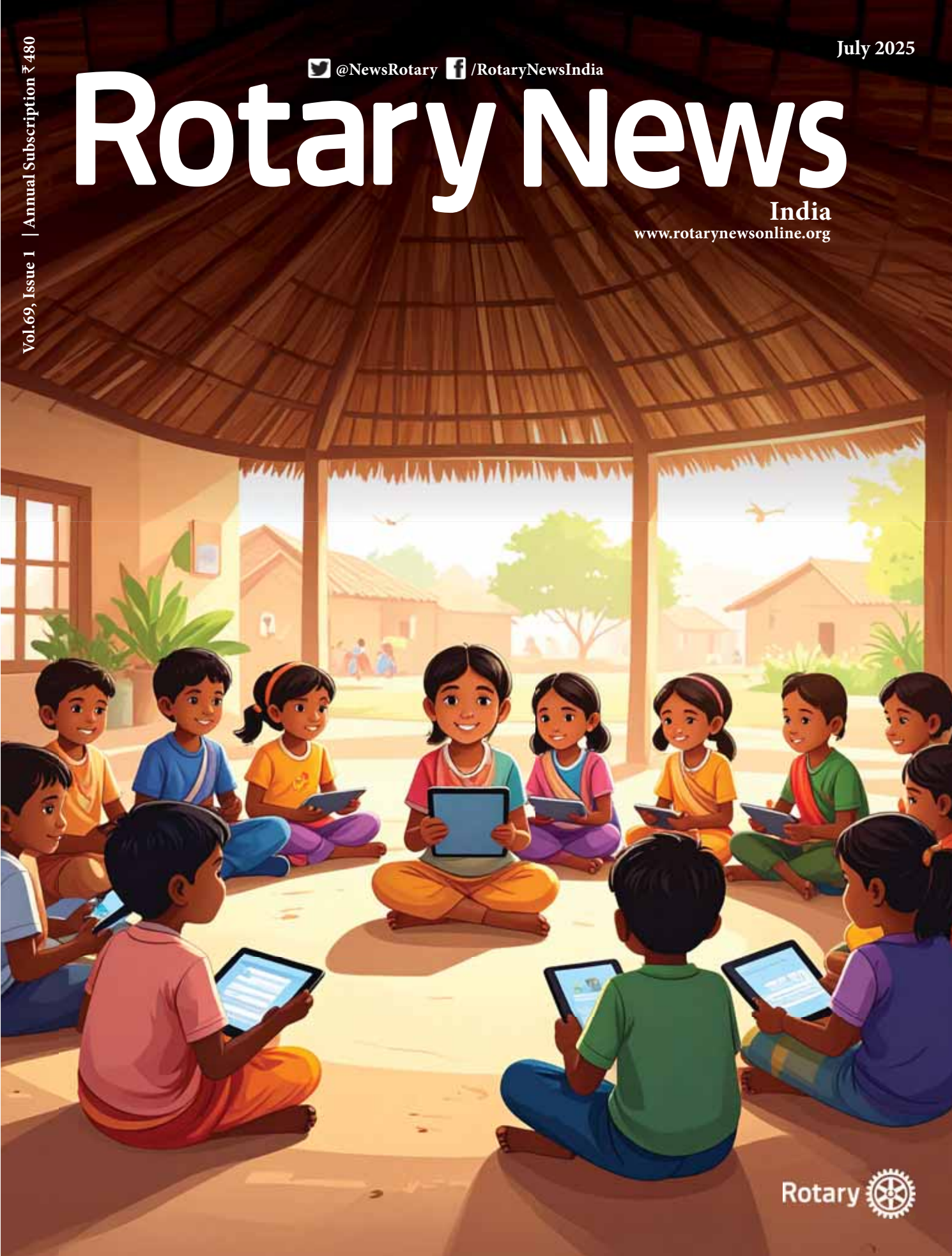


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Rotary 

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High praise for *Rotary News*



Received the June issue and gave it a priority glance. Seldom I leave the editorial unread and I like Rasheeda Bhagat's editorial always.

Eager to know her comments on Operation Sindoor, I didn't turn the page before completing 'War hysteria'. I appreciate the great maturity

with which she has written the editorial, truly a professional one. In the process, she has proved herself to be a true Indian, a very good global person and above all, a great humanitarian. She has touched all the sensitive aspects, dealt with them boldly and expressed a fine opinion like an able global leader with responsibility. Her question "Can we bring back a single soldier who is killed in combat?" has conveyed the critical point. It's rather a message to many a channel heads and journalists for introspection.

While she has appreciated Operation Sindoor against terrorism, she has beautifully conveyed the message of peace. And the last piece of her advice to our TV channels to send some of their most volatile and mentally unstable anchors back to the schools of journalism proves a bonafide journalist in our editor, a great asset to *Rotary News*.

Ravi Hegde, RC Sirsi — D 3170

As we approach the end of the Rotary year 2024–25, members of our club RC Alleppey Greater record our heartfelt appreciation and sincere gratitude to you and your dedicated team for the outstanding work carried out through *Rotary News*.

This past year has been one of inspiration, innovation, and impactful service — and your publication has played an integral role in documenting, sharing and amplifying the meaningful efforts of Rotary clubs across the country and beyond. Each edition not only captured the vibrancy and spirit of Rotary but also educated, encouraged and energised the Rotarians.

Special thanks to Editor Rasheeda Bhagat for her leadership, passion and commitment to high-quality journalism and for tirelessly showcasing the good work of Rotarians. You and your team's work has strengthened the Rotary spirit and brought us all closer as one global family of service.

We salute the *Rotary News* team for being a vital force behind our collective growth, visibility and learning. Your contribution is valued and respected.

Col (retd) Vijayakumar
RC Alleppey Greater — D 3211

Bravo from PRIP Riseley

I always enjoy reading *Rotary News* (India) but wanted to congratulate you personally on your Editor's Note in the May edition. You have captured the importance of our actions, behaviour and attitude to DEI matters very well, and as you say, our words and behaviour certainly do define us as Rotarians.

I especially enjoyed the toilet paper story and the impact it had on one of the employees of the company. It is so important that we reflect on the qualities that we believe define a Rotarian, and your editorial certainly is food for thought. Bravo!

PRIP Ian Riseley

Tirupati trip, a training manual

The article *Meticulous planning behind a magical project* stands out as a training session for all Rotarians who plan a mega project. RID 3233 DG Mahaveer Bothra details the planning starting from the first brick. The cost escalated from ₹10 lakh to ₹50

lakh, and the DG expanded the committee to 15 Rotarians! An example of "find the right cause and the means will follow."

All aspects of the project including housekeeping assistants in each coach, which ensured Lord Balaji darshan for special children, narrated by Rasheeda in her inimical style made

this article read-worthy again... and again! Kudos, DG Bothra and team who made a difficult project possible and made the children smile.

NS Srinivasa Murthy
RC Bangalore — D 3192

The June issue has many service projects, including those under the

LETTERS

leadership of RID 3233 DG Bothra. Tirupati darshan of Lord Venkateshwara for special children is the largest achievement of the year. The herculean task undertaken by the project committee to ensure smooth darshan for special children brought tears to my eyes.

In another service project the same district has presented Rotary Women Achiever Awards with the tagline *Golden Sparrows of Chennai*. Bothra assured that he would increase women Rotarians. He needs to be congratulated for enhancing Rotary's image.

*N Jagatheesan
RC Eluru — D 3020*

The mad display of jingoistic tendencies during TV debates post the ceasefire of Operation Sindoor was noted in the Editor's Note. The meticulous planning of special children's trip to Tirumala was well-captured with accompanying visuals. There could not be a better public image project for Rotary than this.

Kudos to DG Bothra and his team for making this project possible. Sad to note the omission of Rotary by the PM in his *Mann ki Baat*, while mentioning the Ethiopian children's heart surgery. That would have given a morale booster to Rotarians.

*Anthri Vedi Nekkanti
RC Hyderabad Mega City — D 3150*

Your opening editorial comments were perfect and presented the correct perspective of the Pakistan-sponsored terror attack. I have over three decades of active military service, mostly in counter-insurgency areas, including Kashmir and found no 'fear and chaos' in the border areas of India. On 'US intervention' there is too much misinformation. That didn't

happen, what actually happened, I can't disclose here. The IMF loan to Pakistan, though heartbreaking to many of us, was a standard tranche already in progress. As for the 'fanatic warmongers', these people are useful idiots. War hysteria or war-mongering are the pre-requisites for waging war.

UR Raj, RC Ranchi — D 3250

The June cover photo of a boy and his mother and the colourful photos of President Stephanie during her travel were delightful. The Editor's Note admires the name *Operation Sindoor* and she has rightfully criticised the reporting by some TV channels during the war. RID Raju Subramanian's comments show his commitment. All the articles are praiseworthy; *Set the birds free* is an eye-opener to many who trap them in cages. Club matters photos are colourful. The June issue is superb.

*Philip Mulappone MT
RC Trivandrum
Suburban — D 3211*

The May cover picture of solar-powered clay lamps at the Gateway of India was beautiful, and the editorial of Rasheeda titled "Your words/behaviour define you..." was superb.

Jaishree's article *Without membership...* was excellent. Congrats to

the Rotarians of Pune Central for restoring ancient dams in Satara.

*Daniel Chittilappilly
RC Kaloore — D 3201*

Mumbai Rotarians have given hope to the underprivileged by lighting up their homes with solar lamps. This project has enhanced Rotary's image.

*AS Iyer, RC Emerald
Erode — D 3203*

Kudos to Rotarians of RID 3055 for strengthening the bonds of friendship between the people of India and Pakistan through the Kartarpur Sahib corridor. This, we hope, will lead to further exchanges to foster good friendship and bonding. Only Rotary can initiate such spiritual journeys.

*K M Shammikumar
RC Vellore South — RID 3231*

RIPE Mario's exit

The resignation of RI President Elect Mario de Camargo is shocking, and unfortunate as it came just a few days before assuming office. This will pose administrative problems for the RI Board because of paucity of time.

We pray that RI comes out of this crisis soon by choosing the best person for this high office.

*R Srinivasan, RC Bangalore
J P Nagar — D 3191*

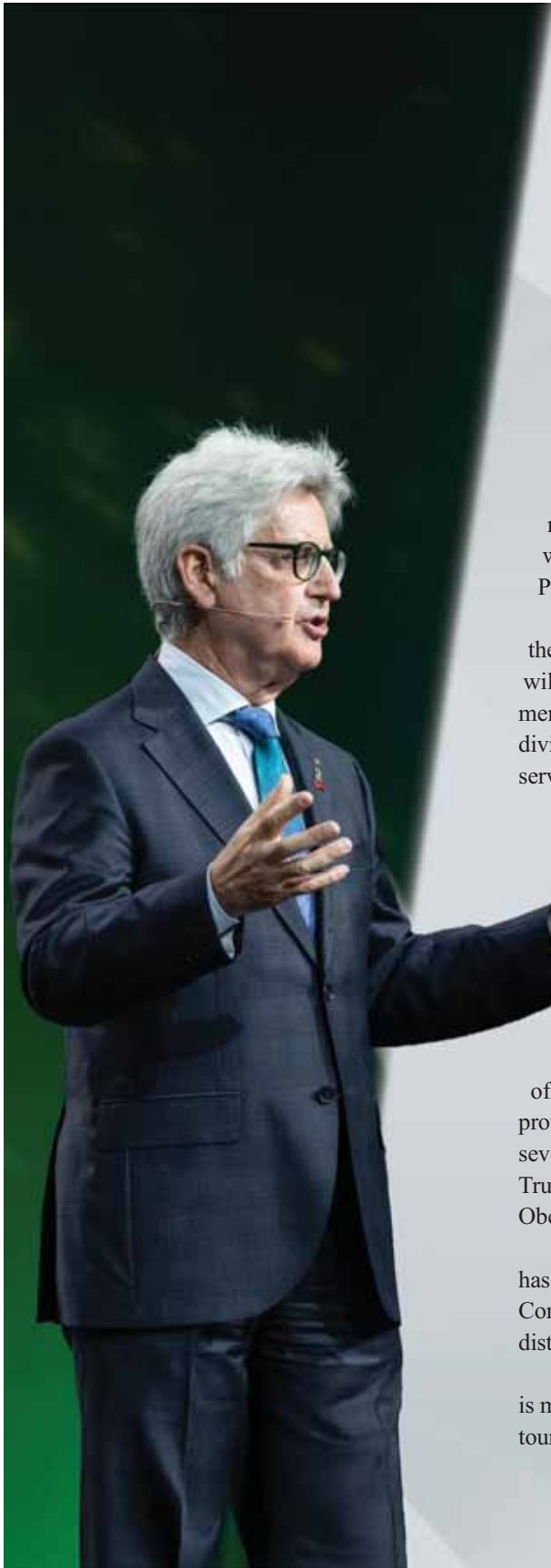
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Francesco Arezzo is new RI President

Francesco Arezzo, a member of the Rotary Club of Ragusa, Italy, has been selected by the Board of Directors to become Rotary International's president for 2025–26. Arezzo will become president on July 1.

The Board conducted a special session following the unexpected resignation of RI President-elect Mário César Martins de Camargo on June 8. Guided by the RI code and policies, the Board selected the new president-elect from a pool of candidates who were considered by the Nominating Committee for President of Rotary International in August 2023.

The 2025–26 presidential message, announced at the 2025 Rotary International Assembly in February, will remain *Unite for Good*, which calls on Rotary members to be a force for unity in a world increasingly divided by politics, geography and ideology. Through service projects, Rotary brings together people of every background — across races, religions and professions — in a shared mission to do good in their communities.

Arezzo is an orthodontist in private practice. He is active internationally as a member of the Italian, European and American orthodontics associations. He is vice-president of the National Association of Italian Dentists for the province of Ragusa and was the founder and head for seven years of the delegation for Ragusa of the National Trust for Italy. He is a Knight of Honor and Devotion in Obedience within the Sovereign Order of Malta.

A Rotary member for more than 30 years, Arezzo has served as vice-chair of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and as RI director, learning facilitator, and as district conference presidential representative.

Arezzo is a benefactor of The Rotary Foundation. He is married to Anna Maria Criscione, an entrepreneur in the tourism field. They have two children.

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Grace in giving

As death and destruction, threats, flexing of muscles, and unleashing of raw military power plunged parts of our world, yet again, into uncertainty and fear, came the heartbreaking news about an Air India Ahmedabad-London flight with 242 people on board crashing in the blink of an eye after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport. All the 242 on board, except one who miraculously snatched his life from the claws of death by jumping out of the burning aircraft, perished... their hopes, dreams and plans for the future burnt to ashes. As the entire nation mourned this heartbreaking disaster, and we marvelled at the few who missed the flight for some reasons, with one woman being denied boarding because she was held up in traffic, a myriad of thoughts flashed across the mind's eye. The faith of those who believe in providence, destiny, god, a superpower that rules the world, the alignment of planets, etc was strengthened and the inevitable thought was about how fickle life can be and how the end can come in so many unexpected ways.


The natural progression of thought, once you accept this, revolves around the need to lead the one life we all have as decently as we can. No, this is not an essay in moral science. Such phenomenal tragedies, and the war and strife-torn world we live in today, send out strong signals about the ephemeral nature of our existence. Once we accept that with a calm mind, then all of Rotary's core values come into a much sharper focus... the ones on truth and fairness, equity and diversity, and making a difference to the less fortunate in our communities through not only the sharing of our wealth but also our skills and expertise. For corporates in India, CSR is mandatory, but for those with large hearts, giving comes naturally. Consider

the case of Ravishankar Dakoju from Bengaluru, who shocked the Rotary world a few years ago by announcing the gift of ₹100 crore (\$14 million) to The Rotary Foundation. Or Rajashree Birla from Mumbai, who continues giving large sums to Rotary International for polio eradication, and also locally for Rotary's community welfare projects. The other day in a casual chat, past RI Director Ashok Mahajan told me simply: "She has never said no to me; whatever sum I've requested for Rotary, she has given it with a smile." Add to this, Dakoju's refrain... 'I had nothing; society has given me everything, so I am returning it to people who live in our world.'

Isn't this grace in giving?

But money is not the only way through which you can display generosity. A kind word or deed... just a warm, caring smile to those in distress can work magic. Once we accept that our time on earth is limited, and the inevitable might be just around the corner, it becomes so much easier to shed the heavy load of negativity... hate, anger, greed, desire for revenge, which we often take to ridiculous lows.

Let's throw all these out of the window, and let in some fresh air. The ending of hate and desire for revenge is the beginning of peace. History... not ancient but of the mid-20th century has shown us how the oppressed and helpless of yesterday can turn into heartless and merciless oppressors of today. So let's shun negativity and choose the path of peace and progress...


Rasheeda Bhagat



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Director speak



Say 'Yes' to Rotary as we Unite for Good

Dear friends,

As this new Rotary year begins, I look back with deep gratitude. My journey began over three decades ago — not as a Rotarian, but as a Rotaractor. What started as a small step into the Rotary world has transformed my life in ways I never imagined. From being a regular club member to serving in leadership roles, this organisation has quietly shaped me, guided me, and helped me grow — not just as a Rotarian, but as a person.

Rotary has stood tall and strong over the years — through wars, pandemics, and natural disasters — and it remains strong. Because Rotary has something powerful: *Service Above Self*. A value that crosses all boundaries, of nation, race, culture and religion.

Rotary is now present in over 220 countries and territories. We proudly say *the Sun never sets in the world of Rotary*. Somewhere, every moment of the day or night, a Rotary club is meeting, serving or making a difference.

What makes Rotary truly special is how it empowers communities, brings lasting change in lives, and above all, transforms individuals. Rotary's diversity and fellowship teach us to see the world as one family. The Four-Way Test becomes a moral compass, guiding us with honesty and integrity. And

Rotary leadership is not just a role — it is a path to *lifelong empowerment and transformation*. Here, we learn, grow, and lead with compassion.

Peace is not just the absence of conflict or war. Peace cannot exist where there is hunger, poverty, or inequality. That's why Rotary acts.

If *Yes* is the mantra, and when you say YES to Rotary:

- You are lifting people out of poverty.
- You are opening doors to education.
- You are creating healthier lives through sanitation and care.
- You are empowering women and youth.
- You are protecting the planet for future generations.

Rotary does the magic. Rotary creates hope through its **People of Action**. And through YOU.

As we begin this new year, let's stand together — stronger, kinder, and more committed than ever. Let us make Rotary an inevitable force for Doing Good in the World.

Let's proudly Say YES to Rotary as we *Unite for Good*.

Wishing my fellow Rotarians a purposeful and joyful Rotary year 2025–26!

M Muruganandam

RI Director, 2025–27

Message from TRF Trustee Chair



Take a closer look

When you joined Rotary, chances are it was because you wanted to make a lasting difference. Arch Klumph felt the same way.

When he proposed The Rotary Foundation in 1917, he envisioned more than just a fund. He saw an enduring vehicle for Rotary members to serve their communities and create lasting change. More than a century later, that vision thrives, thanks to your dedication and to the Foundation's unique structure, which empowers members to identify and solve global problems at every level.

Today, I am not asking you for a donation.

Instead, I invite you to look at The Rotary

Foundation with fresh eyes. Imagine a charity governed by its own members. A global mission carried out by those very members.

A Foundation that reflects the shared values of its members — ensuring clean water and literacy for all, eradicating the scourge of polio, building local economies through entrepreneurship, and making the world more peaceful through conflict resolution training.

