

October 2017

Rotary 

ROTARY NEWS



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Photo Courtesy: INPPC, Delhi.



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RC Birmingham, US, is over 100 years old and with 640 members, is intermittently the largest Rotary club in the world, and boasts of a Rotaract club, arguably the largest in the world.

A heart-rending farewell

The September issue carries on its cover page the beautiful photo of Sam F Owori, which touches our hearts. And, who else, other than PRIP K R Ravindran, can give such a heart-rending account of Owori's burial ceremony? When it was stated in the article that Sam and Norah never had the privilege to live in their just-built home, where he was made to rest temporarily before the last journey to his final resting place, we had to shed tears.

As usual, the issue has many good articles such as *Recharging Rotaractors*, *How to get iconic projects featured in Rotary News*, and the Editorial on women's empowerment with anecdotes, which is thought-provoking,



shows the writing skills of the Editor.

R Srinivasan

RC Madurai

Midtown — D 3000

The article *Sam Owori's final journey* was extremely emotional. Another article *Mantra to succeed as Governors* is praiseworthy and I liked the story *Towards a TB free India* very much. The introduction of DG Vyankatesh Vithal Channa (*Meet your Governors*) was also interesting.

Santosh Tiwari

RC Jalna

Rainbow — D 3132

Worrisome change

Rotary clubs in India have changed a lot from what they were in the 20th century, but the direction is worrisome. The liberty given to the clubs in inducting members, the dilution of personal touch with electronic communication which has resulted in poor attendance

at weekly meetings; and the crumbling of the classification system, have all led to any Tom, Dick or Harry becoming a member. Liberty to reduce four meetings to two has resulted in poor rapport among the Rotarians, affecting personal relations and lower attendance at club meetings.

Due to dilution in the classification system, our image has nosedived and Rotary is no longer different from any other international NGO. Quality concepts are lost; members are not invited, but inducted like a herd, hurting our public image. Only The Rotary Foundation offers hope for a better tomorrow. All this despite our lawmakers sitting in the Council on Legislation.

PDG Madhukar

B Deodhar — D 3141

Useful, interesting

I find *Rotary News* very useful and share the information it carries with others at Rotary meetings. Please send us the list of subscribers from D 3231 as I want each Rotarian to subscribe to *Rotary News*. This will help us verify who has not paid their subscription dues.

Should I, as Governor, send the project details or can the clubs send them directly? What kind of projects qualify for publication? And through what mode do we have to send them? Kindly clarify these queries.

DG Jawarilal

Jain K — D 3231

Dear DG Jain,
Thanks for your appreciation which motivates us to do better. As for your query; the detailed list of subscription dues and non-subscribing clubs from your District has already been mailed to you. On sending news, refer to the September issue, Page 11,

where I've written on how to get your iconic projects featured in *Rotary News*. <https://rotarynewsonline.org/get-your-iconic-projects-featured-in-rotary-news/>

Editor

Let numbers tell the Rotary story

RI President Ian Riseley has used his professional skill as a chartered accountant to good use by asking clubs to do self-assessment through a numeric data tool in the August issue. Now RI will ask clubs on Rotary Central to provide two numbers: the money spent in cash and kind on humanitarian services; and the number of hours spent on Rotary projects/activities. This will usher in transparency enabling the clubs' self-assessment.

PP P C Sanghi — D 3054

Learn from Bagchi

I met Subroto Bagchi at the IL V Prasad Eye Institute in Bhubaneswar while presiding over an event. I heard his talk and interacted with him on his vision in *Skill-ing Odisha*, (August issue). He is a great speaker with a vision and a bottom-to-top approach to achieve it. His rich experience will certainly bring a revolution in "skill development". Rotary should incorporate this project to bring tangible results.

Major D K Zarekar

RC Nashik-

Ambad — D 3030

It was a pleasant surprise to see a familiar face on the cover of *Rotary News* (August issue). *Skilling Odisha* mission is tailor-made for Subroto Bagchi. I interacted with him in the mid-1980s when he executed a reskilling plan for executives to take up sales and marketing activities. Wipro Infotech, then an infant in India's IT industry, had embarked on a growth path which required reskilling the existing staff to handle client queries and sell its products. Bagchi led that initiative.

In his trademark down-to-earth manner, he helped us understand what a computer meant to small businesses, and the challenges a hands-on business head would encounter. The basic selling techniques that he shared with the motley group of engineer-MBAs was just the pep we needed. Using simple examples, he drove home the point to us wide-eyed learners. And all through, he recounted childhood anecdotes from his beloved Odisha.

Later on, we often recalled those tips while facing tough client situations. All power to Bagchi, as he shows the way to build a skilled Odisha, and Rotary India should engage with him. Thank you for this inspiring article.

Vidyut Shenoy, RC Bangalore
Indiranagar — D 3190

Immortal characters

Sandhya Rao's passion for books and her journey through the land of books is admirable. She has really covered excellent classics in her write-up *Summer magic* (September issue). Books have given us certain immortal characters who continue to find mention in our daily conversations. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle gave us the detective character Sherlock Holmes, P G Wodehouse a great valet Jeeves, Earl Stanley Gardner the defence attorney Perry Mason, Agatha Christie created a Belgian detective Hercules Poirot. American essayist John Burroughs said: "I still find each day too short

for all the thoughts I want to think, all the walks I want to take, all the books I want to read, and all the friends I want to see."

H S Khurana
RC Ludhiana — D 3070

A ready reckoner for success

In the September issue I am tempted to reread the article by PRIP KR Ravindran, *Mantra to succeed as Governors*, giving invaluable advice to Rotary governors and incoming District leaders. The whole article is couched in a language which conveys useful, practical tips. He reminds us that "while popularity is temporary, respect is perennial." His advice that to earn respect we should endeavour to "build monuments that will endure forever" is timely. There is an organic unity in the whole article which is an excellent recipe for a leader's success.

PDG Kuldip Dhir
D — 3070

Thank you, *Team Rotary News*, on behalf of my District 3240 for the wonderful coverage of *A Rotarian's Literary Feat* in the September issue.

DGE Dr Sayantan Gupta — D 3240

From a non-Rotarian

This letter from a non-Rotarian comes to thank you for your article *A Venice experience in Mexico* (April issue). It made me recall the moments I spent on those waters 30 years ago and helped me remember Venice and a few other nostalgic journeys I have undertaken in India, one on the River Godavari in Andhra Pradesh. Another nostalgic moment I remembered was my meeting with the then District Governor Kalyan Banerjee, when he was on his first official visit to Rajpipla. I was there with my limb under

plaster, and he was very kind to thank me for attending that meeting... such a great soul.

I couldn't climb that step from being a Rotaractor to Rotarian, but I am still in touch with Rotary. At times, I get *Rotary News* issues from the footpath, but this time your article and Kalyan Banerjee's graceful face forced me to pick my pen and write a few lines to you. May an Editor like you keep adding value to *Rotary News*.

Sanjyant Sahasrabuddhe
Jwalamukhi, Kangra district
Himachal Pradesh

This refers to Sheela Nambiar's *What Women Want* in the September issue, where she says: *Food is intricately woven with emotions, besides satisfying physical hunger*. PRIP K R Ravindran had once said, "Women know the needs of the community better but their opinion is not sought. A club that shuts out women, shuts out much more than half the talent, ability and the connections it should have."

The writer has aptly concluded: *A woman should primarily love herself and everything else will fall into place.*

Raj Kumar Kapoor
RC Roopnagar — D 3080

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The power... to do good

As Rotarians in India move into battle gear to join hands with the Government of India to now take care of the 'Plus' element in the PolioPlus war they waged valiantly for long years to rid India of polio, the INPPC (India National PolioPlus Committee) led by PDG Deepak Kapur will take centre-stage once again. Thanks to the efforts taken by two Indian Rotary stalwarts, past RI Presidents Rajendra K Saboo and Kalyan Banerjee, The Rotary Foundation has come on board for yet another partnership between Indian Rotarians and the Government of India... this time on a special universal immunisation (UI) project titled *Mission Indradhanush* (MI). As Union Health Secretary C K Mishra explained recently at a national PolioPlus orientation meet in Delhi, two years ago, the GoI found an alarming number of 90 lakh children outside the UI programme, and launched MI, "and in the last two years we've reached out to 60 lakh of them". UI includes immunising children not only against polio but also measles, rubella, TB, chickenpox, hepatitis B, among others.

As the 'Plus' in PolioPlus refers to these diseases, particularly measles and rubella, the senior leadership decided that Rotary should partner with the GoI in *Mission Indradhanush*. At first, Michael McGovern, Chair of the International PolioPlus Committee, was convinced that this was only an extension of the PolioPlus programme, which would continue to keep Rotarians active and engaged till the world is made polio-free. Once McGovern was convinced, as Trustee Chair, Banerjee wrote to every TRF Trustee, explaining the salient features of this programme and its relevance and advantages to the PolioPlus programme, as nobody in RI or TRF wants to deviate from that programme. The Trustees were convinced and with the help

from a freshly minted national committee and the district governors for 2017–18, Indian Rotarians will now go full steam to rid India of these preventable diseases, particularly measles and rubella, the latter being disastrous for the child in the womb when a pregnant woman contracts it.

But what warmed the heart at the Delhi meet was the great store government officials, beginning at the top and with the Health Secretary himself, place on Rotary's help and support through a formal and institutionalised partnership. Mishra admitted that while the GoI had made great strides on MI, there was a limit to "overburdening our lower level health care system, so I seek Rotary's support, knowing you have a repository of wisdom and knowledge in the field and a global connect that we can certainly use."

Both Dr Balwinder Singh, National Programme Officer (Immunisation), WHO, and Pradeep Halder, Deputy Commissioner (Immunisation), Health Ministry, made a passionate plea to Rotary to join the immunisation drive in India. Their collective plea: You have power and clout for advocacy at the highest level in the government. For reaching the polio vaccine to Bihar, *puri ki puri train ke beech* you got two wagons reserved, and that too in 48 hours! Only Rotary could do this! Now once again, for MI we need you. You have direct access to the ministers and top bureaucrats, so please partner with us!

Takes the mind back to the Jaipur Institute (Dec 2015) when Piyush Goel, then the Union Power Minister who has now been given the Railways portfolio, and a Rotarian himself, had talked about the "collective power" in the room, and said, "I know you can get 10 ministers like me for such a meeting."

Power is a heady feeling alright. But when that power is used to do good, it transcends to another level.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Rasheeda Bhagat'.

Rasheeda Bhagat



Together let's fight Polio

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

Some years ago in the Melbourne, Australia, museum where my daughter used to work, an iron lung was on display. For most people my age who remembered the terrifying polio epidemics of the 1950s, that iron lung was a testament to how far vaccination had brought us: to the point where that once-critical piece of medical equipment had literally become a museum piece.

For much of the world, the story of polio is a simple one: After years of fear, a vaccine was developed and a disease was conquered. But for some of the world, the story was different. In so many countries, the vaccine wasn't available, mass vaccination was too expensive, or children simply couldn't be reached. While the rest of the world relegated polio to its museums, in these countries, the disease continued to rage — until Rotary stepped forward and said that all children,

no matter where they lived or what their circumstances, deserved to live free of polio.

In the years since PolioPlus was launched, the combined efforts of Rotary, the governments of the world, and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative have brought the number of cases of polio down from an estimated 350,000 per year to just a few so far in 2017. But we must reach zero cases, and stay there, to achieve eradication. To do that, we need everyone's help.

On October 24, we will mark World Polio Day. It is a day to celebrate how far we have come and an opportunity for all of us to raise awareness and funds to complete the work of eradication. I ask every Rotary club to participate in some way in World Polio Day activities, and I encourage you to visit endpolio.org for ideas and to register your event. Whether you host a silent auction, a virtual reality viewing, a fundraising walk, or a Purple Pinkie Day, your club can make a real difference.

This year, our World Polio Day livestream event will take place at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation headquarters in Seattle; you can watch it on endpolio.org beginning at 2.30 pm Pacific time. As many of you know, Rotary has committed to raising \$50 million a year for the next three years. This amount will be matched 2-to-1 by the Gates Foundation — effectively tripling the value of all money Rotary raises on World Polio Day and throughout the year. Let's all make a difference on World Polio Day — and help End Polio Now.



Ian H S Riseley
President, Rotary International

Message from the RI Director



An exemplary microcredit centre

Dear Rotarians,

The United Nations Development Goals encourage us to focus efforts on eradicating poverty, uplifting and empowering women, creating global partnerships for development and ensuring environmental sustainability. October is the month that Rotary dedicates to Economic and Community Development when we renew our commitment to helping grow local economies and celebrate successes on that journey. Here I share my experience with just a few examples of my home club's Microcredit Centre's commitment to promote growth and development of local economies and communities.

Before I do that, let me say a few words about the microcredit pioneer Prof Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel laureate from Bangladesh and the founder of Grameen Bank. Prof Yunus began transforming lives while serving as an economics professor in Bangladesh. What began as personal microloans to poor women in nearby villages, grew into the Grameen Bank, which today has more than 2,500 branches throughout the country. I had the opportunity to listen to him at the Rotary International Convention at Bangkok in 2012 when he commended Rotarians for their work in developing countries. He also encouraged Rotarians to pursue social business enterprises that would work

with microcredit-funded businesses not just to generate revenue but also to return profits to the communities where they operate.

Karur is known the world over for its cotton handloom home textiles. This industry, which exports hand-woven home furnishings and apparel worth over Rs 3,000 crore every year, is labour intensive, employing several thousand semi-skilled and unskilled labourers who lack access to the formal banking sector. These hapless daily wage earners were under the control of usurious money lenders who grabbed virtually every rupee they earned. To provide such people succour from the scourge of these money lenders was born the Microcredit Centre of Rotary Club of Karur in 2000–01 by getting RI District 6460 as an international sponsor for this project. Loans ranging from Rs 5,000–10,000 were extended to tailors (to buy sewing machines), vegetable and flower vendors, tea and petty shop owners, small grocers, electricians and women's self-help groups. Today, with a corpus of Rs 5 million and zero bad debts, RC Karur is in the enviable position of being able to extend micro loans to 350–400 beneficiaries every year and plays an important role in uplifting their quality of life.

All this was made possible because of the involvement and dedicated efforts of Rotarians contributing their precious time and money and, of course, financial assistance of The Rotary Foundation. The key to the success of the Microcredit Centre is the training that is imparted to beneficiaries in soft skills and family values, apart from rudimentary banking knowledge before the disbursement of loans.

I am proud of this achievement of the Rotary Club of Karur and wish that every club and Rotarian should emulate their example and play an appropriate role in developing local economies of the communities in which they serve.

Let us work together and help Rotary make a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'C. Basker'.

C Basker
Director, Rotary International

Message from the Foundation Chair



Expanding Rotarian's role as peacebuilders

What do we mean when we talk about peace?

In 1921, the fourth object of Rotary was established: "The advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service."

In Rotary today, we see peace not as an abstract concept but as a living, dynamic expression of human development, integral to our humanitarian mission.

Much of our work for peacebuilding depends on the ability of Rotary members to execute three important activities: forming transformative partnerships, raising funds to support our many hundreds of projects, and recruiting and supporting Rotary Peace Fellows in their work.

This year The Rotary Foundation formed a strategic partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, one of the leading organisations in identifying and measuring the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.

Through this partnership, Rotary will work with the institute to create an online learning portal for Rotarians and peace fellows to build

on their current expertise, apply new methods and mobilise communities to address the issues' underlying conflicts. Our goal is to foster community-based projects in peace and conflict resolution that are practical and impactful.

Rotary has also launched a Rotary Peace Centres Major Gifts Initiative to raise funds for new partnerships while continuing to garner contributions to educate and support our peace fellows and more.

President Ian H S Riseley's six peacebuilding conferences — taking place globally from February to June — will explore the relationship among peace, Rotary's areas of focus and environmental sustainability. Our history proves that you don't need to be a diplomat to make peace.

When you mentor a student struggling to graduate, you are a peacebuilder.

When you launch any project to support economic development in your community, you are building conditions for sustainable peace and conflict management.

When you support and collaborate with a Rotary Peace Fellow, you are advancing peace.

Today's complex conflicts require more creative community-based initiatives. Together we can really make a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. Netzel".

Paul A Netzel
Foundation Trustee Chair

How do you define peace?
Send me your thoughts at
Paul.Netzel@rotary.org.

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District Wise TRF Contributions as on August 2017

(in US Dollars)

District Number	APF	PolioPlus*	Other Restricted	Endowment Fund	Total Contributions
India					
2981	13,205	773	0	0	13,978
2982	10,551	60	609	0	11,220
3000	3,803	78	27,500	0	31,381
3011	21,784	100	(5,689)	0	16,195
3012	32,369	2,318	0	2,016	36,703
3020	1,724	0	19,950	8,594	30,267
3030	203	20,724	1,050	0	21,977
3040	0	0	0	0	0
3053	1,158	0	0	0	1,158
3054	70,000	102	65,000	0	135,102
3060	12,416	0	206	0	12,622
3070	7,560	148	0	(500)	7,208
3080	4,370	1,372	0	0	5,742
3090	1,073	0	0	0	1,073
3110	15,027	1,399	5,049	0	21,475
3120	13,214	508	0	0	13,722
3131	45,695	(4,431)	32,625	24,594	98,483
3132	20,173	660	0	0	20,832
3141	144,305	1,730	76,338	0	222,374
3142	111,476	0	0	(1,000)	110,476
3150	8,699	16	8,400	0	17,115
3160	30,702	0	0	0	30,702
3170	11,616	5,341	1,016	0	17,973
3181	12,286	250	0	78	12,615
3182	1,918	0	20,811	0	22,729
3190	777	200	0	16	993
3201	18,842	0	22,197	0	41,039
3202	1,250	340	0	0	1,590
3211	13,973	0	0	(10,000)	3,973
3212	115,469	102	0	0	115,571
3231	5,390	0	31,250	6,000	42,640
3232	25,502	2,000	4,455	0	31,958
3240	8,939	0	0	555	9,494
3250	8,559	0	0	0	8,559
3261	11,449	100	0	0	11,549
3262	333	0	0	0	333
3291	18,014	(27)	323	0	18,310
India Total	823,600	33,862	311,091	30,352	1,198,905
3220 Sri Lanka	12,677	10,067	0	1,217	23,961
3271 Pakistan	2,000	22,886	0	0	24,886
3272 Pakistan	129	5,500	0	1,000	6,629
3281 Bangladesh	43,060	0	0	7,025	50,085
3282 Bangladesh	7,106	150	0	0	7,256
3292 Nepal	20,711	100	36,456	0	57,267
South Asia Total	909,281	72,565	347,547	39,594	1,368,988
World Total	14,884,124	2,783,996	1,834,673	2,434,366	21,937,159

* Excludes Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Source: RI South Asia Office

Ruby

...Red, Rare, Royal

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GoI seeks a “deeper partnership” with Rotary

Rasheeda Bhagat

I convey the gratitude of the entire country to Rotary International for its support in polio eradication, not only when India was an endemic country, but its continuing support in the entire battle against polio. In the phase we got critically stuck on the last mile, Rotary and other organisations came forward to be with the government.”

With these opening words Union Health Secretary C K Mishra conveyed the Indian government’s gratitude to Indian Rotarians for the Herculean battle they had waged, along with the WHO, UNICEF and the Central and State governments, to rid India of

polio. The Health Ministry is again looking for strong and credible partners such as Rotary as “health care delivery cannot, and should not, be the business of the government alone, or else we can’t attain goals.” As Rotary had earlier effectively partnered the government, he urged Rotarians to continue the association as in polio “we learnt from you how to tackle and overcome obstacles. RI has a very strong presence, intellectual capacity and a wide network to aid the Indian health care delivery system.”

Partnerships are crucial
Mishra said partnerships were at the core of the

redesigned national health mission; “stakeholders are part of most programmes, be it development partners, the doctor community or civil society. Rotary was an important partner and we’d like to carry this relationship beyond polio.”

He said the Health Ministry had undertaken a very ambitious universal immunisation (UI) programme in *Mission Indradhanush* (MI). “The government found that nearly 90 lakh children are out of our UI programme and hence MI was launched. In the last two years we’ve reached out to 60 lakh of them. But when you start overburdening your lower level

health care systems, you need substantial outside support and I seek your support not only in numbers. I know you have a repository of wisdom and knowledge in the field and a global connect that we can certainly use.”

He urged Rotarians to align themselves with national programmes. “One concentrated effort at one place is brilliant for that geography at that particular time. But unless it is scaled and sustained, it does not add value, so please ensure continuity.”

But this partnership need to be deepened and institutionalised with a follow up mechanism. “We in the ministry are extremely welcome of any new idea,

In the phase we got critically stuck on the last mile, Rotary and other organisations came forward to be with the government.

C K Mishra
Union Health Secretary



no matter how critical it is to what we are doing. So please give us your ideas and suggestions,” the Health Secretary added.

Addressing the meet PRIP Rajendra K Saboo, complimented Mishra for the crucial role he played in immunising the children of Bihar around the banks of the Kosi river during the floods. “If he hadn’t done that, we’d still be having polio in India.”

