

# Rotary news

India

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**Ratan Tata**  
**(1937–2024)**



**Rotary**  
District 3212



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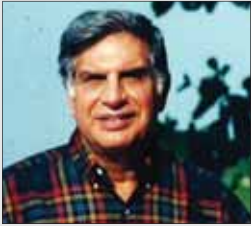
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A publication of Rotary  
Global Media Network

## E-version rate Reduced

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

₹420 to ₹320

The Raja of Rotary

Congrats to editor Rasheeda Bhagat for the article *The Raja of Rotary*. PRIP Rajendra Saboo and Rotary are two sides of the same coin. I've known him for long and his dedication to Rotary. His 90 years couldn't leave any mark on his wrinkleless face which is shining with the glow of Rotary. Inspired by him I chartered RC Nabha Greater in 2006. Our club is doing 100 welfare projects annually, reaching out to the less privileged.



Ashok Jindal  
RC Nabha Greater — D 3090

The cover photo of PRIP Saboo and a special child at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, is awesome. The article detailing the work of the man, who has lived for Rotary and served humanity with the support of Usha, his wife, and still motivates others in Rotary, is really inspiring.

Glad to note that the e-version rate has been reduced. The

messages of RI President Stephanie Urchick and the editor on family life and the joy of giving are commendable. RID Raju Subramanian focuses on *Project Positive Health* and DEI in transforming lives. Other articles, including *Meet Your Governors*, are interesting; the pictures are all colourful. Congratulations to the team.

Philip Mulappone M T  
RC Trivandrum  
Suburban — D 3211

The article on PRIP Saboo explains his amazing personality and how he did so much good for the world. He really walked the talk of his own RI theme, 'Look beyond yourself', during his 58-year Rotary journey, helped by his gentle wife Usha.

K M K Murthy  
RC Secunderabad — D 3150

I am a non-Rotarian who reads each issue of *Rotary News* at a library in Rajkot. It was a delight to read the lead article about PRIP

Saboo; the cover photo was very touching. One can learn from him how to help the community while managing one's family, business etc. I saw him signing a copy of his personal memoir. Can you please review it in the magazine or publish some excerpts? Where can I buy this book to know more about the experiences of this humanitarian? I wish him a healthy, happy, long life to serve humanity.

Farooq Abdulgafar  
Bawani Rajkot

Congratulations to RC Chandigarh for doing so many innovative projects like the PGI Serai, Rotary Blood Resource Centre and *Gift of Life*. As they say 'behind every successful man there is a lady'. It was Usha Saboo who mooted the ideas to PRIP Rajendra Saboo. The seeds she sowed blossomed into trees. Seeing the suffering and lack of amenities for the underprivileged, she approached Rotary and so much was achieved. Her service as an Inner Wheel member is laudable.

VRT Dorairaja  
RC Tiruchirappali — D 3000

The entire October issue is good, but the RI President and Editor's messages highlighting family bonds in Rotary and atrocities on women are really interesting. Decades ago, a past RI general secretary described Rotary magazines as "the eyes, ears and voice of Rotary". His description is even more apt today when we go through *Rotary News*. The quality and standard of our magazine denote the dedication of the RNT team and we are enlightened month after month by reading it.

R Srinivasan, RC Bangalore J P Nagar — D 3191

We are grateful to you and your team for bringing to life our projects, which were featured so prominently. It has brought immense pride to our club members. Special appreciation to

Rasheeda for calling us, gathering extra details and covering our initiatives so beautifully. We received an overwhelming response from our members, the DG and the district team.

Rackhee Mehta, RC Bombay Bay View — D 3141

Trustee Chair Mark Maloney's call to contribute to the Endowment goal of \$2.025 billion is praiseworthy. 'Legacy dinners' for TRF are a great idea.

R Murali Krishna, RC Berhampur — D 3262

Congrats to the RNT team for the hard work in publishing this well-designed, interesting and informative magazine. I read it page-to-page at one go. The coverage of Stephanie

## LETTERS

Urchick created a feeling of magic in my heart. The editorial, articles and photos are excellent. I request you to send the magazine to all members of our club.

*Sumitra Mishra  
RC Bhubaneswar New  
Horizon — D 3262*

### Timely edit on DEI

My compliments for focusing on 'DEI-on-Ground' through your editorial. All the three examples you shared, from trainee doctor, film actress to the Olympian, are so apt. Unfortunately, the world, not just India, is patriarchal. We Rotarians should take up the cause of gender equality through behavioural training at the school level.

Gender equality needs to be practised in every small way at our Rotary events. Thanks for this timely edit.

*Atul Bhide  
RC Thane Hills — D 3142*

**Correction:** In the October issue of *Rotary News*, in the *Meet Your Governors* column, Neerav Nimesh Agarwal is DG of RID 3110. In *Club Matters*, *RC Gulbarga Arya* must be read as *RC Gulbarga Sakhi*. Error is regretted.

Have you read

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[www.rotarynewsonline.org](http://www.rotarynewsonline.org)

### Excellent October issue

**H**earty congratulations to your editorial team for the superb October issue. It was a treat to go through the excellent articles, detailed projects and captivating photos. As club president, I find this magazine a boon to all Rotary club presidents, as it gives them new ideas on various humanitarian projects which can be undertaken.

The choice of articles, presentations, vivid photographs and the positive image

that you portray in every write-up will be something that I and my club members will look forward every month. Keep up the good work.

*Brig (retd)  
PK Muralidharan Raja  
president, RC Pune  
Central — D 3131*

**A**s an avid reader of *Rotary News*, I compliment you on the content and new-look cover design. The wholesome coverage of Rotary activities makes for entertaining reading. The October issue will have a special place in my heart as for

the second time in my 11 years in Rotary my photo appears on the pages of this outstanding publication. Kudos to the editorial team.

*Commodore (retd),  
Ajay Chitnis, RC Pune  
Central — D 3131*

**A**part from the revamped design and layout, the in-depth coverage on Rotary activities around the globe and the choice of articles left one spellbound at the magic of Rotary. My compliments to your team!

*Vipen Malhotra, RC  
Pune Central — D 3131*

### A young Rotarian meets Tata

**I**n 1995, as a young sales executive in TELCO (Tata Motors) my job involved a lot of travel and I found it difficult to attend Rotary meetings. As my attendance was falling low, I decided to leave Rotary, and even wrote out my resignation letter on a trip to Mumbai.

When I went to the Taj Mahal Hotel to attend a computer exhibition and conference, I found a signage about the weekly meeting of RC Bombay. I thought it a great opportunity for a last meet before I resigned.

There, I was astonished to see Ratan Tata, went up to him and introduced myself as a Telco (Tata Motors) staff member. He asked me about my work, role etc, and complimenting on my work, said "Since you are in sales and meeting many people, Rotary is a good place for you."

That interaction changed my life. After the meeting, I tore up my resignation letter, and continue to be a proud Rotarian.

*PDG Deepak Shikarpur — D 3131*

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

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

## A solid Foundation

One of Rotary's greatest strengths is the ability of our members to come together to create lasting change, and The Rotary Foundation helps us transform dreams of change into reality.

From eradicating polio to building peace, much of the work we do around the world would not be possible without our continued support of our Foundation.

The cause of peace is especially important to me, and one of the most effective ways we build peace is our Rotary Peace Fellowship — a product of The Rotary Foundation. The programme helps current and aspiring peace and development professionals around the world learn how to prevent and how to end conflict.

Thanks to a \$15.5 million gift from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, we can continue supporting peacebuilders in more regions with the next Rotary Peace Centre at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul.

Opening yet another peace centre is a monumental achievement that we will celebrate at the 2025 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul.

The three-day conference February 20–22 will highlight the many ways our family of Rotary advocates for peace. Keynote speakers, panel discussions and breakout sessions will allow us to share ideas about building peace and foster meaningful



conversations about promoting peace everywhere.

Registration for the Presidential Peace Conference is open. I hope to see you there, but if you can't make it, our Foundation offers so many ways to change the world for the better. November is Rotary Foundation Month, a great time to get to know your Foundation better and pursue causes that appeal to you.

Global grants support large international activities with sustainable, measurable outcomes in Rotary's areas of focus. By working together to respond to pressing community needs, clubs and districts strengthen their global partnerships.

District grants fund small-scale, short-term activities that address needs in your community and in communities abroad. Each district chooses which activities it will fund with these grants.

Our Foundation can even help you support our wonderful youth programmes, including Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and Interact.

Your gifts to our Foundation also make Programs of Scale possible. These are long-term projects that seek to solve otherwise intractable problems.

To ensure these good works continue beyond our lifetimes, it is up to us to reach our ambitious Rotary Endowment goal of \$2.025 billion by June 30, 2025.

The *Magic of Rotary* does not appear out of nowhere. We create the magic with every new member inducted, every project completed, and every dollar donated to our Foundation.

Please join me in supporting The Rotary Foundation, and together, we will change the world for the better.

**Stephanie A Urchick**

President, Rotary International

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The Rotary Foundation at [rotary.org/donate](https://rotary.org/donate).

**Register for the 2025 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference** at [rotary.org/istanbul25](https://rotary.org/istanbul25).



# The stuff legends are made of

Is it possible to be ethical, retain the high moral ground in a world riddled with intrigue, sycophancy and corrupt business practices, and yet reach the pinnacle of success?

Don't shake your cynical head, yet! The passing away of the gentle giant of Indian business, Ratan Tata, and the numerous anecdotes, some of them unknown as he was a private and media shy person, has jolted our cynical and yet firm belief that it is not possible to lead a highly successful business conglomerate without shutting your eye to all that is murky or questionable.

Stepping into the gigantic shoes of arguably India's most charismatic business leader, JRD Tata, must have been nothing short of petrifying for his barely 54-year protégé Ratan, who had to be necessarily pitted against the highly experienced pack of much older, extremely astute and highly experienced leaders at the helm of various Tata companies, led by the TISCO (Tata Steel) mogul Russi Mody.

Much has been written about how the younger scion took on so many challenges, converted failures into stepping stones to success and finally emerged as the undisputed leader of the Tata group. But business challenges and turbulence remained, through many downs such as the launch of Indica and Nano cars, acquisition of Corus and even the then struggling luxury auto brands such as Jaguar and Land Rover.

But at the end of the day, the integrity associated with the Tata brand was not only safeguarded but scaled new highs under him. The British weekly *The Economist* summed this up neatly when it commented: "Even in difficult times, the Tata Group under his leadership was seen as a uniquely benign employer. It did not swindle, it paid its debts, it stood

behind its products — and it was largely, if not entirely, free from scandal."

Well, that is saying a lot for a group which included giant profit-making companies such as TCS, Tata Steel, Tata Power and of late, even Tata Motors, which has come into the black, and how!

Why are Indians mourning so deeply the passing away of Ratan Tata? Apart from his admirable personal qualities... name it and he had it — gentle, charming, polished, soft-spoken, ever-composed, shy and reticent, courteous, firm but never offensive, philanthropist par excellence — this is mostly because in today's day and age, we are really starved of exemplary men and women. Real life heroes whose example you can unhesitatingly give to your children, your students, your mentees in a business or industry.

Heart of hearts we all know, there aren't too many of these in today's world. A real-life hero who can tell our younger generation that it is okay to dream of a future where you can be rich, powerful, super wealthy, even while embracing values that your parents/teachers taught you and which you've held dear all your life. And on that journey, you can afford to ignore those who brand you an 'idealistic idiot' and remain steadfast. You may stumble, but you will get up, and eventually make giant strides.

Surely, Ratan Tata was the stuff legends are made of. He has given an entire generation the hope that one can lead a life which gives hope to others... and through a philanthropic heart, do good in the world.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Rasheeda Bhagat

# Membership Summary

As on October 1, 2024

Source: RI South Asia Office

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	139	5,931	5.58	56	106	32	254
2982	93	4,019	5.60	29	381	94	188
3000	148	6,283	11.92	62	741	238	218
3011	139	5,385	31.07	68	1,526	216	41
3012	163	4,037	24.30	52	680	104	61
3020	84	4,907	8.15	33	488	115	351
3030	100	5,601	16.12	57	847	490	388
3040	99	2,376	14.69	33	618	56	216
3053	75	3,125	16.83	23	333	39	131
3055	83	3,391	12.56	45	666	57	387
3056	87	3,777	25.13	19	152	99	201
3060	101	5,076	15.88	50	1,918	74	149
3070	117	3,089	15.44	32	173	63	63
3080	110	4,457	13.48	55	1,327	179	127
3090	134	2,687	7.15	20	351	355	173
3100	117	2,260	10.84	13	57	35	151
3110	137	3,722	12.06	18	140	87	114
3120	90	3,818	15.82	37	446	37	57
3131	141	5,652	35.12	114	1,996	290	197
3132	97	3,807	14.63	27	307	123	218
3141	120	6,393	28.06	108	1,884	192	245
3142	115	4,077	23.01	54	1,433	126	99
3150	108	4,064	12.62	80	1,202	119	130
3160	79	2,536	9.54	24	54	95	82
3170	145	6,683	15.20	87	1,023	179	182
3181	88	3,728	10.86	38	388	92	122
3182	85	3,679	10.71	45	213	106	104
3191	96	3,457	19.27	66	1,481	140	36
3192	93	3,727	21.95	53	1,261	149	40
3201	170	6,629	9.97	99	1,755	108	97
3203	97	5,095	7.36	35	531	145	39
3204	81	2,654	8.10	19	122	16	14
3211	161	5,208	8.81	7	52	25	135
3212	122	4,673	10.72	80	417	208	153
3231	95	3,746	7.29	28	318	57	417
3233	87	3,110	18.49	45	1,244	52	63
3234	96	3,641	23.92	57	1,463	86	41
3240	99	3,568	16.79	39	675	49	245
3250	112	4,422	23.27	32	445	61	192
3261	109	3,505	24.96	18	108	32	46
3262	116	3,894	15.69	81	746	647	288
3291	145	3,879	27.17			85	765
<b>India Total</b>	<b>4,673</b>	<b>175,768</b>		<b>1,938</b>	<b>30,068</b>	<b>5,552</b>	<b>7,220</b>
3220	70	2,032	16.44	78	3,021	136	77
3271	112	1,527	20.69	102	421	275	28
0063 (3272)	84	1,182	20.73	47	295	23	49
0064 (3281)	283	5,901	18.18	190	999	120	211
0065 (3282)	151	3,046	9.16	167	1,137	24	48
3292	161	5,602	19.30	165	5,126	121	139
<b>S Asia Total</b>	<b>5,534</b>	<b>195,058</b>	<b>16.22</b>	<b>2,687</b>	<b>41,067</b>	<b>6,251</b>	<b>7,772</b>





# Director speak

## A call to support The Rotary Foundation

Fellow Rotarians,  
Season Greetings!

Our Rotary journey is built on service and a shared commitment to making the world a better place. At the core of these efforts is The Rotary Foundation, a powerful force that turns our aspirations into impactful action. Through its programmes, the Foundation addresses global challenges — fostering peace, fighting disease, ensuring access to clean water and supporting education, among others.

Yet, only 30 per cent of Rotarians currently contribute to this remarkable cause. This is a call to action: supporting TRF is not just a responsibility, it's an opportunity to create lasting change. Every contribution, no matter how small, fuels projects that touch lives locally and globally. The Foundation has set an ambitious target of \$500 million for this year, and with your support, we can achieve it.

Your donations directly impact lives. Fifty per cent of contributions go to the World Fund, supporting international projects, while the other half is invested in local initiatives through district/global grants. This ensures that your contributions benefit both local and global communities.

As we move toward 2024–25, our Foundation Trustee Chair Mark Maloney has set five clear goals for us:

- Lead by example: Every Rotarian should contribute to the Annual Fund and Endowment Fund.
- Increase the donor base: Encourage more Rotarians to give and amplify our impact.
- Support polio eradication: Continue our unwavering commitment to eradicating polio.
- Promote the Paul Harris Society: Inspire more members to join and contribute regularly.
- Organise Million Dollar events: Raise awareness and funds for the Endowment Fund through significant fundraising events.

Finally, we have a pledge to fulfil this year: we must ensure that our Endowment Fund reaches **\$2.025 billion by June 2025**. Currently, we are \$270 million short of this target. It is crucial that we encourage Rotarians to contribute to the Endowment Fund, helping to secure their legacy while supporting the long-term impact of Rotary's mission.

Let's strengthen our commitment and be the driving force behind these goals. Every dollar makes a difference, and together, we will continue planting the seeds of hope for generations to come. Thank you for your continued support.

**Anirudha Roychowdhury**

RI Director, 2023–25

Message from  
TRF Trustee  
Chair



## In our hearts and hands

There are as many reasons to join Rotary as there are members. Most join for experiences — new friendships, expanding professional circles, or putting *Service Above Self* into action to create impact.

Rotary delivers on all of these, often simultaneously. Through our Rotary Foundation, Rotary also has a knack for offering unexpected experiences and new opportunities that open doors and change lives.

I learned this firsthand at age 30 when I served as president of the Rotary Club of Decatur, Alabama. That year, my wife and I sought out the chance to try something new: attending the 1985 Rotary International Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. There, we witnessed the dawn of PolioPlus and met members from different backgrounds, realising we were part of a global family.

Later that year, I learned that a Rotary Group Study Exchange team from Nigeria was scheduled to visit Alabama, but Decatur was not on the agenda. After making a few calls, we soon welcomed the Nigerian team into our home. It was an incredible and unexpected experience.

Before the group departed, the team leader recommended me to lead the six-member team from Alabama that would visit Nigeria the following year, which I did. There, I met people whose lives had been impacted by polio, including several family members of our hosts. I learned that polio reaches its victims across borders, economies and religions.

That Foundation programme — Group Study Exchange — opened my eyes to what Rotary is and what it can do. Taking part in the exchange set me on a path for new friendships and opportunities to serve on multiple continents.

Just as The Rotary Foundation has enriched my Rotary life, it can do the same for you. This month, during Rotary Foundation Month, I invite you to explore new Foundation experiences.

Look for ways you and your club can support Foundation-led efforts like polio eradication, disaster response, or the Rotary Peace Centers. Get involved in global grant or district grant projects. And if you have never had the experience of giving to our Foundation, I invite you to join other Rotary members as a Foundation donor. Your support will mean the world to both Rotary members who want to help and to the individuals and communities who need it.

The Rotary Foundation is not a place or a building. It is an experience, one that lives in our hearts and hands as we do good in the world. The Rotary Foundation is all of us.

**Mark Daniel Maloney**  
TRF Trustee Chair

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Magazine

## Message from TRF Trustee



## Empower lives with your generosity

The Rotary Foundation's mission is simple: "to enable Rotarians to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the improvement of health, support of education, and alleviation of poverty." Over the years, it has grown into one of the most respected humanitarian organisations in the world with contributions supporting a wide range of projects aimed at addressing critical global challenges.

As we celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights, it is time to light up other lives through TRF and its many worthwhile programmes. Rotary's projects are designed with sustainability in mind. Whether it's providing water filters, setting up health clinics, or empowering local entrepreneurs,

the Foundation's initiatives focus on long-term solutions, helping communities become self-sufficient over time.