Doesn't this sound like an interesting charity? The Rotary Foundation is trusted around the world because we have earned that trust. After our successful Programs of Scale initiative in Zambia, the Gates Foundation and World Vision invited us to lead again — resulting in the \$30 million Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge across four African nations.

We are efficient, strategic, and guided by dedicated professional staff and passionate volunteers. Our Foundation consistently receives top marks from Charity Navigator. And the Gates Foundation matches our \$50 million annual commitment to polio eradication 2-to-1, depositing \$100 million into our account each year. That is trust, delivered.

Even in conflict zones, we are there. In Gaza, a single confirmed polio case triggered a humanitarian pause in the war, allowing health workers to vaccinate children and quell an outbreak. Rotary helped fund that urgent response. Once again, we proved to be a reliable partner in a crisis.

We can be proud that we made a difference. Now we look ahead to our ambitious \$500 million fundraising goal for 2025–26. We can reach it together, as we boldly support a Foundation that is doing bold things.

Rotary is not going anywhere, because Rotary is everywhere! That is our strength. That is our unique opportunity. Be part of the legacy of The Rotary Foundation. It is one that Arch Klumph would be proud of. It is a legacy that has changed the world and will continue to do so, as long as we are all part of it.

Holger Knaack
TRF Trustee Chair

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Magazine

Message from TRF Trustee



Your gift will transform lives

As we enter a new Rotary year, it is time to build on our past and step forward into the future. A future where Rotary is respected and more relevant than ever before. Thanks to The Rotary Foundation.

The Rotary Foundation transforms your gifts into projects that change lives locally and globally. Your gift directly supports programmes like eradicating polio, providing clean water, improving literacy and promoting peace worldwide. Every contribution creates a measurable difference. The Foundation's projects address both global issues

and local needs. Your contributions make an impact where it's needed the most.

Through global grants and other Foundation programmes we can truly touch lives and transform communities. With a stellar rating from Charity Navigator, TRF ensures that your donations are used efficiently and effectively.

Foundation grants are taking Rotary in a new and meaningful direction. The impact of grants goes far beyond helping the beneficiaries. They help to engage members, give a positive public image of Rotary and are a great retention tool too. Indeed a multiplier effect. Through the Seven Areas of Focus, TRF is aligning with Rotary's vision statement and the Action Plan.

We are very close to a polio-free world. The journey has been long, arduous and challenging but Rotarians worldwide have proved 'where there is a will there is a way'. This is the time to rededicate and redouble our efforts. Supporting the Polio Fund is now more critical than ever. Without Rotarians' contributions we cannot achieve our dream of a polio-free world. I urge each Rotarian to contribute to the Polio Fund. Your contribution becomes three-fold with the Gates Foundation match. Our support to the Annual Fund today ensures global grants tomorrow. And Endowment Fund is the future of TRF.

By supporting all the three funds of TRF, each one of you is a changemaker committed to making the world a healthier, more equitable and more peaceful place. Your generosity today builds hope for tomorrow. That is the opportunity TRF opens up for us. Let's use this in the best way to *Unite for Good*.

Bharat Pandya
TRF Trustee



From L: Harish Nayyar, Manish Bora, Ajit Kakade and Vishnu Malani from RC Sangamner, along with headmaster Waje Tanhaji Khanderao and students, at the Zilla Parishad Primary School, Kalas village.



RID 3132 Rotarians bring digital learning to **100 rural schools in Maharashtra**

Rasheeda Bhagat

If you want to make the clubs in your district vibrant and keep the club members engaged with Rotary activities, give them a mega project to embrace. This was the objective of the leadership team of a mega transformative project in RI District 3132, where 100 clubs were involved in providing digital classrooms to 100 schools across the 11 revenue districts of Maharashtra that come under RID 3132.

The brainchild of DGN Jayesh Patel, the core members of this project feel that these digital classrooms are already making a big difference to the way children from underprivileged families in the rural areas of this region are learning. Tracing the genesis of the project, the DGN says that when he was the president of his club RC Solapur in 2017–18, he had done a comprehensive survey of 182 rural schools in Solapur district. A highlight of his finding was the dire shortage

of teachers in the government/zilla parishad schools. His estimate is that Maharashtra's average pupil-teacher ratio in higher secondary schools stands at 38, and is among the highest in the country. "This gap is even wider in rural regions, leaving students disadvantaged, and I felt there was a need for urgent intervention."

During his research/survey of these schools, he also traced a particular pattern — at the higher secondary school level, one or two classes, for eg Class 5 and 6, had a much higher number of students than the other classes with the result that the former had to be split into multiple sections. But as only one teacher is assigned per class, she/he could only teach one of the several sections of that class, leaving students in the other sections high and dry and virtually helpless.

Patel badly wanted to do something to improve the education standards in the rural schools of Solapur region, and he thought

that the best way to combat the shortage of qualified teachers was by leveraging digital technology and bringing digital learning to those schools facing shortage of teachers. “But I did not want only my club to do this project; our district has 101 clubs and I felt that to achieve one of Rotary’s main objectives of making our clubs vibrant, this would be an ideal project to get the maximum number of Rotarians and clubs involved in something which is going to bring about a big change in the lives and future of underprivileged children.”

His intent was to engage students of Classes 5 to 10 with engaging and curriculum-aligned e-learning content, and instead of limiting the impact to only local schools, RC Solapur partnered with

all the other clubs in the district — making it a truly collaborative initiative. Each club identified one under-resourced school in its area where Rotarians would put up a DiGi Class unit, and became part of a big, transformative project.

Patel had decided to make this a CSR-funded project with his own company P P Patel & Co contributing ₹25 lakh needed to put up these units in 100 schools. He named the project *Rotary ki Digital Pathshala*.

Speaking to *Rotary News*, he said each DiGi unit comprises a 43” LED TV, which comes loaded with interactive e-learning software, with the content adhering to the state government’s curriculum (See Box for details of a DiGi classroom) from Classes 5 to 10.

“I found that in some schools there might be 200 students in one class, so that it had four or five sections, but the teacher was only one for that particular class with the



Members of RC Ahmednagar Dignity with students and teachers at the Anand School, Ahmednagar.



Murli Bhutda from RC Nanded at the People's High School, Nanded.

result that the children hardly got his attention and proper learning did not happen. We cannot recruit teachers for zilla parishad schools, and hence I thought why not make use of digital technology to make up for this shortage of teachers, because every child deserves good education.”

DGN Jayesh Patel had decided to make this a CSR-funded project, with his own company PP Patel & Co contributing ₹25 lakh needed to put up these units in 100 schools.

On why he waited till last year to do this project, the DGN says, “I could have done that a few years ago, but I wanted clubs in the entire district to get on board. That way more school could be covered.” The result was a mega project that has already impacted a whopping number of students. “Just imagine, this Rotary impact has been felt not only by 70,000 students but also their families, as our team has used the relationship the core committee has built with the villagers to interact with the parents and counsel them on several aspects of health, hygiene and proper nutrition too,” says Patel.

Before rolling out this project, explains RC Solapur president

Sunil Maheshwari, all the clubs conducted a community needs assessment and submitted proposals from selected schools. “In a unique volunteer-driven model, RC Solapur formed a 40-member trained volunteer team — all from the Solapur Rotary Pariwar (a group of 12 Solapur-based Rotary clubs) — to handle the installation and orientation. This hands-on approach ensured ownership, stronger community bonds, and better long-term outcomes. After the inauguration, volunteer teams travelled across the district, completing 100 installations in just 15 days; they will also serve as long-term facilitators, monitoring usage, resolving issues, and evaluating effectiveness.”

To identify the beneficiary schools, care was taken to go to areas where there was so much of poverty that “even if the parents — mostly

small farmers or labourers — had to pay a little money to give the child some basic education, they would pull them out of school and make them work in the fields or elsewhere.”

The scope of what was basically a literacy project was expanded to include other areas, particularly health and hygiene. Also, the focus was on ensuring that educational content was so interesting that “children now ask the teachers when will it be time for our digital classroom! Another positive fall out is that more girls are now coming to the school; we got a call from one girl’s parents asking: Sir, what are you now providing in classrooms that our girls are now eager to go to school!”

Apart from the interactive learning and interesting content, there are spoken English courses, first aid learning and a smattering of Sanskrit, in addition to Marathi.

The attraction for the students, apart from the interactive learning and interesting content, is there are spoken English — or as Patel puts is ‘semi-English’ — courses, first aid learning and a smattering of Sanskrit, in addition to English and Marathi. As this is also a region where thalassemia is very common, students are also given awareness on this condition, and its treatment. Girls are also being counselled on prevention of cervical and breast cancer.

Around ₹35,000 is spent on each school; as the TVs were purchased in bulk, they were able to knock off ₹10,000 on the cost of each TV, and “our own committee members have been trained to install these

RID 3132 DGN Jayesh Patel conducts a software training session for Rotarians in Solapur who will be installing the e-learning TVs in 100 schools as part of DiGi Classroom project.



DiGi Class

Each of the schools received a 43" LED TV set which came loaded with:

- Interactive e-learning software (English and Marathi) tailored for the Maharashtra State Board curriculum for Classes 5 to 10.
- Supplementary modules including:
 - o Scholarship Prep (Grade 5)
 - o Digital library
 - o Swachh Bharat training on health and hygiene
 - o Eklavya, including over 5,000 competitive exam questions
 - o ICT skills
 - o Career disha (opportunities in over 250 careers in three languages)
 - o Learn English (soft skills and quizzes)
 - o Value education on 46 topics
 - o Organ donation and CPR awareness

The project was inaugurated earlier this year by DG Suresh Saboo in the presence of DGE Sudhir Lature, and PDGs Swati Herkal, Rajiv Pradhan, Zubin Amaria, Omprakash Motipawle and Deepak Pophale, among others. Rotarians who played an active role in seeing this project through include Santosh Kanekar, Avinash Matpathi, Suhas Lahoti, Shivkumar Dalvi, Mahesh Salunke, Jitendra Jaju, Salam Sheik, Kedar Kahate, Sanjeev Menthae, Akshai Jhaveri, Atul Chauhan, Sunil Maheshwari and Rajan Vora.

TVs, so there is some saving of cost there too.”

The DGN’s wife Parul, who is also a member of RC Solapur, is actively involved in this project and says they are overwhelmed by the kind of happiness and gratitude that the parents expressed. She is excited about her husband’s plans to continue expanding this project in both 2025–26 and his year as district governor in 2026–27.

“In three years, if each of our district’s 100 clubs can do three schools, imagine the overall impact in the region when it comes to children’s

education and health. During my year as DG, I want to make these schools Happy Schools, and upgrade the digital classrooms to add digital boards, each of which costs ₹60,000. We will also add five more components including handwash stations, separate toilets for girls, laboratories and libraries.”

On funding, his own corporate will continue its CSR funding for the next two years, but his reasoning is that “if my company gives CSR funds for such a transformative project, I am sure other companies will join too.”

Parul adds that in the schools which the Rotarians have upgraded with digital learning, the plan is to start Interact clubs so that the students can also acquire leadership qualities. She is excited about an additional project in these schools where the children will be taught to make compost. “We will ask the children to bring the kitchen waste from their homes to the schools, each will be provided with a 200 litre-barrel and we will train them to convert this into vermicompost. This can then be sold for organic farming at nearly ₹80–90 a kg.”

DGN’s wife Parul, a member of RC Solapur, is actively involved in this project and says they are overwhelmed by the kind of happiness that the parents expressed.

The digital content includes 3D models, animation and interactive elements, making learning joyful and accessible. Initial reports from the schools indicate increased student attendance, better conceptual understanding, and enthusiastic participation. Teachers appreciate the ease of using the system, while students enjoy the interactive and visual approach to learning. RC Solapur has developed tools to monitor data on usage, attendance, academic performance, and user feedback — ensuring ongoing measurement and improvement. “This project has not only reached 100 schools, but also strengthened Rotary’s public image and relevance in rural education,” says club president Maheshwari.

Adds secretary Brijkumar Goydani, “This project is a shining example of Rotary’s power to collaborate, innovate and deliver measurable impact. It has scalable potential and we hope it can serve as a blueprint for Rotary clubs across India seeking to bridge educational inequalities through technology and partnership.” ■

Salem Interactors blaze a trail

V Muthukumaran

It was a much-awaited ‘dream project’ for the outgoing president S Hemanath of RC Salem Phoenix, RID 2982, to start an Interact club at a government school where sanitation facilities are minimal. “A grouping of students mentored by our club will create a positive change, both in the school’s physical conditions and the morale of the children,” he says.

After much planning and deliberations, the club inaugurated its maiden Interact Club of Phoenix, “at a government school in Salem with 23 charter members, who are students of Class 8–10, with the then AG Badrinarayana Gupta presenting the RI citation to charter secretary Ansal Sunil.” During the Interact installation at the Government Higher Secondary School, Maniyanoor, near Salem, an RO filter unit worth ₹8,000 was installed for providing drinking water to 900 students (up to Class 12) and 30 teachers. “A sanitary pad vending machine (₹7,000) was also set up, and we directed charter president Sujithra to ensure that the device is put to good use and restocked every fortnight,” recalls Hemanath.

Shortly, the Interactors will be co-hosting jointly with its parent Rotary a mega drawing competition for government and private schools in Salem. “We will conduct the sketching event in August, and there will be no entry fee for students from government schools. Our Interactors will play a major role in hosting this art competition,” he explains. In the coming months, the club will erect a Rotary-Interact signage at the



AG Badrinarayana Gupta presents the charter citation to Interact club secretary Ansal Sunil as its charter president Sujithra (right) and RC Salem Phoenix president S Hemanath look on.

school’s entrance which will boost “our public image in the neighbouring villages. Also, a push cart donated to an elderly woman selling small snacks and fancy stuff near the school compound wall will be repurposed with Rotary Wheel logo and RI messages to spread the idea of what Rotary is all about among local people,” says Hemanath.

When they came to know that the children’s 40-bed dormitory at the Annai Sathya Illam, a huge orphanage spread over 3–4 acres in Gorimedu village near Salem, was in a derelict state, “we swung into action renovating the dorm at a cost of ₹1.35 lakh. Apart from masonry work, 23 new beds, each having a cot, mattress and pillows; and 40 cupboards were donated to the hostel.” Electrical fittings including lights and fans were replaced, and

a fresh paint coating was given to the walls. “We have given a new, sprightly look to the primary block of the orphanage that has 400–450 inmates in all.”

Children were sensitised on environmental issues at a tree planting drive in which 20 new saplings were named after the inmates of this special home to celebrate the new year. Outgoing DG V Sivakumar presented RI’s Significant Service Award to Hemanath for renovating the orphanage at a public image seminar.

With 39 members, four Paul Harris Fellows and one Major Donor, the Salem club brings out a monthly bulletin, *Phoenix Talks*, edited by Hemanath. “The incoming DG Sivasundaram has made me GML editor for the new Rotary year, impressed with my club projects detailed in our bulletin,” he smiles. ■



Rtn Francesco Arezzo
RI President 2025-26

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A medical mission in Morena

Rajendra Saboo

Learn with passion, earn with integrity, return with compassion.” This is a doctor’s sacred oath, and it serves as a gentle reminder of a deeper, nobler purpose for those in the medical profession.

A medical mission is not just about a group of doctors and volunteers travelling to places to provide healthcare. It is a project of love, compassion and deep commitment to alleviating human suffering. Whether in the remote corners of India or beyond our borders, each mission carries a powerful purpose — to bring healing and succour where it is needed the most.

Each medical mission is different not just because the place is different but because the needs, problems, expectations and facilities differ. At the heart of every medical mission a constant is the unwavering spirit of service among the doctors and volunteers.

Doctors on such missions bring with them a wealth of experience, knowledge and clinical skills. A very valuable aspect of our medical missions is how our doctors share their expertise with local doctors.

Our team of 21 doctors and 17 volunteers embarked on our week-long medical mission to Morena, Madhya Pradesh, in March 2025. With over 100,000 registrations, 5,129 OPDs and 1,048 surgeries and procedures, the scale of service was immense. All OTs and medical units were fully functional and optimised each day. Thousands of patients of every age travelled more than 200km daily to get treated.

Dermatologist Dr Vanita and Dr Anuj were beacons of hope and relief for tribal patients suffering from most neglected skin conditions. The plastic surgery team of Dr VD Singh, Dr Chanjeev Mehta, Dr Surinder and maxillofacial surgeon Dr Hemant performed many complicated surgeries on patients for facial, neck and axillary contractures to help them regain full neck function.

Behind every successful surgery were our anaesthesiologists Dr Madhurima and Dr Johannes — calm, focused and vigilant — during the most vulnerable surgeries. In the ENT group, Dr Patange and Dr Ashvin successfully diagnosed rare and giant cell tumors and treated them.

Orthopaedic surgeons Dr Ravjit and Dr Nikhil carried out numerous intricate surgeries. Notably, tibia nailing by suprapatellar approach and talus with subtalar fixation were performed for the first time in Morena.



PRIP Rajendra Saboo and Usha Saboo with the team of participating doctors.

Multiple surgeries in progress.



Dr Sanjay Kalra and Dr Aman rendered exemplary service by delivering 10 complete dentures, a first-time addition to the mission, which made a remarkable difference to the recipients.

In ophthalmology, Dr Anil, Dr Manjit, Dr Vikram and Dr Uday not only performed cataract surgeries but also carried out oculoplastic procedures. It sounds Greek to us but meant a lot to the patients. Urologist Dr Mandal provided expert clinical care and guidance, benefitting over 550 patients through his consultations and interventions.

In paediatrics and public health, Dr Rita observed that over half of the cases

involved neurological delays, and to address these issues, she conducted health education sessions. Young ophthalmologist Dr Uday, grandson of our senior general surgeon PDG Dr R S Parmar, joined as a volunteer — embodying the legacy of service.

Gynaecologists Dr Namita and Dr Bhavana performed many long-neglected surgeries, bringing much-needed relief to the poor women. PDG Dr Girish Gune, a very able surgeon with miracle hands from RI District 3131, is a constant at all our medical missions. This spirit of respectful collaboration, learning, and serving transformed many lives.

Two pillars of our medical mission were mission director PDG Subhash Garg and medical director Dr Parmar — one leading from the front with unwavering purpose, the other managing with precision and care.

The team of dedicated volunteers including RID 3080 DG Rajpal Singh, RC Chandigarh president Jatinder Kapur, PDG Arun Mongia, IPP Chirag, Praveen Garg, Brij Parmar, Neelam Aggarwal, Charu Mongia and Usha Saboo efficiently managed patient movement, meals, OT transport, and hospitality of the team. From the host Rotary clubs, the contributions of Dr Sanjiv Bandil and PDGs Dr VK Gangwal, Bhupendra Jain and Radhe Rathi were invaluable.

We gave gifts to the scared, crying children to calm them and to the patients to express our gratitude for giving us an opportunity to serve. We Rotarians achieve what politicians often cannot — bring understanding and peace through our healing hands and caring hearts.

In my Sanskrit class in school, I was taught *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. Serving in the medical missions, with every smile, every tear wiped, every life touched — I experienced the real essence of the whole universe being one family.

The writer, a past RI President, attended the Morena medical mission, along with his wife Usha Saboo



Above: Usha Saboo with the team of participating doctors.

Left: PRIP Saboo volunteers at the Morena Medical Mission.



PRIP Saboo interacts with a patient.



