic.

Parents must supervise playtime for very young children and make sure that a toy isn't too loud for the child. It has been found that the noise of some rattles, squeak toys and musical or electronic toys can be too loud and can damage hearing. It is important to also check toys regularly to see that they are in good shape as broken ones could have sharp edges and wooden ones could have splinters. These could hurt children.

So how do you shop for sustainable toys? There are some options that come up when you Google non-toxic Indian toy brands. Look for those that emphasise sustainability and safety. Though it is unfortunate that several companies do not list the

dos and don'ts or the material they have used for manufacturing the toy.

However, the best thing to do when exploring playthings for children is to do extensive research, opt for the greenest solutions, talk to other parents and not be coerced into an unsafe buy. As children are precious and vulnerable, they need only the best that you can give. Remember, an important thumb rule that will always serve you well while making a purchase — when in doubt about a toy, cut it out from your shopping list.

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

Designed by N Krishnamurthy





Wordsworld

# Goan Rhapsody



Sandhya Rao

For all its massive size, the most recently named winner of the International Booker Prize is perfectly offset by its light-weight, quirky writing.

**K**onkani writer Damodar Mauzo's stories gently lead the reader deep into a world of real experiences — multilingual, multicultural, multireligious — laced with irony.

If you are looking for a quick read that's easy yet mindful, pick up *The Wait and Other Stories* by Damodar Mauzo, translated from Konkani by Xavier Cota. Although the book had been bought a while ago, I studiously avoided reading reviews of it until I had finished reading it myself. I had, many years ago on a week-long visit to Goa, been introduced to Mauzo through his Sahitya Akademi Award-winning

novel, *Karmelin*. Hence the excitement of self-discovery.

The path-breaking *Karmelin*, which I read in English translation by Vidya Pai, recounts the story of a woman who takes up a maid's position with a rich family in the Gulf in order to escape from her tribulations at home and for possible financial security. Like a lot of translations, this one too was not 'smooth' reading in the way, for instance, *Tomb of Sand* (see last month's Wordsworld) is. But the storytelling is gripping and the story a glorious examination of truth. When I read *The Wait*, there was an epiphany of sorts regarding translations. It felt like walking on a pebbly beach where the sound of water leaving the shore produces a tinkling sound. The comparison is, of course, with a sandy beach where the sound that dominates is the soft or loud whoosh of the waves.

To clarify: *Tomb of Sand* has been translated brilliantly; you never feel the burden of translation, it reads like an original. Here and there, however, some words and phrases have been used that an Indian speaker/writer of English would almost never use. Since a friend has borrowed my copy of the book, I cannot substantiate this with an example. You may have read or heard the phrase 'in back' in an 'English' book or in conversation with an American. Indians would probably say 'in the back'. Or, to give you a more common example: 'Can I have the check please' as against 'Can I have the bill please'. That is to say, translations, even the truest ones, invariably reflect the language of the

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*The Wait* is a collection of 14 short stories, each quite different from the other, reflecting the pluralistic character of Goan/Indian society.

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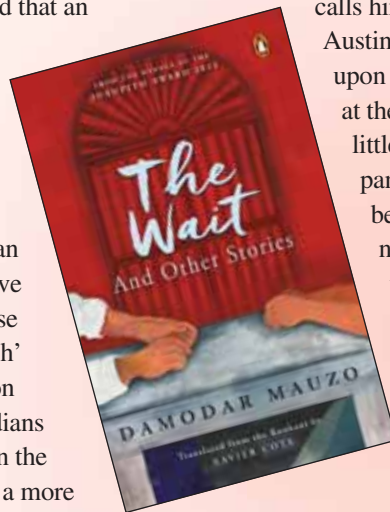
translator. Hence the 'English-ness' of *Tomb of Sand* and the 'Konkani-ness' of *Karmelin* and *The Wait*. I will not try to explain further; I leave it to you to observe keenly the next time you read a translated work.

*The Wait* is a collection of 14 short stories, each quite different from the other, reflecting the pluralistic character of Goan/Indian society. In it you will meet all kinds of characters in all kinds of situations. You catch a glimpse of what lies beneath the surface and begin to understand the underlying social criticism in a gentle narrative.