TRF has consistently earned high ratings from independent charity evaluators like Charity Navigator for its financial transparency and efficient use of funds. More than 92 per cent of contributions are spent directly on programmes, ensuring that donations make a real difference. In fact, Charity Navigator has given TRF a 4-star rating for the 16<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

The Foundation's top priority is the End Polio Now campaign. Rotary members have contributed more than \$2.7 billion and countless volunteer hours to protect nearly three billion children in 122 countries from this paralyzing disease. Rotary's advocacy efforts have played a role in decisions by governments to contribute more than \$10 billion to the effort. Ending Polio is not about the money, but about saving and protecting the children of the world.

It is important to support our End Polio Now Fund. Join the PolioPlus Society in your district and engage all members in this historic moment when we are so close to ending polio forever. And don't forget that the Gates Foundation continues to amplify Rotary's donations to polio eradication with a 2-to-1 match for every dollar.

Ancient texts tell us that anonymous giving is the best form of giving; where neither the donor nor the recipient knows one another and where the giving helps the recipient become self-reliant. Foundation giving is just that 'best' form of giving. When we give to TRF we do not know who will benefit in which part of the world; but the good wishes and the silent blessings of the beneficiaries will come to the donor again and again.

Thank you for your dedication to The Rotary Foundation. It is your acts of caring, kindness and generosity that play an essential role in advancing our mission to do good in the world. That is the magic of The Rotary Foundation.

**Bharat Pandya**  
TRF Trustee

# India loses its Kohinoor... again

Rasheeda Bhagat

As an entire nation is heartbroken on the passing away of the iconic gentleman industrialist Ratan Tata, and you look back upon his illustrious career in the Tata group of companies spanning several decades, you marvel at the simplicity and grace with which he lived his life, and the courtesy he extended even to the most ordinary people. Details of his philanthropy leaves you dazzled and star-struck.

As news of his passing away devastated the whole country, tributes started pouring in. The rich and the famous, celebrities, business tycoons and industrial giants, of course paid tribute, but it was the unsung heroes who really captured the true and deep pain that millions of Indians felt in their hearts. 'The man with zero haters is no more', a simple message on the social media from an unknown person summed up the essence of the man.

Unquestionably the most admired among India's

business leaders, specially for the ethical manner in which he led one of India's most trusted business empires, it was Ratan Tata, handpicked by the great JRD Tata to be his successor, who took the Tata group of companies, already trusted brand, to a highly successful multinational corporation with international brands such as Jaguar and Land Rover. We will come to the very interesting story of how he did the last a little later in this tribute.

In a Facebook interview posted in 2020, Tata recalling his childhood, said: "I had a happy childhood, but as my brother and I got older, we faced a fair bit of ragging and personal discomfort because of our parents' divorce, which in those days wasn't as common as it is today." It is difficult to understand how there was nothing flashy and flamboyant about a man who had spent his entire life, right from childhood, in utter luxury. He had grown up literally in a palace in

Bombay, that was serviced by nearly 50 domestic helpers, and went to school in a luxury Delage car, before he was sent to the US for his high school.

He graduated from the Cornell University with a degree in structural engineering and architecture. He had initially enrolled for mechanical engineering, but changed his major two years later. He served as a trustee on the Cornell board for several years, and was its largest international donor, with 305 Tata scholarships

being awarded to 89 students from India.

Philanthropy was second nature to him, in accordance with the Tatas' penchant for charity, and he was a great lover of animals. In his later years he helped scores of startups and also set up healthcare facilities for animals.

But despite his uber rich family and international exposure, his love for flashy cars and flying planes, he was a shy man, who shunned publicity and limelight, made very few



Ratan Tata



Younger days — with brother Jimmy Tata.

public appearances and was quite a loner. His humility and charismatic personality were classic examples of how a highly successful person can be graceful in his demeanour.

Almost all industrial and business tycoons have their Ratan Tata story, but Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy summed it up neatly when he described him as “competent, humble, courteous, curious, concerned, and patriotic. On the rare occasions when he disagreed, he was not disagreeable. Whether he was speaking to an admiring teenager or a

much-respected senior business person, his sincerity, depth of knowledge and his legendary courtesy shone through effortlessly.”

Even though Tata leaves behind the legacy of a conglomerate, which he literally turned into a salt-to-software giant, and whose reach and profits multiplied during his time at its helm, it was not as though he did not have to face humiliation, stiff opposition and failures (tele-services), and near revolt against his leadership in his earlier years. His brainchild, the Nano car, was a failure, the acquisition

## An AKS member

**D**id you know that Ratan Tata was an AKS member? It is well-known that JRD was a member of RC Bombay and loved to attend its weekly meetings. Well, Ratan Tata too was an honorary member of this club for well over 25 years!

In 2017, with some gentle coaxing, he became an AKS member, and he handed over a single cheque of \$250,000 from the

Tata Education and Development Trust to past president of the club Nirav Shah in the presence of the then RID 3141 DG Gopal Mandhania. With this, he became the fourth AKS member from RC



Rtn Akkshay Mehta, PDG Gopal Rai Mandhania, Ratan Tata and Nirav Shah, past president of RC Bombay.

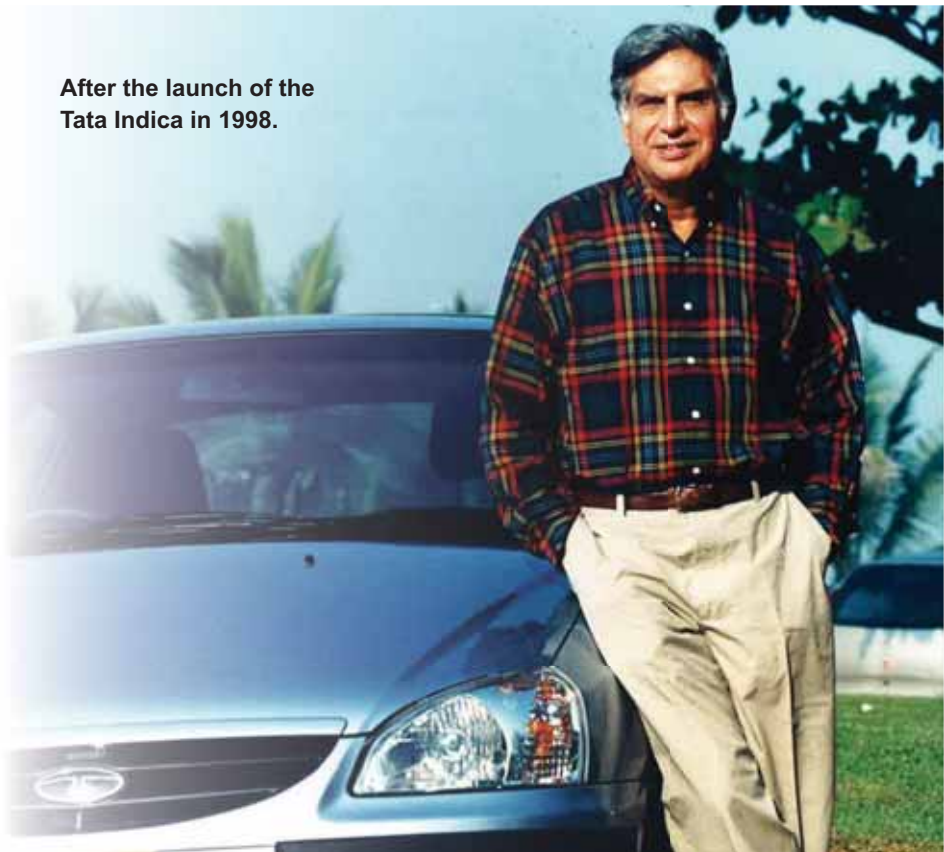
Bombay during 2016–17. Recounting how Tata had been inducted into the distinguished gallery of AKS members, Nirav Shah said that a few months earlier, he was approached by a friend saying that Ratan

Tata wanted to see some 500 vintage cars. “I said I would organise that, but in return I wanted an audience with Tata.” At that meeting Shah made a personal request to Tata, and it happened! ■

of the British steel giant Corus was a disaster, and the Tata teleservices business was a fiasco.

**B**ut arguably the roughest time he faced was from the then TISCO (Tata Steel) chief Russi Mody in the late 1980s. In 1991, when JRD Tata decided to step down and hand over the reins of the Tata group to Ratan Tata, there was widespread disbelief as there were several senior contenders such as Mody, who really resented JRD's choice of the young rookie.

TISCO was already a giant and Mody was a trusted lieutenant of JRD for decades, and as the CMD of the steel giant, he decided to not only defy but also revolt against Ratan Tata. Several interesting games were played with the major politicians of the day,



**After the launch of the Tata Indica in 1998.**

### Some famous Ratan Tata quotes

- The day I'm not able to fly will be a sad day for me.
- Ups and downs in life are very important to keep us going, because a straight line even in an ECG means we are not alive.
- Be persistent and resilient in the face of challenges, for they are the building blocks of success.
- Take the stones people throw at you, and use them to build a monument.
- If you want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to walk far, walk together.

and JRD who had never kowtowed with politicians in his life, was forced, at 87, to dash to Delhi in 1992 and meet the then PM Narasimha Rao and FM Manmohan Singh to lobby for Ratan, who he had appointed as chairman of Tata Sons. But the two sent him back with his own mantra — it would be better for the Tatas to sort out their own affairs and solve their problems internally.

After many ups and downs, Ratan Tata got the board of Tata Sons to pass a resolution to retire all company chairmen when they turned 75. He himself was 54 then. Even though this decision affected all the old boys in the Tata stable, including Darbari Seth, SA Sabavala, Jamshed Bhabha, Nani Palkhivala, etc, Mody, who was then 74, took it personally and found a loophole that technically TISCO was not answerable to Tata Sons and the holding

company did not wield the economic clout to translate its diktat into action.

Mody drummed up political support, got the trade unions on his side, etc, and really muddied the waters for the new heir of JRD. But finally, Ratan Tata outmanoeuvred the man who had joined the Tatas when the former was born — exactly 54 years ago.

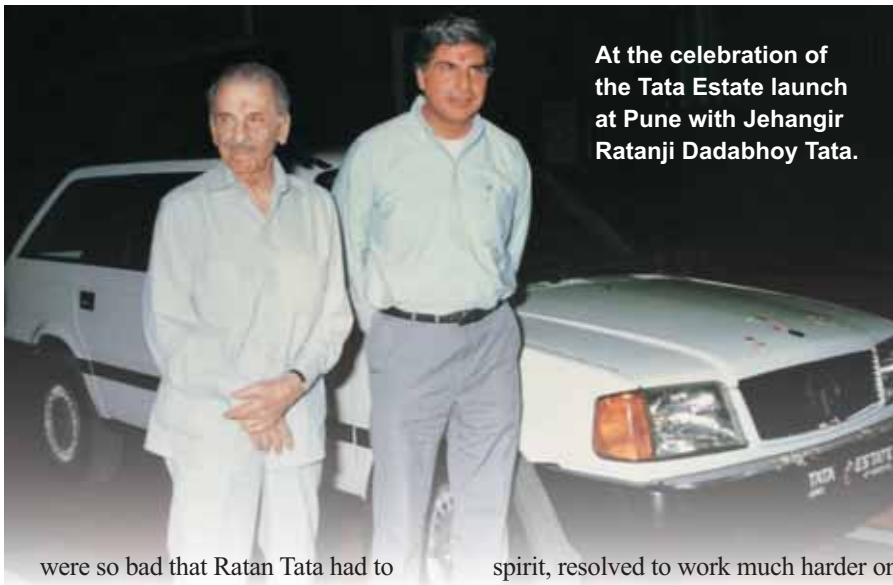
**T**he next major ordeal Ratan Tata faced was in Tata Motors, where in 1998, under his personal interest, initiative and guidance, Tata Indica, India's first indigenously designed and manufactured car was launched. Tata's dream was to take on the Japanese and American cars that were then flooding the Indian market. But the Indica sales were tepid, and the company's finances



Playing a tune.



With cricketer Sachin Tendulkar.



At the celebration of the Tata Estate launch at Pune with Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoi Tata.

were so bad that Ratan Tata had to consider selling Tata Motors.

Ford Motors was a contender, and in 1999, the Tata chairman, with his team, flew to the US to negotiate the sale. In that meeting, the Ford chairman, Bill Ford arrogantly taunted Ratan Tata for entering the passenger car segment without understanding it, and even said he was doing them a favour by buying Tata Motors!

Unable to stomach this insult, Tata walked out, scrapped the deal, and taking a clue from his never-give-up

spirit, resolved to work much harder on their passenger car segment, improving the vehicles' fuel efficiency, making them safer, etc. The results can be seen from the leadership Tata Motors has taken in the EV passenger car segment, the company moving into the black and its share price going up from hitting a low of around ₹67 in 2019 to a high of ₹1,179 in 2024!

Ratan Tata had his sweet revenge moment during the great recession of 2008, when Ford Motors had to sell many of its subsidiaries such as Volvo

and Hertz, and was looking at suitors to buy the loss-making Jaguar and Land Rover. Tata Motors, steered by Ratan Tata's personal interest and passion for luxury cars, entered the fray and closed the deal. Not only that, Tata Motors turned these businesses into some of the most profitable automobile divisions in the world!

As eulogies pile up for India's best loved business leader in decades, the man will be most remembered for showing by example that it is possible in India to do extremely profitable business without bribe and corruption. With him at the helm, the integrity associated with the Tata brand scaled new highs. The British weekly *The Economist* summed this up neatly when it commented: "Even in difficult times, the Tata Group under his leadership was seen as a uniquely benign employer. It did not swindle, it paid its debts, it stood behind its products — and it was largely, if not entirely, free from scandal."

Designed by Krishna Pratheesh S

# Being ‘male, pale and stale’ affects Rotary membership

Rasheeda Bhagat

**D**uring his recent visit to India, incoming RI President Mario de Camargo took out some time in Madurai to sit down for an interview with *Rotary News*. As candid as always, he did not mince his words as he expressed serious concern about Rotary’s stagnant, and even falling membership in some countries, and said this was “because we are still male, pale and stale”.

While praising India for membership growth, TRF giving and service projects, he also pointed out that negatives such as bogus clubs and election disputes were spoiling its image, and standing in the way of India holding a convention, because a Rotary convention can only be held in countries “where Rotary is at peace”.

RIPE Mario de Camargo

Excerpts from the interview:

## How would you sum up the strengths and weaknesses of Rotary in India?

The strengths are clearly membership and giving to The Rotary Foundation. Let me give you the numbers. India, in 2004 had roughly 85,000 Rotarians; today it has 170,000. So, its membership has increased 100 per cent in a period of 20 years. I never take one or two years alone. I always





consider the trend... the design of the curve. It's an ascending curve that India has. In absolute terms, India presents the highest growth in membership in Rotary worldwide the last 20 years. Period.... that's a fact.

Second, years ago, India had a contribution/donation/investment in TRF equalling that of my country, Brazil... roughly about \$5 million a year. Brazil is still at \$5 million and India reached \$32 million (last Rotary year).

**Why do you think this is so? Because even Brazil has grown and become an economic powerhouse.**

Because India has implemented successfully the CSR (corporate social responsibility) programme. I had the privilege to discuss that with my (late) friend Sushil Gupta when this process was still being discussed and evaluated in the government... Indian Parliament and TRF.

**Which year are we talking about?**

The year 2016; when I was a (TRF) Trustee, along with Sushil Gupta. So



To be divided within Rotary is not the Rotary way. You have to be united in India so that you can claim a Convention for India. True Rotary begins with true clubs, true membership.

## The many shades of DEI

When asked if he was happy with the way DEI is working in Rotary, incoming RI President Mario de Camargo had this response:

"DEI has different paces of introduction. I was in Toronto, Canada, last weekend. This is where DEI started, upper northern US and Canada. I told them that the agenda for DEI and the pace of implementation changes according to the region of the world. You cannot force an agenda like DEI at the same

speed in all of the Rotary world, as we also have to respect the local culture. DEI in India may be perceived differently from DEI in Canada, Brazil or Germany, and that has to be respected. I told some DEI members of the taskforce in Toronto that you can't expect the pace of change of DEI in Canada to be the same as in India or the Middle East. You have to respect that Rotary is global and you have to respect the pace of change in different parts of the world when it comes to DEI."

I kind of followed the progress; of course. Sushil followed very closely the evolution of that idea within the political universe in India. And we always exchanged some ideas, because Brazil has a similar law, but which was never implemented with the same efficiency as in India. It is more generous than the India regulation, but it is so limited in terms of the areas of focus that you can invest in, that in practicality very few enterprises take advantage of it.

In India, now you can see an explosion of CSR projects because first, I think here you have a lot more connections between the NGOs and the business world so people are more connected.

Second, the legislation here in India is mandatory, the companies have to invest two per cent of their net profit above a certain level of revenue, in social programmes. In Brazil, it is optional. That makes a big difference. So many companies just let it sit and the money just goes to the government. Because when you do not appoint or assign a specific project to invest that

money in, it just rests in the treasury of the national federal government.

**On membership growth, are you happy with the growth of women's numbers in Rotary in India?**

I think India is on the right track. It has not reached the level of participation of women in Rotary like the US, where women account for one-third, as also in Brazil, where one in three Rotarians are women.

**Are you happy with the kind of projects done by Rotary in India?**

Yes, because Indian Rotarians are giving/investing in the Foundation and then using the money in the projects. Oh yes, India is the leader in the utilisation of Rotary funds.

**Which is really good for the public image of Rotary because Rotary's work gets visibility through these projects.**

That is exactly why Rotary's membership in India is growing, because by doing more projects, getting more



visibility and hence a better public image, you attract more Rotarians. That is also coupled with the emerging middle class in India. When I visited India for the first time in 2008, it was a different country.

#### **How so?**

I saw India as a contrast then between a small minority of very wealthy people and most of the population living in poverty. Today I see a different mood. I see the middle class building, growing. That is one of the reasons for Rotary's successful growth in India, because of its 400-million strong middle class!

**For the last two years two RI Presidents Gordon McInally and Stephanie Urchick, as well as you, have been speaking of concerns in India such as bogus clubs, election complaints, etc. Has this made a difference? Do you see such tough speaking making a difference?**

Yes, yes. I said it at the Bangalore institute and I repeated this last night in Mumbai. India is doing very well in terms of membership. You don't have to resort to fake clubs. That tarnishes the image of the country. Political disputes tarnish the image of the country. For instance, India today would be qualified to hold the convention.

According to the latest reports, there is a brand new convention centre in Delhi, capable of holding 20,000–25,000 people, with all the modern facilities. But to be able to hold the convention in India, you have to be a country where Rotary is at peace. We talk about peace and conflict resolution and give scholarships to younger people to educate and enable them to talk about peace in troubled areas. But then we have a country that is divided within Rotary. That is not the Rotary way. You have to be united in India so that you can claim a convention for

India. True Rotary begins with true clubs, true membership.

**What will be your main priorities as RI President?**

Membership, membership.

**How will you grow the membership?**

We have to rejuvenate our brand in the US, because differently from India where Rotary is still a very attractive proposition, in the US it no longer attracts the younger people. So we will have to build a better image. A rejuvenated image, an image of people in action, purpose, projects.