Rotary achieves ‘2025 by 2025’ dream

Rasheeda Bhagat

Rotary’s ambitious goal, officially set at the 2017 Atlanta Convention, when TRF celebrated its 100th anniversary, to take its Endowment Fund to \$2.025 billion by 2025, has been achieved. “Today we are proud to announce that, with only six days left to reach the 2025 by 2025 goal, thanks to the response of dedicated Rotarians, Rotaractors, and members of the family of Rotary, we have indeed doubled the size of the Endowment (from \$1 to over \$2 billion). So let’s celebrate!”

This announcement by Trustee Chair Mark Maloney at the Calgary RI Convention was greeted with thunderous applause as all the TRF trustees stood on the podium, and the assembled Rotarians were on their feet, cheering this huge milestone that RI had set.

He added: “The Endowment we have built together will ensure we continue to spread the magic of Rotary for generations. A larger Endowment means larger global grants to make a bigger impact,

and increasing numbers of Rotary Peace Fellows working to reduce conflict around the world. You might think that a global pandemic would have reduced or eliminated our progress towards the goal, but no, dedicated Rotarians and Rotaractors persevered, and we reached the halfway mark in 2021.”

In 2015, when the trustees saw that “dedicated Rotarians met an important benchmark by reaching \$1 billion in investments and



India sets \$50 million goal for 2025–26

For our zones 4, 5, 6 and 7, RI Director K P Nagesh and I have set an ambitious goal of raising \$50 million for TRF during the coming Rotary year 2025–26, and I am confident that we will hit this mark for the first time ever. Towards this end we are planning to induct 250 new AKS members, and get 25 Endowments, and 250 Major Donors,” said RI Director M Muruganandam.

Last year our zones had raised \$32 million for TRF, and while this year’s figures are still being collated, the amount has already crossed \$30 million. ■

Left: TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney announces the milestone of \$2.025 billion in Endowment Fund as TRF trustees cheer on at the RI Convention in Calgary, Canada.

commitments, they thought \$1 billion is rather good, but they knew the power of dedicated Rotary members. So, the 2.025 goal was set to double the Endowment in less than 10 years!”

And in the next 10 years, this goal has been achieved as the Rotary family knew that “every contribution to the Endowment was a contribution to the Rotary communities in which we live — from Ghana to Mexico, from Taiwan to India, from Canada to Japan, Brazil to Ukraine. Every contribution can save mothers and children, provide a life-changing education, develop entrepreneurs, protect our planet, prevent and treat disease, ensure

clean water and sanitation, and build peace.”

Next Programs of Scale for Colombia

Maloney announced that the 2025 Programs of Scale grant has been awarded by TRF to Pathways to Peace and Prosperity in Colombia, which partners with the United Nations World Food Programme to strengthen conflict resolution capacity, expand access to economic opportunities and social service programmes in conflict-affected areas.

The long-term goal of this programme is to break the cycle of

violence, poverty, and food insecurity for conflict victims to achieve sustained peace. This organisation in Colombia showcases the joint efforts of Rotary Peace Fellows, peace activists, Cadre members, RIDs 4271 and 4281, and the sponsoring Rotary Club of San José de Cúcuta (in Norte de Santander).

He added that last year’s Programs of Scale recipient, Partners for Water Access and Better Harvests in India, “promises to assist sustainable farming and demonstrates how Rotary can help the world adapt to the growing impacts of climate change. I had the privilege of meeting with the Rotarians in India spearheading this project,” he added. ■

RC Bhavnagar

gives hope to underprivileged children

Rasheeda Bhagat



PRIP Kalyan Banerjee with Anns, teachers and students at the Rotary Child Educare Centre, Bhavnagar.

Sanjay and Nehal were born into an underprivileged family in Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Their grandfather and parents lived in the backyard of the Rotary Service Centre established by the Rotary Club of Bhavnagar, RID 3060, in 1975. As they took care of the centre, doing all the sweeping and cleaning



work, and struggled to make ends meet, the very idea of educating their children in good institutions was a distant dream. “They have now been at our centre for 45 years, but in those days, when their two children were young, life was a daily battle for survival, and the future seemed uncertain. But destiny had something brighter in store for them,” says Manish Kothari, past president of RC Bhavnagar.

Travelling back in time to 1998, when he was his club president, he started a project called *Ray of Hope*, and set up the Rotary Child Educare Centre on the premises of the Rotary Centre, put up by his club, which is one of the largest clubs in RID 3060 with 146 members, and started 80 years ago. “This project’s objective was to provide educational opportunities to poor and underprivileged children. We started with some slum children in the area.”

It was an era when the poor did not give much importance to education, and the Rotarians had to literally lure the children to the Educare centre by offering them snacks, toys, retaining their attention by telling them interesting stories and so on. Soon about 30 to 40 children started coming regularly to the centre between 4 and 6pm, after the Rotarians had done a round of the local slums and convinced parents that this would be a productive way of occupying their children’s time and attention, or else they might indulge in unsavoury activities.

“Slowly the children attending these sessions got hooked, and Rotary Anns started coming to teach the children basic literacy — alphabets and numerals etc.” Next came both voluntary and paid teachers, and primary education in a more formal manner

was started for the children who were in the 5–10 age group.

Very soon colourful books, games, puzzles and similar fun things to learn were added and the Rotarians thought it was time to enrol these children into government primary schools. Some of the children had earlier gone to schools but were either not regular or had dropped out. Again, this was easier said than done, but the Rotarians met the parents and convinced them that if their children were to have a future, they should have some education at least.

Many of the children grabbed this opportunity and within three years, the Rotarians found a big change in the children. “They stopped wasting their time and started learning in the schools and the results were generally good,” smiles Kothari.

Most of the children had by now reached Class 5, 6 or 7 and the Rotarians felt that the brighter among them should be sent to private schools to get an even better outcome, and started sponsoring the fees of the children in these schools.

Asked about how the money was raised, he says that gradually this project was embraced by the entire club and members would donate money on their birthdays, wedding anniversaries and other events. Visitors from overseas would also donate liberally, and now local companies are giving a part of their CSR funds for this project. “We also started meeting the school authorities and trustees and requested them that as these children come from poorer families, but deserve a chance to get good education, their fees should be lowered. Invariably concessional fees were given and the sponsoring Rotarians cheered on their wards as they reached higher classes.

At this level, where extra help was required, at the Educare centre, Rotary Anns, voluntary and paid teachers gave the children extra coaching in subjects like maths and science. Children soon started clearing Class 10. “Seeing the results, our project gained popularity, and the parents’ friends brought their children and sought our help to educate them. We had our limitations but we had set apart a big hall for this project and were able to accommodate about 90 children, who were divided into four groups according to their subjects and learning capacity.”

By now the children were being given uniforms, school books, stationery etc by the Rotarians. “Whatever they wanted, we gave. Bhavnagar’s notable industrialists and rich people started visiting our centre and sponsoring various parts of this project, including providing regular snacks to the children in turns,” Kothari adds.

Initially when the cost of education and educational inputs was low,

the club spent about ₹50,000 a year on sponsoring these children’s education, but now they have stepped up the amount to about ₹4 lakh a year.

His own family is heavily invested in this project. Parul Kothari, the wife of his elder brother Pradip Kothari, who is also a member of RC Bhavnagar, has been working with this project and helping the children with their education right from the beginning in 1998, and around the Covid pandemic completed 25 years of service in this centre. Now, the elderly woman has stopped coming here, and this year Parulben was selected for Rotary’s Award for Excellence in Service to Humanity. Her place has now been taken over by another Rotary Ann Jyotiben Vakil.

As they worked with the children, the Rotary Anns could spot the brighter ones among them, and once they cleared higher secondary school, they would recommend that the club continue supporting them through diplomas or degrees, including professional courses. “I am happy to tell you that at least 100 of our students have gone in for higher education and are gainfully employed in companies like Reliance, Indian Rayon, and so on. One of our students who is employed in Bengaluru, draws a monthly salary above ₹1 lakh, and has been sent to Spain for further training in his subject,” says Kothari proudly.

An interesting sidelight of this project which has transformed so many young lives is that while tutoring and mentoring the children, years ago, Parulben noticed that the two grandchildren of the watchman who looked after the Rotary centre — Sanjay and Nehal — were whiling away their time playing on the streets and not doing much.



The old man had passed away and his duties were taken over by the children’s parents. Parulben counselled and convinced them that the two siblings must join the other children and receive some education as she found them to be very bright. Both the boy and girl’s education was sponsored by the Rotarians and “the dedicated team at the centre, including Rotary Anns, noticed the spark in both the children and supported them entirely. Through primary and secondary school, Sanjay and Nehal blossomed. Tutors, mentors, and volunteers from our Rotary club stood by them at every step — academically, emotionally and financially. Despite numerous challenges, both siblings completed their Class 12 with excellent results,” recalls Kothari.

The parents thought this was more than enough, but since the kids had scored good marks the Rotarians counselled the parents — Batukbhai and Jyotiben — to allow them to study further. While they were willing to allow Sanjay to pursue his interest in engineering, Nehal, being a girl, did



Sanjay works in a PSU bank.

Sanjay and Nehal with their parents Batukbhai and Jyotiben.



not need further education, they said. But the Rotarians refused to take 'no' for an answer; as the family belonged to a scheduled caste, they were even more determined that both of them get a good education.

Putting in his best efforts, Sanjay first did a diploma and then cleared BE in production engineering with the Rotarians sponsoring his fees. Nehal completed her course in BCom and did a PGDCA (diploma in computer applications). While the brother, after a lot of efforts, managed to clear the competitive banking exam and has now been posted as an assistant manager in the Union Bank of India, Nehal has secured a job with the Gujarat State Electricity Board. Their respective salaries: an impressive ₹65,000 and ₹40,000.

There were several challenges along the way. Talking to *Rotary News*, Sanjay said, "I was determined

to get a job in the officer's category in a good bank. I worked very hard and struggled for two years, taking the exam but every time falling short by a few marks." But the young man was determined that it was either an officer's position in a good bank or nothing for him. Finally a few months ago, he succeeded and has now got a posting as an assistant manager in the Union Bank of India. "Right now, I am undergoing training and can dream of a good future ahead which includes a flat and a life partner."

So would he want his wife to be also educated and a working woman, I ask him. "Of course, in today's day and age it is very important to be well educated, and it is good for women to work so that together the man and the woman can provide a good future to the family," he responds.

Nehal's situation was even more challenging. Even though she cleared both BCom and PGDCA and got the job at the electricity board, "her first posting was in Dwarka, which is very far from here... a seven-hour journey, and her parents were very reluctant to send her that far. But again, we counselled them saying she won't get an opportunity like this again and to please accept the posting. I promised them that I will use all my influence and connections to get her shifted to Bhavnagar soon," says Kothari.

So Nehal took up the post and her grandmother travelled to Dwarka to stay with her for more than a year, the time it took the Rotarians to work all their contacts and get the young woman transferred first to a place 30km from Bhavnagar, and more recently, Bhavnagar itself.

A smiling Nehal tells me, "Five years ago, I would have never imagined that I would get this kind of education and a secure job with the Gujarat government. Given my



Nehal is employed in Gujarat State Electricity Board.

background I had never dreamt that I would reach a stage when I'd move among so many educated people; I wouldn't have come this far but for Rotary's help."

Sanjay is equally grateful and thanks members of RC Bhavnagar for standing with the siblings through so many ups and downs. As for the future, he says: "I will work very hard and try for a high position in the banking industry. This journey has taught me that anything is possible."

For the parents, Jyotiben and Batukbhai, it's a dream come true to have both their children in government service — son in a nationalised bank and the daughter in the State Electricity Board.

Adds Kothari, "Today, Sanjay and Nehal are proud, independent and contributing citizens — a true testament to how the undaunted efforts of RC Bhavnagar members transformed two lives, polishing rough pebbles and turning them into diamonds. And in doing so, lit the way for many others to follow. We are very proud of this project and have received so many awards from District 3060. Surely very few projects done by Rotary clubs have run for more than 35 years!" ■

Driven by green dreams

Jaishree

It's unusual to see a team sustain an initiative for seven years with unwavering commitment and purpose. But the Rotary Club of Chennai Meraki, RID 3233, an all-women's club, has done just that: taking its environmental message across the country through an annual car expedition, now in its seventh year.

Since its charter, the club has been championing environmental awareness, and this year, members Sivabala Rajendran, Kothangi Suchitra, and club president Saravana Selvi embarked on a remarkable 6,500km journey over 17 days. Their route

spanned 15 states, 11 RI districts and included interactions with over 500 Rotarians and 1,500 students, even extending beyond India to Kathmandu, Nepal (RID 3292).

"This year's focus was on afforestation and inspiring Rotary clubs to develop Miyawaki forests in their region," says Sivabala, the club's charter president and chair of the expedition. While she and Suchitra are permanent members of the core team, they include the current year's president and secretary annually to share the experience and carry the mission forward. "We keep the team small — just four of us — for



The expedition team with Nepali Rotarians in Kathmandu.





Left: The car rally team with PRIP Shekhar Mehta in Kolkata.



Above: Club president Selvi, Suchitra and Sivabala hugging a tree in Dhanbad during the expedition.



Left: From Left: Industrialist Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti, RC Chennai Meraki president Saravana Selvi, project chair Sivabala Rajendran, Kothangi Suchitra (sitting), RID 3233 DG Mahaveer Bothra and DGN Ganapathy Suresh in Chennai.

Below: The expedition team with PRID Kamal Sanghvi and Sonal in Dhanbad.



better coordination, especially since we cover long distances with a tight schedule,” she adds.

The team, travelling in an Innova, was flagged off in Chennai by DG Mahaveer Bothra and textile industrialist Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti. Among the many memorable moments, Sivabala highlights their meetings with PRIP Shekhar Mehta in Kolkata and PRID Kamal Sanghvi in Dhanbad.

Before the journey began, Sivabala reached out to Mehta. “He

promptly responded within a few hours expressing his interest to meet us. He welcomed us into his office, spent over 90 minutes understanding our mission and past expeditions, and was deeply moved by our commitment,” says club president Selvi.

Their first trip was from Chennai to Dhanushkodi (south Tamil Nadu), and in the subsequent years they did Chennai to Kolkata to participate in the Rotary India’s centenary celebrations; Madikeri (Karnataka) to Poompuhar (TN) along the River Cauvery to promote preservation of water bodies; Kanyakumari to Kashmir; Chennai to Visakhapatnam to participate in the Rotary Institute; and a trip last year on the Western Ghats from Kanyakumari to Gujarat to promote preservation of the ecosystem of the hills.

The club, in its charter year (2018), created Sri Vanam, a huge nursery with over 32,000 saplings, on a barren-land-turned-dumpyard at the Tidel Park campus, in partnership with the Chennai Corporation and Communi-Tree, a local NGO. “We want to protect the environment, prevent soil erosion and curb pollution by planting trees. And today we are proud to say that the wasteland has been converted into a lush, green, urban forest bustling with biodiversity attracting birds and butterflies,” smiles Sivabala.

PRIP Mehta was thrilled to hear about their endeavour and “he, along with his wife Rashi, pledged support for 41 saplings to commemorate their 41st wedding anniversary which happened to be on the day we met him!” These saplings will be planted in the Rotary International Miyawaki Forest the club is developing on a four-acre plot at the University of Madras. The forest, to be launched on June 21, will feature native, medicinal, and fruit-bearing trees. Mehta also promised to amplify their message and help the club achieve its ambitious goal

of planting 10 million trees in 1,000 days. “Let’s work together to make this world green,” he told the team.

His club, RC Calcutta Mahanagar hosted the team and had arranged for a programme in a school where they spoke to students about afforestation, climate change and environmental care.

In Dhanbad, the team was warmly received at the home of PRID Kamal Sanghvi and Sonal. “He has always been a strong supporter of our expeditions. In fact, he and TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya (then RI Directors) were present during our maiden flag-off by then RI President Barry Rassin in 2018,” Sivabala recalls. He also endorsed the team’s new slogan: “Each one, plant one”, calling it bold and visionary.

Throughout their journey, the team was welcomed by Rotary clubs in cities and small towns alike. Their Go Green-themed Innova, covered in environmental messages, became a conversation starter at every stop. Clubs arranged for school and college interactions, where the Meraki team planted saplings, distributed seed packets and delivered passionate

What made this journey even more meaningful was meeting warm-hearted Rotarians who share our commitment to the environment.

Kothangi Suchitra



In Guntur, with Rotarians and Interactors.

appeals on climate responsibility. “We urged everyone we met — students, Rotarians, Rotaractors, the public — to do their bit. Saving the planet requires collective action,” says Selvi.

At Kathmandu, the team received a grand welcome from DG Rajendra Man Sherchan, DGN Vishnu Karkee and several past governors. Krishna Sharma, president-elect of RC Kathmandu Heritage, collaborated with various clubs for a series of events across Nepal.

The team extends heartfelt thanks to DG Bothra, PDGs R Srinivasan and E K Sagadhevan (RID 3203), and Rtn Ramesh for their mentorship, and to Nalli Kuppuswami and Venugopal, chairman of Naidu Hall, a leading multi-brand garment retailer, for their financial support.

Looking ahead, Sivabala says that she and Suchitra are gearing up to take their expedition to the next level, by promoting environmental

consciousness across international borders. “We Rotarians know no borders. So, our next journey may take us to Sri Lanka and Thailand, and we even dream of driving all the way to Russia and London.”

Suchitra, the sole driver for all seven expeditions till now, speaks with quiet pride about her passion for driving. “What made this journey even more meaningful was meeting warm-hearted Rotarians who share our commitment to the environment,” she says. Driving nonstop for 17 days wasn’t without its challenges, especially with rough roads, but “all the pain vanished the moment we were welcomed by Rotarians and their families. God has been kind to us; we didn’t ever have a flat tyre,” she exclaims.

She recalls the Kashmir expedition, where they narrowly missed a landslide in Srinagar by just a few minutes. “It was nothing short of divine intervention. With each mile, the mission only grows stronger. And the journey is far from over,” she smiles. ■



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Project *Spark* was conceived in March 2024 when on a hot summer afternoon, I met a woman selling *koozh* (rice gruel) on a pavement. She used steel tumblers and a jug and I loved the drink. It's the most local gut-friendly food one can have in the scorching summers of Chennai," recalls Nisreen Madraswala, president of RC Chennai Bharathi, RID 3234.

This sparked an idea in her mind; she had always wanted to do something to help small and tiny entrepreneurs by providing them a space to market their produce. As this gelled nicely with her own interest in functional medicine and gut health, she decided to take it forward through her club's platform. Specially because it fell under Rotary's focus area of community economic development and would also be a great public image initiative.

The club's team invited people who owned small businesses to register, "and we met them every month and curated our Rotary speaker meets around themes such as business acumen, strategies and how to grow small businesses."

These efforts culminated in a grand finale in June, where 13 participants pitched their ideas to a jury comprising eminent people with expertise in wellness and startups. People were invited to take stalls and display their products or services under the same umbrella of wellness, traditional and sustainable products. Three winners were recognised with prizes and they will now connect with one of the jury members to grow their business further.

A Chennai women's club encourages small entrepreneurs

Rasheeda Bhagat



At the carnival-like event, there was laughter, music, learning and networking throughout the day. The participants were invited for a "come pitch" initiative, a DIY workshop was held to upcycle



glass bottles, a lively music concert was held in the hall by the On the Streets Foundation. (The OTS Foundation band performs across the streets, parks, beaches, metros and many other public places in Chennai with a vision to make the metro the Street Music Capital of the world!)