The ‘plus’ in PolioPlus

Explaining the ‘Plus’ in PolioPlus, of which many Rotarians had no clue, Saboo said that when Rotary signed an agreement at the international level with WHO, UNICEF, etc, “they said we just can’t talk only polio and it was decided that Rotary would take care of polio and the immunisation for 5–6 other diseases would be the ‘plus’. So now the challenge is to take care of the Plus part, which include measles and rubella. We are now going to sign an MoU with the Health Ministry,” he added.

He added that now that TRF had accepted to take on UI as a project in which Indian Rotarians would get involved, “we have to do it wholeheartedly. The Trustees are looking at India; if this succeeds they might start it in other countries too. Coming to the funds to do this, the money is there. It is there in your pocket, you just have to find it!”

He said some of the senior Rotary leaders were thinking of ways to propagate awareness on measles and rubella vaccination. And this could include, with help from Railway Ministry, two or three Railway coaches bearing messages such as ‘Make India measles and rubella free’ stationed for a few days in a place and then travelling to major stations.

Let’s become givers

RI Director Basker said that the biggest concern the RI Board had when Indian Rotarians were engaged in polio eradication was that “we were attempting to do the impossible. But we built partnerships with

the government, sponsors, health workers, WHO, UNICEF and sought help from everyone. And made the impossible into possible and eradicated polio, making this one of the most successful stories ever written in the field of international health.”

But after India was declared polio-free Indian Rotarians had become a little complacent, but till polio lurked in our neighbourhood — Pakistan and Afghanistan — there was no room for any laxity. “Just imagine if polio returns, 23 years of our time, funds and the effort invested will have to be repeated. Those who attended the Atlanta Convention know we need \$1.5 billion in the next three years to eradicate polio from the world.”

He added that till now India has been a receiver of funds for polio immunisation. “I have assured Trustee Sushil Gupta that this year the Trendsetter DGs are focusing on raising funds for the End Polio campaign. In

Now the challenge is to take care of the Plus part, which include measles and rubella.

Rajendra K Saboo

Past RI President

the next couple of years our focus should be to collect money that others cannot imagine.” When this campaign started 25 years ago, Indian economy wasn’t doing so well. “Today we are the sixth largest economy in the world, second largest steel producer, fifth largest auto producer, sixth largest manufacturing country, and we have the third largest foreign exchange reserves in the world.”

Basker assured the Health Secretary that “with our field volunteers we will focus on the implementation of MI and prove we can do any job.”

TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta said today he could stand up with a sense of pride “because of what you and your predecessors have done in getting polio out of India.” He said when this proposal came up before the Trustees at their meet, “eyebrows were raised that when polio is still not eliminated from the world, why are we talking of something else when Pakistan and Afghanistan are still endemic countries. But we explained to them this is needed because it will strengthen the polio immunisation programme



New National PolioPlus Committee

Chairman

PDG Deepak Kapur

Advisors

RID C Basker

PRIP Rajendra Saboo

PRIP Kalyan Banerjee

TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta

PRID Ashok Mahajan

PRID Yash Pal Das

Members

PDG Sushil Khurana

PDG Rajiv Pradhan

PDG Siddharth Bose

PDG Jogesh Gambhir

PDG Iqbal Singh Tomar

PDG E K Sagadevan

PDG R Badri Prasad

PP Ajay Saxena

and keep polio out of India.”

He added that during a recent trip to Bihar he had checked the immunisation figures with a friend in the WHO and “he said in Bihar

routine immunisation is beyond 73 per cent and in UP it is 68 per cent. That really made my day, and I felt we can reach the goal of 85 per cent and more. That time is not far; we can kick measles and rubella also out of India as we did polio.”

Recalling the first ever national rally for polio eradication in 1987 that was flagged off from the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi by the President of India Giani Zail Singh, Gupta quoted a famous couplet from eminent poet Majhrooh Sultanpuri: *Main akela hi chala tha janib-e-manzil magar. Log saath aate gaye aur karwaan banta gaya* (I had started my journey alone, but along the way people joined me and the caravan materialised).

A bigger push required

In his opening comments INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur said: “Two million children, 7 lakh vaccination

booths, 11 lakh vaccination teams, 1.5 lakh vehicles... you have done it, twice a year, year after year, every year, for 23 years. Indeed, our fight against polio helped Rotarians discover themselves and their true potential.”

But, he added, the past was always less important than the future. While Indian Rotarians did a great job with polio immunisation, the measles and rubella immunisation drive will be a different story. “We are talking about 30 million pregnant women, 26 million newborns, 9 million immunisation stations, 27,000 cold chain points... and this also includes protecting them against Hepatitis B and tetanus. Of course this is a mammoth programme, but let us do what we can.”

Introducing the new national committee members, to the group (See Box) he said they are “Rotarians who have done excellent work in Rotary activities

When my friend in WHO said in Bihar routine immunisation is beyond 73 per cent and in UP it is 68 per cent, I felt we can reach the goal of 85 per cent and more.

Sushil Gupta

TRF Trustee

and will stand by you, shoulder to shoulder.”

Underlining the need to continue to be vigilant against the return of polio, Kapur said the most important aspect of the vaccination programme, as in the past and “even more so today, is surveillance to ensure we don’t miss out on any child who has polio or polio-like symptoms.”

A flashback

Giving an overview of India’s immunisation journey, Dr Balwinder Singh, National Programme



Officer (Immunisation), WHO, said in 1978, “India and the world were struggling with smallpox, and there was no structured immunisation programme.” But once smallpox was eradicated, the entire world decided to have a proper immunisation programme.

In 1985, when the polio vaccine came on the scene, India decided that “we have to immunise every child”, and the age for polio drops was brought down from five years to a few months.

First the cold chain was established, next the capacity was shored up for manufacturing vaccines for six preventable diseases including polio. Our immunisation programme, he added, was “one of the largest public health programmes in the world. While in China 18 million children are born every year, in India, the number is 26.7 million. The numbers are huge, and even if we miss one per cent of

the child population, it is a very big number.”

Singh disclosed that immunisation is done in nine million centres, which could be a hospital, a PHC, a sub centre or even a village *chaupal*, or *anganwadi* centre. Not all places have the necessary infrastructure. The vaccines are stored in the required temperature — 2–8 deg Celsius in nearly 27,000 centres.

He added that he was in Mewat in Haryana the previous day; “it is such a tough situation there. They challenged us to immunise their children. There is barely 18 per cent immunisation in Mewat; 90 per cent looks like a pipe dream.”

Pradeep Halder, Deputy Commissioner (Immunisation), the Health Ministry, said quite often at meetings, he is asked what has Rotary done to deserve so much credit and “I tell them *puri ki puri train ke beech* they got two wagons

Make sure you are there on the victory stand

Past RI President Rajendra Saboo told the participants at the Delhi Polio meet that Rotarians had dreamt of a polio-free world and there was concern in some quarters that at several polio events the Rotary logo was not there.

“Of course our role has been recognised by those who know of our work. But by the time the world becomes polio-free unless we make our presence felt, our contribution will be lost. When the world goes on the victory stand on that day, to ensure Rotary is there, it is important that we continue our efforts. Our work in measles and rubella vaccination will keep the name of Rotary alive in the minds of present leadership at the national and international level. So my appeal to the DGs, through the RI Director C Basker, is that when the final victory bugle is sounded, and you are not there, that will be disappointing. So you must ensure Rotary’s presence on that victory stand,” he added.

reserved for polio vaccines for Bihar! If anybody could do that or has done it, it is only Rotary to which credit goes for doing so only in 48 hours! Now once again, for MI we need you.”

Trustee Gupta expressed the confidence that Indian Rotarians could play a major role in UI, but reminded them that “we have only 16 months and not the long years we had

From L: DGs Parvinder Singh, Ravi Choudhary, G V Rama Rao, P M Sivashankaran, B M Sivarraj, T K Ruby, RID C Basker, DGs J Abraham, Vyankatesh V Channa, Sattish Singhal, Vivek Kumar, Bagh Singh Pannu and P Gopalakrishnan.



What the GoI expects from Rotary



Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao administers polio drop to a child in the 1995 NID in the presence of PRIP Rajendra Saboo, (second from left), then INPPC Chair O P Vaish (fourth from left) and former RISAO Regional Head Vinod Bhola (right).

In its ambitious goal to achieve over 90 per cent coverage of two doses of the PolioPlus vaccines — 9th and 18th month — to protect the child from polio, measles, rubella, TB, etc, this is what the Government of India needs from Rotarians, said Dr Balwinder Singh, National Programme Officer (Immunisation), WHO.

- High level of advocacy, total engagement with partners in the earmarked 118 districts and seven urban cities of India, most of which are in UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.
- Identify and provide contact details of Rotarians at the State and District level associated with *Mission Indradhanush* (MI) so that government officials can approach the right people.

- A national-level task force with senior Rotarians who can be involved in important communications.
- Create awareness, raise visibility of the programme, support innovations.
- Constitute awards, as you did in polio.
- Political engagement; you have the reach.
- Get on board once again celebrities — cricketers and others sportspersons, film stars. Involve different State celebrities like Mithali Raj, Varnika Kundu who was stalked and got huge media support... people who are trending on social media. Get badminton stars such as Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu; kabbadi league players who are huge in rural areas where a big community watches them.
- Get Hindi, Bhojpur, Avadhi, Urdu and Punjabi speaking celebrities.
- Help the minority community where we are again facing a lot of problems. We need to get back the Rotary Ulema Committee for Immunisation, and the advocacy that Rotary did at the most critical phase of resistance to polio needs to be revived. Imams and Ulemas need to get on board.
- Power of the mobile phone. Let's devise a plan to spread the message.
- Organise health camps, particularly in high risk areas.
- Engage community leaders, village pradhans. Get a competition going between sarpanches, even district magistrates. Institute awards or recognition in front of

Chief Minister and other ministers.

- Brace up for more work; UI is huge, every week there is immunisation, it is not like polio camps. MI is fast tracking routine immunisation, and you'll be going to those populations not visited before, where there is no service delivery.
- WHO is monitoring, so you will get authentic figures.
- Involve school teachers with an IT background. Spread the message through school and college bands, painting competition, etc.
- Organise events; *Ek shaam immunisation ke naam* at a good venue, and get numbers.
- Painting competition.
- Utilise school kids. Madrasas are changing, mindset is changing; if you give the message it will reach home. Last week we met a Bishop; we need help from them in the Northeast. Involve gurudwaras
- Organise walkathons, marathons, rallies as we did once upon a time.
- Acknowledge exemplary efforts.
- 1–2 minute video clips, maybe from the mother of an affected child.
- Messages on trains, flights.
- Link the immunisation card to Big Bazaar, giving a discount.. corporate can help and you can get them on board.
- Give them umbrellas, caps, banners. You have spoilt them in the polio programme!

for polio. So we need to change our strategy and course of action, make a new plan and implement it without thinking too much. As the Nike logo says... we have to *just do it!*"

As for the scary scenario projected earlier, where a large section of the minority was once again resisting taking polio vaccines, both Gupta and Saboo said this was a challenging scenario and would have to be tackled. Worse, Mewat might not be an isolated case, so Rotary would have to think and act on such resistance in other pockets of the country too.

Dr Singh added that MI comes under PRAGATI — Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation. "The

Prime Minister himself monitors four or five programmes and MI is the only health initiative in this. His objective is to get over 90 per cent immunisation by 2018. So we're looking for your support at all levels,

particularly in high level advocacy as you have direct access to top people in the government."

He added that MI has got so much clout, with the PM monitoring it that "11 ministries are asking *ki hamey karna kya hei* (what

do we need to do). My appeal to Rotary is to get it cleared at that level... give them proposals and get them cleared. Money is not the issue. You have that power."

Designed by
Krishnapratheesh



From L: PRIP Rajendra K Saboo, RID C Basker and INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur.

Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar

Team Rotary News



The Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP) for 2017–18 was launched by Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar on September 1. The award, instituted last year by the HRD Ministry, recognises government, government-aided and private schools that have undertaken significant steps to fulfil the mandate of the Swachh Vidyalaya campaign.

WinS Target Challenge Committee Chair Sushil Gupta is one of the members of the Puraskar's selection committee.

Last year 172 schools were selected out of 2.5 lakh schools that had applied for the award across India. The awards are given based on five categories — water, sanitation, handwash with soap, operation and maintenance, and behaviour change activities and capacity building.

Schools can register with their U-DISE code and submit applications in the prescribed format available online at <http://mhrd.gov.in>. A mobile app, Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar 2017–18, available on Google Play Store or Apple Store can also be downloaded.

Deadline

Submission of Application: September 1 – October 31

District level selection for awards: November 1 – 31

State/UT level selection: December 1 – 31

Submission of State/UT level results to MHRD for national level selection: January 7, 2018

Final selection: March 31, 2018

How TRF came on board for Mission



Indradhanush

Rasheeda Bhagat

As Rotary India embarks on an ambitious mission to join hands with the GoI on extending the reach of universal immunisation in India through *Mission Indradhanush* (MI), two senior Rotary leaders — both past presidents of Rotary International — Rajendra Saboo and Kalyan Banerjee — shared with a dedicated and

passionate batch of Rotarians the background of how the TRF Trustees came on board to give their blessings to this programme.

For some time now, particularly after India was certified polio-free in 2014, Indian Rotarians have been asking what next. At a National PolioPlus Orientation and Planning meet convened in Delhi in August by PDG

and India National PolioPlus Committee (INPPC) Chair Deepak Kapur, PRIP Saboo explained how with the help of PRIP Banerjee, who was then the TRF Trustee Chair, the Foundation approved the proposal of Indian Rotarians taking up immunisation, along with polio, of measles, rubella and other diseases.

After a discussion with Kapur, WHO and

Health Ministry officials, and Dr Jacob John, “who has played a pivotal role in Rotary’s PolioPlus programme, a note was prepared which Banerjee discussed with Kapur and Mike McGovern, Chair of the International PolioPlus Committee (IPPC), and he convinced Mike that the Indian universal immunisation programme is only an extension of the



From L: DPPC Vinod Tailang, D 3030 DG K S Rajan, NCM Ajay Saxena, DPPC Ramesh Tiwari, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur, PRIP Rajendra K Saboo and RID C Basker.

PolioPlus (PP) programme, which will continue to keep Rotarians active till we make the world polio-free,” said Saboo.

Convincing IPPC and TRF Trustees

McGovern was convinced, took up the proposal at the IPPC meeting, and as Trustee Chair, Banerjee wrote to every TRF Trustee, “explaining the salient features of this programme and its relevance and advantages to our PP programme, as none in RI or TRF wants to deviate from that programme. He opened all the doors and finally, all the Trustees came on board and now we are going to take up

Innovate ways to raise money

For partnering GoI in Mission Indradhanush or universal immunisation, Indian Rotarians cannot accept any more funds from TRF, and will have to think of innovative ways to raise money, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee told at an orientation meet on PolioPlus held recently in Delhi.

The district governors would have to think of fundraising events, musical concerts or charity dinners; “America does it all the time; they do \$1,000 per person dinners, here you can get Rs 5,000. He recalled that as RI President when he was attending an Institute somewhere in the US over the weekend, a charity dinner aiming to raise \$1 million in a night was being held some 2,000 miles away. “The DG, a lady, asked the RI Director in charge of that Institute if he could spare

me for a day. He asked me and I said I am willing to go if you can spare me but I am 2,000 miles away, how do I go? He said don’t worry, they will arrange it. The DG sent an 8-seater chartered airplane. She was clever enough to sell the remaining seats to those Rotarians in her district who wanted the privilege of travelling with the President of RI for two hours!”

This is what people are doing elsewhere to raise funds, and “you can also think of such innovations,” he added. He himself had attended such a big-ticket dinner in D 3011 last year where a lot of money was raised. “It is difficult but not impossible. You will get credit for eradicating measles and rubella from India; the government will do it anyway, but Rotary will be there as a partner.”



universal immunisation in India as a challenge,” Saboo added.

Addressing the orientation meet, Banerjee recognised Kapur, “an icon of PP in India, and his deputy, Lokesh Gupta, for their “tremendous contribution” in making India polio-free.

He said after PRIP Saboo’s initiative on this front, it was “easy for me as Trustee Chair to get this proposal cleared in time from the Foundation.” But now the ball was in the court of this small but powerful national committee to take up routine immunisation. He warned its members that often he had found lukewarm interest in the immunisation task of late with Rotarians asking “there are government people to take

care of it, so why should we get involved, and how long can we do this. They say specific immunisation days are fine but routine is routine and what is our role. But when the GoI had undertaken as its mission to eliminate measles and rubella (German measles) by 2020, why can’t we join hands with them and get recognition,” Banerjee asked, adding, “After polio, GoI always recognises Rotary for its work, and we are their favourite partners. So we are in a happy situation.”

Lead this crusade

Urging Rotarians to lead this “crusade” Banerjee said unlike oral polio drops, these were injectable vaccines and would need “persuasion, follow up and your involvement,

because these will attract more questions from those who resist and your job will also be to get the immunisation mechanism in place and working,” he said.

Saying that India’s statistics for routine immunisation are “ridiculous”, he added that in some areas the figure was ridiculously low at 10 per cent, so achieving a goal of 80 per cent was difficult. “But even if you can go up to 60 or 70 per cent in routine immunisation, you’d have done a great job.”

Asking Rotarians across India to remain vigilant as polio was still lurking around the corner in our neighbourhood, Banerjee said when he raised these points with the Trustees, “it was easy to convince them and they

Let me make it clear that CSR funds can't be used for our meeting and eating; use the money for the actual work, awareness, and implementation of the universal immunisation programme.

PRIP Rajendra Saboo

said go ahead and do it, we are all with you."

Payback time

Coming down to brass tacks, he told the freshly minted committee

members and the DGs for 2017–18 who participated, that "TRF is not going to give us any more funds for organising a meeting like this, for which some funds could be managed.

We have to do our own funding." He suggested that instead of having national meetings, State or district-wise meetings on immunisation could be organised as for national meetings most of the money was spent on travel. "For long years the Americans, Australians, Japanese and other Rotarians have been funding us. For all the immunisation in India we haven't really raised any funds ourselves; either the government has provided the vaccines free

or Rotary has given us the funds. Of course we made India polio-free using our time and effort but not our money. So don't you think the payback time has come? TRF has given us enough and we should be ashamed to ask for more."

The DGs could also consider giving something from the district funds. And there was the possibility of a few generous foreign donors giving some money and "Raja (Saboo), Basker, Sushil (Gupta) and I will work on it and get

An early rubella warrior

As Indian Rotarians brace up to become an integral part of Mission Indradhanush (MI), an ambitious universal immunisation programme to rid India of measles, rubella, and other preventable diseases, the efforts of Nalini Prabhakar, former Chairman of Inner Wheel District 323, and spouse of PRIP P T Prabhakar, on rubella prevention deserve mention.

"When I visited a school for the hearing impaired, about 17 years ago, the correspondent of the school explained to me about rubella and its dangers, saying that 85–90 per cent of the children in her school and similar schools for special children anywhere in India or the world lose their hearing because the mother was affected by rubella during her pregnancy. If only she had been immunised against rubella much earlier, today these kids would have normal hearing," recalls Nalini.

Rubella vaccination has to be given to girls before marriage; this one act, "the teacher told me, will



Nalini Prabhakar (right), former Chairman of Inner Wheel District 323, with a school student who was vaccinated for rubella.

prevent such congenital disorders in newborns".

Deeply moved by this experience, over the years Inner Wheel has been working on rubella, has prepared pamphlets, and spreading awareness in school and college girls. "In the last couple of years we've managed to immunise 10,000 girls in our district. But this is only the tip of the iceberg. We have a long way to go; if Rotary and Rotaractors join hands with us, we can really cover a lot of ground."

She is confident that as rubella now features significantly under MI, "we will eradicate it soon."

Nalini adds that the Kerala government has made rubella immunisation mandatory long ago. "Many marriage halls in Kerala ask for rubella vaccination certificate for the bride, when the wedding hall is booked," she smiles, adding, "other State governments need to do the same."

For long years Americans, Australians, Japanese and other Rotarians have been funding us. For all the immunisation in India we haven't raised funds ourselves; TRF has given us enough and we should be ashamed to ask for more.

PRIP Kalyan Banerjee



Courtesy: INPPC

Microsoft Founder Bill Gates being felicitated by PRIP Kalyan Banerjee in the presence of PRIP Rajendra K Saboo in 2008 at Delhi.

something if possible. But that money would have to be spent on the actual work in the field and not on “our meeting and eating and having a good time,” he made it clear.

Banerjee added that India had been polio-free for several years. “We did it at a time when nobody thought India could do it. And for the first time we raised \$20 million for TRF last year, and my congratulations and compliments to all of you. It’s incredible, we were No 2, leaving Japan far behind at around \$17.5 million. So if we want to do it, we can!”

Shoring up polio contribution

RI Director C Basker said he and his trendsetting DGs had decided that “this year the contribution from India to the polio fund will be the highest in recent times. The DGs are ready to put in their best efforts for measles and rubella vaccination and we will continue till we meet the goal. They’ve been very generous in supporting all the training programmes initiated for the first time in our zones, and have been using their district funds to ensure the training of important

leaders from the districts so they are empowered to do their job better.”