We are still lagging behind in several areas of the world because we are still male, pale and stale. We have to offer new products, new club formats, new forms of meetings. You don't have to meet every week, you don't have to pay for meals, if you want to



Rasheeda Bhagat

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**In business you don't reject customers... but we reject potential Rotarians when we don't look for new members with intensity. And then we complain that 150,000 Rotarians leave Rotary every year.**

gather in a happy hour among younger people and develop your projects. That is also a Rotary club.

**By 'pale' do you mean white men?**

Yes.

**So what will Rotary have to do differently to get more members?**

We have to go back to the lesson we learnt from polio that, alone we can do a lot but if we partner with others, we can change the world. We are pretty good at getting money out of Rotarians' pockets... Arch Klumph, Major Donors, etc. But we are even better in getting money out of someone else's pockets... the US,

Canadian, Japan or German governments, among others.

So if we are that good in advocating for a cause, why are we not that good in advocating for ourselves? To get more members so that clubs may continue to exist. That's a reflection; we can plan and make it happen. Just like in business you don't reject customers... but we reject potential Rotarians when we don't look for new members with intensity. And then we complain that 150,000 Rotarians leave Rotary every year. Some of that happens due to the natural process, when you have members who are 75, 78, etc. But we have to plan and move forward with commitment, targets, engagement. ■

# India shines bright in TRF giving, clocking \$32 million last year

Rasheeda Bhagat



When it was his turn to address the massive TRF Multi District conclave in Kochi, TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney effortlessly lightened the mood and lessened the fatigue of sitting through a long conference with his wit and humour. First of all, he bowed and paid his respects to King Mahabali, complete with his shimmering red *veshti* and glittering gold crown, who had been put in the first row for the event which just followed Onam.

As the audience burst into laughter, he said: “You may laugh but I am not going to get into trouble with royalty!”

Next, referring to the video shown by Mahabali on the various enchantments of Kerala that he and his wife Gay were going to miss as they were on such a short trip to the state, Maloney said he hoped to do it all on his next trip. “I particularly look forward to seeing Gay going down that zipline. That would be quite a show!”

Thanking the leadership of Rotary in India, particularly Trustee Bharat Pandya for extending tremendous support to TRF, resulting in India emerging once again as the No 2 contributor to TRF last year at \$32 million, he referred to Pandya as “maybe the second

most knowledgeable Rotarian in the world. I’ll accept that I am the encyclopaedia of Rotary (as stated earlier by Pandya). It’s not true, but it makes me feel good.”

Complimenting the India region for “the tremendous work that is being done here,” he congratulated the present and last year’s district governors and the regional leadership of Zone 5 — RRFC Gowri Rajan, EMGA Madhav Chandran and EPNC (End Polio Now chair) Chinnadurai Abdullah — for the phenomenal feat of collecting “\$3.2 crore”.

He said by working together, Rotary and TRF, was helping realise so many hopes and dreams across



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Bharat Pandya is maybe the second most knowledgeable Rotarian in the world. I'll accept I am the encyclopaedia of Rotary. It's not true, but it makes me feel good.

**Mark Maloney**  
Trustee Chair

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the world, and recalled the 1985 RI Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, which he had attended. "Walking among Rotarians around the world, including some who outwardly seemed different than me, I became enchanted with the magic of Rotary."

During the 5<sup>th</sup> plenary session, he heard Dr Albert Sabin, creator of the oral polio vaccine, talk about the need to vaccinate all children and watched "the thunderous support expressed by Rotarians. That moment, 39 years ago was

the dawn of PolioPlus, a significant milestone in Rotary's commitment to the world's children".

Next year as club president, he had hosted a GSE team from Western Nigeria, and the following year led a return exchange visit from his district, and saw that two of the children in the seven families in Nigeria who hosted them had polio. "Since that exposure to the victims of polio, I have witnessed firsthand the incredible work



**TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney and Trustee Dr Bharat Pandya greet AKS member Leema Martin.**

of Rotary members and health workers ensuring that this terrible disease will soon be finished forever.”

**M**aloney then posed a query to the delegates — if they had a magic wand to address the challenges in their communities, where would they use it? To expand contributions to end polio? “Or invest in peace builders in a world raging with unrest? Would you provide sustainable systems for water and sanitation where there are none? Would you provide dialysis equipment for a public hospital used by the less fortunate in your community? Or support those rebuilding their lives after a natural disaster?”

Rotary, through TRF, provided the opportunity to Rotarians to use that magic wand in the area their communities needed the most. “Gay and I have had the opportunities to see Rotary’s magic wands in action in several places,” he said.

One of their most memorable moments, Maloney said, was during their visit to Hanoi in Vietnam in Dec 2019, just before Covid unleashed its devastation. They had joined Rotarians from Korea and California conducting vocation training for Operation Smile to correct cleft lip and cleft

*In 1986, during a GSE visit to Nigeria, I saw two children with polio. Since then Rotary has done incredible work to end this terrible disease.*

**Mark Maloney**

palate deformities in young children. The couple was paired with Pink (her English name), who was five months old. She was accompanied by her father, and Maloney carried her into the operating room. Once her surgery was completed, “which I watched fully without fainting, I carried her back and placed her into the arms of her father. Her father sang a lullaby to Pink, which was in French...

remember Vietnam was a French colony. It was a lullaby we both knew and we were able to sing along.”

And then, magic happened. On that day, Rotary changed not only Pink’s life, as she no longer had the deformity and wouldn’t be teased or discriminated against, “but our lives as well. The young father, perhaps 25, who was a Buddhist, came up to us and in gratitude for what we had



Rasheeda Bhagat

**Trustee Chair Maloney interacting with 'King Mahabali' associated with the Onam festival.**



**Event chairman PDG Sunil Zacharia with DGs Sudhi Jabbar, Meerankhan Saleem, Santhosh Sreedhar, S Suresh Babu and N Sundaravadivelu calling the multidistrict conclave to order.**

done, made the Christian sign of the cross for each of us. What a moving experience it was for both of us.”

**B**ut to be able to wave these magic wands, “which are all coin-operated”, TRF’s goals would have

to be met, the Trustee Chair said. For this Rotary year, the Trustees had set an ambitious fundraising goal of **\$500 million** “and all of us have to work together as a team to achieve this goal. We also have to reach our endowment goal of **\$2.025 billion by 2025**. When that goal was established in 2017, it seemed a long time away, but 2025 is upon us and we have got work to do.

**This year, the trustees have set an ambitious goal of \$500 million for TRF. We have to work together to achieve it.**

**Mark Maloney**



‘King Mahabali’ presents a memento to Trustee Chair Maloney as (from left) Trustee Bharat Pandya, Gay Maloney and PDG Zachariah look on.

We are approaching that goal, and we’re about \$250–260 million away,” he said.

Once again spelling out what he calls ‘Mark’s magical markers’, Maloney said all the leaders in the hall would have to lead by example and make a contribution to the Annual Fund. “I also ask you to make a contribution to the Endowment Fund by December-end. Your personal commitment will set the stage for your district’s commitment to TRF.”

Next, they’d have to contribute to their district’s PolioPlus Society with a minimum contribution of \$100 and a commitment to continue that till polio is eradicated. If your district doesn’t have a PolioPlus Society, let’s get one started right away.”

Next came the mission to raise awareness of the Paul Harris Society and increase the number of individuals who make an annual commitment of \$1,000 to it. The last was to put together a team to “host some sort of a legacy event with a minimum goal of **\$1 million** to support the Endowment Fund. If every district does it, even if they are not all successful, and don’t reach the goal of \$1 million, I am confident that we will celebrate at the Calgary Convention (June 2025) that we have achieved the \$2.025 billion goal.”

He added: “You can say fine, that’s well and good, he will say all this because he is the Trustee Chair. But I am not asking you to do anything that Gay and I have not done. We are both members of the PolioPlus Society, as well as the Paul Harris Society, we have



PDG Shaju Peter gives a memento to RID Anirudha Roychowdhury. TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya is also seen.

just established a fund in support of the environment and last February were the chairs of such a million-dollar dinner legacy event. If we can do it, you can do it too.”

**M**aloney inaugurated four healthcare projects worth ₹2 crore, done through global grants, all for the Ernakulam General Hospital. The first three projects, valued at ₹1.3 crore, have been done by RCs Cochin Central and Cochin Titans. These include providing 16 state-of-the-art haemodialysis machines, 18 beds, and 16 multipara monitors, for the dialysis centre, which is now known as the ‘Rotary Dialysis Ward’. This facility will now be able to perform 336 dialysis procedures every week and treat an additional 125 chronic kidney disease patients at a time. The major contributors for this project are Rtms Kochoseph Chittilappilly, Joseph Vachaparambil, Anil Varma and Dr CM Radhakrishnan.

The fourth GG project he inaugurated has provided sophisticated equipment to the Cardiovascular and

Thoracic Surgery department at this government hospital. It was explained that since 2021, this department has been doing bypass and lung surgeries and vascular procedures, and urgently needed crucial equipment to do more complex treatments, including open heart procedures, valve repairs, and congenital heart surgeries. This project, worth \$600,000, has installed the Philips Live 3D echocardiography system which will allow doctors to visualise the heart with precision and perform more complex operations successfully.

**A**ddressing the meet, Trustee Bharat Pandya said that if for over 100 years TRF had “touched lives and transformed communities across the world, it had been made possible by the passion and dedication of Rotarians. He complimented Zone 5 districts for not only meeting their TRF goal last year, but exceeding it. He congratulated the governors and regional teams for this feat, as also members of RCs Cochin Central and Cochin Titans for the outstanding projects they had inaugurated that evening.

“Whether it is cleft palate surgeries in the Philippines, paediatric cardiac surgeries in Mumbai or our medical missions in Africa, truly our global grants unfold the magic of Rotary and through our Foundation we can touch lives and transform communities,” he said.

Giving details of TRF’s Programs of Scale grants, he said in this \$2 million are given every year for a big impactful programme. The first such grant was for a malaria-free Zambia,

second was for mother and child health in Nigeria, and the third was towards a cervical cancer-free Egypt.

Pandya said that the evaluation of the first grant in Zambia, supported by the Gates Foundation and World Vision showed that in two years, the mortality and morbidity from malaria in Zambia had come down significantly, in some cases by as much as 50 per cent. “Learning about this, the Gates Foundation and World Vision were so happy with the execution of the programme and the result, that both the organisations are giving an additional \$20 million, and TRF is matching this with another \$10 million. So the initial \$2 million programme has now transformed into a \$30 million programme called the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge which is to be implemented in four countries — Zambia, Nigeria, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo — to fight three diseases... malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoeal diseases in children under 5.”

This was the magic of TRF; “we give to TRF because its work is done not by hired hands but by Rotarians like all of you. These are the people you can trust with your money. We give to TRF because it is truly effective giving, with 92 per cent of the money being used only for the purpose for which it was given.”

The Trustee added that over the last 15–17 years Gates has given more than \$1.2 billion for polio eradication efforts. When he came to the 2009 RI Assembly, he was asked why he keeps giving to TRF. “He said we look at a programme we want to implement ad hoc and then we look for an organisation that is head and shoulders into that programme.

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You must create district teams to organise TRF legacy events to raise \$1 million.

We have to meet the \$2.025 billion goal by 2025.

**Anirudha Roychowdhury**  
RI Director

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Trustee Chair Maloney honouring AKS member Leema Martin. Also seen (from L): DGs Santhosh Sreedhar, Suresh Babu, Meerankhan Saleem, DGE Chella Raghavendran (RID 3206), RID Roychowdhury and Trustee Pandya.

Bill Gates said they wanted to work for children and particularly polio eradication. Once this was decided, he added, there was no doubt in our minds that the only organisation to work with was Rotary. Such is our credibility.”

Giving one example of the magic that happens with TRF, Pandya said that the SRCC Hospital in Mumbai was started in 1954–55, mainly to offer corrective surgery for paediatric deformities mainly due to polio. With polio having been eradicated from India by 2011, by 2012 the hospital was shut down. It was taken over by Devi Shetty’s Narayana Hrudayalaya and reopened in 2017, and was dedicated to paediatric surgeries, mainly for the heart.

Last year, he had visited that hospital, and saw patients had come from rural Maharashtra to undergo surgeries. In the pre-operative ward, he saw on the beds children from six months to about 12–13 years. They were usually accompanied by their mothers, and as he went around from bed to bed, “in the eyes of the mothers I saw two emotions, anxiety and hope; anxiety about whether her child will come out successfully from the

surgery and hope that at least there is an organisation like Rotary which had come forward to offer a chance of life to their child through such a costly surgery they couldn’t have afforded.”

In the last six years, the SRCC hospital had done 4,500 paediatric cardiac surgeries “out of which 4,200 were done with the help of Rotary’s global grants. The blessings of those people will come to you and your families,” he added.

**I**n his address RI director Anirudha Roychowdhury said that Zone 5 is considered “the largest and strongest in the world” with 50,000 members. The immediate task before Rotarians in India was to create teams in their districts which can work for narrowing the gap — of around \$400 million — to meet the \$2.025 billion goal by 2025. “You must create teams which can organise TRF events that can mobilise \$1 million as Chair Maloney suggested.”

AKS members Leema Martin, Arul Jothi Karthikeyan and RID 3204 DG Sudhi Jabbar, who will

*In the last six years, Mumbai’s SRCC hospital has done 4,200 paediatric cardiac surgeries with Rotary’s help.*

**Bharat Pandya**  
TRF Trustee

be the first from his district to become an AKS member, and Raj Siddharth, president of RC Coimbatore East, who presented a cheque equivalent to \$100,000, were honoured, along with other major contributors to TRF.

Chairman of the event PDG Sunil Zachariah welcomed the delegates, RRFC Gowri Rajan, EMGA Madhav Chandran and EPNC Chinnadurai Abdullah gave a brief report, District Governors N Sundaravadivelu (3202) Suresh Babu (3203), Santhosh Sreedhar (3204), Sudhi Jabbar (3211) and Meerankhan Saleem (3212) gave an overview of their districts’ activities. ■

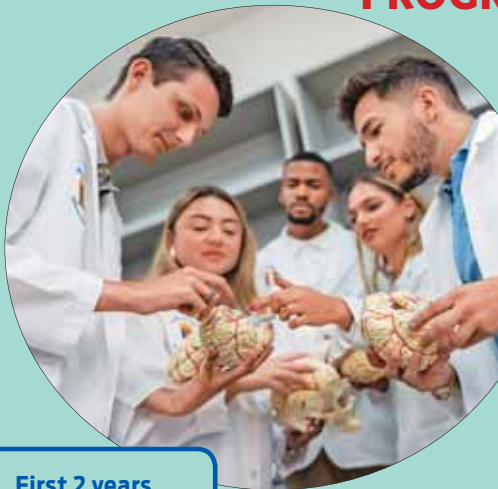


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# Rotary and Peace

## Team Rotary News

Addressing a Q&A session on Rotary and Peace organised by the Rotary Club of Madras, RID 3234, past RI President Kalyan Banerjee shared insight into the evolution of Rotary's peace programme and the organisation's enduring commitment to peace. The discussion he had with club member Sanjay Madhavan touched upon various aspects of how Rotary has been involved in furthering peace worldwide since its inception. It all began with the Rotary Club of

Hamilton, Ontario, proposing a resolution in 1914 urging the International Association of Rotary Clubs to promote global peace.

Banerjee spoke with clarity on Rotary's multifaceted approach to creating an atmosphere that fosters peace, emphasising its focus on education, health, guidance toward gainful employment, economic independence and environmental issues. He highlighted the establishment of various Peace Centers in nearly every continent and the funding provided to students pursuing courses in peacebuilding.

This aligns with Rotary's constitutional objective, adopted in 1921, of advancing international peace and goodwill through a fellowship of business and professional leaders.

Promoting peace was even more essential today with there being so much of conflict and violence raging in several parts of the world, he said.

The conversation also delved into the past president's personal experiences in the two polio endemic countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan. He recounted his meetings with the presidents of both the nations, during which he had emphasised the critical need to immunise the children of these nations. His reflections underscored the essence of Rotary's mission to create an atmosphere that begets peace in communities at large.

Prior to this dialogue, club president G Chella Krishna addressed the origin of the International Day of Peace, celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and noting Rotary's role as one of the founders of the United Nations.

Later Banerjee told *Rotary News* that he was very happy with the club's initiative to invite and involve young Interactors in penning their thoughts on peace. "Some of them spoke on the importance of peace and shared their perspective. I was very impressed with their understanding of peace and interpretation of why it is so important today. They came through as very genuine, and being the future generation, it gives us hope that peace is more likely in their world, than in the world we live in today.... the present scenario of conflict is distressing indeed!" ■

**PRIP Kalyan Banerjee with RID 3234 DGE Vinod Saraogi and RC Madras president G Chella Krishna.**



# Celebrating Nari Shakti

V Muthukumaran



**A**mid the sea of protests across the country over the savage rape and murder of a young intern doctor at the RG Kar Hospital, Kolkata, Rotary Club of Calcutta Mahanagar, RID 3291, honoured nine women achievers with Shakti Samman Awards. “What has happened in Kolkata is against our culture as our *sanskriti* (Indian tradition) worships Goddess Shakti. Ahead of Durga puja, the nine-day festival where the nine avatars of the goddess are worshipped each day, we want to create a positive, vibrant mood for Navratri by hosting the Nav Shakti event,” said club president Pramila Dugar.

She mooted the idea of such an event which also included a panel discussion on empowering girls and the launch of *Project Shakti* comprising four service initiatives worth ₹50 lakh benefiting over 50,000 girls. “PRIP Shekhar Mehta structured and curated the programme that will help us to rejuvenate and recollect our inner strength,” she explained. In his address, Mehta recalled that as Rotary president “I had taken up empowering girls

as my top priority and it resonated around the world as in most places, women faced discrimination, lacked opportunity for growth and struggled for education, healthcare and skill development.”

In fact, women should get half the job opportunities as “they form half of global population. But they are the most affected by issues like climate change, economic disparity and major disasters.” Mehta said *Nav Shakti* is an earnest attempt to look at gender disparities, find solutions through open discussions, and “then follow it up by walking the talk.” At the panel discussion anchored by Sudeshna Roy, advisor, West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and also a film director-cum-actor, the focus shifted towards the systemic issues and social inequalities that women had to face in their daily life.

Citing a 2018 UN study on gender disparity, former Kolkata police commissioner Gautam Chakrabarti said “it reported that it would take 108 years for women to overcome inequality which is a global problem. Even wealthy educated families

**PRIP Shekhar Mehta and Rashi with (from left) Pranay Agarwal, Kavita and Sanjay Bhalotia, Sanjay Dugar, RC Calcutta Mahanagar president Pramila Dugar, Shakti Samman coordinator Aparna Biyani, Shalini Bagaria and Project Nav Shakti chairperson Chitra Agarwal.**





Club president Pramila, along with Shakti Samman awardees, at the launch of *Project Nav Shakti* in Kolkata.

prefer a male child as gender disparities are deeply entrenched in our society.” Now police can file a ‘zero FIR’ by taking cognisance of online complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace. “There are gaps in the implementation of equity laws, and for this to change, we have to work at the family, society and government levels to remove gender discrimination,” he said.