Considering the response it got, the event team was happy that it proved to be more than just



Every participant embodied a story of courage, creativity, and conscious living in that dynamic space for learning.



a marketplace — “it was a vibrant confluence of sustainability, inclusivity, and heartfelt entrepreneurial journeys.” Curated as a tribute to World Environment Day and

Pride Month, *Spark* saw participation from 30 entrepreneurs, offering products such as medicinal chutneys, guilt-free desserts and wellness products. “What truly

set the event apart was the compelling narrative behind every stall — from women-led enterprises to LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and eco-warriors, every participant embodied a story of courage, creativity, and conscious living. It created a dynamic space for learning, networking, pitching and celebration,” said Nisreen.

“Our intent was simple yet powerful, to create a space where local talent gets the spotlight it deserves, and their brands get consumer support. Seeing the energy,

From L: Abha Appasamy, Arul (participants), SN Balasubramaniam, (district resource network team), club president Nisreen Madraswala, DG NS Saravanan, his wife Bharati, and DGND Vijaya Bharathi.



passion, and purpose in that room, we hope *Spark* is only the beginning of a larger movement.”

The products made by the participants ranged from Artisans Buzz’s upcycled bags made by

women using tailoring waste, to Viridian Plate’s plant-based culinary innovations, to Namma Suvai’s farm-fresh groceries.

The funds raised — over ₹1 lakh — will go towards supporting

The funds raised — over ₹1 lakh — will go towards supporting a transwoman and the woman selling *koozh*.



Rotarians and participants.

a transwoman who runs a restaurant and “that lady selling *koozh* who inspired me to organise this event.”

Bharati, the wife of DG Saravanan took up a stall named the Thrift Store where all the pre-used items, from other women Rotary members of her group, were donated. This sale raised around ₹15,400 which will go to fund a food cart, another Rotary project. ■

HPV vaccination drive in Kanpur

Team Rotary News

More than 500 girls have benefitted in a cervical cancer vaccination drive conducted in two phases by RC Kanpur North, RID 3110, in a joint initiative with RCs Kanpur and Kanpur Virat.

While the first dose of HPV vaccination was administered in November last year, the follow-up second doses were completed in April and May this year. “Over 500 young girls in the age group of 9–14 years walked into these camps with

uncertainty but walked out protected, their future a little safer, their families a little stronger,” said Nishant Vadera, president, RC Kanpur North.

The vaccination sites were turned into spaces of awareness creation as medical teams screened girls, “trained volunteers and doctors spoke to parents, easing their worries and educating them about cervical cancer



A girl being vaccinated in the presence of her parents.

and the need to take preventive steps,” he said. Parents listened, asked questions, and left with more than just pamphlets. “They left with peace of mind. For many mothers, it was the first time anyone had spoken to them about cervical cancer, and the realisation that their daughters were being protected free of cost brought tears of relief.”

Encouraged by positive feedback, the lead club is planning to expand the HPV vaccination campaign into rural areas and introduce screening camps for women, ensuring that no woman, young or old, is left behind in the fight against cervical cancer. While the local schools identified the beneficiaries, the project was funded through CSR contributions and by donors. ■



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25	42,056
Total No. of Students Explored	
2,11,143	



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Making life throb again

Team Rotary News

At a limb fitment camp in Gadchiroli, 785km from Nashik, Maharashtra, organised by RID 3030, Ramesh, a 45-year-old man took his first step in years, thanks to his new artificial limb. “Everyone around me applauded. This wasn’t just about walking again, it was about becoming independent again, getting back dignity, and the everyday life most of us take for granted,” he says.

This was one of life-changing moments made possible by the Jaipur Foot Camp, organised by RID 3030 under the leadership of DG Rajinder Singh Khurana. Held over 20 days in Gadchiroli,

Gondia and Amravati, rural areas near Pune, these camps provided prosthetic limbs to over 300 people, many of them from tribal and underprivileged communities.

The Gadchiroli camp was spearheaded by RC Nagpur North in collaboration with RC Gadchiroli. In Gondia, the initiative was led by RC Nagpur Down Town, while RC Amravati implemented the Amravati camp.

At the heart of the project’s smooth execution were Jyotika Kapoor (District chair-Jaipur Foot), Rajeev Warbhe (District chair-Tribal Welfare) and Virendra Patrikar (project chair). The initiative was supported by



the Mahavir Seva Sadan, which provided technical and medical aid, while the local police in Gadchiroli and Gondia ensured proper logistics. Shri Jalaram Satsang Mandal, Amravati, hosted and supported the Amravati camp with volunteers and infrastructure.

From the solemn inauguration led by DG Khurana, flanked by key dignitaries including the SP of Gadchiroli, to a heartwarming valedictory ceremony in Amravati, every detail of the project was handled with due diligence. The cost of the limb fitment camps was around ₹12–13 lakh. DG Khurana called “this project is Rotary’s *Service Above Self* in its purest form.” ■



Above: A beneficiary at the limb fitment camp.

Left: RID 3030 DG Rajinder Singh Khurana (right), along with (from L) District Tribal Welfare Committee chair Rajeev Warbhe, Raju Mangani, Kamlesh Chotwani, RC Nagpur North president-elect Vinay Dara, president Manisha Manghani, AG Jyotika Kapoor, superintendent of police (Gadchiroli) Neelotpal and Pankaj Upadhye, at a prosthetic limb fitment camp in Gadchiroli.

Sending hi-res pictures in HD mode

It is best to share your project pictures from your phone picture gallery directly to our email ID rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com. But if you prefer to send only on **Whatsapp**, you can still send them in the HD mode:

- Go to the picture on your photo gallery
- Tap on the picture, select the recipient on Whatsapp
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- Tap on 'HD' and then send.

This way we will get your pictures in original file size and better quality.

A Rotary project providing funeral management service

Rasheeda Bhagat

In a unique initiative, the Rotary Club of Kozhencherry, one of the oldest service clubs in RI District 3211, has expanded its 37-year-old ambulance service to a full-scale funeral management project titled *Pranama*, that was launched in Jan 2025.

Former club president and chairman of this project Abraham Varughese said the club decided to launch this project six months ago as “we were getting many queries and requests for providing such a service, particularly from those children who are living overseas with their parents living in Kerala.”

He explained that they got such an unusual request as they have been running an ambulance service in the town for 37 years, owning two modern AC ambulances, one hearse ambulance and three mobile and air-conditioned

mortuary units, all supported by trained staff.

These ambulances are operated to transport patients for critical care to various hospitals and medical colleges, “and this service is gratefully acknowledged by the people whose lives we have saved. Our tariff is among the lowest in the industry and we often offer heavy discounts and free service to the needy and underprivileged people.”

Thanks to this history of the club’s community service, the Rotarians were getting many requests to provide total management of a funeral, right from the time of death, till the body is laid to rest. Such a service was particularly needed by nuclear families where the elderly parents lived in Kerala, with their children working overseas.

The club decided to launch such a service and is working with 14 different service providers ranging from

small choirs, to florists to caterers. It has a good social media presence and is well-known in this region. The club has a centrally-located office at the Poyanil Plaza building Kozhencherry, which is manned by four staff members. From January till now, RC Kozhencherry has organised 37 funerals.

On what is involved in such a service, Varughese gives the example of the most recent funeral his team managed for Zakariah Mathew, a retired bank manager who passed away recently. He was working in Kuwait, but moved to Kerala a few years ago. “His only son works in Ireland and he called us to organise a complete funeral service for his father, and we organised it.”

The funeral services range from simple to elaborate and can cost from ₹1 to ₹3 lakh; most of the requests they receive are from Christians, though they have arranged funeral service for some Hindus too. They have not got any request yet from Muslims, and “anyway there are not many Muslims living in this area,” he says.



Kerala health minister Veena George flags off a hearse ambulance of RC Kozhencherry. Also seen are state minister Kadannapally Ramachandran (to her left), *Project Pranama* chairman Abraham Varughese and club president Thomas Varghese.



The body is preserved in the air-conditioned, mobile mortuary unit.



Christian funerals tend to be more elaborate; and once a request comes in, coordination begins with the project's service partners, "and everything is managed professionally to ensure a dignified send-off and a befitting and memorable funeral experience. If somebody dies outside India, our ambulance transports the body from the airport to the home, and after prayers it is transported to the hospital mortuary. Once the date is fixed, we put up a shamiana or *pandal* at home, with a carpet covering the floor. The air-conditioned mobile mortuary is organised at home and the

body is kept in it for people to pay their last respects."

The club works with three different types of choirs, with 3, 4 and 6 members, and depending on the budget, one of these is organised at the home, along with a piano and other musical instruments. Next, the project committee contacts the caterers, and depending on the time of the day, breakfast, lunch or snacks are organised in a house nearby — that of a neighbour's or a friend's home. The body is then transferred to the church where the service takes place. Flower arrangements are organised both at the home and the church. The body is then transferred to a coffin.

After the burial, snacks are once again organised. "In all, we provide 14 services, and these include security arrangements with the personnel carrying walkie talkies to regulate traffic movement. The total cost of the most recent service was ₹2.34 lakh. We take only five per cent as service charge to pay our staff," says Varughese, who has been chairman of the ambulance committee for six years.

For Hindus, the body is picked up from the mortuary and is taken home in the ambulance, "and if they request, we also provide the air-conditioned mobile mortuary which comes fitted with a pre-recorded *Bhagwad Gita*." The service ends with the body's transportation to the cremation ground. Unlike among Christians, Hindu funerals are not accompanied by snacks or meals. "We are happy that our reliable management of the funeral service, which comes from our expertise in running an ambulance service for 37 years, comes as a great comfort and support for the bereaved family at a very difficult time," he adds. ■

All the 100 Rotary clubs of RID 3132 participated in a year-long mega diabetes detection campaign in which a series of medical camps and testing drives were held; around 150 Rotarians were in the frontline checking the blood sugar levels of individuals with glucometer.

While paramedical staff helped them on the sidelines, “our Rotarians were trained adequately by pathologists from nearby hospitals,” says IPDG Suresh Saboo. Rotary teams conducted random tests at public platforms such as Railways, bus stands, airports, movie halls; social and family events like marriages, rituals and birthday bash;

community melas; and festivals like Ganesh Utsav, Navratri, Christmas; fun fairs, exhibitions and at shopping malls.

Recalling the genesis of the campaign, Saboo said, “during the PEL/SEL seminars at Latur in April last year, the incoming club leaders were made aware about the prevalence of the disease, its severity, and the importance of

diabetes detection. They were trained on the use of glucometer and told to get ready for the massive diabetes detection campaign from July 1.” The mega diabetes camps had a tagline ‘Ab ki baar, ek lakh paar,’ with a target of achieving one lakh blood sugar level testing in a year.

But the clubs had surpassed the initial target

in Dec 2024, “and till the last week of May, we had conducted 1.28 lakh testing on individuals. We are confident of crossing 1.5 lakh diabetes testing by June 30,” explains Saboo. After the first testing camp was held at the Ruby Hospital, Jalna, “we conducted the next one during my installation on July 14 in the presence of TRF trustee Bharat Pandya. So far

A mega diabetes test drive screens over 1.5L people

V Muthukumaran

From Left: Dr Deepak Mantri, Deepak Bagdiya, DG Suresh Saboo, Nitin Khandelwal and Nirmala Saboo at a diabetes testing camp at the Shani Mandir, Jalna.



(as on May 23), we have conducted over 500 diabetes camps and drives.”

Individuals were given a standard medical report with his or her name, age and the blood sugar level which they can use for future clinical reference. “Around 1,000 Rotarians coordinated for logistics and smooth conduct of the camps which impressed Jalna MLA Arjun Khotkar,” says Dr Rajesh Sethiya, district chair, Diabetes Prevention, and chairman of Ruby Hospital. The legislator wanted to conduct similar camps in every village of Jalna district, and “he even brought around 80 persons for testing at our camp.”

Many people who tested positive for blood sugar level shared their “anxiety, incredulity, fear



A diabetes screening camp during the Ganesh Utsav event in Jalna. **Below:** RC Jalna Rainbow member Sarla Sethiya tests the blood sugar level of a passenger on a flight.



Around 1,000

Rotarians

coordinated for
logistics and smooth
conduct of diabetes
detection camps
which impressed
Jalna MLA Arjun
Khotkar.

and frustration with our Rotarians,” says Dr Sethiya. Newly-recruited police constable, Ashok Patil (30) at the Police Headquarters, Jalna, was aghast that he was a diabetic as “he had a strong physique with an athletic body. We pacified and guided him to the next course of treatment for the disorder.” A TTE DK Singh assigned to the Nandigram Express train got to know that he was pre-diabetic, and “thanked

Rotarians for such a mega testing drive which he has not seen in his life till then.” And 45-year-old M Dheeraj, a Rotarian, did not know he was a diabetic “until he was tested positive at a screening drive during the Garba event (Navratri) at a local temple.”

There are around 77 million diabetics (type 2) and 25 million pre-diabetics in India. “We wanted to detect the pre-diabetics so that they can take preventive steps to ward

off this chronic illness,” says Saboo. Dr Sethiya is confident that “through awareness creation, we can avoid future health complications for a productive life.” His next project is to hold 100 thyroid detection camps in and around Jalna reaching out to at least 10,000 people.

The diabetes detection campaign of RID 3132 was funded by Jamnabai Shivratan Bagadiya Trust, Jalna, led by Pannalal Bagadiya. ■

Rotary magic at a Pune rural school

V Muthukumaran

Girl students play kho-kho on a new playground fenced off with a barbed wire at the Krantiveer Vasudev Balwant Phadke Vidyalaya, Ravadi, in Bhor taluk near Pune.



It was during a casual visit to a relative's house at Ravadi village, near Pune, by a Rotarian that led to a much-needed makeover for the Krantiveer Vasudev Balwant Phadke Vidyalaya, a Marathi medium school in Bhore taluk. With no compound wall, broken toilet fittings and a rough, unusable playground, the school presented a decrepit look. As the morale of students and teachers was at its nadir, school principal Ravindra Pawar requested Alka Rode, a member of RC Pune Sports City, RID 3131, for urgent help to build a compound fence for the school to ward off anti-social elements freely entering the premises, and creating a nuisance.

Alka connected with her club president Sadhana Joshi and narrated the plight of this government-aided school with 260 students from Class 5–12, who had to study under such deplorable conditions. Following this, a five-member need-assessment team led by Sadhana, including the club's primary contact Sandesh Savant and project director Brij Sethi, made a recce of the school and interacted with the principal and the teachers. The Pune club took up renovation with urgency in tie-up with Bengaluru-based Momentive Performance Materials which gave a CSR grant of ₹16.8 lakh out of the project cost of ₹19 lakh. The balance amount came from RC Bhore (₹50,000) and a district grant (₹1.8 lakh).

While six e-learning systems preloaded with course software were installed for Class 5–10, the software was upgraded for the existing IT systems for Class 11–12. "We put up five desktops for students to prepare for scholarship exams, and a 65-inch interactive panel at the library for revision classes and special events," says Sadhana. The IT vendors trained the teachers on how to hold digital classes "which will provide a whole new experience for students."

Barbed-wire fence

Instead of a concrete wall, a barbed-wire mesh with iron rods was erected to fence the school premises, and provide security for the students and teachers. Now, saplings will be planted all along the wire fence to provide a green cover and second layer of security, while enhancing the aesthetic look of the school.

Hard rocks and sharp stones were dug out from the ground and a smooth playground (₹2.20 lakh) was prepared for the students. Sports equipment worth ₹3 lakh for 10 indoor and outdoor games including track and field events was provided, a 3KW solar panels for back-up power was installed and two toilet blocks (for girls and boys) were given a makeover. The water line was also replaced.

Said the grateful principal Pawar: “The e-learning systems, new playground and sports equipment are all put to good use by our students. Thanks a lot for completing all the work in time, and for the books you have donated to the library.” PT master Gorakhnath Adhikari is confident that the students will win a lot of medals at the district-level sports



A special class being held with the interactive panel (smart TV) at the school library.

tournament, given the new facilities and equipment.

Smokeless stoves

In a joint endeavour with Shashwat Trust, a local NGO, the club distributed smokeless stoves to 1,775 tribal women living around the backwaters of Dimbhe Dam at 45 villages of Ambegaon taluk, 75km north of Pune. The global grant project was done in partnership with RC Fort Collins-Breakfast, RID 5440, and RC Culver City, RID 5280, US, at a cost of \$52,835.

All the beneficiaries were trained to use and maintain the eco-friendly stoves “which are fuel efficient, portable and smokeless as compared to traditional earthen *chullahs*.” Expressing her gratitude to Rotary, Sapna Baban Kale (29) from Maybawadi village, says, “the smokeless stove is a life-saver for my family of five, and cooking is now made relatively effortless, thanks to Rotary.” Asane village sarpanch (panchayat chief) Khema Gabhale points out, “these stoves have come 40 years too late as an entire generation of women had to suffer a life of poor health and smoke-filled huts and cottages.”

Every six month the NGO members will visit the beneficiary homes to review the maintenance and usage of the stoves for the next two years, says Sadhana. “Once we get good results, we will once again tie-up with our foreign partners to expand the distribution of smokeless stoves.” Primary contact Savant is in touch with his counterpart Krishna Murthy from RC Fort Collins-Breakfast to take the smokeless stove project forward. The US club has done 10 global grant projects with RC Pune Sports City since 2018. Earthfit Solutions in Aurangabad have installed the stoves. ■



Earthfit Solutions official gives a demonstration of the smokeless stove to women at Malin village in Ambegaon taluk near Pune.

See you in Taiwan

It's Taipei time! Work is well underway to bring you a world-class event with the prestigious speakers and special surprises that make attending the Rotary International Convention a must-do for every member — at least once. You might find you keep returning like so many convention regulars.

Rotary leaders met Taiwan's President to secure personal support for the event. Your Rotary friends are planning exceptional experiences on the mountainous island and in the capital city known for vibrant night markets and ancient temples among skyscrapers.

Members describe the positive convention vibe: You see all smiling faces and stop to greet someone, reading each other's name badge to find out home countries. "And that's where the conversation starts," says Ben Heinlein, of the Rotary Club of Cranberry Township Sunrise, Pennsylvania. Those connections kindle untold numbers of project partnerships and lifelong friendships.

RI leaders have a convention challenge for you to support Rotary's growth: Simply attend! You'll help bring more attention to Rotary throughout Asia, which can draw new members. For tourism, Taiwan has more diverse options on one island than many larger destinations, with its



heritage on display in architecture and the National Palace Museum's artifacts. Enjoy nearby mountain trails and a food culture where even the simplest meal is an occasion to enjoy time with friends, over beef noodle soup, craft cocktails, or an oyster omelette.

At the RI leaders' visit, President Lai Ching-te discussed Taiwan's support of a peaceful world, a bond shared with Rotary. The convention exemplifies Rotary's vision for peace, and the RI global family gathering in Taipei June 13–17 is your chance to feel the full force of Rotary's strength.

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

RIPE Mario resigns

Mário César Martins de Camargo, a member of the Rotary Club of Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil, has notified Rotary International that he will resign from the role of president-elect and will not serve as president.

In a letter to RI President Stephanie Urchick on June 8, he said that personal reasons and business obligations prompted his decision. In a later message, de Camargo indicated that he will continue to be an active Rotary member and serve his community.

A Rotary member since 1980, de Camargo was selected to be the 2025–26 RI President by

the Nominating Committee for President in August 2023.

