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June 2018

ROTARY NEWS

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On the cover: Rotary International President Elect Barry Rassin during his visit to Chennai.

Picture by: Rasheeda Bhagat



Timely editorial; excellent issue

The Editorial *Increasing incidence of rape... a challenge to Indian women* reflects reality and is a black spot in our ancient Indian tradition of mutual respect and gender equality.

It's really pathetic to hear that foreigners have started asking what's wrong with Indian men and express doubts about the safety of women in India. We need remedial measures for a more responsible society.

RIPE Barry Rassin has asked Rotarians to share pictures of the children we are helping, the school we are building, the disabled we are assisting, and not just how we meet. This shows his vision for Rotary and needs to be followed.

I was very happy to read the article *A Rotary initiative for thirsty birds* and the service rendered by the members of RC Bikaner Marudhara of Rajasthan. They are providing water to voiceless birds during summer which is very severe in a desert region. Their initiative is praiseworthy and must be followed by other clubs.

I am happy to state that I provide water to birds



during summer by keeping a container of water on the terrace of our high-rise building in Thiruvananthapuram. Almost all articles are interesting and hope efforts will be continued by the Editorial team to provide interesting reading material in future too.

M T Philip, RC Trivandrum
Suburban — D 3211

I congratulate you for the excellent work of using *Rotary News* as a platform to put forward some of the most important information and make the readers think and convert into 'people of action'.

As a Rotarian, it gives me great pride and satisfaction, when the reach of Rotary extends beyond

conventional boundaries and makes celebrities as well as dignitaries a part of our communication.

I saw the photo and news about RIPE Barry Rassin's meet with Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje Scindia. She is indeed a dynamic woman. Your Editorial resonates the feeling of all of us about the immense potential that women have and is an apt rider to this meeting. At our club, we have consciously focused on adding women Rotarians to enable the power of Goddesses Durga and Shakti reflect in our service activities.

Manoj Kabre, RC Bangalore
Whitefield Central — D 3190

A timely Editorial and compliments to you for a forceful write up. We in RC Delhi South believe in women's empowerment. The club has set up and is running five vocational training centres which give confidence and courage to women to stand up and raise their voice against violent forces.

Som Dua, RC Delhi
South — D 3011

Stagnant membership

RI Director John Matthews' interview is inspiring, even more is his observation on the need for strategies for retaining membership.

His frank remarks about stagnant membership

of 1.2 million due to lack of right priorities is an eye-opener.

Rotary leaders must introspect and dig deep to understand the growth of membership numbers in order to formulate simple, distinct and executable

strategies in the induction of new members with emphasis on youth and women, besides retaining existing members through a process of engagement, mentoring and recognition.

R Murali Krishna,
RC Berhampur — D 3262

Unveiling PDG Bhalla, the writer

The article *Both Rotary and writing are his passion* written by Rasheeda and designed by N Krishnamurthy was an eye-opener for me. PDG Prem P Bhalla is a very

LETTERS

Excellent and informative articles on different Rotary projects in the May issue. The Editorial, *A challenge to Indian women*, really touched my heart. It is shameful that you had to face journalists' bullets during an event in Switzerland — "What is wrong with Indian men?... are women really safe in India?"

As Rotarians working with a vision in our community, it's time to think of awareness programmes on women's safety in India. The different articles on sanitation, drinking water, and the one on schoolchildren where they no longer need to sit on the floor, show our dedicated work for the community.

A successful RAHAT camp at Dhamtari points to our commitment towards a healthy society. I am happy to see my fellow Rotarians working hard in the project. Overall, an excellent and colourful issue. Congratulations to Team Rotary News.

*P R N Chandra Mouli
RC Berhampur
Midtown — D 3262*

senior Rotarian of our District 3080, and I have known him personally for many years as I am a Rotarian since 1989.

After reading the article I am more knowledgeable about him. I called and

congratulated him about his writing passion. I knew about his Rotary activities but as far as writing so many books and other activities, I came to know only from *Rotary News*.

Please do enlighten us by writing more about our senior Rotary leaders. They are a source of inspiration to us. Thank you so much for making *Rotary News* informative and interesting.

*Dr Suresh K Sablok, RC Nahani
Sirmour Hills — D 3080*

Featuring our projects in Rotary News

I am a Board member of the Rotary Club of Thane. Our club was chartered in 1958 and is the oldest club in District 3142. Our close to 100 members are esteemed citizens of Thane and have held key positions like Mayor in the past. We implement a number of major projects and get a lot of appreciation from the District Governor and other Rotary clubs.

I read *Rotary News* every month and feel that this is a wonderful platform for the global audience to know what Rotary is doing in India. I am keen to feature our projects in *Rotary News* and want to understand the process for doing so. Please let me know the criteria for getting an article featured in our magazine.

*Ramakrishnan Subramaniam
RC Thane — D 3142*

Editor's Note

Mail us a brief report about your club projects — description of the project, where it was done, how many people/communities it benefited, genesis of the project and cost, project contact details. Please avoid reporting routine welfare projects such as tree planting,

blood donation camps etc. Include high resolution action photographs with beneficiaries. Attach the pictures in jpg format. Do NOT embed them in word file or in the body of the letter.

E-mail id: rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com; rushbhagat@gmail.com

The remarkable Renutai of Pune

The cover story on Renutai (April issue) was an eyeopener for many of us. Despite having so many facilities at our disposal, we don't take time out to do good for society in a selfless manner. Renutai gave up a lucrative job to provide a safe and decent future to the children of sex workers. We normally see well-dressed men and women posing for pictures after doing a small project in their clubs. Kudos to you for showing us there is more to Rotary than just glamour and glitz. More power to the Renutais of this world.

*Jyotika Pai, RC Grapecity
Nasik — D 3030*

The April issue has wonderful stories. The article *Corporate membership for Rotary?* was a good read. We need corporate members to help in the funding of projects along with TRF.

The article *RYLA is much more than recreation* shows the efforts of DG Bagh Singh Pannu to help Rotaractors understand Rotary and become Rotarians in the future. The blood donation project (*Blood unites people of all faiths*) of RC Palai, D 3211, that has helped people to think beyond faith is appreciated.

*Naveen Garg
RC Sunam — D 3090*

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor: rotarynews@rosaonline.org; rushbhagat@gmail.com

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The importance of plain speaking, honest reporting

I was barely a little over a year old in *Rotary News*, when on a fine February morning in 2016 I got a letter by snail mail all the way from Washington County in the US. It was on the letterhead of a past RI President called Charles C Keller. Honestly, at that point I did not know the venerable gentleman's tremendous contribution to the Rotary world, but I quickly soared to a dizzy height when I read its content. It said he had been receiving copies of *The Rotarian* and several regional magazines for many years and read them all avidly as they gave a lot of useful information on Rotarians' activities around the world. He then went on to say that he had just finished reading the January issue of *Rotary News* (a major chunk of which was devoted to the then RI Director Manoj Desai's Jaipur Institute) and "I find it to be one of the best issues of a regional publication I have ever seen."

The magazine, he added, "gives a very enlightening picture of how Rotary performs and develops in India". While this was praise indeed, PRIP Keller then went on to use two words that are distinctly missing from our media these days. He said the issue "honestly reports the pluses and minuses" of Rotary in India and gives a detailed account of the "tremendous work" done by Indian Rotarians. (The letter of President Keller, who passed away recently, is carried on Page 41).

"Honest reporting" is something that has disappeared from the bulk of the Indian media these days, and in my career in journalism spanning nearly 40 years I have never encountered such stringent criticism, and even contempt, for the Indian media. While the scope for investigative journalism in a magazine meant for Rotarians is limited, it would be foolhardy and meaningless to look at the organisation, Rotarians and their work only through

rose-tinted glasses. That is why it is encouraging to find that more and more senior Rotary leaders in India, including the serving RI Directors from our zone, do not shy away from calling a spade a spade while turning their lens on the shortcomings of Rotary in our zone. Every RI President in the recent past and the current President Ian Riseley, as well as President Elect Barry Rassin, has been more than generous while complimenting Indian Rotarians for their generous contribution to TRF, execution of great service projects that are changing the face of the communities they inhabit. But at the same time, there is critical concern on shortcomings such as boosting membership in an unsustainable manner. As RI Director C Basker keeps saying at various meetings, there is little purpose in getting in large numbers of people to join Rotary, if they are going to "enter en masse and leave en masse" as well. At the Kuala Lumpur Zone Institute Past RI President KR Ravindran in a "frankly speaking" session asked some very tough questions about the shortcomings in Indian Rotary to both the Past Presidents from India — Rajendra Saboo and Kalyan Banerjee. And neither of them flinched from giving honest answers that took an unsparing look at the weaknesses or deficiencies of Rotary in India.

We at *Rotary News* have striven to bring you accurate and verbatim reporting of senior leaders' honest appraisal of how a few rotten eggs, when it comes to dishonesty, stewardship issues, excessive complaints marking copies to top RI leaders, etc, can spoil the image of Indian Rotarians, the majority of whom are working so hard to form credible partnerships and transform thousands of lives in their communities. After all, the first step in solving a problem is to recognise it exists...

Rasheeda Bhagat



The Magic of Making a Difference

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

For 60 years, choosing a theme has been the privilege, and sometimes the challenge, of each incoming president. Looking back on those past themes opens a small window into the thinking and the vision of each leader — how they saw Rotary, the place they saw for Rotary in the world, and what they hoped Rotary would achieve.

When my turn came to choose a theme, I did not hesitate. I knew immediately that our theme in 2017–18 would be *Rotary: Making a Difference*. For me, that small phrase describes not only what we do now, but what we aspire to do. We want to make a difference. We strive to help, to have an impact, to make the world a bit better.

Over the past two years, I have seen so many ways that Rotary is doing just that. In California, after the devastating wildfires last year, I saw Rotarians *Making a Difference* to those who had lost everything. In Guatemala, I saw the difference that simple wood stoves are making in the lives of women who had been cooking on open fires: They no longer breathe smoke when they cook, they

spend less time gathering firewood, and they are using their stoves to start small businesses. In Israel, I visited a Rotary-supported hyperbaric centre that is helping brain injury and stroke patients return to healthy, productive lives. In communities around the world, Rotarians are *Making a Difference* by resettling refugees, immunising children, ensuring a safe blood supply, and helping young people learn and thrive.

All over the world, I have been a part of Rotarians' commitment to planting trees. We are still awaiting the final count of trees planted, but I am delighted to announce that we have already far surpassed our original goal of 1.2 million trees, one new tree per Rotarian. And, all over the world, Rotary is continuing its advocacy, fundraising, and support for polio eradication. Last year, wild poliovirus caused only 22 cases of paralysis in only two countries. I am confident that soon that number will be zero, and we will begin a new phase in the timeline of eradication: counting down at least three years from the last sign of wild virus to the certification of a polio-free world.

As Juliet and I return home to Australia, we will bring warm memories of the places we have visited, the friends we have made, and the service we have seen. Thank you, all of you, for the tremendous work you are doing, through *Rotary: Making a Difference*.



Ian H S Riseley
President, Rotary International

Message from the RI Director



Celebrating Success

Dear Rotarians,

The Rotary year has come to a close. A year full of activities which saw enthusiastic participation from all Rotarians. Having interacted with so many Rotarians and participated in a number of Rotary activities in this Zone, I must say we are part of a winning team. And by that I mean winning the hearts of the communities whom we serve. We must earn the goodwill of corporates by involving them in Rotary projects. We should keep motivating and energising the spirit of our fellow Rotarians. The force is with us and we must keep the momentum going and for this we must celebrate our accomplishments. You are aware that the media and the business world regularly organise seminars, conferences, award ceremonies and galas. These occasions are used to celebrate achievements and commend exemplary contributions. Such activities kindle enthusiasm and develop a competitive mindset. Unfortunately, within Rotary the realities of club-based politics can turn celebratory moments into a tightrope walk for the leaders of winning teams. I have seen many Rotarians wanting to give credit and encouragement where it is due, but holding themselves back because they do not wish to be seen as boastful. There is a distinction we must make between recognition and boasting. The first is important as it celebrates achievement; the second is mere hot air. At the same time, the achievements we recognise have to be inspirational and memorable, else, the purpose of the celebration is lost.

Also we must celebrate important events as these are milestones in the journeys of our clubs. Celebrating important

events such as installation of new officers, Governors' official visits, contributing to TRF and participating in district programmes and service projects are milestones that infuse life into Rotary. A celebration need not be ostentatious. It can be as simple as recognising the performance of an individual Rotarian or the overall success of the club/district in the preceding 12 months. Success should be celebrated when a fellow Rotarian achieves a goal for Rotary. Personal efforts count when the achievement contributes to the team's common goal. Every achievement that contributes to the mission of Rotary is the real success of the club.

Share your accomplishments. But not solely with your fellow Rotarians. Leverage the power of social media and share your successes; you can list your projects and the important achievements of your Rotary activities, making it visible for others to see what you and your club have done. Remember to make your club's achievements specific and meaningful. Many accomplishments in the Rotary world need some numerical benchmarks particularly in terms of retention, membership, extension and contribution to The Rotary Foundation. We should also create more awareness among new and young Rotarians about that benchmark in order to show why it matters for the growth.

It is my duty to salute and thank all Rotarians of Zones 4, 5 and 6 (South Asia) for their involvement in Rotary activities in the year gone by. I am truly proud of your good work.

Let us prepare for Rotary Year 2018–19.

Let us show the world that Rotary is making a difference.

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

C Basker
Director, Rotary International

Message from the Foundation Chair



Let's plan our year ahead

It's hard to believe that the first year of our Foundation's second century of service — and my term as chair of The Rotary Foundation — is coming to a close.

It has been an amazing experience to see Rotary and our Foundation in action as I've travelled the world. It has been inspiring to see the passion and dedication of Rotarians, the energy and creativity of Rotaractors, and the diversity of projects and forms of service. I've seen *Rotary: Making a Difference* in the lives of countless people in need, because Rotarians are People of Action!

These experiences have reaffirmed my belief in Rotary's future and the vital role our Foundation can and must continue to play — especially as we approach our post-polio era.

As Rotarians, we have big challenges and bold opportunities ahead:

- We must achieve our goal of eradicating polio! Please contribute to the polio campaign — whether through a direct donation, by fundraising, or by telling the polio story using your preferred media platform.
- We must expand the conversation and determine what corporate project or projects we will undertake next. Think bold!

- We must work to engage the 50 per cent of the world's population that is under the age of 30. Surveys consistently show that these young people want to make a difference and to volunteer. We need to continue developing proactive strategies to engage millennials and Gen Z-ers.
- Women account for 50 per cent of the world's population. They are proving to be the backbone of many clubs. We need to expand their reach and welcome their leadership at every level of our organisation.
- More Rotarians and clubs need to connect more closely to the Foundation to understand how it can help achieve our goals.

This Rotary year, I invited you to share your ideas with me. Many did — about how to raise more funds, to simplify the grant process, to better engage youth, to build peace, to enhance our membership experience through The Rotary Foundation. You expressed your passion for a future in which our Foundation will have a greater impact than ever in its second century. This is because you are our greatest strength.

Thank you for the honour of sharing this journey with you.

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

Paul A Netzel
Foundation Trustee Chair

What should I pass on to my successor?

Let me know. Email me at
paul.netzel@rotary.org

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India set to become No 1 in Foundation giving

Rasheeda Bhagat

India has the potential to rise to the very top in giving to The Rotary Foundation and become numero uno in the coming years, believes incoming RI President Barry Rassin.

Incoming RI President Barry Rassin is answering a question on the importance of India to the Rotary world. “India is a very critical country for Rotary; it has the greatest membership growth, a strong Rotaract programme and is one of the top leaders in Foundation giving. While I do not want to talk about weaknesses, one of the opportunities India has is to get more female members into Rotary. Really, that is the only area they are lagging behind; everywhere else they are leading. And I believe they will become No 1 in Foundation giving,” says Rassin.





I exclaim this is the first time I've heard a senior Rotary leader say this about India, and ask why he thinks so. "Because the CSR obligation on corporates in India is such a big thing and a huge opportunity for Rotary."

When asked if Indian Rotarians are connecting well with the corporates to get a share of this colossal kitty, he says, "I think we are in the beginning stage. It is a relatively new law and we all have to understand how it works. But the opportunity is indeed there to talk to the corporate leaders and make sure that they understand that Rotary is the best vehicle for them to use their CSR funds effectively. Once the corporate people in India realise this, then it is going to happen. It is going to take a few years; I think Indian Rotarians are doing okay in this aspect, but it could be much better."

He is a firm believer in getting more women into Rotary and feels India needs to catch up fast. "You have only 11 per cent women; the international figure is 22 per cent! Some countries in Africa have 49 per cent women, and Taiwan has 38 per cent. We in the Caribbean have around 35–36 per cent women members."

So what is Rotary like in the Caribbean; does it tend to reflect the general character of the country where people are cool and chilled out? Or does it tend to be more

At that time, many of the elder members stood up and apologised for resisting women, and admitted that they could see a better result by bringing in women into the club.

formal and hierarchy-ridden, as in some countries?

“As you can see I am not wearing a tie”, he smiles. “And a bright yellow shirt too,” I add. He responds, “Yes, I am trying to look more relaxed and the modern generation, the younger people, want that! I am trying to get us more relevant to the younger generation. In the Bahamas and the Caribbean, we’ve come a long way in being more relevant to the younger population.”

To attract 35 per cent of women into Rotary in his region, all that was required was “to change the paradigm and the perception that Rotary is an all men’s club.” Once that was done the clubs started changing their outlook. Rassin brought in his own daughter, Michele, who runs a medical supplies company, as the first female member of his club “just to prick that balloon”. Michele went on to become the club’s first female president, and something dramatic happened! “Many of the elder members stood up and apologised for resisting women, and admitted they could see a better result by bringing women into the club.”

Rassin’s daughter next introduced her friends to Rotary, “and

those friends brought their friends... and not only women, but a much younger population, so the whole face of my club changed with improved diversity of age and gender!”

Does he think women bring any special character or attributes to Rotary?

“I don’t look at it that way. I believe our objective is to get the best qualified people into Rotary, and that includes men and women. We need to find the best people in our community in order to make it better,” says Rassin.

But surely some special female attributes help, I pursue. But the incoming President says he’d like to focus on “the equality side of it. Men and women might be different but they are equal. Women might be more family-oriented and the younger generation is also more family-oriented; that is good for us. They don’t want long meetings. They want to do service and in that service they want to include their families. The women have a better understating of that. The old guys have to understand that this is a different world!”