Basker requested Kapur to give him “a definite plan, the budget and the money to be raised locally by the DGs. We also need to appoint somebody at the District level to coordinate with the national committee on this programme,” he added.

The session concluded with PRIP Saboo sharing the good news that now that the TRF Trustees have cleared the idea of channelling CSR funds into Rotary’s humanitarian work, senior Rotary leaders in India were confident of raising through CSR funds in a couple of months Rs 37 lakh — Rs 1 lakh for each district — for this immunisation project. “But let me make it clear that CSR funds can’t be used for our meeting and eating; use the money for the actual work, awareness, and implementation of the programme.”

Taking a cue from Banerjee’s speech that many districts overseas have surplus funds, Saboo said if the committee members or the DGs could get an idea of these districts and the kind of surplus money they have, “they can also be approached through common friends for this programme.” He also urged the DGs to involve their successors in this programme so there would be a sense of continuity.

Kicking off the opening session, Kapur beautifully summed up the mammoth effort put in by Indian Rotarians in the polio eradication programme through a single sentence: “Freedom from polio in India taught us so many lessons... that we can look beyond just donating sewing machines... can motivate political leaders of all hues and win recognition from government, that top bureaucrats can include Rotarians in their team!” ■

Freedom from polio in India taught us so many lessons... that we can look beyond just donating sewing machines.

INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur



Breathing life into blue babies

Jaishree

Shweta Kumari (11) is sad that she is unable to participate in the fun activities with her classmates. “I want to play and dance like my friends,” she bursts out in Bhojpuri. But the moment she exerts herself, she gasps for breath and her face turns bluish-black, says her mother Sushma Devi. Shweta was born with a congenital heart condition that places restrictions on her everyday activities, and palpitation, convulsion and dizziness mark her day. “We realised that she had a heart problem when we met a cardiologist at Ranchi but didn’t have the means to take it further,” says Sushma Devi, as they await their turn to meet the doctor at the Mahavir Vaatsalya hospital in Patna.

Meanwhile, inside the chamber, two doctors examine six-month-old Raj Nandini, who doesn’t look her age. She is so tiny and fragile that she could fit into a palm and her cry is feeble as the doctor takes her ECG. Dr Niranjan Dutta writes, “High risk”, in his records as he patiently tells the mother that the child has to undergo surgery at the earliest.

These children were part of the final screening camp organised by District 3250 at the hospital, in association with Rotary’s Gift of Life (GoL) programme. Paediatric cardiologists, Radhakrishnan and Niranjan Dutta, from Fortis-Escorts Hospital, Delhi, were examining child/teenage patients suffering from congenital heart disorders (CHD).

The corrective surgery will be performed later at the hospital.

For over a month, the district has been organising initial CHD detection camps for the underprivileged villagers of Bihar and Jharkhand where paediatric cardiologists identified over 300 children with various forms of heart disorder.

“This is the first time the district is conducting such a massive CHD screening camp. All 92 clubs have come together to give new life to these children,” said DG Vivek Kumar.

The children, along with their parents, were brought to Patna for the final screening. “We identify children for surgery based on their ECG reports and general health conditions,” said



TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta, DG Vivek Kumar and PRID Ashok Mahajan, along with the CHD patients, at the screening camp in Patna. Also seen: PDG L B Singh (far left), Project Chair Sushil Poddar (fifth from right) and Project Convener Anant Arora (right).

Jaishree

Gift of Life



A C Peter (right), National Coordinator, Gift of Life, with the Ugandan children and their parents at the Amrita Hospital, Kochi.

Gift of Life, a Rotary International programme, began in India in 2002, to facilitate heart surgeries for children from BPL families suffering from congenital heart ailments. "It is Rotary's peace project of love with a human touch, functioning beyond caste, religion or even borders," said its National Coordinator A C Peter. GoL arranges open heart surgeries for 120 children every year. So far, 25 matching/global grants of \$1.5 million, in addition to contributions from donors, have been spent for the programme.

"Even as I am talking here, seven-year-old Aryan Sheriff of Lahore, Pakistan, is undergoing surgery in Fortis Delhi now. He was referred to us by the External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj," Peter added. Ten children from Uganda have just flown back after successful treatment at Amrita Hospital in Kochi, Kerala. They were also treated for other ailments such as

hernia in one child and restoring the eyesight in another.

TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta recounted a dialogue with Rtn D N Sharma of RC Udampur who called him in 2005 to provide an update on a cardiac screening camp in Jammu. "Sharma said, '20 children were detected with CHD. Our camp is over'. I wondered if the project is over or has it just begun. And we brought the children to Delhi for treatment.

The scar in the chest of these children is testimony to our good work, and the thought that we were able to save so many lives keep us going.

A C Peter
National Coordinator, GoL

That was the real start of GoL," said Trustee Gupta.

GoL has coordinators all over India and surgeries to treat CHD are conducted in hospitals everywhere. While a surgery costs around Rs 3-4 lakh, Rotary is charged only Rs 70,000 to 75,000. GoL takes care of all expenses — medical, food and stay — for the patients and the caregivers and visa formalities too for international beneficiaries.

Two years ago, 28 children from Zambia and 22 from Uganda were treated in Delhi hospitals. On August 6, 340 children were screened for CHD in Srinagar, and 87 of them were referred to Delhi hospitals for immediate corrective surgery, said Renuka Choudhury, President of RC Delhi East End.

"The scar in the chest of these children is testimony to our good work, and the thought that we were able to save so many lives keep us going," said Peter.

Dr Dutta. Surgery was not recommended for children above 15 years. By the end of the day, 187 children were shortlisted for surgery.

The genesis

It all started during the installation of the District Governor, when S P Bagaria, GoL's State Coordinator for Bihar and Jharkhand and member of RC Giridih, requested DG Vivek to conduct a camp to treat children with CHD. He readily agreed.

"You just have to bring them to Delhi. The moment they set foot on our soil, they are our responsibility. GoL will take care of their boarding, lodging and hospital expenses. Do not charge anything from the patients," said TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta to the Rotarians managing the camp.

He and PRID Ashok Mahajan interacted with the doctors and patients' families. "You do not have to spend money for your child's treatment, we'll take care of it. As such, the hole in their tiny hearts is a huge trauma; let it not dig a hole in your pocket too," he assured the parents.

The clubs had organised transport for people from various localities across the two States. About 100 Rotaractors from 13 clubs also pitched in enthusiastically with back-end support. "It was a wonderful, yet sobering experience. It made us realise the value of life and how blessed we are," said DRR Vaibhav Thakur.

The Rotaractors have been promoting the programme on social media and spreading the message to villagers in semi-urban and rural areas through posters and handbills. "Nearly 4,000

The hole in their tiny hearts is a huge trauma; let it not dig a hole in your pocket too.

TRF Trustee **Sushil Gupta**



Jaishree

Parents waiting with their children for consultation at the CHD screening camp in Patna.

news items on the topic have been published. We want a maximum number of people to benefit from this camp," said Sushil Poddar, the Project Chair. Trustee Gupta added that this will help in promoting Rotary's public image.

PRID Mahajan recalled the days when polio was widespread in Bihar, and acknowledged the efforts of Rotarians such as PDG L B Singh and Syed Shamael Ahmad for providing a breakthrough for the Muslim population resisting the vaccine. "The situation was such that only if UP and Bihar became polio-free, India would be polio-free. Connecting with the Ulemas helped achieve this in a big way," he said.

He commended the district for giving children the *zindagi ka tofa*, saying, "when we have accepted Service above Self as our motto, why should we play in the shallow waters? Let us take such magnificent projects and gift a longer life to such children. Resources will

fall in place when you take the first step forward."

Kishore Kunal, Secretary of the Mahavirasthan Trust that runs this hospital, said, "We'll also perform free heart surgeries here as soon as our new OT is ready. Presently, we'll examine children and send them to hospitals that you suggest. We'll bear the expenses," he said. The trust operates five hospitals for various specialties and is supported with revenue generated through sale of Tirupati *laddus* specially made at their Hanuman Mandir.

"All the 187 children will be treated within a year. We'll get things organised for them," assured DG Vivek, referring to the entire exercise as "*manav kalyan ka maha yagna*."

Rotarians from Delhi clubs (D 3011 and 3012) were also present. Rotary clubs of D 3250 donated milk powder for the neonates in the hospital and wheelchairs for the cancer hospital. ■



Thank you, Rotarians, for your support

Team Rotary News

Following the massive deluge that swept Uttarakhand in June 2013, Rotary India immediately reached out with food and support to the flood victims and decided to reconstruct 32 schools that were devastated by the floods in Rudraprayag district. The Rotary Uttarakhand Disaster Relief Trust was formed with Past RI President Rajendra K Saboo as President and Rotary general officers as Trustees.

Senior leaders appealed to Rotarians for support in rebuilding the schools and funds poured in from across the country. A total contribution of Rs 58 million was received and it earned an interest of Rs 4 million over three years. Rotarians and senior leaders made several trips to

the construction sites braving the challenge of an arduous hill journey of over 14 hours.

By January 2017, all 32 schools were handed over to the respective school management committees. Each school is earthquake and landslide resistant and equipped with desks, benches and blackboards for classrooms, gender-specific toilets and a kitchen to cook mid-day meals.

The sturdiness of the schools was soon put to test when on February 6 an earthquake of the magnitude of 5.8 on the Richter scale struck Rudraprayag and its tremors were felt in Delhi.

A school built by Rotary at Ukhimath, the epicentre of the earthquake, stood its ground, unshaken.



“I am thankful to all the Rotarians who have contributed generously to make this huge dream a reality and I am happy that we were able to fulfil our promise of facilitating education for these children,” said PRID Y P Das.

All contributions received were expended solely for reconstruction of the schools, the accounts have been audited and income tax returns filed, said PRID Das.

Audited balance sheets of four years (2013–17), statement of district and individual contributions received, income and expense statement as on September 15 and the list of 32 beneficiary schools can be viewed at <https://rotarynewsonline.org/thank-rotarians-support/> ■

WinS facilities for Rajasthan schools

Team Rotary News



PDG Ratnesh Kashyap (left) and Joga Ram, the Commissioner SSA, Rajasthan, exchange MoUs in the presence of the State Education Minister Vasudev Devnani (centre).

Rotary District 3054 has signed an MoU with the Rajasthan government to provide all aspects of WASH in Schools in 1,100 government schools across the State. The initial phase includes 550 schools in and around Jaipur and Bikaner and it is expected to be completed in 18 months and then similar work will be taken up in another 550 schools across the State.

“In line with WinS Global Chair Sushil Gupta’s recommendation, we will ensure to usher in behavioural change in the community by reaching out to almost one lakh schoolchildren and thereby sensitise the community through them,” said Ramesh Agrawal, the District WinS Committee Vice-chair.

The entire project, estimated at \$1 million, will be executed with global grant support from clubs of Taiwan and The Rotary Foundation. Plans are underway to sign similar agreement with the Gujarat government as parts of the District also fall in that State, he said. ■

An iconic Rotary Club

Rasheeda Bhagat

RC Birmingham, US, is over 100 years old and with 640 members, is intermittently the largest Rotary club in the world, and has given birth to a Rotaract club which is arguably the largest in the world.

So how many hours a month do they volunteer in working for their club activities... would they have a rough, ball park figure, I ask Fred McCallum, President of the Rotary Club of Birmingham (RCB), Alabama, USA, and its Executive Director Susan Jackson. We are having a tete-a-tete on the

sidelines of the Atlanta Convention, and I'm trying to get a sense of what RI President Ian Riseley has been telling Rotarians on the need to collate the total volunteer hours they put into Rotary work. So that a value can be put on their collective work.

There is a gasp and a giggle. McCallum, who gasps, says, "Gosh, that's really scary to think."

Susan, the one who giggles, adds, "That might scare a lot of people away!"

Adds the club president seriously, "You can be sure it's a lot of time... attending board meetings, club activities, behind the scenes planning, etc. If you are a leader of the club, you simply have to be ready to commit your time." He adds, "We try to get as many members as possible

involved in the club's leadership roles."

Started in 1914, RCB celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2013; "we are almost as old as Rotary itself, but for a few years," says McCallum, with a lot of pride. A downtown Birmingham club, it has a whopping membership of about 640 members, which makes them, arguably, the largest club in the Rotary

From L: RC Birmingham Executive Director Susan Jackson, Club President Fred McCallum and Rotaractor Jeris Gaston.



world. “Well, you can say that currently we are one of the two largest clubs in the Rotary world. Oklahoma City is the other one... we go back and forth with them on that score,” he smiles.

So apart from this distinction, what is the USP of their club, I ask him. One thing is having as members the crème de la crème of the city, even though he doesn’t use those exact words. “We are known as a group of business and philanthropic community leaders from around the area. We are fortunate to have good leadership and have worked hard to maintain the quality of our membership,” says McCallum, adding, that it is this feature which draws more quality members to the club.

“Two and a half of our members became RI Presidents,” says McCallum — Frank Spain in 1951–52, Roy D Hickman in



The Rotary Trail



Most Rotary clubs love to talk in detail about the projects they do, in which they have put in lots of hard work and money, and believe this helps to enhance Rotary’s image in the community. But it is with a charming restraint that RCB President Fred McCallum and Executive Director Susan Jackson talk about one of their most iconic projects, transforming an ugly dump of a stretch in their city of Birmingham into a beautiful walking trail of nearly 1 km.

In 2013, as the club was celebrating its Centennial, it did three programmes — a human rights symposium at the Civil Rights Institute in the city, a Symphony Orchestra attended by nearly 1,000 people, and the much more ambitious Rotary Trail, a multi-million dollar project.

“Yes, it cost us almost \$4m and we had to do some serious, though not hard, fundraising because people wanted that change as this was a terrible part of the city. It was a difficult and expensive stretch — about four blocks — to improve. I don’t know many cities that would dedicate that much money to improve a small

patch of area because every city has so many needs. But it was our gift to our city and the public loves it.”

This gift from Rotary to their city has transformed a vacant railroad right-of-way into a beautifully landscaped, four-block walking/running/biking pathway, with a water conservation system in place. It has benches for people to rest, and solar panels for charging mobile devices and also Wi-Fi!

In 2015, the Rotary Trail was recognised with the State Governor’s Award for Water Conservationist of the Year in Alabama. Prior to the development of this trail, the storm water run-off in the abandoned stretch flowed directly into the village creek, carrying debris and other pollutants into the city’s water system. Now a new filtration system has been put in place to improve the quality of the run-off water.

Never a group of people to rest on their laurels, about its next big project, Betsy Bugg, the current RCB President says, “We’re a group of doers and a pretty ambitious group, and are now discussing what big project to do next.”

The world's largest Rotaract club



In 2003–04, when Charles Collat, “an extraordinary man” who had headed many civic and cultural boards in the city, including Regions Bank and the Southern Research Institute, was RCB President, he set up a Rotaract club, which is arguably the largest community-based Rotaract club in the world with 290 members. Unlike the Rotaract clubs in India, all its members are professionals. Jeris Gaston, a smart young woman, who is its present President is into wealth management. “Our club is targeted at the 25–35 age group people who are out of the universities and are young professionals.”

Her club’s motto, she says is — Learn, Socialise, Serve. Its core competency is developing young leadership and RCB offers a mentorship programme to its Rotaract club, pairing selected Rotaractors with their Rotarian mentors. About 10 Rotaractors are

This Rotaract club has gained such prestige that when a top young professional moves to Birmingham, “this is the club he/she would want to be in!”

also allowed to attend RCB meetings, held in their own building, where the average attendance is 200–210. Susan Jackson, who joined the club in 1999, says that when RCB started this Rotaract club, it helped with total support — \$5,000, their Board formation, etc. “It was also decided that RCB should nominate their young sons and daughters, or young professionals from their organisations, to this club, to give them a firm footing.”

Jeris, a Rotary Ambassadorial scholar, joined the club in 2009. While the Rotary club’s gender mix is barely 80:20, the Rotaract club has a 50:50 gender ratio, “which is indicative too of our city and its young professional community,” says Susan, urging Jeris, “Tell her, how many girls you have on your Board.”

“Our Board is mostly women,” grins Jeris. “And they run it really, really well,” adds McCallum.

From July 1, Betsy Bugg Holloway, has taken over as President of RCB, and is the third female president in the club’s 104-year history. “We welcome all kinds of diversity — racial, gender...,” says Susan.

A signature project of the Rotaract club is *Ready to Read*, under which libraries have been set up in all second grade classes

in the city and about 50 of their members go out as “reading buddies” to read to the students. Their other project is mentoring 17–18 year olds and pushing them to go to college through scholarship the Rotaract club organises through a partnership with a local non-profit and the State department of Education, different Rotary clubs and community organisations. It now wants to get into international service projects.

It also makes an annual gift to the TRF for polio eradication.

The Rotaract club, with annual membership dues of \$470, has done very well at fundraising and 10 years ago started its own foundation, raising \$1 million. “That money has gone back to the community in projects,” says Jeris.

Susan has the last word: “What makes them outstanding and a great model for other Rotaract clubs is the way they use technology in their meetings and communications. It is a very creative style; we take lessons from them, and now our use of technology will change after learning what they do.” She adds that this Rotaract club has gained such prestige that when a top young professional moves to Birmingham, “this is the club he/she would want to be in!”

If other RCs are searching for information about starting or strengthening a Rotaract club, this club can help, as they have a lot of resources and information, she adds.



From R: PRIP K R Ravindran, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, TRF Trustee Noel A Bajat, PDG Gulam A Vahanvaty, Fred McCallum and Susan Jackson.

1972–73, and the half... our honorary member K R Ravindran in 2015–16!” One of its members, Leslie Wright, headed the very first major fundraising campaign when the PolioPlus programme was inaugurated in 1985 and the target was \$120 million.

But the aim of the club leadership is clearly to have top notch leaders from top businesses, professions, philanthropic organisations and the general community as its members. Literally, anyone of substance in the city is a member of this club. And the club has its own building in the city centre called the Harbart Centre — four floors which include a highly equipped meeting room to hold 800, a Board room, a committee room and a well equipped office.

RCB members’ dues include two charitable items which are optional, but “almost 100 per cent of our members pay them; the total is \$1,100 a year,” says Susan.

Signature projects

On some of their iconic projects, he says education is an area close to their hearts and the club has been involved for 12 years in Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) education in the State of Alabama, which was short on this facility in the early 2000s. The club stepped in with funding and over time the State kicked in to fund these classes so that now all the Birmingham schools have Pre-K classes. Now the club has put up a Pre-K centre. Recently they worked with the District to gift a helicopter to the Children’s Hospital for critically ill children in distress.

The Rotary Trail (See Box) was their centennial project.

In the international arena, the club has worked with RC Colombo (the club of PRIP K R Ravindran) for school construction and providing cancer detection equipment to two hospitals in Sri Lanka.

Susan explains that when the tsunami

devastated the island nation in 2005, “our club members wanted to help and sent cheques. We really had a large sum and our strongest contact in that area was Ravi, whose District was taking on the school rebuilding task.” After the project was completed, Ravindran visited their club to thank them and explain how their money had been used. He invited the club members to visit Sri Lanka on a fellowship visit, which was undertaken in 2009, and other collaborative projects followed. The latest is a \$250,000 global grant project involving four countries — USA (RCB), Germany, Switzerland and Sri Lanka — to set up a cancer detection centre. To date, the centre has screened over 35,000 women free of charge and diagnosed approximately 5,000 positive cases who are getting further treatment.

So what aspect of Rotary do they enjoy the most?

Two things, says its President. One, the fellowship, which is both great and important. But also the opportunity to listen to some really high quality speakers, top leaders in their field, some of who are fellow club members, but whose life stories and career experiences are not known to everybody. The calibre of speakers they invite includes personalities like Bill Clinton, General Electric CEO Jeff Immelt, Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, and so on.

Says PRIP Ravindran, “I consider RCB one of the best Rotary clubs in the world. They have undiluted quality in membership, good quantity, wonderful fellowship, do high class projects and have the finest infrastructure, including a superefficient administrative secretariat. What more can you ask of a Rotary club?”

Pictures by
Rasheeda Bhagat
Designed by
Krishnapratheesh

RC Ambala's cancer hospital gets a flying Ambassador

Y P Das

In 1997, Sneha Bansal, spouse of past president of the Rotary Club of Ambala, RID 3080, Subhash Bansal, was detected with cancer. He had to run from pillar to post for her treatment. Realising the trauma and misery that many had to undergo for treatment of cancer, Bansal decided to do something to provide care to such patients in Ambala, where no such facility was available. In 2003, with the assistance of Global Cancer Concern India and Rotary Club of Boca Raton, USA, a palliative care unit was established and cancer awareness camps were organised.



Ravi Bansal in his Cessna 400 aircraft.

A palliative care team was formed and treatment was given to cancer patients free of cost and the club was able to mitigate their agony and pain. Several health camps, particularly for early detection of cancer in women, were held over a two-year period and 3,000 women were screened.