"We greatly appreciate Mário's 45 years of leadership and service to our organisation and the tremendous pride his nomination created among Brazilian Rotary members," Urchick said in a letter to Rotary members. "I am certain that Mário will leverage his experience and will continue to contribute to the growth of Rotary in Brazil and around the world. I want to thank Mário and Denise for their hard work and dedication to Rotary over the past 20 months. We wish Mário well."

©Rotary

Rotary at a glance

Rotary clubs	:	36,531
Rotaract clubs	:	9,512
Interact clubs	:	17,026
RCCs	:	14,064
Rotary members	:	1,163,048
Rotaract members	:	137,275
Interact members	:	391,736

As on June 23, 2025

Rotarians of RI District 3141 are reaching out to the homeless in the slums of

Mumbai with warm, nutritious meals through *Project Annapurna*. “Named after Goddess Annapoorani, the Hindu deity of food and nourishment who is believed to never let her devotees go hungry, the project aims to address the critical need for nutritious food among the city’s underserved communities,” says Hemang Jangla, the Avenue chair who conceived this initiative.

“Since the start of this Rotary year (2024–25), we have been distributing 100 to 200 freshly cooked meals every day in food-grade containers across slum pockets of Mumbai,” says Kinjal Gosalia, past president of RC Mumbai Neo. The project covers areas from Borivali to Dadar and

Andheri to Mulund, systematically divided into four zones — east, west, north and south — each managed by a dedicated Annapurna team. These teams identify the most vulnerable households and ensure that meals reach those who need them the most.

“We didn’t want to distribute groceries, because many of these families are homeless — they

don’t have a place to cook,” she explains. That’s why the focus is on ready-to-eat, nutritious meals.

Thanks to Jangla’s partnership with Kapila Foods, a cloud kitchen in Andheri, the team sources meals at subsidised rates. A standard meal, consisting of four rotis, sabzi, some rice and dal, is priced at ₹120. Jangla sponsors 50 per cent of the cost, while other



Providing meals to Mumbai’s hungry

Jaishree



From L: Avenue chair Hemang Jangla and DG Chetan Desai giving a grocery kit to a woman.



Hemang Jangla giving a lunch pack to a boy in a slum locality in Mumbai.

With a project outlay of ₹92 lakh, over 70,000 people, including children, the elderly, pregnant women and young students, have benefitted from this project.

Rotarians and donors cover the rest. A more economical option at ₹60 — offering rice, dal and khichdi — is also available and widely preferred by donors, as it brings the cost down to ₹30 per meal after Jangla's contribution.

Twelve Rotary clubs across Mumbai have joined the mission, sponsoring meal packets to slum communities in their respective localities. Kinjal, who lives in Virar, also extends support to nearby ashrams housing orphans and destitute women.

But the project doesn't stop at cooked meals. For more stable communities, the Annapurna team

has also supplied 6,000 monthly grocery packs including atta, rice, dal, pulses and cooking oil to over 100 institutions, such as old age homes and orphanages in eastern Mumbai. These kits were distributed for six months.

Food businesses such as Maggi, Oreo, Britannia, Haldirams and Nestlé have

also partnered with Rotary in this fight against hunger. "We visit zilla parishad schools and distribute biscuits, chocolates, noodles and other snacks sponsored by these corporates. The children are overjoyed. We've even given oats packets to school students," she says.

With a project outlay of ₹92 lakh, over 70,000 people, including children, the elderly, pregnant women and young students, have benefitted from this project. "At the end of the day, we're just happy we can fill a few hungry stomachs. Food is not a luxury; it's a basic human right. When people are well-fed, they can think clearly, study better, work harder and live with dignity," smiles Kinjal.

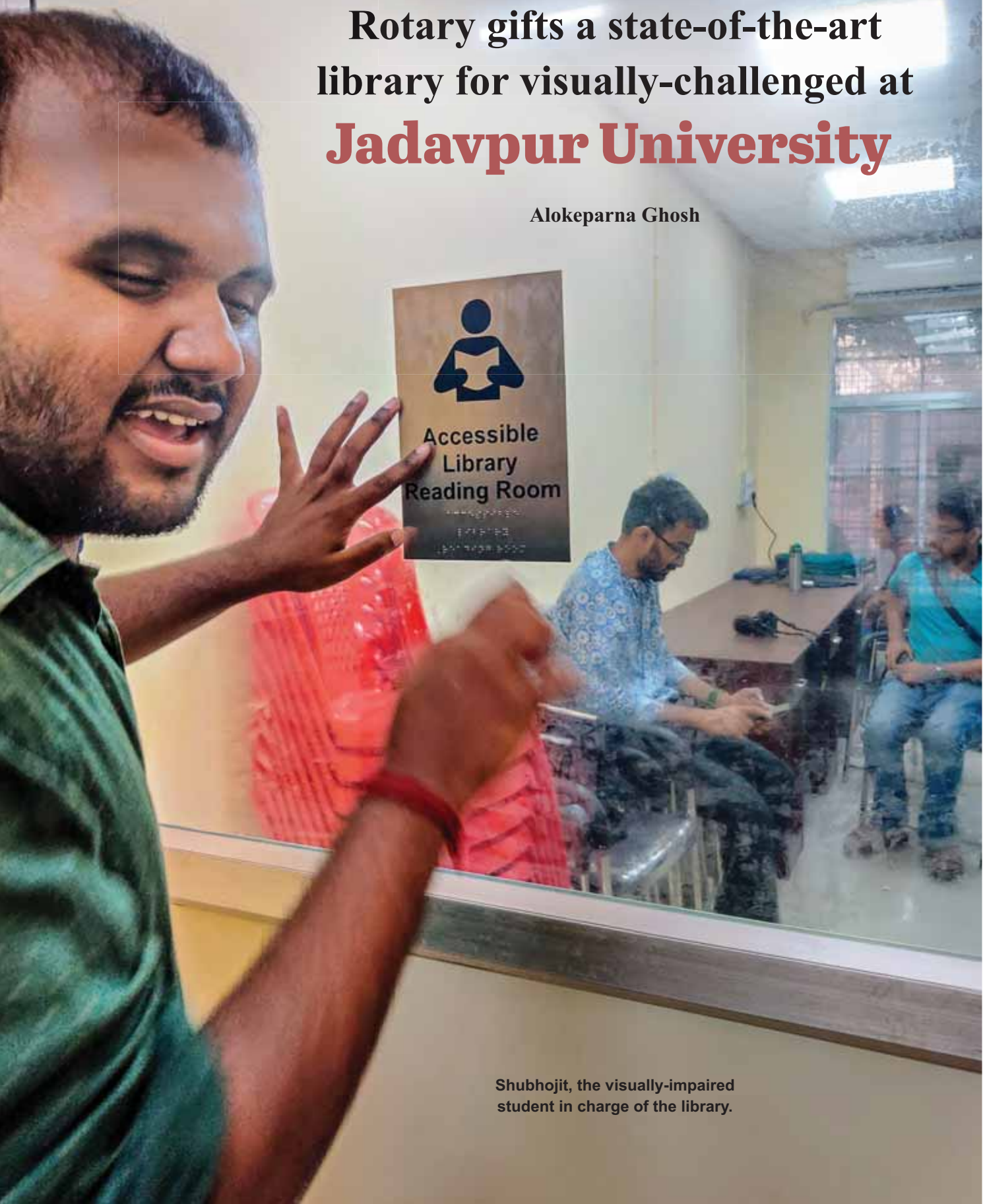
DG Chetan Desai has congratulated the team and pledged his support for the programme. "Our mission does not end here. The fight against hunger and poverty is ongoing, and it requires continuous effort and commitment," says Jangla. ■



Children in a school with snack packets distributed to them by Rotarians.

Rotary gifts a state-of-the-art library for visually-challenged at **Jadavpur University**

Alokeparna Ghosh



Shubhojit, the visually-impaired student in charge of the library.

When you push open the door of the accessible library's main room, the first face that will catch your attention is that of Shubhojit — the most energetic young man, always wearing a smile. Ask him anything, and he will promptly spring into action. Welcome to the world of Shubhojit, Shubhodip, Bablu, Akash, Asikul, and many more visually-impaired students of Jadavpur University (JU), Kolkata, who are pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate, and even doctoral studies. Each day presents its own set of challenges, but their spirit is never daunted by the weight of those struggles. The accessible library at this varsity is their home away from home — a place where their needs are understood and their voices heard, and where they are equal stakeholders alongside the faculty and administration in shaping the future they deserve.

The accessible library was born in 2018, nestled inside the Centre of Disability building of the varsity. Fuelled by the sheer determination of its students and supported by the faculty, the registrar, and the then vice-chancellor, it soon found a home in a room on the ground floor of the central library. But the path was far from easy. In the years following the Covid pandemic, government support dwindled, leaving the library with just one outdated Braille printer. The process of converting textbooks into Braille took up to eight months — far too long to meet the urgent academic demands of the students. Critical equipment — digital braille embossers, audio book creators, transliteration software, or even a simple text-to-speech converter — were all missing. The students were eager to learn, but the system couldn't always keep up.

Then came a turning point. JU pro vice-chancellor Prof Amitava Datta reached out to Dr Ranjit Chakravorti,



From Left: Project chair Vishnu Dhandhanian, DG Krishnendu Gupta, RI Director Anirudha Roychowdhury, Dr Ranjit Chakravorti, and Jadavpur University former vice-chancellor Bhaskar Gupta.

president of the Global Jadavpur University Alumni Foundation, USA, and a 1961 batch Chemical Engineering graduate from the college. Deeply moved by the cause, Dr Chakravorti brought on board his Rotary Club of Danville San Ramon in California. He also reached out to the Rotary Club of Belur in his hometown, Kolkata, and a global grant project began to take shape.

The partnership expanded quickly. RCs Richmond and Chico in California, and Calcutta South City Towers, Chowringhee, Yuvis and North-East in India joined in. So did the JU Alumni Association of Georgia, USA, and the Global Jadavpur University Alumni Foundation. Together, they envisioned a modern, inclusive space for visually-impaired students. JU alumnus Vishnu Dhandhanian from RC Belur took the lead, and thanks to his commitment, the project received TRF approval and ₹38 lakh funding within just two months.

The transformation began with JU allocating an adjacent room as a dedicated reading room. Once the

civil work was done, it was furnished with air conditioning, reading tables, and chairs — enough to welcome 20 students at a time. Then came the real change: state-of-the-art assistive technology was installed. The library now boasts Braille E-Motion devices with speech output in English and Hindi, Readit Zen Max scanners and magnifiers for low vision, DAISY-format audiobook players, Dolphin Publisher software, powerful Braille embossers, and portable as well as desktop video magnifiers. A2 size multifunction printers and transliteration software made the library more adaptive than ever.

The infrastructure also underwent a significant upgrade. A toilet block was transformed into a spacious, unisex accessible restroom with wheelchair access and safety features. Tactile-ramps with railings were added to the library and reading room entrances. Three soundproof recording rooms were built for high-quality audiobook creation. Braille signage now guides students to emergency exits, restrooms and access points — every detail



The team of Accessible Library Project at the Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

designed to ensure comfort, safety and autonomy.

But technology alone isn't enough. To ensure sustainability, training workshops were conducted for library staff and senior students. They now know how to operate complex devices, help peers navigate digital resources, and manage library services with minimal external assistance.

From the initial implementation meeting on Jan 21, 2025, it took just three months to bring the vision to

life. The upgraded library was inaugurated on May 2, 2025. The event was attended by RI Director Anirudha Roychowdhury, DG Krishnendu Gupta, former JU vice-chancellor Prof Bhaskar Gupta, JU faculty members, alumni and Rotarians. Dr Ranjit Chakravorti flew in from California to witness the transformation in person. As the hauntingly beautiful tune from Satyajit Ray's *Apur Shongshar*, played on the flute of Bablu, one of the students, filled the air, the ribbon was cut, and the upgraded library

was officially opened — a moment of quiet triumph, dignity, and shared hope.

What makes this project truly unique is its spirit of inclusion. Students were not just beneficiaries but co-creators. Their insight shaped decisions, their dreams gave direction.

This is the first facility-of-its-kind in Eastern India, and it's not limited to JU students. The doors are open to visually-impaired students from outside the university as well.

Of course, not all problems are solved. As of now, the library mainly serves students from the arts departments. What about technical education? What about engineering? The dream is bigger than what has been achieved. But dreams grow when nurtured, and this project is just the beginning. As RID Roychowdhury aptly said, "There's still more to do — more equipment, more facilities — we would like to do more." This is indeed a cause that awakens the urge to give, to act, to dream alongside those who cannot see but envision more clearly than most. Let us join hands to expand this vision further — to protect the universal right to education, and to ensure that no one is left behind.

The writer is project manager of the Accessible Library Global Grant Project



RI Director Roychowdhury and PDG Ravi Sehgal of RC Belur interacting with the students at the library.

RISE ABOVE ROTARY POLITICS

Let us uphold and protect
ROTARY'S
TRUE PRINCIPLES.



*Politics divides us,
service unites us.*

*What matters is your ability,
not political backing.*

*Don't be swayed by
external influence,
listen to your club members.*

*Stay away from political groups,
**work towards unity
among club members.***

When we are divided,
Rotary becomes weaker...

**When we stand united,
Rotary grows stronger...**

Rtn. AKS. Dr.K.Srinivasan
Rotary Club of Tiruchirappalli &
Erode Central, Zone - 5



One roof, many services

Jaishree

The Rotary Club of Kolhapur, RID 3170, operates the Rotary Samaj Seva Kendra, “probably the only institution in our city offering a wide range of services for the poor and the differently-abled under one roof,” says outgoing club secretary Sahil Gandhi.

Located on Collector Office Road in Kolhapur, the five-storey Kendra has been serving the community since 1969. Spread over 24,000sqft, it houses multiple facilities, including a physiotherapy centre, hydrotherapy centre, stroke rehabilitation unit, a preschool for

children with hearing and speech impairments, a speech and hearing centre, and a blood bank.

“The Kendra was originally built through contributions from our members and continues to function with our own funds,” says Gandhi. It was reconstructed in 2021 and has since been visited by senior RI leaders such as PRIPs Kalyan Banerjee and Shekhar Mehta, TRF Trustee Bharat Pandya, and RI Director Anirudha Roychowdhury.

The ground floor parking area doubles up as a judo training centre for children. Around 40 children attend classes every evening, and several have won accolades at the state and national levels. A ‘Wall of Kindness’ cupboard here stores clean, donated clothes and blankets, which are regularly distributed to slum and street dwellers. In 2023, an e-waste collection bin was installed to promote safe disposal practices. Over 100kg of electronic waste including old computers, switches, laptops, motherboards and mobile phones are collected monthly and sent for proper recycling.



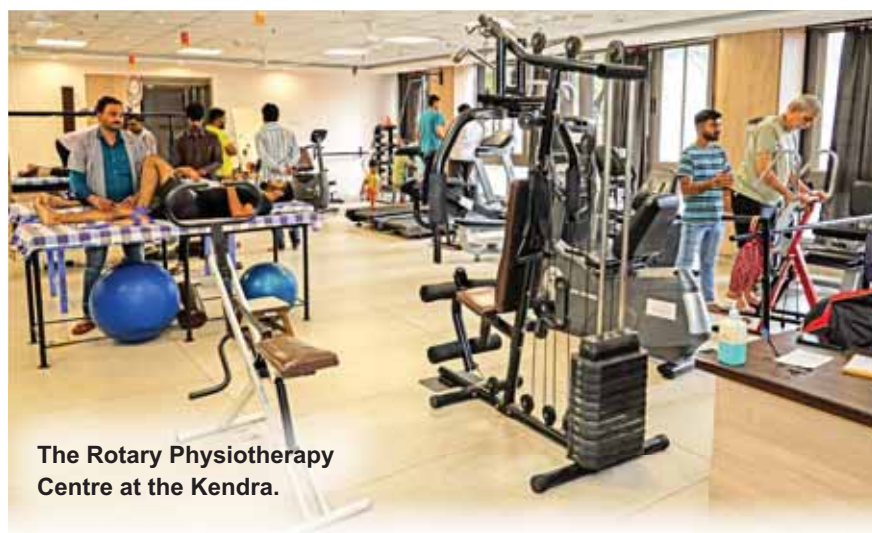
Above: Beneficiaries getting treatment in a temperature-controlled pool at the hydrotherapy centre.

Right: A person gets tested for hearing and speech faculties.





Students being trained in judo.



The Rotary Physiotherapy Centre at the Kendra.

On the first floor, the Rotary Physiotherapy Centre is equipped with modern therapeutic devices. Therapy sessions involving play-based activities and exercises are provided for children with polio, cerebral palsy and delayed milestones. A team of qualified physiotherapists and assistants ensures personalised care. On average, 200 new patients are assessed monthly, and around 2,500 patients undergo various treatments. The charges are highly affordable, and free treatment is offered to those who cannot pay. Assistive devices such as walkers, commode chairs, wheelchairs, air beds, Fowler beds and crutches are also provided at minimal rental costs.

Installed in 2021, the Rotary Hydrotherapy Centre offers therapy for orthopedic, neurological and sports injuries in a temperature-controlled pool, using underwater cycles and treadmills. Waterfall therapy is also provided for pain relief and relaxation. “We maintain the highest hygiene standards. Around 80 people, including children, benefit from this facility each month,” says Gandhi.

The Rajarshi Shahu Blood Bank, managed by the club since 1975 and located on the second floor, is

equipped with an apheresis unit for single donor platelet collection. “We collect 12,000 units of blood annually through camps. We have recently introduced the most advanced NAT testing technology and have started stem cell and granulocyte harvesting to support cancer patients,” he adds.

The Parkinson’s Rehabilitation Centre, established nine years ago in association with the Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorder Society, Mumbai, was the first-of-its-kind in the city. It offers physiotherapy, speech and cognitive therapy, Japanese therapy, counselling, yoga and dietary guidance. A monthly consultation camp is conducted by a neurologist.

In response to the mental health challenges post-Covid, the club set up the Perna Counselling Centre in 2021 to offer mental health support and guidance.

On the fourth floor, the Rotary Speech and Hearing Centre conducts advanced diagnostic tests for children with hearing impairments. Hearing aids and ear moulds are provided at nominal rates. Annual screening camps for adults help identify hearing disorders, and corrective treatments are offered at subsidised costs.

The fifth floor houses the Vertigo Centre, the only such facility in Kolhapur. “At least five people are evaluated each month using the recently installed Video Nystagmography (VNG) system,” says Gandhi with pride, noting that this 56-year-old centre has become “a much sought-after institution, known for its commitment and service.” ■

Apply yourself

As part of the family of Rotary, members are invited to lend their professional expertise on committees that support Rotary and TRF. Each year, those committees focus on putting Rotary's strategic priorities into action, challenging clubs to increase their impact, expand their reach and enhance participant engagement.

Would you like to contribute to Rotary's success?

RI and the Foundation are searching for qualified Rotarians and Rotaractors to serve on a committee in the 2026–27 Rotary year. These positions offer an opportunity for you to apply your leadership skills, share your vocational experience, and help ensure diverse perspectives within each committee.

Rotarians and Rotaractors with expertise in the areas detailed here are welcome to apply. The number of openings is limited. If you're not selected, you can apply next year. All committees correspond through email and on virtual platforms, typically with one mandatory in-person meeting a year. Rotaractors are encouraged to apply for any field of expertise based on their background, skills and experience. Dual members are especially welcome to apply.