To the critical question of women lagging behind men when it comes to key leadership positions in the districts,



It takes at least four years to effect a change at Rotary International, as the CoL meets only once in three years. Most of us do not use a cell phone for that long!

At a glance

Role model: My dad who taught me a lot of what I am today. He was a surgeon... the first surgeon in the country. Yes, I could have become a surgeon but I always knew I could never fit into his shoes so I went into medical business. What inspired me the most about him was his dedication; he was so dedicated to his patients. His patients came first no matter what else was going on. I always admired that. Of course as a child this bothered me for a little while but when I grew up I realised how important it was for the patients to know this doctor will always be there for us.

Views on India: I love the customs, traditions, and feel almost overwhelmed by the welcome I get everywhere I go in India. It’s formal and respectful, but also very warm. Everybody goes out of their way to be really gracious. Makes you really feel great to be part of an organisation where everybody is so nice.

Foodie: Oh yes, I am a foodie indeed. I love to eat everything; I love Indian food and the favourite cuisine of my granddaughter, who is 18, is Indian. I enjoy the spices... I may sweat a little bit on the top of my head, but I enjoy the food. Back at home we do eat spicy food, and we have a hot pepper.

Cooking: Not much; though I can make breakfast... good eggs and pancakes.

How he relaxes: Golf! I love to play golf, but Rotary has destroyed my golf! I haven’t had much time to play. But



it's so relaxing... to be with your friends, fresh air, it clears your head.

Fitness: I keep saying I will go to the gym, but in the job I am in, most of my exercise is walking through airports. I can't sleep much on flights so I use the time to answer my emails... I get about 500 a day! I am lucky enough not to feel jet-lagged or tired by air travel.

Hobbies: Not really... I used to collect stamps. The reality is that Rotary became my hobby many years ago!

Music: My granddaughter says I like old-fashioned music! I like songs where I can understand the words. There were days when you understood what the songs said! That's the kind of music I like.

Reading: Mysteries; I love Dan Brown's books. I have his latest book *Origin* sitting on my desk for three months. I saw

it at an airport and bought it, but haven't had the time to read it.

Religious: I am religious. I am Anglican but not a churchgoer, but I believe in god. I told some people that Rotary is my religion as it helps to make the world a better place.

Books: I am writing a book on my dad and his legacy, and another is my memoir. But the one on Rotary is yet to be written!

Views on a conflict-ridden world: Yes the conflicts around the world, refugee movement in large numbers is frustrating. The politicians have to deal with the humanitarian issues before we in Rotary can. But I am optimistic about the future.

One shortcoming in Indian Rotary: Bring in more women! To me that's really important. Not just any

women but good qualified women who can become good Rotarians.

Esther's role in his Rotary journey: Totally supportive, but she also keeps me grounded and doesn't let my ego get out of hand! If I make a speech, she is the only one I can rely on to tell me if I did my best or what I could do different. Because everybody says you did well. But I can count on her to tell me the truth. I am now dragging her into a role she did not sign up for but she is right there with me. People love her wherever we go. She is so good at it. At the International Assembly in January she had to make a speech. She never wanted to make it but she did and she did a fantastic job. I am so proud of her. Speaking to the spouses, she told them it is so difficult to be the spouse of somebody like me! She is brutally honest. My club has made her a lifetime honorary Rotarian to recognise her supportive role.

With spouse Esther
and Marga
Hewko. **Right:** With RI
General Secretary
John Hewko.



particularly in India, as men tend to be reluctant in yielding leadership space to women, Rassin says this will happen eventually. During his India visit, he had mingled with women Rotarians in India and “I found some of them to be very strong women, and they will in time rise up in the organisation. Others will see it and they will move back. You can’t expect things to happen overnight, it’s an evolution and a cultural change thing too. But it has just started and will happen. We have seen female presidents of clubs, assistant governors and next

year two Districts have their first female governors So the evolution is taking place.”

He adds that once a critical mass of women come into Rotary, the change will happen. It was also a cultural issue in India vis-à-vis women in leadership roles in the community, but things were evolving and changing for the better. “I met the Chief Minister (Vasundhara Raje Scindia) in Jaipur, and I found her to be a very strong and dynamic woman who knows what she wants to do, the changes she wants to make. And she really wants to partner with Rotary

I joined Rotary to network with the business people in my country. I didn’t really understand what Rotary did; only two years later did I discover the power of Rotary.



Look out for the RI Prez's monthly newsletter



Incoming RI President Barry Rassin says the biggest issue Rotary faces today is “the disconnect between Rotary International and the Rotary clubs because the clubs are doing all the work. We’re setting policy and giving guidance and tools to gather the resources but if the club doesn’t know what we are doing or ignores the advice, it doesn’t help.”

So, to bring the clubs closer to RI, come July, he will be writing a letter himself every month addressed to the Rotary club presidents “so that every club feels connected as the president is talking directly to them. Rotary is known in communities because of Rotary clubs and not because of Rotary International.”

in order to achieve sustainable projects.”

He admits that he does have concerns over Rotary not changing fast enough in a world that is changing at a frenetic pace. Does he think that Rotary has missed out on keeping up with the pace of rapid change in the outside world?

“There is no question about it. We don’t move fast enough to make quick changes,” he says, adding this was because “our whole system resists speedy change. We don’t resist change; we resist quick change. We have a Council on

Legislation and the only way we can change with major decisions is by taking it to them. And it takes at least four years to effect a major change, as the CoL meets only once in three years. Most of us do not use a cell phone for that long! The world is changing fast and we need to do something about it.”

The President-elect says discussions are already happening at the RI Board on these issues. “President Ian (Riseley) has already started the discussion and I intend to continue it.”

The single most aspect of Rotary Rassin enjoys the most is visiting

the various Rotary projects and “seeing what people are doing at the community level, meeting with the children, particularly in the toilet projects and seeing their smiles. That makes me really happy.”

Asked if, compared to the developed world, Rotarians in India have a better or bigger opportunity to do work that makes a visible impact on the community, Rassin says, “I’d say their advantage is that they can see what is required to be done because the problems are visible and Rotarians can say I can do this or that.” But this is not possible in

some of the developed countries where the problems are not visible. “They do have a problem but they don’t see it because it is hidden. But where you can see the problem, it makes Rotary more visible.”

The incoming president is well known for asking Rotarians to do “transformational projects” or those that make a big impact on the community. On one such big project he would recommend to Indian Rotarians, he says, “What India is doing in Wash in Schools is a transformational project; you’re doing some of the best WinS projects in India. You also have a major literacy programme which is great and both of these fit into Rotary’s areas of focus. We also have maternal and child health, and each of these areas can have big projects in India and all those could be transformational.”

“I was very impressed with the blood bank at the VHS Hospital in Chennai... that Rotary is really stepping up to do so much for health care in India. But more than the money it is the partnership with the institution (VHS) to run the blood bank, the lab services, maternal and infant care, etc. That partnership is really valuable, and such partnerships will help us expand our ability

and our reach to much more than we could do by ourselves.”

He was happy to note, he added, that while talking to Rotarians in India “they asked me how I could help them connect with international partners so that they can help internationally as well. So that was good to know.”

Next I ask Rassin to share with the readers how his theme — *Be the Inspiration* — germinated and worked out in his head. Striking a reflective note, he says, “I have

lived my life realising that if in my profession or in Rotary I can motivate someone to do more than what they think they can do, then we can together accomplish so much more. When you realise that my life is to inspire other people to do better at their job, either in Rotary or wherever they happen to be, then so much can be accomplished.”

So why did he join Rotary?

Rassin laughs as he responds with a twinkle in his eye: “I joined Rotary to network with the business

What India is doing in Wash
in Schools and Literacy are
transformational projects, and they
fit into the focus areas of Rotary.



people in my country. I didn't really understand what Rotary did. All that I knew was that leaders in my country were in the club. And I was trying to get business." And it wasn't till two years later that he realised the power of Rotary. That he could pick up a phone and talk to a Rotarian anywhere in the world to help somebody.

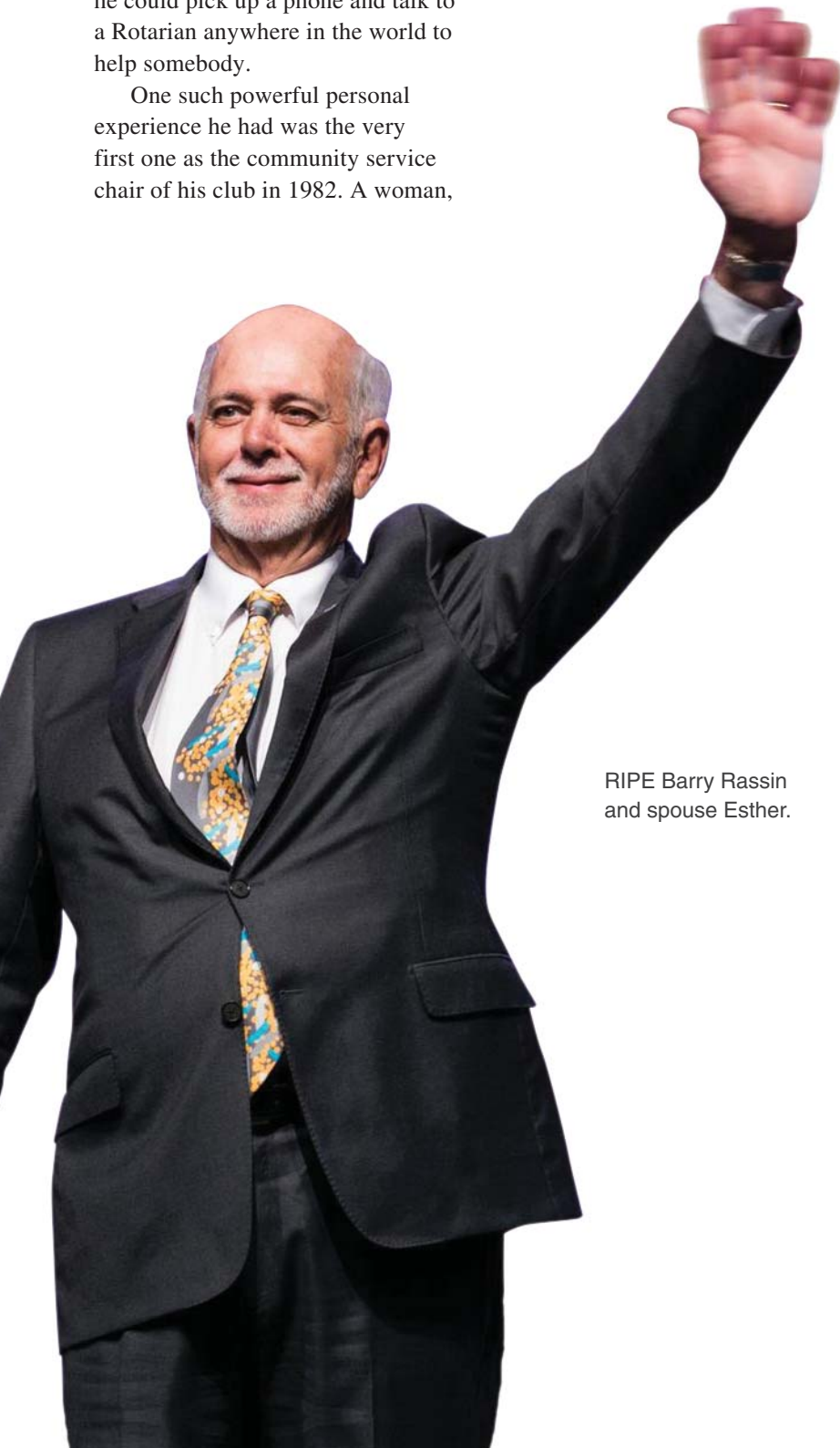
One such powerful personal experience he had was the very first one as the community service chair of his club in 1982. A woman,

I love to play golf, but Rotary has destroyed my golf! I haven't had much time to play. But it's so relaxing... to be with your friends, fresh air, it clears your head.

Rosebud Bell, in the Bahamas who was diabetic and had undergone a kidney transplant, was losing her eyesight and needed to go to another country to get an eye surgery done. "My club came to me and said fix it, and I asked what's the budget and they said we have no budget!" So he pulled out the RI directory and scanned the Miami region where he knew there were good surgeons. He called up a Rotarian who said his club had a member who knew somebody who worked at the Bascom-Palmer, one of the leading eye hospitals in Florida and connected the two. "I talked to that Rotarian and he said there's no problem. I know another Rotarian who is an eye surgeon and the operation fees will be waived."

Next came the question of accommodation; the same Rotarian put Rassin onto another Rotarian who organised a free room at a hotel near the hospital. "These were people I had never met, and just called on the phone." Rassin then called a local Rotarian who was a manager of an airline and he organised free tickets for the patient and her daughter. "So we got the surgeon, we got the hospital, we got the hotel and we got the flight for her and her daughter. We sent her over, she had the surgery, returned and it didn't

RIPE Barry Rassin and spouse Esther.





With District Rotaract
Representatives in Mumbai.



With D 3232 DG
R Srinivasan in
Chennai.

cost us anything. My Rotary club gave her \$200 for her food. After that I realised the power you have as a Rotarian to make a difference and help somebody.”

What does it take for Rotarians to get to the top positions in Rotary? “It’s all about dedication, being committed to the ideals of community service and doing the right things with integrity and hard work. I ran a business but I also worked very hard in Rotary. Some folks find it difficult to juggle their professional work and work in Rotary. But I felt I’ve had a good life and have to give back.” Rassin adds that at one point he was a member of many organisations but as he gradually realised that the one that really makes a difference is Rotary, he dropped out of other organisations and just focussed on Rotary.”

Pictures by
Rasheeda Bhagat and *rotary.org*

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

D 3060 sets up Rotaract Endowment Fund

V Muthukumaran

To inspire Rotaractors to make a transition into full-fledged Rotarians, a unique platform called *Samanvay* was organised by District 3060 with PDG Mohan Palesha (D 3131) as the chief guest. The one-day event conceived by DG Ruchir Jani and DRFC Ashish Ajmera as part of the golden jubilee celebrations of Rotaract was attended by nine DRRs and seven PDRRs-turned-Rotarians who shared their views and discussed issues related to becoming Rotarians and thus continuing with their service activities.

“A number of issues were resolved and past Rotaractors who could not become Rotarians had resolved to start new Rotary clubs in their hometown,” said Rtn Shrikant Indani, a PDRR and secretary, *Samanvay*. On the issue of funding Rotaract projects, Jani and Ajmera proposed a ‘Rotaract Golden Jubilee Endowment Fund’ with a corpus of \$25,000. “The proposal was readily supported by the Rotaractors and those who could not attend the event also readily acceded to the idea of the Endowment Fund. They had also committed to fulfil their

contributions to the fund,” said Rtn Ketan N Patel, a PDRR and District Secretary. An amount of \$25,000 was committed for TRF giving.

DGN Anish Shah and DGND Prashant Jani said they would continue with *Samanvay* in the coming years. A debate on *Rotaract versus Rotary* was illuminating as it clarified many doubts raised by the participants on Rotaract projects and support from the parent clubs. The Event Chairman and PDRR Harish Kothari took care of the arrangements and facilities for the success of the programme. ■



DG Ruchir Jani and PDG Mohan Palesha with Rotarians and Rotaractors at the event.



Small city, **big projects**

Rasheeda Bhagat

This Rotary club is mesmerising the city of Ratlam with its bunch of highly impressive projects and taking Rotary's public image to a new high.

In a small but spanking clean room, there is fragrance emanating of freshly cooked food, and *rotis* being roasted on the tawa. Hemalata and her colleague have just begun rolling out the *rotis*, and as is customary in many parts of India, Rtn Rashmi Jain, from Rotary Club of Ratlam, asks Hemalata to give the first *roti* to the cow.

The little room called the *Aahar Kendra*, which is the club's signature project being run from 1995, is bang

opposite the Ratlam Civil Hospital and Mukesh Jain, past president of the club, and Rashmi's husband, explains that the food is being prepared for the relatives and attendants of the patients who are seeking treatment in this hospital.

"Many of them travel long distances to bring their loved ones to the hospital and we make available this freshly made food — both lunch and dinner — to them at a mere ₹5." The meal includes two *rotis*,

a *sabzi* — on that day, there is *lauki ki sabzi* (bottle gourd), dhal, rice and two *rotis* on offer.

There are several small packets of a snack — *bhujiya* — lying in a tray as also a box of *laddoos*. Jain smiles as he explains, "Ratlam is known for its *namkeen* delicacies and the local people's palates are used to that, so we put in a small packet of *namkeen* every day. As for the *laddoos*, they are to





celebrate your visit! Whenever a VIP visits our Kendra, we offer a sweet in the meal.” And on their birthdays, anniversaries or other special occasions, Rotarians donate the sweet. About 100 fresh meals are cooked and served here daily; “you can see there is no fridge here.”

The Jains live close by, and Rashmi visits the Kendra every day to keep a watch and ensure both quality and hygiene are maintained. She also organises the purchase of the vegetables, foodgrains, etc.

Jain adds that earlier the food was being served at only ₹2, “but we made it ₹5, as everybody gives a ₹10 note and there is a huge problem about getting adequate change.” The meal has this nominal price tag as the recipients “shouldn’t feel they are getting charity through this project, started by PDG Sharad Pathak when he was the club president in 1995.”

Continuity of projects and Rotarians in clubs working together in harmony are unique features of two clubs of RI District 3040 — RC Sonkatch and

RC Ratlam. Small wonder that where there is mutual respect and understanding among members, the clubs outperform. Both the clubs have given two DGs in succession — the present Dr Zamin Husain from Sonkatch and DGE Gustad Anklesaria from Ratlam.

In fact, Anklesaria’s family has been a huge benefactor of Ratlam city through RC Ratlam, which was chartered way back in 1945 and has 116 members, 25 of them women. It is the second largest club in the district after RC Meghdoot and the second oldest after RC Bhopal. The DGE is a third generation Rotarian.

An impressive dialysis centre

His father TS Anklesaria is an active Rotarian and though he lives in Mumbai, takes active interest in this club where he was a past president. Showing me around another signature project of RC Ratlam, their very impressive dialysis centre, where 11 kidney patients are undergoing dialysis, 75 per cent of them below poverty line, either free of cost or paying only ₹400 a session compared to ₹900 or more being charged elsewhere, he says it was started in 2002 with just one machine. In 2006, “we started a Trust (RC Ratlam has three different trusts to run its community welfare projects) and then bought new machines.” Today about 36 patients undergo dialysis everyday here; “it is always full and there is a waiting period. For a new person to enter, someone has to go,” he adds.