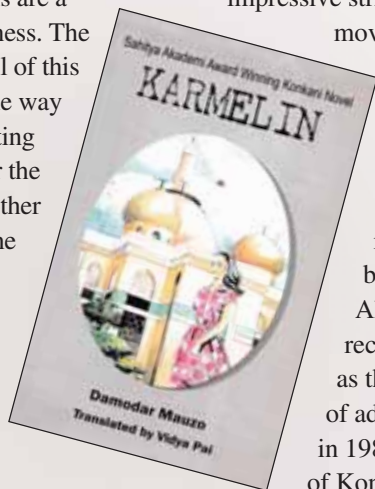
There's a taxi driver who calls himself Yasin, Austin, Yatin, depending upon who he is driving at the time. There's a little girl who suffers pangs of conscience because she shared a nonvegetarian burger with her vegetarian friend. There's a 'gentleman' thief, and a man hung up on external beauty who cannot bear the

deterioration of those attributes.

We see attachment, cowardice, one-sided love, power games, daydreams and night dreams... reading these stories you understand



that Mauzo is a keen observer of life and emotions, and we all know that life and emotions are a pretty complex business. The stories touch upon all of this in a seemingly simple way and leave you reflecting upon them long after the story has ended. In other words, the story in the book has ended, but the story in the life described continues. The references to current events only strengthen this notion.



So, who is Damodar Mauzo? He is the latest winner, the 57<sup>th</sup>, of India's oldest and highest literary honour, the Jnanpith Award, for 'outstanding contribution towards literature', and only the second Konkani writer after Ravindra Kelekar to earn it. He lives in Majorda village, Goa, and has been writing for about 50 years. He says, 'I think I am a writer because I am a good reader.' Thanks to observations made by Mauzo in an interview with Arti Das published in *Firstpost* recently, I came to know that the Konkani script is mired in controversy. Valerian Rodriguez, in an August 2013 article in *EPW*, writes, 'Konkani is a unique language. It is probably the only language in India which is written in five scripts — Roman, Nagari, Kannada, Persian-Arabic and Malayalam — with credible oral and written literature in each of them.' In this connection, Mauzo says, 'When we are speaking about the script, it usually gets associated with identity and then it gets political. The script is not identity, language is.'

Rodriguez points out that 'For many Konkani lovers emotionally

attached to the language, the script controversy endangers the impressive strides the language movement has made in the last fifty years, i.e., a separate political identity for Goa which was achieved in 1967; the recognition of Konkani by the Central Sahitya Akademi in 1975; the recognition of Konkani as the official language of administration for Goa in 1987; and the inclusion of Konkani in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, which lists the major national languages, in 1992.' Those interested in this issue, do please look up the article.

In the *Firstpost* interview, Mauzo says of his believable delineations of female characters, 'I believe that within me there are my father and my mother. Also, I was more attached to my mother while growing up. Probably that's why I may be in a better position to understand their situation.' And about creativity and the growing threat to freedom of expression, he says, 'I feel now that the responsibility of the writer is increased. Literature is also a reflection of the times we live in. A writer must ask questions, and raise issues, and for that, there is no need to be aggressive about it. One can do it subtly and more responsibly. I hope that in times to come the people who are opposing such things will realise that was nothing wrong with it.'



Damodar Mauzo

This little extract from 'Burger' reveals much of Mauzo's genius:

'...Daddy returned home for lunch, it being a half-day. Mummy immediately told him, "Ever since she gave beef to her Hindu friend, Irene has been moping."

'Daddy laughed. "Never mind, Irene. Since you have defiled her, now we'll have to find her a nice Catholic boy and marry her off!"

'Irene could not fathom whether her father was serious or just pulling her leg. She thought of asking him directly but got up instead and silently went inside.

'So she had defiled Sharmila. But what she actually done? The word "defile" has a stink to it. To say that she had defiled her meant that she had spoiled her. Daddy said we had to find a Catholic groom and marry her off. As if we can do this! Marriage has to

be a question of one's own choice. Daddy himself says that the days of parents searching for partners for their girls are over. And in books, too, we read the same thing. Poor Sharmila! Irene hoped nothing bad

would happen to her.'

The world of *The Wait* is multicultural, multireligious, multilingual. It is filled with events and flavoured with a gamut of emotions. It's a real world of sounds, smells, tastes and images. I savoured every one of the stories with delight. I invite you to do the same. You will not be disappointed.

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

## RC Chidambaram Central — RID 2981



Around 200 patients benefitted at a cardiac screening camp held jointly with the Chettinad Super Specialty Hospital and Palani Babu Jewellers.

## RC Delhi Regalia — RID 3011



DG Ashok Kantoor inaugurated a health camp in which tests for TB, liver, blood sugar, thyroid, bone density, ECG, BP, and screening for oral, cervical cancer were done for 240 patients.

## RC Rasipuram Royal — RID 2982



Assistant Governor K Ravi donated a milch cow costing ₹22,000 to a farmer's family to help them earn a sustainable income.