In 2005, Rotary's Centennial year, the club decided to build a cancer detection and general hospital. In the first phase, about 10,000 sq ft was constructed with contributions from RC Ambala members. In 2010, the second phase was completed and the hospital became operational. Rtn Dr Jai Dev, the prime motivator of this project,



Ravi Bansal with PRIP Rajendra K Saboo.

contributed over Rs 8 crore, and the hospital was inaugurated in March 2010 by RI President Nominee Kalyan Banerjee.

Complicated surgeries pertaining to cancer and other specialties have been performed at the Rotary Ambala Cancer and General Hospital.

With RC Boca Raton coming on board as an international partner, some additional much-needed equipment was installed with several matching grants from The Rotary Foundation.

Currently, the hospital has 100 beds, a built-up area of 40,000 sq ft and is providing high quality health-care in general surgery, neurosurgery, oncology, interventional cardiology, orthopaedics, ENT, radiology, physiotherapy, etc at an affordable cost to all sections of the community. Managed by RC Ambala Rotarians, it serves 250–300 outpatients every day.

A flying crusader

To upgrade the hospital in advanced medical care equipment, RC Ambala is now on an expansion project to build an additional 30,000 sq ft, so that another 50 beds and two



additional operation theatres can be added and diagnostic equipment such as a CT scan and an MRI purchased.

The club has found a flying crusader in Ravi Bansal from RC Buffalo, New York, who is a retired entrepreneur. With a passion for flying, this pilot/owner of a Cessna 400 aircraft, has undertaken a one-man mission to raise \$750,000 for some of the critical medical equipment required at this hospital. He has been flying solo around the world to not only raise these funds but also raise awareness on cancer detection and cure.

Bansal took off from Buffalo on July 4, and has flown over 20,000 nautical miles (23,000 miles) in 120 hours of flying time, stopping over at Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, England, France, Italy, Greece, Jordan, UAE, Oman, Malaysia, Philippines, Japan, Russia, Alaska and Canada. He was back in Buffalo on August 21. The first Indian to accomplish such a feat, he says he finds it hard to believe that his “dream for long years to do this Round-the-World trip has been realised and I have returned home safely.”

Apart from raising funds for cancer, to which he has lost his sister-in-law, his aim was also to play golf, drink and play his drums. “I’ve played five rounds of golf in a week and I’ve had enough to drink to last my lifetime,” Bansal told a Buffalo newspaper.



Ravi Bansal and his wife Pratibha being welcomed by R K Sharma, President of RC Ambala.

With a doctorate in mechanical engineering, he earlier owned AirSep, a medical oxygen therapy equipment company, which he sold for over \$170 million three years ago. He has spent \$100,000 of his own money on this solo flight. For Bansal, the best part of his trip was to return to his hometown of Ambala where he was allowed to land at the restricted Air Force Base, and given a warm reception in the city. He blogged about each leg of his trip on his website.

Of course the trip had its blips too; one was when he parked his aircraft in the scorching desert heat in the Middle East and returned to it to “find everything in the plane had almost melted.” While equipping himself with all the essentials required for this marathon journey, one thing he had

forgotten to bring along was a window shade which would have cost him barely \$20!

He thanks his extended family-wife Pratibha, sons Rohan and Nitin, brothers, sister and their families “for their unflinching support”, his logistics team Eddie Gold and Ahmed Hassan of GASE, friends in Buffalo, the new ones he made along the way, and “most of all God almighty who watched over me through the entire journey. Thank you all for helping make my dream come true. I love you all very much.”

The Erie County Legislature, Buffalo, feted him for his accomplishment and fund raising endeavour.

Bansal’s dream of flying solo around the world has come true but his target of raising \$750,000 to fund the purchase of an MRI for the cancer hospital is still short. Over 200 donors have already donated around \$160,000. He plans to raise the rest by visiting Rotary clubs and talking about his adventure and the cause for which it was undertaken.

(You can visit the website: <http://raviworldflight.com/> to know more and support the funding for the RC Ambala Cancer Hospital. Bansal can be contacted at: ravbansal@yahoo.com.)

The writer is a past RI Director, and member of RC Ambala, D 3080.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy





Rotary link ends rural water woes

V Muthukumaran

An arduous trek of over 2 km to and from their houses daily to fetch water is history for the women of Kishor village in Thane district, Maharashtra. For decades, they had to walk under the harsh sun with children in tow, pots on head and waist, making a beeline to a perennial well, nearly 650 metres away from the village. The well has natural aquifers and abundance of sweet water to cater to the villagers' needs, and recharged by the dam, it is the only source of drinking water for the villagers.

"During one of our NSS camps in Kishor, we created five bunds which provided sufficient water for irrigation," recalls Antony Lawrence, Principal, St Paul College and treasurer of Rotary Club of Ulhasnagar Sapna Garden, D 3142.



RC Ulhasnagar Sapna Garden President Manish Mulchandani inaugurates the drinking water project at Kishor village.

Plea for Rotary's help

The village sarpanch Sanjay Gaikar, happy with the project, requested Lawrence to solve the water woes of the village through his club.

Subsequently, the club members led by President Manish Mulchandani visited the village and also briefed the then DG Chandrashekhar Kolvekar about the situation who in turn sanctioned a District Grant of \$2,900 to provide water facilities for the villagers.

Around the same time, a French Rotarian, Philippe Dangelser, a friend of PP Suresh Rupchandani and an expert in water projects, on a visit to the club expressed a desire to inspect the dam and project site.

Seeing the hardship faced by the villagers and the daily grind of women in fetching water from a far-off well, Dangelser agreed to part-fund the project with help from his club, RC Brumath, France. "Philippe shares a good

rapport with our club through RYE for long," says Rupchandani.

Dangelser mobilised around \$4,600 from his club and Ulhasnagar Rotarians chipped in with another \$1,000 to bridge the shortfall. A pipeline was laid to link the well to a storage tank present on a nearby hillock. The tank, with a 10,000-litre capacity, was earlier constructed by the State government.

A submersible motor was lowered into the well to pump water to the tank through the pipeline. The storage tank has supply lines to each household to deliver potable water via taps, thus solving the drinking water needs of the villagers.

The project will benefit over 200 families in the village. "We are thankful to Rotary for putting an end to our drinking water woes. Women spend more time now doing other productive things like studying and even enjoying simple pleasures of rural life," smiles Gaikar. ■



Water being filled into the storage tank atop a hillock.

When charity truly began at home

Rasheeda Bhagat



Manju and Kulbhushan Jetly.

His philanthropy mantra is simple: “I put my hand first into my own pocket before asking others for funds.” And this has been his guiding principle right from his mid-20s, when as a young engineer working at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Mumbai, he was involved, along with a few of his colleagues, in welfare activities for the orphan/destitute children housed in the Bal Ashram or Children’s Aid Society

located just across the street from his office.

Meet Kulbhushan Jetly, Charter Secretary of RC Deonar, which was started in 1987. From counselling those children on basic hygiene and later helping to revive a nearby ITI which was in a state of dysfunction and almost abandoned to equip these children with technical skills, to becoming an Arch Klumph Society member (he will be inducted as an AKS Fellow at the 2018

Toronto Convention), has been a long journey filled with umpteen acts of kindness and charity.

Jetly, who comes from a middle class family in Amritsar where he did his graduation before qualifying as a mechanical engineer in Mumbai, says his family has always been engaged in community service. “My father did honorary work for the Amritsar Sewa Samiti and I’ve accompanied him to some hospitals and schools run by the Samiti.”

This inculcated in him the habit of service, and after involvement with the children in the Bal Ashram, he was in search of a larger avenue for community service. At that time Rotary was starting a club in the Deonar area and looking for professionals, businessmen, etc, and he readily joined.

Meanwhile, after working for few years as a quality control engineer, he quit his job to start his own manufacturing unit to make QC equipment and introduced several new products in the market. After joining Rotary, he got deeply involved in the club’s service activities, and became one of the contributors to The Rotary Foundation. At first, Jetly and his wife became Paul Harris Fellows. “My grandson became a PHF on his first birthday; long ago we had decided to become Major Donors, and then thought about the next milestone, the AKS,” he says. In his decision to join the elite AKS club, Jetly was also driven by the thought that credit would also go to his



From L: District TRF officers Nirav Shah and Akkshay Mehta, DG Gopal Mandhania, Kulbhushan Jetly, Manju and Virendra Widge.

club, “because I am very proud of my club.”

Beginning as the charter secretary of the club, he became president in 1989. The polio eradication drive had already begun and Rotarians were focused on this single point agenda. RC Deonar started its polio eradication programme in a huge slum area in Mumbai, and he joined it in right earnest, and held 100 polio immunisation camps in his year as president. With 65,000 children immunised, the club began its long journey in community service.

“But that was in an urban area. I wanted to focus more on villages

as I felt the real need for community service was required there.” So he started the ‘Sanitation and clean drinking water for all’ project for which a TRF matching grant of \$103,000 was obtained, and the club worked with Rtn Jaap Vaandrager of RC Zoetermeer Zegvaart, the Netherlands.

Under this project, 35 toilet blocks and borewells were constructed in 35 villages of Karjat taluka near Mumbai and for water conservation a check dam was built, “which brought

great relief to thousands of villagers.” This was followed by another Matching Grant to install rain water harvesting in seven schools.

But, before doing all this, and holding steadfast to his philosophy of donating money himself before asking others, he spent Rs 1 lakh, about 15 years ago, to do a big sanitation project. He has also been instrumental in raising funds for disaster relief after natural calamities. When Uttarakhand was devastated by floods, and Nepal by the massive earthquake a few years ago, “we were on a WhatsApp group and I told my club members that we should help and I began by giving Rs 5,000. In 36 hours we collected Rs 2 lakh. I have always believed that these small beginnings lead to monumental things,” he says.

The story of how Jetly got Vaandrager involved in these projects is interesting. “The first time I took him

to visit one of the schools, he saw the schoolchildren sitting on a mud floor in the most disciplined manner. I saw him weep and asked the reason and he said these boys and girls are little angels and he got involved in the welfare work.”

Going forward, even after being inducted in the AKS club, Jetly has plans to keep contributing to TRF, for which he has “great respect”.

His wife Manju is a past president of the Inner Wheel Club of Deonar. “It was her idea that we should stop contributing in small bits. We thought that with advancing age, when you are not sure about the future, it is better to make big contributions and that is how the AKS membership idea was born. I strongly believe that we should share our resources to eliminate the misery of others and use our expertise to improve their lives,” he adds. ■

When I took Rtn Vaandrager from the Netherlands to the school and he saw the children sitting on a mud floor in the most disciplined manner, he wept and said these boys and girls are little angels and got involved in the welfare work.

A trip down memory lane

Rasheeda Bhagat

To this generation of Rotarians, or Rotaractors, who joined Rotary when India was on the verge of becoming polio-free, or after it became so, it will come as a shock to know that in the early 1980s, India was reporting 450 to 500 new cases of polio every day. And that too when the world as a whole was reporting about 1,000 cases a day!

And we are now talking of barely five cases of polio being reported in the world this year... in Afghanistan and Pakistan! And there have been

zero polio cases reported from India in the last four years.

As Rotary in India gets ready to sign an MoU with the Indian Government to join as a trusted partner in its universal immunisation (UI) drive titled *Mission Indradhanush* (MI), PDG Deepak Kapur, who has so efficiently chaired the India National PolioPlus Committee (INPPC) since 2001, takes a trip down memory lane on his journey in ridding India of polio.

In 1994, as a young DG — Kapur was all of 36! — he got involved in

polio work, but really got absorbed in it the next year when Rotary tied up with the then Health Minister of Delhi, Dr Harsh Vardhan, in the fight to end polio. “Thanks to intense advocacy efforts by senior Rotary leaders in India, he decided to try out supplementary immunisation, which is different from routine immunisation where the numbers were really poor.”

Till then, senior politicians and bureaucrats refused to believe that India could be polio-free. But in 1994, after seeing the “stupendous success”

INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur with tennis player Sania Mirza during a promo for polio immunisation.



Those were the days when
India used to report 450–500
cases of polio every day, when
the entire world had 1,000
cases a day.

of the first supplementary immunisation that Harsh Vardhan organised, the GoI decided to adopt it as a national programme in 1995, he says.

Biting cold, crowded areas

Kapur recalls that in biting cold all of them would go to Dr Vardhan's house at 6.30 am and his wife would "give us a cup of tea and from there we would go to very crowded areas to immunise children. Those were the days when India used to report 450–500 cases of polio every day, when the entire world had 1,000 cases a day."

Which was nearly half the number, I gasp. "Oh yes, and later on, it became more than half, when things started getting better controlled in the Americas and elsewhere, and the Indian statistics became worse!"

In 2001 he was made the INPPC Chair. "By 2000 we had come down to 265 cases and in 2001, 268 cases. So everyone thought the job was done. But in 2002 we had what we call the mini-outbreak in UP, which was a setback. And for years we saw the seesaw of P1 going up and P3 coming down."

Kapur explains there are three polio viruses, which are classified as P1, P2 and P3. The last case of P2 was from Aligarh in 1998, and then it was gone! India was left with P1 and P3 virus. P1 was then considered much more virulent because the symptoms were more severe and it could travel long distances unlike P3.

UP, Bihar worst hit

In the "mini-outbreak" stage, UP and Bihar were the worst hit due to high

Resistance from Muslims

One of the biggest challenges of the polio eradication drive in India was the huge resistance from the Muslim community, particularly in UP and Maharashtra.

INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur recalls that once, in the Kundarki block in UP, in one particular Muslim household reputed to be very resistant to polio immunisation, the door was opened by a woman holding a child in her arms. "We said, may we immunise your child? We had been told they will hit you, throw you out, but she said 'sure'. We were surprised, and a couple of guys moved forward to give the drops. But I said: 'Hang on'; the body language was not right. She was so tense. So I asked her what will you do after we put the drops in the child's mouth and go away? And she said I will dash his head on the floor and kill him. Totally shocked and shaken, I asked why and she said if I don't, my husband will come

home in the evening and kill me. So we quietly went away."

Such fear was twofold; the Muslims were told the medicine is *haram* (forbidden) for Muslims as it had parts of pig in it. And two, it was a plot of the American and the Indian governments to limit the number of Muslims in India.

Once in Rampur, he saw a rag of a newspaper which barely printed 200–300 copies propagating this crazy theory. "The reason behind this story was that this guy had asked a local Rotarian for an ad which cost some Rs 500 or 600 and was refused and this was his revenge. But such gossip picked up like crazy. We fought such false propaganda by setting up Muslim Ulema committees. Past president Ajay Saxena was instrumental in getting together many of these maulvis in UP and I requested PRID Ashok Mahajan, my batchmate and dear friend, to take it forward in Maharashtra."

population density. "I have seen 32 people living in a 15 sq yard plot in a place in UP, barely 30 minutes from Delhi. The day shift people would sleep there at night and vice versa. People in such areas were living in terrible insanitary conditions. Human refuse floated around in dirty water and the people were drinking water

from a pond where buffaloes covered in mud were bathing."

Kapur says what is most scary is that in some of these areas such conditions remain even today and "that is why there is danger of polio returning if we are not vigilant."

Another problem was malnutrition in the children which prevented the vaccine from forming antibodies in the child, rendering the vaccine ineffective. While in the US children were being given three doses for polio, in South India "we were giving 7–8 doses but in UP we had children getting as many as 20 doses of the vaccine and yet getting polio," he adds.

Add to this situation, the prevalence of intestinal diseases in children. "So the child was like a bucket with a hole at the bottom. You kept pouring the vaccine and it came out from the

You guys are holding the
world to ransom; it is
because of you Indians the
world is not polio-free.

Bruce Aylward, WHO



other end, not staying in the body long enough to make the antibodies.”

Periods of despair

So did he and the other leaders have periods of despair, I ask him.

“Plenty; I used to speak to PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and Trustee Sushil Gupta, and wonder whether India would ever become polio-free,” he says. He recalls a particular meeting of an Advisory Group that advised the GoI, in which “only government officials, people from UNICEF and WHO were allowed but not we Rotarians. At one such meeting in Lucknow, Banerjee, who was then a TRF Trustee, said TRF gives so much money for polio and how can they not allow us. It was 2001, I had just become the INPPC Chair; we just walked in and ever since, we belonged

there! It was frustrating to be treated as just the moneybags to begin with!”

India becomes Polio-free

Bruce Aylward, who headed the polio programme worldwide in WHO for long years, came to India in 2001 and said: “You guys are holding the world to ransom; it is because of you Indians the world is not polio-free. I prophecy that India will be the last country in the world to be polio-free, and in India, UP will be the last State, and in UP the last town will be Moradabad.”

Recalling these words, Kapur says that there were four polio capitals in the world in those days — Moradabad, Bareilly, Badayur and Rampur, all four in western UP! “What was called the ‘Moradabad-virus’ has infected children in every continent in the

My fear is that world will, within two years, report 500 cases of polio every day! And from where are you going to find the same funds, the same commitment, the same passion to begin anew?

world; it has travelled to Africa, the Americas and Europe.”

There were lots of moments of despair, “lots of occasions when we felt so discouraged. But then one fine day, as President-elect of RI, Banerjee said at a meeting, very empathetically: “We-will-get-rid-of-polio-next-year. And it happened! On January 13, 2011 we had the last case of polio in India in his year as RI President and that was totally amazing! I had thought he was being very rash. But it happened. And three years later came the certification!”

Coming to the present and the near future, Kapur is apprehensive that Indian Rotarians have slackened on the polio front. “They have taken up other things; there are so many needs... the feeling is that it is over and polio is not going to return. But it was due to such complacency that so many other countries such as Indonesia, Kazakhstan, China, Bangladesh, Nepal got it back; China got it back from Pakistan and others got it from India!”

Striking an ominous note, Kapur says that in case polio returns to India and our response is not swift and it is not controlled immediately, “my fear is that world will, within two years, report 500 cases of polio every day! And from where are you going to find the same funds, the same commitment, the same passion to begin anew? So keeping India polio-free is absolutely crucial in this battle.”

Photo Courtesy: INPPC, Delhi.



From slum to MC ... to hospitality

Ramesh Narayan

We often talk about how the Universe conspires to bring things together; sometimes we actually experience it.

I was driving to Virar (about two hours away from Mumbai) to attend a music performance for elderly women that had been put together by friends Pratibha and Geeta, with help from another singer friend, Romita.

At that time, Ekta Shah who manages the Bhavishya Yaan (BY) programme of RC Bombay, D 3141, at the GK Marg Municipal School, messaged me that an alumni of our BY programme who was studying in college and always attributed her success to our programme, wanted to give back to society, and could I think of something for her.

I got out of the car and asked Pratibha and Geeta if this girl could accompany them to an orphanage they were helping. They agreed to take her there the very next day.

Many weeks later, while planning my installation a thought struck me. I called Pratibha and asked her how she found Pooja Kamble, the young woman, who despite being so impoverished, wanted to give back



President of RC Bombay Ramesh Narayan with Pooja Kamble.

to society. Overwhelmed with the response, I asked her to help this girl from the slums of Worli to be the MC at my installation as President of RC Bombay.

What followed was amazing. Pratibha and Geeta went into high gear coaching the young woman. Ekta, who was travelling, kept in touch with a hundred tips on several points. And Pooja Kamble, the young girl with a paralysed father, no mother, two sisters and a brother, and who wanted to give back to society, took centre stage as MC at the Taj Crystal Room before a packed audience that could have intimidated anyone.

She was cool, poised and natural. I congratulated her and thought the story was over. My objective of

showcasing Bhavishya Yaan had been achieved. Or so I thought.

One of my personal guests was Ashrafi Matcheswala, the General Manager of Hotel Taj President, who saw much more in Pooja. She proposed that Pooja be admitted in the B Voc (Bachelor of Vocation) programme being run by Indian Hotels and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). It was late and the batch was full, but Ashrafi made it happen.

Pooja has signed up to do the course and is on her way to becoming a professional in the hospitality industry, and I'm sure RC Bombay will be happy to pay any fees that might be needed.

*The writer is President,
RC Bombay, D 3141.*

I asked my friend Pratibha to help
Pooja Kamble from the slums of
Worli to be the MC at my installation
as President of RC Bombay.

Man who boosted women's numbers in Rotary India

Rasheeda Bhagat



PRIP Gary Huang and Corinna inaugurate the Conclave in the presence of TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta, DG R Srinivasan, PDG ISAK Nazar, PRID P T Prabhakar and Afzalunisa Nazar (extreme left).

The real test of a good leader is not only to inspire his team but to come out with simple yet brilliant ideas. “The biggest problem we had in those days (when Gary Huang was RI President in 2014–15) was membership which was sliding. The simple idea he gave Rotarians was look within your home for getting new members. And that is how the idea of making spouses also Rotarian originated, and India inducted the highest number of women members during that year under his leadership,” RI Director C Basker said at the *Light up Conclave* organised in Chennai by D 3232, for the

District Governors during PRIP Gary’s presidential year, when the theme was *Light up Rotary*.

Under the guidance of the then RI Director P T Prabhakar and the extraordinary leadership of the *Light up* DGs “we showed to the world that India can make a difference... in membership, particularly women’s membership, TRF contributions and huge PR projects such as *My Flag My India* done by PDG ISAK Nazar; and PDG Ganesh Bhat who organised a programme with 500 artists playing the veena in one stadium. Across India we did things that were liked by Indians,” he added.

