

# Rotary News

INDIA

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CREATE HOPE  
in the WORLD



# Yadhumanaval

A Project by Rotary Club of Virudhunagar Dist-3212



*Jayanthasri Balakrishnan*

"SHE PAVES A PATH FOR GIRL CHILDREN TO BECOME STRONGER VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES THROUGH HER MESMERIZING TALK."

**Stronger  
Women build  
Stronger  
Nations.**

-Zainab Salbi

**IDHAYAM**  
PROMISE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS



## She is Everything

As the main speaker of this program,

Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan has touched the lives of more than 76,000 young minds through 55 sessions.

She is determined to reach out and inspire many others to be the stronger versions of themselves, and to help all young girls realise their potential and understand that they can do anything they put their mind to.

Girl students of various institutions are at the heart of the Yadhumanaval program - which aims to empower them across all areas.

Notably, Project Yadhumanaval was featured as a cover story in the renowned Rotary News (April, 2023 edition)

As on  
June, 2023  
No. of Occurrences  
**55**  
No. of Beneficiaries  
**76350**

Do you wish to organize Yadhumanaval for the girl students of a school in your town/city/district?

We are waiting to partner with you.

**Get in touch**  
Yadhumanaval Project Chairman  
**Vijayakumari D. Rtn DVK**  
**94887 66388**

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fundamental right



## Excellent articles; joyful reading

Having been in Rotary for 35 years, I have to say that since you have taken over as editor, the pleasure of reading *Rotary News* has doubled. There has been an unexpected improvement in the quality of the magazine. I am from a Hindi-speaking region and I enjoy reading *Rotary Samachar* more. Earlier the selection of some words in Hindi was not good but these days there has been a lot of improvement in the Hindi version. Congratulations to you and your team.

The magazine has good coverage of Rotary as well as inspirational, human interest articles. We get motivated and learn a lot reading the good service work done by other clubs thanks to your coverage.

*Dr Sushil Vishal Poddar*  
RC Patna City Samrat — D 3250

I was happy to see the innocent face of a village girl during the opening of a library in her school as the cover photo of the August issue.

RI President Gordon McNally turns the spotlight on mental health. It is great news that seven women were sworn in as district governors in our zones. In her message, the editor has nicely explained the reasons for the recent flood in parts of India and ways to overcome such devastating perils in the future.

TRF trustee chair Barry Rassin describes well the importance of TRF and endowments. It was great to read that a Bengaluru club had renovated 214 anganwadis at a cost of ₹4 crore. Other articles like *A memorable day in Evanston, Rotary sets up a library*



*in a tribal school, Giving hope through Jaipur limbs, Winning a mini marathon, A bamboo bus stop in Thane, Engage with youth and Gifting joy of reading* are all worth reading.

The write-up about playback singer P Susheela, *the nightingale of the south*, by SR Madhu is excellent. *Club Hop* photos are colourful. On the whole, the August edition is superb.

*Philip Mulappone MT*  
RC Trivandrum Suburban — D 3211

Allow me to congratulate the editorial team for the excellent articles in the August issue. The journal is full of fantastic, informative articles and the advertisement about the opportunity available for higher and professional education in different fields is also interesting to read. More such information in future issues will help young students. Thank you for the excellent teamwork.

*Hiten Popat, RC Calcutta Spectrum — D 3291*

I am really happy with the diverse coverage you give in the magazine. I am one of those Rotarians who waits for your monthly edition to view/know the different aspects of Rotary which you cover and the signature projects of our clubs. Kudos to you and your team.

But last month I missed the details about membership.

*Dr Ravikiran, RC Kharghar*  
Midtown — D 3131

## Great projects in D 3212

Responding to the suggestions of parents and heads of institutions, IPDG VR Muthu, RID 3212, initiated *Project Punch*. We, members of RC Tiruchirapalli (RID 3000) feel proud that he was our past president and a reputed trainer of leaders. We learnt that after her training, Deepa was able to address a large gathering with confidence. Other projects such

as *Yadhumanaval* have benefitted thousands of youth, *Kalam*, a career-guidance programme, and *Vigyan Ratham*, a science project, will all mould the younger generation into responsible adolescents. Kudos to IPDG Muthu.

Naresh Kumar Jalan, a member of RC Calcutta Mahanagar, RID 3291, has proved beyond doubt that “if there is a will there is a way” and “practice makes perfect”. He

participated in the Tata Structura Marathon after undergoing a major heart surgery, and made a miraculous comeback. Thanks to PRIP Shekhar Mehta for highlighting his feat.

*VRT Dorairaja*  
RC Tiruchirapalli — D 3000

## A new beginning

The editor's note, “A toast to new beginnings” (July issue) has welcomed the new Rotary year

with a splendid write-up. As they say, morning shows the day. Rotarians began the Rotary new year with effective action to “Create hope in the world.” RI President McNally has given this theme to encourage us to serve the community. All the articles are informative and interesting including *We don’t want to build a park, but an entire forest*. The project articles inspired me.

Congrats to the editor for publishing wonderful articles and bringing out a beautiful magazine month after month.

*NSS Harigopal  
RC Berhampur — D 3262*

The editor’s note, *A toast to new beginnings*, was excellent and her article, *We don’t want to build a park, but an entire forest*, was superb.

Jaishree’s article *Eco-friendly stoves for a Maharashtrian village* was nice.

*Daniel Chittilappilly  
RC Kaloor — D 3201*

### Focus on mental health issues

RI President McNally’s July message is motivating as he focused on mental health projects to protect the well-being of Rotarians and the public. Building peace, creating a sense of belonging from club meetings to service activities, empowerment of women and girls are the other thrust areas of McNally. He rightly believes that by taking up diverse projects, Rotary will create hope in the world.

Rotary clubs must carry out different kinds of service projects. A new Rotary year has just begun

and for the club leaders, there are as many new things to be done and when they take up this work, they will inspire all their club members. As pointed out by editor Rasheeda Bhagat in her note, let our new club leaders make the full use of every moment of their leadership and bring glory to Rotary.

*R Srinivasan  
RC Bangalore  
JP Nagar — D 3191*

### Change champions

RIPE Stephanie Urchick’s statement that “Rotarians are change champions” highlights the fact that we are dedicated to creating a better world. By working together, Rotarians can amplify their impact and achieve meaningful results. Rotary offers a platform for Rotarians to collaborate and

leverage their collective efforts for maximum impact.

Through their participation in Rotary clubs, we work together to address various social issues, such as poverty, hunger, disease, literacy and environmental sustainability. Rotarians utilise their skills, expertise and resources to initiate projects and programmes that have a lasting impact on the lives of individuals and communities.

*Anil Jain, RC Ahmedgarh — D 3090*

### Interesting reading

Thank you for sharing the quarterly issue of *Rotaract News*. I found the July issue of the e-magazine interesting and note that Rotaractors are emulating Rotarians.

*Anil Latey  
RC Poona Downtown — D 3131*

**On the cover:** Students, along with Headmistress Radha Krishnaraj, at the Panchayat Union Middle School in Bettati village, Nilgiris district, where RC Nilgiris has done ₹51 lakh worth service projects.

**Picture by:** Rasheeda Bhagat

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## Peace in practice

**T**he International Day of Peace takes place on September 21. The United Nations General Assembly declared this a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace through observing 24 hours of non-violence and ceasefire.

It is not enough, as people of action, to simply avoid war. If we are to *Create Hope in the World*, we must aggressively wage peace.

Where can we begin? There are countless armed conflicts around the world, and the global population of displaced people is higher than ever. The opportunities are nearly limitless, but the cycles of violence and hardship seem endless.

My advice is to start small but think big. I look to Rotary members in Pakistan and India for inspiration.

In March 2020, about 50 Rotary members from Pakistan met with around 50 Rotary members from India at Kartarpur Sahib, a shrine in Pakistan. The sanctuary honours Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, a religion practised in both countries. Tensions between the two countries barred many religious pilgrims from India from visiting the shrine. That is, until Pakistan opened a visa-free pathway to them in 2019.

Earlier this year, Rotary members from opposite sides of the border again met at the shrine, this time with about twice as many participants.

Any work toward building peace needs to be brave and bold. What these Rotary members have done is just that. The Pakistani government took an important step toward peace when it admitted Indian pilgrims

to the Kartarpur Sahib shrine, but Pakistani Rotary members took the next step when they welcomed Rotary members from India as friends and family. That is Positive Peace at work.

These peacebuilders did not stop there. Club representatives at this year's meeting signed twin club agreements to recognise their long-term commitment to continue to learn from each other and to work together on more peacebuilding efforts, and they have held joint meetings via video chat.

The importance of communicating with and learning from another culture cannot be overstated, and Rotary is making it even easier to do so. One way of engaging in cross-cultural dialogue and building relationships across borders is through virtual international exchanges that build on our current programmes and make them more accessible.

A virtual exchange uses online platforms to connect people from different parts of the world so that they can share their traditions, priorities, values, and more. Virtual exchanges can serve as a window to another part of the world through activities such as cooking class, learning a new language, or even designing service projects with a global impact.

These online chats have the potential to inspire new connections and more respect between societies. Taking that knowledge and using it to better the lives of our fellow human beings is the next step.

Let's see where it takes us.

**Gordon McNally**  
President, Rotary International



## I have a dream...

**T**his time, let's look at dreams. September is the Basic Education and Literacy month in Rotary. But I did not go to the cool environs of Coonoor to visit the beautiful panchayat union middle school, transformed by the Rotarians of RC Nilgiris into a magical haven of learning, because the literacy month was coming. While taking a break from Chennai's brutal summer, I decided to check out the project sitting in our inbox. About a school in Bettati, Nilgiris district, being virtually adopted by this club. A bunch of Rotarians explained the school's transformation from a pathetic, crumbling building with a fungus-ridden kitchen and stinking toilets, to the cheerful, brightly painted building that I saw.

Earlier, because of several dysfunctional classrooms, students of three classes were receiving education from a single teacher, seated in the same room, with a different row marking the class! A non-functioning smart board, a few computers in a state of disrepair — remember we are talking about Tamil Nadu, so these learning tools are given free to government schools, unlike several states in the North. The dedication of a bunch of Rotarians was clearly palpable; I was told that the project leader Air Commodore Sanjay Khanna (who has left Rotary temporarily for personal reasons) “virtually got admitted to the school” during the three months the school was overhauled, ending up with a spanking new computer room with new and repaired computers, a science lab and a colourful library.

The improved facilities have enthused the children; one girl wants to become an army doctor — the region has the Wellington Cantonment; the second, who recently got a second place in Spell Bee, an IAS officer; and a boy wants to become a civil engineer. The parents and students asked for an English teacher, the Rotarians have employed one and will pay her salary for two years. The students are now seriously engaged in cracking the magic world of computers, conquering spoken English, and visiting so many exotic lands through the world of books. Instead of sitting on the cold floor in a hill area for their noon meal, they now use tables and chairs in the covered dining area, and of course colourful desks and benches in their newly done up classrooms. The Rotarians have given them not only dignity, but much more than that... dreams and aspirations.

While their government is busy fighting the imposition of Hindi, they want to learn Hindi. Who knows... the bright-eyed Likisha may tomorrow become an IAS officer and get posted as the deputy magistrate in a little town in UP. There a working knowledge of Hindi will surely come in handy! And Yalini, the army doctor, could be posted anywhere in India, so being multilingual will be an advantage. In a country where such huge disparities exist, giving an underprivileged child a dream and the opportunity to realise that dream, is surely god's work on earth.

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

**Rasheeda Bhagat**

### A dazzling venue



**T**he triple-skyscraper complex that will host part of the 2024 Rotary International Convention in Singapore is sure to rank as one of the coolest sites yet for the global gathering.

To start, that's how it looks (see pic). Marina Bay Sands has a roof deck resembling a long boat that connects the trio of 57-storey hotel towers and includes an infinity pool. Attending the House of Friendship and breakout sessions in the convention centre below puts you in the heart of a dining, luxury shopping and entertainment megaplex.

Exploring the top attractions is a vacation in itself—one that you can fit conveniently around your convention schedule. Buy a ticket to SkyPark on the roof deck to look over the skyline and the bay. The Shoppes mall features big-name brands, even including kids clothing stores from Dior, Versace, and more.

Book a meal to remember at one of several restaurants by celebrity chefs. Two are recognised with Michelin stars: Cut steakhouse by Wolfgang Puck (one star) and Tetsuya Wakuda's Waku Ghin (two stars), which offers Japanese fine dining with French and Italian touches.

Take a boat ride on an indoor canal fed with rainwater collected in a giant, transparent bowl outside. A waterfall through a hole in the bowl dumps into a pool inside.

A light and water fountain show called Spectra is free each night. And there's still a stacked schedule of live shows, an art and science museum, a nightclub with a three-storey spiral slide... discover the rest May 25–29 when you arrive to start *Sharing Hope With the World*.

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

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Magazine

## Director speak



## The key role of Basic Education and Literacy

**775 million** people over the age of 15 are illiterate. That is 17 per cent of the world's total population. This data forces us to also shift our focus to recognise the importance of lifelong learning and thus champion adult literacy as well. Empowering adults with the ability to read and write not only enhances their personal growth but also strengthens the fabric of our communities. A literate society is a society poised for progress.

“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education.” These words from John F Kennedy underscore the pivotal role of education in shaping the destiny of nations. Rotary's dedication towards literacy for both children and adults resonates deeply with this sentiment. By investing in education, we invest in the future of our societies and the world at large.

This September, let us stand united in our pursuit of a world where every child has the opportunity to learn, every adult has the chance to grow, and every community thrives. Let's turn the page towards a brighter, more literate tomorrow. Together, we can reshape destinies, uplift lives and create lasting impact.

So friends, celebrate the Basic Education and Literacy Month and let our action reflect our commitment to building a better world through education.

**Anirudha Roychowdhury**  
RI Director, 2023–25

My dear Rotarians,  
As September dawns upon us, Rotary proudly heralds the beginning of the Basic Education and Literacy Month. This dedicated time is a celebration of our commitment to nurturing minds, fostering growth and drive change through education.

At the core of our mission is the drive to strengthen the community's capacity to support literacy. I firmly believe that education is not just a privilege, but a fundamental right that empowers individuals to shape their destinies. Through collaborative efforts, let us aim to break down barriers, open doors and create a world where every person has access to quality education.

One of the key aspirations during this month is to address and reduce gender disparity in education. Every child deserves an equal chance to learn and flourish, regardless of the gender. By focusing on eliminating gender-based barriers, let us lay the foundation for a more equitable and inclusive society.

But friends, our commitment should not end with children. Do you know? Across the world, more than

## Create your Rotary moment



**W**hen was your Rotary moment? It's when you realise that being part of Rotary means more than just showing up for a meeting, when you discover you are part of something that changes the lives of others as it changes yours.

I will never forget the moment when I learned about Daniel, a Haitian child.

Rotary Foundation trustee Greg Podd, who at the time was serving with me on an RI committee, had been trying to get Daniel on a plane for urgent heart surgery through the *Gift of Life* programme. But Daniel couldn't get the visa to travel, and doctors had given him only months to live.

When Greg told me this, I remembered that *Gift of Life* was operating in Haiti and we could do the surgery there. This was on a Wednesday. Greg helped get a hold of Daniel's medical records. The *Gift of Life* surgeon I knew — who visited only once or twice every month — happened to be in Haiti. By Thursday, the surgeon had looked over the medical charts and told us that he could repair Daniel's heart but said he was travelling soon. We had to get Daniel to a medical facility by Friday morning. Daniel and his parents rode 90 minutes on a scooter through the bumpy roads of rural Haiti to get to the facility, and the surgeon successfully performed the procedure. Thankful, Greg and I moved on to other projects.

A few months later, I got an email with a picture of Daniel. I will never forget his smiling face, despite the foot-long scar running down his chest, and what he wrote: "I know you helped me. You saved my life. Thank you." On behalf of Daniel and countless others, I am passing along that gratitude to all Rotary members who have helped or will help this year.

The beauty of Rotary, especially with The Rotary Foundation, is that we can create these Rotary moments anytime. Just reach out to others in Rotary and discuss our work. Our caring network, our dedicated volunteers, and available resources will take care of the rest.

If two people can make such a difference, imagine what we can accomplish by working together in larger groups through The Rotary Foundation. Picture the impact of clubs within a district joining forces for a Foundation district grant to boost literacy, or two districts from different parts of the world transforming a community through a water, sanitation and hygiene global grant. If you haven't discovered your Rotary moment yet, keep searching. Serving Rotary through our Foundation is a great place to find it, and it will change your life.

**Barry Rassin**  
TRF Trustee Chair

## Experience the joy of giving



**T**he Rotary Foundation transforms your gifts into service projects that change lives both close to home and around the world. During the past 106 years, the Foundation has spent over \$4 billion on life-changing, sustainable projects. With your help, we can make lives better in our community and around the world.

TRF is our window to the outside world. Look through this window and you will see the young pregnant mother who is struggling with her pregnancy because she has no access to antenatal care; you will see the young boy crippled with polio crawling on all fours because he has no access to polio-corrective surgery. Look through the window and you will find the thousands who struggle to find safe water and proper sanitation, the millions who cannot read or write.

And we have two options — we can either close the window, close our eyes and pretend that all is okay or we can reach out with a helping hand to do something about all these problems. And the best way to do it is with and through The Rotary Foundation. TRF programmes benefit millions around the world providing food, water, sanitation, education and healthcare to people in need.

But the programmes will happen only when we support the Foundation. And so if we want to continue 'doing good in the world' we must support all the funds of TRF.

The act of giving gives you more joy and happiness than receiving something from others. The satisfaction you feel when you see the smile you put on someone's face when you give them something is an indescribable feeling. It gives you a sense of achievement and fulfillment. You will never know who has benefitted from your gift in which part of the world but the goodwill and fragrance of your gift will linger for years. Experience the joy of giving and you will give again and again.

Light the candle of giving and lead the way to create hope in the world.