## RC Nasik Grapecity — RID 3030



A skill centre has been established, in association with sewing machine manufacturer Singer, at the Jeshta Nagrik Mitra Mandal in Nashik.

## RC Pudukkottai — RID 3000



Groceries were donated to Renaissance, a special home, at Annavasal and Kalamavur villages. The club provided educational assistance to eight students.

## RC Chandigarh — RID 3080



Rations were donated to 30 HIV/AIDs patients at Haripur village, Panchkula, and a medical check-up was done on villagers. Medicines were distributed to them.

## RC Nabha Greater — RID 3090



School uniforms worth ₹38,000 were distributed to students of Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha Government Girls School.

## RC Pune Shivajinagar — RID 3131



Digital skills are imparted to 200 students through an e-platform in association with Lighthouse, an NGO, and funded by eZest Technologies.

## RC Moradabad North — RID 3100



Over 300 amputees were fitted with artificial upper limbs at an LN-4 camp, held with the support of RC Poona Downtown.

## RC Karad — RID 3132



A hepatitis awareness rally was conducted jointly with the Rural Hospital, Undale, to sensitise the public.

## RC Gorakhpur Midtown — RID 3120



Sixty-five eye camps were done benefiting 16,000 patients last year. Around 2,000 cataract surgeries were done and an ambulance was also given to the Raj Eye Care Society.

## RC Deonar — RID 3141



New clothes were distributed to 200 children at a slum colony in Mankhurd area in a joint project with Firstcry, an online store.

## RC Ulhasnagar — RID 3142



The club members, along with Rotaractors, tied rakhis on the wrists of police personnel at the Central Police Station to mark Raksha Bandhan.

## RC Kota City — RID 3182



Rotarians and Anns cultivated a half-acre barren field and will donate the rice to an orphanage and old age homes.

## RC Hubli East — RID 3170



Wheelchairs were distributed to those from the economically-weaker sections of society to enhance their mobility.

## RC Cochin Beachside — RID 3201



Over 55 kits consisting of essential supplies were gifted to poor families on the death anniversary of Rtn Rajagopal, a former AG.

## RC Chamarajanagar — RID 3181



Around 2,630 patients were screened and IOL surgeries done on 1,667 people at the ongoing eye camp being held on the first Sunday of every month at the Rotary Hall.

## RC Mettupalayam Prime — RID 3203



Over 120 patients were screened for breast cancer. Also, 100 diabetic foot patients were examined and advised with the support of Ganga Hospital.

## RC Odayanchal — RID 3204



Saplings were distributed to students at a government school in Attenganam. Financial assistance was given to a patient in Kasaragod for treatment at the Father Muller Hospital.

## RC Imphal — RID 3240



Around 130 units of blood was collected at a camp at the Manipur University. The project was done in association with the university's NSS cell, RIMS, Imphal, and 16<sup>th</sup> Assam Rifles.

## RC Alleppey Greater — RID 3211



Medicines were distributed to flood-hit people by a team led by club president Col Vijayakumar and consisting of AG Gireesan and secretary Sivi Vidhyadharan.

## RC Bilaspur Midtown — D 3261



Three computer sets and study material worth ₹1.75 lakh were donated to the Saraswati Vidya Mandir School, Ratanpur, in the presence of IPDG Sunil Phatak.

## RC Virudhunagar Elite — RID 3212



Sewing machines, chairs were donated to a women's hostel during the installation of new club president KB Kamalasekaran and his team.

## RI District 3262



DG Pravudutta Subudhi signed an MoU with the Apollo Hospitals to provide discount cards to Rotarians for a complete health check-up.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

*The* **ROTARY ACTION PLAN**

# INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO ADAPT

A CONVERSATION WITH  
NICKI SCOTT

"We can achieve harmony and amplify the sound if we all play the same tune instead of a staccato selection of solos."





## Learn what your club can do at [rotary.org/actionplan](https://rotary.org/actionplan)

### Q. Why is increasing our ability to adapt one of the priorities of the Action Plan?

**NICKI:** Everyone, and every organization, is looking to make a greater societal impact. It's an enormous opportunity for Rotary to be a thought leader and a sought-after partner. But if we want to lead in a time of accelerating change, we need to become — and to be seen as — more agile and relevant.

### Q. What are the challenges?

**NICKI:** As an organization, we're very fragmented and hierarchical. We have rules, officers, titles, and committees instead of teams. The more administrative layers you have, the more removed you are from the actual work.

We need to look at leadership as something anyone at any age can own. You don't need 40 years of experience before you can significantly contribute. Remember, Paul Harris was only 36 when he started Rotary.