Around 90 rapes are being reported each day in India, “and we all know that this is just the tip of the iceberg as many don’t come forward to lodge police complaints. We know that only women can give birth and breastfeed, but the rest of her work in nurturing the child should be shared by men too. Let us put the responsibility of bringing up children on men too,” said Anuradha Kapoor, founder-trustee, Swayam, an organisation that advocates women’s rights. To stop violence against women, “we have to ask what type of men and boys we have got used to in the first place,” she said. In a forceful plea, acting coach and film director Daminee Benny Basu said “we have to break free from the gender conditioning and stereotypes that are common in the film industry. Policies are framed by a patriarchal society, and the very idea of equality is being twisted by male chauvinists with statements like ‘boys will be boys.’”

The panellists agreed that the workplace should be “more accommodative of women’s concerns, but now she is being forced to ‘fit into it’”. Also, we have to respect homemakers as without the household chores this world will come to naught.” Sudeshna Roy said that “each one of us should look back and within us to analyse where we have gone wrong and make efforts to make our society more gender inclusive.”

Pointing to a report of McKinsey Global Institute, event chairperson Chitra Agarwal said, “closing the gender gap in employment and other areas will add \$28 trillion to the global GDP by 2025.” Only 1.4 billion out of 3.5 billion employed people in the world are women. “While 66 per cent of the global work (consolidated) and 50 per cent of food production are done by women, they get only 34 per cent of the global income,” she said.

### **Project Shakti**

A slew of programmes including vaccination against cervical cancer for 1,500 girls, holding awareness and medical camps (₹20 lakh); creating MHM awareness sessions for 30,000 girls, training stakeholders and distribution of eco-friendly sanitary pads (₹12 lakh); promoting a model kitchen garden, orientation sessions for girls

at anaemia camps and seed kits distribution (₹10 lakh); and self-defence training to 1,000 girls under *Project Virangana* (₹5 lakh) will be taken up by the Mahanagar Rotarians.

### **Nine awardees**

The club got 82 nominations from across the state with a write-up of their work, 10–20 action pictures and bio-data, which were scrutinised by two eminent jurists — Satyam Roychowdhury, MD of Techno India Group, and Dr Kunal Sarkar, a cardiac surgeon, said award coordinator Aparna Biyani. “One woman was selected in each of the nine categories after careful vetting and deliberations by the jury,” she said.

The awardees are: Parul Bajoria, fashion designer, Arts and Culture; Priyanka Goenka, baby food and nutrition, Entrepreneurship; Anwesha Banerjee, fearless reporting, Journalism; Yasmin Nazia, criminal lawyer, Legal; Sharanya Banerjee, karate trainer, Martial Arts; Anasuya Chakraborty, community police officer, Police Service; Tahrina Nasrin, swimmer, Sports; Payal Varma, therapeutic practice, Social Service; and Soma Bose, writer and visual storyteller, Author. Each awardee was given a trophy, citation and a gift pack.




Pictures by V Muthukumaran



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# Startling fall in numbers a huge concern

Rasheeda Bhagat

RIPE Mario de Camargo



**D**id you know that the US, the country where Rotary was born, has lost over 100,000 members in the last 20 years? Probably not.

Expressing grave concern at the declining membership of Rotary, particularly in some parts of the world, with only a few regions, prominently India, being an exception at the Vision 2030 Conclave in Madurai, incoming RI President Mario de Camargo said he distinctly saw three scenarios in Rotary.

The first was the scenario that gave hope; the scenario of growth where the numbers said Taiwan had grown at 127 per cent, India at 103 per cent, Philippines at 52 and Korea at 35 per cent. “All of them are in Asia. In the last 20 years, India has grown from 85,000 to 172,000. You might ask why 20 years? That is because I do not believe in those spikes in membership that are created artificially... fake clubs with fake Rotarians. We have to grow

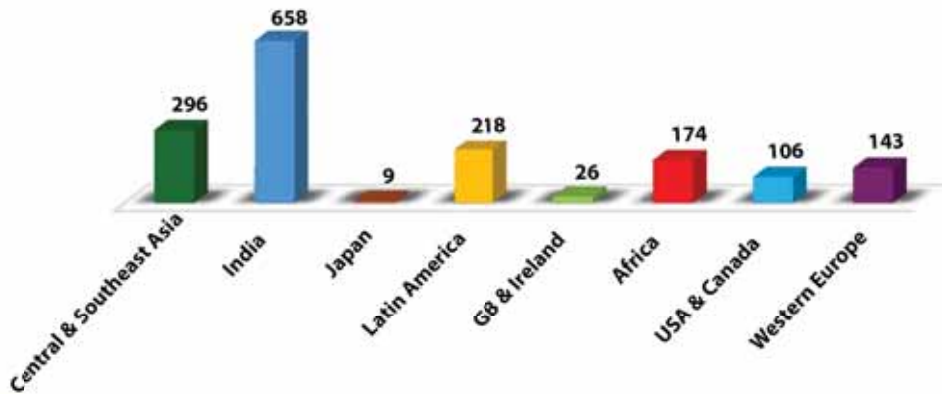
sustainably and healthy, and long term.”

But while commending India for its growth, Camargo also laid down a strict warning for Indian Rotarians. “India is doing very well. But don’t tarnish your good numbers with bad behaviour; it’s not worth it. You are doing fine. You are not desperate to create artificial numbers. You have good solid robust numbers.”

Moving to the second scenario, where the decline in numbers was marginal, with Brazil declining by two per cent, Mexico six per cent and Italy four per cent, he said, “Some people like to use the word stable, but I don’t call it stability. For me, it is stagnation. My country, Brazil, is stagnating in Rotary membership; we’ve been 50,000 for 20 years. So when I was invited to address a club in France where I had to speak in French because I had to ensure that they understood what I was saying and also because sometimes the French don’t like to listen to English. I said you’ve lost 8,000 members in France in the last 20 years, your neighbours, the Germans have gained 16,000!”



## New clubs chartered 2021-23



Coming to the third and “the distressing areas or the danger zones where Rotary is in decline”, he said in US the membership had fallen by 29 per cent, Australia by 36 per cent, Canada by 34 per cent and Great Britain and Ireland by 33 per cent. “The US has lost over 100,000 Rotarians since 2004.”

**D**e Camargo disclosed that the previous fortnight he had addressed two institutes in the US “and I had to tell them they were

losing members. Many of them were surprised to learn this, but this is the reality. I asked them what are you going to do about it. If you don’t act, in 10 to 15 years the headquarters of Rotary are going to move from Chicago to Delhi.”

Showing another chart on the formation of new clubs, the RI President-elect revealed some more interesting numbers. Between 2021-23, Central and South East Asia had created 296 new Rotary clubs, while India alone had created 658 clubs. “That shows how and why India is growing; there is a clear

*India is doing very well. But don’t tarnish your good numbers with bad behaviour; it’s not worth it.*

co-relation between the number of new clubs and the growth. Japan, which is also declining, created only 9, Latin America 218, Great Britain and Ireland (GB&I) created 26 clubs, “and that reduced the average age of Rotarians in GB&I from 79 to 73 years old. I’d like to know who would want to join a club where the average age is 73? You

want a succession and you want to leave a legacy. What legacy are you going to leave in a club where the average age is 73,” he asked.

In the same two years US and Canada had added only 109 clubs. “They have 9,000 clubs in US and Canada, and they added only 109 clubs! That is like having no kids...if you don’t have any kids, you don’t have any heir to leave your company, profession or business to. That is what is happening in some countries because people resist change; they don’t want to change and face the reality. I tell them if you don’t change, you are going to die. It’s simple.” ■



# TRF and its coin-operated magic wands

Jaishree



Jaishree

TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney and Gay, DGE Vinod Saraogi (2<sup>nd</sup> from L), DG NS Saravanan (6<sup>th</sup> from L), TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya (3<sup>rd</sup> from R) with families from Uganda. The children were treated for CHD in Chennai hospitals.

In Rotary we all have access to magic wands that enable us to tackle various challenges in our communities. But there is just one problem — these magic wands are coin operated. None of these will work unless you put the time, effort and resources now and for the future,” said TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney. Addressing Rotarians of RID 3234 in Chennai, he urged them to extend their generosity to support The Rotary Foundation. “With these coin-operated magic wands, you can eradicate polio, foster peace in a world grappling with unrest, provide sustainable solutions for clean water

and sanitation, invest in teachers to promote learning, and help rehabilitate those affected by natural disasters.”

He recalled participating in a medical mission in Zimbabwe in March 2020. “PRIP Rajendra Saboo was leading a team of 20 Indian doctors who performed 3,200 medical procedures in just one week. They worked tirelessly, conducting cataract surgeries, dental procedures, and removing tumours without expecting any form of remuneration. They even trained local doctors so that they could continue to change lives. This experience left a remarkable impression on Gay and I. We could

feel the impact of our Foundation there,” he said.

Referring to TRF’s goal to build an Endowment Fund of \$2.025 billion by 2025, he said, “When this goal was announced in 2017, 2025 seemed to be a long time away. But the target year is now upon us. As a team let’s all work together to achieve this goal.” He called on each Rotarian to lead by example and contribute generously. “Take ownership of the magic wand by donating \$100 to the Polio Fund and \$1,000 to the Annual Fund. Every dollar matters — it could provide life-saving polio drops to a child, reduce maternal and

child mortality, immunise women against cervical cancer and empower our people of action so that they can create lasting change around the world,” he said.

Earlier TRF trustee Bharat Pandya acknowledged the generosity of Rotary donors. “To every single one of you who has given to the Foundation this year, and in years past — on behalf of the trustees, Rotarians and the countless beneficiaries you’ve impacted — thank you for your unwavering support,” he said. He highlighted the sacrifices of over 100 health workers killed in Pakistan over the last decade — many of them women — simply because they went door-to-door to immunise children against polio. “We owe it to those who have lost their lives and those who continue to risk theirs — to support polio prevention as a tribute to their sacrifice.”

Pandya shared details about TRF’s latest initiative, the Programs of Scale, which awards \$2 million grant over a 3–5 year period to an impactful

community programme. The first grant was awarded to the ‘Malaria-free Zambia’ programme. “Its success in reducing malaria-related deaths caught the attention of the Gates Foundation and World Vision, leading to an additional \$20 million contribution, with Rotary matching it with \$10 million.” This \$30 million initiative, known as the ‘Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge’, will address child mortality caused by malaria, diarrhoeal diseases and pneumonia in four countries — Zambia, Nigeria, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. “Can you imagine

To every single one of you who has given to the Foundation this year, and in years past, thank you for your unwavering support.

Bharat Pandya  
TRF Trustee

the impact this funding will have over the next three years, addressing some of the top killers in that part of Africa? This is why we need the Foundation,” he said.

RID 3234 DG NS Saravanan, thanking the AKS members and major donors, announced that the district has garnered a commitment of \$2 million contribution to TRF. He urged every Rotarian, rather than the “select few who make repeated contribution,” to step up and contribute.

DGE Vinod Saraogi thanked TRF for approving a GG of \$54,000 which will help the district treat 100 children with congenital heart disorder from Uganda. The medical project is being executed in partnership with RC Kampala Ssesse Islands, Healthy Hearts Foundation, the Uganda Hospital and the Indian Association in Africa. The surgeries are being performed at the Kamakshi Hospital and the Namar Heart Hospital in Chennai. Maloney felicitated PDG S Krishnaswami with the ‘Regional Service Award for a Polio-free World’. ■



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# Mario moments



**Above:** RIDE M Muruganandam presents a memento to RIFE Mario de Camargo at the membership conclave in Madurai.



**Above:** (From L) PRIP Shekhar Mehta, RIFE de Camargo, RID Anirudha Roychowdhury, PRIDs Mahesh Kotbagi and Kamal Sanghvi in Kolkata; **Right:** RID Roychowdhury greeting PRIP KR Ravindran and PRID C Basker in Madurai.





From L: PRID AS Venkatesh, RID Raju Subramanian and PRID C Basker.



**Above:** RIPE de Camargo and RIDE Muruganandam at the Madurai conclave.

**Left:** RIPE de Camargo and RIDE Muruganandam share a lighter moment.



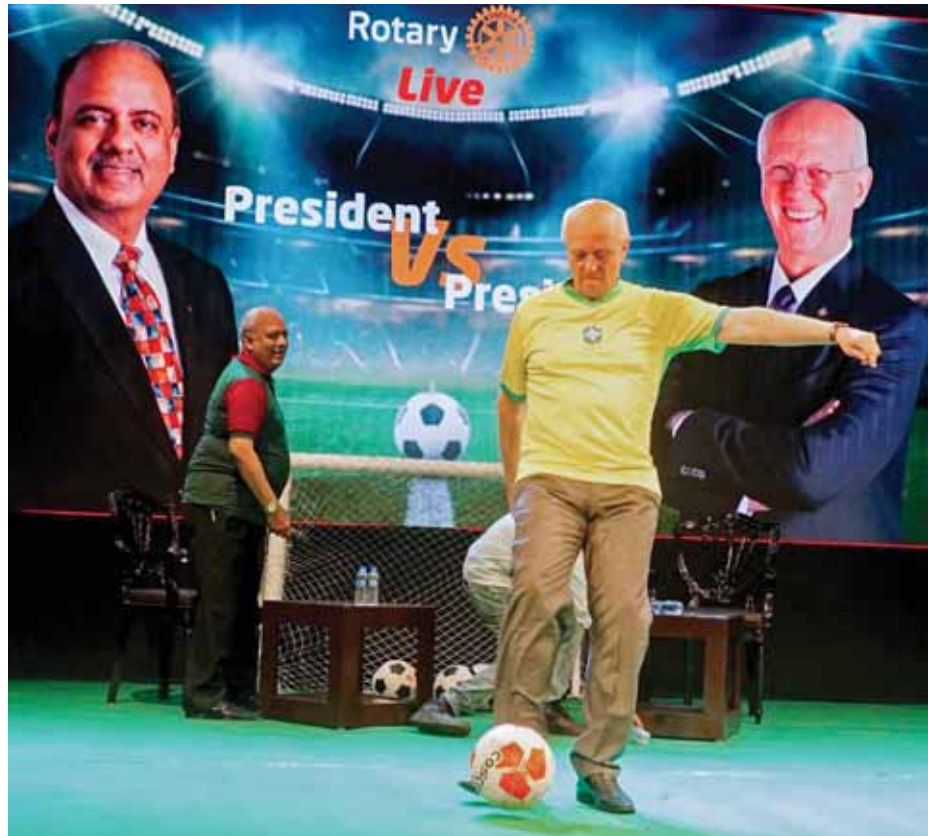
**Below:** RIPE de Camargo interacting with RID Subramanian and PDG Harjit Singh Talwar in Mumbai.





**Above:** RIPE de Camargo given a traditional welcome in Madurai.

**Right:** RIPE de Camargo and PRIP Shekhar Mehta give a glimpse of two football-crazy places — Brazil and Kolkata.



From L: Meera and PDG John Daniel, RIPE de Camargo, RIDE Muruganandam and PRID Venkatesh.



PRIP Ravindran with members of RC Madurai West — (from L) Chitra Ganapathy, Lalji Vora, Amar Singh and NAN Narayanan.



**Above:** RIPE de Camargo with children who had undergone paediatric heart surgery sponsored by Rotary clubs in India. Also seen (from L): PRID Kotbagi, PRIP Mehta, PRID Sanghvi, RID Roychowdhury, PDG Sandip Agarwalla (RID 3141), RC Calcutta Mahanagar president Pramila Dugar, PDG Ravi Vadlamani and RC Calcutta Mahanagar president-elect Sanjay Bhalotia.

**Right:** RIPE de Camargo captures the colours at the reception in Madurai.



**Left:** PRID Venkatesh being welcomed by RID 3000 IPDG R Anandha Jothi in Madurai. Also seen (from L): PRID Basker, RID Raju Subramanian, Conclave chairman RID 2981 PDG S Balaji, PRIP Ravindran and RID Roychowdhury.



**From L:** RID Roychowdhury, DG Shital Shah (RID 3131), DG NS Mahadev Prasad (RID 3192), RIPE de Camargo, DG Satish Madhavan (RID 3191), DGN Lenny da Costa (RID 3170), RIDE KP Nagesh and RID Subramanian at the Hyderabad membership conclave.



# Trustee Chair visits service projects in Chennai

Kiran Zehra & V Muthukumar

The true essence of Rotary is fostering global partnerships to address local challenges,” said TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney, as he inaugurated *Project E-Shala Version 2* in Chennai. This global grant initiative, led by RC Madras East (RCME), RID 3234, enhances digital education by integrating interactive panels into schools, giving students and teachers better access to technology.

He urged Rotarians to contribute to the PolioPlus Fund, and “consider directed gifts and cash contributions to support global grants.”

TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya highlighted the club’s contribution of \$145,000 to TRF and stressed the importance of education, especially for girls. “True empowerment doesn’t

come from gold chains or diamonds, but only through a good education. With this project, you are going to change the lives of thousands of girls,” he said.

The *E-Shala* project, initially launched in 2019–20, has given smartboards worth ₹1 crore to eight schools of the Vivekananda Educational Society in Chennai. Supported by Rotary Clubs of Madras Central, Madras Coromandel, and international partners — RCs Greater Sydney, Hills-Kellyville, Medicine Hat and Cataraqui Kingston, the initiative provided 82 interactive panels that allowed the use of digital platforms like PhET for science, Kahoot for quizzes, Geogebra for math, and Scratch for coding.

The success of the pilot project led to *E-Shala 2*, benefiting schools

in the city’s northern suburbs. “The goal is to bring modern digital learning tools to underprivileged schools, allowing students access to a broader range of resources,” said RCME president P Muthu. He thanked club member Srinivasa Rao and his spouse Vinayambika Rao for their \$35,000 contribution towards the term gift, which made *E-Shala 2* possible. “These funds will upgrade 25 classrooms at the Sri Ram Dayal Khemka Vivekananda Vidyalaya with interactive smart panels.” The international partner for this project is RC Irvine, RID 5320, USA. He also highlighted that the club has done GG projects worth \$2.5 million.

RCME has 26 major donors and is a recipient of the 100 per cent Paul Harris Fellow Club Award for





TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney and Trustee Bharat Pandya with DRFC chair B Dakshayani, RCME member Divya Siddharth, club president P Muthu, Srinivasa Rao, PDG J Sridhar and Vinayambika Rao at the inauguration of *Project E-Shala*.

practical skills. Cataract surgeries valued at ₹4.5 crore has benefitted 22,500 individuals.

The Winners Bakery initiative generates sustainable profits to fund vocational projects and youth employment opportunities. The *Wings to Fly* project, now in its 10<sup>th</sup> edition, has so far given 25,000 government school students the opportunity to visit foreign countries. The club's Aravind Rotary Center for Advanced Ophthalmic Resources and Education (₹1.5 crore) provides advance eyecare and training. RCME's ₹4.5 crore *Healing Tiny Hearts* project, in partnership with the Apollo Hospitals and Tamil Nadu government, has funded life-saving heart surgeries for over 1,500 children.