**Bharat Pandya**  
TRF Trustee Vice Chair

# Rotarians!

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## Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs : 36,926

Rotaract clubs : 11,191

Interact clubs : 14,018

RCCs : 13,018

Rotary members : 1,172,284

Rotaract members: 164,711

Interact members : 322,414

*As on August 14, 2023*

## Membership Summary

As on August 1, 2023

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	137	5,994	6.34	73	492	33	254
2982	84	3,679	6.50	35	836	85	92
3000	132	5,371	10.46	104	1,616	172	215
3011	135	4,972	29.08	82	2,404	124	37
3012	152	3,726	23.08	75	790	83	61
3020	86	4,822	7.55	45	992	117	351
3030	101	5,547	15.40	125	1,935	471	384
3040	111	2,397	14.60	60	758	69	213
3053	73	2,908	16.13	36	591	42	128
3055	80	2,873	11.73	67	1098	67	376
3056	89	3,839	25.55	44	490	99	202
3060	106	4,912	15.86	68	2,198	55	142
3070	124	3,312	16.36	49	523	51	62
3080	107	4,067	12.12	121	1,617	147	121
3090	108	2,375	4.88	48	601	191	164
3100	113	2,281	12.01	15	137	32	151
3110	145	3,800	11.37	17	110	33	106
3120	86	3,561	15.89	37	415	26	55
3131	140	5,293	25.94	144	2,612	190	145
3132	87	3,480	13.19	38	537	104	173
3141	111	5,814	26.61	152	5,078	163	213
3142	105	3,707	21.04	94	1,816	83	91
3150	110	4,119	12.67	154	1,832	100	130
3160	84	2,745	8.93	32	234	95	82
3170	148	6,504	15.25	116	1,764	163	178
3181	87	3,528	10.63	39	462	81	118
3182	87	3,550	10.20	46	229	104	103
3191	90	3,160	18.04	107	2,722	117	35
3192	81	3,443	20.85	118	2,416	85	40
3201	173	6,645	9.75	134	1,967	87	93
3203	95	4,931	7.58	87	1,145	119	39
3204	74	2,422	6.85	24	226	17	13
3211	159	5,000	7.76	10	152	19	133
3212	127	4,581	11.18	89	3,582	141	153
3231	95	3,332	7.38	39	436	39	417
3232	177	6,196	19.29	126	7,265	138	99
3240	105	3,517	16.66	71	1,133	63	227
3250	108	4,115	21.19	68	970	59	191
3261	105	3,491	22.69	23	242	20	45
3262	112	3,732	15.76	76	709	642	284
3291	140	3,662	25.42			55	725
<b>India Total</b>	<b>4,569</b>	<b>167,403</b>		<b>2,888</b>	<b>55,132</b>	<b>4,581</b>	<b>6841</b>
3220	70	1,945	15.78	98	4,385	83	77
3271	177	3,102	17.92	190	3,325	332	28
3272	161	2,281	14.69	80	1,122	20	49
3281	327	8,077	18.11	281	1,995	144	208
3282	182	3,558	9.92	203	1,426	30	47
3292	154	5,538	18.49	180	4,517	84	134
<b>S Asia Total</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>191,904</b>		<b>3,920</b>	<b>71,902</b>	<b>5,274</b>	<b>7,384</b>

Source: RI South Asia Office

# RC Nilgiris creates a model government school

Rasheeda Bhagat

A visit to this spanking new, vibrantly coloured, cheerful Panchayat Union Middle School in Bettati, a small village in the Kotagiri block in the cool environs of the Nilgiris district (RID 3203) in Tamil Nadu, is bound to brighten your day. The chatter and laughter of children is irresistible anywhere; much more so in a government school. A single club — RC Nilgiris — has spent a whopping **₹51 lakh** on a transformational project and drastically altered this school — its classrooms, toilets, kitchen... setting up a neatly stacked library with interesting

Deepika Unni, public image chair, RC Nilgiris, past president Vijaya Kumar Dar, Air Commodore Sanjay Khanna, club administrator Sheela Bhasin and secretary Sunil Goel with students at the Panchayat Union Middle School at Bettati village, Kotagiri.



books, a computer room with desktops and laptops, a science lab and a covered dining area.

I visit the school, tucked away nicely in Bettati village near Coonoor, where the rich and famous have bought up land and built beautiful cottages. I am taken there by a bunch of RC Nilgiris club members, and seeing the banter and the camaraderie among them it is easy to understand how and why what began as a small project to give some books to the school, ended up creating sheer magic for the 68 children of this school. Chartered in 1941, this club has 45 members, 13 being women.



Air commodore Sanjay Khanna, the moving spirit and architect of this half a crore rupees project, explains its genesis. In Nov 2022, the club kicked off a project titled *Vanga padikalam* (Come, let's read), where they collected books for schools. "Many of the books came from Dr Parvathi, a club member, who lives both here and in the UK, and when here, is a regular attendee of our meetings. She sent us a lot of beautiful books from the UK," says Khanna.

As the Rotarians distributed these books to various schools "we realised that the infrastructure in government schools was very bad and the hygiene appalling. We found the toilets stinking, the kitchen was really bad and the children were sitting in damp and dreary classrooms. The entire environment was not conducive to education."

This really depressed and dejected the core team of the club engaged in the reading project. They found little use in providing the tools for education in schools without giving a conducive learning environment. From there was born the idea to do up schools really well.

**W**e had two options, either do little interventions in several schools or identify one school and make it a model school, in such a manner that

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Now our kitchen is top class — we have a member working in Taj Hotels, and the other day a team from there visited; they said our kitchen is on par with theirs.

President **CHN Kumar**

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We found the toilets stinking, the kitchen was really bad and children sitting in damp and dreary classrooms. The environment was not conducive to education.

**Sanjay Khanna**

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it stands out as a role model for other schools to catch up with. And motivates other NGOs to take up other schools," says Deepika Unni, the club's public image chair.

The Bettati school was chosen for two reasons; it had the real estate — a large campus with nearly two acres of land, providing ample scope for renovation and restructuring. Even though the school was only up to Class 8 and with 41 children, its rejuvenation would motivate more parents to send their children here. The place had eight classrooms and they knew that once these were rebuilt, painted and furnished with benches and desks, it could easily accommodate some 200 children. The biggest luxury here was the luxury of space.

"We began with the kitchen because the midday meal was being prepared there. The walls of the existing kitchen had fungus, the ration was kept on the floor and there were rodents running all over the place. We knew we would have to completely redo the toilets, separate ones for girls and boys. And we also constructed a toilet for the teachers," says Khanna, who for personal reasons has recently stepped out of Rotary for the time being.

The classrooms were in a total mess; the floor was chipped, the walls had broken down and some of the rooms were separated by broken or tattered cardboard sheets, and the roof was leaking. The furniture was old and

# Old



# New





**Annual Day celebrations on the new stage facilitated by RC Nilgiris.**

tattered, so the children had to sit on the floor. “This is the Nilgiris, it is cold and the kids can’t sit and study on the floor. There was one bulb only ... so you can imagine that a lot needed to be done,” says club president Gr Captain CHN Kumar.

**T**he initial money was raised through crowdfunding, and the target set was ₹15 lakh. “We began small, wanting to do two or three things but as you go along you get excited as you’re dealing with children. You see the joy on their faces, and the hope in their parents’ eyes and you feel let’s do more. We went to them in October, the actual work started in Jan 23, and by April we were done and handed over the school to them,” says Khanna.

Of the total of ₹51 lakh spent, while the initial amount came from

crowdfunding, from club members, their friends and family, later the corporates joined, with almost half the money — ₹24 lakh — coming through CSR, and here, as usual past president Vijaya Dar put in a lot of effort.

Kotak Mahindra was the lead CSR company and contributed ₹17.6 lakh, totally funding an entire block. Star Chemicals gave ₹1 lakh for the kitchen, and Orissa Ferrotech pledged ₹10,000 every month for a year for the salary of the English teacher.

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*We began small, wanting to do two or three things but as you go along you get excited as you’re dealing with children.*

**Sanjay Khanna**

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While the club members contributed ₹4 lakh, eminent citizens of Coonoor funded the creation of a neat, clean and comfortable covered dining area. Earlier the children ate their midday meal seated on the floor, which would be freezing cold in winter.

Here I get an interesting nugget; a collective demand from the parents of the children for an English teacher. “This shows their aspiration that their children learn English in order to get good jobs. But they also asked for a Hindi teacher, which shows they’re seeking opportunities for their children all over India,” says Dar.

With the Rotarians engaging an English teacher and undertaking the responsibility of paying her salary for two years, the children now have the advantage of bilingual education — classes are conducted both in Tamil and English, with focus on spoken English. The great job the English teacher has done can be seen from

# English, please!

When I converse with some of the older children at the panchayat school in Bettati, adopted by the Rotarians, their desire to learn and speak in the English language is evident. In the computer room, Yalini, a Class 8 student, says confidently that she wants to talk in English, and answers my questions effortlessly, even as her teacher beams! “My mother is a homemaker and my father is a driver. When I grow up, I want to become an army doctor,” she says cheerfully. She adds that after Class 8, she will move to another school for higher education.

Later, Lt General MG Girish, a past president of the club and the moving spirit behind the stunningly beautiful crematorium this club has put up in Coonoor, tells me that he will organise a woman doctor from the Army (Wellington Cantonment) to speak to Yalini and mentor her.

Likisha, also opts to talk in English, and says that while her mother is a “homemaker, my father is a farmer. The farm belongs to us and he grows vegetables like cabbage, potatoes, beetroot.” She won the second place in SpellBee and says she is learning to type on the computer. “We type stories and some passages from books.”



**Above:** Likisha with the school headmistress Radha Krishnaraj.



**Left and below:** Yalini and Akash working on their systems in the school's computer room.

Her dream? “To become an IAS officer!”

Akash, also in Class 8, is not too sure of his English... yet, and opts to speak in Tamil. The smart young boy says both his parents work on the farm, and “I want to study further and become a civil engineer.” ■



# உளரட்சி ஒன்றியம் பெட்டை



Club members with students. Club president CHN Kumar is seen on the extreme right.

most of the Class 8 children I pick for a conversation opting to speak in English! (See box)

**T**he school has now got a spanking new kitchen, and a secure storage area where the food material for the midday meal is kept in stainless steel containers. About the quality of the food club president Kumar says that while many other schools had an issue, “here the problem was only on the hygiene as the kitchen was in a real bad condition. But now our kitchen is top class — we have a past club president working in Taj Hotels, and the other day he had come with a team to plant fruit-bearing trees in the school garden. They said, ‘this kitchen is on par with ours!’”

Club secretary Sunil Goel explains that the younger children’s classrooms didn’t require too much civil work and just had to be painted and furnished, “but for the older children’s classrooms we did the roofing, the walls, the windows, lighting and got completely new furniture.”

On the bright colours — bright green and red are predominant — the Rotarians explain that the majority community in this area is the Badagas and they like bright colours, “particularly as the weather is gloomy here. The headmistress and the teachers chose the colours,” says Sheela Bhasin, club administrator.

A club member, who is a civil engineer took up the nitty-gritty of renovating all the eight classrooms, the kitchen, the toilets and the covered dining area. Deepika explains how

one of their principal objectives was to provide a clean and hygienic separate toilet with running water for the girls, to prevent the girls from dropping out of school at puberty, as is the norm in many Indian villages.

**I**nterestingly, the land on which the school was built in 1967 was donated by a Rotarian. Headmistress Radha Krishnaraj says earlier the school, which has classes till only eighth standard, had only 41 students but after its fantastic makeover, an English teacher being appointed, a new computer lab equipped with both desktops and laptops available for the children, the number has gone up to 68. This is one of the most popular rooms in the

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There are many government schools but parents seek only private schools. Recently my driver's daughter joined LKG in an elite school where the fee is ₹40,000.

Past president **Vijaya Dar**

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school where the science-cum-computer teacher Vijayalakshmi is really engaging the children on how to work on the computers. I find around a dozen girls and boys absorbed in their laptops and desktops — the school already had a few which were not working and the Rotarians repaired them, while also adding a few new machines.

This vibrant room has really motivated more people in the region to gradually send their children to this school. With the teachers also talking to the local people about the mega

change in their school, the strength has gone up.

“The school also had a smart-board which was not working, and we got it repaired and now so many programmes are run on it to engage the children,” explains Khanna; other Rotarians joke that during the project he got admitted to the school! The library exudes a lot of cheer and the children are lost in the wide array of books. The Rotarians have got the children bright yellow uniforms prominently displaying the Rotary wheel as well as shoes.

As I click away pictures of the students reading books, or keying in English and Tamil text on their computer screens, the air commodore explains how earlier a single teacher would simultaneously take classes for children from three different classes, such as Class 4, 5, and 6.

“The first row would have Class 4 children, the second row Class 5 children and so on.” You shudder to think of kind of learning these children would have got earlier. Vijaya Dar,

who is from Kashmir, explains how this is common in government schools in Kashmir, even today. “The children of Classes 4, 5 and 6 study from the same classroom,” he says.

Actually, it is not the number of schools in Nilgiris that is the problem; the problem is the infrastructure and the condition of the schools and the quality of education they offer. Radha estimates that there are over 600 government schools in the Nilgiris district (“in a radius of 3–4km you’ll get 10 schools”), Dar comments: “But sadly, some of them don’t have students. Because parents want to send their children to private English medium school, and every half a km, you will find one such school. That’s why we’ve employed an English teacher here.”

He shares that only recently “my driver’s daughter joined LKG in an elite school where the fee is almost ₹40,000 a year, and he came to me for help. I told him to send her here but couldn’t convince him. The name of the school makes all the difference.”

Unlike most government schools this panchayat school has an active PTA, which has become even more enthusiastic after the major



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In Nilgiris district, there are over 600 schools, in a radius of 3–4km you’ll get 10 schools.

Headmistress **Radha Krishnaraj**

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uplift the school has received both in physical infrastructure and quality of education on offer. The government had appointed five teachers “but clearly more were needed if the students had to get reasonably good education. Can you imagine... the teachers came together and contributed from their salary a sum to employ more teachers! Now the parents have voluntarily decided to contribute ₹100 a month per child so more teachers can be appointed.”

He adds that ₹68,000 a month is a huge amount, and the PTA will decide how to deploy the amount. I learn that the government’s annual contribution for the upkeep and maintenance of this school is a paltry ₹22,000. “That is for the upkeep of the building, changing bulbs, fixing leaking taps

and the rest. But by virtue of the school’s strength going up, we are hoping when the number crosses 80, one more teacher will be appointed,” adds Khanna. While the club pays the English teacher’s salary, the computer teacher’s salary is sponsored by the US-based brother of a club member.

With the scenario totally changing at this panchayat school, and seeing the enthusiasm and interest from the teachers, children and parents, the Rotarians have devised a strategy for the children’s higher education after Class 8. “Before moving out, we wanted to secure the future of at least some of the brighter children.

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To improve their spoken English, we, we will screen English movies, pausing it every 30 minutes to ask them what they have understood.

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**Deepika Unni**

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While the headmistress is trying to add a higher class, after Class 8, every year as the school now has the required infrastructure, we are also making some connections,” smiles Khanna.

The plan is that every privileged or private school in the area should adopt a government school and the club’s Interact school, the Stanes Higher Secondary school, whose principal Glen Croning is a club member, “starting from this year, will take two students in Class 9. And we are looking forward to other elite schools doing the same.”

But meanwhile this school will continue its upward journey. “There is a lot of interest in extracurricular activities, and the students wanted a place to showcase their talent. So we’ve built a stage for them. We also want to encourage their hobbies and to improve their spoken English, we will screen English movies, pausing it every 30 minutes to ask them what they have understood. Every Friday some special activity will be held; on Kargil Vijay Diwas, our president Gr Capt Kumar explained to the children what had happened in Kargil. We want to organise something like this every Friday,” says Deepika.



Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

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# Emotional wellness sessions for refugee children in Uganda

Jaishree

Ugandan children display their artwork following a drawing session conducted on Google Meet by Rotary E-Club of Empowering Youth.



**T**wenty-five refugee children aged 10–16 were identified by RAC Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda, for a mental wellness programme hosted by Rotary E-Club of Empowering Youth, RID 3132, under its *Project Mindstrong*. The 90-minute interactive session was anchored by host club member Sangeeta Chandran on Google Meet. She engaged the children with storytelling and drawing sessions. “Being in a refugee camp can be stifling.

But the sessions gave the children moments of joy. They were all warm, curious and zealous,” says Sangeeta.

The project was initiated by the E-club member Bindu Shirsath following a conversation with Rtr Eric Mupika, a past president of the Rota-ract club which, he says, “is probably the world’s first Rotary entity in a refugee camp. Our club is made up of young refugees who want to make our settlement better and comfortable for all.” Mupika is a refugee from Congo and a charter member of the

club. He teaches yoga for children and adults, and is a retailer of cooking oil and handicrafts.

“Our focus is predominantly on mental health initiatives. So, when Eric discussed spreading joy and positivity among the refugee children, we designed *Project Mindstrong*,” says Bindu and recalls a session where the children had to express their feelings through emojis. “Although most of them showed ‘happy’ emojis, it tugged our heart to find some who put up ‘angry’ and

## The Nakivale Rotaract Club

The Nakivale refugee settlement is located in the Isingiro district bordering Tanzania in Southwest Uganda. The late RIPN Sam Owori was instrumental in the formation of RAC Nakivale Refugee Settlement, says Mupika. Owori had attended an event where 13 young refugees from the settlement were honoured by the American Refugee Committee (ARC) for their project ideas to help the community. Impressed by their enthusiasm and determination, he suggested the organisation of a Rotaract club. Thus the club was born in 2017 with the support of RCs Kitwatule and Mbarara, Uganda, and Roseville, USA, and the ARC.

“When refugees leave their home country, they often abandon their belongings and arrive at a camp with nothing except the clothes they are wearing. The first point of



Rtr Eric Mupika entertaining the children at the refugee settlement.

entry at the Nakivale settlement is the reception centre where they normally stay for weeks. The initial days are traumatic as they cannot have access to any services here. So we make them feel comfortable by giving them extra clothes and other essentials, with support from the ARC,” explains Mupika.

The Ugandan Rotaract club has 22 members and is presently working on building public toilets and procuring sewing machines for its vocational training centre. “We want to train women in tailoring

to augment their income; they can even use the sewing machines at our centre to stitch clothes for their clientele,” says Mupika.

The *Project Mindstrong* helped children become emotionally mature and “I could see how happy they all were to interact with the Rotarians from the host club. Later, many of them came to me with a lot of questions on how to conduct themselves and not lose their cool in trying situations. Their parents thanked me for that wonderful programme,” he adds. ■

‘sad’ emojis... and there was one young boy who put up a placard saying ‘I want peace’.”

Referring to a session on anger management titled ‘What to do when I flip my lid?’, Sangeeta says that it is extremely important to address anger issues especially in teenagers. “These children are living in a world where they see lot of injustice and the inability to address such issues may induce violent behaviour in their later life.” Mupika agrees that it was “a significant and a valuable topic. It gave them an insight into how to recognise the triggers and place yourself in the other person’s shoes. The session

ideally suited the teenage group, as most of these youngsters are traumatised.”

Sangeeta is an integrated therapy counsellor and heads the Wellness department at TCS. “Mental health is a huge challenge, especially for youngsters. We regularly conduct emotional wellness programmes to help them understand and overcome anxiety, depression and anger, and cultivate a positive mind.” Bindu adds, “We also train MSW students and health workers to volunteer as emotional help assistants. They visit schools, colleges and PHCs to identify people with mental disturbances and provide emotional support.”