To be considered for committee membership or to recommend a Rotarian or Rotaractor for an appointment, visit **on.rotary.org/application2025**. Applicants must be registered on *My Rotary* at **my.rotary.org** and should make sure their My Rotary profile includes current contact information. Applications are due **August 15**.

Committee openings

Area of Expertise	Function	Prerequisites	Openings
Audit	Advises leadership on audited financial reports, internal and external audits, and internal control systems	Independence, appropriate business experience, and demonstrated financial literacy in accounting, auditing, banking, insurance, investment, risk management, executive management, or audit governance	One position with a four-year term
Communications	Advises leadership on Rotary's overall public image, branding, communications, content strategy, and approach	Professional background and experience in internal and external communications, marketing, public image, brand, public relations, media, and content strategy	Three positions with three-year terms
Finance	Advises the RI Board on Rotary's finances, including budgets and sustainability measures	Professional background in a finance-related field, with nonprofit experience preferred. Candidates should have experience in financial matters at the club and district levels.	Two positions with three-year terms
Fund Development	Advises The Rotary Foundation Trustees on all aspects of fundraising	Significant experience in nonprofit fundraising. Committee members actively fundraise and support the Foundation.	Two positions with three-year terms
Investment	Oversees the management of Rotary's investments. Makes policy recommendations to the boards of governance.	Institutional investment experience or equivalent	One position with a four-year term

Area of Expertise	Function	Prerequisites	Openings & Commitment
Learning	Advises leadership on creating effective learning opportunities for Rotary leaders and members	Adult learning expertise within or outside Rotary. Experience in the professional learning field (including e-learning) or with planning and implementing learning events at the member, club, district, zone, and international levels.	Three positions with three-year terms
Operations Review	Advises leadership on the effectiveness of operations, administrative procedures, and standards of conduct. Serves as the advisory compensation committee to the Executive Committee of the RI Board.	Experience in management, leadership development, or financial management, and thorough knowledge of Rotary's operations. Appointments are limited to past RI directors and past Foundation trustees.	One position with a six-year term
Strategic Planning	Advises leadership on matters regarding the strategic plan	Significant experience in long-term planning, financial management, and RI and Foundation programme activities	Two positions with four-year terms
Technology	Advises leadership on enhancing technology practices, products, and strategy to improve the member and participant experience	Expertise in technology development, security and data privacy, product management, and user/participant experience. Non-Rotarian technology experts may be appointed.	Two to three positions with three-year terms

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**Or does it go to
your junk folder?**



Every month we bring out the online publication **ROTARY NEWS PLUS** to feature your projects. This is sent to **every member** by e-mail by mid-month.

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

Looking back with great satisfaction on the Rotary year 2024–25, which has gone by, Rajni Barasia, outgoing president of RC Bombay Bay View, RID 3141, says with pride, “We have done around 320 projects and initiatives worth ₹4.5 crore across all the seven focus areas of Rotary touching more than one lakh lives during this year.”

The club’s beneficiaries are spread across India — Kashmir, Karnataka, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, and all over Maharashtra. In June, the club members distributed winter jackets to 800 homeless children in Mizoram, Leh (Ladakh), Kargil (Kashmir) and Darjeeling at a cost of ₹8 lakh. “These are special jackets fabricated recently and can be used as sleeping bags in the night,” says Rajni.

In April-May, two ambulances were donated to rural hospitals in Kinwat village, Nanded district, and



Bay View Rotarians do 320 projects worth ₹4.5 crore in one year

V Muthukumaran

Melghat village, Amravati district, at a cost of ₹43 lakh, funded by CSR grants and member contributions.

In Kinwat, a doctor at the Sane Guruji Rugnalaya takes care of the vehicle, while for Melghat, Dr Ashish Satav at the Mahan Trust Hospital has received a 20-seater bus-cum-ambulance from the club.

Returning on the two-in-one medical bus to his village, Dr Satav rang up Rajni to say, “you have no clue what your club has done for the tribals in our remote villages who don’t have access to medical care. Now, they have got wheels to reach their nearest hospital in Melghat for timely treatment of various illnesses.





A woman drawing water from the well built by the club at Ambesari village in Dahanu taluk.

Below: RC Bombay Bay View president Rajni Barasia (seated, 3rd from L) and secretary Rackhee Mehta (standing, centre), along with club members, at the handover of an ambulance to the Sane Guruji Hospital, Kinwat.



Above: Women patients from remote villages at the ambulance-cum-bus being used by the Mahan Trust Hospital, Melghat, near Amravati.

Thanks a lot for this wonderful gift.” Both the charity hospitals offer free diagnosis and treatment.

A major highlight of the club’s medical projects is the renovation of a 30-bed post-natal ward and its operation theatre at the Cama and Albless Hospital, Fort Mumbai, a speciality centre for women and child care. “The ward and OT renovation done at a cost of ₹40 lakh pooled in by members will benefit 5,000 pregnant women each year,” says Rackhee Mehta, outgoing club secretary. With the Phaco machine (₹23.6 lakh) donated to BMC Eye Hospital, thousands of high-tech surgeries can be done to restore the sight of underprivileged patients.

Mental health camps

In a mega outreach, the club has done a series of mental health and wellness camps and awareness sessions for 5,000 participants including students, teachers, parents of special children, and policemen. “Expert counsellors guided the multiple sessions on addiction prevention, menstrual hygiene, good touch bad touch and healthy lifestyle talks held at government schools in and around Mumbai,” explains Rajni. Following one such camp, the father of a special child approached Rackhee to request her club to “hold more such events as through these sessions we learn how to take care of

our well-being, even as we look after our special children's interests." The wellness sessions also focused on how to recognise the early symptoms of mental illnesses that a child can have. These mental health camps were held jointly with RC Addiction Prevention 3141.

As part of RID 3141's *Project Anganwadi*, Bay View Rotarians have renovated 10 integrated childcare centres (₹12 lakh) in Vikramgad and Talasari taluks near Mumbai which will benefit at least 300 children every year. E-learning classrooms with Smart TVs were set up at 35 zilla parishad and private trust schools (for Class 1–10); and play equipment given to 22 government and trust schools at a total cost of ₹40 lakh under the *Happy Schools* initiative. "Our smart classrooms and play equipment will benefit over 10,000 students, and we also reached out to a remote school at the Karnataka border to install a smart class," says Rajni.

As high fluoride levels in drinking water have stunted the growth of children due to poor haemoglobin in Pali district of Rajasthan, "we installed RO filter units at a cost of ₹15 lakh at 21 government schools, and now around 8,000 students can have clean drinking water." Around 200 tribal families at Ambesari village (Dahanu taluk) and Kaspada village (Vikramgad taluk) are 'breathing easy' now with the two wells constructed through a CSR grant

Every service project is like our own baby. We conceive it with enthusiasm and go about our tasks with great zeal.

Rajni Barasia
Club president

of ₹11 lakh. "Earlier, women had to trek more than 4km to fetch water. Now this practice is history as they get water from the wells," smiles Rackhee.

She recalls a joyful moment for Rotarians when a Kaspada woman approached her to express the villagers' gratitude and said, "Now we get a lot of time to spend with our children. As we draw water from the well nearby, we save our energy which is diverted to other useful chores in taking care of our families."

A rainwater harvesting system with a borewell (₹4 lakh) was built at a zilla parishad school, Vankas village, in Dahanu taluk, through CSR funding to provide clean drinking water to the villagers.

This 23-year-old club has 155 Rotarians for whom "every service project is like our own baby. We conceive it with enthusiasm and go about our tasks with great zeal," says Rajni. ■



A mental health workshop at a zilla parishad school in Dahanu taluk near Mumbai.

District Wise TRF Contribution

(in US Dollars)

Source: RI South Asia Office	District Number		Annual Fund	PolioPlus Fund	Endowment Fund	Other Funds	Total Contribution
	2981		70,304	28,127	35,104	7,127	140,661
	2982		66,253	24,983	13,444	235,645	340,326
	3000		76,540	25,213	1,000	372,876	475,629
	3011		139,805	7,509	78,480	1,980,006	2,205,800
	3012		68,044	1,097	1,500	1,133,307	1,203,948
	3020		125,806	85,692	122,103	151,382	484,983
	3030		96,030	7,746	34,056	317,364	455,196
	3040		12,298	440	18,071	89,183	119,992
	3053		117,465	2,951	0	83,524	203,940
	3055		72,460	4,497	2,071	68,208	147,237
	3056		32,848	2,356	60	133	35,397
	3060		258,055	6,788	72,039	869,619	1,206,500
	3070		35,930	1,713	0	0	37,642
	3080		46,519	10,457	17,384	114,456	188,816
	3090		24,631	109	24,076	88,778	137,593
	3100		34,651	5,705	0	55,133	95,488
	3110		31,080	2,394	27,711	447,749	508,934
	3120		80,455	1,211	25,164	65,312	172,141
	Annual Fund (AF) includes SHARE, AoF and World Fund. PolioPlus excludes Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.	3131		676,465	22,825	142,420	1,631,814
3132		102,962	2,789	23,349	89,365	218,465	
3141		640,533	45,100	321,670	3,462,126	4,469,430	
3142		552,008	60,160	60,175	639,326	1,311,668	
3150		194,980	31,909	155,380	1,014,280	1,396,549	
3160		27,560	3,464	1,000	5,787	37,810	
3170		80,128	23,939	146,042	569,852	819,961	
3181		208,219	17,369	371	0	225,959	
3182		121,902	4,329	12	29,270	155,512	
3191		97,447	8,532	158	473,381	579,519	
3192		179,442	12,526	23,652	347,918	563,538	
3201		208,717	50,253	38,180	845,754	1,142,904	
3203		55,277	14,523	18,093	171,675	259,568	
3204		61,772	17,552	57,083	27,817	164,223	
3211		46,687	4,884	0	65,803	117,374	
3212		322,511	59,739	135,493	212,483	730,226	
3231		19,238	10,277	105,704	46,768	181,987	
3233		147,557	26,676	16,429	479,224	669,885	
3234		139,049	32,065	100,746	1,066,483	1,338,344	
As on May, 2025		3240		240,539	32,963	50,000	208,938
	3250		178,054	13,137	74,684	259,829	525,704
	3261		54,412	854	8,335	35,176	98,776
	3262		96,508	4,085	2,313	22,526	125,431
	3291		189,740	14,780	205,835	288,306	698,661
	3220	Sri Lanka	84,849	6,090	32,056	205,955	328,950
	3271	Pakistan	10,053	50,036	0	12,500	72,589
	63	(former 3272)*	9,383	2,808	0	100	12,291
	64	(former 3281)*	10,731	3,074	1,000	1,050	15,854
	65	(former 3282)*	3,464	1,251	0	0	4,716
	3292		116,284	34,223	90,026	160,976	401,509

* Undistricted

Cancer detection workshop at RC Kundli

Team Rotary News

With the aim to sensitise women on the need for early screening, RC Kundli, RID 3012, conducted an awareness workshop on breast cancer in partnership with the Rotaract Club of SRMUH. Over 50 participants from various walks of life were educated on early detection of symptoms by self-examination.

The awareness workshop provided information on early

signs of breast and other cancers in women, “thus empowering them to seek timely medical help if they detect anything unusual,” said outgoing club president Shikhar Sharma. Doctors explained the lifestyle factors, genetic disposition and age-related risks that can influence the development of cancerous growth in the body. “The importance of mammogram and clinical examination were emphasised,

RC Kundli president Shikhar Sharma (third from Left), along with club members Ved Prakash and Parvinder Sidana, and resource persons, at the cancer awareness workshop.



Above: Club president Sharma with DGND Ravi Bali (centre) and other members at the cycle distribution at the Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Nangal.





urging women to go for regular screening,” he said.

A community support team was created for clarifying doubts, and women were told to take charge of their health. At the end, all the participants thanked the club for organising the workshop that helped them to recognise the early symptoms of breast cancer through some simple techniques.

RID 3012 DG Prashant Raj Sharma inaugurated two anganwadis that were renovated by the club at the Rasoi School Complex in Sonipat district. “These were in a bad shape and children found it difficult to stay there, especially during summer. We brought in positivity with a new ambience that brought smiles on the faces of these children,” said Shikhar Sharma.

Earlier, the club had built toilet blocks, installed handwash stations and drinking water booths at the Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Nangal.

“We distributed stationery kits to all of them.” The anganwadis also double up as maternal care centres.

Bicycles were donated to 20 students at the Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Nangal, in Bhiwani taluk, Haryana, with DGND Ravi Bali as chief guest. In the past, the club had built toilet blocks, installed handwash stations and drinking water booths in this school. Recalling the past work, the school authorities thanked the club for its sustained efforts to improve the sanitation and other facilities in the school. As an expression of gratitude, students staged a cultural performance for the Rotarians showcasing the rich Haryanvi culture.

T-shirts were distributed to 650 students at the Government Senior Secondary School, Aterna, in Sonipat in the presence of DG Sharma who appreciated the club for taking up a range of educational projects. In his address, club president Shikhar Sharma advised the students to “prepare for the future by taking part in competitions.”

More than 150 units of blood was collected at a blood donation camp, and the volunteers who could not donate due to time constraint requested the club to arrange a similar camp soon. The club thanked the donors for a massive response to the event. ■



From L: Vasu, club president Sharma, JK Seth, KS Sharma and Dr Shakti Ahlawat at the distribution of t-shirts for students at the Government Senior Secondary School, Aterna.

Making a difference

A mega medical camp at Sarigam

In a mega medical camp at the NR Agarwal Rotary Hospital conducted by RC Sarigam, RID 3060, around 540 patients were screened for various health issues. After lab tests and consultations, medicines worth ₹2.25 lakh were distributed.

Eighty-one people were chosen for surgery across disciplines. “Some surgeries have begun and the rest will be completed within a month, at a total cost of ₹9 lakh,” said PDG Bal Inamdar. The medical camp, an annual feature for over 20 years, was supported by volunteers from a nursing college and an NGO, along with an RFE team from Mexico, RID 4195. ■



Patients being examined at the medical camp.



RID 3060 DG Tushar Mehta (second from L) and RC Surat president Jai Mistry (fourth from R), along with club members, at the new gastrointestinal endoscopy centre.



Surat hospital gets a Rotary diagnosis facility

A gastrointestinal endoscopy centre was set up at the Sheth P T Surat General Hospital by RC Surat, RID 3060, through a GG project in partnership with RC Emory-Druid Hills, RID 6900, US, and RC Singapore, RID 3310.

The facility delivers modern diagnosis to a hospital that serves thousands of low-income patients each year. It all began when the hospital partnered with club to organise a medical camp for the underprivileged in April last year. ■

A child care unit set up at Pune hospital

DG Shital Shah, RID 3131, inaugurated an Acute Child Care Unit (ACCU) set up at the KEM Hospital through a GG project done jointly by RCs Pune Pride and Pune South. RCs Cupertino and Los Altos, (from RID 5170, US), and RC Charlotte Hall, RID 7620, US, are the global partners.

The medical facility will support newborns transitioning from paediatric ICU, who require constant monitoring. The ACCU will cater to children with serious illnesses who do not require ICU-level care, said Dr Ashish Bavdekar, director, KEM Hospital. It is equipped with five multifunctional beds with monitors and an integrated drug delivery system. ■



RID 3131 DG Shital Shah (fifth from L) at the inauguration of the ACCU at the KEM Hospital, Pune.



RID 3262 DG Yagyansis Mohapatra and PDG Aswini Kar at a self-defence training session for girl students.



Self-defence training for girls in RID 3262

Rotary clubs in RID 3262 have conducted self-defence training programmes to equip girl children with skills to protect themselves from stalkers and sexual harassment.

DG Yagyansis Mohapatra and PDG Aswini Kar were present at a project site where martial arts were taught to girls to build their confidence, mental strength and alertness to ward off challenges in public spaces. Through interactive sessions led by professionals, the girls were taught practical methods of self-protection and motivated to speak up or raise a red flag against all forms of harassment or abuse. ■

RI Board of Directors 2025–26

The RI Board of Directors manages Rotary International affairs and funds in accordance with the RI Constitution and Bylaws. Directors are nominated by their zones and elected to a two-year term. Nine new directors and the president-elect join the Board on July 1.



SangKoo Yun

RC Sae Hanyang, Korea
President-elect

SangKoo Yun grew up in Seoul, where his father, a prominent political activist, served as the country's president in the early 1960s. Instead of entering politics like his father, Yun traveled to the US to pursue his interest in architecture. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture at Syracuse University in New York. When he returned to Korea in the late 1980s, Yun founded Dongsuh Corp, which engineers and markets architectural materials, and later started the Youngan Corp, a real estate and investment venture.

Yun joined Rotary in 1987 as charter member of his club. From the beginning, he worked to promote Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) and served on his district's scholarship committee. For eight years, he served as co-chair of the Keep Mongolia Green initiative. This project planted windbreak forests in the Gobi Desert to combat dust storms. The initiative's success helped inspire the Mongolian government to plant a 2,700km "Great Green Wall" to counter desertification. Yun received a Friendship Medal from the president of Mongolia. He was recognised by Queen Elizabeth II as an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

In support of polio eradication, Yun is regional vice-chair of the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee and a PolioPlus national advocacy adviser. He is a recipient of TRF's Distinguished Service Award. He and his spouse, Eunsun Yang Yun, are Rotary Foundation Benefactors, Major Donors and members of the Arch Klumph, Paul Harris and the Bequest Society.



Alain Van de Poel

RC Wezembeek-Kraainem, Belgium
Vice President

Alain de Poel is the owner of Cocoonpoel SRL, a distributor of bathroom supplies and fixtures. In 1992, he helped start the club where he is still a member.

As a reserve officer in the Belgian armed forces, he helped teach recruits how to read and write. Poel says he is passionate about three things in Rotary: regional adaptability, Rotary's core values, and The Four-Way Test, which was always on display in his offices. A recipient of the Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World and TRF Citation for Meritorious Service, he is a Paul Harris Fellow.



Patrick Eakes

RC Crescent (Greensboro)
North Carolina
Treasurer

Patrick Eakes, a professional engineer, is the owner of CP Eakes Co, a custom metal fabricator he formed in 1996 that supplies metalwork in construction and manufacturing. He joined Rotary in 1998. One of his favourite roles was assistant governor, when he first experienced the power of Rotary beyond his club.

He and his wife, Kristen, support Children of Vietnam, a local organisation that provides education, nutritious meals, clean water and medical support for thousands of children in Vietnam. Eakes enjoys golf and travelling. He has received RI's Service Above Self Award and belongs to the Membership Society. He has also earned TRF's Distinguished Service Award and Citation for Meritorious Service. He and Kristen are Major Donors and members of the Bequest and Paul Harris Society.



Christine Buering

RC Altenburg, Germany
Director 2025–27

Fostering international connections and increasing opportunities for women are central to the work Christine Buering has been doing for nearly three decades. Born in southern Germany, she pursued tourism studies at the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne in Switzerland, followed by studies in Mexico and Spain.

She joined Rotary in 1995 when she co-founded her club with her husband Alexander, and others. Passionate

about gender equality, she helped found the Rotary Action Group for Menstrual Health and Hygiene and was a member of the group that started the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award in 2017. She supports TRF as a Major Donor.



Christine Etienne

RC Petoskey, Michigan
Director 2024–26

Chris Etienne is an associate broker with Harbor Sotheby's International Realty and director of leasing for the Village at Bay Harbor. With her husband, Dennis Lindeman, she also owns a retail business, Linde Furniture.