### Nadi Dialysis Centre

Maloney and his spouse Gay visited the Nadi-RCM-Tolia Dialysis Centre at Madhavaram, a northern suburb. The facility with 12 machines was set up in June 2022, said PDG JB Kamdar,

who is the CMD of Nadi Airtechnics, the makers of industrial fans, where the centre is located.

Looking at the statistic chart, the Maloneys were happy to know that 14,474 dialysis sessions were done as on date, benefitting 140 patients including 70 current beneficiaries.

Recalling the two-year journey of the dialysis centre, Kamdar said out of the total project cost of ₹2.5 crore, "a global grant of ₹1 crore was used to buy the machines by RC Madras, RID 3234, while the building and other features were put up by the Pushpavathi Babulal Kamdar Charitable Trust, at a cost of ₹1.5 crore." The club partnered with RC Alamo, RID 5160, US, and the Wockhardt Foundation which operates the dialysis centre.

As part of a comprehensive medical complex, "we will build a new 30,000sqft centre that will house the expanded dialysis unit with 20 machines — five more from RC Chennai Madhavaram and three machines funded by our family Trust," said Kamdar.

While the club will do it through a GG worth ₹40 lakh, the new building funded by the Kamdar Trust, costing ₹12 crore, will also include a mammogram clinic, screening facility for cervical cancer,

and a primary health centre, named Nadi-SMF-Medical Centre. The Nadi health centre is providing general health and diagnostic services at an affordable cost to the local community over the last 14 years, said Jayanthi Nagarajan, past president, RC Chennai Madhavaram. Kamdar added that the new medical building is expected to be inaugurated by December 2025. ■

three consecutive years. The club's key initiatives include a ₹1 crore BETI (Better Education and Training Initiatives) GG project, benefitting over 5,000 students, and installing a hydraulic lab worth ₹45 lakh at Ramakrishna Mission Polytechnic College to train 5,000 students in



Trustee Chair Maloney, Trustee Pandya, PDG Sridhar, Marlene and PDG JB Kamdar, Gay Maloney and RC Madras past president Vijaya Bharathi Rangarajan at the Nadi-RCM-Tolia Dialysis Centre.

# Rotary in crisis

## in its birthplace: de Camargo

Rasheeda Bhagat

**A**ddressing the *Vision 2030* membership conclave organised in Madurai by incoming RI Director M Muruganandam, RI President-elect Mario de Camargo made it clear that membership should be the topmost priority of Rotary leaders at all levels, and went on to explain in detail the key and crucial terms and phrases in Rotary, which were often misunderstood.

One of his reflections was on three types of leaders he had encountered in

**RIPE Mario de Camargo**

Rotary. The first was “the leader who makes it happen, the second, who lets it happen and the third type is the leader who is surprised by what happened. If we get leaders who are surprised by what happened, Rotary will have no future. We need leaders who make it happen.”

Amidst applause he said: “In India, you are making it happen. I wish we had more Indias around the Rotary world.” With its falling membership, North America “is losing control of this institution. When I tell them this, they do not like it, but I am being candid and true. The fact is that Rotary is in crisis in the place of its birth. I believe that the currency in Rotary is not the money we have; our currency is members, our clubs and our districts. It’s a simple equation. But it took us too long to realise that.”

He next stressed upon the importance of Rotary leaders making succession plans; “we have to make the most of having top-down continuity, but this is easier said than done... continuity to some Rotary leaders means that I am establishing the rules and my successors will follow them. I want to see continuity when you pick up the phone and ask your successor

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Be kind, generous, be a gentleman, consult your successor before you make a decision... that is true continuity.

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before making a decision what he/she thinks of it. Continuity for me is respect... respect for your successor. We have to change our mindset, where some presidents, or directors, say I want continuity, but when he leaves, he leaves all his decisions on the table for you to follow. And some directors do the same. We have to start from the top. Be kind, generous, be a gentleman, consult your successor before you make a decision... that is true continuity. If we don’t engage our successors, nothing will happen, so continuity is basically respect.”

**D**welling on the importance of change, he said “the trouble with our times is that our future is not what it used to be. It changes



RIDs Raju Subramanian and Anirudha Roychowdhury light a lamp to inaugurate the membership conclave in Madurai. Also seen (from L): PRID C Basker, PDG S Balaji, RIDE M Muruganandam, RIPE de Camargo, PRIP K R Ravindran and PRID A S Venkatesh.

Rasheeda Bhagat

every two, three, four years. Take for example the technology in cars. Everything changes at a substantial speed and society changes accordingly. If we don't keep pace with the change, we will become irrelevant."

De Camargo said he had been seeing the change in India since he first came here in 2008. "I can see the difference... new buildings, new highways, new cars, new professions. If your club doesn't pay attention to the surroundings, and sticks to its old ways, you'll lose members."

He then gave an example of his own home town Santo Andre, "an industrial hub and birthplace of the locomotive industry. But the locomotive industry moved outside the town. They went for cheaper land, better taxes and less expensive labour. We lost the locomotive industry; all its big shots were in my dad's club... Firestone, General Motors, etc." With all those companies gone, his club

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His club, RC Santo Andre, when his father was a member, had only 45 members; today "it has 167, because we are not afraid to change."

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(RC Santo Andre) had to change, "to continue to be the same. If you want things to stay as they are, things will have to change. So my club changed to remain the same."

The result was that his club, when his father was a member, had only 45 members; "today it has 167, because we are not afraid to change."

He gave the example of his wife Denise; when he invited her to join

his club, "saying it has 110 members who are very well established, and crème de la crème of our society, she said I don't want to join your club, I want to do Rotary in a different way. I don't want to have to dine every Thursday, with wine and whiskey. I want to have a different way to make Rotary happen. So I challenged my club to form a satellite club."

This was done "on our dining table with 8 ladies; now 8 women can do a lot of good, or a lot of damage if they are contradicted. So don't say no to the ladies. Today there are 57 members in our satellite club. And they don't want to become a normal club because they don't want to deal with the Rotary paperwork, bureaucracy, records and numbers. They want to do projects and have fun. Which goes back to the idea of Rotary a long time ago. We do good and we have fun. So that's the core

RIPE de Camargo greets RID Roychowdhury. PRID Venkatesh, RID Subramanian and RIDE Muruganandam are also seen in the picture.



principle of her club and she is doing very well in her club.”

Moving forward, new ideas, innovations, continuity, partnerships, and new club formats were necessary. For example, there are only 9,000 members in Rotary satellite clubs in the whole world. “If we were a company, we would be bankrupt because we introduced a new product in the market called satellite clubs which are more flexible, more nimble and have less bureaucracy. But 8 or 9 years later, we have only one per cent of that market. That is not success.”

Satellite clubs will have to be publicised, as they are viable and give an opportunity for members who cannot belong to a legacy club or attend weekly meetings but still have the willingness and the drive to participate in a Rotary club.

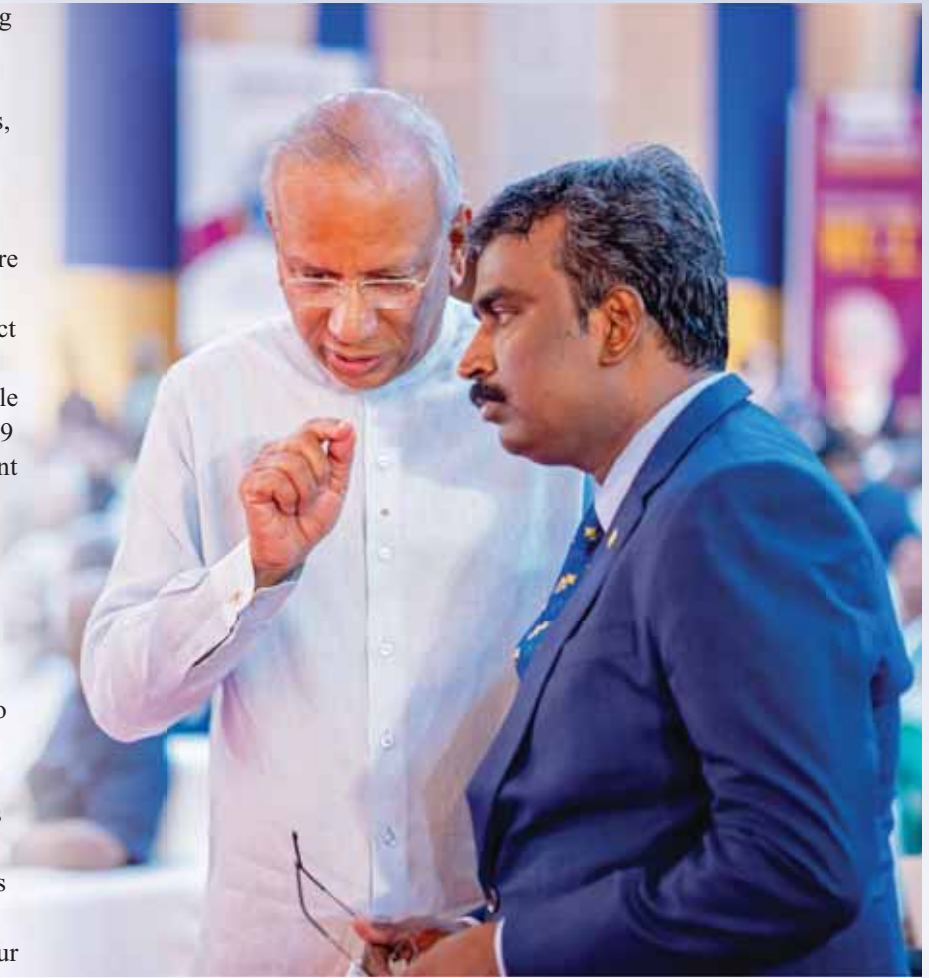
Reiterating how important it was for Rotary to add new members in every which way, de Camargo warned the delegates that “Rotarians are going to get tired of me talking about membership. That has to be our focus, we have to increase members, because we are getting old... I am getting old. I’ve been a Rotarian for 44 years now. I am the first RI president to come from the RYE programme, do you know that? So I am a product of a Rotary programme.”

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*My wife Denise said I don't want to join your club, I want to do Rotary in a different way. I don't want to dine every Thursday, with wine and whiskey. I want to have a different way to make Rotary happen.*

**RIPE Mario de Camargo**

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PRIP Ravindran with RIDE Muruganandam.

On where to get members, he told the assembled Rotarians: “Why don’t we connect with professional associations? Lawyers, dentists, doctors, engineers, architects, printers, textile industry... all of them have their trade federations. I was president of a printers’ association for three years in Brazil and 10 years in Latin America. Very few members were Rotarians. Why can’t we engage with such associations? Because that is the type of quality we need. I don’t want you to go fishing for Rotarians out on the streets just to make the numbers look better. We have to keep the quality level, otherwise we will go into self-destruction mode. But to get members of quality is hard; we

have to look into diverse talent pools, people who share our collective mindset. That’s not easy to find, but professional and trade association do have that kind of people.”

That was a lesson learnt from polio, he added. “We learnt that alone we can do a lot but if we partner, we can change the world.”

He recalled how once he had asked a top leader of the Gates Foundation why they gave so much money — \$100 million a year — to Rotary when they had so many alternatives. “She answered very candidly: ‘Because you have 1.2 million volunteers, and you do not pay a single cent to your volunteers. So I suddenly realised that our

RIPE de Camargo  
and PRIP Ravindran.

## Great camaraderie

The great camaraderie between the incoming RI President Mario de Camargo and past RI President KR Ravindran was palpable at the Madurai event, right from the time the two met and greeted each other, through their meeting on the podium where they exchanged a spontaneous hug, and when the latter introduced the former, in a departure from the usual AV presentations that Rotarians have watched *ad nauseum*.

Ravindran said that at the Lisbon Convention, one “PDG caught my attention not because of his striking good looks, or because he was a South American, but because of the way he presented himself and the clarity with which he put forward his position. I thought he is bound to go places. And my instincts were right!”

Defining the hallmark qualities of an outstanding leader, Ravindran said “such a leader needs to be an understanding person, show compassion and have empathy. He should have the strength of mind, the ability to act as a strong-minded officer and to possess knowledge and determination to provide leadership during difficult times such as the Covid pandemic or the 9/11 attacks.”

RI was a very complex organisation, and one needs to have “a clear mind to be able to lead the RI Board and persuasively chair meetings. You have to be able to think on your feet, and direct the people on the Board... who are people of substance from different continents. Mario has demonstrated already that he has the capacity to do that.”



He recalled a near-crisis situation just before the Sao Paolo convention; “there was a meeting in President Gary Huang’s office and we were thinking of cancelling the convention, when one of us said let’s get Mario involved. Mario came in and salvaged that convention.”

The past president added: “In order to be RI President, one has to be a showman as you are the face and front of a very complex organisation. Mario is a showman, he is charming, as you all saw today, he is able to sit with all of you and pose for photos. To be the president, one needs communication skills to be able to inspire and motivate audiences all over the world. There is nobody of better wit and substance as your incoming president. He speaks so many languages...

English, Spanish, German, a little of French, Italian and of course Portuguese. If he stays with you a few days in Madurai, he’ll start speaking Tamil as well!”

To be an RI President, one also needed to be a clever lawyer, to understand and differentiate between right and wrong, interpret the voluminous constitutional documents and disseminate effective instructions to both the staff and other leaders. Mario has all these qualities, and will make a great president.”

Both of them shared a background in printing, packaging and publishing. De Camargo had till recently run a huge printing company, which he sold a couple of years ago and is today a much



sought after business consultant. Having served in various professional organisations and trade bodies in leadership positions “he is a global figure even without Rotary. I have served with him on TRF; he is bold, well read and makes decisions which are not always popular but best for the organisation. The fourth Brazilian to become an RI President, he comes down hard on stewardship issues and is very particular about how TRF funds are used. With a keen business mind, he looks at ways of cutting expenditure, operating more efficiently, and we are going to get a brilliant, highly motivated, disciplined, hardworking and supremely self-confident president heading Rotary in the coming year.”

In response, de Camargo had this to say: “Ravi rescued me from the Rotary freezer. Some PDGs are sometimes punished and left in the freezer because they do not always agree with the senior leaders and I was left in the freezer for 6–7 years, till I was rescued by Ravi. He made me a (TRF) trustee before I was elected RI director. So I never cease to say ‘thank you Ravi for having seen me when nobody else did.’

Addressing PRID Basker, who was in the audience, he added: “Basker was in the Nominating Committee which selected me as president. So if I do well, I will accept the compliments, if not I’ll give you Basker’s cell phone number!”

*RB*

biggest asset is not the \$2 billion we have in TRF but our members. But we have stagnated at 1.2 million since 1996. Not India... not this part of the world, but in some areas. The birthplace of Rotary is in crisis. When I say this in the US or Canada, they do not like it. But we have to tell the truth.. that is the reality, and I am not here to sugarcoat reality.”

**C**onvenor of the membership conclave for the five RI districts 2981, 2982, 3000, 3212 and 3231, RIDE M Muruganandam said the registration for this event was above 2,500, and beyond the capacity of the auditorium. Quoting the results of a survey done by RI’s RPIC (Rotary Public Imagine Coordinator) team on the awareness about Rotary across the world, he said to the question ‘Have you heard of an organisation called Rotary?’ the response in Taiwan among the people surveyed was 91 per cent followed by India at 83 per cent. But to the next question about the people’s

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*I don’t want you to go fishing for Rotarians out on the streets just to make the numbers look better. We have to keep the quality level, otherwise we will go into self-destruction mode.*

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understanding of Rotary, and how familiar they were with the work done by Rotary, the figure for India was the highest at 73 per cent, followed by Nigeria 57 per cent and Taiwan 54 per cent.

The incoming director said that even though India was “growing and glowing, and our zones have 4,856 clubs with 1.72 lakh Rotarians, the fact remains that we’ve had degrowth in two of our four zones and 19 of our 44 districts, even though our net growth was 1,341 members.” With the help of charts used in his presentation, he said 45 per cent of the clubs in our region were in the red zone, 35 per cent were in the amber zone and only 20 per cent in the green zone. If the clubs from the red zone were pushed to amber, and amber to the green zone, he estimated India could add around 25,000 new members.

Muruganandam also urged Rotarians to turn their attention on adding Rotaractors and Interactors to the Rotary family. Presenting an analysis on the prospects of boosting their numbers and why these numbers were not growing in India, he said that sadly enough, as many as 74 per cent of Rotary clubs had not sponsored even a single Rotaract club and 79 per cent clubs not even one Interact club. Also, 80 per cent Indian Rotary clubs had not even set up a single RCC (Rotary Community Corps).

“If we want this organisation to thrive over the next few decades, youngsters are very important,” he said, reiterating that he himself had begun his Rotary journey as a Rotaractor.







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**74** per cent of Rotary clubs have not sponsored a single Rotaract club, **79** per cent clubs not even one Interact club, and **80** per cent Indian Rotary clubs have not set up a single RCC.

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### RIDE **M Muruganandam**

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He also announced that PRID C Basker had decided to become an AKS member.

**I**n his opening remarks, RI director Anirudha Roychowdhury said while the sluggish and falling membership of Rotary in the world was a concern, “the fundamentals of Rotary are on a very strong foundation. Our corporate governance is at its best and we have resources to pass through this period, where we have some membership blues, but we have to plan how to tackle this situation.” He was confident that under the “evolutionary and revolutionary leadership” of de Camargo, Rotary’s future was bright.

Urging the delegates to embrace Rotary’s unifying policy and DEI guidelines, he added, “To make a significant impact in the community, we have to make our clubs stronger. Your priority should be to increase membership, engage with members and encourage clubs to meet the local community’s needs. Let’s use social media effectively to enhance our public image. Leadership development

and innovative partnerships are other areas we need to work to meet our Vision 2030 goals.”

Complimenting RIDE Muruganandam for the multidistrict initiative and an overflowing hall with the event attracting a registration of around 2,500 Rotarians, RI director Raju Subramanian said, “This audience is a testimony of the strength of our zones. The backbone of our organisation is membership and without that, we cannot meet any of our targets, be it TRF contributions or service projects.”

He said it was a matter of grave concern that in the last 10 years Rotary had lost 1.2 million members across the world. “We must look at getting new members, and retaining them, to build the future of our organisation. We have to work together to get quality members, we are not interested in mere members, we are interested in Rotarians. We don’t need members who come and go with the president but members who stay with the clubs.”

Stressing the need for Rotary to get members of sterling quality, he added, “Once we have quality, the numbers will automatically go up. There are multiple avenues and areas through which we can grow our membership and create new clubs which are permanent and not only for the club president’s year of office.”

Subramanian said Rotarians need to make the effort to recover “the members we have lost. Please go to the members who have left Rotary, connect with them and bring them back.”

PDG S Balaji, RID 2981, chairman of the event, welcomed the gathering.

Designed by Krishna Pratheesh S

## Ninety and Noteworthy

The autobiography of PRIP Rajendra Saboo, titled *My Life's Journey: A Personal Memoir*, was released on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in Chandigarh by former Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court SS Sodhi. Published by Alpha Beta Gamma, the book is available on Flipkart.



PRIP Rajendra Saboo with Justice SS Sodhi.