The E-club, chartered last year, has 12 members including two in Canada and the US. “As our club’s name suggests, we work only to empower the youth,” she adds. The club transferred funds to the Ugandan Rotaract club to provide books, notebooks, stationery items, art material and refreshments to the refugee children during the programme. This year the Rotarians plan to buy tailoring machines for the women at the settlement. But, “transferring money to the African country is not so easy and the transfer charges are exorbitant. It takes about 10 days for the money to reach the Rotaractors,” says Bindu. ■

# RC Bilaspur brings joy into the gloomy lives of women prisoners

Rasheeda Bhagat

**A**s a lawyer practising at the Chhattisgarh High Court right from its inception in 2000, Hamida Siddiqui, immediate past president of RC Bilaspur, RID 3261, had ample opportunities to visit the Central Jail of Bilaspur. Here she found that most of the women inmates — 208 in all — were in a state of depression and the younger children below six, “who are allowed to live with them are extremely unhappy and deprived of basic human rights.”

With the Central Jail exuding so many negatives... acute depression, misery, pain, unhappiness and general dissatisfaction, she started wondering about the ways in which some happiness could be infused into the lives of these misfortunate women and children.

Thus was born *Project Khushi*.

Speaking to *Rotary News*, Hamida said that most of the women inmates in the Bilaspur jail are there for committing murder, and the jail manual

allows their children younger than six to stay with them; the older children are put up in a facility nearby which is looked after by an NGO.” While there are 20 younger kids, the older ones are 13 in number.

She explains that normally it is not easy to get inside a jail and hold conversations with the prisoners and their children. But since she is a lawyer, and deputy advocate general of Chhattisgarh State, she approached the Chhattisgarh state Legal Services

**A nukkad natak entertains the women inmates.**





Authority (CSLSA) chairperson Justice Goutam Bhaduri, and discussed with him that “during my year as president of RC Bilaspur I would like to organise an event for the jail inmates... the women, and particularly

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**Some of the older girls are so depressed that they look at you totally blankly... whatever you speak to them, the words seem to fall into a dark, empty space.**

**Hamida Siddiqui**  
IPP, RC Bilaspur

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their children. This would try to bring some happiness in their lives through an opportunity to sing and dance, watch a *nukkad natak* (street theatre), draw rangoli, enjoy some cultural programmes, put up performances, participate in a drawing competition, etc. The idea was to bring some cheer into their gloomy lives, at least for a day or two,” recalls Hamida.

**T**he judge readily authorised her to organise such an event on the jail premises. Before giving details of the project, she says, it is important to understand the extreme conditions under which most women have committed as grievous a crime as murdering their husbands. For long years, most of them suffer in silence and helplessness the atrocities inflicted on them by their husbands and family

members. They have to face cruelty and physical violence from their husbands who come home drunk; “they do not take care of the children or discharge their responsibility in the home or towards the children.” Most of the time, in sheer desperation, the woman kills the man, under whose hands she has suffered such torture. With hardly any family member coming forward to take care of the children, they end up in jail with their mothers, even though technically they are not prisoners.

But in reality, the children are indeed caged beings, growing up in an environment to which no child should be exposed. “I’ve interacted with some of the older girls who are so depressed that they look at you totally blankly... and whatever you speak to them, the words seem to fall into a dark, empty space,” she says.

Asked if the depressed women and children do not have access to psychological counselling, she smiles

wryly and says: “Yes, technically, it’s all available, but most of it is mechanical and comes nowhere near the care that the mother and father can give. Only sensitive eyes can see this; if you can’t even see the prevalent depression, how will you give relief or treatment?”

**I**n this background, Hamida took the idea to her club members to plan and execute the two-day *Project*

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**The irony is that the male inmates are relatively happy. They are found laughing and having fun, but the women’s section is ignored and they are visibly unhappy.**

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*Khushi*. With Hamida personally organising the funding, and several club members supporting the event by gifting the materials required, such as clothes, gifts for the children, stationery for the drawing and painting competitions and other items required, the Bilaspur Central Jail was totally transformed for two days in May.

“The jail was decorated with lights and flowers as though there was a wedding ceremony happening there. You should have seen the happiness that the women exuded; we

**Women inmates exhibit their singing skills.**



cannot take them out because of the grievous crimes they have committed, but we could certainly give them two days of some happiness, in a life which is so sad, gloomy and filled with depression and little hope for the future.”

Claiming that this event was a first-of-its-kind in any jail in India, Hamida says the entire women’s cell was lit up and decorated in bright colours. The day started with a yoga and meditation session. The women participated in various competitions like singing, dancing, applying mehndi and rangoli, “and we were amazed to see how talented they are, particularly in singing and dancing.”

For the children, there was plenty of fun and frolic. They participated in events such as dancing, drawing, sketching, marble race, and fancy dress competition. On the second day, they thoroughly enjoyed the puppet and magic show. Sewing machines, books, study material, stationery and crayons, balls, bats, carrom board, badminton rackets, etc



**A fancy dress event by the inmates’ children.**

were distributed to the women and children. A mini library was also set up for the kids and the women.

A play was performed by the Behaviours Club of Guru Ghasidas University on the alarming and serious issue of depression and drug abuse. The event was presided over by

Justice Bhaduri and attended by both the police and jail superintendents.

**B**ut is this going to be a one-time event, and what about the



Hamida Siddiqui (extreme right), IPP, RC Bilaspur, presents a sewing machine to the women, in the presence of Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority (CSLSA) chairperson Justice Goutam Bhaduri.



**A yoga and meditation session in progress.**

children's future, I ask Hamida. "I would love to repeat this project this year too, and am discussing it with this year's club leaders. It will be great if this event is held in perpetuity, the women really need something like this. We also gifted them a harmonium, so that they can have some entertainment."

Hamida then describes a disturbing phenomenon; gender discrimination. "The irony is that the male inmates are relatively happy.

They have so many things... sewing machines, harmoniums, etc, and are found laughing and having fun, but the women's section is ignored and they are visibly unhappy. I am a mother of three daughters; women's issues is very important to me," she adds.

This lawyer is now thinking how to help the older children living in a nearby building and being looked after by an NGO. She is trying to support the older children; take out

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**Emotionally, the children  
are so confused...  
everyone is coming and  
giving them something.  
There is not much dignity  
in always taking things  
from people. They need a  
respectful way of living.**

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some of the children from here and place them into regular hostels and schools. They are not aware of their origin or roots; the religion and community to which they belong. "I'm not saying that religious divisions are good, but it is good to have an identity and know your roots. Emotionally, they are so confused... everyone is coming and giving them something. There is not much dignity in always taking things from people. They need a respectful way of living... in a hostel or boarding school."

Hamida adds: "Without parents, children have a totally different kind of life. They have emotional bankruptcy, no emotional connections; mechanically they have food, sleep, study, but without care, affection and security there are chances of their turning into future criminals. We know that all serial killers have had a very disturbed childhood."

The task ahead is daunting but she is happy that for at least two days the club was able to make the women happy. "The media gave the event wide coverage and the women were so happy. I was really touched when one of them said '*Aap ne hamare liye itna socha, hum aapka shukriya ada nahi kar saktey*' (We can't thank you



Above: Justice Bhaduri and Hamida enjoy the rangoli done by the women inmates.



enough for thinking of us). And seeing the media coverage, another said: “*Aap ne hamey itni izzat di ki hum paper mei aaye* (You gave us so much respect that the newspapers wrote about us). There is not much we can do to help women whose bail has been refused... some of them have been here for 14 years. But I am happy that our club, through this project, was able to recognise those who have lost their identity.”

Let’s end this article with a smile. During the fancy dress competition one of the children enacted the famous scene from a Hindi movie with the classic dialogue on delayed justice: *Tareekh pe tareekh; court me yehi milta hei, magar insaaf nahi milta*. (All we get are dates in courts; not justice). That left Justice Bhaduri, who was presiding over the event, laughing! ■

# A journey in philanthropy

Rajendra Saboo

**M**y journey as a Rotarian has been influenced by many people. Some gave me sage counsel, others helped with generous donations. When I look back at over eight decades of my life, I cannot help but notice how Birlapur, the place of my birth, continued to play a vital role in my life even as my work took me first to Calcutta and then to Chandigarh, my *karam bhoomi*.

I had the privilege of sharing a close and

meaningful relationship with G D Birla, a renowned industrialist and freedom fighter. Being born in Birlapur and with my father's position in Birla Jute Mills, I had the opportunity to connect with the Birla family. It was during my time at Hindustan Motors in Calcutta that I first met B M Birla, the youngest among the Birla brothers, who imparted invaluable knowledge of an innovative accounting system.

As I embarked on my entrepreneurial journey, I returned to Hind Motors and collaborated with Indian card yarn manufacturing. During this period, I had the pleasure of playing cricket with both Aditya Vikram Birla and Sudarshan Birla in Birla Park. The camaraderie we shared strengthened our bond as friends.

**From Pilani and Calcutta to Chandigarh:** A life of work and social service

Under G D Birla's guidance, my father

initiated the establishment of Hindustan Aluminium Ltd in Renukoot, UP, with Mandelia serving as the overall executive.

In 1960, when I established the needle factory, GrozBeckert Saboo, in Chandigarh, fate presented me with an extraordinary encounter. G D Birla himself visited the factory, accompanied by my father-in-law, Mandelia, and my father, Saboo. G D Birla showed a genuine interest in my endeavours beyond the Chandigarh

**PRIP Rajendra Saboo helps Rajashree Birla, chairperson, Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development, administer polio drop to a child during an NID. Binota, wife of PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, is seen behind Rajashree Birla.**



factory. When I mentioned my involvement in Rotary, he candidly expressed his belief that I was wasting my time. However, his perspective changed when I informed him later of my appointment as a Rotary International Director, and he encouraged me to aim for the top.

The late GD Birla, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's concept of trusteeship, embraced a philosophy that extended beyond business profits. The Birla Group's purpose was to develop untapped resources, promote education and contribute to building a new, independent India. As part of this commitment, a portion of the group's profits was consistently reinvested in meaningful welfare activities for the betterment of society.

During my tenure as Rotary International President in 1991–92, I had the privilege of meeting Aditya Birla and his wife, Rajashree Birla, who continued to uphold the family's philanthropic tradition. In 2008, she visited Chicago and donated \$300,000 to The Rotary Foundation for educational initiatives. Following this, I requested her to consider a \$1 million donation in memory of GD Birla for polio eradication, a cause she readily supported.

The announcement of Rajashree's donation took place during a Rotary event at the headquarters in



**Rajashree Birla speaking at a meeting in the presence of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and PRIIP Saboo.**

Evanston, with prominent Rotary leaders in attendance. The following day, a gala dinner was organised to honour her, where several Rotary leaders and distinguished guests gathered. The event symbolised the convergence of Rotary's service ideals and the Birla family's commitment to social welfare.

Rajashree's dedication to social work extended beyond monetary contributions. She established the Aditya Birla Memorial Hospital in Pune, providing essential healthcare services and contributing to the well-being of the community. Additionally, her involvement in healthcare initiatives, such as conducting medical camps and administering polio vaccines, showcased her personal engagement and commitment to improving lives.

Through her actions, she exemplified the core values of Rotary — service above self and dedication

to humanitarian causes. Her visits to slums in Mumbai, personally administering polio drops to children, highlighted the transformative power of individual efforts in addressing societal challenges.

Rajashree has been recognised for her exceptional contributions and tireless efforts to make a positive impact globally. She has been a leading figure in the fight against polio, donating a staggering total of \$15 million towards eradication efforts. Starting with an annual contribution of \$1 million, she continued her support even after India was declared polio-free in 2014, pledging to donate until the world is free from this disease.

As the chairperson of the Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development (ABCCIR), she oversees numerous charity and community initiatives focused on education, employment, drinking water, women's

empowerment, and assistance to the rural poor and physically disabled. Through ABCCIR, she has made a significant impact, assisting around 7 million people across 3,000 villages worldwide, with notable presence in Thailand and Egypt. The organisation supports schools, hospitals, and provides education to thousands of students.

Rajashree's philanthropic endeavours extend beyond polio eradication. She actively collaborates with organisations like Population First to combat female foeticide and works closely with Habitat for Humanity, serving on their Asia Pacific and Global committees. She also advocates for widow remarriage, challenging societal taboos in many Indian villages.

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*The writer is a  
past president of  
Rotary International*

# An avid collector of Rotary stamps in Mumbai

Rasheeda Bhagat

**T**his Rotarian is as proud of his “100-month stint in Rotaract,” as he is of his collection of Rotary stamps with First Day covers from over 50 countries in all the five continents.

Meet Bharat Merchant, a member of RC Bombay Seaface, RID 3141, who has been collecting Rotary stamps and first day covers for the last 30 years. The interest of this passionate Rotarian in this organisation goes back to half a century “when

I was the president of the Rotaract Club of Bombay. I was in college and the founder-director of the first Rotaract club in the city of Bombay and my brother was the founder-president.”

He remained a Rotaractor for 100 months. “During that time, I got so interested in Rotary that after my college days (when his Rotaract journey ended) whenever I or one of my friends travelled, we would make inquiries about Rotary stamps or first day covers. But I met with little

success, getting maybe one stamp/cover in two years,” he says.

During the subsequent years Merchant got busy with his business (owning a factory) and joined Rotary only in 1997, as a member of RC Bombay Seaface. As a full-fledged Rotarian, he started pursuing his passion for Rotary stamps more diligently; whenever he or his friends travelled overseas they would look out for and buy Rotary stamps. “But I soon learnt that the best way to get my hands on



Rotary First Day covers from the collection of Bharat Merchant, a member of RC Bombay Seaface.



Rotary stamps were through philatelic shops. One of the philatelic shop owners in Bombay understood my interest, and whenever he found or got a Rotary stamp he would call me and I would immediately rush and grab it; the older the stamp the more I would get excited."

He would pay a princely price of ₹1,000 — it was a princely sum 15–20 years ago; "the price actually depended on the country and the demand."



Merchant with some of the first day covers from his collection.

His passionate pursuit has made Merchant a proud owner of at least 500 Rotary stamps and 100 first day covers. The oldest Rotary stamp he has dates back to 1948 and is from Brazil (see picture). He explains that most Rotary stamps are issued on special occasions such as “the silver, golden,

diamond jubilee of Rotary in a country; some are issued for conferences, conventions, CoL, Everest expeditions and of course PolioPlus events. The maximum number of Rotary stamps were issued in 2005 during the centenary celebrations of Rotary, including in India.”

With interest in stamp collection decreasing gradually, he is seriously toying with the idea of “giving my entire collection to RC Bombay West. They have their own building in a Rotary service centre in Juhu, Mumbai, and could put my stamps on display there so that many people could enjoy it.”

An avid Rotarian, Merchant, who is now 70, enjoys most “being able to do social service for the community through Rotary. For 25 years I have been a very active member of my club, always a member of the board but never the president.”

Asked why, he smiles and says, “It just didn’t happen, but it’s ok; Rotary gave me an opportunity to be of service to my community. That matters the most to me. Every city I visited in India, I never failed to attend a Rotary club meeting in that city and exchange flags.”

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



## Laptop donated to NGO centre for blind

Team Rotary News



A visually-challenged girl uses a laptop with the support of the NVDA software.

Reaching out to the visually-impaired students, RC Thane West, RID 3142, donated a laptop with a non-visual desktop access (NVDA), a software that converts texts into voice, to Shri MK Chaudhary Memorial Centre, Dombivli, which is being run by Snehankit Helpline, an NGO.

Two Bluetooth headphones, along with keypads, that can be connected to a smartphone were also donated to the centre. This facility will benefit more than 40 visually-impaired students in their studies.

The project was funded by the returns from an Endowment Fund created by past president Suchit Gadakari and the handover event was attended by club president Shirang Deshpande, project director Sadhana Vaze and other members. Snehankit Helpline chairperson Parimala Bhat was also present. ■

# Rotarians must have humanitarian spirit

Team Rotary News



RC Roopnagar president Namrita Parmar hands over a contribution of ₹9.84 lakh for TRF to RI Director Raju Subramanian. PRIP Rajendra Saboo and his wife Usha are also present.

A true measure of a Rotarian's success and fulfilment comes not from receiving awards and recognition, "but from making a meaningful and positive impact on the lives of those in need in a

community," said RI director Raju Subramanian, speaking at the installation of Namrita Parmar as the new president of RC Roopnagar, RID 3080. He laid emphasis on the need to care for the well-being of others,

rather than personal gain or recognition. "Let us nurture a humanitarian spirit where the primary goal is to alleviate suffering and improve the quality of life of the less fortunate," he said.

Service with compassion, showing empathy and understanding the struggles and challenges of people are the hallmarks of a Rotarian, he said. Two qualities that a Rotary leader must have are modesty and humility. "Arrogance and ego have no role in Rotary leadership. We give hope to people in need through our small acts of service. Serve as much as you can and in every avenue of service," he urged the gathering. The installation event was also addressed by PRIP Rajendra Saboo and his spouse Usha. ■

## De Camargo chosen 2025–26 RI president



Mário César Martins de Camargo, a member of RC Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil, has been chosen by the Nominating Committee as RI president for 2025–26. He will officially become the nominee on September 15 if no other candidates challenge him.

De Camargo plans to boost Rotary's public image by working from the top down. "Rotary today has strong competition for members and funds. We need to rejuvenate the brand, especially in some zones. We should utilise post-pandemic meeting tools... to allow the president to address Rotarians all over the globe. We also need to develop more long-term partnerships with political, community and business leaders. Let's emphasise our greatest asset: 1.4 million volunteers," he says.

He also hopes to improve Rotary's process for appointments and governance. "Rotary should adopt a more

transparent system to appoint volunteers for positions, with clear criteria and data-based evaluation of results."

De Camargo was president of Gráfica Bandeirantes and has been a consultant to the print industry in Brazil. He has also served as president and chair of several printing and graphics trade associations, including the Brazilian Association of Graphic Technology and ABIGRAF, the Brazilian Printing Industry Association.

He has served on the board of Casa da Esperança (House of Hope), a hospital sponsored by his Rotary club, that serves 150,000 children with disabilities every year.

De Camargo studied in the US and Germany and holds degrees from EAESP-Fundação Getúlio Vargas in business administration and Faculdade de Direito de São Bernardo do Campo in law. A Rotarian since 1980, he has served Rotary as director, trustee, RI learning facilitator, committee member and chair, and task force member. He and his wife, Denise, are Major Donors and Benefactors of TRF.

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# Mammography bus flagged off in Chennai

V Muthukumaran

**L**ocal governments and the states play a critical role in the development of an ecosystem for a medical service project which the Rotary clubs are doing in collaboration with hospitals and NGOs, said RI director Anirudha Roychowdhury. “As government agencies are key stakeholders, clubs must partner with them for medical projects for better reach and achieving their targets,” he advised, after flagging off the Project Kamalam Udayar Mobile Mammography Centre, a cancer screening bus,

on the campus of Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (SRIHER) in Chennai.

RCs Madras Vadapalani, Madras West, RID 3232, and The Hills-Kellyville, RID 9685, Australia, have come together for this global grant project worth \$170,000. A non-profit family trust also has contributed ₹25–30 lakh for the vehicle.