From that year Rotary in India has not looked back and continued to grow, said Basker. Paying a tribute to the leadership of DG R Srinivasan, he said that he carried his entire team with him with his smile and affection and had set a great example by working along with PDGs such as Nazar, who is now the District Trainer, Natarajan Nagoji, DGE Babu Peram and DGN G Chandramohan.

Basker also urged the DGs, who he calls ‘Trend-setters’, to help him convert India, which had always been a receiving country in polio immunisation, to one that gives. “Let’s not forget that our children got

immunised because somebody paid for the vaccines. Today it is our duty to give others... everybody sitting in this hall is blessed with enough wealth. So we should now give to immunise children of other countries against polio. With your support we can make India the top of the world in the End Polio campaign.”

PRIP Gary began his speech by asking the audience to do the “happy clap”, and added cheerfully, “Nobody remembers what I said but everybody remembers my happy clap!” Explaining how he had zeroed in on his theme, he quoted Confucius who had said it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. “There are so many problems in the world, and many people say there is nothing that I can do to solve them. So they sit quietly and watch the suffering of so many and don’t do anything. The right way is to light a candle. I light one, you light one, 1.2 million Rotarians together light a candle each and imagine what a difference that can make!”

He urged every Rotarian in the huge hall to think of doing something,



RID C Basker and Mala being felicitated by Rtn Balasubramaniam and Rtn Sashi Suresh in the presence of (from R) Light up Conclave Chair D Dev, PDG ISAK Nazar, DG R Srinivasan and Sujatha Srinivasan (extreme left).

however small, to make things better. “After all, Rotary is a big organisation and together we can make a difference, and do something big. Of course we can’t solve all problems, but let us do as much as we can, with whatever we have.”

Gary said in polio eradication work, Rotary helped immunise over 2.5 million children, one child at a time. “When we started there were 1,000 cases of polio reported every day and 350,000 children were either killed or paralysed across the world every year. Thanks to your hard work there hasn’t been a single new case of polio in India in the last five years. “

Today there were only three countries with polio — Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan. “We know it isn’t easy but Pakistan’s Rotarians have made it a priority to eradicate polio. It is now only a matter of time, and I am sure our dream will be achieved by 2019. When that happens there will not be words adequate enough to say ‘thank you’ to all of you. Our Foundation has done so much good across the world and you can proudly say I was part of that. So nothing you do is ever small, it all adds up. Every candle you light makes a difference.”

TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta said his friendship with PRIP Gary went back 30 years; “I don’t know how many people sitting in the audience have been in Rotary for 30 years!” An exceptional president of RI who had shown amazing leadership, during his year both membership and TRF contributions had taken a

jump, and “for the first time TRF giving crossed \$100 per capita.”

Of course, as last year was the TRF Centennial year, “we raised more money but Gary really charged up India and changed Rotary in India. His idea of making spouses Rotarians really clicked and some of them have today become presidents of their clubs. The kind of hard work these women Rotarians do is difficult to match by many of us male Rotarians,” Gupta added.

PRID P T Prabhakar said as RI President, Gary had motivated his team to achieve greater heights. “His idea of ‘Rotary Days’ was a wonderful PR idea which we should continue every year, with each club doing something to promote the image of Rotary. The best project of the year was ‘My Flag My India’ which created a Guinness record, putting Rotary on the global map. We were also number one in membership, and Director C Basker was the Rotary Coordinator and he did

wonders with the numbers, with Zone 5 getting 63 per cent of the global growth in membership which was 70,000 Rotarians.”

Prabhakar added that the figures achieved during PRIP Gary’s year “in membership still hold the record and I feel this will remain so for a long time. He also honoured our District (3230) by being with us for the Chennai Institute (and other projects) for one whole week.”

PDG ISAK Nazar, District trainer and organiser of the Light up DGs conclave said the one word to describe Gary’s leadership was inspiration; “if you can inspire your colleagues, associates and friends, you are a great leader and if you can transform that inspiration to others you are a successful leader.”

He added the conclave had been convened for the “Light up Governors and we will continue this because light up leaders are not only for the year, but for the decade.”

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

The kind of hard work women Rotarians do is difficult to match by many of us male Rotarians.

TRF Trustee
Sushil Gupta

Textile
trail

Reviving



Kunbi saree of Goa.

Forgotten Treasures

Sabita Radhakrishna



In the olden days, craft was always an oral tradition passed on from father to son, mother to daughter. Some of the methods were lost, and the priceless heritage textiles disappeared into the annals of time. To perpetuate the craft, documentation is enforced today, and craft activists encourage vanished textiles to be revived. In this way they are brought to the forefront to a public which does not know of its existence, the tradition is revived, old skills relearnt and at the same time tweaked to suit the demands of the contemporary market.

To celebrate Handloom Day, Crafts Council of India invited two young textile revivalists to showcase their resuscitated sarees. I anchored the show, talked about my initiative in revival, and we had a lively panel discussion.

Rohit Phalgaonkar, who holds a PhD for his work on the Art History of Goa and a teacher by profession, went on to collect samples of the tribal sarees which died out some 40 years ago. He reproduced original samples, which he collected over a decade, of Goa's Gauda community and thus a saree lost and disappeared was revived thanks to his efforts. Phalgaonkar replicated the sarees

exactly as they were woven before, in bright colours and checks, with the typical border and the coarseness of the saree adding to its raw beauty. He took help from the handloom weavers from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to create exact prototypes of the original ones.

For 200 years, the Portuguese imposed a ban on saree weaving to introduce imported textiles and the dress culture, yet a large number of people stuck to their native identity. Anton Juan wove sarees secretly in a basement in his home risking severe punishment. Art silk was introduced during the Portuguese rule in Goa. These sarees called 'Saado' were gifted to brides and other family members during weddings. Phalgaonkar revived these sarees ensuring they were handwoven with art silk, and were named after two goddesses.

For 200 years, the Portuguese imposed a ban on saree weaving to introduce imported textiles but a large number of people stuck to their native identity.



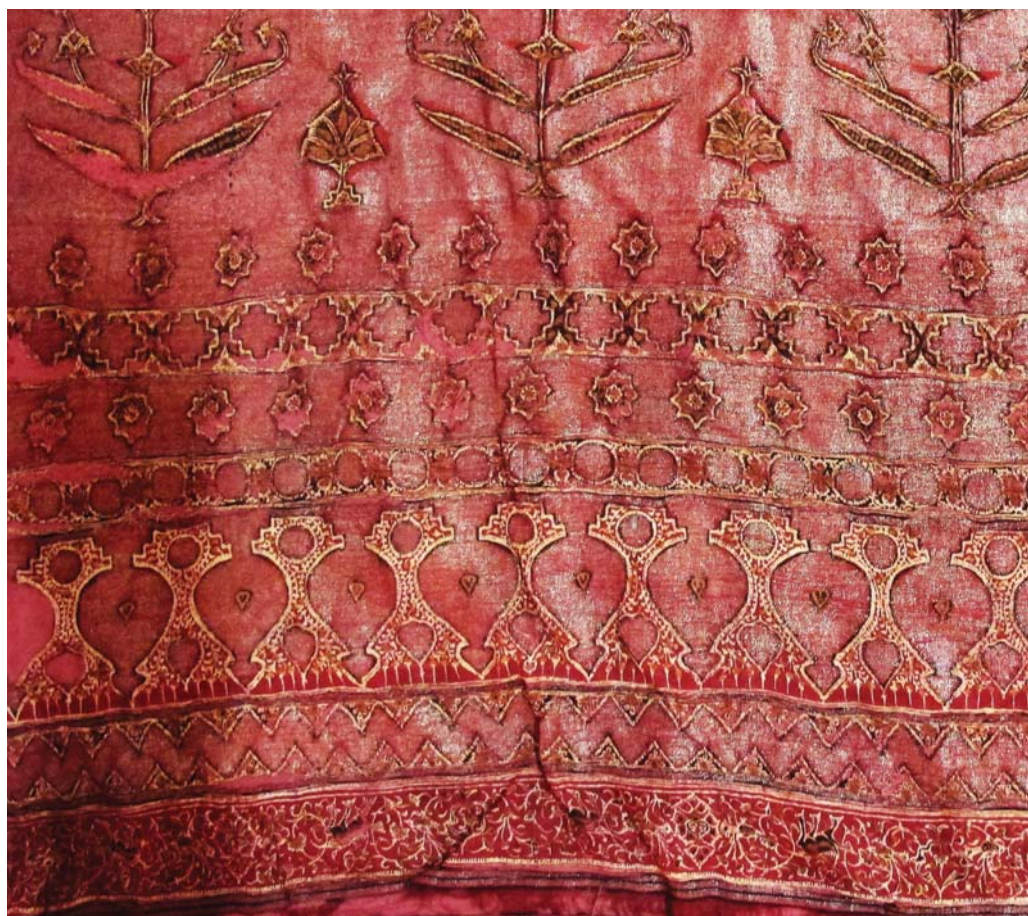
Above: Kunbi saree. Below: Kodalli Karuppur saree of Kumbakonam.

Shantadurga is the red sari while Navadurga is pink. Thus was born the *Gauda* saree of the Adivasis of Goa. During the Portuguese period some Gaudas got converted to Christianity and the rest stayed on as Hindus. The Christian Gaudas did not give up their original Hindu cultural practices including the saree.

Phalgaonkar revived four original designs of Goa's *Gauda* sarees naming each kind after the village and the village deity from where the original saree was found. The *Gauda* saree also has a specific border. Some models have Rudraksh designs on it. It shows

their connect with their pre-Portuguese culture. The Hindu counterparts slowly shifted from the original design to the traditional nine-yard saree which came from the neighbouring State of Maharashtra, retaining tribal style of draping which included tying of the knot on their shoulder. Hence the saree needs to be called as Christian *Gauda* saree or the Adivasi saree of Goa.

Hemalatha Jain researched and revived the exquisite *Patteda Anchu* sarees as she stumbled upon this forgotten relic of the 10th century in North Karnataka. This young



woman, passionate over revivals, wears many hats... that of educator, curator, designer and revivalist. She established Punarjeevana, a nonprofit organisation in Pune, and a self-help group.

She first laid eyes on the *patteda anchu* saree when she visited the Yellamma Saundatti temple in Karnataka. Fascinated by a remnant of an old saree owned by a Devadasi, Hemalatha plunged into research and documentation and ultimately a revival, basing her PhD thesis on this weave. She gave the original saree a



***Patteda Anchu* saree of North Karnataka.**



contemporary twist, and brought it to the forefront of saree fashion.

She worked with weavers in North Karnataka, and got to know that it was woven centuries ago in and around the villages of Gajendragarh, Belgaum, Raichur, Kodal, Bedar, Bellary, Gulbarga and Dharwad. "It was

considered an auspicious garment, offered to the temple goddess when the daughter of a household got married," she says. As is the case with most revival sarees, the design innovation has moved it from the original red and mustard to a palette of eight shades with *pallus* on both sides.

Hemalatha Jain researched and revived the exquisite *Patteda Anchu* sarees as she stumbled upon this 10th century forgotten relic in North Karnataka.

The traditional saree was short in width (43") and 6 yards in length, specifically designed for women working in farms. This coarse 20-count sari is made in cotton. The *patteda anchu* is a languishing craft as only one master weaver is left who knows how to weave the traditional saree. The

The *Gauda* saree has a specific border; some models have Rudraksh designs on it.

designer intervened and converted the width of the sari and specific colour palette that includes shades like yellow, red, pink, blue and black.

I talked about my tryst with textiles, and my passion for handlooms, wearing my mother's handloom sarees when other teens my age would be wearing chiffons and georgettes. Having worked with weavers across India for the past 35 years, I spoke about my attempts to save the legendary *Kodalli Karuppur* saree, an 18th century masterpiece, from oblivion.

Craft and textiles survive when they are linked to temples, or when they enjoy royal patronage. The legendary *Kodalli Karuppur* saree which I helped reproduce at Kalakshetra evolved

Craft and textiles survive when they are linked to temples, or when they enjoy royal patronage.



***Kodalli Karuppur* saree.**

under the patronage of the Maratha ruler Serfoji Raja Bhonsle Chatrapathi II in the 18th century woven exclusively for the Thanjavur royalty up to the 19th century. The Karuppur fabric was used for religious rituals and worn only by nobility. The sarees were produced in the village of Kodalli Karuppur near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district by 400–500 families who migrated from Saurashtra to various weaving centres in the South.

The Kodalli Karuppur saree is a joint effort by the weaver, printer and the painter, and involves multiple skills. When we reproduced the Karuppur saree at the Craft Education and Research Centre of the Kalakshetra Foundation in Chennai, I hoped that one prototype would lead to many more Karuppur sarees to be made as close as possible to the original. This didn't happen, though we have standing orders for at least four sarees even if the price could be over a

lakh each. I am looking for corporate sponsorship which might make this happen!

At the end of the day I wonder, if reviving sarees is enough. It has to be an ongoing process, with the looms humming at least for two years, offering the hope of sustainable livelihood for the poverty-stricken weaver.

Pictures by Sabita
Radhakrishna

Designed by
Krishnapratheesh



Singapore dazzles students

V Muthukumaran



For the eight students from Yashodeep Vidya Mandir in Aurangabad, the four-day study tour to Singapore was their first ever experience of an outside world. The sparkling cleanliness and discipline of the foreign city added to their amazement.

As part of its school upgrade activity, RC Aurangabad Metro, D 3132, tied up with RC Bukit Timah (RCBT), D 3310, Singapore, to organise an educational tour for students. The main objective was to educate them on sanitation, hygiene, cleanliness, and other public issues such as traffic movement, discipline and expose them to the outside world, said Project Chair Chandrakant Chaudhari.

Initially, the club selected 15 students, but seven of them dropped out as their parents feared their wards might not return. The club faced 'embarrassing queries' from parents

who attributed 'ulterior motives' to Rotarians for undertaking the tour to a foreign land.

The annual income of the parents of the shortlisted children is below Rs 1 lakh and they never dreamt that their children will ever fly to some foreign country. Even a visit to a metro like Mumbai for passport and boarding a plane from an international airport became talking points in their taluk. All the students were residents of Khultabad, a taluk 28 km from Aurangabad, and they had never travelled outside their place until now.

One of the students, Divya Kachker, was much impressed by the highly disciplined traffic, designated smoking zones and cleanliness in Singapore. "It was a wonderful education," she says and wonders if India can be like Singapore one day.

The host club mobilised S \$2,300 to cover entry fees, conveyance,

souvenirs, food and miscellany for the visitors. Three teachers and four Rotarians accompanied the students. The students were given a warm reception at the residence of RCBT President Ajitchandra Sule and Rtn Milan Sule and attended a workshop on Chinese brush painting. The Singapore Rotarians entertained the young guests with their native performances.

Delightful sights

A whirlwind visit to the city's famed tourist spots was a veritable treat for the students. They were surprised to know that the island-city imported water from Malaysia for daily consumption. But with the setting up of NEWater Plant and steps like rainwater harvesting they hope to be self-sufficient by 2020.

The visiting team presented Lavani, a folk dance of Maharashtra, impressing the students of the Global International School in Singapore. ■

Seed balls to green the Earth

Karthik V

While Rotary International President Ian Riseley is encouraging afforestation, and urging Rotarians to plant a sapling each, the seed ball technique is quietly catching up with the green volunteers across the country.

The ancient concept of seed balls, also called clay dumplings, was rediscovered by a Japanese farmer, Masanobu Fukuoka, known for his revolutionary ideas on re-vegetation of land. Seed balls are often used as a handy weapon in 'guerrilla gardening' (gardening on land that the gardeners do not have the legal rights to utilise, such as an abandoned site, private property, etc).

Seed balls comprise a mixture of fertile red soil, cow dung, cow urine and other bio compost. The semi-solid mix is prepared by adding water proportionate to the quantity of the mixture, after which a particular plant seed

is inserted in it. These semisoft seed balls are allowed to dry in the sun and stored for later use. They are scattered near hills, lakes, ponds so that they sprout and become plants and eventually trees that help to capture and retain rainwater. More than 50 per cent of the seed balls germinate into new plants.

Cost effective

This technique is cost-effective, as each seed ball costs just a rupee, while it costs a few thousands to nurture and maintain a plant sapling and that includes watering and protection, says Gangadharan, an agriculturist in Kasaraghatta, a village near Bengaluru. He has made seed balls of grass, jack fruit, pongamia, jatropha, tamarind, neem, seethaphal (custard apple) and mango and strewn them in the villages of Kasarghatta, Aladahalli, Mahimapura and Kerekuttiganuru near Bengaluru. He says plants such as

eucalyptus and acacia are best avoided as they consume a lot of water and spread their roots much further to water bodies located far away.

Preparing the seeds

Seeds have to be prepared through the 'scarification process' before they are made into seed balls. The process involves weakening, opening, or otherwise altering the coat of a seed to encourage germination.

The seeds have to be soaked in water boiled at 100 deg Celsius, and left to remain in it until the water cools to room temperature. They are then ready to be made into seed balls.

The seed ball technique ensures that saplings survive for at least two months without water. If these saplings can stay alive till the beginning of the monsoon, then their survival rate will be more.





Children making seed balls.

Seed ball recipe

1 part seeds of your choice
 1 part potting soil
 5 parts pottery clay mix from the local art store
 1–2 parts water
 Large tub to mix ingredients
 Large box to dry and store seed balls

Directions

Mix seeds and soil thoroughly. Mix the clay and one part water, ensuring that there are no lumps.

Slowly add more water until the mixture has the consistency of the toy store moulding clay.

Add seeds. Keep kneading the dough until the seeds are well mixed. Add more water if necessary.

Take small portions of the clay mixture and roll into balls about one inch in diameter. The balls should hold together easily. If they're crumbly, add more water.

Dry the seed balls for 24–48 hours in the shade. They become hard and can be sowed or tossed on wasteland or dry land just before the monsoon. They need not be buried or watered. The rain soaks the seed balls, germinating the seeds inside. The nutrients present in the seed ball help the sprouting seeds to grow.

Seed balls can be stored in a cardboard box for future use. Do not use plastic bags.

Rotary involvement

Rotary clubs can take this initiative of greening the earth to schools and the children will just love it. Celebrating the Vanamahotsava this year, RC Mangalore, D 3181, distributed seed balls of flowering and fruit-bearing plants to Interactors, who dropped them on the Tannirbhavi beach in the city. RC Mysore Jayaprakash Nagar involved schoolchildren to make 7,000 seed balls which were given to 70 club presidents during the governor's installation programme at the beginning of the year.

Utthistha Bharatha, an NGO, is ready to partner with clubs in the district to take this to schools, colleges and corporate. NSS students in schools and colleges are interested in experimenting with the seed ball concept.

A tractor load of mud and another tractor load of composite, about 90 cft each, should be able to teach children in three to four schools.

*The writer is member of
 RC Mysore Jayaprakash Nagar
 D 3181.*



Karur Angels promote Rotary

Team Rotary News



Neelavathy Gopalakrishnan, the First Lady of D 3000, does not want to be “just an ornament to the Governor. Instead I want to promote Rotary’s theme for the year and motivate Rotarians to achieve district goals.” Hence, when

her club member Meena Subbiah suggested a unique motor rally, she grabbed it enthusiastically.

The two women, along with three more — Lakshmi Balaji, Vinitha Mohan and Shanmugavalli Nallasivam — all from the all-women club RC Karur Angels took out a scooter rally criss-crossing the entire district passing through major towns including Perambalur, Trichy, Ariyalur, Pudukottai, Madurai, Periyakulam, Theni and Dindigul before finishing off at where they all started in Karur. They set out after working out the finer details of their bike journey with DG P Gopalakrishnan, Assistant Governor and District Coordinators.

Riding TVS Zest scooters, the ‘five angels’ promoted Rotary’s community projects among the public in villages and small towns en route. They were

received with fanfare by local Rotarians at pit stops and together they participated in rallies within the town. They distributed handbills to popularise Rotary’s

Above: (From L) Rotarians Meena Subbiah, Lakshmi Balaji, Vinitha Mohan, Shanmugavalli Nallasivam and Neelavathy Gopalakrishnan on their way to Batlagundu.

Right: The rally team being greeted by Rotaractors at Madurai.





programmes and seed balls to encourage a greener environment.

At Madurai DGE RVN Kannan, along with Rotarians and Rotaractors, arranged a

traditional welcome with dance and music for the rallyists and joined them for a rally within the city.

The team was facilitated by the DG at a meet organised jointly by the local clubs at Karur, their final destination. They had traversed over 600 km for over a week from August 2.

Recalling the experience, Neelavathy said, “I think we achieved a lot with our maiden initiative of creating public awareness and look forward to such programmes in future.”

On a personal note, Vinitha said that she felt more confident and empowered to handle things on her own after the scooter rally. “Beyond Rotary, I’m happy I could motivate and inspire more people to do something like this in their life too. Thanks to Rotary for providing me with this opportunity and making a difference in my life.” she added. ■



CONVENTION

Museums

Randi Druzin

When people think of Toronto, they usually think of snow, hockey and, more recently, culinary delights. But the city has some world-class museums too. If you have time to visit just one when you’re in town for the 2018 Rotary International Convention from June 23 to 27, you should go to either the Royal Ontario Museum or the Art Gallery of Ontario.