The portrait of his father, GD Anklesaria, whose contribution to the famous Rotary Hall in Ratlam is described later in the article, hangs in the dialysis centre. One day somebody from Mumbai, an uncle of past president Mukesh Jain, called saying he’d like to donate two dialysis machines for our centre. In those days the machine cost ₹6 lakh, “so I told him



A mother and son have a swinging time at the Rotary Garden.



DGE Gustad Anklesaria (right) oversees the preparation of healthy juices and salads at the juice centre in the Rotary Garden.

we'll put up one machine and give us cash for the other one." He gave ₹6 lakh which was put into two endowment funds, and thanks to income from those and government subsidies this centre is able to offer dialysis to the BPL patients totally free of cost and at concessional rate to the others.

Giving details of the dialysis centre, DGE Gustad says the Rotary Charitable Trust is responsible for running this centre under an MoU signed between the RC Ratlam Club Trust and the Civil Hospital. "It says that it is our responsibility to provide the manpower, dialysis equipment, consumables, and the Civil Hospital is supposed to provide the infrastructure, electricity and water. We have 13 technicians on our payroll." In all 19 dialysis machines have been acquired, of which seven have now become obsolete. The project cost is above ₹1 crore, and it has been done with

one matching and two global grants; the first matching grant being done in 2008.

I am shocked to see that most of the 12 beds are occupied by young men in their mid or late 30s. Says the DGE, "We even have a 5-year-old patient." The main reason for kidney failure among these patients, apart from uncontrolled diabetes and high

blood pressure, is indiscriminate use of strong medicine, particularly pain-killers, without proper medical advice. The success of this dialysis centre run by Rotary can be gauged from its replication in 2012 by a non-Rotary private Trust in Vidisha, the constituency of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan.

"The trauma these kidney patients undergo is tremendous; we support them to the extent we can, the rest is in god's hands," says T S Anklesaria.

The DGE adds that the club is slowly trying to get corporate CSR funds for its projects. A small beginning has been made with the State Mining Corporation giving ₹1 lakh. "We are setting up meetings to get more funds from this and other corporates as well," he says.

Ajit Shinde, a post office agent, has been undergoing dialysis here for 18 months free of cost as he has a BPL

Many people travel long distances to bring their loved ones to the Civil Hospital and we make available this freshly made and hygienic food to them at a mere ₹5.

Mukesh Jain
Past President, RC Ratlam

classification. He is 42, a diabetic and has high blood pressure. Bahadur, 37, has come for dialysis from a village about 60 km from Ratlam, and has been undergoing dialysis for 30 months. He is unemployed; Najmuddin, a retired businessman is 70 and admits that he ended up with a kidney problem “as I did not control my blood sugar”. His sons pay the ₹400 for each session and the patient says, “This is a top class facility with excellent equipment and service and we pray for the Rotarians who have set up this centre.”

Virendra Singh, who is in charge, explains that most of the people who have kidney disease lose their jobs and become unemployed.

Rotary Hall

At the gigantic Rotary Hall, a 4,000 sq ft facility, DGE Gustad Anklesaria explains that RC Ratlam is perhaps one of the few Rotary clubs which has three public charitable trusts to manage its various projects. The hall came up in 1962 and originally the space for a smaller hall was donated by his grandfather, but unfortunately, on the

The trauma these dialysis patients undergo is tremendous; we support them to the extent we can, the rest is in god's hands.

T S Anklesaria

Past President, RC Ratlam

day he was to lay the foundation stone he passed away. His grandmother said the event should not be delayed and announced that she would donate more land to make the size of the hall four times larger.

“This was the vision of our elders; it has made such a difference not only to Rotarians — all the Rotary clubs in Ratlam meet here — but also others as we let out the hall to non-Rotarians as well,” adds PP Mukesh Jain.

Rotary Garden

But the most visible and impressive project of RC Ratlam is the Rotary Garden,

spread across a whopping one lakh sq ft of space, and with an open air gym for women with functional, mechanical equipment. I find a dozen odd women exercising in this gym where the space is earmarked exclusively for women.

Saeeda Sheikh is a regular here and says she gets a minimum of 90 minutes exercise on the various equipment here. Mamata lives 2 km from the park and walks here every morning these days as the examinations of her two children are over. “I come at 7.30 as there is no rush to send the children to school.” Paridhi Patni, an MBA student, says she finds this open air facility, which is totally free of cost, really exciting and works out here daily. Kismatunnisa says she works out here in the morning “as that is the only free time I get. So I come here by 6.30 every morning.”

DGE Anklesaria explains that all the equipment in the gym is locally manufactured. “We copied it from another garden in Nashik and since this town has excellent fabrication skills, we got it all done here at one third the price of what was available in the market.”

Apart from the open air gym for women, the other big hit at this park is the juice centre, operating since 2007. For a mere ₹5, you can get a glass of fresh juice made from carrots and other vegetables, aloe vera and seasonal fruits. Walking around the park in the morning with the DGE and spouse Rukhshana, I can see frenetic activity at the juice centre, with brisk sales. People not only enjoy the healthy drink here, they pack it up, along with salads made from tomato, sprouted *moong*, etc, again available for a mere ₹5. As he gets the salad packed, a youngster tells me: “In the market this costs ₹30, so I buy it from here every day.”

When asked how they can afford to price the juice and the salad so low, Anklesaria smiles and says, “Not only



The dialysis centre run by RC Ratlam.



Fresh food being prepared in the Aahar Kendra.

this juice centre but the entire park is self-sustaining. It is managed by one of our charitable trusts; we have taken it over from the municipality and even pay for all the staff employed here. The vegetables are grown here; and what is not grown is bought.”

The entire park is buzzing with activity; in the children’s play area the kids are on the swings and other play equipment; elsewhere yoga is going on. In another corner some clapping and

“Not only this juice centre but the entire park is self-sustaining and managed by one of our charitable trusts. We pay the staff, grow the vegetables; what is not grown is bought.

DGE Gustad Anklesaria
RID 3040

laughter therapy are on, and there is an acupressure tract, apart from one for jogging. That a small town like Ratlam has so much fitness activity going on in the morning is an eye-opener, and Rotary’s role in that is appreciated by everybody. What better PR exercise than this, I come away musing.

It is also preventive health, the DGE reminds me. Rotary has been responsible for setting up many jogging parks in the city, and over 50 years “we have virtually changed the habit of people and given them a reason to wake up early and enjoy their natural surroundings.”

Another park

Following the success of the Rotary Garden, many more parks in the city have been renovated. RC Ratlam itself is now gifting the city another park. DGE Gustad and the current president of the club Pradyumn Majawadia take me to see the spot which the club has taken over from the local municipality.

“This place — over 20,000 sq ft — had become a dumping ground for *kachra*, so first of all we cleaned it up, raised the level by 5 ft, and are going to put up facilities here on lines of the Rotary Garden,” says Majawadia.

The jogging track has already come up; trees have been planted to make the area green, there is going to be an open air gym for women and a herbal juice centre. The play equipment for children has just arrived and remains unpacked. “We are installing water coolers, LED lights, etc. This is a ₹15 lakh project and will soon be operational”.

He adds that the club has also sent a proposal to the State government to renovate a Public Health Centre, make the building bigger and provide adequate health care facilities. It is a global grant project worth ₹1 crore, but the government sanctions are yet to come in.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat
Designed by N Krishnamurthy



Our Esteemed Guest

Rtn Barry Rassin & Ann Esther
RI President 2018-19



Rotary Institute 2018
Chennai | 5-7th October
Zone 4, 5 & 6A

Convener's Message



RID Basker Chockalingam
Ann Malathi

Dear Rotary Leaders,

Rotary Zone Institutes give opportunity to Rotary leaders, past, present and future, to meet and greet each other, exchange ideas and debate on how to take Rotary forward. **Malathi & I** deem it a privilege and pleasure, to invite you and your spouse, to Rotary Institute 2018, to be held during October 5-7, 2018, at **Hotel Leela Palace, Chennai**. With a set of wonderful speakers and world class entertainment, this will be truly an Institute with a difference. We will have the rare opportunity of having with us the Rotary senior leadership, who will make the event a memorable one for us. The dynamic Institute Chairman PDG ISAK Nazar and his wonderful team are making every effort, to ensure that, we all have a grand Rotary Institute 2018 — **Passion To Serve** — at Chennai.

With warm regards,

RID Basker Chockalingam, RI Director (2017-19)

Chairman's Message



Ann Afzalunnisa
PDG ISAK Nazar

Dear Rotary Leaders,

Greetings from Team — Rotary Institute 2018.

It's a great opportunity given by Director / Convener Rtn C Basker to have our **Rotary Institute 2018** at Chennai, at the grand venue — **Hotel Leela Palace, Chennai** — on 5th, 6th and 7th October 2018. Please be ready to witness one of the most memorable Rotary Institute at Chennai. We are all set to deliver an outstanding and memorable Institute. With a galaxy of eminent speakers, a new experience in entertainment and all that a successful Rotary Institute can be remembered for, awaits you. On behalf of Rotary Institute 2018 Team, I welcome you to **Passion to Serve, Rotary Institute 2018**. Please register immediately.

PDG ISAK Nazar

Chairman — Rotary Institute 2018



Please send this form duly filled by post / courier to:

Rtn PDG ISAK Nazar, Chairman, Rotary Institute 2018

Manna Foods, 129, Z Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar, Chennai – 600 040, Phone: 044 2683991, Mobile: 94449 76846
e-mail: rotaryinstitute.chennai2018@gmail.com, nazarisak@gmail.com

REGISTRATION DATA SHEET



Name: Rtn. Call / Badge Name:.....

Classification:

Address:

City: Pin Country

Mobile: e-Mail:

(Note: Include country and area code for Telephone / Fax Number)

☐ PDG ☐ IPDG ☐ DG ☐ DGE ☐ DGN ☐ DRFC ☐ DMC ☐ DRC

Home Club: RI District:

Name of Spouse: Call Name:

Food Preference			Collar size				
	Rotarian	Spouse					
Veg	☐	☐	☐ 38	☐ 40	☐ 42	☐ 44	☐ 46
Non Veg	☐	☐					

REGISTRATION			Couple	Single	Amount
Institute Registration	Couple	Single			
Upto 30th June 2018	INR 25000	INR 15000			
After 30th June 2018	INR 26000	INR 17000			
GETS (Couple)	2,3,4 October 2018	INR 60000			
DGs Training Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
DGN Training Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
Dist Trainers Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
COL Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
TRF Dinner	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Couple INR 3000 per Single			
TRF Seminar	5th October 2018	INR 5000 per Couple INR 3000 per Single			

HOTEL ACCOMODATION

The Leela Palace	Double Executive	INR 10000 Per Nite			
	Single Executive	INR 9000 Per Nite			
Ramada Plaza	Double Deluxe	INR 8000 Per Nite			
	Single Deluxe	INR 7000 Per Nite			
The Savera Hotel	Double Deluxe	INR 7000 Per Nite			
	Single Deluxe	INR 6000 Per Nite			
Total					

*Kindly tick whichever is applicable.

*Please note that the Accomodation is purely on first come first serve basis.

The cheque and draft shall be in favour of "Rotary Institute 2018" payable at Chennai.	Online payment details: Account Name: Rotary Institute 2018 Bank: Karur Vysya Bank Branch: Saidapet, Chennai - 15 Account No.: 1651155000067299 IFSC Code: KVBL0001651
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The Institute registration covers the following:

- Inaugural plenary on Friday, Oct 5, 2018 followed by dinner.
- Lunch and dinner on Saturday, Oct 6, 2018.
- Lunch on Sunday, Oct 7, 2018.

The other events such as GETS (Couple), DG Seminar, Membership Seminar, DGN Seminar, COL, TRF Seminar, Foundation Dinner have additional registration as mentioned above.

Date:

Signature:

Two glittering evenings in Mumbai and Kolkata

**Rasheeda Bhagat
Jaishree**

At two grand
meetings held
in Mumbai and
Kolkata, incoming
RI Directors Bharat
Pandya and Kamal
Sanghvi were
felicitated.

The relaxed tone in Mumbai for an evening of celebration and felicitations for the two incoming RI Directors — Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi — was set by Past RI President K R Ravindran who referred to the duration of his speech by saying that he belongs to the Henry VIII School of public speaking — that as Henry VIII said to each of his six wives ‘I shall not keep you long’.

“But having looked at the eminent people who have addressed you just before me I rather feel like Henry VIII’s last wife who said I know more or less of what is expected of me, but I am not sure how to do it any differently.”

As the audience burst into laughter, striking a serious note, he said “While your skills will make you winners, the advice I have for you is: “Focus on the organisation first, focus on the organisation second, and focus on the organisation third. Make it your priority.”

Doing some plain speaking, Ravindran added that “while you will enjoy the role make no mistakes you will be tested. Operating in our part of the world, with the pulls and pushes of partisanship is a daunting task. You will discover big and little people. You will find that you will be called to make sacrifices and you will find that you will have to employ a

RIDN Bharat Pandya and Madhavi being felicitated in the presence of (from L): PRID Shekhar Mehta, TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta, PRIP K R Ravindran, DG Prafull Sharma, RID C Basker, PRIP Rajendra K Saboo, PRIDs Ashok Mahajan, P T Prabhakar, Y P Das, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, Binota Banerjee, PRID Manoj Desai, Sharmishtha Desai, Nayantara Mahajan, DG B M Sivarraj, RIDN Kamal Sanghvi and Sonal Sanghvi. RIDN Pandya’s daughters — Sashmi and Nidhi are also in the picture.



perfectly disciplined will to tread the middle path. But you are both capable and you will discover that you lead best when you forget yourself and focus on the group.”

Both Pandya and Sanghvi had held various leadership positions, but there was a difference between becoming a leader and leading. “Leader is where others follow you not because they have to but because they want to.”

The two RIDNs would be our zones’ representatives in “one of the strongest Boards in recent times with a strong RI President to lead them... the Harvard-educated Mark Maloney. Together all of you will form a representation of our brand’s vision statement, which is that Rotary connects leaders from all continents, cultures and professions to exchange ideas and

It is a very daunting task to be a director from this part of the world, unlike in the West. You will both discover big and little people.

PRIP K R Ravindran

take action in communities around the world. You will be great brand ambassadors for India of the Board to the world.”

Ravindran, a current TRF Trustee, further said, “I am a great supporter of the recent tough actions our Board has been taking on errant district leaders, and even past governors, for, understand that the Rotary brand does not stop at our logo. It permeates every action, interaction and decision each Rotarian makes. And when leaders misbehave or are found wanting they not only set a bad example, but they also destroy our brand promise and our brand itself. I always remember what Past RI President Bob Barth said, Rotarians are people with the highest integrity and ethical standards and they give more than they take!”

Thus, the example the leadership sets is vital because RI is a complex multi-cultural organisation. It is operating in 200 countries and geographical areas and deals in nine languages and 26 currencies. For the year 2016–17, the total amount of funds available for investment was “about 1.1 billion US dollars. But more interestingly the value of the work that Rotary does

I will be flexible and open to suggestions. Flexibility does not mean compromising on one’s principles because my dad taught me the most important thing for a person is his integrity.

RIDN Bharat Pandya

each year across the world is conservatively estimated at another \$1 billion or more. So, in reality we are a \$2–2.5 billion corporation and that gives you an idea of the responsibility of our new directors.”

Both in Mumbai and Kolkata, where the two leaders were felicitated, the mood was of *sher* and *shayari* (poetry), camaraderie and goodwill. In Kolkata, Past RI President Kalyan Banerjee struck a light note when he said: “To become an RI Director from Zone 4, you should know to speak Gujarati, and to become a RI President from India you need to be from





Kolkata.” He was referring to both Pandya and Sanghvi and past director Manoj Desai being Gujaratis, while he and the late PRIP Nitish Laharry hailed from Kolkata. PRIP Rajendra Saboo has a Kolkata connection too.

In Mumbai, he said he often marvelled about Rotary and “the way we follow succession... all club presidents, governors and internationally a new RI President replace the old one as June 30 turns into July 1 each year. And the directors change every two years. Few other organisations have such a smooth and automatic transition as we do in Rotary.”

It was great to know that India will henceforth have two RI directors instead of one on the RI Board year after year, thanks to the new zoning structure initiated by PRID Manoj Desai a few years ago. This underlines India’s growing importance in Rotary.

He had always admired Dr Pandya “as a very special individual; a quiet and thinking persona and always so articulate and relevant. And I know

from my experience in 2013 that he can be superbly, convincingly and cogently argumentative.”

He then went on to describe how in a few minutes flat, as a representative in the CoL, Pandya had used his eloquence and debating skills to change the opinion of the Council on Legislation comprising over 500 district representatives, the entire RI Board, all the Trustees and past RI Presidents. It pertained to RIBI “and he did this in a few minutes flat. So

Bringing peace in our country and world will by our first and utmost priority. We will bring peace by giving food to the hungry, sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, houses to the homeless and education to the illiterate.

RIDN Kamal Sanghvi

he is a miracle worker and a man ideally suited to take Indian Rotary forward. Madhavi, his wife, is such a warm and understanding person and the two of them form a great team.”

Similarly, Sanghvi was a great Rotarian with leadership skills and had a great partner in Sonal. He had won the mandate by a vote of 79 per cent, and he was confident, added Banerjee, that the two leaders would take Rotary in India to new heights.

Elaborating on the sequence of events that led to Pandya making a passionate and cogent argument on defeating a motion related to RIBI that was rather “mischievous”, Past RI President Rajendra Saboo said the proposition in question was being submitted to the CoL by a group of delegates from RIBI and “hidden in it was a deep rooted change that would completely change the constitution and relationship between RI and RIBI.”

Saboo’s help was sought in advance to get a voting delegate to make a presentation that would unveil

Dist 3141 & 3142
 new chapter unfolds.
 ans "bookmark" it in their hearts!

RIDN Kamal Sanghvi and
 Sonal being felicitated
 in the presence of the
 Rotary senior leaders.



the mischief that was being done. "It was in the interest of Rotary, and of all the delegates from India I chose Bharat (Pandya), and sat with him one evening on the manual of procedure. I was amazed at how quickly he got the essence of what we were saying, and made a presentation much better than I'd have done. The proposal was defeated handsomely and everybody wondered who was this man from India. How did he get to know about it? But he was defending what was right; this incident made me realise the mettle of this man."