Recalling PM Narendra Modi’s advice to PRIP Shekhar Mehta to highlight the GoI’s *Poshan Abhiyaan*, an integrated national nutritional mission covering

pregnant women, girls and children below six, during the latter’s visit to other countries as Rotary president, Roychowdhury urged the clubs to execute a joint nutritional project worth \$2 million in the field of women and childcare with the support of the social welfare department. “Paediatric heart surgeries can be done at the Sri Ramachandra Hospital just like children from Afghanistan, Kenya and Ghana are being operated at hospitals in Raipur, Bengaluru and Kolkata,” he suggested, and complimented IPDG N Nandakumar for doing service projects worth ₹80 crore during his tenure. He expressed hope that Rotary’s corporate project, End Polio, which was started in 1985, is “nearing the end of the tunnel with just five cases reported this year in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and we will be able to eradicate it totally in another 3–4 years.” The recently launched Programs of Scale project in Zambia to fight malaria at a cost of \$6 million has brought down the mortality ratio drastically in that country, he noted.

## Two more buses

The mammography bus is the third project at the SRIHER, after the launch of the cardiac care bus by RC Madras Central Aadithya in March 2022; and the setting up of a dialysis unit with 10 machines during the term of PDG J Sridhar, said Nandakumar. The cardiac

From L: Project coordinator Dr H Thamizhchelvan, IPDG N Nandakumar, RC Madras Vadapalani president Hema Mani, SRIHER vice-chancellor Dr Uma Sekar, TN social welfare commissioner V Amuthavalli and Sumedha Nandakumar.





(From L) RID 3233 DGE Mahaveer Bothra, RI Director Anirudha Roychowdhury, PDG S Muthupalaniappan and RID 3232 DG Ravi Raman.

care bus, worth ₹2 crore, has screened 10,000 patients so far, he added, and thanked project chief coordinator Dr Tamizhchelvan, dean, Sri Ramachandra Dental College and Hospital, for monitoring the mobile mammography project at various stages. “Two more mammography buses will be flagged off soon with the support of private hospitals,” he said, and recalled that 10 mammogram devices were distributed to government hospitals, PHCs and NGO clinics in and around Chennai under *Project Shakti*, which aims to create awareness on early screening for breast and cervical cancer among women. The vehicle will be

operated and maintained by the hospital, with the paramedical staff screening people at medical camps in rural areas.

DG Ravi Raman commended the three partner clubs for joining hands to “do a phenomenal work, a project that will help the downtrodden people in and around Chennai.” The state government is ready to partner with Rotary in creating awareness on breast and cervical cancer through mammography buses, said V Amuthavalli, commissioner for TN Social Welfare department. “We will depute SHG members and paramedics on these mobile clinics to reach out to the communities,” she said. “All

the 55,000 anganwadis in the state can be used to spread the message of early cancer screening, detection and timely treatment,” she said.

SRIHER vice-chancellor Dr Uma Sekar said that in India, “younger women are more vulnerable to cancer; and early detection and treatment is the only way forward.” The hospital has conducted around 50 medical and dental camps jointly with Rotary clubs. “The cardiac bus has helped identify 284 patients for surgery at their hospital of choice; among them, 38 had undergone surgery, while 70 patients are waiting for their turn.” With the support of Rotary and the Chennai Corporation, antenatal camps are being held regularly under *Project Nalam*, she said.

Speaking to *Rotary News*, project coordinator Boovaragan from RC Madras Vadapalani said, “the mammography bus has a target to screen 2,000 women annually with the support of the corporation, hospitals, PHCs and NGOs in Chennai and its neighbouring districts.” PDGs ISAK Nazar, Muthupalaniappan, former DRFC M Ambalavanan, DGE Mahaveer Bothra (RID 3233), and DGN Vinod Saraogi (RID 3234) were honoured for their contributions to the mammography project.

Pictures by V Muthukumaran

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# A tribute to the Rotary spirit

Vidyottama Sharma

**K**alyan Banerjee, past RI president, has created a beautiful gallery of the gifts and mementos he received from all over the world since his election to Rotary's highest office.

At Vapi's GIDC area, in a beautiful bungalow, adorned with a lovely garden on all four sides, is a spacious room that has now become part of a folklore in the Rotary world in India. For, stationed above the porch of the bungalow, called *Karubika*, this 750 sqft room houses an immensely popular personal museum of PRIP Kalyan Banerjee. Known lovingly as Kalyan *da* in India, Banerjee, the third among the four Indians who have donned

the RI president's hat, led the Rotary world in 2011-12.

The museum, known as the Kalyan Banerjee Gallery, has one of the biggest collections of headwear from across nations, including hats, caps, boaters, bowler hats, beanies, fedoras and berets. They are made of all types of material and fabrics like silk, cotton, bamboo and straw and are embellished with innumerable designs and embroidery. These caps decorate the top layer of the wall in the antechamber, the mini entrance, of the gallery. With hundreds of exhibits neatly arranged in segments, the gallery offers a glimpse into Banerjee's Rotary travel and the gifts he received in those tours

and meetings. Photographs, books, sculptures, certificates, plates, scarves, trophies, wall hangings, artefacts, statues, paintings, rugs, shawls, flags, dresses, t-shirts, and many more exhibits, vie with each other for space and attention. The gallery has a basic core as the nucleus and then *bhool-bhulaiyan* (maze) like layered passageways around it. No space has been left vacant.

"It was entirely my wife Binota's idea," says Banerjee. "Over the years we had collected so many gifts and mementos. And she said, 'why not we display them instead of packing them in cartons?' She wanted to show how the world had responded to the RI president wherever he went." As a

**PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and his wife Binota (third from R) in discussion with interior designer Mona Shah (L), Uniphos vice-chair Sandra Shroff and Praful Dewani, past president, RC Vapi.**





A view of PRIP Kalyan Banerjee's personal museum.

TRF (The Rotary Foundation) trustee (2001–05), RI president-elect, then RI president and TRF trustee chair (2016–17), he had collected many souvenirs gifted to the couple as tokens of love and appreciation.

Though the idea was sound, the Banerjees did not know how it would pan out. They needed an expert's help in taking it forward. And that expert was Mumbai's interior designer-architect-landscaper Mona Shah. The first step even before Mona began designing was to create a space for the gallery. So, the Banerjees got a spacious room constructed in the area above the portico of their bungalow in Vapi. Once that was done, Mona set out to use her creative genius. "The credit for the segments and design must go entirely to Mona," says the past RI president. "She decided how to classify the exhibits into various sections and then arrange them. Though she took inputs

from Binota and me, the designing was entirely her domain." While the gallery was designed by Mona Shah, its execution including the construction, carpentry and the furniture design were handled by Rotarian Praful Dewani from Banerjee's home club, Rotary Club of Vapi.

Work on the gallery began after Banerjee's term as the RI president ended. Operational since 2015, it has exhibits from the years 2009–10, 2011–12 and 2014–15. "I couldn't do it in 2013–14," he says. There are about eight to ten sections of which one is dedicated to PolioPlus, RI's biggest success story throughout the world.

Other classifications and sub-classifications are China, Africa, Seoul, Dubai, Kalyan Banerjee Trustee Chair, Recognition from around the world, and The Rotary Foundation among others.

Along with the displays, Mona has also given due importance to photographs and the audio-visual content. While she has displayed photographs of a young Kalyan Banerjee, when he had just joined the Rotary world and also when he and Binota got married, she has also created a corner where five important speeches of the past president can be watched. Ear phones are available too. In two corners, the photographs keep changing to include the vast repertoire of his life. His late wife, the gracious Binota, smiles from many photographs. Those who have met this soft-spoken Rotary partner, pause for a few minutes before the couple's photographs.

"I really enjoyed cataloguing and designing Kalyan Banerjee's Rotary journey spanning multiple decades within four walls," says Mona. "It was a surreal experience to take on

a humongous task to success and see the joy and inspiration the gallery brought to fellow Rotary members.” She took one step at a time. “We started with something as simple as moving his entire collection from various lofts and parts of his offices and residences and organised them based on geography and years of the events. What I enjoyed the most was creating a spotlight for each of the mementos and gifts he received over the course of his life’s work towards the Rotary association.”

Adds Dewani, “Binota’s dream came true when she gifted her husband this gallery to keep ‘memories of their Rotary journey’ alive for years to come. There are countrywide mementos, documented pictures with important world and India leaders, pictures of world Rotarians at various occasions, countrywide tokens of love, crystal mementos from different clubs other than Rotary, presidential themes woven on different fabrics, pictures of RI board of directors of various years, pictures capturing varied shades of the past president and headgears from different part of the world and a family corner.”

As RI president, Banerjee visited 97 countries and about 45 as the president-elect. He also received mementoes and gifts as TRF trustee and trustee chair. The gallery displays





those souvenirs from about 140 countries. Gurbani or a soothing music greets the visitor on entering the main gallery and plays throughout. “We have also kept another set of music as foreigners do not understand Gurbani,” explains Banerjee. Rotarians, GSE (Group Study Exchange) teams from various countries and pupils and college students are the main visitors.

There was a time when it seemed that the gallery would never take shape. It was Rotary year 2016–17 and Banerjee was the TRF chair. “In the last years of my trusteeship, Binota began withering away. She was ill and I wanted to devote my time to her,” he reminisces. A kind and quiet woman, Binota enjoyed much respect and love from Rotarians and their

partners. She had always been by her husband’s side when he discharged his duties as a Rotarian at various levels. When her condition began deteriorating, he decided to give her time and attention. He resigned from his post. “I felt I could not discharge my duties when Binota needed me by her side. But then, many senior Rotary leaders told me that six months had already elapsed and any new person who would have to suddenly fill my position wouldn’t be able to do much in the next six months. So, it made sense for me to continue. I then withdrew my resignation.”

Banerjee, 82, is a chemical engineer from IIT, Kharagpur, and retired from the board of United Phosphorus last year after decades of service. He has been chairman of UPL, Bangladesh too. He has also been president of Vapi Industries Association and chairman of the Gujarat chapter of the Confederation of Indian Industries.

Is he happy with the way the gallery has turned out? “I think it has probably come up better than I thought. I still keep adding things in it.”

He is now reviving his efforts in the field of literacy and medical services. He is joined in this initiative by Prof Nayan Patel, who serves on the International Advisory Board at Somerville College, University of Oxford. A past district governor himself, Patel is working on leprosy prevention in India, with an emphasis on Maharashtra. “I am getting involved in literacy and health services again as I have been passionate about these right from the beginning,” says Banerjee.

“Even if you are old and retired, you do not have to hang up your boots. You can continue doing the good work. Perhaps someday I will have a gallery of our efforts in the fields of literacy and health too,” says the sports lover, who had recently returned from Wimbledon, as a parting shot. ■

# A Mumbai Rotaract club dreams big

Rasheeda Bhagat

A single Rotaract club in Mumbai, Rotaract Club of Jai Hind College (RACJC), RID 3141, has done a bunch of very interesting projects, which makes its president Khushi Shetty, smile proudly as she looks back on the year just gone by. For one, she managed to do what so many other past presidents of her club had only dreamt about — hold a Lit fest, complete with a book launch.

Among the projects done by this club of 178 members, 70 per cent of them women, one of their best is the hosting of *Masti Mela*, a vibrant and joyful fun fair for the children of Asia's largest slum — Dharavi. This initiative aimed to bring happiness and excitement into the lives of these children growing up in a

*Masti Mela was not just about creating a fun fair; it was about spreading love, happiness, and a sense of community.*

**Khushi Shetty**  
IPP, RAC Jai Hind College





huge slum, offering them a break from their daily, not too shiny lives.

A variety of engaging games and activities was held to capture the children's imagination and ignite their enthusiasm. Some of the most popular games were ball-throwing and ring toss which came with prizes when the children hit the target. 'Find the correct tile' was designed to improve their observation skills, and the 'jumping jack' gave them enough scope for screams of delight. "A candy floss stall provided a sweet treat, adding to the festive atmosphere and leaving smiles on the children's faces. Understanding the importance of nourishment, our club ensured that the children were provided with a nutritious lunch, consisting of dishes like idli chutney, pav bhaji, and *sheera* for dessert. *Masti Mela* was not just about creating a fun fair; it was about spreading love, happiness, and a sense of community. The event showcased the transformative power of simple acts of kindness and the profound



**Above:** Club secretary Zainab Jetpurwala with a child at the *Masti Mela*.

**Left:** Children enjoying the *Masti Mela* fun fair organised by RAC Jai Hind College at the Dharavi slum.

impact they can have on the lives of others,” said the 2022–23 club president Khushi.

The day ended with joy and laughter; “we believe the memories of this day will stay with these children for a long time,” said club secretary Zainab Jetpurwala.

Coming to the next project, the Mumbai Students Film Festival, organised by the club recently, marked the fifth year of providing a platform to aspiring young filmmakers. The festival got 20 entries of short films of 10–12-minute duration, and showcased a diverse range of topics and perspectives. Well-known industry professionals, including Karthik Mallur, Saurabh Bharat, Priyanka Tanwar and Apoorva

I am so happy that we were finally able to put together a lit festival. This has been dreamt of by many past presidents.

Shaligram, served as judges, lending their expertise and guidance to the event.

“The top 10 films were selected for screening at the prestigious Creative Adda venue in Versova. The audience was captivated by the filmmakers’ artistic prowess and storytelling abilities, witnessing firsthand the depth of talent among the next generation of filmmakers. The films explored intriguing themes, including Mumbai’s vintage car culture and the hidden masks worn by teenagers in today’s complex society,” says Khushi.

Prizes were given for best direction, cinematography and editing. The winners were awarded citations and monetary prizes. The festival concluded on a high note as the entire team came together to celebrate their accomplishments. The atmosphere was filled with joy and enthusiasm as the participants showcased their unity through the vibrant RACJC dance and shout.

In June, the club organised its highly anticipated Lit Fest 23 in collaboration with *Speaking Souls* and *Re-Create Spaces*, providing a vibrant platform for literary exploration and artistic expression. The itinerary was packed with captivating events, including a book launch and conversation with the author Chattanathan. A stand-up

Club president Khushi Shetty (standing sixth from R) with the club’s executive board at the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Model UN programme.





comedy show titled ‘Comedy Central,’ an open mic event called *Alfaaz*, a mesmerising musical evening with *VibeZ*, and a pop-up marketplace, were also held.

The book launch and a Q&A session with Chattanathan, author of *The Heel*, gave the audience an insight into his writing journey. The stand-up comedy show featured the talented comedians Rowland Dominic and Praveen Pandya, providing a refreshing break filled with laughter. “*Alfaaz* gave budding poets and spoken word artists a platform to showcase their work, fostering a supportive and inclusive creative community. The musical evening *VibeZ* featured talented musicians and singers who captivated the audience with original compositions and Bollywood Mashups, creating a mesmerising atmosphere,” adds Khushi.

The pop-up marketplace where the Rotaractors raised funds for some of these projects by giving stalls on rent, allowed small businesses to promote their brands and offered the participants a chance to explore and support local entrepreneurship. “This further enhanced the festival’s vibrant atmosphere, fostering a sense of community and collaboration,” added Zainab.

Very excited about pulling off a lit fest — after all the Jaipur, Bengaluru and other big literary festivals make huge headlines all the time — Khushi said: “I am so happy that we were finally able to put together a lit festival. This has been dreamt of by many past presidents, but they simply couldn’t do it. But this year, we said we have to do it. So we first talked to some of our past presidents, learnt about their dreams, ideas and plans. At the end, my team decided

**Above:** The Mumbai Students Film Festival team felicitates a winner.

**Below:** Children participating in games at the *Masti Mela*.



on a one-day event with a pop-up market.” Her core team for these events had seven members.

She explains that the pop-up market is a kind of flea market but on a smaller scale and with brand exclusivity, giving small businesses an opportunity to offer brand exclusivity, and that really interested the crowd. “We put on offer a book launch, movie discussion, stand-up comedy, poetry, and brands from small businesses... all in one place, giving the audience a different kind of experience.”

**S**he adds that “in a bid to foster global awareness and cultivate a spirit of diplomacy among young minds, the club once again organised the fifth exciting event — an educational simulation of the United Nations.

The Model UN initiative aimed to provide students with an invaluable opportunity to delve into the world of international affairs and work collaboratively towards crafting resolutions for pressing global issues.

This inspiring initiative aimed to provide students with “an invaluable opportunity to delve into the world of international affairs and work collaboratively towards crafting resolutions for pressing global issues.”

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was simulated with the agenda of discussion being the violation of human rights in conflict zones. “Over the course of two

intensive days, the simulation brought together a diverse group of students, each representing a different country. Through role play and lively debates, participants stepped into the shoes of diplomats, grappling with real-world challenges and devising innovative solutions. The event not only tested their knowledge of global affairs but also honed their negotiation, critical thinking and public speaking skills.”

In the end, a draft resolution was presented. Participants had the opportunity to contribute their ideas, engage in productive discussions, and collaborate to form a resolution that represented their collective wisdom. The event underlined the importance of teamwork and cooperation in achieving common goals. But to take away the grimness of the debate, the youngsters also planned an entertainment segment, where they “engaged in a series of lighthearted activities. They exchanged anonymous messages through chits, adding an element of intrigue and surprise to the proceedings. Dancing and enacting various roles provided a platform for self-expression and creativity, allowing participants to unwind and enjoy themselves,” she added.

Asked what next Khushi smiles: “Now that a new Rotary year has begun, I have given the baton to the new leader, also a woman, Vedika Bansal. And our club will continue to do fun and meaningful events,” she adds.

*(More projects by this same club in the next issue)*



A session from the Lit Fest '23.

# Love all, says PRIP Banerjee

Team Rotary News



PRIP Kalyan Banerjee at the installation of Anil Chadda as president of RC Chandigarh. DG Arun Mongia is on the left.

**A**t the installation of the new leadership for RC Chandigarh, RID 3080, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee urged Rotarians to “hold on to the values of heritage, integrity, respect and excellence, much like the spirit of Wimbledon.” He said he was in the UK enjoying the Wimbledon matches when he was invited as chief guest to the installation event by PRIP Rajendra Saboo, a member of this club.

Every game in tennis, he said, “begins with ‘Love All’, and this spirit should be adopted in all our endeavours.” He stressed the need for mental health awareness, particularly in the context of the Covid pandemic’s far-reaching effect on the Indian population, including youngsters in schools and colleges. Banerjee urged Rotarians to embrace advanced technology such as AI to keep up with the fast-changing world.

Reflecting on the club’s history, PRIP Saboo recalled the donation of a mortuary van in 1961. He praised the club’s impressive track record, and said that two Chief Justices of India and six Supreme Court judges from the city were its members.

DG Arun Mongia shared plans of extensive eye check-up camps to address 10 lakh school children, establishment of a blood bank in Ambala Cantonment, four dialysis centres, and two eye hospitals in RID 3080.

Anil Chadda, president of RC Chandigarh, detailed a series of impactful social welfare initiatives to be undertaken by the club this year. The club is actively working towards establishing a human milk bank worth ₹31 lakh in Mohali. Additionally, the club will provide single-use bags for the apheresis machine at the Rotary Blood Bank Society Resource Centre at a cost of ₹16.6 lakh. He shared plans of a special programme dedicated to senior citizens, and service activities to commemorate the club’s 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and Chandigarh’s 70<sup>th</sup> year.