She joined Rotary in 1990, and championed the sponsorship of her district's first inbound Ambassadorial Scholar from Afghanistan, who later earned a master's degree from Grand Valley State University, returned home to teach at Nangarhār University, and joined a Rotary club.

Etienne has received TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service and the Distinguished Service Award. She and her husband are Major Donors.



Brian Hall

RC Covington, Louisiana
Director 2025–27

Brian Hall is director of development at Attivo ERP, where he specialises in integrating business systems. After a trip to Russia, where he volunteered in orphanages, he returned home with a deep commitment to service. He joined Rotary in 2007.

Hall has been an active leader in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Rotary Action Group for more than eight years, currently serving as chair-elect. Hall is a recipient of Rotary's Service Above Self Award, and TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. He and his wife Lynn are Major Donors.



Jung-Hyun Lee

RC Hwasung Taean, Korea
Director 2025–27

Jung-Hyun Lee has dedicated his life to education, beginning his career as a high school teacher. He went on to become an instructor for college entrance exams at elite preparatory schools, playing a pivotal role in shaping Seoul's renowned Noryangjin school district. He also founded the Hanssem Academy in Seoul.

He is a Rotarian since 2003, and a champion of digital literacy. He launched free computer education courses for

the underprivileged. His wife, Young-Ran Won, is a survivor of ovarian cancer, and they lead a support group for cancer patients and their families. Lee is an AKS member since 2020.



Naomi Luan-Fong Lin

RC Taipei Lily, Taiwan
Director 2024–26

Naomi Luan-Fong Lin is general manager of Lite-Puter Enterprise Co Ltd, a brand of energy-saving lighting control systems she started in 1978. A speaker of four languages (Mandarin, Taiwanese Hokkien, English, and Japanese), Lin holds bachelor's degrees in Japanese literature and international trade from Chinese Culture University in Taipei.

Lin joined Rotary in 2004 as charter president of RC Taipei Lily. She helped organise an End Polio Cycling Tour in Taiwan, which raised more than \$271,000 for TRF and the PolioPlus Fund. As DG, she helped establish 17 Rotary clubs and 16 satellite clubs. Lin has received the Service Above Self Award. She and her husband, Louis Hsu Kun-Pai, a PDG, are AKS members and Major Donors.



Isao "Mick" Mizuno

RC Tokyo Tobihino, Japan
Director 2024–26

Isao Mizuno is president of Chiyoda Unyu, which supplies parts to the automobile and trucking industries with branches throughout Japan.

Mizuno joined Rotary in 1989 as a charter member of his club, which was sponsored by his father's club. He was asked by Hino's mayor to lead a spring cherry blossom festival in the city, and he enlisted his club to support the event as volunteers. Mizuno is also a donor and past vice-chair of the Rotary Yoneyama Scholarship for Overseas Candidates, a large scholarship programme for global students in Japan.

He is a Major Donor and Paul Harris Society member.



M Muruganandam (MMM)

RC Bhel City Tiruchirapalli, India
Director 2025–27

M Muruganandam, widely known as "MMM" or "Triple M," is an entrepreneur with over 30 years of expertise in supply chain management. As founder and chair of Excel Maritime, he has expanded operations across 18 cities in India and to Singapore, Malaysia,

Thailand and Indonesia. He holds a master's degree from BITS, Pilani; an MBA from Indira Gandhi National Open University; and a Master of Foreign Trade from Pondicherry University.

His Rotary journey began at 16 in Rotaract. He became a Major Donor to TRF while still a Rotaractor. In 2016–17, as one of the youngest governors of District 3000, he spearheaded record-breaking initiatives, including some recognised by Guinness World Records. He also played a pivotal role in establishing 99 Rotaract clubs, 250 Interact clubs, and 100 RCCs in his district.

He is the recipient of RI's Vocational Service Leadership Award and TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. MMM and his wife, Sumathi, a member of the same Rotary club, are AKS members.



K P Nagesh

RC Bangalore Highgrounds, India
Director 2025–27

K P Nagesh is an entrepreneur and founder of UNIQ Security Solutions, a company that employs over 10,000 workers in South India. He served as a short service commissioned officer in the Indian Air Force.

Nagesh joined Rotary in 1995. While serving as governor of District 3190 in 2015–16, he led initiatives that added about 2,000 members and 52 new clubs while increasing the representation of women. The district also achieved the highest total contribution to TRF worldwide during that year. His goal is for India to become a \$100 million-giving country, with every district giving at least \$1 million.

Nagesh is a recipient of RI's Service Above Self Award. He and his wife, Uma, a computer science engineer, are AKS Chair's Circle members.



Salvador Rizzo Tavares

RC Monterrey Carlos Canseco,
Mexico
Director 2024–26

Salvador Rizzo Tavares is CEO of Grupo Rizzo, which he established in 1987 as an office equipment wholesaler. Along with Intel, he also helped develop the Classmate student laptop, more than 200,000 of which have been sold in Latin America.

Tavares joined Rotary in 1989 at age 27. His mentor was PRIP Carlos Canseco. He has led global grant projects to address eating disorders, resolve environmental problems, and provide equipment to detect prostate cancer.

An avid sports fan, Tavares is a former golfer and soccer player, and multiple marathon runner. He and his partner, Esmeralda, are Major Donors, Benefactors, Paul Harris Fellows and Bequest Society members.



César Luis Scherer

RC Marechal Cândido Rondon-Beira
Lago, Brazil
Director 2025–27

César Luis Scherer is an entrepreneur and accountant with extensive experience in financial management, strategic planning, and administration. He is the founder-director of an accounting firm and served as a professor of accounting for 29 years at the State University of Western Paraná in Brazil.

A Rotarian since 2003, Scherer learned the true meaning of Rotary when he lost his chequebook. While seeking help at a local bank, he discovered the manager was a Rotarian who, upon hearing his situation, not only assisted but also offered his home for him to stay in while he looked for an apartment. Scherer helped the district become the largest in Latin America, with around 3,200 members as of early 2025.

Scherer is a recipient of TRF's Citation of Meritorious Service. He and his wife, Sônia, are Major Donors.



Jennifer A Scott

RC Central Blue Mountains, Australia
Director 2025–27

Jennifer Scott is a lawyer, mediator, and conflict resolution specialist with experience in environmental law.

A Rotarian since 1996, she currently serves as regional vice-chair of the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee, and is also a member of TRF's Cadre of Technical Advisers.

She and her husband, Ian, have also been active in Sustainable Cambodia. This Rotary-led initiative empowers communities in rural Cambodia through an integrated approach of education, clean water access, and sustainable agriculture. She has also played a key role in advancing legal frameworks in Mongolia, leading a vocational training team to train judges and social workers in family mediation.

In 2023, Scott was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia. She and her husband, a PDG (2014–15), are Major Donors and members of the Bequest Society. She has been recognised with TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service.

**Wyn Spiller**

RC Grass Valley, California
Director 2025–27

A Louisiana native and daughter of a Rotarian, Wyn Spiller earned a psychology degree from Louisiana State University. She began her teaching career, after moving to California with her husband, she co-owned a children's clothing store before transitioning into a local winery business founded in part by her family.

She is a Rotarian since 1994. Spiller's commitment to peacebuilding includes supporting the Rotary Peace Centers, connecting with Rotary Peace Fellows, and helping build an endowed fund for peace. She is a recipient of TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. She and her husband, Steve, are Major Donors and members of the Bequest, Paul Harris and PolioPlus Society.

**Suzan Stenberg**

RC Östersund Åre, Sweden
Director 2024–26

Suzan Stenberg owns a business consulting firm that trains college students. She is a former RYE student in Manhattan, Kansas. At Microsoft, she worked in business development and helped start the Microsoft University programme. She ended her 20 years at Microsoft serving on the company's leadership team in Sweden and overseeing small-business marketing as well as education programmes in the Nordic countries. Stenberg developed a business incubator in Åre in conjunction with Swedish universities as well as a science park that coaches startups.

A member of Rotary since 2009, Stenberg organises the annual Åre Rotary Wild Camp, which invites all RYE students in Sweden. She and her husband, Göran Stenberg, are Major Donors and members of the Paul Harris Society and the Bequest Society.

**Daniel V Tanase**

RC Suceava Bucovina, Romania
Director 2024–26

Daniel Tanase is managing partner of Assist Software SRL, a software R&D company that he co-founded in 1992 and now has 360 employees. He joined Rotary in 2002 as a charter member of his club. As club president, he led the club's first community service project helping more than 3,000 children across Romania.

He co-founded the Assist Humanitarian Foundation that collaborated with Rotary on disease prevention projects. He has written books on management, a collection of short stories, and a Rotary pocket handbook. Tanase has received the Service Above Self Award. He and his spouse, Marlena, are Major Donors.

**Harriette Florence Verwey**

RC Leiden-AM, Netherlands
Director 2025–27

Harriette Florence Verwey graduated from Leiden University, Netherlands, with a medical degree, later earning a PhD, and dedicated her 34-year career to cardiology at Leiden University Medical Center. She pioneered the use of the left ventricular assist device as an alternative treatment for chronic heart failure when transplant is not feasible.

Verwey joined Rotary in 2002. One project from her early involvement included organising a national concert for deaf children. She was the first Black DG in the Netherlands and is the first female director coming from her zone. Verwey is a PolioPlus and Bequest Society member and a Major Donor.

**John Hewko**

General Secretary
Rotary Club of Kyiv, Ukraine

From 2004 to 2009, John Hewko was vice-president of operations for the Millennium Challenge Corp, a US government agency that delivers foreign assistance to the world's poorest countries. Prior to joining MCC, Hewko was an international partner with the law firm Baker & McKenzie, specialising in international corporate transactions in emerging markets.

He is a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and has authored papers and articles in leading US and global publications. Hewko holds a law degree from Harvard University and a master's in modern history from Oxford University.

As general secretary, Hewko leads a diverse staff of 800 at RI's headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, and six international offices. He and his partner, Marga, are Major Donors to The Rotary Foundation. They live in Evanston.

TRF Trustees in the next issue

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RID **2981**

RC Kumbakonam Central

A spacious waiting hall for girls at the Government Arts College was built with a CSR grant of ₹95 lakh from GRT Jewellers. Assembly speaker M Appavu and state minister Govi Chezhaan inaugurated the premises. PDGs Ramesh Babu and S Balaji were present.



Club matters



RID **3020**

RC Vijayawada

Eye check-up camps were held at 20 municipal and zilla parishad schools, reaching out to over 6,700 students so far, under *Project Drushyam*. Among them, 1,351 were treated for eye disorders, and spectacles were distributed at 20 schools. The project is supported by Maxvision Hospitals.

RID **3030**

RC Panchora-Bhadgaon

Around 130 blood bags were collected at a blood donation camp held in support of Operation Sindoor in which civilians and soldiers were injured during the conflict.





RID **3055**

RC Kankaria (Ahmedabad)

Club members led by its president Nipun Patel and project chair Vipul Shukla took part in a mega clean-up of Sabarmati River initiated by the municipal corporation. Over 250 tonnes of litter were removed from the riverbank.

RID **3000**

RC Karambakudi City

Large umbrellas were provided to roadside vendors in Karambakudi to protect them from natural elements. The project boosted Rotary's public image.



RID **3141**

RC Bombay Film City

A dental chair was donated to the Arthur Road Jail Hospital which has 3,800 inmates. Following a request, a club member, a dentist, will offer his service once a week.



RID **3120**

RC Lucknow Baradari

Over 2,400 people were treated in eye check-up and cataract screening camps at eight villages near Lucknow with the support of Saraswati Hospital and Mittal Analytics. The medical camps performed 52 cataract surgeries and distributed 2,000 spectacles at a project cost of ₹7.15 lakh.

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10. Members should ensure their names are included in the subscribers' list their club sends us. If you've paid, but your name is not sent to us by your club, you will not get a copy of the magazine.
11. If you've not received your printed copy to which you had subscribed, check with your club president if your club has opted for e-version.
12. Clubs must **immediately** update us about any modification in membership status to enable us to deliver the magazine to the new members.
13. Clubs are liable to pay for the number of magazines we despatch according to the



list available with the Rotary News Trust.

14. Unpaid dues of the club will be shown as outstanding against the club. Any payment received subsequently will be adjusted against earlier dues.
15. Details of clubs with subscription arrears will be shared with RI and are liable for suspension.
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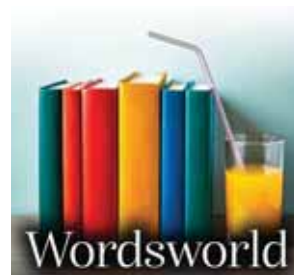
Non-compliant clubs face termination by RI

Beginning July 1, 2022, the RI Board has included in its *Rotary Code of Policies* the termination of Rotary clubs that do not subscribe to a Rotary magazine. A quarterly report on non-compliant clubs is being sent to RI by our office, after notifying the respective club leaders and the DGs. These clubs are given a **90-day grace period** after which the defaulting club is placed under suspension by RI.

For clubs that stay suspended and are non-compliant for 180 days, RNT, after notifying RI, sends a reminder letter stating "the Board at its discretion can terminate this club."

Club presidents, please urge your members to subscribe to *Rotary News*, and get a full picture of Rotary activities in India. **RI recommends inclusion of information about mandatory subscription in your PELS/GELS curriculums.**

No story is too small to be told



Banu Mushtaq's Kannada short stories reveal human nature in its myriad minute manifestations with wit, warmth and vivid detail, all of which come alive in Deepa Bhashthi's English rendering.



Sandhya Rao

Banu Mushtaq and Deepa Bhashthi have been in the news after being awarded the International Booker Prize 2025 for the short story collection, *Heart Lamp*. This is the second Booker for a work originally in an Indian language, the first being *Ret Samadhi / Tomb of Sand* in 2022, by Geetanjali Shree, translated from Hindi by Daisy Rockwell. What makes this year's award so special is that it recognises a language that is not a dominant *bhasha* of India; it is the official language of the state of Karnataka.

In the process it evokes a much bigger picture by drawing attention to the less-known, the less-obvious, the less-heralded, the less-banded about, the less-projected, and the less-lionised. In a world that appears to be falling apart under the dead weight of political power-play and

authoritarianism, such validation is a nod to democratic principles. Add to this Deepa's observation that Banu's career as journalist, lawyer, writer and activist exemplify the word *bandaya*, which means dissent, rebellion, protest, resistance, revolution... You realise that this is no mean feat; it's a towering achievement. No wonder there is so much discussion around it and, by extension, on the importance of translation — and all that it implies — in the world.

No one worded it better than Banu Mushtaq herself in her acceptance speech. "This is more than a personal achievement," she said in a steady, quiet voice. "It is an affirmation that we, as individuals and as a global community, can thrive when we embrace diversity, celebrate our differences, and uplift one another. Together, we create a world where every voice is heard, every story matters, and every person belongs." She went on to add: "This book was born from the belief that no story is ever 'small' — that in the tapestry of human experience, every thread holds the weight of the whole. In a world that often tries to divide us, literature remains one of the last sacred spaces where we can live inside each other's minds, if only for a few pages."

And that is exactly how the reader experiences the short stories in this collection: by being invited to live inside the minds of individuals such as

Shaista, Mutawalli Saheb, Yakub, Mehaboob Bi, Akhila, Razia, Mehrun, and a host of chikkappas, doddammas, ajjis, maulvis and dadimas, with a throbbing intensity that makes us laugh, cry, exclaim, bemoan, plot, seethe... and identify with them.

They are real people, caught up in the minutiae of life and living, and they reveal themselves in many hues. When they speak, we hear for we discover they speak much like ourselves. There is no artifice in the narration, the world of these stories emerges with a directness that is both disarming and disturbing. It's not just literary skill, the work appears to be a triumph of humanity despite tragedy, despite foolishness, despite rage, despite jealousy, despite hypocrisy, and sometimes, despite the ridiculous.

In her afterword headlined 'Against Italics', Deepa Bhashthi points out that 'Banu grew up in a progressive family and was educated in Kannada and not, as was common for Muslims then, in Urdu.' She goes on to talk about the Bandaya movement in Kannada literature which 'started as an act of protest against the hegemony of upper caste and mostly male-led writing' prevalent at the time Banu Mushtaq was growing up and which is clearly reflected in each of the 12 stories in *Heart Lamp*. In *Red Lung*, for instance, a harried Razia takes a

practical approach to containing the energies of a bunch of visiting children: ‘Seeing a summer of continuous torture before her and no other way out, in the end she decided that she’d have to engineer bed rest for some of them somehow. Circumcisions, she decided. She would get khatna done.’ While on the one hand there is wit and irony in the telling of this story, there is also the heart-wrenching instance of a woman so desperate for the gift of a food packet that she holds out her one-month-old baby, begging that *sunnat* (circumcision) be done for him too.

The Shroud takes on an almost ominous tone for the manner in which Shaziya, who had promised a loyal Yaseen Bua that she would bring back a *kafan* (shroud) from her Hajj pilgrimage, tries to make excuses for failing to keep her promise. When, upon his mother’s demise, Yaseen Bua’s son Farman comes asking for the *kafan*, Shaziya’s mind is in a whirl, twisting and turning between remorse and justification: “Even in her wildest dreams, she had not thought that Bua would haunt her after death. She

collapsed under the weight of sudden anguish. What must she do? What must she not do? Even if Bua asked for a *kafan* costing one lakh rupees, Shaziya was ready to give it to her, but a *kafan* from Mecca that had been soaked in holy Zamzam water, ya Allah, what to do?”

The Arabic Teacher and Gobi Manchuri offers a different kind of spin on the expectations of a young man seeking a bride. Saleema Jaan is pleased to find a suitable boy, a maulvi at that, for her daughter. But the proposal falls through because, as Saleema Jaan explains: “He didn’t ask about what we would give or take during the wedding. He waited for the girl to leave the house, stopped her in the middle of the road and asked whether she knows how to make gube

manchari, whatever that is! What sort of a man is he?!” An odd sort, indeed!

The writing resonates with moments that actively engage the reader. It is typical of some women in the Kannadiga culture to address their husbands as ‘Riii’. Each time a ‘Riii’ popped up in the book, I was reminded of my cousin’s ear-piercing imitation of an aunt’s ‘Rrrrrriiiii!’

There is a casual, easy and natural tone to the English freely

“ In a world that often tries to divide us, literature remains one of the last sacred spaces where we can live inside each other’s minds, if only for a few pages.

– Banu Mushtaq

interspersed with words in regular Kannada, the Kannada dialect of Hassan which is Banu’s home, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi and Dakhni. “Banu speaks Dakhni, often wrongly identified as a dialect of Urdu, but which in fact is a mix of Persian, Dehlavi, Marathi, Kannada and Telugu. Kannada is Banu’s language at work and what she

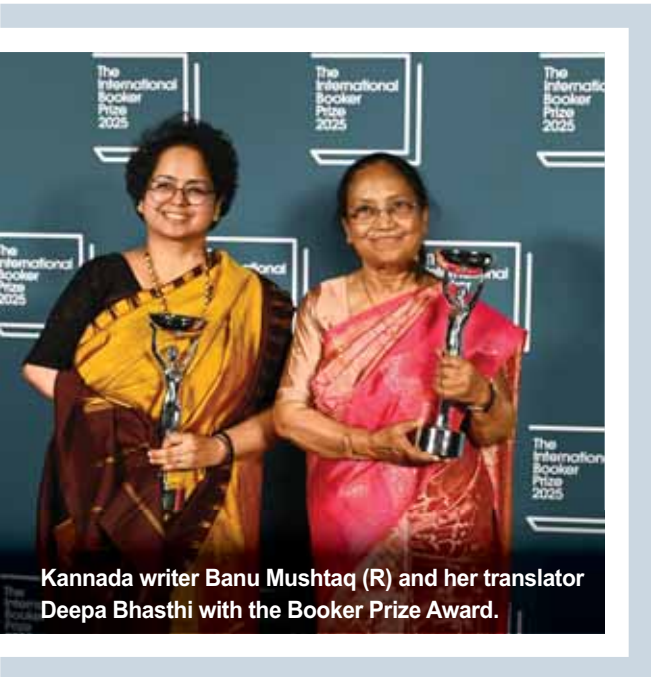
encounters on the street,” Deepa writes.