He had always admired Pandya's eloquence and ability to quote from Shakespeare, Byron and Wordsworth as well as Indian sages. Sanghvi too had impressed him over the years with his leadership and organisational skills, but particularly at his conference in Bhubaneswar where he had invited Saboo as the chief guest. "He is an outstanding speaker, very knowledgeable, and has a sharp memory. But here I am talking more

To become an RI Director from Zone 4, you should know to speak Gujarati, and to become a RI President from India you need to be from Kolkata.

PRIP Kalyan Banerjee

about Bharat as I am biased in his favour as he is short! Kamal, though not as tall as Ravi, is around the height of Kalyan (Banerjee), which I can stand!"

Saboo also took Sanghvi to task for calling the assembled senior Rotary leaders as his gurus. "These days the meaning or connotation of gurus is not good... such as *yeh sab gurulog (scoundrels) hei*."

Turning serious, he added, "Everybody here has spoken about the 18th floor (in Evanston, where the RI Board meets) but don't make that your destination.

Two years will pass quickly and you will be remembered for what you do *en masse* when your term is over. I've seen people at the last Board meeting shedding tears that they would become a nobody from July 1. But remember that while you will become past club presidents, DGs, directors and even past RI Presidents, you can never be a past Rotarian."

Congratulating the two RIDNs, RI Director C Basker said he was reminded of his own felicitation event in Madurai where praise was showered upon him "and I thought this will be a cushy job. But when you start the work, you'll understand it's not child's play, but a very strenuous job. But both of you have the capability and the resources to ensure that we take the activities we've started forward and make India at par with developed nations."

Even though "we've grown exponentially in the last five years, the biggest challenge we have in India is stability at the grassroots-level and the club-level. Thirty per cent of our clubs

“Indian Mafia”



PRID Ashok Mahajan greets RIDN Bharat Pandya in the presence of PRIP Kalyan Banerjee (left) and PDG (3292) Basu Dev Golyan in Kolkata.

Talking about his presidential year in 2011–12, when two Indian directors (Shekhar Mehta and Y P Das) were on the Board, Past RI President Kalyan Banerjee recollected that whenever he won an argument at any Board decision, the others would grumble and refer to them as the ‘Indian Mafia’. “Before any Board meeting, the three of us would brainstorm and work out a proper strategy. Because we wanted to give the impression that India is one and we are united. I suggest you two, too, should have a strategy in place.”

Banerjee observed that Indian Rotarians are being punished since “we drag RI to court for all petty internal disputes. We are not being given any RI assignments,

despite our significant achievements in membership growth and TRF contributions. We are being punished. Let us try to resolve our differences among ourselves rather than escalating to an international level. We are a good Rotary country, but we can become a great Rotary country when we sort out all pending court cases with out-of-court settlements. We must realise that Rotary is not an organisation to show off our ego or prestige. It is an organisation that helps us make friends around the world and serve humanity in a united manner. When we do that we will be the *Numero Uno* of the Rotary world. And Bharat and Kamal, that’s going to be your task. Good luck and God bless you.”

are still very weak and 75 per cent of Rotarians don’t know what Rotary is all about. People join *en masse* and leave *en masse*.”

He urged both the leaders to be a lighthouse to club presidents; “lay emphasis on training to improve their skills and capabilities. We are a resourceful country; we are No 3 in giving AKS members, No 2 in Endowments and No 1 in Major Gifts and membership. But what we lack is a little bit of discipline.” Basker said that following Ravindran’s advice he had started including both Sanghvi and Pandya in all his important communications. “Because Ravi has told me that one of the biggest reliefs you can have is pulling other guys inside your circle.”

Felicitating Pandya, PRID Ashok Mahajan said he was extremely proud and happy to see the man he had declared, as the then DG in 1993–94, the outstanding president of his





RIDNs Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi, Madhavi and Sonal with the DGNs.

district, elected as director. “He has the right leadership skills and sterling character and ability to uphold the values of Rotary. I’ve always admired his speeches studded with quotes from philosophers and great people, along with his humility.”

Describing the duo as “two wonderful people”, PRID YP Das urged them to always remember that in the RI Board they would be representing not

only India but the entire Rotary world. Also, he often heard from leaders how they rose to their positions; “forget all that. Your focus should always be on how you would like to leave office after two years of your directorship. What will matter most is how you demit office when your term ends. Everybody is proud of you both and they all have expectations. My advice to you is exceed those expectations and make all of us proud.”

Congratulating the two incoming leaders, TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta said that with two directors on the RI Board, Rotary in India gets ready for a bigger role. Though today with 1.4 lakh Rotarians we are in the number 2 slot in membership as well as in TRF giving, he recalled late RIPE Sam Owori’s comment that with such a huge population India should have 1.2 million Rotarians.

Gupta cautioned both the leaders to keep their focus on “transparency and

stewardship issues as the entire Rotary world is watching us.” Of the 35 global grants given by TRF to India, 34 were found to be perfect and “only in one grant we had some challenges, but this was highlighted in our last Trustee meet. Perceptions are important, and we should never forget that.”

Star-studded evening

In Kolkata, it was a high-profile meet hosted by seven districts — 3291, 3240, 3250, 3261, 3262, 3292, 3120. PRID Shekhar Mehta said, “We have amongst us 145 past governors, 14 DGs, 8 DGEs, 10 DGNs, 11 DGNDs; one PRIP and four PRIDs, as we celebrate the two stars of the evening — Kamal and Bharat. *Lagta hai ke Rotary mei is part of the world se acchhe din hi nahi, bahut acchhe din aane vale hai,*” he observed.

Referring to Sanghvi as his younger brother, Mehta recalled how he had

Don’t make the 18th floor in
Evanston your destination. Two
years will pass quickly and you
will be remembered for what
you do *after* your term is over.

PRIP **Rajendra Saboo**

worked with him for several years, helping him execute the Kolkata Zone Institute and various Literacy summits. “Kamal makes friends easily and it’s a pleasure to work with Bharat,” he added.

PRID Manoj Desai, while welcoming the “second doctor from India to become a director”, shared reminiscences with both Pandya and Sanghvi, from how they worked out strategies to improve membership in India in 2010 to how during Desai’s directorial tenure they had helped in bringing out the best from his team of DGs. Referring to the observation that both the directors-nominee are Gujaratis, Desai added that including Trustee-elect Gulam Vahanvati, there will now be three Gujaratis in the RI Board and TRF.

PRID Das recalled how India was represented by two directors (Mehta and himself) in 2011–13 for the first

Keep your focus on
transparency and stewardship
issues as the entire Rotary
world is watching us.

TRF Trustee **Sushil Gupta**

time, before which “we even had a director from Thailand representing our zones. We’ve come so far and I’m sure that these two young men will take our region to greater heights.”

He cautioned Pandya and Sanghvi not to fall prey to ‘gangism’. “When Shekhar and I were directors, many of them would suggest that the two of us belonged to two different ‘gangs’. But we stood steadfast and together and

never fell into the trap to pull us down. So stay united, take Rotary forward and forget personal issues. You will make all of us proud.”

PRID P T Prabhakar congratulated the two leaders and said they would be representing India at the RI Board when the Rotary flag was flying high in our country. “We have been top in membership for several years, and with a contribution of \$20 million to TRF last year, we were No 2 in giving. Indian Rotary is now the prime mover of global Rotary and you are fortunate to be serving on the RI Board at such a juncture.”

Felicitating Pandya, who was his batchmate as DG, PDG J B Kamdar recalled that at their GETS in Colombo, many trainers had picked “Bharat as the most promising leader in our batch. Years have passed since then but he is the same amazing and loving Rotary leader, the same Bharat with no change... soft spoken, gentle, polite, humble and without an iota of deceit.”

Felicitating his medical colleague and friend of 42 years, Rtn Dr Kuldip Singh Sandhu said even though he hailed from a privileged background being the son of the legendary Dr S S Pandya, “Bharat was always humble, generous and I’ve never seen him shouting at anybody. He has not a shred of arrogance in him and has a very focused mind, is a voracious reader. The high level of eloquence that the Rotary world know him for started in college with his reading of a wide variety of books.”

Also, he added, Dr Pandya’s was a rare place in Mumbai “where no down payment is expected from the patients.”

Thanking the “trilogy” and all his “gurus” assembled in the hall, Kamal Sanghvi promised, together with Pandya, to “work hard and passionately take up all the challenges that come our way. I assure you I will do everything within my means to pursue the goals and

Informal round

A ‘Rapid fire’ round was moderated at the Kolkata meet by PRID Shekhar Mehta. When he asked Sonal Sanghvi how she felt about her husband being elected Director, she said she was overwhelmed but worried as now she will have “to get used to being called ‘directory’,” for, earlier as governor’s wife, she was referred to as ‘governess’! Madhavi Pandya and their daughters who were away in Melbourne conveyed their wishes through an AV. “All the best Papa. I’ll try to harass you a little less so that you concentrate more on your new assignment,” promised Sashvi, Pandya’s younger daughter. “Don’t I get some benefits as a director’s son,” was a cheeky question to Kamal Sanghvi from his son on an AV.

On the message both wanted to convey to Rotarians, Sanghvi said: “We have so many Peace Centres across the world; but no peace among ourselves. So we will promote programmes to encourage peace among our clubs and members.”

Pandya’s answer: “Leadership position is wonderful, but we must learn to step down gracefully from the ladder of leadership.”

Their role models: It is “Bino-taji” for Sanghvi and “Kalyanda” for Pandya.

Prompted by Mehta for a piece of advice to the two RIDNs, Banerjee quipped, “Our personal conflicts are ruining the reputation of our region. So I would like you to deal with issues more patiently and with wisdom,” he said.



RID C Basker, RIDNs Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi with the DGs and DGEs.

vision of our wonderful organisation. I pledge that bringing peace in our country and world at large will be our first and utmost priority. We will strive to bring peace by giving food to the hungry, sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, houses to the homeless and education to the illiterate.”

Responding to the felicitations with “mixed feelings... excitement at having reached a milestone, relief that at last the election phase is behind me, but above all, a feeling of awe and great responsibility which now vests on my shoulders,” Pandya recalled the famous quote: ‘To whom much is given, much is required.’

“These lines bring home to me that now I have a great responsibility but also an opportunity and I won’t stop following the path of integrity and working for a better Rotary till I am satisfied I have done my best.”

As this “opportunity to do good on a much larger scale than ever before” stood before him, he recalled the values of “integrity and selfless service” that his late father had taught him.

Pandya added that his priority would always be the Rotary clubs

The biggest challenge in India is stability at the club-level. Thirty per cent of our clubs are still very weak and 75 per cent of Rotarians don’t know what Rotary is all about. People join *en masse* and leave *en masse*.

RI Director C Basker

and promised all the senior leaders and Rotarians that “my integrity in thought, deed and action will remain as always. I will be flexible and open to change, suggestions, different and differing viewpoints. Flexibility does not mean compromising on one’s principles because my dad taught me the most important thing for a person is his integrity.”

Striking a somber note, he added, “The only thing that walks back from the tomb along with the mourners and

refuses to be buried is the character of a man. It outlives him and can never be buried.”

Thanking both the host Districts 3141 and 3142, “for I am a product of the undivided D 3140”, and their DGs Prafull Sharma and B M Sivarraj, members of RC Borivli, PDG Raju Subramanian, “Madhavi, my well-wisher, guide and often my critic, mentor and best friend and wife” and his two daughters, he promised he’d never allow the 18th floor at the *One Rotary Center* go to his head.

In Mumbai, DGs Prafull Sharma and Sivarraj led the committee of hosts; PDG Rahul Timbadia, Viren Jethwa, President of RC Borivli, Pandya’s home club, past president Vinay Vyas, DGEs Shashi Sharma and Ashes Ganguly felicitated the RIDNs.

In Kolkata, DGs Vivek Kumar (3250), Ajay Agarwal (3262), Ranjeet Singh (3120) and Sanjay Giri (3292) felicitated the two leaders.

Pictures by
Rasheeda Bhagat & Jaishree

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Chuck – The Complete Man

Rajendra K Saboo

Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguishes one man from another.

- Ernest Hemingway

Charles C Keller, known as Chuck Keller, was a treasury of wisdom, a reservoir of knowledge and an ocean of experience. He was truly a founding pillar of contemporary Rotary. He was not only part of Rotary's history, having witnessed many turning points, in many ways he was also a creator of this history.

I vividly remember that I first met Chuck in April, 1983 in Monte Carlo when

I was in the second year of my Rotary International Directorship and he was the Chairman of a very significant Council on Legislation (COL) held there. This was the Council which was debating on the programme that Past RI President Clem Renouf had introduced as "Health, Hunger and Humanity" through which he had initiated the Polio eradication programme.

Big stalwarts and the voices from the past opposed it on the ground that Rotary

projects were only for clubs and there was no provision for taking up collective corporate programmes. And this is what was to be changed in order to take up the Polio challenge.

As the Chairman, Chuck was absolutely fair to both sides that ultimately passed the resolution approving the action of the Board of Directors and the initiative of Sir Clem Renouf. The way Chuck conducted that particular subject truly created an awe

about him. This Council also debated many other issues and the way Chuck steered the Council with humour, patience and fairness, was a lesson to learn.

The more I met Chuck during International Assemblies and other committee meetings, I was influenced by his remarkable knowledge of Rotary and his total commitment to his club and district regardless of the position he had held at the international level.

PRIP Charles Keller and spouse Carol at the 2017 International Assembly in San Diego.



Very distinctly I remember Feb 23, 1986, when I was flying on a charter plane from the International Assembly at Nashville, Tennessee, with my two good friends, the late Bill Sergeant and the late George Arceneaux. I had been invited by the Rotary Club of Chattanooga to speak on the birth anniversary of Rotary. The Nominating Committee for the RI President had selected Chuck Keller to be the President for 1987–88 but he was challenged by a past director from France. This became a topic of discussion between we three friends during the flight and I asked them can one man and his club challenge the nominated candidate and trigger the election process through the whole world costing almost \$ 50,000. At that time, it used to be ballot by mail. Could we not do anything about it?

The COL was just two months away in Chicago and there was no time to introduce a new legislative proposal. The only way was to find an existing proposal and introduce an amendment requiring

a certain percentage of Rotary clubs worldwide to endorse the challenge. Such an amendment would have to be germane to the main proposal. That was a difficult task because the Chairman of that Council was Judge Wilbur Pell. We selected a particular proposal and left it to George Arceneaux, who himself was a judge, to move the amendment. This was the strategy and it was seconded by Bill Sergeant. I had to make a statement on it. It worked and the provision did come through requiring one per cent of the clubs of the world to endorse any such challenge to be valid. What provoked this discussion was — should a good man like Chuck Keller be challenged? But the new provision would be effective only from the following year and unfortunately Chuck had to go through the election process which ultimately resulted in his resounding victory.

Chuck Keller was born on June 17, 1923 in Goshen, Indiana, US. He joined Rotary in 1950 at the age of 27 as a member of the Rotary Club of California, Pennsylvania. In addition to

I was influenced by his remarkable knowledge of Rotary and his total commitment to his club and district regardless of the position he had held at the international level.

being RI President, Chuck served as RI Director, The Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair, Chair of the Council on Legislation twice, Chair and Member of innumerable RI Committees. And most recently, he was Chair of the Foundation Centennial History Book Committee.

Chuck Keller graduated from California State Teachers College with the highest honours in a BS Ed degree in English and Social Science, and received the Distinguish Service Award. Returning to Washington County after law school he decided to pursue law as his career. As an attorney he made great accomplishments. He was a senior partner in the law firm of Peacock, Keller, Yohe, Day and Ecker. He served on the board of governors of the Pennsylvania Bar Association and in 1983 became president of the organisation. In 1986 he received one of the highest honours granted to trial lawyers by the American

legal profession. Very soon he earned the reputation of being a Senior Council and professionally hit the top. In the community he had been a director of several agencies, including the Boy Scouts, United Way, Chamber of Commerce and health agencies. During the second world war he was a combat pilot and later joined the US Air Force Reserve, serving in the Judge Advocate General's branch. He retired in 1972 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

He was an avid sports enthusiast and played basketball and tennis in college. I also used to tinker with tennis and when I came in the senior leadership role after being RI Director, many times Chuck invited me to play with him and other senior Rotary leaders. I realised I was nowhere near their standard and quietly withdrew, becoming a victim of their light-hearted banter!

As RI President he gave the theme to Rotarians — *United in Service — Dedicated to Peace*. It showed his total commitment and focus on service and peace.

I remember his counsel: "If you have a good point and are convinced of its relevance, pursue it without fear".



PRIP Charles Keller with the college of RI Presidents at the 2017 International Assembly.

Coming back to my interactions with him I recall the significant dialogue I had with him, something I will never forget. During the Orlando Convention when I was just about to finish my term as RI President, Chuck very candidly told me, “Raja, when you were nominated I did not think that the Nominating Committee had made a good choice. However, I am very happy that you have proved me wrong”. This was Chuck, and this was one of the best compliments I’ve received.

It was my privilege to serve with Chuck in many committees, significant of which was the Rotary Peace

Committee, initiated when I was TRF Trustee Chair. He served as Vice-Chairman with me and after I finished my term he took over as the Chairman. He was much senior to me and yet he never forgot the protocol and respected the opinion of the members with fairness and democratic process. There were times when in other committees including Council on Past Presidents we had strong differences on some issues. And I remember his counsel given to me much earlier: “If you have a good point and are convinced of its relevance, pursue it without fear”. And even after such encounters across the table in our discussions, the next day we would be

friends again, never letting the mutual respect decline.

When I think of Chuck the verse of Walt Whitman becomes so true to my feelings, “We were together. I forget the rest”.

The story of Chuck will not be complete without mentioning his two wives whom Usha and I had known. Lou, who Chuck loved very dearly and lost her as she suffered a stroke while on a flight. Another lovely lady Carol came into his life and she blended so well with the Rotary family as if she had been there for all the time.

Chuck was a role model being extremely active until the age of 92 with his mind being absolutely alert. Thereafter

on his own he said the time had come for him to stop coming to International Assemblies. We all missed him at the last Assembly as also the Convention. In fact, those who have known him will miss him for a lifetime.

For such a man, the departure from this world is truly the celebration of life. And when he meets our Creator in Heaven, he would tell Him, “Thank you for the opportunity and the life that you gave me on the earth”.