PRIP Banerjee released a coffee table book compiled by the club to highlight its numerous projects and endeavours across the city. ■



**From left:** IPP Vinod Kapoor, DG Arun Mongia, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, PRIP Rajendra Saboo, club president Anil Chadda and Teena Avninder Virk, director, Community Services, unveiling the coffee table book.

# A sophisticated device to treat mental illness

Jaishree

**R**otary Club of Delhi North, RID 3012, has installed a deep transcranial magnetic stimulator, a sophisticated equipment imported from the US to treat mental illness, at the Cosmos Institute of Mental and Behavioural Sciences (CIMBS), New Delhi. “We are heeding RI President Gordon McNally’s call to Rotarians to listen to the anguish of people with mental health issues

and zeroed in on this project last year,” says club president Raj Gopal Rangwala.

The non-invasive machine is effective in treating people suffering from extreme depression, bipolar and obsessive compulsive disorders, schizophrenia, substance addiction and neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis and stroke, conditions that cannot be treated through medicines or counselling support.



The equipment, worth ₹1.5 crore and procured with global grant support from RC Birtamode Midtown, RID 3292, Nepal, and TRF, was inaugurated in June by Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari in the presence RI director Raju Subramanian, IPDG Lalit Khanna, DRFC Sharat Jain and CIMBS director Dr Sunil Mittal.

**A demo of the new deep TMS machine sponsored by RC Delhi North.**





**From L:** IPDG Lalit Khanna, RC Delhi North president Raj Gopal Rangwala, CIMBS director Dr Sunil Mittal, IPP Ashok Mittal, RI Director Raju Subramanian and Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari during the inauguration of the medical equipment at the CIMBS.

Rangwala, explaining the procedure in simple terms, says that the device is fitted over a patient's head like a helmet. An electric current induced by a magnetic field stimulates that part of the brain earmarked by the doctor for treatment. "Each session lasts 30 minutes and a minimum of 20 sessions spread across a month is recommended for the patient. At present, 14 people are undergoing treatment at CIMBS with the help of this machine, and have shown remarkable response," he adds.

The club is spreading awareness about the availability of this device to other clubs and districts so that they can recommend patients in need of treatment to the hospital. "We want it to be a self-sustaining project. So we have designed a module where 33 per cent patients recommended by Rotary receive free treatment, another 33 per cent patients will be charged at 50 per cent of the cost, and the rest will pay the normal fee." The recommending club will take into account the socio-economic background of the person before prescribing the suitable slot.

**Right:** IPDG Khanna and club members after distributing e-tablets to 154 students at the Nagar Nigam Balika Inter College, Makanpur.

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**At present, 14 people are undergoing treatment at CIMBS with the help of this machine, and have shown remarkable response.**

**Raj Gopal Rangwala**  
president, RC Delhi North

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The 91-member club celebrated its diamond jubilee last year, and "this project was a fitting tribute to our dedicated team," says IPDG Lalit Khanna, a member of this club. Computer labs and smart classrooms for village schools, cataract surgeries and artificial limb camps, and bicycles for girl students in villages are some of the oft executed service projects of this club. Four Ekal Vidyalayas — single-teacher schools that provide informal education to children aged 6–14 — and a centre to train women in tailoring in Teharki village in Palwal district were sponsored by the club last year. ■



# Treating children with squint eyes in Mauritius

## Team Rotary News

The surgery has transformed her personality and boosted her confidence. She is enthusiastic to face the world these days,” said the mother of an 18-year-old girl who underwent a corrective surgery for squint eye disorder. Another boy, sitting on a hospital bed with a plaster on his left eye, was excited to say: “I have lived through 16 years with people making fun of my squint. I feel so wonderful after this surgery. I can now focus on getting on with my life.”

Rotary Club of Pondicherry Agaram, RID 2981, initiated a squint eye surgery project in Mauritius, Africa, following a request from RC Bagatelle there. Five ophthalmologists from India — Milind Killedar from Mumbai, Madhuri, Harsha, Priyanka and Vanaja Vaithiyanadan of RC Pondicherry Eves — screened around 175 children, all under 18, for squint and other eye disorders, at the Subramania Bharathi Government Eye Hospital in Port Louis, Mauritius. Sixty-five children with squint eye, shortlisted for corrective surgery, were operated upon over a week in April.



Mauritius health minister Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal with RC Pondicherry Agaram IPP K Sowrirajan and RC Bagatelle IPP Amaresh Ramlagun (R) visiting a child at the hospital ward.

Minister for health and wellness, Dr Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal who inaugurated the event lauded this initiative which “has helped clear a 16-month backlog in our region. The project is a golden opportunity for children suffering from strabismus to receive necessary treatment free of cost.”

Squint eye disorder is a common phenomenon here. “Surgery is done if other non-invasive options are not successful,” said K Sowrirajan, IPP RC Pondicherry Agaram. “This is probably the first international service project of our district. We signed an MoU with the Mauritius health ministry and RC Bagatelle to continue extending support to treat eye disorders in the island country.” The Indian doctors gave specialised training to their Mauritian counterparts to address the syndrome better.

Squint eye disorder or strabismus is a condition where the eyeballs are misaligned. “It creates a poor psychological impact particularly in school-going children as they are often ridiculed by friends and in public places. Left untreated, eyesight will eventually deteriorate,” said Amaresh Ramlagun, IPP RC Bagatelle. ■



The team of Indian ophthalmologists with club presidents Ramlagun and Sowrirajan on the inaugural day of the camp.



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# Chennai Annets summit the Everest Base Camp

Kiran Zehra

**S**itting in the cosy comfort of his home in Chennai and scrolling through breathtaking images of him summiting the Everest Base Camp on his mother's mobile, Ovium Lakshmanan, son of RID 3232 AG Vidya Ragu, brings back to life the trials and triumphs of his extraordinary journey. "It feels like only yesterday that I stood in awe before the mighty Himalayas, pushing the boundaries of my physical and mental strength," he says. The Everest Base Camp is at 5,364 metres (17,600 ft)

on the Himalayas. The 11-year-old completed the trek in seven days and created a record as the 'fastest child to complete Mt Everest Base Camp trek' in the Asia Book of Records.

Tusita, 12-year-old daughter of Mahesh Pattabhiraman, a member of RC Madras East, who also completed the trek with another group, says, "this was a wonderful experience and it has changed me as a person." As her group of eight left Kathmandu to reach Ramechhap, "we passed through the bustling city and the scene gradually

changed into more rural surroundings. The road wound through hills and small villages, providing us with glimpses of traditional Nepalese life. We also crossed rivers, terraced fields and lush green forests, adding to the scenic charm of our journey."

Ovium adds that "one of the highlights of our drive was the view of the Himalayan range. As it was a clear day, we were happy to see the snow-capped mountains in the distance, creating a breathtaking backdrop for our ride."





and was instantly transported to heaven. The flavours were different, yummy and healthy.” Tusita became “extremely fond of the *dal bhaat* and the hot chocolate served at a café in Namche village.”

Meeting a scientist who had done the base camp trek 58 times, and an 82-year-old man who planned to trek to Camp 2 at 21,000 ft, were “inspirational” for Ovium. “I was also lucky to see the Sun Dog phenomenon, a rare event where a circular rainbow surrounds the sun. It was mind-blowing.”

Talking about their triumphant arrival at the Everest Base Camp, the Annets remembered the biting cold winds, their frozen faces and the overwhelming sense of achievement that washed over all the difficulties. “Despite the exhaustion, I felt elated to be standing at the foot of the world’s highest peak holding the Indian flag, followed by the RID 3232 Annets banner. I was proud of what I had accomplished.” For Tusita this trek was “an amazing experience and has armed me with lessons I can use to achieve my own potential.” ■

At Ramechhap “we boarded a plane that could seat only 10 people to fly to Tenzing-Hillary Airport in Lukla, Nepal, considered a very dangerous airport because of its geographical location combined with factors such as a very short runway and limited electricity. It was exciting because we had the whole plane to ourselves. The flight was comfortable and I wasn’t scared,” says Tusita. Ovium described this flight as “a minibus in the sky. It was thrilling!”

He marvelled at the sherpas, “the unsung heroes, who guided and supported us every step of the way. They possessed an intimate knowledge of the terrain and the weather patterns, and ensured a safe and successful trek for us. My sherpas were equally tired and yet ran to serve us hot beverages and food during our stay at the base camp where the place was short-staffed. From navigating treacherous paths to erecting tents in harsh conditions, they ensured that each trekker had the opportunity to experience the awe-inspiring beauty of the Everest region.”

Both the children enjoyed the food served throughout the trek. Despite Ovium’s initial reservations about the “unfamiliar rajma and dal,” he took “a hesitant bite

**Above: Tusita, daughter of RC Madras East member Mahesh Pattabhiraman, after completing her trek to the Everest Base Camp.**

**Below: Ovium Lakshmanan, son of RID 3232 AG Vidya Ragu, at the Everest Base Camp at 17,600 ft on the Himalayas.**



# Utility kits for sugarcane farmers in Pune

Jaishree



Members of RC Pune East at a hamlet after distributing 'Happy Family Kits' to the villagers.

For three years now Rotary Club of Pune East, RID 3131, has been distributing 'Happy Family Kits' to migrant and economically challenged families in the rural belts of Pune. Each kit comprises ten items including a biogas stove, solar lamp, detergent soap and other toiletries, stainless steel containers, a basic first-aid box, sanitary pad

packets and tarpaulin, all packed into a travel bag. The project was conceptualised by club member and DGE Shital Shah in 2020–21. Around 2,500 families have benefited from the project so far.

There are several sugarcane farms on the outskirts of Pune. During the harvest season, the farmers who are otherwise employed elsewhere at meagre wages, visit

their farms for about four months. Most of them arrive with barely anything. "We identified such farmers and gifted them the family kits which will give them the basic necessities to keep them comfortable as they harvest their crop," says Vinay Patil, district chair, Happy Family Kit project. During earlier visits the Rotarians were moved by the pathetic living condition of the

people in other hamlets and decided to include them too as beneficiaries of the kits.

Each kit costs around ₹3,500 and Foseco India has been a consistent supporter of the project with its CSR funds. RC Pune East provides its share of funds through its trust and has also roped in 72 Rotary clubs in the past three years to contribute to this cause. “These clubs have also helped in identifying the beneficiary families,” he says.

Last year the club had applied for a global grant of \$62,500 to help 1,400 people with the kit. “But the grant didn’t go through due to the

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*The village Velhe is without much basic facilities, and the kits will be of great value for the people there.*

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**Sahil Vijay Shaha**  
president, RC Pune East

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sustainability factor. But we are hopeful of continuing the project this year with CSR grants and in-house funds,” says club president Sahil Vijay Shaha. This year the

club is planning to distribute 700 kits to start with and is working on upgrading the number to 2,000, “if we get lucky with a CSR partner,” smiles Shaha.

For the current year, the Rotarians have identified families in Velhe, a remote village, 70km from Pune. “It takes two hours to reach there. The village is without basic facilities, and the kits will be of great value to the people there.” The club has worked out a plan with its partnering Rotary clubs where two kits are given free when a club places an order for one. “This way we can also reach out to more beneficiaries,” says the club president. ■

Doing good with TRF help

## A Rotary trauma care centre at Karkala

Team Rotary News



TRF trustee vice chair Bharat Pandya and IPDG Jayagowri Hadigal inaugurate the trauma care centre at the Dr TMA Pai Rotary Hospital.

TRF trustee vice chair Dr Bharat Pandya recently inaugurated the Yermal Revathi Premananda Shenoy Rotary Trauma and Emergency Care Centre at the Dr TMA Pai Rotary Hospital in Karkala, Udupi district, Karnataka. The trauma care centre was set up by RC Karkala Rockcity, RID 3182, with equipment worth ₹52 lakh, with the support of RCs Crown Point and Chester County (Lionville), RID 6540, USA, and TRF, through a global grant.

IPDG Dr Jayagowri Hadigal, PDG Dr Bharathesh, DRFC Dr P Narayana, Vasantha Prabhu from RC Chester County, and HS Ballal, pro-chancellor of MAHE University, Manipal, were among those present at the inauguration of the facility. ■

# RC Madras Central revamps Gynaec OPD

V Muthukumaran

**N**ow patients and their attendants need not stand in an open area under the hot sun or get drenched in rain at the Gynaec OPD of the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (IOG) at the Government Hospital for Women and Children in Chennai. RC Madras Central, RID 3232, has set up a 36-seater, fully covered visitors' lounge spread over 2,000 sqft at a cost of ₹8 lakh. Also, the Fertility Research Centre (FRC) attached to the OPD has been revamped with partition walls and is neatly furnished at ₹3 lakh. The new lounge and Gynaec OPD upgradation were made possible with a CSR grant (₹11 lakh) from Meridian Global Ventures, garment exporters, owned by RID 3234 DGN and club member Vinod Saraogi.

The waiting area is named Mohini Saraogi visitors' lounge, in the name

of the DGN's mother. "We will soon be providing an RO water unit and a canteen on this premises to make the patients comfortable while awaiting their turn at the lounge," said Saraogi. IOG deputy director Dr Meena Suresh was looking for donors to take up the task of upgrading the Gynaec OPD, when she was directed by Tamil Nadu former health secretary P Senthil Kumar to approach Rotary.

"Dr Meena came to us when we were exploring medical projects in the focus area of mother and child three months ago. We visited the FRC which was then, a big hall with no partitions or cabins for screening patients, the lab was not well-equipped, and the entire place was not organised. But there was a steady arrival of patients, hence we thought of revamping the fertility centre, and

setting up a visitors' lounge," recalled Saraogi.

The club's IPP K P Sreekumar approached corporates to help fund the medical project, but Saraogi, after seeing the derelict condition of the Gynaec OPD, which is heavily crowded, came forward to fund the renovation work through his company.

## New look fertility centre

Sporting a gleaming look, the FRC has a neatly partitioned OPD clinic, scan room, counselling room, IUI (intra-uterine insemination) room, semen analysis lab, and semen and blood collection rooms. "After the revamp, the footfalls have risen from 30–40 to 50–60 patients a day at the FRC which uses the Assisted Reproductive Technology. At any given time, at least 10 patients will undergo investigation or

**RID 3234 DGN Vinod Saraogi (fourth from R) and his wife Usha, along with (from L) the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology deputy director Dr Meena Suresh, its director Dr K Kalaivani; DG Ravi Raman (3<sup>rd</sup> from R), to his left, RC Madras Central president Prakash Vaidyanathan and RID 3232 public image chair C Muthusamy (extreme right) at the new visitors' lounge.**





**RID 3234 DGN Saraogi, DG Ravi Raman and club members at the revamped fertility clinic.**

minor surgeries here,” explained Dr K Kalaivani, director, IOG.

The Gynaec OPD gets around 120 patients a day. Thanking Rotary profusely, she said, “it was only after RC Madras Central started their work, the government woke up and began to deliver equipment at the FRC. Now, they have given us a seed money of ₹1.5 crore for the FRC-Level 2 which will come up shortly. Once again we will approach

the club for support and monetary help in completing the expansion work.”

DG Ravi Raman said the visitors’ lounge and the upgraded FRC were excellent and “the project was well done by the club. Now, the IOG team will always approach Saraogi and this club to further improve the facilities.” The clubs are ready to work and support the hospital staff by providing medical facilities or in doing expansion work, he assured.

Club president Prakash Vaidyanathan said, “we are happy to reach out to society through this medical project. The IOG and hospital staff must keep asking us and we will be happy to do what they want.”

Usha, wife of Vinod Saraogi, said she was “thrilled” when a mother with a newborn said, ‘Madam, the facilities are excellent here.’

Pictures by V Muthukumaran

## Delhi hospitals get Rotary ambulances

**Team Rotary News**



From L: IPP Vikas Dhingra, RI Director T N Raju Subramanian, DG Jeetender Gupta, past presidents Ajeet Jalan, Rajan Chopra and Deepti, spouse of DG Jeetender Gupta, after the inauguration of an ambulance.

Rotary Club of Delhi South West, RID 3011, donated seven ambulances to hospitals in Faridabad, Rohtak, Delhi, Palwal and Gurgaon, and a van to the Shauriya Foundation that takes care of children with autism disorder. The ₹80-lakh project was sponsored through a CSR grant from EValue Serve solicited by past president Ajeet Jalan.

RID TN Raju Subramanian, inaugurating the project, complimented the club members and recalled the acute suffering of people due to shortage of ambulances for emergency care during Covid. “You are doing an invaluable service to people with life threatening illnesses to get medical help as quickly as possible,” he said. DG Jeetender Gupta, IPDG Ashok Kantoor, PDGs Sanjiv Rai Mehra and Vinay Bhatia were also present at the inaugural. ■

# WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK



## THE ALL-MEMBER SURVEY IS COMING IN OCTOBER!

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To make sure you receive the survey, update your email address at [my.rotary.org/profile/me](https://my.rotary.org/profile/me).

# Project Vignettes

## Team Rotary News

### Club builds a Rotary Bhavan



TRF trustee vice-chair Bharat Pandya inaugurates the Rotary Bhavan in the presence of IPDG Anand Jhunjhunuwala, PDGs K S Sunder Rajan, Kishor Kedia and club members.

RC Chopda, RID 3030, fulfilled its 52-year dream with the inauguration of its Rotary Bhavan in the city. Fundraising efforts and a ₹5 lakh donation from past president LN Patil made the 2,000 sqft hall a reality for the club. TRF trustee vice-chair Bharat Pandya inaugurated the new facility in the presence of former Assembly Speaker Arunbhai Gujarathi and IPDG Anand Jhunjhunuwala. ■

### RC Mulund honours Rajashree Birla



Eminent philanthropist Rajashree Birla being felicitated by motivational speaker from the Brahmakumaris movement BK Shivani in the presence of PRID Ashok Mahajan (second from L).

RC Mulund, RID 3141, recently honoured Rajashree Birla, chairperson, Aditya Birla Foundation for Community Initiatives and Rural Development, with the Paragon of Philanthropy Award during its diamond jubilee celebrations in Mumbai. Rajashree, having given over ₹150 crore, is the second largest individual contributor to TRF. ■

### Help for flood victims



Rotarians with the flood relief material to be handed over to the Mohali Deputy Commissioner.

Two submersible pumps, 300 grocery bags and 50 bed-sheets were handed over to the deputy commissioner of the Mohali Municipal Corporation by RC Chandigarh Central, RID 3080. The pumps will be used to remove the flood water brought in by the recent heavy rains in low-lying areas and basements of residential complexes, and the grocery bags will be distributed to the flood victims. ■

### Notebook donation drive



Club members distributing notebooks to students.

Students at Shantaba School in Kukeri village near Surat received notebooks from RC Surat, RID 3060. Over 3,000 notebooks were distributed and club members Sanjay Jalan and Anurag Kapoor pledged to sponsor the yearly expenses of one student each, totalling ₹30,000 per year. ■

# The Rotary Foundation Trustees

The RI president-elect nominates the trustees, who are elected by the RI Board to four-year terms. Four new trustees take office on July 1.