“The ROM” is a museum of art, culture and nature from around the world and across the ages. Its collection comprises about six million specimens, objects and artifacts. Ten years ago, a museum expansion added five interlocking prismatic structures in the shape of a crystal.

The nearby AGO’s collection includes more than 90,000 works of art. It has an expansive collection of Canadian art, works from the Renaissance and Baroque eras, and European, African, Oceanic, and contemporary art. The collection of 40,000 photographs is a big draw, as is the largest public collection of works by renowned British sculptor Henry Moore.

Across the street from the ROM, you’ll find Canada’s national ceramics museum, the Gardiner, which offers drop-in clay classes. Another popular destination is the Bata Shoe Museum, which has thousands of shoes and related artifacts on display representing 4,500 years of footwear.

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**Register for the 2018
Rotary Convention
in Toronto
at riconvention.org**

Love at first line

Sandhya Rao

What a wondrous web we are entangled in when we read the first lines.

I must have been about 12 or 13 when I started reading Paul Gallico. It was *Love of Seven Dolls*, a birthday gift from a friend to an aunt. Strange title, I thought, what on earth does it mean? A slim book, barely a hundred pages, which began: "In Paris, in the spring of our times, a young girl was about to throw herself into the Seine." Then, a couple of paragraphs further down the page: "Do you remember Paris that May when spring came early and the giant candelabra of the chestnut trees in bloom illuminated the beautiful city?"

I knew neither the Seine nor chestnut trees, and nothing about Paris save its name but I was hooked into what I still consider pure magic. By the time I finished the book — in one sitting, and several times since — I realised, yes, of course, it had to be *Love of Seven Dolls*, what else could it have been? I have recommended this book to friends and others everywhere — their first reaction has always been "What? What's that again? *Love of...* what?"

I hunted unsuccessfully in bookstores for a copy for myself — this was well before the age of cyber activity; the book remained out of print for years, or at least unavailable in India. Until one fine birthday in Delhi, in 1991, a book landed in my hands with the inscription: "The search has ended..."



Some of us have Charles Dickens embedded in our brains. Remember *A Tale of Two Cities*? "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us..."

The words resonate even as I type in these lines, just as Harper Lee's words from *To Kill a Mockingbird* resonate in a dramatically, diametrically different way: "When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow." Such a simple statement, but it plunges us right in the middle of the action and we want to know more. I know I did. And what a world that book opened up, a world alien and unfamiliar, a world that by the time the book was read and done

remained engraved eternally upon a teenager's consciousness.

Thinking about opening lines, I pulled out books at random from my overflowing bookshelf. Incidentally, there was a time when I would mourn and scold whenever a book that I had loaned someone went walkabout. These days — maybe it's age, maybe it's wisdom — I don't mind so much although there's still a dull ache inside because frankly, there's no room at this inn. So long as whoever is in possession of my precious copy has read it and enjoyed it and treasures it, and maybe even passes it on to others to read. That's the hope.

Anyway, so there was Che Guevara's *The Motorcycle Diaries* on top of the pile, in translation from the Spanish (by Alexandra Keeble), of course. The first chapter is titled 'So we understand each other'. I remember I fell in love with that statement right away. The story, or the diary, begins: "This is not a story of incredible heroism, or merely the narrative of a cynic; at least I do not mean it to be. It is a glimpse of two lives that ran parallel for a time, with similar hopes and convergent dreams. In nine months of a man's life he can think a lot of things, from the loftiest meditations

Famous or evocative first lines do not just belong to fiction.

Take a book like *Why I Am Not A Hindu* by Kancha Ilaiah.

on philosophy to the most desperate longing for a bowl of soup — in total accord with the state of his stomach.”

I couldn't stop; nor have I stopped presenting copies of the book to young friends whenever I see it in bookstores. Occasionally the book is accompanied with a Che t-shirt and I have to confess that brings a brighter light to recipients' eyes!

About two years ago, a friend passed on a copy of *The Garden of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng. “Tell me what you think,” he said. It's a small book with small print and I began reading right away: “On a mountain above the clouds once lived a man who had been the gardener of the Emperor of Japan. Not many people would have known of him before the war, but I did.” Yes! The quiet elegance of the prose yielded a fulsome flavour that steadily grew into a dread-knot that slowly unravelled itself.

Famous or evocative first lines do not just belong to fiction. Take a book like *Why I Am Not A Hindu* by Kancha Ilaiah: “I was not born a Hindu for the simple reason that my parents did not know that they were Hindus. This does not mean that I was born as a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist, a Sikh or a Parsee. My illiterate parents, who lived in a remote South Indian village,



Earlier I would mourn
whenever a book I had
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These days — maybe age
or wisdom — I don't mind
so much, hoping it has been
passed on for others to read.

did not know that they belonged to any religion at all.”

Hard-hitting. Mind-blowing. The book's powerful ideas remain in your head to temper and season you forever. Some people are driven crazy, others are infuriated, while still others are rendered incredulous. Some, however, are changed.

That's the thing about books. You start reading and by the time you finish, something in your wiring changes.

What about the writer? Stephen King, in an interview with Joe Fassler published in *The Atlantic* (July 23, 2013), said: “When I'm starting a book, I compose in bed before I go to sleep. I will lie there in the dark and think. I'll try to write a paragraph. An opening paragraph. And over a period of weeks and months and even years, I'll word and reword it until I'm happy with what I've got. If I can get that first paragraph right, I'll know that I can do the book.”

He goes on to talk about what he considers the best opening line from among the books he's written. He chooses *Needful Things*: “...the story starts off with an opening line, printed by itself on a page in 20-point type: ‘You've been here before.’ All there by itself on one page, inviting the reader to keep reading. It suggests a familiar story; at the same time, the unusual presentation brings us outside the realm of the ordinary. And this, in a way, is a promise of the book that's going to come.”



Promise, that's the word. It's the promise of what's to come. As in Moni Mohsin's *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*: “Haw, such a big scandal in our group, na! Tonky's wife, Floozie, has run off with his best friend, Boxer, who is married to Floozie's best friend, Dropsy. Just look! What a *tamasha*. Everybody is talking about it at weddings, darses, parties, everywhere. Floozie's name is mud. Worse than mud. Mud mixed with cow shit, like the pheasants in Janoo's village use to make their houses. (Or do they use straw? Khair, whatever.)” Totally irreverent, absolutely outrageous, and entirely unputdownable. I binge-read this one, driving colleagues crazy by nabbing them round every corner and reading aloud bits. That's the kind of book it is. Love at first line. And we all know love defies definition.

That's why, when I ordered a copy of *Olympics: The India Story* by Boria Majumdar and Nalin Mehta for purely research purposes, I fell, lock, stock and barrel, in love. Check it out: “India was the first colonised Asian nation to take part in the Olympic Games.” Didn't I say love at first line has no basis in scientific logic or philosophical reasoning? The proof is entirely in the savouring of the book.

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

Meet your Governors

Jaishree

Adding value to Rotary

P Gopalakrishnan

Home textile exporter, RC Karur Tex City, D 3000

He joined Rotary in 1999, after being a Rotaractor for a year. “Initially, my interest was just to make friends, but today Rotary is an integral part of my life; it has given me everything,” says Gopalakrishnan, adding that in Rotary he developed public speaking and leadership skills which have helped him serve key roles in various other forums.

He calls his team GEMS (Go the Extra Mile and Serve — his theme) and has put together 9 projects (*Navaratnas*) for all clubs to carry out together on a particular day each month. “It enhances coordination and competition among clubs,” he says.

He highlights an innovative way of enhancing Rotary’s public image. “We’ve given GEMS privilege cards to our members and tied up with 2,500 outlets which give discounts ranging from 2–30 per cent for merchandise and services.” These outlets display the Rotary wheel which, in turn, increases Rotary’s visibility among the public, he says.

Another novel idea that he has introduced is inviting a garment retail outlet to open shop on a college campus which has a huge Rotaract population. The arrangement is that 10 per cent of the proceeds will be given by the outlet to the Rotaract club. “The revenue will help the club undertake service projects,” he says.

His other projects include setting up six dialysis centres, ten rural eye clinics and provide WinS facilities in schools for which he has got approval for three global grants totalling \$275,000.

“Many of our clubs are weak and the retention rate is also poor at 65 per cent,” Gopalakrishnan says about membership. His objective is a net increase of 10 per cent, retaining at least 85 per cent of the new members and strengthening weak clubs. New members inducted now will be the club presidents’ responsibility for the next three years, he says.

His spouse, Neelavathi, is a member of RC Karur Angels, an all-women’s club from where five Rotarians undertook a scooter rally to create awareness about Rotary across the district.





G V Rama Rao

Civil contractor

RC Vijayawada Sree Durga

D 3020

Children's education is his priority

This governor was so impressed by the polio eradication drive that he moved from the Indian Red Cross Society to Rotary, and now he loves the fellowship and opportunities to transform people's lives that Rotary offers.

Rama Rao is keen on improving sanitary conditions in schools by providing water, toilet and handwash facilities. "Many children, particularly girls, are reluctant to come to school in our region due to lack of proper sanitation facilities, and privacy which is very important for girl students. Improving other infrastructure facilities in schools is also on his agenda. Providing education for children and making them future-ready is the best gift we can give, he says.

On membership, he wants to strengthen weak clubs by improving their membership and add 800 new members. There is not much enthusiasm in his district among women to become Rotarians, says Rama Rao.

His target for TRF contributions is \$1 million towards the Polio Fund.

Children and youth welfare are his focus

His "most cherished moment" was when he received the Service Above Self Award. "And I still value the time when I led a GSE team to Massachusetts and a polio corrective surgery camp organised in Belgaum as club president," reminisces Anand Kulkarni. He is a Rotarian since 1997. "I had also visited our One Rotary Centre at Illinois when Kalyan Banerjee was RI President," he says.

Kulkarni has planned his year well; in service projects, his focus is on promoting menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls. He has appealed to the spouses of Rotarians to visit 10,000 schools and talk to girl students about this. "We are in the process of finalising global grants and corporate partnerships to raise \$150,000 to install incinerators in schools," he says and is happy that the Chief Minister of Goa Manohar Parrikar, complimenting this endeavour, has promised to extend the government's support to cover all schools in the State.

Care for the emotional health of youngsters to combat mental stress and screening people for diabetic retinopathy under project Drishti are his other health-related programmes.

He plans to execute e-learning projects of value \$65,000 in 105 schools, in partnership with Tata Motors, and conduct awareness programmes on road safety in schools and colleges.

His goals include raising \$1.1 million for TRF, increase district membership by 10 per cent, add 50 Rotaract clubs to the existing 50 and 200 more women Rotarians to the existing 300 members. He has asked every Rotary club to sponsor at least one Interact club too.

Anand Kulkarni

Realtor, RC Belgaum, D 3170



Community projects, his buzzword

He became a Rotarian when he was 23, after hearing the then Governor O P Vaish speak at the Rotary Club of Sirsa of which his brother was a member. "I enjoyed my two years as Rotaractor of Aligarh Muslim University, I didn't take it very seriously then," says Sattish Singhal.

As president of RC Noida in 1996, he conceived the setting up of the Noida Blood Bank worth \$2 million in a 6,500 sq ft property. "It was one of the biggest projects with no matching grant support." Now as governor, he wants to establish two more blood banks, two radiology centres, 20 dialysis centres and 15 eye clinics this year. Work is almost complete in 10 dialysis centres, 5 eye clinics and the blood banks. "The first dialysis centre was inaugurated by PRIP Kalyan Banerjee on my installation day," he smiles.

He has visited 60 of 87 clubs in the district. "I tell them, don't invite me for Dandiya nite or Diwali nite. Do something for the society, and I'll gladly participate. Four clubs are ready with \$1 million to do projects," he says.

His goal for TRF contribution is \$1 million, "but I'm sure we'll exceed". He wants to add 20 per cent more members and increase women membership by 22 per cent. It is "already second largest in the country," he smiles.

Singhal credits his spouse, Prabha, an Inner Wheel member and past president, as his driving force.

Sattish Singhal

Cotton trader, RC Noida, D 3012



Vinay Kumar Asthana

Rehabilitation professional
RC Kanpur Shikhar, D 3110

He wants to enrol more women members

Installed 40 women in a newly chartered club, RC Aligarh, in a single day. Many women in our district are keen to become Rotarians," says Vinay Kumar Asthana. He wants to increase overall membership by 20 per cent, with focus on women membership. On the first day of his installation, he had inducted 31 new members in a fairly new club. He wants to encourage new members and "make them feel included so that they will retain their initial enthusiasm". He is conducting a drive to enrol his team in Rotary Club Central and has appointed tech-savvy Rotarians to help members who are unable to understand the working.

He became a Rotarian in 1991. Rotary blood runs in his family; most of them, including his wife Seema, are Rotarians and his brother-in-law, Ajai Agha, is a past governor of D 3120.

Being a rehab professional, his focus is on rehabilitating the physically-challenged. "My team is planning to distribute mobility aids to the needy in a big way this year," he says. Conducting blood donation camps and sapling plantation across the district are his other agendas.

He plans to raise half a million dollars for the Foundation. ■



Peddalling to school

V Muthukumaran



Rotarians of RC Bombay Juhu Beach with student-beneficiaries of the club's bicycle project.

Neha Ravindra Davala, a Class 10 student residing at Somta village, bids a cheerful adieu to her parents as she leaves for school on a brand new bicycle. Gone are the days of an arduous journey to school for this Class 10 student of Shanti Ratan Vidya Mandir, Kondgaon, in Palghar district near Mumbai.

Her mother used to give Neha Rs 10 everyday to take a tempo to school. On many days, she could not attend school as there was no money at home or she would be late to school as the tempo service was irregular. "Thanks to this new cycle, I am able to attend school everyday on time and also reach home early to help my mother. I also get more time to study," says Neha.

School life changed for the better for 150 students of the school when

RC Bombay Juhu Beach, D 3141, in partnership with Ashland India, gave them bicycles. The company also pitched in with a donation of Rs 6 lakh as part of its CSR outreach.

"The beneficiaries used to trek a total of nearly 10 km to school and back home. They all hail from very low-income tribal families," says IPP Neha Savla.

**Thanks to this new cycle,
I am able to attend school
everyday on time, reach home
early to help my mother and
also get more time to study.**

The school principal Sushil Shejule is confident that the students will be able to show commendable progress in their academic pursuits, as "their commute has been made comfortable."

At the end of the academic year, the bicycles will be returned to the school and fresh allocations will be made next year.

An MoU has been signed with the school making it responsible for the upkeep of the two-wheelers. "The school ensures a pillion rider, to help more students," says Neha Savla.

The club wants to replicate this project in more schools in the surrounding rural areas upon receipt of such requests from school authorities. "We can tie-up with corporates to raise funds as many private companies are ready to join us in this initiative," she adds. ■



Making beaches garbage-free

V Muthukumaran

School children with their garbage collection.



Over 2,000 volunteers from corporates, schools, colleges, government agencies and NGOs of Chennai thronged the Elliot's Beach on a Sunday morning. Armed with huge polythene sacks and wearing gloves, they scoured the beach, and cleared it of garbage.

On the third week of September every year, the Indian Coast Guard organises the beach clean up across its 42 CG stations to mark the International Coastal Clean up (ICC) Day on September 16. ICC is part of the UN Environmental Programme Initiative that began in 1986 to engage local volunteers in cleaning the oceans and create awareness on marine diversity

in the younger generation. As part of their broader agenda, ICC Day was observed to conserve and protect the marine ecology across the coastal regions of the world.

Flagging off the event, Coast Guard (Eastern Region) Commander and IG Rajan Bargartra warned that humans were testing the patience of the oceans by using them as a "bottomless sink" to dump all sorts of garbage. "The capacity of tolerance for accepting our abuse, treating oceans as one large sink, is unacceptable and will be beyond repair if we don't stop disposing of waste in canals, rivers and lakes, the waters of which finally end up in the ocean," he said.

Grave pollution

Senior Scientist D Mohan from the Indian Coastal and Marine Area Management, Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, decried the harmful practice of polluting the seas. "We are selfish in keeping our homes clean, but don't bother about our surroundings which will affect us eventually." He noted nearly 55 per cent of beach garbage and litter on water bodies consist of non-biodegradable things like plastics, while fishermen were guilty of throwing bio-waste, amounting nearly 2 per cent of total garbage. "We have to chart out multi-fold efforts towards a trash-free ocean which will be our greatest wealth," he said.

Volunteers add colour to the event.



The maritime force is taking efforts to protect the marine species too. “We have distributed TEDs — Turtle Exclusion Device — to fishermen who can now use them in their trawlers to prevent the death of sea turtles,” said a Coast Guard pilot.

Volunteers Linda Gerberch, from Cleveland, Ohio, and Lou Courtois from Normandy, France, who were busy collecting garbage, paused to say, “Poor beaches are suffering all over

the world. Coastal degradation is same everywhere and global action has to be intensified for quick results.”

Roshan Rajagopal and Sharmila Pasupathy, part of a 75-plus team from the HSBC Bank, said they were happy to exert themselves for a good cause to make the beach clean.

The Municipal officials later declared that around 2–2.5 tonnes of solid waste was collected at the end of the three-hour drive. The civic body

will segregate and slot the garbage, some of which will be transported to the dump yards as refills.

Rotary pitches in

RC Guindy, D 3232, joined hands with the Indian Maritime Foundation (IMF), Chennai branch, to take part in the ICC Day proceedings. Over 50 Rotarians and Rotaractors took part in the clean up in the Chennai leg of the IMF’s drive across South India for trash-free seas.

“The overall objective is to make water bodies garbage-free, create awareness on waste segregation and safe disposal of collected garbage,” said Badri Narayanan, Chair, Rotaract Committee, RC Guindy.

Last year, IMF collected over 35 tonnes of garbage across the selected blocks in South India. “This year, the collected waste is expected to be 10 per cent lesser due to better awareness in coastal areas,” he said.

After the flag-off involving a salute from Navy cadets, DG R Srinivasan presented a cheque of Rs 50,000 to the IMF President Commodore Rajan Vir for their clean up efforts. Former Tamil Nadu DGP and legislator R Natraj and film celebrity Suhasini Maniratnam were the guests of honour. ■



DG R Srinivasan and G Sathish Kumar, PP of RC Guindy, present a cheque to IMF President Commodore Rajan Vir in the presence of former DGP R Natraj and Suhasini Maniratnam.

Develop a different focus

Bharat & Shalan Savur

It is a challenging world. And a compassionate one too,” I thought as I watched an ant crawl in the dust. When she met a stone, she laboriously tried climbing it. When she slipped down for the fifth time, she finally went around the stone and continued her crawl. I marvelled at the ant’s ingenuity. I marvelled even more at a world that erects obstacles and, simultaneously, offers a way around them!

A healing focus. An illness or pain is a challenge, an obstacle. The secret is to understand that we should not give way to despair, fear, anger, for they do nothing but exaggerate the physical pain and increase our suffering. Ah, but know: the mind that can magnify pain can also decrease it — by adopting a thinking style called ‘the differential focus on the good’.

To stay serene and stable, find all that is good to focus on: 95 per cent of your body is still healthy and strong, the beauty of a bird cruising the skies, its wings spread out, bonding with decent people by exchanging happy memories and stories, finding a coin on the pavement, seeing one bright flower peeping cheerfully through the leaves of a bush, the conviction that there are people who care for you and whom you love, the belief that there is a higher power looking out for you 24/7. This is how, like the ant, you walk around any obstacle.

The inner voice. Yes, there is that critical inner voice that insists it’s illogical to look for a silver lining in the dark, frowning clouds. The same voice also insists there’s nothing great in finding a coin on the footpath. However, this is not the time for needless judgment.

Besides, what the inner critical voice is offering is not reality but duality — separating you from the magical joys and beauty of being alive and thrusting you deeper into needless gloomy isolation and pain.

When you’re in pain, you need an inner support system — one that celebrates your every step to being healed and sustains you through setbacks. You don’t need an inner voice that says smugly, “You are deluding yourself” because you are not deluding yourself. You need an inner voice that says “Pain is temporary. Hang in there and keep improving every day, keep moving forward.”

Taking charge. Our body functions are closely related to our mental functions. As the Sadhguru puts it so aptly, “A thought of a tiger, mountain, ocean or person causes the body to re-calibrate differently.” A thought of a tiger invokes fear, an ocean invokes calm, a person you dislike invokes anger or disgust. Each thought reverberates through and impacts the body and keeps it in wellness or drives it to illness. So, it is in our best interests to not emphasise and exaggerate fear, disgust, anger, despair. And we can do it. We can take charge of our thoughts and responses.

A doctor takes charge of the treatment. An engineer takes charge of the turnkey project. A lawyer takes charge of the case. So too, should each of us take charge of our way of thinking. Medicine, engineering, etc are professions, but this is far bigger, it’s pro-life. I’m struck by James Russell Lowell’s verse: “Dear common flower, that grow’st beside the way, / Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold!”