## Building futures

DG Deepa Khanna inaugurated a skill development centre set up by RC Muzaffarnagar Mid Town, RID 3100, jointly with Bosch, at SD College of Engineering and Technology. Three-month training will be provided here for youngsters.



(Last row, from L) RID 3192 PDG Jeetendra Aneja, RID 3100 DG Deepa Khanna and DGE Nitin Agarwal at the inauguration of the centre.

## Learn and lead

Nine Rotary clubs of RID 3141, under *Project Learn*, trained 40 teachers to deliver life skills education to 2,000 marginalised children, focusing on mental health support. Led by Dr Swaroop Sampat Rawal, the initiative equips educators to foster emotional well-being in classrooms.



DG Chetan Desai (second from L) and Swaroop Sampat Rawal (centre) with club members at the inauguration of *Project Learn*.

## Rotary's meal kiosk

RC Sulthan Bathery, RID 3204, along with the local municipality and Hotel Wilton, runs the *Hunger Free Sultan Bathery Project*, providing lunch packets daily to those in need through a kiosk set up at the municipality campus.



Rotarians place a food packet and water bottle in the kiosk.



**Rtn. Stephanie Urchick**  
Rotary International  
President 2024-25



**PDG Rtn. T N Subramanian**  
Rotary International  
Director 2023-25



**PDG Rtn. Fit. Lt. K P Nagesh**  
Rotary International  
Director Elect 2025-27



**Rtn. N S Mahadev Prasad**  
Rotary District Governor  
RID 3192 2024-25



**Rtn. Shankar Srinivas**  
Chairman, South Asia International  
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# Breaking silence on menstruation and menopause

Jaishree

What if something as natural as the monthly menstrual period didn't have to be a taboo topic?" This question inspired Shruti Dharamsi, president of RC Mumbai Ghatkopar West, RID 3141, to initiate *Project Masik Chakra*

(menstrual cycle) as the club's signature project for the year. "In a world where conversations about menstruation and menopause are only whispered, we wanted to create a programme that would break this silence. Our goal was to help girls understand that periods and menopause are natural, and knowledge

about them can be empowering," she explains. Several Rotary clubs including RCs Chandivali Mumbai, Wada, Mumbai Nova, Mumbai Mulund East and Mulund Valley have participated in this project.

The project involves four components — menstrual awareness sessions for girls, distribution of eco-friendly period panties and menstrual cups, and spreading menopause awareness. "Our first step is to visit schools and educate girls aged 8–15 about menstruation. We aim to reach them early, before myths and misconceptions can take root," she says. So far, the clubs have reached around 4,000 students across 21 schools.

Each awareness session lasts 90 minutes, beginning with the screening of a 25-minute educational film, followed by a Q&A session and a quiz. "The session was extremely informative. We learned about the science behind menstruation, hormonal changes, importance of a healthy diet, hygiene and how to manage period cramps. We





Students with copies of Menstrupedia Comic book. RC Mumbai Ghatkopar West president Shrutika Mehta is seen at the far-end of the classroom.

could ask our questions freely, without embarrassment,” says Shrutika Mehta, a student. *Menstrupedia Comic*, a guidebook to understanding periods, is distributed to the students at the end of the sessions.

Reusable menstrual underwear is provided to girls aged 10–18 in these schools. These eco-friendly panties, which typically cost ₹1,800, are offered at ₹700 for a pack of three. “We do not charge the students. Instead, we encourage Rotary clubs to distribute these environment-friendly alternatives to sanitary pads, which are harmful to the planet,” explains Shrutika. Furthermore, over 5,000 medical-grade silicone menstrual cups have been distributed to women police officers, nurses, sex workers and women in corporate offices. “We are currently seeking permission to extend this initiative to women inmates in prisons,” she adds.

Shrutika encourages more Rotary clubs to get involved in this initiative. The menstrual cup costs ₹250, but the Ghatkopar Rotary club covers ₹40, the sponsoring club contributes ₹200, and

the beneficiary pays just ₹10. These cups, made to last up to 10 years, offer a sustainable solution to menstrual hygiene. “When I first recommended distribution of menstrual cups to women a couple of years ago, a friend suggested that I try it first. Although I found it slightly uncomfortable to remove it first, once I got the hang of it, using the cup became effortless. You just need to breathe deeply, squat and push gently,” she recalls. To support new users, the club has a dedicated WhatsApp group and a helpline that offers guidance. “There are different types of cups, and we help women choose what works best for them.”

The project also includes online menopause awareness sessions led by Rotarian gynaecologists every month and is open to the public. “We share Zoom links with our members, who then pass them on to their circles. We also touch on this topic during our school sessions, encouraging girls to discuss menopause with their mothers,” says Shrutika. Many women, she notes, are unaware of the symptoms of menopause, or are reluctant

to acknowledge that they are in that stage, although they experience signs like hot flashes, mood swings, irregular cycles and fatigue.

The menstrual awareness video has been produced in 18 regional languages, and the comic book, priced at ₹15, is available in Marathi and English. “We are open to getting it printed in other languages if Rotary clubs are interested in replicating this initiative in their areas,” Shrutika adds.

*Project Masik Chakra* has sparked open dialogue on a subject once considered taboo. Shrutika recalls a moment when she handed over a menstrual cup to a male Rotary club president, suggesting he give it to his wife or daughter. “He was scandalised, replying, ‘you give it to them! Men don’t talk about such things in my community’. This incident motivated us to include boys in our school sessions, so they too can better understand and support the women in their lives.”

She credits DG Chetan Desai for “coining the project’s name and insisting that we consider eco-friendly options for menstrual management.” ■

# Meet



**Tushar Shah**  
*Industrial automation*  
*RC Surat Tapi, RID 3060*

# Your

# Governors

V Muthukumaran

## Dialysis units at hospitals

Clubs have been told to do a “proper needs assessment before taking up a service project so that we don’t waste our scarce resources,” says Tushar Shah. On top of his priority list is the setting up of dialysis centres in Nadiad, Rajkot, Surat and Anand through a global grant of ₹1.4 crore.

Shah has given a directed gift of \$15,000 for doing 1,000 cataract surgeries (GG: ₹50 lakh) at the Rotary Eye Hospital, Navsari. “Our target is 18,000 surgeries,” he says. The district clubs are putting up basic facilities at 100 adopted villages over the years. “We will be rejuvenating 15 derelict lakes and ponds, each costing ₹20 lakh.”

Around 35 avoidable blindness camps will be held at the adopted villages, and surgery is being done for those who need it. “Happy Schools are also a work in progress at the villages.” Shah is focused on 100 per cent TRF-giving by Rotarians, and his target is \$1.5 million for the year. He joined Rotary in 2008 attracted by its youth exchange programmes and service outreach.



**Anish Malik**

*Garments*

*RC Indore United, RID 3040*



**Rajinder Singh Khurana**

*Healthcare*

*RC Nagpur West, RID 3030*



**R Raja Govindasamy**

*Ex-college principal*

*RC Madurai West, RID 3000*

## Rahat camps boost morale

**T**he 100-day Rahat medical camps and job fairs will boost the public image of Rotary in Madhya Pradesh, says Anish Malik. With 98 clubs having 2,350 Rotarians, “I am aiming for a 10 per cent net membership growth and to charter 10 new clubs,” he says.

A clutch of medical projects — an ENT centre (GG: ₹40 lakh); dialysis unit (five machines) at a trust hospital (GG: ₹40 lakh); and diagnostic centre (GG: ₹55 lakh) in Sagar — will be inaugurated shortly. “We will hold around 8–10 Rahat camps, each benefitting over a lakh people, mostly villagers. Two job fairs will be held in Bhopal and Indore,” he says. On July 1, at a mega camp, the district collected over 1,355 units of blood. Clubs are into awareness drives on organ donation at schools, colleges and public institutions.

He aims to collect \$250,000 for TRF. Malik was a member of a Leo club, the youth wing of Lions, till 2001, before he joined Rotary in 2009. “I had an eventful Rotaract stint from 1991-93, and was inducted into Rotary by my friend Manoj Chandak,” he says.

## A global RYE conclave

**R**IPE Mário de Camargo was the chief guest at a two-day global Rotary Youth Exchange (Sep 28–29) meet attended by 125 delegates including 33 RYE students. “Over the last 10 years, I was involved in RYE programmes as this activity has shaped my life. I joined Rotary in 2001 inspired by my father late Amolak Singh Khurana,” recalls Rajinder Singh. As a boy, he accompanied his father and enjoyed Rotary programmes and fellowship.

With 100 clubs and over 5,600 Rotarians across the Vidarbha-Khandesh regions of Maharashtra and Nashik, “we will add 500 new members and charter 10 new clubs.” A dialysis unit (five machines) was set up at a trust hospital in Malegaon (GG: ₹45 lakh), while a GG worth ₹50 lakh is under process for an eye hospital attached to the Bajji Jeevandeep Multispeciality Hospital, Chalisgaon.

Singh is confident of doing 8–9 GG projects and 10 CSR-India grant projects this year. For TRF-giving, his target is \$600,000. “Over the years, I made a lot of friends in Rotary, which keep me ticking and motivated, thanks to fellowship,” he says.

## Water bodies being restored

**A**s a graduate fellowship awardee (1979-80) of TRF, “I was inspired to serve the community as a Rotarian,” says Raja Govindasamy. He wants to add 500 new members and charter 12 new clubs, taking the total number to around 6,700 and 160 respectively. He is keen to add at least 250 women members, raising their strength to over 1,000 by June 2025.

On his priority list is the rejuvenation of 100 water bodies across the eight revenue districts (₹5 crore). RC Dindigul Queencity will vaccinate 500 girls against cervical cancer (GG: \$30,000); 100 handwash stations (CSR grant: ₹50 lakh) will be installed at government schools; Project *Uzhavar Sandai* (farmers’ market) will provide financial literacy and medical camps for 1,000 farmers and Farm Management seminars will be held for farmers. The APJAK Academy, a district initiative, will equip 5,000 students with life skills.

*Yathumanaval* (She is all) sessions will be held for over 1,000 school, college girls. His TRF-giving target is \$1 million.

Govindasamy joined Rotary in 2001 inspired by its motto to serve the poor and needy in local communities.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Helping people at the medical camp was an incredibly humbling experience. Seeing the gratitude in their eyes, despite the challenges they face, reminded me of the profound impact compassion and care can have. It was a privilege to be part of a team that brought hope and healing to a community that welcomed us with open hearts,” said PDG Madhukar Malhotra. He was the project chair for the Rotary medical mission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, undertaken in August by a team of 25 Rotarians including 18 doctors and a technician from Rotary clubs across India.

This 12-day, \$141,000 global grant medical VTT project was spearheaded by RC Chandigarh, RID 3080 (fourth to Ethiopia), in partnership with RC Addis Ababa, the host club. This is the 27<sup>th</sup> medical mission to Africa, said Malhotra.

Over 600 people were surgically treated across five hospitals in Addis Ababa for various medical conditions. “We treated some challenging conditions which are not routinely addressed here,” said Dr Kuldeep Dhawan, a laparoscopic urologist and medical director of the mission. Among the many success stories was that of a patient who had endured partial facial paralysis for six years. He now has hope of a full recovery through physiotherapy. “This mission saved me; the doctors here had advised me to travel overseas



## Yet another medical mission in Ethiopia

**Jaishree**

for treatment and I cannot afford that,” he said.

RID 3250 PDG Dr R Bharat, consultant plastic surgeon, who has specialised in cleft care and burns management said, “We did some complicated tissue transfer treatment relatively new to Ethiopian doctors.” He recalled a remarkable reconstruction

surgery on a 60-year-old man who had lost his nose to skin cancer. Dr Ravindra Bharathi and Dr Vigneswaran, microvascular surgeons from the Ganga Hospitals, Coimbatore, meticulously reconstructed his nose using tissue from his forehead, restoring not just his appearance but also his confidence. In another extraordinary



Medical mission team at the Delhi airport.



surgery, the team helped a 25-year-old war victim regain function in his right arm through an eight-hour microsurgery to reconstruct damaged nerves.

“The plastic surgery department at the Alert Specialised Hospital is doing commendable work, and we supplemented their efforts by training the junior doctors, nurses and technicians,” said Dr Bharat. A CCTV placed outside the OT helped them learn the complexities of this surgery. The Indian team performed 22 major reconstructive surgeries at the hospital.

Milind Joshi, a paediatric surgeon and urologist from Jalgaon, was on his second visit to Ethiopia as part of Rotary medical mission. “This time we introduced laparoscopic surgery for children, something that had never been done here.” His team donated a neonatal cystoscope to the St Paul’s Hospital Millennium Medical College, enabling doctors to treat complex renal conditions in newborns. Dr Masresha Solomon, assistant professor of Urology at the hospital, expressed her gratitude, saying, “So far we’ve

been performing open surgeries; now, thanks to Rotary, we’ve gained the knowledge and experience to perform laparoscopic surgeries.”

Around \$200,000 worth of defunct medical equipment in various hospitals was repaired and re-installed by Jai Dev Sharma, a biomedical engineer in the team. “At one hospital we found ₹6 crore-worth new equipment donated by international donors lying unused under a tarpaulin. Sharma installed and made it functional,” said Malhotra. The Indian doctors trained local technicians and nurses to operate these devices.

The mission team left for Ethiopia on Aug 11, “commemorating the birthday of PRIP Rajendra Saboo who pioneered the medical VTT initiative in 1998. Rotary medical missions are always close to his and Usha’s hearts,” he said. The Ethiopian Airlines made special provisions for the team’s extra baggage of medical supplies and equipment.

Reflecting on the experience, RC Chandigarh past president Anil Chadda, who volunteered for this

mission, said, “Over the course of 12 days, we not only provided critical medical care but also empowered local healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge to continue this work.” Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia Anil Kumar Rai complimented the Rotarians for providing critical medical care in Ethiopia and sharing their medical expertise with the local doctors. ■



Dr Kuldeep Dhawan, laparoscopic urologist and director of the medical mission, along with the local team, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



RID 3000

**RC Trichy Diamond City Queens**

Under *Project Aasai Magal* (maternity-cum-childcare project), pregnant women at a government hospital were felicitated and given nutritious food. The project was held jointly with RC Tiruchirapalli Phoenix.



**Club matters**



RID 3020

**RC Vijayawada Midtown**

Commercial sewing machines were distributed to 100 women, thanks to CSR grant of ₹2 crore from Coal India, in a joint project with RC Vijayawada Sree Durga.

RID 3055

**RC Sabarmati (Ahmedabad)**

An e-waste collection camp, led by project chair Dinesh Patel, was held with the support of an authorised agency that created awareness on safe disposal of used electronic gadgets and accessories.





## RID 3070

### **RC Jammu Elite**

Fifty saplings were planted at the Government Middle School, Mussa Chak, and an awareness event was held for the students on the role of trees in reducing global warming and climate change.

## RID 3011

### **RC Delhi Mid Town**

Around 100 delegates attended a clubfoot seminar sponsored by four Delhi clubs. DGE Ravinder Gugnani, PDG Raman Bhatia, Dr Mathew Verghese, chair, Cure-India Trust, and its director Dr Santosh George were among the speakers.



## RID 3132

### **RC Barsi**

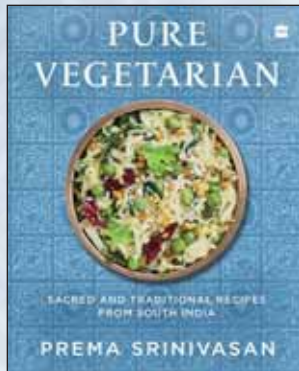
Bicycles were given to 11 girls at the Shah Kanya Prashala, Barshi, to make their commute to and from school easier and enable them to focus on their studies better.



## RID 3141

### **RC Bombay Film City**

Around 240 students of R C Maruti High School, Andheri East, were screened at an eye camp. Children with defective vision were given spectacles. RC Worli, Ratnanidhi Charitable Trust and Essilor Luxottica Foundation were co-partners.



# Delights of vegetarian cuisine

## Pure Vegetarian — Sacred and Traditional Recipes from South India

Author : **Prema Srinivasan**  
Publishers : **Harper Collins**  
Price : **₹1,299**

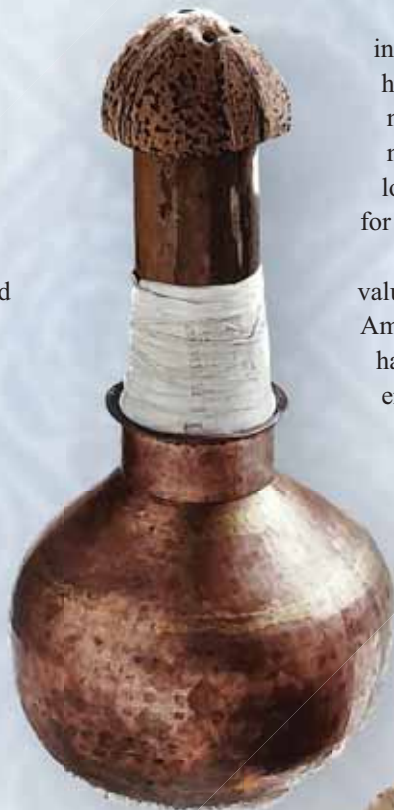
**E**xploring a vegetarian lifestyle can be a delightful journey, and *Pure Vegetarian* by Prema Srinivasan is the perfect companion for beginners and seasoned home cooks. With its colourful, inventive recipes, this cookbook highlights the variety and richness of vegetarian cuisine and provides a fresh perspective of how simple ingredients can be transformed into nourishing meals. Whether you're looking to experiment with new flavours or searching for everyday staples, this book promises to inspire and delight.

Reading this book took me on a flashback to when I first began cooking after moving into my marital home. My parents-in-law had left for the US shortly after I arrived, and I found myself suddenly in charge of the kitchen — a daunting task for someone who didn't even know how to cook rice

Jaishree

in a pressure cooker! Thankfully my mother had thoughtfully packed her handwritten recipe notes and another cookbook by a popular author named Meenakshi Ammal, which has long been a staple and a lifesaver for many South Indian brides.

Prema's book is just as valuable as Meenakshi Ammal's, and a must-have for all those who enjoy cooking. It offers a range of recipes from everyday essentials like *sambhar*, *rasam* and



Rose petal  
kheer



*Kozha puttu*, a Kerala delicacy, steamed inside a cylindrical mould.



Modak, rice flour dumplings

(made from soy milk), rose petal kheer and green papaya salad are few other interesting recipes.

What adds even more charm to *Pure Vegetarian* are the cultural anecdotes, historical tidbits and photographs of the food, and some lesser-known utensils, which will evoke memories in the reader. I was so reminded of my grandmother's home where the entire house will be filled with the heavenly aroma of *rasam* being cooked

in an *eeya chombu* (tin pot). The *rasam* is then transferred into a stainless steel vessel, as longer storage time can increase toxicities due to the reaction of the acidic content in the food with tin. Cooking in a tin pot is a bit tricky; if left unattended it will melt.

The book also features recipes of sacred offerings made in temples across India, such as *Terali Appam*, offered to Goddess Lakshmi. It is a fragrant combination of rice flour, bananas and jaggery, spread on a cinnamon leaf, and steamed. Other temple offerings like *Jagannathji ka peda*, *Ambalapuzha paal payasam* (kheer made with rice and milk, offered to Lord Krishna at Ambalapuzha in Kerala) are equally fascinating.