### Q. Where are you seeing opportunities?

**NICKI:** Before the pandemic, a large percentage of Rotary members didn't really think or see beyond their club. They didn't have a sense of themselves as a global network of change-makers. During the pandemic, people were joining virtual meetings in different districts and countries and seeing for the first time all the things Rotary was doing.

We're capitalizing on this momentum. I worked with a team in Great Britain and Ireland that started a Rotary global hub, an online platform that connects people to clubs but also gives them the opportunity to participate based on causes rather than location. And their involvement can be episodic rather than tied to a weekly meeting at a specific time. It is proving very successful in both attracting new and retaining existing Rotarians.

**MEET NICKI SCOTT.** A change-management consultant and a member of the Rotary Club of The North Cotswolds, England, Scott helped develop our Action Plan as part of Rotary's Strategic Planning Committee. She is the 2022-23 vice president of Rotary International.



I also see Rotary doing more to build on the work of others, to share leadership. In Great Britain and Ireland, we host Volunteer Expo, an event where all kinds of people and organizations can come together and collaborate. We don't have to reinvent the wheel every time.

### Q. What structural changes will increase Rotary's ability to adapt?

**NICKI:** More regional autonomy is key. What might work for one region might not be a cultural fit for another.

We can be much more regionally focused without losing the ideals of a global organization, or losing the power of a global brand. We can achieve harmony and amplify the sound if we all play the same tune instead of a staccato selection of solos.

### Q. What makes you most optimistic?

**NICKI:** Rotary has something powerful to offer. There are a lot of well-meaning organizations out there, but good intentions don't always translate to results. Rotary has the infrastructure and the integrity that people are looking for, and the connections in communities to know what is really needed. We know how to get the job done. We are people of action.



# Make sense of economists' research... if you can!



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

Since I was 16 years old I have been a student of, and involved in, economics and my involvement with the subject is now 55 years old. My first job after my MA was as the Economics Editor in a large British publishing house. After a few years I got bored with publishing and became a journalist specialising in economics. Economists are usually seen as depressed people who always have a gloomy outlook on life. Oscar Wilde even said that while they knew the price of everything, they knew the value of none. But, actually, they do have a sense of humour. But, sadly, they don't acknowledge it. They prefer, instead, to be funny in a peculiar sort of way. To see why I say this, let me summarise some very strange research they have done on, of all things, drinking, which leads me to believe that the only thing funnier than an inebriated economist is a sober one. In fact, if you ask me, these economists seem to be taking revenge on alcohol. American economists, with their publish-and-perish approach to intellect, have taken the lead.

So one research finding says "consumers drink less ethanol (and have fewer alcohol-related problems) when alcohol-beverage prices are increased." Wow! Who'd have guessed.

Another concludes not just that "blacks (in the US) participate in alcohol less than whites, and their participation cannot be explained with the included variables as well as it can for whites", but also that "price and advertising effects are generally larger for

females." This probably means two things. What they are I leave to you to figure out.

I really liked the third one. It is about binge drinking by kids and the impact on their chances of finding a job a decade later. The good news here is for females. For them, "adolescent drinking and adult wages are unrelated, and negative employment effects disappear once academic achievement is held constant." But for males it's very bad news: "negative employment effects and, more strikingly, positive wage effects persist." The economists think that "binge drinking conveys unobserved social skills that are rewarded by employers." Really?

A fourth one is truly fantastic. It explores the possibility "that a reduction in per capita drinking will result in some people drinking 'too little' and dying sooner than they otherwise would." So the authors did the usual

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Consumers drink less ethanol (and have fewer alcohol-related problems) when alcohol-beverage prices are increased.

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things with data and conclude that "the long-term mortality effect of a one per cent reduction in drinking is essentially nil." Please clap, everyone.

The fifth says that "results from the preferred specifications indicate that higher beer taxes lead to a lower incidence of assault, but not rape or robbery." The finance ministry should note.

This is not all. A sixth looks at the "relationship between alcohol policies (for instance, beer taxes and statutes pertaining to alcohol sales and drunken driving) and rates of gonorrhoea and AIDS among teenagers and young adults." The conclusion: higher beer taxes lead to lower rates of gonorrhoea for males!

The seventh examines the link between drinking and domestic violence, and concludes that "increasing the tax on beer can be an effective policy tool in reducing violence."

Paper number eight investigates the effect on inebriation on sexual activity. The authors say that, among teenagers and young adults, alcohol use appears to have no causal influence in determining whether or not they have sex. "However, alcohol use may lower contraception use among sexually active."

I explained all this to my son when he said he wanted to become an economist. Like a good son he ignored me. But going by where he lives now, he actually managed to become quite a good one probably because he has a really good sense of humour and sees how funny what he does really is. ■



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