Chuck was truly the complete Rotarian, the complete man.

The writer is a Past Rotary International President (1991–92)

An invaluable endorsement

Charles C. Keller
Past President (1987-88)
Rotary International
Rotary Foundation Trustee Chairman (1992-93)
Rotary Foundation Trustee (1998-94)



February 5, 2016

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Rasheeda Bhagat, Editor
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Dear Editor Rasheeda:

I have been receiving "The Rotarian Magazine" and regional publications for many years and I enjoy them because they give a full picture of what Rotary is doing worldwide.

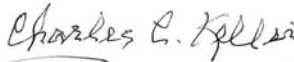
I have just finished reading the January issue of "Rotary News" and find it one of the best issues of a regional publication I have ever seen.

To start off with, the color pictures were extraordinary and very attractive. The various reports on the Jaipuria Institute were interesting and informative. The coverage of the Centennial plans for The Rotary Foundation were well done. I think the article on how Rotary International chooses its presidents, written by PRID Thomas was interesting and exceptionally informative. President Ravi's "Report Card" was very well done.

Over all, it gave a very enlightening picture of how Rotary performs and develops in India. It honestly reports the pluses and the minuses, the tremendous service activity on the one hand and the election disputes on the other hand.

I write to congratulate you on an outstanding issue. With best wishes,

Ever sincerely,

By: 
Charles C. Keller
PRIP 1987-8

CCK/bad

Rotarians-United in Service-Dedicated to Peace

Simon Master Chairman's Award for PDG Asoke Ghosh

Team Rotary News

Past governor of D 3011 and Chairman and Managing Director of PHI Learning Asoke K Ghosh was recently conferred with the Simon Master Chairman's Award at the International Excellence Awards 2018, in partnership with The Publishers Association at the London Book Fair, for his contribution and impact on global publishing. He is the fourth recipient and the first Indian to get this award.

He was also honoured as President Emeritus by the Federation of Indian Publishers and the Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation has appointed him as their Honorary Adviser.



Congratulations



(From L) Madhavi Pandya, DGN (3040) Dhiran Datta, PDG (3131) Mohan Palesha, PDG (3141) Vijay Jalan, PDG (3090) Vijay Gupta, RIDN Bharat Pandya, PDG (3030) Kishor Kedia, RIDN Kamal Sanghvi, PDG (3012) Ramesh Aggarwal, PDG (3040) Narendra Kumar Jain and Sonal Sanghvi.



(From L) PRIDs Shekhar Mehta and Y P Das, PRIPs Rajendra K Saboo and K R Ravindran, RID C Basker and PRID PT Prabhakar.

& Celebrations



Jaishree

(From L) PRIDs
YP Das, Ashok
Mahajan and
Manoj Desai.



(From L) PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, PDG Vijay Jalan, DGE Pinky Patel,
Binota Banerjee, Sharmishtha Desai and TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta.



RIDN Bharat Pandya and Madhavi Pandya.



RIDN Kamal Sanghvi and Sonal Sanghvi.

From L: RID C Basker, RIDN Bharat Pandya and PRID P T Prabhakar with D 3040's PDG Ashok Tanted, DGND Gajendra Narang, DGE Gustad Anklesaria, PDG Nitin Dafria and DGN Dhiran Datta.



Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat
Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

Message from RI South Asia Office

**Rotary International South Asia Office, Pullman / Novotel Commercial Tower,
First Floor, Asset No.2, Hospitality District, Aerocity (Near IGI Airport), New Delhi 110037**

Rotary Citation 2017–18

Earning the Rotary Citation is an honour that RI President Ian Riseley hopes all clubs strive to achieve. To earn the citation, please complete all activities and report your accomplishments to Rotary by June 30.

The 2017–18 Rotary Citation Achievement Guide explains how and where to report each citation goal.

Members who have My Rotary accounts can view their club's citation dashboard by signing in to My Rotary. Then, under Manage, in Club & District Administration, go to Reports and, in the Awards section, you'll see Rotary Citation. View the report for your type of club.

The Rotary Citations for Rotaract and Interact clubs include goals that will help clubs keep members energised and attract new ones. The Rotaract Citation Achievement Guide and Interact Citation Achievement Guide that are available for download on RI website explain where these achievements can be reported and how to view progress. Rotaract club presidents can view

their dashboard report and make updates on My Rotary. This year's district governors will receive certificates by email in August and September to distribute to Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs that have earned the citation.

Questions related to Citation can be directed to rotarysupportcenter@rotary.org.

Payment Instructions for TRF Donations/Contributions

- Kindly ensure that for all contributions to be credited to The Rotary Foundation Fiscal Year (2017–18) ending June 30, 2018, the online payment must be initiated and authorised by June 30, 2018.
- Indian donors can make online contributions both through the Rotary Foundation (India) [RF(I)] website www.rotaryfoundationindia.org and Rotary International website www.rotary.org and avail benefits under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

The Rotary Foundation guidelines for the reclassing (correction) contributions

The Foundation no longer accepts or processes reclassifications (corrections) to contributions made in the earlier Rotary year(s) from one gift designation or restriction to another (e.g. Annual Giving to Endowment etc.). Please note that corrections can only be made within 90 calendar days of the gift receipt date and must be made within the same Rotary fiscal year. Adherence to these guidelines will maintain the integrity of the annual audited financial report as well as the District Designated Funds.

Member Reporting for July 2018 Invoice

Club Secretaries must update membership data, including new member additions and removal of terminated members as they occur or by June 30, 2018. These changes can no longer be made retroactively.

- It is essential to keep clubs' membership data current so you receive a correct invoice.
- Want to go paperless — under Club Administration Invoice preference at My Rotary, check the box to remove the club

from receiving the paper copy of invoice.

- For more information, please visit the Membership Dues page on My Rotary.

Community need assessment compulsory for Global Grant

Starting July 1, 2018, any club or district that applies for a global grant to support a humanitarian project or a vocational training team will be required to conduct a community assessment first and include the results in their grant application.

Staff support for grants

Staff can conduct a preliminary application review or help sponsors redesign projects to meet Foundation requirements. To request a preliminary review, contact your grant officer or write to grants@rotary.org.

Attention to Approaching Deadlines:

Scholarship application due date: Global grant applications for scholars who will begin studies in August, September, or October need to be submitted by June 30, 2018.■

Rotaractors' date with RIPE Barry Rassin

Jaishree

It was just an hour-long meet, but for the DRRs, "it was 60 minutes of opportunity to get charged. He is just superb, so full of life," said one DRR, while another commented, "he is like one among us."

In Mumbai, District Rotaract Representatives (DRRs) of India had an exclusive meeting with RI President Elect Barry Rassin on the sidelines of the District Rotaract Zone Institute. The meet was coordinated by Rajat Menon, a past DRR and a member of RC Bombay Downtown Sealand, D 3141.

"It's a pleasure to attend a Rotary meeting where I can take my jacket off," said Rassin, as he began his brief address to the DRRs. While polio remains the top priority, his next priority is to double the number of Rotaractors. And significantly improve community-based Rotaract clubs across the world to ensure a smooth transition from Interact to university-based Rotaract to community-based Rotaract and finally into Rotary. Less than five per cent of Rotaractors make the transition to Rotary, he observed.

"Rotaract is the secret weapon in Rotary which we've ignored for so long. You are not workers; you're leaders, you're the future of our organisation," he said, and listed out all that the Rotaractors expected in Rotary: "I know that basically you don't want to go to a lot of meetings, you want to be efficient when you go to a meeting; you want to do service, you don't want it to be expensive, and you want to enhance your leadership skills." He called for Rotary clubs to consider these points in order to attract Rotaractors. "Treat them as equals. Involve them as partners in your community service programmes," he said.

To the Rotaractors, he added, "Look for a club that satisfies your needs. If you don't find one that's engaging you, start your own Rotary club. Do it the way you want to do it with your friends so that you don't lose the passion for Rotary. Our rules are very flexible today; so it can happen the way you want it to be."



RIPE Barry Rassin, RID C Basker, D 3141 DG Prafull Sharma, RI Rotaract-Interact Committee member Karthik Kittu, Rotarians Rajat Menon and Preeti Shah with the DRRs.

RIPE Rassin being honoured by DRREs Hansika (left) and Nishita as RID C Basker and DG Prafull Sharma look on.



He announced that a new programme is being designed for Rotaract in association with Toastmasters International and the content will have more of public speaking and leadership skill development and will be launched in July. He related how petrified he was when he delivered his maiden speech on community service. “I was standing there behind the lectern, holding on to its sides, reading my speech, cut to the bottom of the page and waited for the lectern to turn the page for me. Rotary has helped me to stand before an audience and speak. I want every Rotaractor to have that opportunity... to develop as an individual.”

The long-term goal will be that Rotaractors will enjoy the same rights and privileges as Rotarians. Currently,

What I want from you is to take the lead and go to a Rotary club and say, ‘we want you to be involved and we want to involve with you.’

RI President Elect **Barry Rassin**

Rotaract data is being updated at Evanston with help from Rotaract club presidents. “I understand from the RI that we have over 10,000 clubs but less than 40 per cent have confirmed their existence. We must know the exact data so that we’ll know what you are doing and how we can help you.”

A big applause greeted his announcement that in the long range he’d like to see Rotaractors have the same access as Rotary clubs to global grants.

Q&A session

Answering a question from DRRE Kiran Raj, D 3190, on Rotary clubs not mentoring Rotaract clubs after chartering them, Rassin said Rotary clubs can’t just start a club and walk away. Rotarians must invite Rotaractors to their weekly meetings and they should also attend Rotaract meetings. They must be around to help and teach them. “When Rotaractors from the Rotaract Club sponsored by my club come for our meeting, they don’t sign in as guests, they sign in as members,” he said.

To another DRRE’s suggestion for a coordination meet of Rotary and Rotaract club presidents, on the lines

of PETS, Rassin explained that the accommodation is a challenge as the hotels where the PETS are organised have limited space, “but we are working out something which we hope to finalise in a couple of years.”

To a question on what he liked about Rotaractors and what he expected out of them, Rassin quickly replied: “Well, I love your youth. Your energy and optimism are fantastic. I want to spread that to Rotary. What I want from you is to take the lead and go to a Rotary club and say, ‘we want you to be involved and we want to involve with you’. Be proactive; don’t wait for Rotary to come to you.”

Rotary-Rotaract link

Addressing the DRRs, RI Director C Basker said, “There should be a connect between Rotary and Rotaract so that both partners can work in tandem. That’s why we had the coordination programme with the DRRs and the DRCCs and it is shaping up well. He appealed to the incoming DRRs too to keep updating the Rotaract database. “The contact details of all Rotaractors are vital to us for better connectivity. Together we can do so much more,” he added.

Referring to the newly-born *Rotaract News*, the RI Director urged the DRRs to send action photos and reports of their projects to *Rotary News*. “That is your magazine specially designed for you. Showcase your wonderful projects to the entire world through it.” He added, “Together you are a force. Don’t think you are young. You can make a difference.”

He announced that he has offered to be the Liaison Director for Rotaract in 2018–19, which RIPE Rassin acknowledged in his speech. Quoting an African proverb, Rassin said: ‘When spiders web unite, it can tie up a lion.’

Pictures by Jaishree

Let's not run behind numbers: **RI Director**

Jaishree

Membership robbery" — this is how President Riseley refers to our membership growth, and every RI Board meeting includes an agenda with the sub-head 'India concerns'. It is high time we reform ourselves and become true Rotarians."

With these powerful words, RI Director C Basker set the tone for the training seminar held at Chennai

recently for assistant regional coordinators of Zones 4, 5 and 6A. Expressing his concern over membership growth, he said, "Every year we add 10,000 members and by the end of the year 9,000 members just leave. Let us not run behind numbers. We need genuine Rotarians who care for humanity."

Another major issue of concern was surfacing of various instances of misappropriation of funds. "We receive

the largest amount through global grants; yet stewardship is a big challenge in our region. As a country we must be ashamed of such dishonesty."

RCs Rajendra Rai and Ashok Gupta, RRFCs Avinash Potdar and Vijay Jalan, RPICs Ashish Desai and Rajadurai Michael introduced their teams of assistant coordinators. Along with them, the leadership engaged in a two-day brainstorming workshop



A section of the regional leaders with RIDN Bharat Pandya, EMGA Sam Patibandla, TRF Trustee Elect Gulam Vahanvaty, PDG Sashi Varvandkar and EMGA Ashok Panjwani.

where they brought to the table their anxieties and challenges in training district and club leaders on the three verticals of Rotary — membership, Foundation giving and public image.

“All lessons that you learn here should percolate to the district and club level,” said RIDN Bharat Pandya. He suggested that committees be formed for each vertical in all the districts and clubs. “Reach out and be in touch with the respective district and club officers,” he added, urging the regional leaders “not to wait for an invitation to make a presentation. Rather, volunteer to educate club members.”

When one of the delegates pointed out an instance where a governor demanded \$10,000 as contribution to TRF in return for a district assignment, TRF Trustee Elect Gulam Vahanvaty said, “Collecting money for TRF is a

good thought, but demanding money in this way is certainly not acceptable. Appointments are not for sale. They are based purely on merit.” On membership, he said that an indiscriminate push for inducting new members only resulted in members leaving within the first two years. “We have to first understand if we are following the right steps while inducting members. We may be taking in people who have no idea about Rotary but agree to become members on the insistence of friends. So we need to address this on a war footing.”

But unlike membership, Foundation giving does not have a downside. “The more we ask, the more we get. We are collecting funds for the Foundation by selling what the Foundation does, and people contribute, because they believe in the Foundation and its activities,” he added.

Later, addressing the break-out sessions, Director Basker assured the delegates that they had been chosen for their leadership capabilities and performances. “We depend on you now to set our country in order... in terms of membership, public image and Foundation giving.”

He added that a clear focus and definition were needed on the role of the district and many governors did not get this right. Often, instead of working in tandem with RI’s priorities — that of making the world polio-free and enhancing club membership, “they seem to have their own priorities. The districts are formed solely to help clubs in advancing the objects of Rotary. But today, instead of the districts supporting the clubs, it is vice versa. There is more of district activities than club activities,” he observed.



Key points

RID Basker, TRF Trustee-elect Gulam Vahanvaty and RIDN Bharat Pandya highlighted the following points for the regional leaders to act upon:

- * District leaders should conduct meetings in regional language.
- * RCs and ARCs must guide clubs to frame their constitution and bylaws and also encourage governors to follow it up with clubs;
- * Data should be updated in Rotary Club Central.
- * Encourage clubs to do service projects based on local community needs and educate them to avail global grants using the Rotary Showcase facility to get international partners.
- * RPICS and ARPICS should develop a media plan to promote Rotary across the country.
- * RRFCS to encourage all Rotarians to contribute a minimum of \$26.50 annually to the Foundation.

We may be taking in people who have no idea about Rotary
but agree to become members on the insistence of friends.

RI Director **C Basker**

Stewardship

The three senior leaders did not mince words on what they thought of dishonesty in utilising grant and other funds and said stewardship issues were both crucial and critical.

Vahanvaty said last year India had surpassed all records. Incoming Trustee Chair Ron Burton had set a comprehensive goal of \$380 million for the next year. “The Rotary Foundation counts on us and we have always responded most willingly. In 2015–16 we were second to Japan by a huge margin; last year we were second to Japan by a short head. We will continue to narrow this gap. When we have so much to be proud of in our giving to the Foundation, why should we allow a handful of individuals to give us a bad name?”

It was a shame that in a membership of 150,000 Rotarians in India, a mere 0.003 per cent (50 Rotarians) are “making us hang our heads low. How can we allow such a miniscule number of misdemeanours to bring us



From L: TRF Trustee Elect Gulam Vahanvaty, RI Director C Basker and RIDN Bharat Pandya share a light moment.



From L: PDGs Ravi Mehra (3110), Natarajan Nagoji (3232), Hitesh Jariwala (3060), RIDN Bharat Pandya, PDGs Pramod Parikh (3132) and Jaya Shah (3292).

so much ignominy? Let's have a zero tolerance to dishonesty, not because the Trustees want it, but because each of us believe in it."

Referring to clubs with less than 10 members, Pandya pointed out that there are 196 such clubs in India and they exist only for election purpose. He urged the Rotary coordinators to identify them and close them. "We'll be losing about 2,000 members, but that is not a loss for Rotary. I want you to also concentrate on clubs with less than 25 members. Identify their interests and engage them in Rotary programmes so that they bring in their friends."

Counselling the public image coordinators to devise programmes to better engage Rotarians, he observed that public image is not only promoting Rotary to outsiders. It also involves taking Rotary to Rotarians. "Seventy per cent of the Rotarians are still unaware of what Rotary does and what a beautiful organisation they are a part of," he said.

How did you deal with your regional coordinators? If you have ignored them, nothing much has changed now.

Gulam Vahanvaty
TRF Trustee Elect

Breakouts

While the Rotary coordinators thrashed out ways to increase "quality" membership and retain existing members, the public image team worked on giving more spotlight to Rotary and the Foundation team brainstormed grants management and fundraising with additional resources from EMGAs Ashok Panjwani and Sam Patibandla.

To a suggestion from a PDG that the governors should be sensitised to take the services of the ARFCs and DRFCs,

Vahanvaty made a point: "You all have been successful governors. How did you deal with your regional coordinators? If you have ignored them, nothing much has changed now." He suggested that the contact details of the coordinators' committee be included in each of the district directories so that club presidents can reach out to them easily for guidance and support.

The Rotary Coordinators' session moderated by Rai was an animated one with discussions ranging from dual membership, satellite clubs and women members. A predominant suggestion for attracting more women members included less meetings and more fun and service. "Women get put off with liquor served during meetings," said ARC Gurjeet Sekhon. ARC Bindu Singh pointed out that the tag "Rotary spouse" is a big deterrent as most Rotarians "consider us just that and not a Rotarian."

Pictures by Jaishree



Machines & Robots train underprivileged students

Rasheeda Bhagat

Enthused by the prospect of further upgrading the vocational training of orphan boys looked after and educated by the Ramakrishna Mission and giving them a bump-up in their starting salary, Rotary Club of Madras East, D 3232, has executed yet another, and this time their biggest ever single global grant project of \$110,000.

This involves the gifting of ‘Machines and Robots’, a Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) project which will provide the trainees at the Polytechnic run by RKM in Chennai with state-of-the-art, futuristic manufacturing technology skills.