**Barry Rassin**  
**Chair 2023–24**  
**Trustee 2020–24**  
**RC East Nassau, Bahamas**

Barry Rassin is a director and former president of Doctors Hospital Health System in Nassau, Bahamas, where he retired after a 38-year career.

A Rotarian since 1980, Rassin served as RI president in 2018–19, when he advocated for closer partnership between Rotary and Rotaract clubs and presented the measure that broadened the definition of membership in RI to include Rotaract clubs at the 2019 CoL. He has served RI as director, TRF trustee and vice-chair, chair of both the Finance and the Shaping Rotary's Future Committees, RI training leader and seminar trainer.

Rassin has received the Service Above Self Award. He and his spouse, Esther, are Major Donors, Benefactors, Paul Harris Fellows and members of the Paul Harris Society.



**Mark Maloney**  
**Chair-elect 2023–24**  
**Trustee 2021–25**  
**RC Decatur, Alabama, USA**

Mark Maloney is a principal in the law firm of Blackburn, Maloney and Schuppert..

Maloney served as RI president during 2019–2020, when he presided over the first virtual RI Convention that was organised during the Covid-19 pandemic. A Rotarian since 1980, he has also served as an RI director; Foundation trustee and vice-chair; and aide to 2003–04 RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe. He has also participated in the CoL; he was an adviser to the 2004 Osaka Convention Committee, chaired the 2014 Sydney Convention Committee, and chaired RI's Operations Review Committee for four terms.

He served as Future Vision Committee vice-chair; Foundation training institute moderator; Foundation permanent fund national adviser; member and vice-chair of the Peace Centers Committee; member of the International PolioPlus Committee; and adviser to the Foundation's WinS Target Challenge Committee.

Maloney's wife, Gay, is an attorney in the same law firm and a member and past president of RC Decatur Daybreak, Alabama, USA. Both support TRF as Paul Harris Fellows, Major Donors and Bequest Society members.



**Bharat Pandya**  
**Trustee 2022–26**  
**RC Borivli, Maharashtra**

Bharat Pandya is a practising general and laparoscopic surgeon. He and his wife, Madhavi, a gynaecologist, own a private hospital in Mumbai.

Pandya joined Rotary in 1989 as a charter member of his club. During his year as DG, his district, RID 3140 contributed over \$2 million to TRF, making it the top contributor worldwide for 2006–07.

He has served Rotary, as director, RI treasurer, RC, training leader and member of Rotary's Membership, Strategic Planning, Leadership Development and Convention Promotion Committees and on the India PolioPlus Committee. He has received the Service Above Self Award, TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service and Distinguished Service Award. He and Madhavi are Level 2 Major Donors to the Foundation.



**Martha Peak Helman**  
**Trustee 2022–26**  
**RC Boothbay Harbor**  
**Maine, USA**

Marty Helman spent her career as a writer for business executives and as a magazine editor at McGraw-Hill and the American Management Association. Later, she served as president of the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, a nonprofit that has partnered with TRF to fund the new Rotary Peace Center that will be located at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul.

Helman and her late spouse, Frank, joined RC Boothbay Harbor in 2003. She has served Rotary as chair of the Peace Major Gifts Initiative and on the working group to select a site for the new peace centre. Helman initiated an effort to

support the Sakuji Tanaka Rotary Peace Fellowship, which raised \$1 million for the Rotary Peace Centers.

She is an AKS member, and supports Rotary as a member of the Paul Harris Society and PolioPlus Society. She and Frank were charter members of the Legacy Society of TRF.



**Chun-Wook Hyun**

**Trustee 2023–27**

**RC Seoul-Hansoo, Korea**

Chun-Wook Hyun is senior partner at Seoul-based Kim & Chang. A charter member of RC Seoul-Hansoo in 1991, Hyun has served RI as training leader, RIPR and Host Organisation Committee member and legal adviser to the Seoul Convention in 2016. He also serves as director of Rotary Foundation Korea. He is an AKS member.



**Jennifer Jones**

**Trustee 2023–27**

**RC Windsor-Roseland, Ontario**

Jones is the founder of a media company in Ontario that has helped countless corporations and not-for-profit organisations lead with conviction and credibility.

She was the first woman to serve as RI president in 2022–23. She is the recipient of Rotary's Service Above Self Award and TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. She holds a Doctor of Law and has been recognised with the YMCA Peace Medallion and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. She is also the first Canadian to receive Wayne State University's Peacemaker Award.

Jones is married to Nick Krayacich, a family physician. They support TRF as members of the AKS, Paul Harris Society and Bequest Society.



**Holger Knaack**

**Trustee 2022–26**

**RC Herzogtum Lauenburg-Mölln, Germany**

Knaack is the owner of Knaack KG, a real estate company. A Rotary member since 1992, Knaack has served Rotary as president, treasurer, director, moderator, member and chair of several committees, representative for the CoL, zone coordinator, training leader and DG.

He was an endowment/major gifts adviser and co-chair of the Host Organisation Committee for the 2019 RI Convention in Hamburg.

Knaack and his wife, Susanne, are Major Donors and members of the Bequest Society.



**Hsiu-Ming Lin**

**Trustee 2020–24**

**RC Taipei Tungteh, Taiwan**

Lin is managing director of Continental Worldwide Enterprises Co. Ltd., a company that designs and integrates satellite communications systems.

A Rotarian since 1988, Lin has served Rotary as an RRFC, RC, RIPR, committee member and chair, and director and treasurer on the RI Board. He and his wife, Chen-Yi, are AKS members. Lin is also a Benefactor of TRF and a Paul Harris Fellow.



**Larry Lunsford**

**Trustee 2021–25**

**RC Kansas City-Plaza Missouri, USA**

Larry Lunsford, a certified public accountant, is senior vice-president and chief financial officer of Bernstein-Rein

Advertising, Inc.

In 1982, he was chosen as the Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar to Australia. Lunsford joined Rotary in 1991, served RI as director, and aide to RI President Mark Maloney. He has also served as zone institute chair, RPIC, TRF alumni coordinator, RRFC, IA leaders' seminar trainer, and chair of TRF's Rotary Peace Centers Committee.

Lunsford and his wife, Jill are Major Donors, Benefactors and Bequest Society members. He has been awarded TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service and the RI Service Above Self Award.



**Geeta Manek**

**Trustee, 2020–24**

**RC Muthaiga, Kenya**

Geeta Manek, a second-generation Kenyan, graduated from business school in the UK before returning to Nairobi to join the family retail and property management business.

Geeta joined Rotary in 1997. Her roles have included RC, chair of the Health Major Gifts Initiative and of the Joint Committee on Partnerships, member of the Major Gifts Initiative Oversight Team and the Rotary Institute Host Organising Committee and RI training leader. She was also the only female governor of District 9200 before

it was divided into Districts 9211 and 9212 in 2012–13. She also served as her district's coordinator of the Kick Polio Out of Africa Campaign.

She's helping lead a Rotary literacy initiative in Kenya. Geeta has been honoured with the Service Above Self Award. She and her spouse, Kaushik — who served as DG in 2008–09 — are Major Donors and Benefactors, as well as Bequest Society and AKS members.



**Aziz Memon**  
**Trustee 2020–24**  
**RC Karachi, Pakistan**

Aziz Memon is chair of the Kings Group, a leading garment exporters in Pakistan.

Since he joined Rotary in 1995, he was recognised for his leadership in polio eradication. Memon has served as member of the IPPC and chair of the Pakistan PolioPlus Committee. He was the recipient of the Louis Pasteur Medal by the Institut Pasteur.

Memon has received the Service Above Self Award, the International and Regional Service Awards for a Polio-Free World, and TRF's Distinguished Service Award and Citation for Meritorious Service. He and his wife, Samina, are AKS members.



**Akira Miki**  
**Trustee 2021–25**  
**RC Himeji, Japan**

Akira Miki, a dentist with his own practice, joined Rotary in 1981. He has served as RI director and a special advisor for the Foundation Trustees in 2020–21.

He has also served as RIPR, training leader, GETS trainer, ARC and CoL representative. He is director of the RI Japan Youth Exchange Committee. Miki is a former Interactor and a recipient of TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. He and his wife, Chiharu, are members of AKS, Benefactors and Major Donors to TRF.



**Greg E Podd**  
**Trustee 2022–26**  
**RC Evergreen, Colorado, USA**

Greg is a retired certified public accountant and financial expert in his own firm.

He joined Rotary in 1982, served RI vice-president and director. He also served on the Operations Review Committee and TRF's Investment Committee. He was a training leader, and a CoL representative.

As a TRF's major gifts adviser, Greg organised his district's Million Dollar Dinner, which raised more than \$3.1 million in one night.

Greg has received the Service Above Self Award and TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. He and his spouse, Pam, are Major Donors and members of the AKS, Bequest Society and Paul Harris Society.



**Carlos Sandoval Delgado**  
**Trustee 2023–27**  
**RC San Nicolás de los Garza, Mexico**  
Sandoval is chair of Orsan Corp, a leading company in the energy sector and the main distributor of Exxon Mobil in Mexico.

He joined Rotary in 1975, and has served RI and TRF as RRFC, member of the Fund Development and Peace Centers committees, and extraordinary donations endowment/major gifts assessor. He will also serve as Community Economic Development Major Gifts Initiative adviser through 2025.

Sandoval is a recipient of TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. He and his spouse, Martha, are Platinum Trustees Circle members of the AKS.



**Dennis J Shore**  
**Trustee 2023–27**  
**RC Hawthorn, Australia**

Dennis Shore, a chartered chemical engineer, joined Rotary in 1980. He has served as endowment/major gifts adviser and is vice-chair of Rotary

Foundation Australia. He has served three times as RIPR and twice as CoL representative. He was a vice-chair and promotions director of the Host Organisation Committee for the RI Convention in Melbourne in May.

He convened a million-dollar dinner in 2017 that raised over \$3.5 million for TRF. Shore and his wife, Lynda, are Major Donors and Bequest Society members. He is a member of the District 9800 Paul Harris Society and a recipient of TRF's Distinguished Service Award and the Citation for Meritorious Service.



**John Hewko**  
**General Secretary and Chief Executive Officer RC Kyiv, Ukraine**

Refer Aug'23 issue for Hewko's bio.

# From RI South Asia office desk

## Fundraising highlights from South Asia for Rotary year 2022–23

- India has achieved its highest ever contribution of **\$31.2 million** and has retained its No 2 position in worldwide TRF giving.
- RID 3141 ranks world No 1 with a total giving of \$6.5 million.
- Nine districts from India has crossed \$1 million mark.
- 38 new AKS members (including level change) from South Asia have been added during 2022–23.
- 71 per cent clubs and 32 per cent members have contributed to TRF with 10 districts achieving 100% Giving Clubs status.

### Zone-wise TRF contribution as on June 2023 (interim unaudited)

in US\$

Zone	Annual giving	PolioPlus	Endowment Fund	Other giving	Total contribution
4	2,884,115	177,420	1,664,264	8,427,642	13,153,441
5	2,293,397	498,792	567,171	3,572,777	6,932,137
6	1,368,954	140,348	374,507	1,776,751	3,660,560
7	2,645,959	302,428	932,757	3,121,046	7,002,190
<b>Total</b>	9,192,424	1,118,987	3,538,700	16,898,216	30,748,328
<b>Total<sup>#</sup></b>	8,950,358	2,074,372	3,416,792	16,778,662	31,220,184
<b>1B*</b>	189,936	86,524	55,125	462,120	793,705
<b>Total<sup>#</sup></b>	9,497,439	2,216,404	3,699,592	17,454,994	32,768,429

<sup>#</sup> India and South Asia total contribution includes \$1 million contribution of Rajashree Birla for Polio.

\*Zone-1B figure includes only Pakistan and Bangladesh.

### South Asia's million dollar districts 2022–23 (interim unaudited update)

Zone	District	Total contribution	Worldwide rank
4	3141	\$6,510,341	1
7	3131	\$2,615,321	5
5	3232	\$1,998,018	9
4	3011	\$1,836,479	12
5	3201	\$1,808,675	13
4	3012	\$1,765,200	14
7	3190	\$1,633,379	17
6	3110	\$1,311,847	34
4	3060	\$1,054,754	58

## Certificate of Appreciation for districts

During their April 2023 meeting, the TRF trustees took a decision to annually recognise districts that achieve at least 90 per cent compliance with grant reporting requirements during a Rotary year. Please refer to Section 34.050.3. in the TRF code of policies for further details. Your dedication towards transparent reporting and stewardship is instrumental in driving meaningful impact in your communities.

Thirty-nine districts worldwide were recognised for their exceptional grant reporting efforts during 2022–23 and they received a certificate of appreciation signed by the trustee chair. TRF trustee vice-chair Bharat Pandya joins Rotary's stewardship department in congratulating RID 3203 on receiving this important recognition.

Rotary encourages all districts to aim for reporting compliance above 90 per cent in the next four quarterly analyses and 100 per cent compliance with district grants and district-sponsored global grants for Rotary year 2023–24. Your dedication towards transparent reporting and stewardship is instrumental in driving meaningful impact in your communities. Keep up the great work, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours. ■



# From global warming to “global boiling”

Preeti Mehra

*After the world experienced the hottest July ever,  
the alarm bells are ringing.*

Are concerns about global warming exaggerated by over-enthusiastic environment activists? Those who like to wish the problem away would like to think so. They might even remind you of how former US President Donald Trump had infamously ridiculed climate change activists as “prophets of doom” at the World Economic Forum meet in Davos in 2020. He had also dismissed climate advocacy groups as “alarmists” who want to “control every aspect of our lives.”

But in 2023 after the world experienced the hottest July in recorded history and confronted unexpected weather events — flash floods, forests fires, melting glaciers, intense heat and ocean waters heating to record levels — the sceptics are having second thoughts.

The consensus among governments is that we are facing a climate emergency. The realisation had

dawned a few years ago, but 2023 set the alarm bells ringing louder because of the severity of the decline.

But despite all the warning signs, I still meet people who say that green activism is just a “fad” practised by the elite. Climate change, they assert, is nothing new and nature will correct itself. Others point out that global warming is a myth because we still

have winters. In fact, warming may not be as bad as it is made out to be, they say, making light of the issue.

Going green should not be perceived as a pastime practiced by people who have nothing better to do. Neither is it a hobby horse for killjoys who derive some pleasure out of waging a war against plastic or air pollution. The realisation must dawn that this is

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We hear a lot about  
carpooling, but how many  
of us implement this in our  
daily lives?

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a serious issue, and a green lifestyle must be incorporated into all our lives. We must act at the personal and collective levels to save the environment. And all of us, governments included, have a role to play.

As responsible citizens we must lead by example. We hear a lot about carpooling, but how many of us implement this in our daily lives? Even if we do make an earnest start, we soon lose interest because enjoying our private space in a vehicle is no doubt a lot better than sharing it with fellow passengers. Here is where commitment and a small bit of sacrifice comes in. Remember every additional vehicle on the road means more fossil fuel burnt and more air pollution.

No one is asking you to junk your car till such time that you can afford an expensive electric vehicle. But reducing

its use will certainly help. Thus, if you can leisurely walk to a nearby destination that would be a better and healthier option than driving. And also keep in mind that a shared vehicle reduces carbon emissions and the number of vehicles on the road.

Then again, we often talk about the wisdom in using public transport instead of private vehicles. But the line-up of cars outside schools is proof enough that many parents prefer to send their children in the comfort of personal vehicles rather than in school buses. This must change. We have to begin practising what we preach and forego some privileges. Remember, green living begins at home.

The same goes for single-use plastic. I know of friends who go shopping in all earnest armed with a cloth or jute bag. But they don't stop the friendly neighbourhood vegetable vendor when he packs beans or tomatoes into a plastic bag, to avoid their getting mixed up in the bag. The upshot of this is that they return from the market with an environment-friendly bag full of non-recyclable plastic!

According to industry estimates, annual plastic production in India stands at 20 million metric tonnes. Of this about 8.6 million tonnes is single-use plastic which cannot be recycled. It ends up in landfills or as plastic pollution on the land. It also clogs our rivers and finally ends up in the ocean where environmentalists have identified garbage patches which contaminate the marine ecosystem.

But what can we do in the face of a plastic explosion with annual production estimated to hit 1.1 billion tonnes worldwide by 2050? The fight seems one-sided but each of us can contribute. As Bill Gates put it: "The market is ruled by supply and demand, and as a consumer you can have a huge impact on the demand side of the equation. If all of us make individual

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I know of friends who go shopping in all earnest armed with a cloth or jute bag, only to return with an environment-friendly bag full of non-recyclable plastic.

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changes in what we buy and use, it can add up to a lot.."

But though individual action matters, that alone will not do. Those among us who can influence public opinion or government decisions can have an even more profound impact. A collective awakening towards environmental issues and climate change is essential to make governments and industry to act. But at the individual level you can influence your neighbours, community and your club. You can also encourage them to petition governments and captains of industry to bring about change. Collective pressure often works.

The urgency of the environmental crisis cannot be overstressed. At the end of the hottest July the world has ever witnessed, UN secretary general Antonio Guterres had this message for the world: "Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning. The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived," he said, adding that there can be "no more hesitancy. No more excuses. No more waiting for others to move first."

It's high time all of us act. And act with sincerity of purpose.

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



# Meet your



**Arun Bhargava**  
*Packaging designer*  
*RC Mumbai Andheri, RID 3141*

## Embrace change

**I**nspire giving, instead of demanding," says Arun Bhargava. "Shift the focus from contributions to the real-world change Rotary is creating. This approach will spark genuine enthusiasm among members, resulting in generous contributions." He urges his district members to access valuable resources on *rotary.org* as well as engage directly with programme experts. "to proactively seek knowledge in areas that deeply interest them."

Bhargava is captivated by Rotary's remarkable ability to adapt to an ever-changing world and remain relevant across different eras. His leadership is inspired by this mantra. "Embrace change, harness it and turn it into a catalyst for growth."

A staunch believer in "intentional membership," Bhargava emphasises the significance of not rushing anyone into joining Rotary. "Prospective members deserve a clear picture of the commitments involved, paired with the transformative benefits of Rotary."

His district is "actively working to incorporate individuals from diverse backgrounds into our Rotary clubs. RC Equivalence, chartered in April 2023, offers a welcoming space for LGBTQIA individuals, their families, friends and allies."

He will continue to work on the National Integration project in collaboration with the Indian Army, which aims to boost education, healthcare, and women's empowerment in Kashmir. By training 100 rural women in nursing, RID 3141 will address the critical medical gaps in 300 villages in Kashmir.



**Asha Venugopal**  
*Journalism, RC Nasik Grapecity, RID 3030*

## Lead by example

**S**tarting as a young Girl Guide and NCC cadet, Asha Venugopal's parents instilled in her "the value of being a go-getter," a trait she has carried into her roles in Rotary since 2010. On the day of her installation as DG she contributed \$250,000 to TRF to become an AKS member. "While becoming an AKS member boosts the Foundation's impact, it will encourage members in my district to also come forward and give to TRF," she says. Asha aims to raise \$500,000 for the Foundation through her district.