The author has included miscellaneous cooking tips too. While boiling milk, add little water to the pan before pouring in the milk. This prevents the milk from sticking to the bottom of the pan; for green chillies to stay fresh for long, remove the stems before storing; soaking overripe tomatoes in salted water for eight hours will firm them up.

With its clear, step-by-step instructions and captivating content, *Pure Vegetarian* is more than just a cookbook — it's an invitation to explore, experiment and savour the rich heritage of vegetarian cuisine.

Designed by Krishna Pratheesh S

chutneys, to special dishes and sweets such as *jalebi*, *basundi*, *malpuva* and a variety of kheers, and pickles too. The book's standout feature is its array of recipes that will keep you from repeating

dishes for weeks. The sheer variety in vegetarian cuisine is astounding, dispelling the notion that South

Indian cooking is limited to *sambhar*, *dosai*, *idli* and *rasam*. In fact, the book includes 14 different types of *rasam*, including the unique rose petal, and buttermilk *rasams*.

Have you ever tasted jackfruit

*idli* (*palapazha*

*idli*), orange-flavoured *poha* or pineapple curry?

Prema has included these and some long-forgotten dishes in her book. I was particularly impressed with bittergourd *sambhar* (*pavakkai pittlai* in Tamil) and Himachal Pradesh's *madra* (a chickpea-curd gravy). Vegetarian specialities from various regions of India are also included. The brinjal *rasavangi* was a great hit at my home. Green soup with yuba slivers



Tamarind rice



RC Rourkela Queens president Barkha Gupta (L) and secretary Kanakjeet Agarwal with students at the Asha Deep School.

# Rotary Rourkela Queens transforms a school

Kanakjeet Agarwal

**T**he journey of Rotary Rourkela Queens, RID 3261, with Asha Deep School began through an unexpected connection.

While working on the LN-4 project, we crossed paths with Ram Chandra Behera, chairman of RRRC (Regional Rehabilitation and Research Centre), Rourkela. During one of our discussions, he reached out to our club advisor, Ajay Agarwal, asking if we could assist Asha Deep School, which was in urgent need of support. He brought the

proposal to our club, and we immediately embraced it.

Upon visiting the school, we felt an immediate, deep connection with the children and realised that they needed better support, not just in terms of learning but also transportation. To address their pressing need, our club first donated a 'Sarathi e-auto' to help transport the children to school, ensuring they had a safe and reliable way to attend classes. This donation significantly eased the children's daily commute and was an essential step in



supporting their education. We then turned our attention to improving the school's infrastructure. Recognising that the children deserved a better environment for learning, we began planning to upgrade the facilities. Under the leadership of past president Kiran Arora, we initiated the construction of a new classroom and essential sanitation facilities, including three new toilets.

In August 2024, the new classroom and toilets were inaugurated by DG Akhil Mishra, along with assistant governor Sanjay Purohit, in the presence of club president Barkha Gupta, treasurer Ruchita, DGN Alam Singh Ropra, club advisor Ajay Agarwal, Sarang Bhide and the teachers of Asha Deep School.

Their presence underscored the collective effort that drives Rotary's mission.

Our club members are happy that this project will have a lasting impact on the children. The newly-built classroom now provides a safe and inspiring space for learning, while the toilets meet critical hygiene needs, ensuring a healthier and more comfortable environment for the students.

The teachers of the school freely voice their need and RC Rourkela Queens members remain committed to addressing them. With every request that comes from the school, we rise to meet the challenge, knowing that each contribution helps enhance the lives of the children. Whether it is infrastructure, transportation or healthcare, we strive to meet their needs, ensuring a brighter



Above: DG Akhil Mishra inaugurating a classroom at the school. Club president Barkha, club secretary Kanakjeet and the club's IPP Kiran Arora (R) are also seen.





“

With every request that comes from the school, we rise to meet the challenge, knowing that each contribution helps enhance the lives of the children.



future for these students. Our support for the school is ongoing, and we are always ready to assist in any way we can and we will continue to work tirelessly to create a positive and lasting impact.

Ram Chandra Behera is grateful for the club's unwavering commitment, and said that both the e-auto and the new infrastructure will greatly benefit the children. Our commitment to this school extends beyond infrastructure. We recently organised a dental checkup camp for the children, where they received paediatric care, psychiatric support, speech therapy and physiotherapy. Additionally, we

provided much-needed medicines to those in need, ensuring that the children receive proper healthcare alongside their education. Every initiative with these children leaves us deeply fulfilled, knowing we are positively contributing to their growth and development.

DG Mishra commended our club's dedication and highlighted the importance of supporting special schools like Asha Deep, reinforcing Rotary's motto of *Service Above Self*.

*The writer is secretary of  
RC Rourkela Queens*

# The intoxication of reading



Who says Young Adult books are only for young adults?



**Sandhya Rao**

**Y**

oung Adult or YA is a category usually found in children's book-lists referring to books that address

readers from the mid-teens to the early twenties. This is the crossover group that doesn't fit the description of 'children' and yet is not entirely 'adult'. In a sense, this is a somewhat notional classification given that many mid-teens and above are pretty adult-like and many in their early twenties are still children. However, it serves a practical and useful purpose in the world of books.

So then, having deliberately tried to establish the profile of young adults, what do I mean when I assert that YA books are not just for those in the age-group that has been mentioned in the previous paragraph? Until quite recently, there was a proliferation of books all over the world popularly called 'chicklit'.

These were/are basically romance novels featuring young people in a plethora of contexts and geographies, ranging from the light to the racy, and generally thought to be popular with female readers, mostly young but a lot of older women as well.

This term also carries with it a whiff of the derogatory as well as the snobby, as if to say chicklit is not really literature. If you believe that reading choices are subjective, then this attitude holds no water. Further, the presumption that chicklit is 'girly' was demolished when I discovered, during the course of a teaching assignment with business management students in the age-group 24 to 30 years, that men, too, enjoy chicklit. And write it as well. Ravinder Singh, Durjoy Dutta, Chetan Bhagat and many more are as popular as Anuja Chauhan, Sonali Dev, Rupa Gulab, Swati Kaushal, Preeti Shenoy and enjoy a fan following among all sections of society, age no bar, depending upon individual tastes.

And of course, YA books don't just comprise romance, there's a whole range of subjects including science, history and nonfiction. A book that I'd like to

recommend was on the short-list for the 2024 Neev Book Award (NBA): *Zen* by Shabnam Minwalla. And no, it's not some philosophical treatise on Zen, but a combination of mystery, history, romance and politics. It

centres around Zen, short for Zainab, a 17-year-old Mumbaikar with wild hair, the child of a mixed marriage who feels strongly about political narratives and personal positions that differentiate between and discriminate against people on the basis of religious affiliation. It is also about 20-year-old Yash, visiting from the US to attend a wedding. He has different views; he carries emotional baggage even as he struggles with the demands made on him by members of his family and a particularly clingy young woman. In the midst of family fireworks, wedding *dhamakas*, a controversial school debate on the status of the Constitution and an anti-CAA protest march, out pops a diary.

Here, a small diversion: In an interview I caught on YouTube, Shabnam speaks of how the idea came to her after a cousin showed

her a diary kept by her grandmother in the 1930s in which she writes about the Independence movement, her impending marriage and her attraction to someone involved in the freedom struggle. 'Do something with this,' her cousin said



to Shabnam. And she did, by writing the *Zen*. In *Zen*, the diary that Zen finds belongs to another Zainab caught up in the Independence movement and out of it spills love and longing, patriotic fervour, dark mystery, even a murder. *Zen* traverses two timelines, that of 1935 and of 2019, and what happens through the 600 pages of layered storytelling makes for compelling reading.

Incidentally, the 2024 winner of the NBA was *The Henna Start-Up* by Andaleeb Wajib, another powerhouse of a storyteller, with some 40 titles to her credit. She was featured in the March 2022 issue of *Rotary News*. The award is linked to the Neev Literature Festival (NLF) organised annually by the Neev Academy in Bengaluru when the school campus comes alive with writers, illustrators, publishers, librarians, translators, anybody with anything to do with books, as students, teachers and other staff go all out to ensure that events are held seamlessly and invitees and visitors are well looked after. Workshops, panel discussions, readings, performances happen simultaneously and the 'marketplace' spills over with books for all ages from all over. Both *Zen* and *The Henna Start-Up* were gobbled up in next to no time! Punctuating the events at various venues on the school campus are reviews of books presented by students of all ages. Some of them are startlingly insightful, a positive reflection of the school's emphasis on encouraging reading.

This brings me to my favourite subject: the importance of reading. It doesn't matter what you read so long as you do because for one, we may think we know things but in fact we don't, and the more we read the better we realise how little we know. So, that's one myth busted. For another, reading helps calm the mind, settle the soul, soothe the spirit. Whether you read fiction or nonfiction, it's all about stories — and who doesn't like stories. Go ahead, then, and pick up YA titles because they are knocking madly on your door!

Incidentally, writer and historian Marc Aronson objects to the use of the word 'nonfiction'. 'I prefer curiosity,' Aronson pointed out at an interaction. 'Curiosity' books, because they help you discover things. A teacher at Rutgers University, Aronson has several books to his credit. Many of them are collaborations and all of them explore connections between cultures and across borders. Take *Sugar Changed the World: A Story of Spice, Magic, Slavery, Freedom and Science*, written with Marina Budhos. According to the teacher's guide, it looks at geography, science, history, economics and civics even as it examines sugar through language, the arts and the senses. He has written



about the rescue of the young Thai football team trapped in a flooded cave in *Rising Water*, and about the rescue of 33 miners in Chile where they were stuck 2,000 feet underground in *Trapped*. A book for our times is *Unsettled: The Problem of Loving Israel*. Touted as his

most personal book in an amazon.com write-up, it explores the history of Israel including the conflicts, the Palestinians and the Jewish settlements. Although intended as a YA book, it asks hard-hitting questions: 'Can a religious state also be a democratic one? Is Israel the victim or the aggressor?... What kind of Israel should exist?' The write-up about *Race: A History Beyond Black and White* says 'Racism. I'm better; she's worse. Those people do those kinds of things. ... Where did those feelings come from? Why are they so powerful? Why have millions been enslaved, murdered, denied their rights because of the colour of their skin, the shape of their eyes?' Again, a YA book, but such a wealth of provocations for everyone to reflect on.

And for those who enjoy history, Devika Rangachari has a whole host of titles. Her *Queen of Ice* about a 10<sup>th</sup> century Kashmiri ruler called Queen Didda is an NBA winner. *Queen of Fire* is about the Rani of Jhansi. *Queen of the Earth* is about Prithvimahadevi, daughter of a powerful king of Kosala. All of likely interest to many of us. So, no, YA books are not for young adults alone. They are for everyone — fiction, nonfiction, and everything in between, depending upon the curiosity quotient.

“ The more we read the better we realise how little we know. Reading helps calm the mind, settle the soul, soothe the spirit.

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

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# Vision for the visually-impaired

Kiran Zehra

Since its launch in 2022–23, *Project Drishti*, an initiative by RC Indore Uptown, RID 3040, has screened 726 visually-impaired children. Of these, 28 children were identified for corrective surgeries. “We have successfully completed 21 surgeries, enabling the children to regain their vision. We are also working on corneal transplants for seven more children,” says PDG Sanjeev Gupta, a club member. In addition, six children received spectacles, and 15 were given low-vision devices.

Club member Rajan Baweja conceived the project, proposing that the advanced facilities at Choithram Netralaya, a local eye hospital in Indore, could be used to restore vision for the visually-impaired. He shared this idea with club member Aradhana Sahay, who has over 22 years of experience in rehabilitating visually-impaired girls and holds a PhD in designing furniture and home fittings for the disabled, as well as a BEd specialising in visually-impaired individuals.



**Above:** A visually-impaired girl being examined under *Project Drishti*.

**Below:** Project chair Aradhana Sahay with visually-challenged students and students of the Emerald Heights School.



“The goal of the project is to screen all visually-impaired individuals in the district and explore options for sight restoration through surgeries and treatments,” says project chair Aradhana.

Choithram Netralaya conducts the initial screenings. “Surgery costs range from ₹10,000 to ₹1 lakh, depending on the complexity. Some of these expenses are reimbursed through the government programme Aayushman, but when that is not possible, they are covered by donations from Rotarians and well-wishers,” explains Gupta.

Beneficiaries are primarily identified from schools and institutions for the visually-impaired, such as Helen Keller Higher Secondary School, the National Federation of Blind and MP Kalyan Sansthan in Dewas. Transporting students to the hospital is sometimes facilitated by the schools if they are within municipal limits, otherwise the club covers the costs.

Gupta also highlighted the crucial support provided by students from Emerald Heights International School, Indore. “These students assisted the visually-impaired children by explaining the doctors’ procedures, helping them move around and providing support during meals. Since they are peers, the visually-impaired children trust them more and feel comfortable in their presence. Many of these bonds have blossomed into strong friendships,” he smiles.

One of the beneficiaries, Gana Rajput, a Class 8 student from Helen Keller School, shares her experience: “After the operation, when they removed the bandages, the first thing I saw was my father’s face. It was an incredible feeling.” ■

## From RI South Asia

### Paul Harris Fellow recognition points transfer

Recognition points are awarded to donors who contribute to TRF through the Annual Fund or PolioPlus or approved global grant. Donors receive one recognition point for every dollar contributed to these funds. Contributions to the Endowment Fund and Directed Gifts are not eligible. Donors can transfer Foundation recognition points to others to help them qualify as Paul Harris Fellow or Multiple PHF.

- A minimum of 100 Foundation recognition points must be transferred at a time, and donors must complete and sign the PHF Recognition Transfer Request Form. The points may not be transferred from individuals to a club or district.
- Only individual donors are authorised to transfer recognition points from their individual account; club presidents are authorised to transfer recognition points from a club account and DGs are authorised to transfer recognition points from a district account.

After completing the transfer request form, scan it in PDF format and email to Manju Joshi at [Manju.Joshi@rotary.org](mailto:Manju.Joshi@rotary.org) for processing. It takes 5–10 business days to update and reflect online.

November, which is Foundation month, is a great opportunity to inspire Rotarians and Rotaractors by sharing impactful stories. Here are some tips:

- ❖ Encourage clubs to invite a speaker to address their club meeting. They can share their personal experiences with a Foundation programme.
- ❖ Feature individuals such as Peace Fellows, grant recipients, grant partners, or Rotarian/Rotaract leaders who have been positively affected by TRF at club or district events.
- ❖ Promote Foundation Recognition and motivate members to strive for the next level of TRF recognition.
- ❖ Show appreciation to all donors, including new Major Donors, Bequest Society members, Paul Harris Society and PHF members or those who have contributed for the first time.
- ❖ Encourage inactive or non-contributing clubs and members to contribute to TRF.
- ❖ Promote online giving; urge members to contribute online through their *My Rotary* login.

### Timely closure of district grants of last year

District grant reports for RY 2023–24 or prior years should be submitted by the district before Dec 31, 2024. This will help the district to file the grant application for 2024–25 in a timely manner. Though the last date of submission for RY 2024–25 is May 15, 2025, implement it well in time to avoid any resultant issues. The current leadership may submit the RY 2024–25 application effective July 1, 2024 onwards; however, the application will be approved and disbursed once the RY 2023–24 or prior year district grant is completely closed. ■



# Helping schools take the green leap

Preeti Mehra

Sensitising students and staff to be environment-friendly can be a meaningful beginning.

**C**an schools go green — not with envy — but by being environmentally conscious? They can do so with encouragement and support from the local community, parents' groups, clubs and socially conscious establishments. You and your friends can help your local school take a green leap forward by exercising your persuasive skills to convince the management, parents and students to turn over a new leaf.

Much of what I will be sharing with you in this column is courtesy

of friends who are environmentalists and from the excellent Green Schools Programme of the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). On my part, the effort will be to mark a few pointers on how you could realistically help reduce the carbon footprint and battle climate change. This is necessary because many of us are overwhelmed by the enormity of the task. Consequently, after a few half-hearted attempts at cleaning the neighbourhood park or saying no to plastic, we return guilt-laden from the grocers with a carry bag made of some vile hydrocarbon.

Well, the good news is that your effort can have a long-lasting impact. All you have to do is literally go to your neighbourhood school and kick-start the process. You and your like-minded friends can set the ball rolling by interacting fortnightly or monthly with parents, teachers and students, enlightening them about environmental concerns and how they can join the fight to mitigate climate change. You can perhaps rope in the services of environment experts and organisations committed to the cause. Once you have laid the groundwork, you can nudge the school towards positive action.

So, what is a green school? Simply put, it is an educational institution that becomes healthier for the community and the environment by adopting practices that reduce its carbon footprint, are less polluting and train students to be more environmentally conscious.

Perhaps reducing air pollution could be the first step. Encourage students and teachers to use public transport or the school bus rather than private vehicles. This is easier said than done because we live in a world obsessed with cars. That explains why there is traffic jam every morning and when classes are over for the day outside most schools and on the roads leading up to them.





Students must be made aware that this is a cause for alarm since Indian cities rank among the highest in the WHO database for poor urban air quality. While air pollution can come from several sources, vehicular emissions are considered the most harmful as they adversely impact people's breathing levels. So, fewer the vehicles on the road, the better.

Your green effort can also focus on school management, which can be sensitised to using well-maintained, less polluting vehicles. Schools must also be advised to minimise burning leaves and paper and ensure adequate exhaust facilities for generators, which must be fuel efficient.

Being energy efficient is critical for a school to become green. You can suggest switching to LED lights. Replacing old bulbs with more efficient lighting that consumes less power can be carried out in phases. The same goes for fans — a conventional one uses 75 watts of power, while those rated as efficient consume less than 35 watts. Similarly, more energy-efficient models of air conditioners, refrigerators and other appliances will weigh on the power bill more mildly than older models.

You can encourage students and staff to conserve energy. Simple things like switching off lights and fans when not in use make a big difference. The same goes for other appliances. Incidentally, we waste about 7–10 per cent of electricity when appliances are in standby mode. Schools can also harness solar power to ease the load on the power grid, save electricity, and reduce the carbon footprint. The government has several subsidy schemes to support solar power adaptation.

Another civic issue that schools need to address is urban waste. According to the Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs, India generates about 150,000 tonnes of waste daily. This problem can only be solved if a

culture of waste management is practised at all levels, from individual households to civic corporations and state governments. Schools can provide excellent educational opportunities to create awareness about waste and its management, and you can initiate or sharpen this process.

However, waste management cannot be understood or implemented by merely speaking to students. It would be best to organise a series of interactive workshops conducted by experts during which concepts like segregating, reusing and recycling waste are explained and demonstrated. Students should be educated about types of waste such as biodegradable, non-biodegradable, hazardous, non-hazardous, and e-waste and their handling. At a later stage, students can be taught to practise composting.

There are other areas where a school can implement healthy green practices. For example, the food served in schools, either as a midday meal or in the canteen, must be nutritious. You can sensitise students and parents to

ensure that canteens are not treated as commercial outlets for serving junk food and aerated drinks. Schools must teach healthy eating habits, and kitchen chefs must be instructed to use wholesome local produce whenever possible. Also, the separation of waste and its disposal by the canteen must be closely monitored, perhaps by a team of students led by a staff member.