Giving details of the project, RCME President B S Puroshotham says that every year the club works harder to go one step further to improve the sustainability and scalability of the projects executed by it in the previous years. Whether it is public health projects to help the Public Health Centre and the Childs Trust Hospital, or vocational services to RKM and V-Excel, each project has addressed a key current social development need.

Despite India, one of the youngest nations in the world, adding almost 16 million people to the workforce every year, there is a huge gap in the availability of skilled labour in the Indian market today. According to statistics from NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation), barely five per cent of the total workforce in India has received some sort of skill training. So

the skilling area was chosen to execute the global grant totalling nearly ₹70 lakh.

Juxtapose this with the fact that the RKM has a shelter facility for 70 orphan boys in a building that is adjacent to their polytechnic in Chennai. From this polytechnic, every year around 150 students from an underprivileged background go into the work stream. Students of RKM who are trained here are placed

across various industry segments with salaries ranging from ₹10,000–20,000 a month.

“So when we decided to do a global grant to address the huge skill gap in young Indians who undertake vocational education, RKM with its long track record in providing diploma courses to students from underprivileged background, and with who, we have done several projects earlier, was a natural partner,” he says.



Inauguration of the CIM project. Seen in the picture are DG R Srinivasan and RCME President B S Puroshotham.

The organisation already provides a three-year polytechnic course to students from underprivileged backgrounds with the focus on employment-specific and industry-relevant skills and education. It has been doing this service and providing diploma courses to underprivileged students since 1932 with a highly successful track record in placing students in reputed companies.

Involving the beneficiary

Also, RKM and RC Madras East have a long-standing relationship, which includes the club donating major laboratory equipment to them in 2015, and keeping in mind RI's constant advice to clubs to do projects that the community or the beneficiaries want, the club sought ideas from RKM for the latest grant.

"Principal Sugumar of RKM expressed the need to set up a state-of-art



RKM Polytechnic students at the inaugural meet.

CIM lab where the students could be given skills that are not only industry-specific but also widely relevant to the manufacturing industry," says Secretary of the club Papa Rao.

RKM then suggested a list of equipment they need for skilling their students in latest manufacturing techniques. Rtn Raghuraman, a member of the club who now lives in Switzerland, during his visit to India, spent a good two weeks fine tuning the project.

The project was also vetted with the help of Mahadevan, Vice President of India Pistons, which already works with RKM. His team reviewed RKM's current facilities and together with the Rotarians and RKM, designed a modern CIM lab. "Rtn Raghuraman's advice and help in fine tuning the project's exact equipment requirements and specifications was invaluable. The final quotations were vetted from multiple vendors, and a supplier chosen from Pune," says Purushotham.

Rao adds that even before the global grant money could come in, "the Pune manufacturer started working on the equipment without our having to give him a single rupee in advance, thanks to Rotary's credibility

and public image. And within a few months the lab was ready and was inaugurated. The entire project was conceived, researched, planned and executed in less than a year."

While the project was being planned, RCME reached out to Rtn Harish Murthy from the Rotary Club of Irvine, USA, who agreed to be their international partner, adds the club president.

Apart from the equipment sought, 15 desktop computers and a DVD writer are also being donated to facilitate this computer integrated learning. The club expects the RKM CIM lab to be a state-of-the-art showcase facility for other vocational training institutions to improve their own skilling programmes. This lab will also conduct 'train the trainer' programmes for internal and external faculty from other polytechnics, and will be used for skill enhancement training modules for mechanical and automobile students.

"With the CIM training, we expect more reputed companies to come for campus placement of the best students and at least a 20 per cent hike in their starting salary," adds the club secretary. ■



Rotary honours a philanthropist par excellence

Jaishree

It'd have been the most important highlight of my year as Trustee Chair to be here and thank you personally. I am sorry I couldn't make it due to prior commitments that I couldn't get out of," TRF Trustee Chair Paul Netzel said in a message read out by PRIP K R Ravindran at a grand meeting held in Mumbai to present a Rotary Crystal, RI's highest honour, to one of TRF's largest benefactor, Rajashree Birla, Chairperson of the Aditya Birla Foundation for Community Initiatives and Rural Development.

She was being felicitated for her over two-decade support to Rotary's battle against polio. PRIP Ravindran presented the crystal at the event attended by senior leaders — PRIP Rajendra K Saboo, PRIP Kalyan

Banerjee and Binota, PRID Ashok Mahajan, RID C Basker, RIDN Bharat Pandya, TRF Trustee Elect Gulam Vahanvati, and several AKS members from Districts 3141 and 3142. The event was hosted by DG Prafull Sharma.

Ravindran, who now serves as a TRF Trustee, said, "If polio eradication is a reality, it is because of people like you. What you have contributed and done far outweighs what we talk here and what we see in the media."

The Aditya Birla group is the second largest corporate donor to TRF with "a total contribution of nearly \$10.24 million. Viewed from a global perspective, this is stunning. We cannot equate the one dollar we (in South Asia) give to the one dollar given in the US or Europe. Your \$10 million is worth a billion dollars in the West," he added.

The generosity of the Birla family over generations for community welfare was legendary, Ravindran said, giving out numbers. The Aditya Birla group spends ₹250 crores annually on philanthropy and charity, runs

Aditya Birla group is anxious to see that every child pan India is safe from polio. We have administered 27 million polio drops through booths set up across the country.

Rajashree Birla

Chairperson, Aditya Birla Foundation for Community Initiatives and Rural Development



56 schools, supports 5,000 villages reaching every year 7.3 million people globally. “The philosophy of the Birla group is very clear: They have plants all over the world. Instead of extracting the resources in the regions they extend the benefits of their investments to the communities they touch.”

He added that Rajashree’s support for polio eradication transcends conventional values. “Some may say, so what? They have the money. But I can show you several people who have all the money, but don’t give a penny for other’s welfare. So, more than the money, what is important is the heart to give. Generosity runs in the blood of the Birla family.” Her gifts have had a real and significant impact on making and keeping India polio-free. They have changed the course of India’s history and moved the entire country forward, into a healthier and more stable future.

But, warned Ravindran, the work is not yet over, as the virus still lurked in a few countries. To keep the world polio free, 400 million children in 60 countries have to be immunised. “We look up to you to continue your support. We owe it to you for helping us get double your contribution from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.”

PRIP Saboo recalled memories of his father’s employment with the Birlas in Kolkata and his own stint at Hindustan Motors, a Birla group company. “For me, the Birlas are synonymous with my family. Rajashreeji’s husband Aditya and I used to play cricket in the Birla Park at Kolkata.”

PRIP K R Ravindran presents the Rotary Crystal to Rajashree Birla, Chairperson of the Aditya Birla Foundation for Community Initiatives and Rural Development, in the presence of (from L) DG Prafull Sharma, RIDN Bharat Pandya, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, PRIP Rajendra K Saboo, RID C Basker, PRID Ashok Mahajan, TRF Trustee Elect Gulam Vahanvaty and RRFC Vijay Jalan.



PRIP K R Ravindran, PRID Ashok Mahajan, his spouse Nayantara with Rajashree Birla.

Some may say, so what? They have the money. But I can show you several people who have all the money, but don’t give a penny for other’s welfare. What is important is the heart to give.

K R Ravindran
Past RI President

He remembered how in 2008, when she was to be inducted into the AKS Society for her contribution of \$250,000 to TRF, he suggested she make the occasion more memorable with a contribution for Polio. She instantly agreed to donate \$1 million and announced her intention immediately in her speech at the induction ceremony.” Not only that, she even prompted Usha Mittal, wife of steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, to contribute a similar figure.

“From 2008 onwards, not a single year has gone by where Rajashreeji has not given,” he said. Even after India was declared Polio-free, she continued her generosity and donated another \$1 million at the Atlanta Convention, “for us to work for a Polio-free world.”

Referring to the theme of the evening — *Giving is Living* — Saboo said that Usha and he had almost made

these words the theme for his Presidential year, but “perhaps it was meant to be for this day,” he added.

PRIP Banerjee recalled how, in the early 2000s, when PRID Mahajan and he approached her to help Rotary address polio that was very much rampant then, Rajashree had readily contributed a very huge sum. “And she gave it with so much faith in us, and I find that faith has not diminished one bit in her. Thank you, Rajashreeji, your support to polio eradication in India has been unmatched by anybody else.”

Underlining the trust the corporates and individuals have in TRF, he recalled how an Italian Rotarian instantly gave a cheque for \$1million for relief work in Kutch, Gujarat, after it was devastated by the 2001 earthquake. “He never asked me how his money was spent nor did he visit India. It can happen only in Rotary because of the trust people have in the Foundation and the causes we espouse.”

“While we Indians are known in the Rotary world as a receiving nation, here we have Rajashree Birla who is second in the world in giving,” said Director Basker. He quoted a couplet on giving from the *Tirukkural*, saying Rajashree understands Tamil. (She has done part of her schooling in Madurai)

He said that her partnership with Rotary has helped to wipe away the tears of 16 million families. “In 1988



RID C Basker, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, PRIP Rajendra Saboo, Rajashree Birla, PRIP K R Ravindran, PRID Ashok Mahajan, RIDN Bharat Pandya and TRF Trustee Elect Gulam Vahanvaty at the felicitation event.

when we set out to address polio, there were 350,000 polio cases from 125 countries. Today we have just six cases and with the support of large-hearted people like Rajashreeji, we will very soon reach the zero mark," he said.

Pointing out that every Rotarian of District 3231 has contributed a minimum \$10 for the Polio Fund, the RI Director urged the audience to never shy away from asking for a good cause and made a reference to the late US President and a polio victim Franklyn Roosevelt, who launched the March of the Dimes to raise money to fund the research programme of Jonas Salk, the discoverer of the injectable polio vaccine.

He complimented DG Prafull Sharma and B M Sivarraj for organising the event to honour "the biggest partner of Rotary's End Polio campaign" in India.

The Rotary Foundation India was determined not to be left behind when it came to supporting the programmes of the Foundation and "it has always been that extra donation from Rajashreeji that has made us go past the goal post and claim a place in the top two slots worldwide for giving," said PRID Mahajan, adding that thanks to her support, TRF is no longer passive in India today; it is dynamic and full of life.

"Many people were not absolutely sure if a band of volunteers can change

An Italian Rotarian instantly gave a cheque for \$1million for relief work during the Kutch earthquake. He never asked me how his money was spent nor did he visit India.

It can happen only in Rotary.

Kalyan Banerjee
Past RI President

the world. The skeptics, who had no idea what a service organisation could do, got the confidence that great things were possible when they saw you donate generously to the Foundation," he concluded.

In her response, Rajashree said that with her long association with Rotarians she was struck by their selfless service. The philosophy of philanthropy is deeply rooted in the DNA of the Birla family, she said. Congratulating the great work Rotary is doing world over in eradicating polio, she added that the Aditya Birla group is anxious to see that every child pan India is safe from polio. "We work collectively in urban sites and railway stations. We have administered 27 million polio drops through booths set up across the country."

Besides polio, her organisation has tied up with Rotary for addressing

diabetes and has reached out to 100,000 people. "We are also backing Rotarians in treating thalassaemia patients in Mumbai."

Speaking about her great-grandfather-in-law G D Birla's association with Mahatma Gandhi, Rajashree narrated how Gandhiji regarded Birla as one of his mentors and "Daduji, as we affectionately called him, would in turn say that he was the Mahatma's follower. Both of them developed a special bond." Birla, she said, "bequeathed to all of us a legacy of caring and giving for those in need. As for me, giving is a measure of a life well lived. Only a life lived for others is a life worth living."

RIDN Bharat Pandya, proposing the vote of thanks, remembered Albert Sabin's magnanimity when he refused to patent his invention of the oral polio vaccine, with the historic reply, "Can you patent the Sun?" He thanked Saboo and Mahajan for being the link between Rotary and the Birla family. "Gulam and I experienced the warm hospitality of the Birlas when we visited their home to meet Rajashreeji's son Kumaramangalam Birla. Just like their generosity to give, they are lavish in their hospitality too. They are rich not because they have but because they give... to causes they believe in and because they want to change the world."

Pictures by Jaishree



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Vinay Kulkarni

Rotarians and Rotaractors can take advantage of discounts on travel, online shopping, dining, entertainment and a variety of other products and services under the Rotary Global Rewards Programme. Amazon, Flipkart, Marriott, MakeMyTrip, Hertz and Samsung are just a few of the businesses that participate. Many offers donate a percentage back to Rotary. Rotarians can help build this programme by adding offers from their own businesses.

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right-hand side of the screen.

- Enter the promo code in the corporate code box (Promo code and Corporate codes are the same) when completing the payment.
- Rotarians can avail this facility and even donate their savings to TRF.

Visit www.rotary.org/globalrewards or download the App from the Apple App Store® or Google Play™.

The author is the Chairman, WAS-MGI Committee and Member - TRF Fund Development Committee.

D 3000 gets a massive dose of ₹1.2 crore CSR funding from KVB

V Muthukumaran



District 3000 Governor P Gopalakrishnan presenting a TRF citation to KVB Chairman B Swaminathan and Managing Director P R Seshadri. Also seen are District General Secretary M Balaji (extreme left), PDG S Rajendran (fourth from left) and District Admin Secretary L Subbiah (extreme right).

Karur Vysya Bank has donated ₹1.2 crore to The Rotary Foundation under its CSR funds for setting up four low-cost dialysis centres at four locations — Trichy, Karur, Dindigul and Theni — in Tamil Nadu. Each centre will have six dialysis machines and the total project value is ₹2.2 crore including the grant from the Foundation.

“This is the single largest amount received by Rotary in India from a corporate entity under CSR funding. We have joined hands with the KVB for community service,” says RI District 3000 Governor P Gopalakrishnan. In the last few months he met the top officials of the bank including its managing director and CEO P R Seshadri to make detailed presentations on TRF policies, methods of project implementation and stewardship in a bid to get CSR funding for Rotary’s service and humanitarian projects.

But the district’s first-ever CSR project took some time to crystallise and a lot of deliberations before it was finally okayed by the KVB Board of

Directors and the amount has been received.

Striking a rapport

The district has approached many firms in and around Tamil Nadu ever since Rotary International okayed the proposal to accept CSR funding and include it as TRF contribution, says L Subbiah, District Secretary, Admin and from RC Karur Texcity.

With four out of 11 KVB directors being Rotarians including one Ann, and Gopalakrishnan striking a ‘good working relationship’ with the top officials of the bank, “we were able to make an effective presentation with a bouquet of projects the bank could choose to fund from their CSR money.” In Karur, RC Karur Texcity Secretary A J Suriyanarayana and RC Karur Angels (all-women’s club) President S Nirupama’s husband Rtn M V Srinivasamoorthi are part of the KVB Board.

RI Director C Basker visited the KVB headquarters to make a presentation on TRF’s programmes and global projects to its managing director. “His

briefing added value to our proposal seeking CSR funds from the bank,” adds Gopalakrishnan.

All the four dialysis centres will offer treatment sessions at an affordable cost, almost 65–70 per cent lower than that charged in private hospitals. Each centre will have a five-member Rotary panel consisting of two doctors, two Rotarians and one beneficiary to oversee its administration.

D 3000 Rotary leaders led by Gopalakrishnan felicitated Swaminathan, Seshadri and nine other directors at the KVB headquarters in Karur with a citation and a shawl. Apart from individual citations to every director, the DG along with PDG S Rajendran presented certificates issued by TRF (signed by RI President Ian Riseley and Trustee Chair Paul Netzel) to Seshadri thanking the bank for its generosity.

During the informal interaction at the Board room, the Directors appreciated Rotary clubs for being proactive in Karur and doing a wide variety of community projects. ■

District Wise TRF Contributions as on April 2018

(in US Dollars)

District Number	APF	PolioPlus	Other Restricted	Endowment Fund	Total Contributions	EREY Donors (in numbers)	EREY %
India							
2981	37,456	4,675	0	0	42,131	213	4.9%
2982	62,534	2,320	2,725	0	67,579	396	14.6%
3000	83,244	7,267	344,802	41,265	476,579	2,084	41.2%
3011	123,508	714	110,743	16,462	251,427	408	13.4%
3012	39,251	6,693	112,590	3,016	161,549	213	6.1%
3020	57,745	23,554	49,950	42,478	173,727	196	4.6%
3030	923	22,724	1,050	0	24,697	3	0.1%
3040	11,706	15	48,307	0	60,028	43	2.0%
3053	9,283	78	22,129	25,000	56,490	25	0.9%
3054	16,578	203	305,368	1,000	323,150	47	0.8%
3060	143,203	1,503	206,936	26,992	378,635	1,106	29.0%
3070	40,482	198	25,794	1,084	67,559	221	7.5%
3080	112,877	16,151	21,178	92	150,299	195	6.0%
3090	608	0	2,500	0	3,108	3	0.1%
3100*	14,629	0	0	0	14,629	56	3.5%
3110	65,802	3,498	60,631	0	129,931	166	4.3%
3120	81,367	508	50,231	0	132,106	111	3.8%
3131	400,754	734	361,055	90,098	852,641	1,293	25.4%
3132	75,426	1,406	7,875	16,000	100,707	229	5.2%
3141	620,700	23,006	738,463	105,001	1,487,169	1,117	21.9%
3142	344,523	18,808	788	(1,000)	363,119	800	29.6%
3150	56,064	12,557	44,750	62,000	175,370	330	9.2%
3160	125,394	1,000	0	8,338	134,732	184	7.9%
3170	48,107	8,058	23,815	0	79,979	327	6.1%
3181	91,783	1,091	0	78	92,952	698	23.1%
3182	78,094	0	39,417	0	117,510	721	22.9%
3190	86,340	27,448	108,689	93	222,570	79	1.6%
3201	156,262	14,114	206,098	5,323	381,797	236	4.6%
3202	51,430	7,819	0	2,773	62,021	114	2.4%
3211	120,642	100	0	53,846	174,588	118	2.8%
3212	254,909	35,135	32,500	2,000	324,544	574	15.5%
3231	125,350	15,250	171,250	70,914	382,764	90	3.6%
3232	351,483	33,718	114,382	20,300	519,884	449	12.2%
3240	83,006	1,942	0	8,367	93,315	310	10.6%
3250	83,410	100	9,673	10,000	103,183	195	5.5%
3261	39,221	115	29,112	0	68,448	130	5.5%
3262	76,220	227	7,981	0	84,428	294	8.9%
3291	53,961	26,675	58,789	119,279	258,703	53	1.4%
India Total	4,224,275	319,404	3,319,569	730,800	8,594,048	13,827	10.0%
3220 Sri Lanka	119,518	10,427	6,998	1,217	138,160	575	30.2%
3271 Pakistan	39,401	70,699	11,752	0	121,851	84	5.9%
3272 Pakistan	33,009	2,799	0	1,000	36,809	62	2.3%
3281 Bangladesh	387,884	15,106	328,990	86,037	818,016	704	12.5%
3282 Bangladesh	102,819	1,964	0	1,000	105,783	453	12.0%
3292 Nepal	134,681	26,214	618,772	0	779,668	662	15.1%
South Asia Total	5,041,587	446,613	4,286,082	820,054	10,594,336	16,367	12.0%
World Total	97,206,324	28,158,399	14,799,410	20,943,478	161,107,611		

* Non-districted

Source: RI South Asia Office

The feisty women presidents of D 3232

**Jaishree
Kiran Zehra**

District 3232 recently saw an exciting celebration of 20 of its women presidents being felicitated for their leadership role during the year. Of the 103 clubs in the district, 20 were led by women this year. “They are the gems of our district. For any organisation to be successful, we must acknowledge the efforts of women and leverage their highest potential to ensure more women follow their example and come out of their shells,” said DG R Srinivasan. The Women Leadership Summit, held on May 6, celebrated the fact that 30 years ago, on May 4,

1987, the US Supreme Court ruled that Rotary clubs should not exclude women from membership on the basis of gender. From quirky audio-visual introductions of the presidents to well-moderated sessions, and a few donations, the evening was filled with entertainment and action.