This kind of code switching happens in many homes in India, including mine, where, in the course of one conversation, you are likely to hear Marathi, Tamil, English, Hindi, Kannada with the occasional Punjabi and Bengali.

As for the business of italics, mentioned in the chapter heading, typically, books published in English italicise words that are ‘foreign’, words such as *de rigueur*, *schadenfreude*, and so on. But yaanai, ghar, chikkamma, adda? These are not ‘foreign’ to Indian languages, are they? And if you believe that English is as much an Indian language as Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Bengali, there the matter ends. Deepa Bhashti explains her position. Italics “serve to not only distract visually, but more importantly, they announce words as imported from another language, exoticising them and keeping them alien to English. By not italicising them, I hope the reader can come to these words without interference, and in the process of reading with the flow, perhaps even learn a new word or two in another language.”

Well said, Deepa. Sabash, Banu.

The columnist is a children’s writer and senior journalist



Kannada writer Banu Mushtaq (R) and her translator Deepa Bhashti with the Booker Prize Award.



Tiny drops make mighty oceans

Preeti Mehra

We need individual and collective efforts to save our water bodies.

When you live in a coastal city like I do, you become deeply aware of the vast expanse of sea, its smells and sounds. The vast expanse of water impacts our life. Recently, we were enlightened about the sea and its linkage to humanity, animals and plants at an event in the Alliance Française of Madras, in collaboration with the French Institute in India and the French Embassy.

It was an engrossing evening with a panel discussion and an exhibition on the theme, “We are the Ocean”. The idea was to look at how each one of us is connected to the ocean and the

challenges the sea is undergoing in the face of drastic pollution and dramatic climate changes. It was, as Alliance Française put it, a “space for dialogue, creativity, and action.”

The sea and all our other water bodies are rampant with a range of polluting substances, of which plastic is the most prominent, was the most disturbing aspect highlighted at the discussion. One of the partners at the event, Tree Foundation, has been working to protect the ocean, the environment, and the interconnect-edness between human activity and the ocean. It has been giving special focus to protecting the Olive Ridley,

hawksbill and green turtles along the country’s east coast. For this it uses the services of village communities and their youth. It organised former turtle egg poachers and school drop-outs into a Sea Turtle Protection Force and released an estimated 3.85 million turtle hatchlings back into the ocean.

The photography exhibition, ‘Faces of the Ocean’ gave the audience a glimpse of the work our fishermen do and their role in making us the second-largest fish-producing country in the world representing around eight per cent of global fish production. The images were powerful, of the intensive work men and women do as they



Ibis Hotels joined hands with NGOs to clean-up beaches in the country on World Oceans Day. A scene in Goa.

engage in hauling nets, repairing boats, sorting, cleaning and selling the fish.

We were told that this was the right time to focus on the oceans and see how we can involve ourselves in keeping waste and plastic away from the water. Last month, the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) had a massive conference where they urged world leaders to “recognise the ocean as a central pillar of climate action.” So those among us, who feel that green is the way to go and live close to water bodies, must join in action that can save the oceans from pollution, protect marine life, and root for marine biodiversity.

“The ocean sustains our economies, shapes our cultures, and nourishes our communities. As stewards of nearly 30 per cent of its vast expanse, we embrace both a profound privilege and a solemn responsibility — a duty shared by all nations that see the sea as part of their heritage and their future,” was an urgent appeal at UNOC3 from President Surangel Whipps Jr of Palau,

a Pacific Island nation. He is the current chair of AOSIS, where protecting the ocean is the most important agenda. As a matter of fact, it should be for us as well.

And yes, some organisations are taking the ocean seriously and trying to add their might to the effort which is truly a herculean task. On World Oceans Day last month, Ibis India, which has several hotels in coastal cities including Mumbai, Kochi, Chennai and Goa, reported that it had partnered with NGOs to conduct a large-scale ocean cleanup. It had mobilised over 600 volunteers and collected over 500kg of waste in a single day.

Apart from cleaning up, which is badly needed at all our beaches, Ibis hotels held awareness sessions on marine pollution and had some interactive sessions for schoolchildren, fishermen and tourists “to encourage long-term behavioural change and collective environmental responsibility.”

It was aligning itself with this year’s global theme, ‘Wonder: Sustaining What Sustains Us’. The idea

is to bring into focus how important the marine system is for us and how it is vital to restore ocean health, which in turn supports life on Earth.

So, what can we do to protect our oceans and other water bodies? For a start we can conserve water so that excess water does not flow into the rivers and other water bodies which finally find their way into the sea. On the same count, prefer non-toxic cleaning products and pesticides so that these do not pollute our water.

We have to reduce our use of single-use plastic and campaign for this in our community and neighbourhoods. It is estimated that 80 per cent of plastic pollution in the ocean originates from land, including untreated waste, water runoff from cities, and industrial activities. Marine animals can mistake plastic waste for food with disastrous consequences including death. Human beings are adversely impacted when they consume contaminated marine food.

Microplastics, which are tiny pieces of plastic invisible to the naked eye, that break down from larger plastic waste, are causing havoc in rivers, lakes and oceans. These can come from a variety of sources including synthetic fibres used in fast fashion and clothing.

Studies reveal that plastic pollution on the land and in the water can seriously impact the ability of ecosystems to adapt to climate change. In the ocean, it harms marine life.

So, to protect the ocean you can volunteer to clean-up beaches and river banks in your neighbourhood. You can also change your lifestyle by consuming less plastic and encourage others to do the same. At an individual level your contribution may seem too inconsequential. But remember tiny drops of water make the mighty ocean.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues



The magic of fresh air

Bharat & Shalan Savur

An ounce of oxygen leads to the bounce in your body. As you inhale, your lungs pluck the oxygen from the air, which includes nitrogen and other gases like carbon dioxide. The lungs then circulate the oxygen through your body. The pure oxygen is absorbed by your red blood cells into your haemoglobin and these tiny sponges of oxygen bob in your bloodstream and feed the tissues (muscle, bone, nerves). A group of cells form a tissue, and a group of tissues form your organs — heart, lungs, stomach, etc. These sponges squeeze out the oxygen and absorb the waste carbon from your tissue. They then bob back to your lungs from where the waste gas is expelled as you exhale.

Your fitness hinges on your lungs' processing power. The more oxygen you contribute to your tissues, the better your body works. Aerobic exercise does precisely that — strengthens your lungs and literally expands your breathing space around the lungs. Love your lungs. And live with love and fresh air. A space that is increasingly more difficult to find in these polluted and climatically-challenged times.

Aerobic training also steps up the haemoglobin in your blood — adds more red blood cells in harmony with the enhanced lung capacity. Those sponges that we spoke about earlier now united with haemoglobin, also relieve you of carbon dioxide and other wastes.





The blood vessels of an inactive person harden over time due to lack of exercise. This progressive clogging of the arteries narrows the lanes of blood flow and the jam results in high blood pressure. The ideal blood pressure is 120/80. The former (systolic pressure) is when the heart is pumping blood into your system. The latter (diastole pressure) is when the heart literally takes a breather. A pause from the pumping.

Your body has two kinds of metabolism. The first is the transformation of food burned by oxygen to become energy. The transformation of food then forms new tissues. Your body requires carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and fat to maintain its metabolic equilibrium. These components work best with a balanced diet.

Sit still without any thoughts and focus on your breath. Make it slow and deep for five minutes. Now, place your index and middle finger on your wrist or below your jaw. Count for 10 seconds and multiply that number by six — this is your resting pulse rate. A count of up to 70 beats per minute indicates you're generally in good health. A count over that magical 70 means your heart is strained and working overtime. Slow down, pause. Repeat this process two or three times a week at different times and after various activities.

If you are either doubtful about your health or your fitness, check with your family physician to be safe and sure of your health and fitness level. And if you are either over

Aerobic exercise strengthens the heart by improving the elasticity of heart muscles.

And coordinates with the fibres to pump the blood out of the heart with every beat.

35 and/or have hypertension, diabetes, etc, in your family tree, forget the finger-pulse test. Get a medical check-up. This advice is for late tuners. And serves as a reminder to those who need a check-up but haven't gone in for it yet.

Exercise hastens the heartbeat. Which is why you require medical clearance. Paradoxically, the best way to lower the resting heart rate is to make it beat faster for limited periods of exercise (anaerobic). This exertion strengthens the heart and enables it to perform better at a lower rate. Let's take the car for example. When all four cylinders work at the optimum level, the engine purrs to perfection. If one cylinder weakens, three cylinders take its load and lead in the heart's performance. Aerobic exercise strengthens the heart by improving the elasticity of heart muscles. And coordinates with the fibres to pump the blood out of the heart with every beat. Unexercised or under-exercised muscles are akin to the automobile groaning instead of purring smoothly. The general rule of thumb: the slower the heartbeat, the more efficient it is. And the healthier you are.

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



RID 3142

RC Kalyan City

In an eco-friendly initiative, 500 students at the Narendra Convent School were taught a solar cooking method for conserving energy. Each student was given a solar cooking kit to replicate this method at home.



Club matters



RID 3204

RC Kasaragod

A blood collection van (₹35 lakh) was donated to the Government Hospital, Kasaragod, through a global grant. RC Cascavel Primavera, Brazil, is the global partner. Club president Narayana Naik gave ₹10 lakh for the project.

RID 3231

RC Tirupattur

Buttermilk and ragi porridge were distributed to roadside people near the district collectorate office as summer refreshment. Club treasurer M Thirunavukkarasu sponsored the project on the death anniversary of his wife.





RID 3261

RC Sambalpur

Members of the Interact Club of St Joseph's Convent School distributed books, clothes and fruits to inmates of an old age home-cum-orphanage. The students interacted with elders and children at the special home.

RID 3181

RC Mangalore Central

Hotelier K Prakash Shetty was conferred Vandana Award for his entrepreneurship. PDG Devdas Pai, chairman, Awards Committee, AG K M Hegde, club president Brian Pinto and DRR Sanjay were present.



RID 3262

RC Bhubaneswar Meadows

A water conservation exhibition was held at the Hirapur Youth Club, Baliana, jointly with Sailabala Foundation. Students from six schools put up 12 projects for display, and the jury selected three of them for awards.



RID 3291

RC Jodhpur Gardens Calcutta

A medical bed was donated by the club's Foundation chair Brojo Gopal Chowdhury to Behala Balananda Brahmachari Hospital in memory of late Debasri Chowdhury.

Compiled by V Muthukumaran

From RI South Asia

The Rotary Foundation's zonal team 2025–26 for Zones 4, 5, 6 and 7

Please find below the details of the zone-wise team

Zone	Designation	Name	E-mail address
4 & 7	RI Director	K P Nagesh	rid2527kpn@gmail.com
5 & 6	RI Director	M Muruganandam	mmstask@yahoo.com
4,5,6,7	TRF Trustee	Dr Bharat Pandya	drbspandya@gmail.com
4	E/MGA	Ashish Ramesh Ajmera	ashishajmera27@hotmail.com
	EPNC	Dr Ashes Ganguly	ashesganguly@yahoo.com
	RRFC	Dr N Subramanian	drnsupra@yahoo.co.in
5	E/MGA	Aruljothi Karthikeyan	dgkarthi3202@gmail.com
	EPNC	VR Muthu	vrmutu3212@gmail.com
	RRFC	Gowri Rajan	rotary.gowri@gmail.com
6	E/MGA	Ajay Agarwal	ajayagarwal3262@gmail.com
	EPNC	Uttam Ganguli	uttamganguli57@gmail.com
	RRFC	Debashish Das	debashishdg32401920@gmail.com
7	E/MGA	Sam Rao Movva	sammovva@yahoo.com
	EPNC	Girish Govind Gune	drgirish3131@gmail.com
	RRFC	Surendra Reddy Bommireddy	pdgsurendra@gmail.com

CSR Stewardship Sub Committee

A CSR Stewardship Sub Committee has been formed with representatives from all the four zones to assist in

ensuring that CSR grant reporting is completed in line with the CSR policy. The members are:

1. Zone 4

PDG Harjit Talwar,
RID 3141

2. Zone 5

PDG John Daniel
RID 3211

3. Zone 6

PDG Rajan
Gandotra
RID 3250

4. Zone 7

PDG Lakkaraju
Satyanarain (Tikku)
RID 3020

Roles and responsibilities of CSR Stewardship Sub Committee:

- ❖ Support in follow-up for completing the CSR reporting requirement for the CSR grants overdue reporting.
- ❖ Reaching out to zone leaders (RRFCs, EMGAs and ARRFCs) to assist with CSR grants closure as is the practice for GG.
- ❖ Reaching out to district leaders (DGs, DRFCs, DGSCs) to assist with CSR grants closure.
- ❖ Post-audit reviews of CSR grants will be shared with the committee for compliance.
- ❖ CSR grants exceeding \$400,000 include advance cadre visits; therefore, the details will also be shared with the committee.
- ❖ CSR team will work with the committee to ensure that no CSR grant reaches the 30-month reminder mark or remains open for more than two years.■

Membership Summary

As on June 1, 2025

Source: RI South Asia Office

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians (%)	Rotaract Clubs	Rotaract Members	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	142	5,978	6.04	56	110	35	255
2982	89	4,042	5.86	36	550	98	189
3000	149	6,265	11.64	95	1,230	245	218
3011	133	5,303	30.98	72	1,867	240	41
3012	151	3,908	24.51	55	635	105	61
3020	81	4,527	7.95	46	707	187	351
3030	104	5,657	16.51	66	1,298	513	402
3040	102	2,443	15.39	35	737	64	217
3053	75	3,275	18.84	23	328	43	131
3055	88	3,586	12.02	49	683	61	409
3056	83	3,861	25.17	22	204	110	201
3060	100	5,168	15.54	53	1,806	78	154
3070	117	3,103	15.11	36	359	73	64
3080	118	4,535	14.49	65	2,122	222	127
3090	130	2,542	5.94	24	377	359	174
3100	115	2,166	10.39	17	112	41	151
3110	133	3,667	11.64	22	214	106	114
3120	90	3,892	15.75	34	472	45	58
3131	133	5,344	37.05	123	2,729	307	255
3132	99	3,936	14.23	35	436	207	229
3141	121	6,746	28.92	124	3,517	222	249
3142	115	4,081	23.16	57	1,609	142	100
3150	103	4,128	13.35	67	1,691	129	130
3160	77	2,472	8.94	27	108	100	82
3170	142	6,620	15.03	89	1,003	204	184
3181	91	3,788	10.98	40	430	144	122
3182	85	3,737	10.68	49	306	118	105
3191	85	3,240	20.65	75	1,846	201	36
3192	84	3,488	22.08	65	1,789	164	40
3201	175	6,815	10.18	116	2,104	121	99
3203	102	5,317	7.50	52	853	158	40
3204	87	3,010	10.76	28	310	24	23
3211	161	5,318	9.29	14	219	34	136
3212	121	4,730	10.59	89	610	216	153
3231	92	3,616	7.19	35	436	121	422
3233	91	3,419	18.48	64	1,964	59	63
3234	81	3,234	24.27	65	1,607	108	42
3240	99	3,500	17.11	47	802	82	253
3250	115	4,530	23.77	39	541	99	194
3261	96	3,422	24.46	18	112	37	46
3262	120	4,052	16.66	84	785	668	298
3291	141	3,800	27.84	-	-	96	779
India Total	4,475	176,261	16.31	2,208	39,618	6,386	7,397
3220 Srilanka	74	2,120	16.89	88	4,149	147	79
3271 Pakistan	105	1,432	20.39	106	491	281	28
0063 (3272) Pakistan	72	1,141	19.54	48	296	23	49
0064 (3281) Bangladesh	225	4,961	17.13	185	1,033	120	211
0065 (3282) Bangladesh	135	2,722	8.82	167	1,094	26	48
3292 Nepal	160	5,624	19.26	179	5,361	132	145
S Asia Total	5,246	194,261	16.37	2,981	52,042	7,115	7,957



Women and *dabbas*

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

LBW



There is a classical saying in Hindi “*Pran jaye per vachan na jaye.*” It means a person will die before breaking a promise. For many Indian women, it’s more like “*Pran jaye per dabba na jaye,*” meaning if they have sent you something to eat in a box, they are very loath to forfeit the box, or *dabba*. They don’t care whether you liked the contents of the *dabba*; they care only about the *dabba* and absolutely insist on getting it back. I found this out to my cost nearly half a century ago. A friend’s mother had sent me some *undhiyu*, a Gujarati dish that is apparently cooked upside down underground slowly in an earthenware pot and comprises a lot of vegetables and ghee. It’s marvellously heavy to eat. I wrote to the lady thanking her for the thought and the delicacy and she wrote back immediately saying “I am glad you liked it. Please keep the container safely, I will collect it when I am next in Delhi.” Those days the postal department used to have a service called QMS, or quick mail service. Letters reached Bombay and Calcutta, as they were called then, in 24 hours. Madras took 36 hours. Much to my dismay, I had given the box away to the maid, who had grabbed it gleefully.

I thought it would only be gentlemanly to inform my friend’s mother that the box was now gracing the maid’s kitchen. Her reply was scathing. “Young man, just as you must ask before you take something, you must also ask before you give away something that doesn’t belong to you.” I have kept that letter as a reminder of the expected social etiquette in respect of such *dabbas* and, over the years, I have been very careful and never ever repeated that mistake.

Given this feminine social code, I thought, all women would follow it. You know, do unto others what you will have done unto you. But that, sadly, isn’t true. It’s actually a very interesting sociological phenomenon. If you ask a woman to return your *dabba*, she can, as often as not, get very annoyed. Apparently, it’s very bad form. The code thus applies only to men. That’s why when they send each other something, women use cheap containers.

Before I got married, my mother had bought a very handsome set of *dabbas* for me to take my lunch to the office... made of stainless steel with fancy latches. One day I sent some carrot halwa to a friend’s wife for their wedding anniversary. A few weeks passed and the *dabba* stayed with her. I forgot all about it until some months later my mother, who was visiting, asked me where it was. I told her and she was very angry. She ordered me to get the *dabba* back immediately.

When I reluctantly rang up my friend and reminded him, he said his wife had liked it so much that she was using it to send his lunch in it. “She thought it was an anniversary gift.”

My mother never forgave either of them and would always refer to them as *dabba thirudans* (thieves in Tamil). My fate was worse. I now had to seek her approval before despatching anything. Much to my wife’s dismay, who is a connoisseur of *dabbas*, she makes sure there are lots of cheap plastic boxes in the house. In fact, there is a class system among these *dabbas*. Which *dabba* is used for sending something depends on a whole lot of factors like occasion, social standing of the recipient, gender, etc. The highest compliment my mother would pay was “I liked the *dabba* very much.” I have now become a collector in her memory. ■



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