We too can fringe life’s dusty roads with the golden radiance of our thoughts.

Think... It helps to wake up each morning with this wonderful knowing that you are created, designed, equipped and blessed to become a blessing and kindle a heaven on earth. It fills your heart with gladness. The smile in your being matches the beautiful widening smile of dawn in the skies. The qualitative difference in you is amazing. You love people spontaneously with a pure kind of love and bask in the love you receive. You lose interest in listening to negative stuff and even more important: you lose interest in repeating negative stuff that you hear. There’s a wonderful way to think before you talk:

- T - Will it transform life for the better?
- H - Will it help?
- I - Will it inspire?
- N - Will its newness enlighten?
- K - Will it kindle joy?

When you’re in pain, you need an inner support system — one that celebrates your every step to being healed and sustains you through setbacks.

If what you are about to say will produce none of these effects, then why say it at all? Let it go. As this habit sets in, you'll also think before you think! If there's nothing beautiful about an emerging thought, why think it? Gradually, all those strong feelings of fear, anger, despair fade and fall away. In their place is a cool, relaxed luminosity which can generously host amiable visitors like gratitude, appreciation, empathy, humour and happiness! Such a mind will bring the level of pain or illness down.

Recently, a dear friend, Annie came to exercise class after a tooth extraction. She was not on pain-killers, her only post-extraction treatment had been an ice-pack. Her eyes calm as always, she cycled and did all her other exercises including weight-training quietly and uncomplainingly. When asked if there was pain, she nodded, smiling gently, much to everybody's astonishment. Annie has the luminous mind I'm talking about.

Physical peace therapy. I'm grateful to Patanjali for bequeathing Yoga to the world and to Sweden's Per Henrik Ling who introduced physiotherapy in the early 19th century. For, physical postures, manipulation and specific exercises alleviate pain and stiffness and bring relief to the body. Invest in peace and ease for the body instead of problems and pain. It's practical, it's common sense, it's wisdom-at-work to use your muscles, to loosen your joints, to strengthen your heart and lungs and back and spine... Why sacrifice the quality of your life by neglecting your body? Remember: the quality of life is more important than getting things done. Giving priority to

"getting things done" over fitness is an over-reaction. Being here at peace without pain is more important than any destination, any doing. Exercising teaches your body what it is to be flexible and more relaxed. When you are loose, you are more resilient, more positive, more yourself.

So, walk around the stone, the obstacle. And allow your gentle transition from pain to ease, from illness to wellness. And like the ant, never look back, you're not going that way.

The writers are authors of the book Fitness for Life and teachers of the Fitness for Life programme.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



Welcome to Rotary Institute 2017



Ian Riseley
RI President 2017-18



RI Director C Basker
Convener



PDG R Theenachandran
Chairman

Innovation is the key

Transformation is what happens to a drop of water when it is touched by the magic of sunlight. It becomes a rainbow. It is what happens to a seed when it starts the journey to become a mighty banyan tree. The banyan tree is not an improved seed, just as a butterfly is not an improved caterpillar or a rainbow an improved drop of water.

Man's loftiest wishes and dreams have become reality through creativity and innovation. A 100 years ago who would have believed that humans could fly or that men could walk on the moon? Innovation is about putting foundations under the dream castles we build in the air.

In its 112 years history, Rotary International has always been evolutionary and sometimes revolutionary. This has been achieved by involving Rotary's RI officers in a time honoured system of meeting every year to discuss the future of Rotary. Rapid change is the nature of the world today. Rotary too needs to respond in order to be relevant.

The Annual Institute of Rotary officers in the sub-continent will be held this year for the Zones 4,5 and 6A in Malaysia at the Sunway Resort City, Kuala Lumpur, on December 1-3, 2017. Almost a 1,000 RI officers from the region are expected to participate in an interactive process that will involve present, past and future RI leaders, in a process of innovation that will recreate our movement.

One of the highlights of the Institute is the training of our DGs, DGNs and DGEs. They go through a clearly developed syllabus with trained facilitators. This ends with an inspiring graduation ceremony.

Eminent Speakers

Steve Rodgers, a business and lifestyle consultant, and a best-selling author. He sees himself as a "leader, helping others discover and maximise their highest good and purpose in life and business." He lives by the personal code: help individuals and companies unlock their full potential.



Mitty Chang, grew his entrepreneurial roots when he built his first website in 1998. He was in the fourth grade at that time. By the time he was 13, he had already begun his career in freelance web designing.

Swami Sukhabodhananda, is not only one of the most respected spiritual leaders of the country, he is also nicknamed the 'Corporate Guru'. His expertise lies in synthesising ancient wisdom of the east and modern vision of the west appealing to both young and old from a wide spectrum of society.



Mahatria Ra
T T Rangarajan or Rajan or "Mahatria" is a New Age Guru with a captivating style. Mahatria embarked on a mission to awaken humanity on the path of holistic abundance. Since then, his singular pursuit has been to enable living from the highest practical pedestal possible.

Bobby Cash
An extremely talented country music artist from India — Bobby Cash, known as 'The Indian Cowboy', is a charismatic character. Tall, good looking, dressed in black leathers and a Stetson — he is a Star!



Have you
Registered?



For Registrations contact:
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Speakers from Rotary International



Rajendra K Saboo
Past RI President



Kalyan Banerjee
Past RI President



K R Ravindran
Past RI President



Sushil Gupta
TRF Trustee



Paul A Netzel
TRF Trustee Chair



John C Matthews
RI Director

Serious fun!

Rotary should be serious fun, says RI President Ian Riseley. With his infectious smile and zestful energy, he exhorted Rotarians to enjoy the Institute as it is an important part of a leader's Rotary journey. "Plan your year through interactive discussions. Celebration and the inspiration you gain from the Institute will help you to make an even greater difference in your club and community," he says.

"Training is the most important thing we do in the Rotary year," says President Riseley. The work of Rotary is not done on the 18th floor of the Rotary Building in Evanston. We make a difference in the world because of the work done in over 35,000 Rotary clubs around the world.

As leaders, we need the Institute to make our work more efficient and focussed. We can then ensure that each year's goals are achieved at the club level. Team work ensures that we are united in the common purpose of making a difference.

"As Rotarians, we need to understand our responsibility to the planet," he says. "As an accountant, I want to see two figures this year — the total value of money spent on Rotary projects and the number of volunteer-hours spent. I am sure that this same measure will help you keep track of your contribution to our Movement."

Riseley and Juliet believe in walking the talk. A keen proponent of environmental sustainability, they live on a 7-acre property, where they practise their ideas in a very personal way. They want every Rotarian to plant a tree.

Visioning tomorrow

The webinar where a large cross section of Rotarians participated, was a trendsetter. It was high tech, interactive — a lot of listening and sharing happened. Virtual Reality hit us at the Atlanta Convention. Tomorrow has arrived in Rotary. The Malaysian Institute is your chance to put your stamp on Rotary's future. You too can leave your footprints on Rotary. Discussions, sharing and building networks will be the core elements of our annual family get-together, which the Institute really is.

We want you to take innovation and flexibility right down to the club level. As Rotary leaders, we need more Rotary in every Rotarian. We need to keep our flock together. Let us aim for the impossible — 100 per cent retention. Let us use all our powers to mentor, support and care for our people and keep them in Rotary.

Sam Owori had a vision of an India with 1.2 million Rotarians. What we need is a quantity of quality Rotarians. Let us meet at Sunway Resort City, Kuala Lumpur. Let us think, talk, plan and participate in the trendsetting year ahead.

Today everyone is looking for instant success, instant fame, instant friendship. There is nothing instant in this world. Except instant coffee and even that does not taste so good. Let us unite, to put together, to create a braver, better, brighter Movement.

C Basker

RI Director 2017–19



Refreshing experience

This Rotary Institute is an experience by itself. The delegates get all the entertainment besides the Institute programmes. For three days, delegates live in an exciting environment with all home comforts, which will certainly be a very refreshing, memorable lifetime-experience.

PDG R Theenachandran

Chairman – Rotary Institute 2017



Solar lamps brighten Mysuru colony

Team Rotary News

As six-year-old Taj Bi buried her face into her mother Tasin's neck, and hugged her tightly, the villagers of Janata Colony, a hamlet 8 km from Mysuru, were moved by the scene. Promod and Tasin had reunited with their children Asmin and Taj Bi, after 18 months. They were compelled to leave the children with Tasin's mother in the neighbouring village as there was inadequate lighting in their home and they feared that the children may get bitten by venomous insects lurking in the dark.

Thanks to RC Mysore Jayaprakash Nagar, D 3181, four out of the 30 families in the village will now experience relief from total darkness after sun set, as the club, in partnership with Liter of Light, an NGO, has installed two solar street and indoor lamps in their houses. "We've undertaken this project on a pilot basis and will provide a similar facility to the entire village soon," says Club Secretary Karthik V.

Though the colony has over 400 houses, only 30 of them were occupied as the slum tenement lacks basic amenities like water supply, power, toilets, proper roads and drainage system even after two decades of existence. "But we realised that lighting was the top priority for the residents. Until then, they were using kerosene lamps to light up their homes at night," he says.

The club is in the process of identifying ways to provide other basic



Above: Rotarians with the Liter of Light team after installing a solar street lamp in the village.

Below: Club Secretary Karthik V interacting with a beneficiary.

amenities, including medical assistance, for the villagers and is looking for sponsors to support the work.

Economical lamps

The solar lamp is constructed with a plastic bottle filled with bleached water and is installed with a solar panel atop a wooden pole. A battery and four LED lamps of three watts each are encased in the bottle, which provides adequate light. The circuits are designed to switch on and off automatically.

While the cost of a solar street lamp is Rs 4,500, the indoor lamp, with a solar mobile charger, costs Rs 1,300.

The NGO installs this easily scalable and replicable solar device at places or in communities which don't have any electricity. The club is ready to assist its counterparts in other districts with such economical solar lamps, says Karthik. He can be contacted at Karthiktara@gmail.com. ■



Rotary brings cheer to Sapna

Surhuda Kulkarni



Dr Ramesh Godbole provides medicines to Sapna Kasbe in the presence of (from R) Club President Pramod Bendre, Varsha, Alka Pawar, Sapna's mother and teacher Lalita Naravane.

Sapna Kasbe (11) studying in Shishu Vihar Primary school, Pune, was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Her sugar levels shoot up to 400-plus and she takes insulin injections thrice daily. Her father, Babasaheb Kasbe, is a watchman and her mother, a domestic worker. Every month, the family had to spend Rs 3,000, almost one-fifth of the family's monthly income, towards the child's medical expenses.

Three months ago, Varsha Bendre, spouse of the President of RC Pune Ganeshkind, D 3131, Pramod Bendre met Sapna during the club's uniform distribution drive in the school. She came across as a studious child, but her health was poor. Her class teacher Lalita Naravane requested Varsha to help Sapna. Varsha consulted Dr Ramesh Godbole, a pathologist and an honorary member of the club, who immediately agreed to sponsor her medical expenses.

"Your help has completely changed the life of the Kasbe family. Sapna seems to be settled and happy at school," said Lalita.

"The value of one little life saved and protected is equal to a million service projects. Every drop in the ocean counts," said President Bendre with pride and satisfaction.

*The writer is a member of
RC Pune Ganeshkind, D 3131*

Jumping the line

Harjit Singh Khurana

Long winding queues is a regular sight, in a country like ours, where the population is burgeoning every second. We find ourselves in one quite often — for boarding a flight, darshan in a temple, or for the school admissions which may last for days.

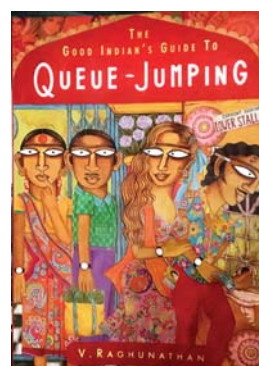
This book is interesting for those who are always in hurry and take pride in jumping queues. It exposes the tendencies of an average human being to find ingenious ways of jumping queues. The book discusses all types of queues — formal, social, overt, covert and many such variants. It also includes the virtual queue in a call centre where we invariably hear the recorded voice that says: 'You are in queue, please wait.'

Wherever there is a queue people try to find novel methods to jump the line. Queue jumping is successful when there is a legitimate reason to jump the line and it is difficult for those in the queue to verify the queue jumper's excuse.

The author has discussed an interesting pattern of queues in India and the West. "Our average queues are full of verve and vitality, each brain in overdrive, actively evaluating all strategies to jump the queue," he writes. "What is more, in our queues we stand really tight, unlike the Westerners, who stand apart as if the next person may be suffering from some unmentionable contagion," he goes on to add.

How our VIPs get preferential treatment at airports and other places is fascinating. An

excerpt: "Not all airports provide for fast track passages which Westerners allow at a premium in their airports to those travelling in first class or business class. Nor do they provide for *marhaba*-like arrangement (of the Dubai Airport), where one pays for the privilege of being ushered through the airport gates faster. Our system is somewhat different. Our fast track or *marhaba* equivalent



Title: The Good Indian's Guide to Queue-Jumping

Genre: Non-fiction

Author: V Raghunathan

Publishers: HarperCollins

Pages: 180 (Paperback)

Price: Rs 229

involves our leaders wearing spotlessly white kurta-pajamas and being escorted by a couple of safari-suited gunmen to the front of any queue."

In short, the book is a tongue-in-cheek focus on the art. When you cannot escape the queues, try beating them.

*The writer is a member of
RC Ludhiana, D 3070.*

The land of smiles

R Nand Kumar

I was pleasantly surprised when I landed in the Cambodia capital Phnom Penh, welcomed by a sign 'Namaste'. Indian passport holders get visa on arrival, but a return ticket and proof of hotel booking are essential.

It may seem paradoxical that Cambodia is called The Land of Smiles, as it has witnessed so much of genocide, civil war, Khmer Rouge atrocities and Pol Pot for the past 40–50 years. The pre-historic past of Hindu and Buddhist cultures has possibly still given the locals the humility and

smiles to greet you everywhere, painting a different picture altogether. The main religion is Theravada Buddhism (a form of Mahayana).

Cambodia is now embracing the 21st century and emerging as a vibrant, exciting tourist destination, offering an opportunity to step back into ancient history and get immersed in

its charming culture. Language is a challenge for tourists since English is spoken by few. The US dollar is easily acceptable in all local shops and malls. Everything is a *dolla*, as pronounced by the locals. There is really no need



to change to the local currency (riel) as you also get back change in dollars.

Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, is the wealthiest city and the seat of the government and the Royalty and the King. It is the political and commercial centre. The city is situated on the banks of the Tonle Sap and Upper Mekong rivers. Phnom Penh gives you a glimpse into the political upheavals the country went through after the Independence from the French in 1953. Here the main attractions are the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum, Independence Monument, Khmer Rouge Killing Fields, Tuol

It may seem paradoxical that Cambodia is called The Land of Smiles, as it has witnessed so much of genocide, civil war, Khmer Rouge atrocities and Pol Pot for the past 40–50 years.

Sleng Prison and Museum and Wat Phnom. For good bargains, head to the Russian Market. I am recommending some places I found very interesting both historically and culturally, and they can be covered in two days. Hire a *Tuk-tuk* in Phnom Penh and go around these sites paying between \$3–5.

The Tuol Sleng Genocide Prison and Museum, or S-21, was the most notorious of the 150 or more interrogation and torture centres where innocent educated youth were eventually sentenced to death and sent to the Choeung Ek Killing Fields. Pol Pot and his communist Khmer Rouge movement that

Angkor Wat



led Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, killed nearly 1.5 million Cambodians by starvation, execution, disease or overwork. Sadly, the site is a former high school where outdoor school equipment was used to hang prisoners upside down and dipping them into jars filled with filth. The halls show photographs of the many who were tortured and eventually killed by the regime. Some, like Chum Mey, survived thanks to their skills to repair machines. The Killing Fields of Pol Pot, a few km away, have over 300 mass graves. Young men, women and children were executed and some were buried alive. A memorial stupa has been erected with over 800 skulls inside.

The National Museum of Cambodia is a beautiful structure founded by the Frenchman George Groslier in central

Phnom Penh. It houses nearly 14,000 items and is one of the world's largest collections of Khmer art. Items date from prehistoric times to earlier periods, during and after the Khmer Empire, which at its height stretched from Thailand, across present-day Cambodia, to southern Vietnam. There is so much that India shares with Cambodia and its pre-historic journey, especially the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. You are welcomed by a huge sandstone statue of Garuda (925–950 AD). Look out for the many statues of Vishnu in various poses, Shiva's trident, the arch depicting the combat between Duryodhana and Bhima, and many more.

The city got its name from a wealthy widow called Penh who found a large koki tree in the river, inside which

she found four bronze statues of the Buddha. Penh constructed a small shrine on an artificial hill (or Phnom) made by the people living in the village to protect the sacred statues. This place is Wat Phnom (or temple on a hill) and is the central point of the city.

Now for some shopping tips. Visit the Russian Market for some great bargains for local Cambodian paintings, souvenirs, fridge magnets, stickers, handicrafts, hats and antique pieces, but beware as many will be fake. Bargain hard without feeling shy.

If you fancy a beer, try out the Angkor, Anchor or Cambodia brands. My choice was Cambodia. Liquor is cheap in Cambodia and so buy your duty-free quota when you finally

Phnom Penh gives you a glimpse into the political upheavals the country went through after the Independence from the French in 1953.

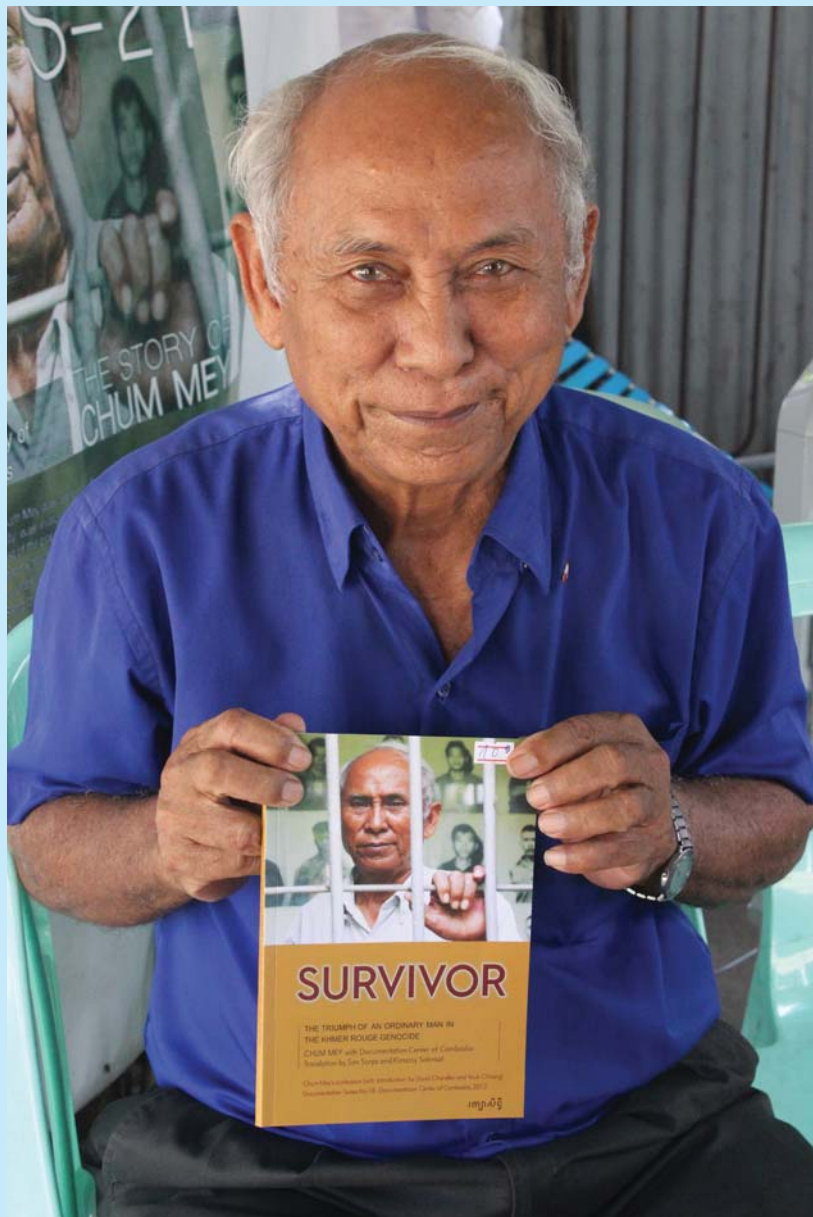
Royal Palace, Phnom Penh.



check out from Siem Reap. Sign off the visit to Phnom Penh with their local Khmer dishes (mainly fish and chicken) called Amok. It is a very tasty curry with the standard accompaniment of boiled sticky rice.

I was at Siem Reap, the temple town, on the third day. A short 45-minute flight from Phnom Penh by the local Cambodia Angkor Air takes you to this beautiful airport of Siem Reap. As the ancient capital during the 9th and 10th centuries, it depicts a cross of two religions — Hinduism and Buddhism. The link can be seen distinctly in the sculptures, carvings, paintings and statues in the temples. Conservation and restoration work is in progress with the assistance of Indian and Japanese governments.