Meanwhile, outside the auditorium, six children, dressed in black and white, were fervently practising their steps, to a *thaalam* (hand beat) sans music. Said one of the girls, “We are going to tell everyone we are HIV positive through our performance.” They were representing *Project Hope*, a joint project of the 20 clubs to provide rehabilitation opportunities for HIV victims.

Instead of boring sit-down meetings, we meet over a game of badminton or go swimming or do an aqua-yoga.

Apoorva Prasad
President, RC Madras NextGen



Film artist Kasturi Shankar, moderating a session titled *Women of substance*, said that a woman with an unshakable sense of self-worth and one who stands by her convictions is a woman of substance. Women, much more than men, can give a positive direction to an entire generation, but unfortunately Indian women are yet to discover their worth.

“A woman of power and positive influence is a woman of substance,” said Usha Kumar, President of RC Madras Midtown. Anita David, President, RC Madras North, urged women to “raise your voice when you are not comfortable and tell people when they are wrong. More importantly, teach your sons to respect women



Anita Paramasivan, Lata Kamalesh, Lakshmi Ramakrishnan, M Suguna Devi and Usha Ajit Kumar.



From L: Pramila, Usha Kumar, Sharada Sundaram, Kasturi Shankar, Rajashree Thandy, Anita David and Hemalatha Kesavan.

Teach your sons to respect women so that the world need not see any more Nirbhayas.

Anita David
President, RC Madras North

so that the world need not see any more Nirbhayas.” Rajashree Thandy, President of RC Chennai Kilpauk, related how her son had referred to her as his role model in his school essay at the age of six, and continues to hold her in that position even today at 21!

Referring to the diversity of women in the hall, Kasturi said, “Rotary is bringing together women from various backgrounds to network and do good. So, don’t stop with this one year; go and inspire women out there and show them what they are capable of. It is part of your duty.”

In a lively discussion on the various roles donned by women,

Presidents' voices

Our chat with few presidents to understand how they managed their year and the challenges they faced yielded an interesting insight. For Anita Paramasivan (RC Chennai KK Nagar) the Sezhan project is close to her heart. "We gave six powerlooms, worth ₹7 lakh, in Kadaladi, a village near Kanchipuram." Other projects included giving free spectacles and facilitating cataract surgeries for 4,500 people in the locality; the Kamadhenu project, through which the club provided microfinance and job opportunities to the underprivileged. "I felt happiest when it helped set up a tea shop for a widow, providing her a monthly earning of ₹15,000."

Anita, a radiologist, initiated breast cancer awareness among the Anns in various clubs. "Many women become anxious once they detect a lump in their breast fearing cancer. But it need not be so. I want to break that myth through my profession," she said.

Her take on how to improve women's membership: "We must inspire wives of Rotarians to join Rotary. Most of them are not willing to bring their Anns to Rotary activities. This year I insisted on more family participation." Anita (50) got married at 18 and with excellent support from her family, did medicine. "Professionally, I am a doctor till 4.30 pm and after that it is Rotary," she smiles.

Sharada Sundaram (RC Chennai Spotlight — an all-women's club) says, "We are a bunch of 30 women; we do service and have a lot of fun too spiced with 'popcorn fellowships', watching movies, dramas, like any other kitty-party group, but with a purpose." Her first project was Yatra, where four women drove across the districts of Tamil Nadu, promoting awareness for

planting native trees "that will withstand the ravages of cyclones like the recent Vardha. A taste of the hospitality of Rotarians in other places opened a treasure chest of what Rotary actually is. The bonding and fellowship and the pride of being a Rotarian was the best take-home," she says.

Anita David is the first woman president of the 49-year-old RC Madras North and the only woman member of the club. "I have inducted three women members." So, did she face any challenges being in a male-dominated club? "No, it was a pleasure working in the club. Every member was cooperative extending support. The moment I suggest some project, money pours in and all the members pitch in to volunteer," she said. Under her leadership, the club donated personality development books to the inmates of the Puzhal prison and also organised a RYLA for them. She is director of a freight forwarding company and her husband, a past president of RC Chennai Renaissance, takes care of her work during her presidential year.

Rajashree Thandy (RC Kilpauk) is a senior director in a software firm. The club has 33 members with 7 women. Her views on why women do not join Rotary: "There is a myth that Rotary

is so much work and money. But I feel that it is about making a choice as to how much you need to donate and how you want to contribute. You need not give up your family or career. It is about striking a balance between Rotary and other things." Smart classes, hearing aids and audiometric kits donated to three schools for the hearing impaired is a project close to her heart. "We want to take it to all the seven schools in Chennai," she smiled.

Apoorva Prasad (RC Madras Nextgen) is a HR consultant. "We are a lively 55-member team with diverse opinions and ideas. Arriving at one decision takes very long." She has inducted 10 new members. Her major project was renovation of the girls' toilet in a school for the hearing impaired using district grants. The other project was a diaper-drive for mentally challenged children and a multi-specialty medical camp for fishermen and their families on the outskirts of Chennai. "Instead of boring sit-down meetings, we meet over a game of badminton or go swimming or do an aqua-yoga," said Apoorva.

Bhavani Subramanian is the charter president of RC Chennai Infinity which has 33 members. She was inspired by Rotary's polio eradication programme.

"We go outside and fix the world and come home and fix our child's broken toy too. Women leaders face certain challenges that men may not. But at the end of the day all these challenges only make us stronger. I thank Rotary for helping me work on my confidence and determination," said Hemalatha Kesavan, RC Meenambakkam.

For Malathi Gururajan, President, RC Adambakkam, "The one thing I learnt was that women shouldn't shy away from opportunities that allow them to move forward. It could be a job or a role that demands a lot, we should be open to challenges."

I thank Rotary for helping
me work on my confidence
and determination.

Hemalatha Kesavan
President, RC Meenambakkam



Women Presidents of D 3232 with DG R Srinivasan and his spouse Sujatha.

We must inspire wives of

Rotarians to join Rotary. Most of
them are not willing to bring their

Anns to Rotary activities.

Anita Paramasivan

President, RC Chennai K K Nagar

Kasturi asked the men in the hall: “Do you think it is unfair that your wife has usurped the role of a primary caregiver?” Jay Shetty, spouse of PDG Rekha Shetty, quickly responded that the men in general do not feel any insecurity as long as the child grows with a healthy mind and

body. His question: “What about your role as mother-in-law?” led to another animated discussion.

Kasturi ended the session with a challenging poser to the audience: “Are we as a society willing to accept the tough choices women make when they choose to divorce, be single moms... do we have the readiness to acknowledge and support such women?”

Lakshmi Ramakrishnan, a social activist, launched a documentary made on Project Hope — a rehab programme of these 20 clubs for HIV patients. It enumerated the Rotarians’ efforts to support such children with training in vocational skills and basic literacy.

“They are willing to come out in the open and accept their condition. But are we ready to accept them?”

asked Lakshmi. The response by the Rotarians was overwhelmingly positive. BS Purushotaman, President of RC Madras East and Anshul Agarwal, President of RC Chennai Galaxy, instantly announced their support for the cause. This was followed by a mime by the children at the end of which they unmasked their faces and articulated their aspirations. Sivabala, the President of RC Chennai Meeraki, concluded the segment telling the assembly, “These children do not want your sympathy, all they need is your empathy. They want love which we can offer in abundance.”

A ramp walk and dance by Annets formed part of the entertainment section.

Pictures by Kiran Zehra



Rotary reaches out to farmers

Kiran Zehra

If you think farming is an easy job, you should spend an entire day at the farm with a pitch fork and shovel,” says Suren Poruri, President of RC Secunderabad West, D3150. In association with the Grameenmall Foundation, the club recently spent

an entire day at Jaidupally village, located 70 km from Hyderabad and conducted a *Gramotsavam*. Aimed at improving the economic security of farmers, especially women, the *utsav* focused on lessons in increasing productivity, access to farming inputs

from the regional agricultural institutions and market information for the villages adopted by the club.

Jaidupally village, located in a beautiful valley surrounding the Anathagiri Hills, woke up to a day of learning

and fun as 500 farmers gathered to “train, share experiences and were guided through activities to gather information and make informed decisions in their farming practices.” While spending time at the farm was a refreshing experience for the club members, they also got an insight into various difficulties in a farmer’s life. Lakshmi, a sunflower cultivator, points out, “Access to financial support and markets are major challenges for us. Add to this, lack of information on weather conditions and pricing. We rely only on traditional methods of

DG J Abraham (second from L) and other Rotarians examine the crops in a field.



farming and have limited technical information.”

Project Coordinator Sitaraman says, “What started as a Rotary check dam project in 2013 to improve groundwater level and provide irrigation facilities in the village has now grown into a bond that is helping farmers in this region to develop community sustainable agriculture — a production system that sustains the health of the soil, eco-system, food and nutritional security of the rural people.” Through the Farmer Support model set up by the club and Grameenmall Foundation,



DG J Abraham presents an MoU to the District Collector Syed Omar Jaleel in the presence of the villagers.

the club helps the farmers get fast-track solutions to their problems and link them with the market to get better prices.

Agro-based institutions such as the Agriculture University, Hyderabad, Indian Institute of Millet Research, Indian Institute of Oil Research and Agriculture Research Station, Tandur, had stalls at the venue to interact with the farmers on various farming practices, cultivation methods and marketing techniques. Farmers were urged to stop using fertilisers/pesticides for cultivation and move into organic/natural farming. “This would have a major ecological impact, save the soil, financially benefit the farmer in the long run and consumers will get natural and chemical-free food,” said Sitaraman.

Close to 12 companies who will be directly procuring products from the

What started as a Rotary check dam project in 2013

has now grown into a bond that is helping farmers in this region to develop community sustainable agriculture.

Sitaraman
Project Coordinator

farmers also attended the event.

A cricket tournament between four teams from four different villages, hosted by the club, provided entertainment, and the club members got a taste of authentic village food.

DG J Abraham handed over an MOU to District Collector Syed Omar Jaleel for setting up a safe drinking water plant with a capacity of 500 litres an hour in the village. The District

Collector appreciated the club’s efforts to support farmers and assured support to take the project forward.

Other Projects

Club President Poruri listed out the other projects of the club that included providing bicycles to 160 girl students at a cost of ₹7 lakh and transforming 13 Kasturbha Gandhi Balika Vidyalas into Happy schools at a cost of ₹50 lakh.

Under a global grant with RC Visakha Port City and international partner RC Naperville, D 6450, USA, the club provided cancer diagnostic and detection equipment to Homi Bhabha Cancer Research and Hospital, Visakhapatnam. The club plans to set up 295 RO water plants across the district at an estimated cost of ₹1.2 crore. So far 45 such plants have been set up. ■





Presidential Citation 2017–18

It is time for Rotary clubs to submit their reports for the Presidential Citation. The last date for filing the report of your achievements is June 30.

Please refer *Rotary News* July 2017 issue to get information as to how to qualify for the Citation, or visit www.rotary.org/presidential-citation. If you have questions, write to riawards@rotary.org.



Rotary at a glance

Rotarians : 12,35,496

Clubs : 35,810

Districts : 539

Rotaractors : 2,54,472*

Clubs : 11,064*

Interactors : 5,23,733*

Clubs : 22,771*

RCC members: 2,26,366*

RCC : 9,842*

* As on May 1, 2018

Membership Summary

As on May 1, 2018

RI Zone	RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
5	2981	112	4,640	220	60	226	170
5	2982	69	3,074	134	64	112	45
5	3000	126	5,321	458	296	665	195
4	3011	77	3,407	664	58	109	25
4	3012	87	3,430	668	70	129	55
5	3020	92	4,241	210	117	465	351
4	3030	92	5,055	628	81	312	164
4	3040	95	2,154	236	60	124	137
4	3053	74	2,824	436	18	51	94
4	3054	130	6,362	1,009	94	309	469
4	3060	99	4,259	454	61	123	132
4	3070	103	3,084	300	68	158	54
4	3080	77	3,341	225	73	216	108
4	3090	80	2,193	88	32	37	122
4	3100*	74	1,721	74	11	72	146
6	3110	115	4,019	318	51	49	104
6	3120	78	3,311	371	37	59	51
4	3131	131	5,596	1,163	112	284	89
4	3132	105	4,126	428	66	205	140
4	3141	89	5,435	1,170	120	252	82
4	3142	83	3,166	490	70	195	65
5	3150	99	3,687	371	93	229	109
5	3160	70	2,459	131	27	48	81
5	3170	127	5,658	409	60	309	161
5	3181	72	3,172	238	35	179	104
5	3182	83	3,441	264	36	274	93
5	3190	129	5,176	631	151	357	50
5	3201	140	5,266	321	101	131	47
5	3202	128	4,872	242	105	436	46
5	3211	137	4,500	271	13	89	123
5	3212	98	3,999	301	113	278	133
5	3231	70	2,949	127	56	200	238
5	3232	105	4,221	603	146	311	80
6	3240	88	3,061	356	62	147	152
6	3250	97	3,773	669	51	209	180
6	3261	68	2,512	294	16	102	42
6	3262	95	3,305	381	46	70	75
6	3291	145	3,802	706	81	131	592
India Total		3,739	1,46,612	16,059	2,811	7,652	5,104
5	3220	69	1,941	247	84	200	75
6	3271	81	1,455	250	52	16	13
6	3272	161	3,361	467	44	36	37
6	3281	205	5,911	851	232	86	186
6	3282	141	4,026	398	132	47	39
6	3292	114	4,446	671	122	115	108
S Asia Total		4,510	1,67,752	18,943	3,477	8,152	5,562

*Non-districted.

Source: RI South Asia Office

Rotary Zone Institute in Chennai

V Muthukumaran



V Muthukumaran

From L: PRID PT Prabhakar, RID C Basker, RIDN Bharat Pandya, PDG (D 3232) Raja Ramakrishnan, PDG (D 3011) N Subramanian and Institute Chairman ISAK Nazar.

Rotary leaders of Zones 4, 5 and 6A met in Chennai recently to discuss the nitty-gritty of the Rotary Zone Institute scheduled from

October 5–7 at Hotel Leela Palace in Chennai. Institute Chairman PDG ISAK Nazar anchored the meet and introduced the members of the Institute committee. While the

organisers have targeted over 1,000 registrations, as on date the number has crossed 300. RID C Basker is the Institute Convener, D 3011 PDG N Subramanian will be

the Secretary, Rtn PT Ramkumar, the Institute Treasurer and PRID PT Prabhakar is the Advisor. RIDN Bharat Pandya will chair the GETS session. ■

Convention

Convention countdown: *Online updates*

Whether you'll be at the 2018 Rotary International Convention in Toronto from June 23 to June 27 in person or want to keep up with what's happening there from home, you'll find all the latest news on rotary.org and social media.

Every day, the Convention Minute provides a quick video recap of the previous day's events, along with a look at the day ahead. Our hosts will update you on must-visit House of Friendship booths, bring you interviews with attendees, and provide you with coverage of both general sessions and breakout sessions. Find the Convention Minute at riconvention.org, on Rotary's



Facebook page, or within the daily convention e-newsletter. You'll also be able to watch and share full videos of the world-class speakers.

Rotary staff will be blogging and tweeting from the general sessions, House of Friendship, workshops,

host committee events, and more. The live coverage will include videos, interviews, and other insights from Rotary's biggest event of the year. Daily news stories will fill you in on all the headlines and developments. You can also browse exclusive photos of all the convention highlights.

If you are attending the convention, you can share your own stories on social media; also see what other Rotarians are posting and get the latest updates from the convention team by using the hashtag [#rotary18](https://twitter.com/rotary18).

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



Practise mindful immersion

Bharat and Shalan Savur

When Saroja had a nervous breakdown, her family rallied around. Demands stopped, negative comments were held back, personal chores were quietly done, her private space was given new respect. Ah yes, it greatly helps to have kind, supportive people around. As Mother Teresa observed, “It is easy to love the people far away. It is not always easy to love those close to us. It is easier to give a cup of rice to relieve hunger than to relieve the loneliness and pain of someone unloved in our own home. Bring love into your home for this is where our love for each other must start.”

The critic. Simultaneously, we absolutely need a full-hearted inner cheering champion to silence the internal critic, the voice-in-the-head that constantly carps: “You look fat in that outfit,” “The Chief Trustee of your institution doesn’t like you,” “You failed,” “You’re worthless.” These remarks cannot be passed off as

reality checks, they are our own prejudices, wrong notions turning around and biting us, even wild exaggerations that encourage self-drama. Yet, repeated frequently, they prevent us from leading a healthy, relaxed, focused, loving life. The Master says, “As a mountain is composed of tiny grains of earth and the ocean of tiny drops of water, so is life composed of little details, actions and thoughts. The consequences, good or bad, are far-reaching.”