These are just a few pointers. Of course, expecting any individual or group to bring about all the changes I have suggested is not pragmatic. However, spreading essential awareness and pushing the school to include a permanent environment training programme in its curriculum could be a meaningful beginning. More information can be sourced from *How green is your school*, an environmental audit for schools, brought out by the Centre for Science and Environment. It is available online at the CSE store.

Here's to happy green schools!

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





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# Bicycles for tribal students

Kiran Zehra

Wearing a pair of worn-out Hawai chappals, Aakash Kumar, a Class 10 student at Rajkiyakrit Higher Secondary School, Pakur village, Jharkhand, walks seven kilometres every day to attend school. The journey, which takes him over 90 minutes, is along a rough, stony path. “On rainy days, the road turns into a muddy, slippery mess. My chappals slide in the thick mud, and by the time I reach school, my legs are covered in mud. Sometimes, my feet hurt so much that I struggle to concentrate in class. More than the pressure of board exams this year, it’s the exhausting journey to school that’s frustrating me,” he says. Many of his friends have stopped coming to school “because it was just too hard to make the daily trip. I almost gave up school.”

But everything changed the day Aakash Kumar received a bicycle. As part of an initiative by RC Jubilee Hills, RID 3150, in collaboration with BGR Mining and Infra, a leading mine developer and operator, 1,000 bicycles were donated to students hailing from tribal areas in Jharkhand. Of these, 850 were distributed to students at Kumar’s school. “Now, the same

journey takes less than 20 minutes, and I am no longer exhausted when I arrive. Most of my friends have also started to come back to school,” he smiles.

“The Rajkiyakrit School serves children from villages spread across the region, and getting to school every day is a real challenge for them. The bicycles are more than just a mode of transport; they are a way to enhance their entire schooling experience,” says Balakoti Reddy, president of RC Jubilee Hills. “By making the journey easier, we’re helping students look forward to attending classes, rather than quitting.”

This initiative coincided with the renovation of several school buildings and construction of new classroom blocks, science labs and vocational training infrastructure by BGR Mining and Infra. “These efforts have transformed not only how students get to school but also their learning environment,” says Reddy and adds that in a recent conversation with the school principal, “I was pleased to hear that student attendance has improved, along with academic performance.”

This collaboration demonstrates how Rotary can effectively match corporate responsibilities with community needs, creating a win for everyone involved, he adds. ■

**From R:** DG Sharath Choudary, DGE SV Raam Prasad and RC Jubilee Hills president Balakoti Reddy gift a bicycle to a student.



# Build your resistance

**Bharat & Shalan Savur**

**D**arwin's 'survival of the fittest' is the default option, or rather compulsion, dictated by life's evolutionary nature. Simply put, fitness is mainly about man's adaptation to his environment. Unlike the rest of the animal kingdom or species that dwell on earth, man alone has the ability to think.

This intelligence has governed his degree of adaptation to the world around him. Unfortunately, the same intelligence has literally been man's worst enemy. For, especially after the Industrial Revolution, human behaviour has resulted in a severe depletion of planet earth's natural resources. Toxic pollution, over-population, modern warfare, etc. are the wages of modern man's sins against the world's natural order. Hence, his adaptation itself is a mixed blessing. The sedentary life that characterises today's human existence has a built-in inherited weakness. If man once believed that physical activity caused the wear and tear of body tissues and hastened the aging process, we have today realised that the opposite is the truth. That constant usage through activity, especially exercise, delays aging because body structures and functions adjust to the load placed on them.

Inactivity creates illnesses. The muscles waste away and their

inherent strength is undermined. Take the heart, for example. It becomes weaker and less efficient. Blood vessels vanish, energy storage slides to a halt. Consequently, the body becomes less able to meet physical demands. Mild heart attacks, strokes and metabolic disorders like diabetes are the price we humans pay for physical inactivity.

The paradox of our physique is that almost all our critical organs lie north of the navel — the upper body — heart, lungs, brain. And the best way to provide them with cardiovascular respiratory stimulation is at the other end by exercising our leg muscles — walking, cycling, etc. Cardio exercises go a long way in building stamina and immunity from illness. The body also requires strength, which literally and figuratively speaking, has a hands-on approach.

## Resistance training

Broadly speaking, there are two methods of toning and strengthening our muscles. One involves muscle contraction. And the other, stretching of muscles. Free weights ( barbells and dumbbells) and workstations contract the addressed muscle. We recommend five-pound and 10-pound dumbbells for females and males respectively. We had written about the hows and whys of weight training in an earlier issue of *Rotary News* (July 24). Let's now

discuss stretching muscles to achieve the same results. This brings us to TheraBands.

Different colours distinguish their resistance capacity. Unfortunately, there is a confusion of colour grading in defining the resistance offered by each band. We suggest visiting your local sports shop, or the Internet, and recommend bands marketed by Vissco — an established Indian manufacturer



of medical and sporting goods. Their prices (currently ranging from ₹300 to over ₹600 a piece) are another way of selecting brand band resistance. The higher the price, the greater the resistance. We suggest that you personally select the band that best suits you. Vissco has displayed various exercises on the packet that encloses the band. Anyway, here are the exercises that we and our students practise in our Fitness-for-Life classes.

- Place the band at arm's length and shoulder-width apart, palms facing the body. Stretch band as you raise it smoothly towards the ceiling. Lower and repeat (reps) 20 times. Inhale as you raise. Exhale as you finish. This works on the front muscles of your upper body to benefit arms, chest and shoulder muscles.
- Hold band overhead parallel to the floor, palms facing out. Now stretch downward smoothly backward to touch the tailbone at the lower end of your spine. Stretch the band to facilitate smooth movement. Inhale as you lower.



Exhale after you reach overhead. Benefits muscles at the back of your torso.

- Place the band behind your bottom at arm's length, palms facing out. Stretch band out horizontally to your fullest capability. Inhale as you do so. Exhale as you return to the start point. Benefits arms and the back of the torso.
- Extend left arm at shoulder level horizontal to the floor. Grip with your right hand at shoulder height with the band bang-centred on the shoulder. Pull with your right hand aligned to your shoulder as far right as you can. Do 20 reps. Now repeat the same exercise with your right arm. Benefits the arms and shoulders. Note: The action is akin to using a bow and arrow.
- Hold the band over shoulders and bend as far left as you can until you feel a stretch waist upwards on the other side. Then, similarly bend right. Do 20 reps. Benefits the arms, shoulders and torso.
- Hold the band stretched over your shoulders and rotate your torso 20 times.

Resistance bands protect and project muscles you can use and prevent muscle decay.

Resistance training maintains muscle bulk already attained by weight training. It naturally and literally stretches and extends such a muscle.

### Downward drag

Any seasoned driver will tell you that driving down a ghat road requires much more car control than climbing it. Because the gravitational pull doubles. I've witnessed for myself, the greater gravitational force work on a Maruti 800, which packs a Mercedes-like engine into its tiny body chassis. This call from the valley's depth

accelerates its descent. Like a horse bucking in anger or fear, the Maruti too virtually lifts itself. Which is why, the SUV (sports-utility-vehicle) with its stronger body and four-wheeled capability has gained tremendous traction from city, town and countryside users. Put your vehicle in second gear while negotiating the same steep section whether climbing or descending. The strain on your vehicle is the same.

Similarly, time has the last word on the build of an individual obeying the law of gravity. The longer one lives, the greater the downward drag felt by the body. Which is the prime reason one shrinks and stoops with old age. Weight and resistance training confront and cushion the body by preserving body mass and muscle as much and as long as possible. Hence, weight and resistance training is not only for weightlifters, bodybuilders and professionals that employ their bodies. It is essential for you too. Who else would carry you around in the winter of your life?

Moisture, dampness and sharp objects like finger nails or rings cause the bands to snap and break. Hence, trim your nails or use gloves while training with bands.

### Pitfalls

A holistic fitness life ensures strength and stamina but doesn't fully cover immunity. Take other measures to strengthen the latter. Like Vitamin C. Avoid crowds and flood-prone areas as much as possible. And beware of chikungunya, dengue and ever-newer Covid -19 avatars which could be lurking behind the next corner.

Be safe.

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



RID 3160

**RC Gulbarga Sakhi**

Around 50 women at an anganwadi in a slum area were educated on menstrual hygiene. Sanitary napkins were distributed. Colour books and pencils were given to children.



# Club matters



RID 3192

**RC Bengaluru Abbigere**

School uniforms worth ₹3 lakh were distributed to 150 children at the Government PU College, Hesaraghatta, thanks to sponsorship from club secretary Sathish Kumar.

RID 3212

**RC Tuticorin**

Around 100 units of blood were collected at a blood donation camp held at the VO Chidambaranar Arts College, Thoothukudi, in partnership with the Youth Red Cross.





RID 3231

### RC Vellore Angels

In an anti-plastic drive, 500 cotton bags (₹11,600) were distributed to 15 street vendors by Rotarians led by club president Vijaya Kumaran and secretary Thamari Rajarajan.

RID 3182

### RC Tirthahalli – RID 3182

Club president Anilkumar and past AG KPS Swamy led a team of Rotarians in planting paddy in a field under *Project Raitha Mitra*.



RID 3240

### RC Burdwan South

Desk-benches were donated to Satgachia Meghamala Free Primary School in a village at Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal. This will enable the students to study comfortably in their classrooms.



RID 3291

### RC Jodhpur Gardens Calcutta

School kits were distributed to children at the Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Thalia, in Joypur block of Howrah district under Project Eazy School 3. The event was attended by PDG Mukul Sinha.

Compiled by V Muthukumar

## First convention? It won't be your last



Whether Calgary will be your first convention or your 20<sup>th</sup>, Rotary leaders are confident you'll walk away amazed. And a discount alert! The last day to save significant money with early registration is Dec 15. Lock in

your preferred hotel and signature events, which can sell out.

First-time attendees June 21–25 in Canada can expect inspiration from distinguished speakers — their insights are a top reason that convention regulars return year after year. The events have featured everyone from World Health Organisation and United Nations leaders to Nobel Prize winners, presidents, astronauts and authors.

Jonathon Wennstrom, of the Rotary Club of Livonia, Michigan, says a powerful experience at his first convention, this year in Singapore, was hearing about the vast needs in the world followed immediately by Rotary's solutions. "We all need inspiration. We all need to have our batteries recharged. This has been a tremendous way to do that. I feel lifted up."

General sessions are part entertainment spectacular (music stars, dance troupes and acrobats) and part motivational rally. They're also a learning forum guided by Rotary's leaders. In between, you can explore your passions and your club's priorities at booths and breakout sessions.

Members say that highlights in Singapore included making spontaneous connections in the House of Friendship and feeling Rotary's worldwide influence.

Didier Grandport, of the Rotary Club of Tamarin Les Salines, Mauritius, sums up his first-convention feelings: "It makes me happy to meet people of the world, building action. Being here is like a dream."

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

## A day in Parliament

### Team Rotary News

Students from the Interact Club of Sushila Devi Lakshmi Girls Senior Secondary School, sponsored by RC Delhi North, RID 3012, participated in the National Leaders Homage Programme in Parliament.

Two students, Yukti and Jaisika, delivered speeches in the presence of Om Birla, Speaker of the Lok Sabha. This visit provided the students with a first-hand experience of Parliament's



Interactors of Sushila Devi Lakshmi School in Parliament.

functioning, and the roles of elected representatives. Appreciating the initiative, PDG Lalit Khanna said "participating in programmes like this helped the students develop

public speaking skills, while deepening their understanding of governance and democratic values, encouraging civic awareness and active citizenship." ■



# District Wise TRF Contribution

As on September, 2024

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

Source: RI South Asia Office

(in US Dollars)

District Number	Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution	
2981	32,951	1,182	0	38	34,171	
2982	25,399	3,637	9,285	11,959	50,281	
3000	16,363	2,247	0	241,007	259,617	
3011	24,811	4,622	1,238	327,402	358,072	
3012	360	101	500	27,000	27,961	
3020	20,845	4,481	11,000	4,857	41,183	
3030	2,602	138	2,000	1,000	5,740	
3040	1,369	88	0	14,586	16,044	
3053	11,011	0	0	0	11,011	
3055	11,853	54	1,000	39,744	52,651	
3056	3,291	0	60	133	3,483	
3060	93,033	1,040	299	46,354	140,727	
3070	9,514	0	0	0	9,514	
3080	9,426	3,502	17,384	9,561	39,873	
3090	2,289	56	0	0	2,345	
3100	12,396	2,156	0	3,265	17,817	
3110	6,732	24	0	21,094	27,850	
3120	12,139	100	8,337	0	20,577	
3131	226,704	4,169	12,000	50,341	293,214	
3132	24,993	200	0	4,569	29,762	
3141	256,550	12,777	52,000	739,492	1,060,819	
3142	229,692	13,461	7,560	80,348	331,061	
3150	53,448	7,638	7,250	252,438	320,774	
3160	1,968	1,092	0	5,787	8,847	
3170	25,973	11,880	2,000	58,566	98,418	
3181	21,820	3,768	0	0	25,588	
3182	7,333	108	0	0	7,441	
3191	18,678	1,671	0	1,323	21,673	
3192	40,792	1,471	1,000	1,976	45,239	
3201	39,502	14,203	2,190	30,160	86,055	
3203	16,616	2,234	15,000	4,601	38,451	
3204	6,366	230	0	0	6,596	
3211	10,132	525	0	3,048	13,704	
3212	113,039	8,421	0	93,875	215,335	
3231	11,693	3,073	31,238	0	46,004	
3233	7,293	2,001	0	124,430	133,724	
3234	46,565	9,714	19,459	201,998	277,736	
3240	82,559	4,552	36,000	13,870	136,981	
3250	112,004	2,578	1,000	19,103	134,685	
3261	1,068	0	0	5,205	6,273	
3262	7,305	454	0	0	7,758	
3291	55,832	3,085	17,500	6,514	82,932	
3220	Sri Lanka	26,593	1,425	2,000	3,875	33,893
3271	Pakistan	7,814	10,000	0	6,300	24,114
3292	Nepal	32,225	7,694	5,001	44,833	89,753
63	(former 3272)	225	283	0	0	508
64	(former 3281)	1,321	724	1,000	0	3,045
65	(former 3282)	278	663	0	0	941

\* Undistricted



# Spirits and stiff joints

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

LBW



**T**he other day I, along with some friends, all in our mid-70s, were discussing the fate, of all things, muscles in an ageing body. Our brains are no longer important. The topic came up after someone said wine was less harmful to the muscles than spirits like whisky, rum, vodka, gin etc. Everyone held forth with glasses of vodka and gin in their hands. None of us knew anything about physiology and the effect of toxins on muscles. But when has ignorance ever prevented any Indian from insisting that he or she is the last word on the subject?

Talk then turned to remedies, prevention and cure. Some insisted that yoga was the answer because it stretched and strengthened all the muscles including ones that you never suspected existed. Others insisted that if stretching and strengthening was all that was needed, physiotherapy was superior. What's the difference, I asked. But I was ignored because I had stopped consuming alcohol some years ago and my opinion was therefore worthless in the context of our discussion.

However, I was deeply interested because, in spite of family induced abstinence, I remained as stiff as a skateboard. The absence of alcohol had no effect on my recalcitrant muscles. So yoga had been forced upon me by an anxious family. But it had little effect. I remained as stiff as ever. Thankfully, Covid intervened and the yoga master was not invited back again. He tried but I put my stiff foot down, saying no means no.

But the denouement came a month ago when I bent down to pick up a spoon and couldn't get up again. I was straightened out very slowly, accompanied by excruciating pain. The family, both immediate and extended, unambiguously and unanimously decided that I needed a

physiotherapist. So the young fellow who takes my 98-year-old mother through the paces with a benign smile on his face, was told to do the same thing to me also. Torture but smile as you do it because smiling has a therapeutic effect.

I asked the physio what his intentions were. He said he was going to focus on my gluteus maximus. I had no clue what that was but didn't want to show him my ignorance. Later Google told me that it means "the largest and most powerful muscle in the human body, and is responsible for the shape of the buttocks and hips, extends the thigh, aids in lateral rotation, and stabilises the femur during movements such as walking and standing... It's also essential for maintaining an erect posture."

Well, well, well, I thought to myself, talk about rock bottom. Or, as my grandfather used to say about my deficient education, the foundation has to be strong. So, after nearly 60 years, I have once again set about strengthening my foundation. Believe me, it's not at all easy because it's a vicious circle: strengthening requires stretching, and stretching requires strengthening. I asked the physio how he could tell what was actually happening in my glutes. In response he asked me to lie on my stomach and raise my neck and legs as far as they would go, and hold them there for as long as I could. I think I won the Olympic iron medal for both time and distance: about three seconds long and two inches high. That's how I finally understood the difference between yoga and physiotherapy. In yoga you breathe while stretching, in physiotherapy you hold your breath. The rest, as the saying in Punjab goes, is 'detail di gal'.

I have also finally understood the meaning of the 1970s pop song "Killing me softly with his song, strumming my pain with his fingers". It's what the physio does. ■



Rotary  
District 3212



# She is Everything Yadhumanaval

"Empowerment of women leads to development of a good family, good society and Ultimately, a good nation".  
- A.P.J Abdul Kalam.




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

*Transforming shy caterpillars into beautiful butterflies*

Rotary strongly encourages partnership with like-minded Institutions and Corporates which support Rotary's Programmes. Empowering girls has been a major focus of Rotary in the recent years. Therefore the coming together of Rotary District 3212 and IDHAYAM, to empower young adults through a confidence and energy building Programme specially designed by an illustrious life skills facilitator, Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan, titled "Yadhumanaval", is a great blessing indeed.

Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan has touched the lives of more than 1,25,000 girls in India and Srilanka.

97 No. of Occurrences 

1,26,910 No. of Beneficiaries 

LEKHA 008/Nov 24/ Rotary/BIW



**IDHAYAM**  
PROMISE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Get in Touch

**Yadhumanaval**  
Project Chairman  
Rtn D.Vijayakumari  
+91 94887 66388



**Rotary**  
District 3212



# PROJECT PUNCH REACHES A NEW MILESTONE



IDHAYAM and Rotary Club of Virudhunagar, in association with Rotary Club of Chennai Legends, are to organize

## PROJECT PUNCH 100 - A CENTURY OF IMPACT

Date: November 4, 2024 - November 6, 2024 | Venue: Dr. RELA Institute and Medical Centre, Chennai.

**100** Events **300** Days

**10392** Beneficiaries

*The celebration is in the air.*

**PROJECT PUNCH**



PROJECT PUNCH is a 3-day Spoken English programme for students (preferably, B.Ed. students) and professionals (across India) who face the need to improve their Communicative English and Public Speaking skills.

Rotary Clubs, Rotarians, Institutions, Organizations,  
Students and Well-wishers from everywhere  
for Your benevolent support.

**IDHAYAM**  
SAY IDHAYAM • SPELL HEALTH



Do you wish to conduct **Project Punch**?

Contact: Project Chairman  
Rtn. A.Shyamraj | 97502 07464