Most temples are world heritage sites and non-functional for daily religious rituals. The main places are Angkor Wat, Ta Prohm, Angkor Thom and Bayon Temple. Try spending two days to see these at leisure. The visits to Angkor Wat and Ta Prohm require a lot of walking. Drink water all the time and appropriately dressed in trousers or skirt below the knee; remember you are visiting temples.



Chum Mey, one of the few survivors of the Khmer Rouge imprisonment, with his book 'Survivor', where he narrates his experiences in the Tuol Sleng prison.

R Nand Kumar

A *son et lumiere* (sound and light) show of 90 minutes — 'Smile of Angkor' — gives a glimpse into the early history and culture of both Cambodia and Angkor Wat. It prepares you for the temple visits. The show offers a good non-veg choice of a buffet dinner as well.

Angkor Wat (Temple City) is the largest Hindu temple complex of the world, covering an area of 400 acres. It was built by the Khmer king Suryavarman II in the early 12th century

in Yashodharapura, the capital of the Khmer Empire, as his state temple and eventual mausoleum. It is made with sandstone blocks piled on top of one another. Then the sculptors would chisel out the figures marked by the artists. The reflection of the temple in the waters of the moat and some stunt photography are very popular here.

Angkor Wat is a breakaway from the Saivite tradition of previous kings and was instead dedicated to Lord Vishnu. About 1,200 sq m



A tall, white, tiered stupa with a dark, ornate roof and a spire, standing in a clearing. The base is a simple, rectangular structure with a large doorway. People are gathered around the base, and there are some trees and a paved area in the foreground.

Memorial Stupa at the
Choeung Ek Killing Fields.

of carved bas reliefs represent eight different stories, such as the Hindu epics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. Perhaps the most important narrative is the *Churning of the ocean of milk*, depicting the story of *devas* fighting the *asuras* in order to reclaim peace, orderliness and power which the gods have lost. The elixir of life (*amrita*) needs to be released by churning the ocean by the gods and demons working together. Both sides are aware that once the *amrita* is released there will be a battle to attain it.

By the 12th century, Cambodia had started adopting Theravada Buddhism which is associated with South East Asia and is perhaps closer to the original Indian form of Buddhism. The Angkor Thom built by King Jayavarman VII has a Smiling Buddha. The entrance city gate though has a representation of Vishnu in the centre of the churning of the sea of milk.

The Ta Prohm temple is a purely Buddhist temple built by King Jayavarman VII for his mother. It is very unique in that it is in almost the same condition now as it was found in the 19th century. A startling picturesque and impressive combination of trees growing out of the ruins and the surrounding jungle has made it one of Angkor's most popular temples. It gives the appearance of almost being swallowed by the jungle! It has towers, closed courtyards, narrow passages and shrubs sprouting from the roofs of monumental doorways. Many strangulating roots engulf the temples and the corridors. One of the most famous photographed spots in Ta Prohm is the Tomb Raider tree.

To spend a nice and relaxing evening, visit the Pub Street and the Night Market both open till late into the night.

*The author is a member of
RC Bangalore Jeevanbimanagar;
D 3190.*

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

D 3211 adopts 1,500 schools

Jaishree



Chief Guest Shashi Tharoor (in blue) with (from L) District WinS Chair Mathew Verghese, DGN Shirish Kesavan, PDG R Reghunath and DG Suresh Mathew at the Sarvodaya School, Thiruvananthapuram.

Rotary District 3211 launched its WinS programme for the year at the Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Thiruvananthapuram in the presence of DG Suresh Mathew, District WinS Coordinator R Reghunath, WinS Chair Mathew Verghese and DGN Shirish Keshavan. Rotary clubs of Trivandrum organised the mass awareness programme where Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor was the chief guest. Over 2,500 children of the school participated in the hand wash demo and other sanitation workshops that formed part of WinS. It was a renewed focus on health and sanitation for the school children. Leaflets describing the right way of washing hands were given to them to help spread the message in their localities.

Soon after the launch, Tharoor tweeted “Inaugurating Rotary’s WinS programme (wash in schools) to promote sanitation. Kids must be change agents for better health.”

The District had exceeded its goals in the last two years. “We adopted 1,169 schools in 2015–16, and 2,432

schools last year,” said Reghunath. New toilet blocks and handwash stations, along with water facilities, were constructed for schools that lacked these facilities, and where the sanitation facilities were in a dilapidated state, clubs helped renovate them. Training school teachers and students in hygiene practices were undertaken by club members in all the schools. “We have achieved behavioural change in remote villages too, as advocated by WinS Target Challenge Committee Chair Sushil Gupta. Children across Kerala have been catalysts in promoting the use of toilets and healthy handwash habits in their communities.”

The district, with a global grant support, constructed 36 toilet blocks in the State at a cost of Rs 1.46 crore.

WinS Target Challenge Competitive Grant

More recently, the district got approval for its proposal submitted to TRF under the new ‘WinS Target Challenge Competitive Grant’. “Ours is one among the 13 projects from the

five Target Challenge countries that have been approved for this specific grant,” said Reghunath.

The Rotary Foundation trustees have approved this grant specially for the five participating countries — India, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Kenya. The grant process will be administered in two phases. Under the first phase, clubs/districts can apply for grants upto \$10,000 for assessing the needs of schools in the respective communities; 10–12 proposals will be selected for the grant.

The next phase involves upgrading schools to higher star-levels as prescribed in the WinS format. About 3–5 sustainable projects will be selected in this phase and will be eligible for \$150,000 to 500,000 funding from the grant.

The district’s target this year is to adopt 1,500 schools for sanitation and Reghunath is confident of covering 2,000 schools. “Our people now know what has to be done and how to achieve each step,” he says. ■

SMS to pledge your eyes

Jaishree



S Jayaraman,
founder-trustee,
Nayana Jyothi
Trust.



As sight ambassadors, donors can inspire others to pledge their eyes and when someone they know dies, these ambassadors can counsel the immediate kin of the deceased, and with their consent, call the closest eye bank and complete the process without hassles.

The closest eye banks in a particular area can also be known by typing EYEBANK<space>Pincode. These eye banks will simultaneously receive alerts of a possible eye harvest and the nearest eye bank can reach the site without much waste of time. "Ideally, the golden hour is 4–6 hours after death. The entire process of alerting the eye bank is completed through a mobile phone and without any hassle of looking for the pledge form that the deceased might have signed, or searching for the eye bank."

He narrates how students of a school in Doddabellapur near Bengaluru are actively promoting eye donation. "The moment they come to know of any death in their locality, they inform their teachers, who then come over and counsel the bereaved family. If the family is willing to donate the eyes of their dead relative, they immediately alert the eye banks."

More recently, Jayaraman has also got the consent of the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu governments to use the 108 helpline. In the event of a death, relatives can call 108 if they wish to donate the eyes of the deceased. The call will be diverted to the nearest eye bank, following which, a medical team will go over to harvest the eyes. ■

You don't have to fill any form to pledge your eyes. Just an SMS will do. You also become a sight ambassador in the process," says S Jayaraman, founder-trustee of Nayana Jyothi Trust, Bengaluru.

"Whenever we speak of eye donation, people agree to pledge their eyes but immediately ask for

the pledge form. The concept is so much ingrained in people's minds and hospitals too claim to have collected many such pledges." Instead, all that people need to do is send an SMS — EYE<space>Name<space>Location — to 9902080011. The names and location will be stored in the Trust's database.

Eye donation – facts

Jayaraman highlights some alarming statistics — while 15 lakh Indians suffer from corneal blindness, only 15,000 usable eyes are collected out of the 75 lakh deaths and about 150 lakh eyes are cremated or buried.

The entire procedure takes just about half an hour and leaves no

visible signs on the body. After making the call, the eyes of the deceased should be closed and covered with moist cotton, the overhead fan switched off and the head of the deceased raised by about six inches to lessen incidence of bleeding during the removal of eyes.

A vegan, no-frills club

Team Rotary News



PDG ISAK Nazar addressing the club members.

In a year where RI President Ian Riseley has put the focus on planting trees and greening the earth, in RI District 3232, Chennai, S N Balasubramanian, a passionate environmentalist, has been instrumental in chartering a new club — RC Chennai Green City. It has over 30 members, who are a mix of both young and old, and hail from 27 different classifications in classic Rotary style.

Balasubramanian, who was the charter president of RC Guindy Industrial City which was started in 2007, says a unique feature about RC Chennai Green City is

that the club members have embraced frugality. “We are a vegan club, the members are not served alcohol and we have only breakfast meetings. It has been decided that the money thus saved will be utilised for service projects.”

On the installation day on July 16, where PDG ISAK Nazar was the chief guest, the club donated three computers and a printer/scanner to a government high school in the city. It has also started a Rotaract club, which was one among the 50 inaugurated by PRIP Gary Huang last month.

Paul Harris boosts club’s morale

Team Rotary News

With emphasis on promoting Rotary’s public image in D 3090 DG Bagh Singh Pannu has initiated installation of the bust of Rotary International Founder Paul P Harris in 20 clubs in the district which have their own community halls. The bust sculpted in black metal measures 3 feet tall and 2 feet wide and was made in Hyderabad at a cost of Rs 40,000, said Pannu.

RC Sri Ganganagar was the first club in the district to have the Paul Harris bust installed in its Rotary Hall on July 1 and “it has boosted the morale



Rotarians of RC Sri Ganganagar with DG Bagh Singh Pannu (fourth from right). President Sandeep Chauhan (fourth from left) and Secretary Harvinder Singh Sandhu (second from right) at the installation event of the Paul Harris bust.

of our members,” said Club Secretary Harvinder Singh Sandhu.

Formed in 1959, the club got its own building

20 years ago and the venue hosts festivals like Navaratri, Diwali and Holi for its 115 members. “DG Pannu has planted

the first sapling of the year at the garden in front of our building. We hold regular meetings at the hall,” said Sandu. ■



RC Kumbakonam East — D 2981

A dengue awareness programme was held in association with the Tamil Nadu health department in over 13 villages, and in a government primary school. The Rotarians also distributed footwear to the students at the school.

RC Omalur — D 2982

A sports meet was organised for students of the panchayat middle school in Omalur and certificates were given to all participants. The club distributed lunch boxes to all the students to motivate them to attend school regularly.



RC Nagpur North — D 3030

A 'Drive to save water' from Kanyakumari to Ladakh, covering a distance of 8,500 km in 21 days, was organised by the club. The journey created awareness among three lakh people, said the Project Director Nalin Majithia.

RC Dindigul — D 3000

The club, in partnership with Rotaract Club of PSNA College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul, conducted a blood donation camp. Over 450 units of blood was donated by the students and staff at the mega camp held on the college premises.



Matters

RC Bikaner — D 3053

The club donated benches and desks to two government schools at Nathusar Bass and Goga Gate in Bikaner. This is an ongoing project funded by a global grant over the last three years.



RC Jaipur — D 3054

An interactive session on protecting women's rights was held in which a range of gender discrimination issues were discussed. Justice Vinod Shankar Dave, former Judge of Rajasthan High Court, and NCW ex-chairperson Mamta Sharma shared their views with the Rotarians.



RC Chandigarh Midtown — D 3080

Under a global grant, the club, along with URC Edwards, US, and TRF, provided solar electricity to remote villages of Ladakh. While the direct beneficiaries will be over 400 rural people of the Himalayan villages, the project will indirectly benefit 4,000 people including trekkers, tourists and shopkeepers.



RC Meerut — D 3100

Vriksha Mitra Abhiyan, a programme to plant saplings, nurture and protect them, is being executed with the involvement of 75 children in Meerut. These children, called Vriksha Mitra (friends of trees), carry extra bottles of water to water plants on the way to school, install tree guards to protect saplings and nurture them with organic manure.



RC Shahjahanpur — D 3110

A dental camp was held for students and staff of the Madrasa Faizan-E-Madina. Rtn Dr K P Saksena gave a demo on brushing teeth to the students and urged them to brush their teeth twice a day for better oral hygiene.



RC Pune Kothrud — D 3131

DG Abhay Gadgil presented the Rotary Excellence Award, instituted by the club, to Kailash Katkar of Quick Heal Technologies for his contributions in the field of IT security and furthering the 'Make in India' campaign.



RC Proddatur — D 3160

Club President Ayub Khan presented a cheque of Rs 30,000 to help celebrate the wedding of a couple hailing from a poor background. The Rotarians also gifted the couple few household items.



RC Puttur City — D 3181

Over 350 commuters were screened for diabetes at a camp held at a bus stand. Those detected with the disorder were given suitable medical advice by the doctors and gave referrals for further treatment.



RC Kadur — D 3182

A fancy dress competition was held at a Rotary nursery school to celebrate Janmashtami. Fifty children dressed up as Lord Krishna on the occasion. The club distributed prizes to all the participants.



RC Silk City Ramanagara — D 3190

Over 40 students were given books at the Lakshmi pura Government College. The students were very happy with this gift and thanked the club members.



Matters



RC Coimbatore West — D 3201

Rotaractor Dhandapani went on a bike ride from Kashmir to Kanyakumari to spread awareness against child abuse and also promote the Clean India mission. The club feted him on successful completion of his tour.



RC Udumalpet Tejas — D 3202

Sports equipment worth Rs 5,000 and books for libraries were donated to the municipal middle schools in the town. The Rotarians also honoured the teachers with gifts to commemorate Teachers Day.



RC Sivakasi Central — D 3212

The club members are distributing bread, fruits and biscuits to patients at the Sivakasi Government Hospital every Thursday. They have been providing this service for over 60 weeks now.



RC Burnpur — D 3240

The club organised a camp to detect liver fibrosis and cirrhosis through a special test called Fibroscan. About 75 people registered for the camp.



RC Ballygunge — D 3291

An eye camp was held at Munsirhat in Howrah where 138 patients were screened and 38 of them were found to be in need of IOL implants. The surgeries were performed at the M P Birla Eye Foundation in the town.

Compiled by V Muthukumaran
Designed by L Gunasekaran

Membership Summary

As on September 1, 2017



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Rotary at a glance

Rotarians : 12,19,237

Clubs : 35,731

Districts : 539

Rotaractors : 2,42,834*

Clubs : 10,558*

Interactors : 5,11,589*

Clubs : 22,243*

RCC members: 2,27,861*

RCC : 9,907*

* As on September 1, 2017

RI Zone	RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians	Rotaract	Interact	RCC
5	2981	111	4,466	194	56	225	172
5	2982	66	2,842	89	58	112	43
5	3000	127	5,287	435	287	638	194
4	3011	73	3,157	606	49	103	28
4	3012	87	3,608	731	66	125	55
5	3020	102	4,433	216	111	461	351
4	3030	94	4,983	602	73	305	164
4	3040	97	2,194	237	52	109	135
4	3053	77	2,966	466	16	37	93
4	3054**	127	6,005	943	89	295	471
4	3060	97	3,968	401	59	119	129
4	3070	106	2,990	239	65	152	54
4	3080	78	3,359	221	66	213	106
4	3090	78	2,054	81	32	37	122
4	3100*	72	1,626	67	10	76	146
6	3110	115	3,900	255	51	50	104
6	3120	75	3,211	326	36	51	50
4	3131	134	5,349	1,020	91	267	75
4	3132	110	4,471	497	61	192	138
4	3141**	91	5,356	1,118	113	251	86
4	3142**	77	2,765	384	62	189	69
5	3150	100	3,658	347	92	229	108
5	3160	69	2,336	102	21	45	81
5	3170	128	5,421	369	55	300	160
5	3181	72	3,064	204	29	168	104
5	3182	79	3,214	238	27	273	92
5	3190	132	5,170	593	137	339	49
5	3201	139	5,186	296	92	125	46
5	3202	131	4,860	236	97	426	44
5	3211	137	4,379	255	11	86	123
5	3212	95	3,801	198	108	264	126
5	3231**	68	2,690	90	55	177	235
5	3232**	97	3,883	509	130	298	82
6	3240	87	2,983	339	59	146	146
6	3250	96	3,768	677	40	203	176
6	3261	70	2,444	211	16	104	42
6	3262	97	3,341	386	41	68	75
6	3291	150	3,892	748	67	129	581
India Total		3,741	1,43,080	14,926	2,580	7,387	5,055
5	3220	73	1,918	234	80	201	77
6	3271	77	1,469	237	45	16	13
6	3272	154	2,852	438	37	37	36
6	3281	202	5,748	777	227	84	186
6	3282	137	3,878	301	133	38	40
6	3292	116	4,450	668	119	106	106
S Asia Total		4,500	1,63,395	17,581	3,221	7,869	5,513

*Non-districted **Newly formed districts from mergers/bifurcations.

Source: RI South Asia Office

In Brief



PM loses roof

Hurricane Maria, classified a Category 3 storm, lashed the coasts of the Dominican Republic in September, triggering an avalanche of torn roofs including that of Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit. “My roof is gone. I am at the complete mercy of the hurricane. House is flooding,” he posted on Facebook. Puerto Rico and the northeast coast of the Republic were the worst hit even as the coastal cities were just coming out of the Hurricane Irma.

Amazon gets a parrot customer

Corienne Pretorius of London was clueless as to who had placed an order for a set of golden gift boxes with Amazon, when she received a notification of the purchase order on her phone. After a series of inquest that ruled out her husband and son, she realised that the culprit was her pet Buddy, an African Grey parrot. The bird had placed the order mimicking its owner on a voice controlled smart speaker that responds to the name ‘Alexa’. Corienne accidentally found out that her pet was the culprit when she later found her talking into the device mimicking her voice.

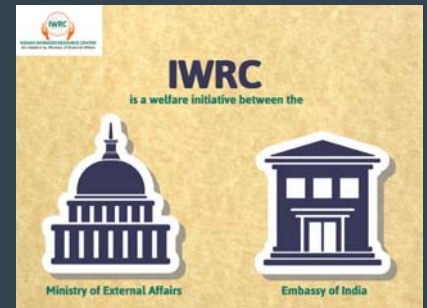


Durga’s grand entry

Durga Puja is a much-awaited annual event in West Bengal. Pandals display themes ranging from politics to entertainment. While one pandal displayed an old house with a ‘money-tree’ from which hung replicas of the demonetised Rs 500 and Rs 1,000, another resembled the grand, imposing Mahizhmati kingdom, of *Baahubali*-fame. Social causes such as female foeticide, IVF and test-tube babies also featured in some of the pandals. And a hotel created excitement among children with its 600-kg chocolate Durga idol 6-ft tall.

Helpline for Indians in the UAE

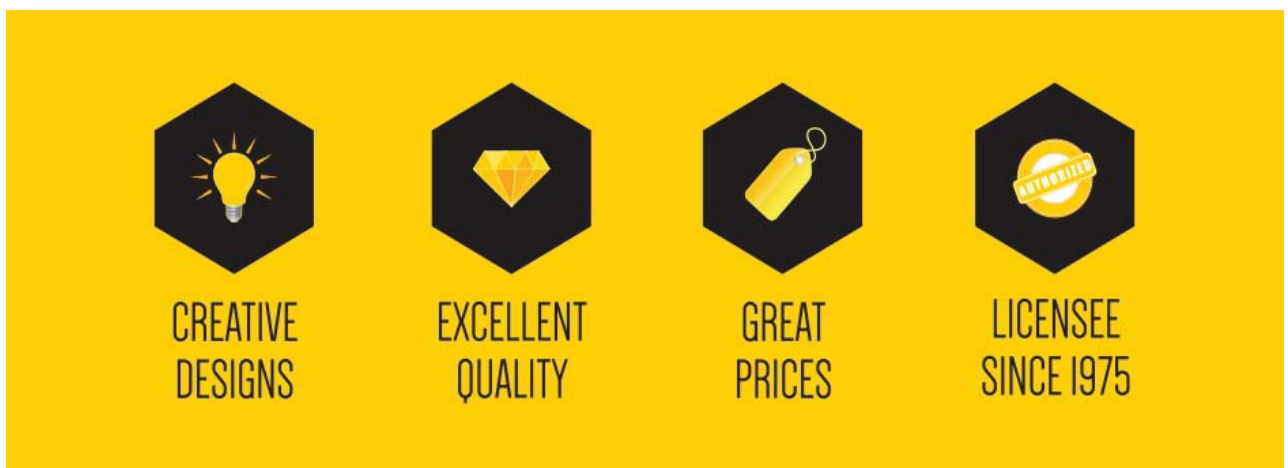
The Indian Embassy has opened its second Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) in Sharjah. It has a toll-free number: 800 INDIA or 80046342 to receive complaints and suggestions. The service is free for all Indians residing in the UAE. The services include attending to grievance petitions, legal, financial and personal counselling, awareness camps for workers and verification of job offers. The first such facility was set up in Dubai in 2010.



Good thieves!

A family in Mangaluru was happy to get back its 99 sovereigns of gold and Rs 13,000 cash when the thieves who stole the booty decided to return it. Facing pangs of regret, they threw the packet containing the stolen articles into the owners’ house with a note advising them to deposit the gold in bank locker and that they regretted committing the crime.

Compiled by Jaishree; Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



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