To ensure that her district makes a tangible difference to the community she has set "simple, doable initiatives". *Project Akanksha*: An app for Classes 7 to 10, delivering comprehensive lessons via smartphones aims to support 50,000 students. Under *Project Boond*, aerators will be distributed to homes, cutting water wastage by 60 per cent. Of the planned 5,500 bicycles, 1,000 have already been given to underprivileged students.

District clubs are welcoming LGBTQIA members, but women's membership needs a boost, Asha acknowledges, and adds that "diverse membership means an increased number of Rotarians, membership dues, event involvement and fundraising, leading to stronger economic support for Rotary's growth and initiatives."

She suggests background checks before inviting potential members to join and recommends newcomers explore the Rotary Leadership Institute to enhance their understanding of Rotary.

# Governors

Kiran Zehra



**Anandtha Jothi**

*Hospitality, RC Dindigul, RID 3000*

## Rotary optimal platform for women

Anandtha Jothi's Rotary journey began with a friend's invitation to a club meeting, coinciding with her entry into her family's hospitality business. She segments her life into two distinct phases — "before becoming the club president in 2006, and after. This pivotal role exposed me to a broader perspective, enabling me to make decisions with a holistic vision."

For membership growth, she advocates the *Each One Bring One* approach and encourages members to share their personal success stories, illustrating the profound impact Rotary has had on their lives. "Rotary provides an optimal platform for women professionals and entrepreneurs. Highlight this when you meet a potential woman member," she urges. She is delighted that RC Tiruchirappalli Butterflies, an all-women's club was recently recognised for achieving 150 per cent growth by adding 22 new members to the existing 33.

She is determined to "challenge the status quo and perspective of clubs that have only male members. We've already initiated the formation of 11 mixed-gender clubs, and two of them have been chartered. Notably, a 67-year-old, men-only club has now welcomed younger members and women," she smiles.

During her tenure, the district aims to construct 100 toilet blocks for girls and distribute 100 auto rickshaws for women, all with CSR support. Her target for TRF giving is \$2.5 million.



**Raghavan S**

*Energy Conservation, RC Hosur, RID 2982*

## His journey is powered by Rotary

From the corridors of a government school and college as a student, to "commanding the stage, inaugurating projects, and engaging with amazing individuals — this extraordinary journey is powered by Rotary," marvels Raghavan. He credits his friend Satya Parsa for introducing him to Rotary in 1997.

He believes that "classification" as part of a club's membership structure, fosters friendship and brings diverse skills to the clubs." He urges his team to "outline the financial commitment, time and dedication Rotary requires before inducting new members."

Raghavan highlights the value of staying well-informed through *Rotary News*, and *Rotary* magazines. He recommends to his team to leverage the tools available on [rotary.org](http://rotary.org) and the Rotary App for instant access to vital information.

He finds Rotary's resilience during the World Wars "motivating but the future of the organisation depends on what we give to it today." He aims to raise \$1 million to TRF.

The DG plans to charter 100 Rotaract, Interact and RCC clubs. On his to-do list are 10 marathons and a Rotary train journey from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to raise awareness on organ donation and other causes. A cancer detection van valued at ₹1.4 crore is also in the pipeline. Funds for all the projects will be raised by the clubs, grants and CSR.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

# A community forest near Jamshedpur

Team Rotary News

Until June 2022, a one-acre plot on the outskirts of Patamda village, 35km from Jamshedpur, at East Singhbhum district, was a barren piece of land. The Rotarians of RC Jamshedpur Steel City, RID 3250, commenced the new Rotary year by planting 1,000 native saplings on this patch of land, naming it 'The Hope Grove'.

"We are awaiting the monsoon season to set in and will be planting more saplings in the coming months," says club president Amrita Vakharia. Environmental experts and community members were consulted and naturalised species such as teak, sheesham, karanj, neem, mahua,



Club member Trilok Singh plants a sapling in the presence of the Garigram village sarpanch, Lion Ramesh Sheth, RC Jamshedpur Steel City president Amrita Vakharia and Manju Singh.



jackfruit, jamun and mango, suitable for the local ecology, were chosen for the plantation.

The objective, says Amrita, is to create a sustainable ecosystem and improve the air quality, soil and moisture conservation, and create a favourable environment for the villagers and the habitats. "Our community forest with its lush greenery will soon enhance the beauty of the area. We have built a Rotary gate at the entry point and since the land is on the West Bengal highway, it is a perfect way to enhance Rotary's public image." The entire area will be fenced to protect the plants and the saplings will be scientifically groomed for one year by the Aadiwasi Welfare Foundation.



“We decided it will not be a one-time affair where we plant saplings ceremoniously and later forget about them. So we roped in experts to nurture them

and ensure that the plants grow into a healthy forest. Every member was excited to participate in this initiative,” she says.

Amrita is hopeful that the forest, with its fruit-bearing trees and medicinal herbs, will benefit the 500 families residing in the village in the next 10–15 years. ■

## Helping women and tribals

**S**ewing machines and masala mixers, each worth ₹15,000, were given by RC Rajgurunagar, RID 3131, to 170 women who had lost their husband during the Covid pandemic to help them earn a regular income working from home. The project cost was ₹20 lakh.

The club has done over 30 projects that had benefitted the tribal families and vulnerable groups in the community, said IPP Jayashri Padwal. Reaching out to tribal hamlets, the club donated solar lights worth ₹1.2 lakh to 120 families across 11 villages who were living without electricity and faced many hardships in their daily chores.

Fifteen multipurpose solar sets and two solar street lamps were provided to a remote village located deep



Solar lamps being distributed to villagers.

in the Sahyadri valley at a total cost of ₹50,000. “There is no road, light, school or medical facility in this tribal village,” said Jayashri. As students were sitting on the floor at a zilla parishad school in one of the villages, “we donated 50 desk-benches worth

₹3.5 lakh.” IPDG Anil Parmar was present at the event. Umbrellas and school bags were gifted to the students.

Under *Project Green India Campaign*, 600 cotton bags stitched by underprivileged women were distributed to the public. ■

# Rotary awards

## \$2 million grant to fight cervical cancer in Egypt

Etelka Lehoczky

**U**nited to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt, an initiative to reduce the number of cases while raising awareness and improving women's access to preventive care, is the recipient of Rotary's third annual Programs of Scale award. The grant was announced in May at the RI Convention in Melbourne, Australia.

Building on the expertise and knowledge of key partners, the four-year programme in and around Cairo will vaccinate more than 30,000 girls, aged 9–15, provide cancer screenings for 10,000 women, and launch a public awareness campaign to reach four million people. Healthcare workers, school administrators and staff will

receive training on cervical cancer and its causes to ensure proper care and counseling for women and girls.

“As a cancer survivor, I am proud that we are supporting this project — and especially gratified that we are taking such an important step to support women's health,” said RI President Jennifer Jones, who announced the grant at the convention. “By providing preventive care, we can empower women and girls with the knowledge and resources they need to stay healthy and thrive. This programme is further proof that Rotary is capable of creating large-scale, meaningful programmes that create lasting change.”

Cervical cancer is considered one of the most preventable cancers. It's caused primarily by the human papillomavirus, which is responsible for the most common viral infection of the reproductive tract. Ninety per cent of cervical cancer deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, where cancer screenings and routine HPV vaccinations aren't available and cultural misconceptions may deter women from seeking care.

A 2021 WHO report showed that only 1 per cent of women aged 30–49 in Egypt had ever been screened for cervical cancer and of those diagnosed with the disease, more than half die from it. By providing vaccines to girls, screenings and timely treatment for women, and accessible information, *United to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt* strives to reduce the burden of this preventable disease and encourage communities to prioritise women's health.

“By increasing awareness and promoting preventive care for cervical cancer, we can save lives and create healthier communities in Egypt,” said Amal El-Sisi, a paediatrics professor at Cairo University and a member of RC El Tahrir. “As we gather data for the first time on the HPV and cervical cancer burden in the greater Cairo area,



Illustration by Gwen Keraval

# Past Programs of Scale award recipients

**U**nited to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt is the third recipient of Rotary's annual Programs of Scale grant. The first two grants supported programmes in Zambia and Nigeria that have already made significant progress in improving the health of communities in those countries.

**2020–21: Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia** aims to reduce cases of malaria in 10 heavily affected districts in Zambia's Central and Muchinga provinces. The programme is especially focused on reducing severe malaria and death among pregnant women and children under age five.

- With the support of several local implementing partners, the programme has trained and supported 245 health facility staff members and added 2,500 community health workers to

the national health system in Zambia. The community health workers are trained in integrated community case management, which targets the three diseases that cause the most deaths in children under age five: malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea. They also participate in polio immunisation campaigns. The programme has expanded effective malaria diagnosis and treatment to communities in the target districts, bringing health care access to over 1.2 million Zambians.

**2021–22: Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria** aims to reduce maternal and infant mortality by increasing access to high-quality healthcare in several areas of Nigeria. The programme involves training healthcare workers, equipping health facilities,

and creating new patient feedback and referral systems.

- Partnerships with nine institutions, including the Federal Ministry of Health, were established to ensure the long-term sustainability of the initiative. A baseline study was conducted across project locations in order to measure programme effectiveness and location-specific knowledge, attitudes and practices. In the first six months of implementation, the programme trained 210 healthcare workers in emergency obstetrics and neonatal care, engaged traditional and faith-based leaders, and held community dialogue sessions for more than 5,000 people.

Learn more about Programs of Scale grants at [my.rotary.org/programs-scale-grants](https://my.rotary.org/programs-scale-grants).

we are gaining crucial insight into the overall prevalence in Egypt. Upscaling our efforts will enable us to reach more women and girls in Egypt and empower them with the knowledge and tools they need to take control of their health.”

In addition to increasing awareness of cervical cancer and improving medical services for women, the programme will make progress toward the goals set by WHO's Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative. This global effort aims to vaccinate 90 per cent of girls by age 15, screen 70 per cent of women by age 35 and again by age 45, and treat 90 per cent of women who have precancerous or cancerous cells. It aims to meet those targets by 2030.

RC El Tahrir initiated *United to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt*, with the full support of RID 2451 (Egypt). The

effort is modelled after an Egyptian presidential initiative on breast cancer, which increased women's visits to clinics and offers routine breast health services. The cervical cancer prevention programme has assembled a coalition of partners that include the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population, the Egyptian Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology, and the Sona3 El Khair Foundation.

“The Egyptian government is committed to improving women's health, and we are pleased to work in partnership with Rotary clubs in Egypt to prevent cervical cancer in our country as part of the new presidential initiative for early cancer detection,” said Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, minister of health and population.

The Rotary Foundation awards one \$2 million Programs of Scale grant

each year to an evidence-based programme that aligns with at least one of Rotary's causes and is ready to be expanded to create larger scale change. The programmes are sponsored by Rotarians in collaboration with local communities and partner organisations that offer expertise and support.

“With Rotary's Programs of Scale, our members are inspired to tackle large scale challenges and collaborate with organisations that share our vision for transformative change,” said Ian Riseley, TRF trustee chair (2022–23).

The other Programs of Scale finalist this year is the Digital Interactive Classrooms programme, which aims to improve the quality of education in Panama by introducing new technology in 230 classrooms.

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## Bicycles for girls in Dhanbad

Team Rotary News

**P**RIP Shekhar Mehta presided over the installation of Nandlal Agarwal as the 77<sup>th</sup> president of RC Dhanbad, RID 3250. He distributed bicycles to 25 school girls to enable them to commute between school and home, laid the foundation stone for a dialysis centre to be built by the club during the year, inaugurated a vocational training centre for girls and women, and did a virtual inauguration of a blood collection van during the event.

Mehta visited the club's artificial limb centre through which the club has fitted 500 limbs and several LN-4 prosthetic arms last year. Club members, PRID Kamal Sanghvi, PDGs Sanjay Khemka, Sandeep Narang and Rajan Gandotra were also present. ■



PRIP Shekhar Mehta with PDG Sanjay Khemka and PRID Kamal Sanghvi (third from R) after distributing bicycles sponsored by RC Dhanbad to girls.

## RID 3150 distributes bicycles, sewing machines



**I**n a major boost to empowering girls and rural women, Rotary clubs of RID 3150, donated 2,700 bicycles to students, and 100 sewing

machines to those who had completed tailoring courses in Guntur and Prakasam districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Apart from club contributions and donations from Rotarians and their families, the mega project was supported by BGR Mines and Nirmaan Organisation, an NGO.

The girls had to walk over 4km daily to reach school and the bicycles would drastically reduce their travel time to pursue their education. Also, the distribution of sewing machines to those who had completed skill training would enable them to secure their livelihood with a regular income.

Crowdfunding and partnerships leveraged by the clubs have contributed to the success of this mega district project led by PDG Ravi Vadlamani. ■

# District Wise TRF Contribution as on July 2023 (interim). (in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution
<b>India</b>					
2981	7,846	405	0	0	8,251
2982	9,716	0	7,085	3,929	20,730
3000	38,746	0	0	585	39,331
3011	45,268	1,753	0	36,585	83,606
3012	1,574	0	0	1,720	3,294
3020	9,725	176	0	0	9,901
3030	1,264	5	0	2,675	3,944
3040	799	24	0	0	823
3053	4,011	0	0	0	4,011
3055	2,896	33	0	0	2,929
3056	1,413	0	0	0	1,413
3060	14,355	9,125	0	67,679	91,159
3070	101	0	0	0	101
3080	6,822	1,702	0	1,500	10,024
3090	14,497	713	0	5,121	20,331
3100	6,889	0	0	0	6,889
3110	0	0	0	0	0
3120	2,188	24	0	0	2,212
3131	119,793	51	6,098	5,934	131,875
3132	15,444	125	0	0	15,569
3141	46,270	1,452	25,000	38,387	111,109
3142	96,277	1,110	4,500	0	101,887
3150	779	130	50	44,976	45,935
3160	4,862	0	0	0	4,862
3170	13,689	15,063	0	0	28,752
3181	4,584	122	0	24	4,730
3182	1,146	0	0	0	1,146
3191	9,100	1,341	60,976	0	71,417
3192	6,801	1,220	0	0	8,021
3201	6,523	3,553	1,012	12,775	23,864
3203	584	308	1,220	2,531	4,642
3204	1,011	500	0	2,962	4,473
3211	1,494	1,000	0	4,011	6,505
3212	12,575	728	0	0	13,303
3231	1,417	386	0	0	1,803
3232	13,918	1,800	8,300	8,543	32,561
3240	6,785	1,088	0	30	7,903
3250	4,118	1,148	26	2,974	8,266
3261	3,049	0	0	0	3,049
3262	289	24	0	0	313
3291	14,385	0	24,390	0	38,776
3220 Sri Lanka	15,522	615	0	0	16,138
3271 Pakistan	5	0	0	5,775	5,780
3272 Pakistan	0	60	0	25	85
3281 Bangladesh	2,901	198	1,000	1,000	5,099
3282 Bangladesh	5,035	100	0	0	5,135
3292 Nepal	2,876	200	0	34,010	37,086

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

Source: RI South Asia Office



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Wordsworld

## Machine over mind



Sandhya Rao

Our encounters with algorithms are surely of the third kind.

**B**efore the whole phenomenon of algorithms was revealed to me by a young friend, it felt spooky the way my devices — luckily only two, phone and laptop — used to throw up items of supposed interest. From shampoos to shows, the whole shebang, some thought-provoking, a lot clearly not. Wiser now to the behind-the-scenes activity, I am curious about what emerges from cyber space, especially if it is to do with books and reading and writers.

Of the more recent pop-ups, one that caught my eye was an online newsletter called *CrimeReads*. In the section Crime and the City, the piece was titled ‘The complicated history of crime fiction in Tanzania’ by Paul French. Crime fiction! Tanzania! A name that featured prominently

there was — you’d never guess! — Georgette Heyer! Yes, that undisputed ruler of young girls’ hearts with her action-packed, highly readable novels about dashing lords and daredevil or demure ladies circa Regency England! According to Paul French, back in the 1920s, Georgette Heyer lived in Tanganyika where her husband worked as a mining engineer.

‘Apparently, they lived deep in the bush where her husband was surveying for minerals,’ he writes in the article. ‘She wrote a couple of historical romances while there and tells Tanganyika tales in her memoir but didn’t really get into detective fiction for another decade with her series of books featuring Superintendent Hannasyde and Sergeant (later Inspector) Hemingway. (SR disclosure: *I didn’t even know she wrote detective fiction, and I thought my friends and I had read ALL of Georgette Heyer!*) There are some criminal elements in *Beauvallet* (1929), a novel of Elizabethan pirates that she started work on while in Africa.’ Wow! That most beloved and romantic of stories, second only to *These Old Shades*, was birthed in Tanganyika and not in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century cottage in England!

Incidentally, Wikipedia says her thrillers were nothing to write home about; however, they were known for their wit, if not for unoriginal plotlines. Her romances though, are a class apart!

Those who enjoy police procedurals on OTT platforms may have watched a show called ‘Shetland’

featuring Detective Jimmy Perez. (If you haven’t, please do.) This series is based on the novels of Ann Cleves who, says French, ‘went to Tanzania for her 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Out of that trip to the Serengeti came a short story — *Moses and The Locked Tent*’ included in the collection *Ten Year Stretch: Celebrating a Decade of Crime Fiction at Crimefest* (edited by Martin Edwards, 2018)’. Interesting connections, no?

Incidentally, the 2021 Nobel Prize winner, Abdulrazak Gurnah, hails from Tanzania, although he moved to the UK in the 1960s during the Zanzibar Revolution. His novels are on my TBR list as are ‘those of Tanzania-raised author MG Vassanji, particularly *Uhuru Street* (1991), a collection of stories set in the Asian community of Dar es Salaam, and the often simultaneously hilarious and poignant short stories of Sandra Aikuruwa Mushi in her collection *Stains on my Khanga* (2014)’ — on French’s recommendation. And, just by way of interest, Tanzania was earlier known as Zanzibar, and its capital is not Dar es Salaam but Dodoma!




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Can you read anything at all from start to finish, i.e., an essay or a short story, without your mind being sliced apart by some digital switchblade? Without your seeking distraction as a form of entertainment, or entertainment as a form of distraction?’

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On another note altogether, it came as a shock to learn via Alice Kemp-Habib's article in *The Guardian* of July 18 about what she refers to as 'an industry-wide mental health crisis' in the publishing world. To quote: 'Author and publisher welfare has been a hot topic in the books industry of late. Publishing houses, trade unions and industry bodies have scrambled for solutions following a survey by *The Bookseller* (a magazine for and about the book trade) in which debut authors reported overwhelmingly negative publication experiences: more than half of respondents said the process adversely affected their mental health.' She quotes Ed Gillet as pointing out that although his publisher was supportive, the act of writing a book is extremely isolating, which is one major reason for the impact on mental health. Imogen Hermes Gowar, who published her first book, *The Mermaid and Mrs Hancock*, in 2018, makes an interesting comment to Alice. She says: 'For me it was the total change in status. I was 28 when I sold my book and ...

I was used to being the intern, or the temp, or the volunteer juggling day jobs in cafes and care work to pay my bills. Suddenly I was treated like the most important person in the room, and it really did a number on me.'

Makes you think, right? Especially about the impact of social media on individuals, and the resulting sense of micro-celebrity-ism it can engender.

Imogen adds that clearer communication throughout the process would have eased her concerns. "A lot of authors I know feel quite powerless and shut out from decision-making.

We are the product, but we are not a member of the team ... it's extra alienating to feel that decisions directly concerning our work and careers are often not shared with us."

Taking Imogen's observations forward, the logic would seem to apply to practically every aspect of our lives, especially creative, inventive aspects. Again, something to think about.

Another writer, Lily Dunn, who published *Sins of My Father* in 2022, tells Alice: "So much anxiety comes from not knowing what to expect ... waiting for a response, and the agent or editor who is juggling any number of books and therefore can't always give the authors what they need there and then."

This is a very real problem in the publishing world because editor and author have to work very closely to be effective. Come to think of it, this is true of any endeavour that involves thinking, researching, testing, creating, innovating — whether it is a proscenium theatre or an operating theatre or even a project to draw up an inclusive and democratic

civil code for a dynamic, multicultural, secular-minded nation...

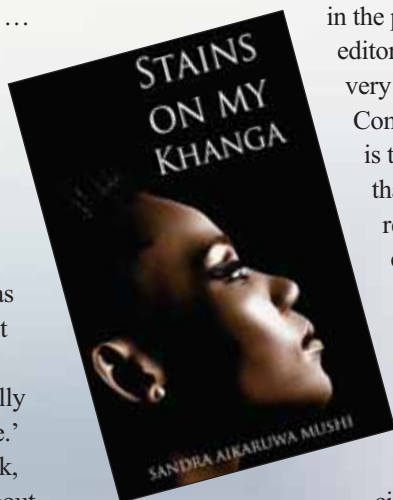
Writing in *Esquire* ('The Life, Death — and Afterlife — of Literary Fiction', July 14), Will Blythe asks if the digital revolution has killed the cultural relevance of short stories in magazines. In other words, how deeply has the global obsession

with social media and easy access through smartphones affected our finer sensibilities, our attention span, our willingness to stay with something? He asks a simple but fundamental question: 'Can you read anything at all from start to finish, i.e., an essay or a short story, without your mind being sliced apart by some digital switchblade? Without your seeking distraction as a form of entertainment, or entertainment as a form of distraction?'

Yes? No? Why? It might be worthwhile pondering over this; maybe it will give us an opportunity to assess the quality of the lives we lead today.

Blythe compares the digital universe to a black hole, 'swallowing everything around it, including the un-digital idiosyncrasy of humans'. He goes on to explain that 'In *God, Human, Animal, Machine*, the writer Meghan O'Gieblyn... has created a fascinating inquiry into the nature and power of informational technology, as if that technology might be a new God, in the process of mathematizing uniqueness, and algorithmizing all of us... She describes how the Israeli intellectual Yuval Noah Harari argues that we already accept "machine wisdom" when it comes to the recommendation of "books, restaurants and potential dates." He believes that "dataism" is replacing humanism as "a ruling ideology".' The fact is, the articles quoted here were all recommended by machine wisdom. Scary thought.

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



# Health: your first fundamental right

**Bharat & Shalan Savur**

Come September, and the festival season arrives: from fall (pun intended) to spring, India celebrates festivals in a zesty manner. Coincidentally, this is also the season of the Big Fat Indian wedding. No Indian festival is complete without a feast. Coupled with the wedding season, this period is literally stretched with culinary spreads. From traditional food to salads and fast food, the dining counters are packed. Temptation enough to turn a gourmet into a glutton. The gourmet enjoys the taste of food, the glutton devours it and then some. This distinction is ignored by the self-confessed 'foodie'. And the sensuous spread is often also the middle-aged spread around the foodie's middle. This piece is meant to be a not-so subtle siren call. A bugle before the impending battle of the bulge. Hence this preface to put this in a healthy perspective. Remember: hunger is a need. Appetite

is not. The latter is artificial, superficial and, most often, causes superfluous superflows to the body's beleaguered equator. Eat moderately like a connoisseur. Eat to enjoy not to fill. Eat like there is a tomorrow.

## The Covid cocktail

The world has just about recovered from Covid. The year 2019 was a landmark. We call it the new BC — before Covid. Lockdowns, work or study from home, etc turned many couch potatoes into sitting ducks. Natural intervention or lab-induced bug? No one knows for sure. However, what is obvious is an almost complete 180 degrees turnaround attitude in our country. Masks, social distancing may no longer be required. But here is a tip worth considering: Please continue to mask-up whenever you anticipate dust pollution to keep asthma, bronchitis, laryngitis, cough, cold and sore throat

at bay. Even more so if you reside in a city like Mumbai that once boasted it never slept and has now re-awakened to its long-pending infrastructural defects. Be that as it may, keep your masks handy. We still read random reports of Covid cases. Health experts anticipate newer avatars. No one can tell for sure. Hence, don't drop your safeguard.

## Make age a number

There's a sweet little cartoon where Dennis (yes, the Menace!) is sitting on his granddad's shoulders and telling his mom, 'Grampa says I keep him young, tired and worn out!' And that's what is happening! to many of us... and at 40, when we're just beginning to find ourselves. Unfortunately, illnesses are finding us too. Statistics make for dismal reading: 31 million Indians turned diabetic in their fourth decade between 2019 and 2021; 50 per cent of Indian males encounter heart attacks by age 50 and 25 per cent of them do so before age 40. The Indian Heart Association also records that 'systemic hypertension accounts for 24 per cent of heart attacks in the country.' Add obesity, unhealthy eating habits, a car-bound, desk-bound lifestyle to such non-communicable diseases (which means they are neither genetic nor hereditary) and the potential list of would-be patients gets longer. And younger. A new generation has been taken over.

Let's make age a mere number because that's what it really is. Let's celebrate every decade from 20 on as beautiful seasons of heart and health. Neglect neither body nor mind. Prioritise health. Start taking small steps today towards a better life right away. Some simple suggestions: Start by



taking one little walk around the block; drinking one glass of water; deleting one toxic habit; refusing one fried dish; paying up one debt/bill; and consuming one fibre-rich food. Start by taking up that one thing you love doing, and spending one hour in sweet solitude.

### A balancing act

What are we doing with these small but significant start-ups? We are heading towards a wonderful life, a balanced life even as we navigate the streams of festivals, weddings, foodie binges, the BC-effect and more. In fact, talking of balance, I'd like to share two easy exercises you can do wherever you are: a) Stand with legs apart. Raise your left leg 6 inches above the ground and stay in that position to 20 counts. Next, do the same by raising your right leg. b) Stand with feet together. Now, place your left foot just in front of your right foot, left heel touching right toes, so that both feet are in a straight line. Remain in that position to 20 counts. Next, repeat with your right foot in front of your left foot.

Such balancing exercises ground us and make us feel more confident in ourselves. It's true of our daily diet too. In many ways, you are what you eat. It literally defines your mind and body. Light, low-fat foods keep you light and limber. It's important to understand that what you eat, do or not do, should not destroy you. Hence, as far

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Eat moderately like a  
connoisseur. Eat to enjoy  
not to fill. Eat like there is  
a tomorrow.

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as possible, follow these little pointers: Eat slowly, at regular times and intervals. De-stress with anything that calms your body and mind — music, silence or walking your dog. Walk at least 10,000 steps daily and sleep soundly for eight hours. It repairs, replaces, refreshes you — all at the same time.

### The hand on the shoulder

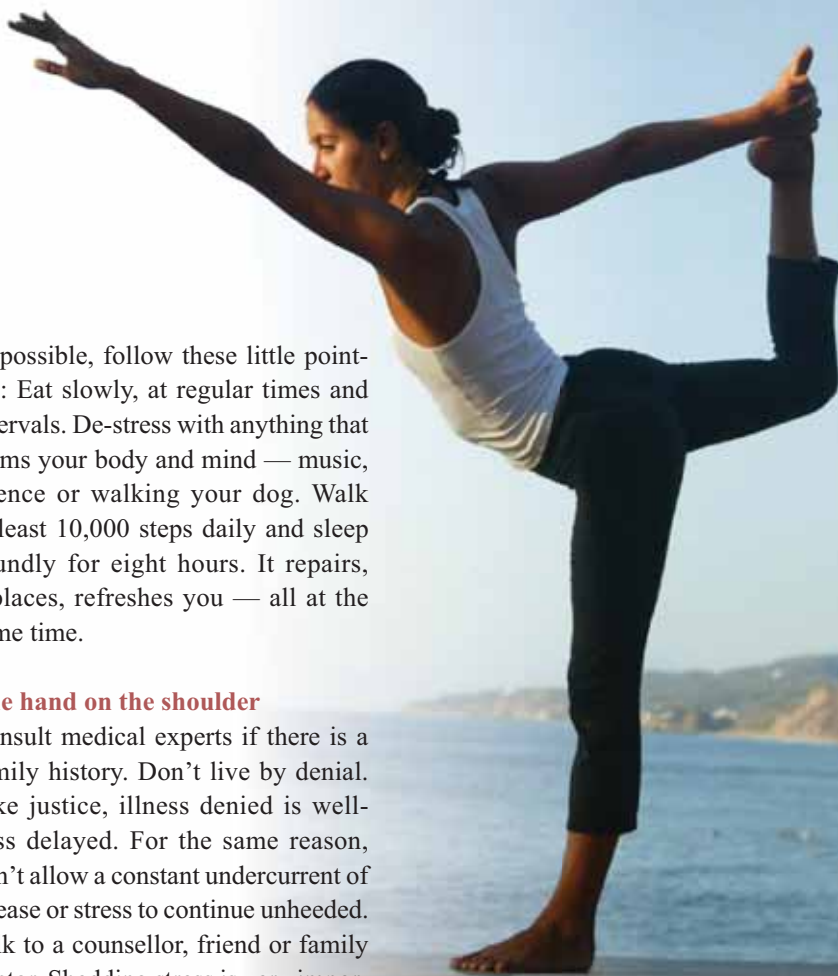
Consult medical experts if there is a family history. Don't live by denial. Like justice, illness denied is wellness delayed. For the same reason, don't allow a constant undercurrent of unease or stress to continue unheeded. Talk to a counsellor, friend or family doctor. Shedding stress is very important. Stress is not only in the head, it is all over your body. The fight-or-flight response courses through every organ, every cell. If there is persistent long-term stress in the system, one can get high blood pressure, heart disease, thinning bones, cancer... If you're upset, stressed and your heart is palpitating, your pulse is racing... And somebody intuitively your state, puts her hand on your shoulder and says, 'Want to talk about it?' immediately, you breathe slower, the brain gets more oxygen, the heart returns to its original rhythm, and the body functions normally. That's how vital timely help is. We all need that hand on our shoulder at the right time.

### ...Happily ever after

Ever since we switched from farm food to fast food, health has been trundling downhill for many of us. Modern

medicine has kept pace, but we haven't. We still can. It's never too late. To junk colas and burgers, as well as bhajjis and bhaturs, would be an excellent start along with all the tips and suggestions strewn through this piece. The more volatile the world gets, the more stable we need to remain emotionally, mentally and physically. The secret is to keep experimenting with healing practices — do fun things, enjoy whatever you do, and laugh a lot. It is still the best medicine. Good health is your first fundamental right in life. It is built into your very constitution. Revel in maintaining it.

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



## RC Panruti — RID 2981



A brass iron box was donated to a woman by the Inner Wheel club members. Also, ₹3,000 was given to an underprivileged student.

## RC Sonepat Ardent — RID 3012



E-learning tablets (₹14 lakh) were distributed to 100 students of Arya Kanya Senior Secondary School to empower them with digital knowledge.

## RC Thuraiyur Perumalmalai — RID 3000



Among the 320 people screened at an eye camp held with the support of Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore, 127 were identified for cataract surgery.

## RC Waltair — RID 3020



Over 70 women attended a cancer awareness and screening camp, and 58 took the test at Durgapuram, a resettlement colony.

## RC Delhi Okhla City — RID 3011



Food and sweets were distributed to 700 persons with the participation of 14 members to mark the start of Rotary year.

## RC Malegaon Midtown — RID 3030



School bags were distributed to 15 underprivileged students by PDG Rajendra Bhamre during the installation of new president Keshav Khairnar.

## RC Jalandhar East — RID 3070



Groceries and other essential items were distributed to flood victims in the presence of PDGs US Ghai, SPS Grover and Barjesh Singhal.

## RC Ganga Bijnor — RID 3100



Raincoats with Rotary logo were distributed to needy people during the installation of new office-bearers.

## RC Nahan Sangini — RID 3080



Hearing aid worth ₹65,000 was donated to a girl, born with hearing and speech impairment to a labourer family.

## RC Kanpur Industrial — RID 3110



A medical camp was held at the Kanishk Hospital, Kanpur, with DG Vivek Garg as chief guest. An MoU was inked to provide affordable health-care to the hospital staff and Rotarians.

## RC Patiala Mid Town — RID 3090



Sewing machines were gifted to 13 underprivileged women who had completed a tailoring course conducted at the Rotary Bhawan.

## RC Pune Heritage — RID 3131



Equipment worth ₹29 lakh were donated to the Sassoon Hospital, Pune, for its paediatric surgery department through a global grant.

## RC Karkamb — RID 3132



Around 240 people were screened at the cataract surgery camp. Forty-seven patients were chosen for surgery at the HV Desai Eye Hospital, Pune.

## RI District — 3182



Sixty teachers underwent a 3-month training programme. One-day workshop to identify special children benefitted 2,000 teachers.

## RC Bombay Peninsula — RID 3141



Scholarships were distributed to 200 children from poor economic background to help them pursue education.

## RC Coimbatore Meridian — RID 3201



Club president Govindarajan handed over a cheque of ₹10,000 to a girl student (Class 9) who had lost her parents. The club will pay the fees until she completes school education.

## RC Satellite City Navi Mumbai — RID 3142



A medical camp was held for elders at the Anandashram, an old age home at Nerul, with the support of Bhavana Hospital.

## RC Erode North — RID 3203



School fees of 13 students amounting to ₹1.5 lakh was donated by club member K Sivakumar. Two of the beneficiaries are national-level Karate players.

## RC Tellicherry — RID 3204



Food and new clothes were distributed to 100 destitute at the Tellicherry bus stand. The project was sponsored by AG CP Krishna Kumar.

## RC Gauhati South — RID 3240



Under a joint project with the Assam State Legal Services Authority, the club distributed wheelchairs to 25 disabled people from Kamrup Rural and Kamrup Metro districts.

## RC Alleppey Greater — RID 3211



Three oscillators (₹1.5 lakh) were donated to old age homes in the presence of DGN Tina Antony during the installation of club office-bearers.

## RC Jamshedpur East — RID 3250



Nutritional supplements (₹500 each) were distributed to TB patients at the District TB Centre. This will be continued for six months.

## RC Madras Mount — RID 3232



More than 100 police personnel took part in a walkathon to create awareness on varicose veins. IPDG Nandakumar, DCP Sakthivel and co-host, Rela Hospital CEO Ilankumaran were present.

## RC Raipur — RID 3261



Notebooks and stationery were distributed to 80 students at the Sau Kusum Tai Dabke Primary School, Raipur. PDG Subhash Sahu was present.

Compiled by V Muthukumaran



**TCA Srinivasa  
Raghavan**

# A googly of a question



**W**hy do Indian drivers blow their car horns so frequently? This is one of those cosmic mysteries that even Albert Einstein would be hard put to explain. I am asking this nevertheless because a few days ago there was a traffic jam on the highway that connects Delhi to Gurgaon. Actually, it is called a highway (NH48) and is officially one, but it became a city road 15 years ago. The traffic on it is upward of 200,000 vehicles a day.

Anyway, there everyone was stuck in stationary traffic. Most drivers had switched off their engines to save on fuel so it was all very quiet except for the fools who were blowing their horns as if it would help move the traffic. After a while I got very irritated and walked over to the fellow closest to me, a tempo driver. I asked him why he was honking when he could see it wouldn't help. Ordinarily, he would have abused me and asked me to mind my own business but I think my polished, cultured and educated manners disarmed him. His answer was unbeatable. "Sahib, what are horns for?" Exactly. What are horns for if not blowing when you are frustrated?

This reminded me of something that happened 60 years ago. We were driving somewhere near Jhansi when we stopped to have some tea at a roadside stall. There were a few villagers

sitting around doing nothing more stressful than drinking their tea. They would pour the tea out on saucers — yes, those were the days when even roadside stalls had saucers — and slurp noisily from them. I asked one of them, in my polished, educated and cultured tone, why he was doing that. His answer was the same as the tempo driver's would be 60 years later: what is it for then, if not to drink from?

It's not just the villager or the poorly socialised tempo driver who has this attitude. On one of the Indian Airlines flights from Delhi to Bombay — when it wasn't called Mumbai — the fellow sitting behind me kept ringing the bell for the stewardess. He must have called her at least 10 times in that two-hour flight. When we were waiting to get off the aircraft,

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When I confiscated the crayons my grandson was trying to colour the walls with, he protested shrilly, and asked me: what are walls for? What indeed?

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I asked — in my usual way — why he kept on calling her. His answer was the same as that of the tea drinker's had been and the tempo driver's would be later: what's she there for? Good question: what was she there for?

We can see this sort of thing everywhere in India. In my first job I found two of my colleagues happier helping themselves to office stationery and ball pens. When I protested that this was theft, they said the same thing: why keep them there then? In fact, during the days of STD calls it was common for employees to call friends and relatives at office expense. When asked about it, they would ask what's it there for?

This perennial question has resurfaced in my own home now. My grandson is visiting and my wife gave him a set of colouring crayons and a slate to keep him occupied. He soon started trying to colour the walls. Fortunately, I prevented him from doing too much damage by confiscating the crayons. He protested shrilly and when I told him to be quiet, he asked the same question: what are walls for? What indeed?

The tea stalls got rid of the problem by abolishing saucers. Now I think the time has come to abolish the horns in vehicles and the call bells on planes. I have shown the way by taking away the colour crayons from my grandson. Believe me, it's very easy. ■



CREATE HOPE  
in the WORLD



# Vignana Ratham

A Project by Rotary Club of Virudhunagar Dist-3212

## Science Made Easy

Rotary



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

As on

June 30, 2023

- No. of Schools visited **334**
- No. of Colleges visited **12**
- No. of Days travelled **253**
- No. of Students benefitted **108306**
- No. of Teachers Who have attended the program **4695**



**Vignana Ratham**

Project Concept Dr. Pasupathy

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**PDG AKS Rtn Er Muruganandam M**

B.E., M.B.A., M.S., M.F.T., PGDMM., DEM.,

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