The champion. Let’s aim for good consequences. Instantly, disbelieve the remarks from the internal critic. Refute them before they blow up into issues and thrust you in the burnout zone. Begin with a definitive, “No, this remark is not true.” Then speak the truth: “I look good in this outfit,” or “I am overweight, so what? I look great!” Be logical: “The Chief Trustee doesn’t dislike me. She is aloof with everybody!” Give a fresh perspective:

“I haven’t failed. I haven’t succeeded yet. Soon, I will.” As for the statement, “You’re worthless,” denounce it stoutly: “Rubbish! I’m worth every ounce of inspiration Creation was sparked by when It created me!” Jot down a list of all your positive qualities. Start a notebook and invite your friends to write down what they think of you, giving instances wherever possible. It makes a heart-warming book to browse through. When you consciously, constantly raise the level of your inner dialogues and assumptions, stress seeps out, ease moves in, strengths get replenished. Ponder this universal truth: each and every one of us possesses all the highest of qualities, we just need to possess them consciously.

Mindful immersion. The mind is our greatest blessing. It just needs calmness and resilience daily to ward off and rise above the little every day stresses of family, job, commuting. One beautiful

way to prepare it is through mindful immersion. Immerse the mind in breathing. As you breathe consciously, think, “Calming my thoughts and feelings, I breathe in and out.” As does the sun set and a soothing silence envelops the world, so do thoughts and feelings set and a soothing peace envelops the mind. From this peace, a quiet, luminous resilience is born.

Mindful immersion can be practised also through reading an inspiring book with deep concentration — focusing on the details the words spin out so completely that the inner critic and outside happenings are shut out. I was deeply moved listening to an interview with a person on a wheelchair. Reading a chapter on pain and suffering in a spiritual book, he says, was the beginning of a mind-transformation. He has a disease where his muscles weaken progressively. After his experience of mindful immersion in the spiritual chapter, he has risen above the affliction by accepting it. It is as it is, he says simply. Even if his physical condition couldn’t be improved, his mind has cast off suffering and is in a calm, positive, peaceful state.

Alter brain chemistry. Manage your time and wellbeing tenderly. When negative emotions arise, release them through physical exercise. Moving the body alters our brain chemistry making us feel lighter, more optimistic and hopeful. The mind releases

While exercising indoors calms the mind, walking outdoors adds another dimension — the sunlight increases the serenity-promoting serotonin levels in our brain to cause the ‘pilgrim effect’ — a feeling of elation and elevation.

moody clutter and the world appears brighter, more spacious. While exercising indoors calms the mind, walking outdoors adds another dimension — the sunlight increases the serenity—promoting serotonin levels in our brain to cause the ‘pilgrim effect’ — a feeling of elation and elevation. In fact, I’d say it was a combination — reading Yogananda’s book *Autobiography of a Yogi* and my fitness-regime (exercising one-and-half-hour every day and walking in the sun to do my errands) that transformed my thinking and made me a pilgrim of life’s winding journey.

If we do not want the inner voice to constantly express negative thoughts, we need to watch our negative emotions. It is important not to hold grudges. Speak to the people concerned, to understanding friends who validate your feelings and don’t dismiss them. Consult somebody experienced and mature. Never let negative thoughts and feelings linger. They give grist to the inner critic and, alongside, weaken the immune system as the festering resentments harden into stones in the kidney/gall bladder, as calcium deposits in the joints or as tumours in any vulnerable region. If we’re already vulnerable emotionally, then the harsh inner critic can drive us to drink, despair and depression.

Create balance. Any imbalance can tip the emotional scales. What we need is a quality called steadfastness which means we need a regular routine to adhere to. Regular meal-times, regular sleep-time, regular exercise-time, an hour for a pet hobby, music, volunteering... Direct emotional energy into absorbing, creative or constructive activities that you do for the sheer joy of doing without expecting any reward. Sing, sculpt, paint, dance, polish a stone, garden, write a para, poem, song, cook, read and share what you’ve read... Whenever you do something creative, you transform your agitated

Mindful immersion can be practised also through reading an inspiring book with deep concentration — focusing on the details the words spin out so completely that the inner critic and outside happenings are shut out.

breath into a beatific smile. When all that is wavering and fitful in us gives way to a sane balance, we lead fruitful, fulfilled and healthy lives.

Be at ease. Finally, find your own entry points to peace and ease. Even if nobody pressurises you, you may be pressurising yourself. Instead, be realistic about how far you can go without being stressed. Also, know: you don’t have to make life a pleasure-seeking cruise — when you deeply appreciate what you have, that itself would arouse pleasurable, contented feelings. As importantly, know: when you aren’t experiencing pleasure, it doesn’t mean you are unhappy or bored. Hence, don’t give in to complaining, it only raises toxic emotions and stress levels. Forgive, let go, let be — it shows a higher intelligence and self-awareness. The less you react to negative people, the more peaceful and balanced your mind and body. One of the most useful things I’ve learnt is: there is no such thing as an awkward silence when you can be relaxed in it. In short, as the birds demonstrate every moment: If you want to fly, give up all that weighs you down.

The writers are authors of Fitness for Life, Be Simply Spiritual – You Are Naturally Divine and teachers of the Fitness for Life programme. They also write Savurfaire, a daily blog to spread wellbeing.



The Aurangzeb story

Sandhya Rao

A new book tries to examine why this Mughal ruler is not particularly beloved, either in history books or in the popular perception.

I remember my music teacher once telling me, speaking about her daughter, “Oh, she’s a regular Aurangzeb.” Meaning, she didn’t like music, which clearly was upsetting to my teacher. Meaning, by extension, Aurangzeb disliked and discouraged music. That’s what we’ve been led to believe.

It appears that this view is only partially true — or false, depending upon how you look at it, says Audrey Truschke in her book, *Aurangzeb: The Man and the Myth*. The cover features a young-looking emperor, not the white-bearded, bent-over figure whose image we’re familiar with. Besides, it didn’t seem to be a scholarly-type tome. Also, it was slim and priced reasonably — all good reasons for buying a book about a man who doesn’t exactly set your heart aflutter.

Good thinking because I read it almost at one go, not because the writing is felicitous but because I wanted to immediately share it. Not that I concur with all of Truschke’s conclusions, but she

does make a persuasive case for putting aside preconceived notions about Aurangzeb and looks at him in historical terms. In this book, Truschke combines the forces of research and the writing of history to help us understand why Aurangzeb was the way he was, and what could have established and perpetuated his public image. In other words, the book is not so much about an Aurangzeb we didn’t know (although there is that, too), it’s about why we think of Aurangzeb the way we do.

Anyway, to get back to Aurangzeb’s attitude to music. Truschke says that for years he followed his ancestors in their leisure tastes, and that included music. “The king had expert knowledge of the art of music, according to Bakhtawar Khan, a little-cited but important historian of the period,” she writes. “A musical treatise dated to 1666, Faqirullah’s *Rag Darpan*, listed the names of *de rigueur*’s favourite singers and instrumentalists.” When he was in his thirties, he is said to have fallen head over heels in love

with a singer and dancer called Hirabai. It’s difficult to reconcile the dour Aurangzeb of our imagination with the image of a lover, but that’s what he appears to have been: her lover. Sadly, though, she died a year later. During the second decade of his reign, Aurangzeb withdrew any sort of patronage to music. Yet, in his later years, he took up with Udaipuri, a musician, and had a son by her called Kam Bakhsh.

Truschke teaches South Asian history at Rutgers University in the US, and her research focuses on “the cultural, imperial and intellectual history of early modern and modern India (c. 1500-present)”. It’s not surprising, then that the voice of the researcher sometimes dominates the narrative, although thankfully it’s the ‘teacher’ who mostly speaks, with clarity and logic, if not elegance. Whichever voice you hear, though, it provides a useful lesson on how history could, even should, be read.

History is in our DNA: every present has a past, whether individual or collective. We are who we are today because of our yesterdays. But the writing of past events and people and the reading and interpreting of it are different from the ‘truth’. Written texts of actual events and persons are rarely entirely true. How can they be? They are subjective to varying degrees, they are influenced either by the period in which a text was written or by the chronological distance from the events they recall, they are encumbered by the weight of the baggage a writer (in this case, a historian) carries and are influenced by those experiences.

The same holds true for Aurangzeb, the book. Still, when Truschke appeals to the reader to examine Aurangzeb on his terms and in light of his ideals, don’t judge him by our times, it’s only fair to listen.

You don't have to love him, just try to understand that his religious ideals of providing justice and protection to his citizens often conflicted with state interests, causing enormous internal distress and impacting his actions, she says. Besides, she warns: The bulk of Mughal histories are written in Persian, the official administrative language of Aurangzeb's empire.

Out of necessity and ease, many historians disregard the original Persian texts and rely instead on English translations. This approach narrows the library of materials drastically, and many translations of Mughal texts are of questionable quality, brimming with mistranslations and abridgements. Some of these changes conveniently served the agendas of the translators, especially colonial-era translations that sought to show Indo-Muslim kings at their worst so that the British would seem virtuous by comparison."

Think Aurangzeb and we think "Oh, he wholesale destroyed temples". This view is the influence of colonial era scholarship, says Truschke, and the British strategy of divide and conquer. "Aurangzeb's

notion of justice included a certain measure of freedom of religion, which led him to protect most places of Hindu worship. Mughal rulers in general allowed their subjects great leeway — shockingly so, compared to the draconian measures instituted by many European sovereigns of the era — to follow their own religious ideas and inclinations. Nonetheless, state interests constrained religious freedom in Mughal India, and Aurangzeb did not hesitate to strike hard against religious institutions and leaders that he deemed seditious or immoral." It is in this context, suggests Truschke, that we need to see his execution of Sikh guru Tegh Bahadur for rising against the Mughals. "It probably did not help matters," she adds, "that Tegh Bahadur's nephew and the seventh Sikh guru, Har Rai, was rumoured to have supported Dara Shukoh (one of Aurangzeb's brothers) during the war of succession."

All four of Shah Jahan's sons conspired to grab the throne. When Shah Shuja heard of his father's ailment, he crowned "himself king, complete with the ostentatious title Abul Fauz (Father of Victory) Nasruddin (Defender of the Faith) Muhammad Timur III Alexander Shah Shuja Bahadur Ghazi"! Murad and Aurangzeb attacked Dara, Shuja attacked Dara... Shah Jahan himself was behind the murder of two of his brothers, Jahangir got his brother Daniyal killed. Fighting for the crown is *de rigueur* — not just in the Mughal era but wherever, whenever power is at stake.

Truschke argues that Aurangzeb "acted according to his ideals of justice, commitment to political and ethical conduct (*adab* and *akhlaq*), and the necessities of politics. Aurangzeb's world view was also shaped by his piety and the Mughal culture he inherited." Seen in this

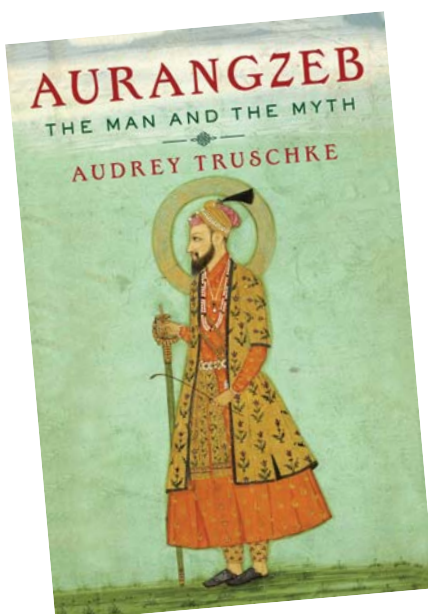
Truschke combines the forces of research and the writing of history to help us understand why Aurangzeb was the way he was, and what could have established and perpetuated his public image.

context, it is possible to understand why several Persian translations of the *Ramayana* in poetry and prose were dedicated to him.

The more he tried to curb corruption in his court, the wider it spread its tentacles; the more heavily he came down on drinking, the more people drank. The book quotes travel writer Niccoli Manucci as saying, "Aurangzeb once exclaimed in exasperation that only two men in all of Hindustan did not drink: himself and his head qazi Abdul Wahhab." Manucci, however, divulged... "But with respect to Abd-ul-Wahhab (Aurangzeb) was in error, for I myself sent him every day a bottle of spirits (*vino*), which he drank in secret, so that the king could not find it out!" He was merciless when he punished, but also appointed Hindus in many high positions. Truschke tries to show how all these converged in an individual who "died having expanded the Mughal kingdom to its greatest extent in history and yet feared utter failure."

Audrey Truschke's biography of *Aurangzeb* is insightful without being defensive, forceful without being jingoistic. Most of all, it is refreshing and invites you to drink from the fountain of history. The next time you travel, you might want to take Aurangzeb along.

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



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A Rotary fridge to feed the hungry

V Muthukumaran



From left: RC Cuddalore Midtown Secretary P Santhosh Kumar, President B Murugan, DG Ramesh Babu, AG Madanchand Jain and IPP Apparsamy Balasubramanian at the inauguration of the 350-litre fridge.

Surplus foods and unconsumed fresh fruits at households in Cuddalore, a small town 190 km from Chennai, are now being packed and displayed in a 350-litre refrigerator installed by the Rotary Club of Cuddalore Midtown, D 2981, so that hungry people can have easy access to it.

Under its Food for All project, the club has placed the fridge on the premises of the Devi Gas Service on Lawrence Road, a busy place dotted with shops and commercial outlets and surrounded by residential clusters. The club has mobilised ₹31,000 to install the fridge which “we hope is put to active use by those who have excess food, fruits or any other edible items to spare,” says B Murugan, the Club President.

Depending on the effectiveness of the project and “how well the fridge

serves the purpose of feeding the hungry and deserving people, we will install five more refrigerators across the town,” he says.

Inaugurating the project, DG Ramesh Babu praised the club members for having conceived such a need-based and innovative project and advised other district clubs to replicate it so that surplus food from homes are redistributed to needy people in the community.

The fridge is open for the needy people throughout the day and the club is studying the pilot initiative to replicate it at a number of locations in Cuddalore as the “project will go a long way in the fight against hunger and malnourishment,” says Murugan.

Tie-up with hotels

In order to scale-up the project and reach out to more beneficiaries,

the club is holding talks with 3–4 restaurants and hotels, so that at no point the refrigerators turn empty, says IPP Apparsamy Balasubramanian. “A few hotel proprietors take the initiative to place fresh food in the fridge which is open for all from 7.30 am to 9.30 pm,” he explains. But the club is taking efforts to create awareness among residents to make full use of the cold storage as they can deliver large quantity of unconsumed food at social events and family occasions, says Balasubramanian.

At present, curd rice and lemon rice are kept in the fridge which is being maintained by the Rotarians. “We will be making Food for All an ongoing project and we are sensitising the residents to place food, that is otherwise going waste, in such fridges, more of which will be put up shortly,” he says. ■



Spreading TB awareness

Team Rotary News



Dr B R Abhijit inaugurates a session while Club Presidents Shashikanth (Metro), Suvarna (Garden City) and Shoba Murali (Cubbon Park) look on.

RC Bangalore Cubbon Park, Garden City and Metro, D 3190, jointly hosted awareness programmes and screening camps for tuberculosis

in Bengaluru recently to mark the World TB Day on Mar 24. This was the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch discovered the TB bacterium which

opened the path for diagnosing and curing the disease. Each year on this day Rotary clubs hold awareness programmes to step up efforts to end the TB menace.

Dr B R Abhijit of Rajarajeshwari Hospital gave an exhaustive presentation on the disease. He is helping the clubs to set up DOTS centres for early detection and treatment of TB patients, says Shobha Murali, President, RC Bangalore Cubbon Park. “The emergence of multidrug-resistant TB

(MDR-TB) poses a major health threat and could risk gains made in the fight against TB,” she adds.

Hoardings and posters helped spread the message across the city and the members visited a slum colony to create awareness among the residents on following preventive measures against TB.

PDG Suresh Kasliwal (D 3040) and Rotary India National TB Control Committee were also involved in the execution of the awareness events in the city. ■

Rotary opens computer centre in Varanasi

Students from underprivileged families are being given computer training by RC Varanasi Central, D 3120, under the Rotary India Literacy Mission which aims to provide vocational skills to the youth to help in their employment.

The computer centre inaugurated by Union MoS for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel recently provides basic and advanced courses over a period of 2-6 months. Presently there are 60 students. They are being taught by two well-qualified teachers, said Club Secretary Manoj Kumar Jajodia. The club had spent Rs 4 lakh in setting up the centre at a building owned by Club President Rishabh Chandra Jain in Sigra in the heart of the town.

The centre has 10 computers with accessories and furniture, but “in due course, we will expand the facility with 25-30 more computers and also open more such centres in other parts



of Varanasi,” said Jajodia. DG Ranjeet Singh was much impressed by the centre during his visit and noted “this project was important part of Rotary service as it builds up the RI image too.”

Job placement

An elated Chandni Tahalani (18), a first-year B Com student, is confident of getting a job after completing the computer

training which will “equip her with the required skillsets”. Rishikant Singh (19), a second-year BA student, readily agrees with her. “This is a great opportunity to equip ourselves with computer skills which are a must to get a job,” he said. “With help from our club members and by networking with our business associates, we will provide them jobs depending on their skill sets,” said Jajodia. ■



RC Manora Pattukkottai — D 2981

The club presented cots for the inmates of an old-age home in Pattukkottai. The total project cost was ₹1 lakh. The club-sponsored RCC Soorappallam donated groceries to the home at a cost of ₹8,000.

RC Salem Smart City — D 2982

A mega *swayamvaram* was organised for differently-abled people in Salem in the presence of District Collector Rohini and political leaders. Sixty-three couples got married at the event. The project cost ₹2 lakh.



RC Nashik Smart City — D 3030

Cataract surgeries were performed on 11 senior citizens from Matoshree Vridhashram, an old-age home, at Tulsi Eye Hospital in Nashik.

RC Madurai West End — D 3000

A mentally-challenged youth R Hari Muthu Krishnan was feted for rising above his disability and winning medals in badminton. The Rotarians assured their continued support to him for his sports endeavours.



Matters

RC Dabra Sugar City — D 3053

In a major distribution of study material, the club gave away 150 school bags, over 1,000 books and pens to students of government schools. Fans were also donated to the schools.



RC Jaipur Majesty — D 3054

A prosthetic hand fitment camp was organised in Ahmedabad which benefitted about 260 people. More than 200 volunteers participated in organising the camp. DGE Neeraj Sogani and DGND Rajesh Agarwal visited the camp.



RC Rajkot Midtown — 3060

CycloFun was held to raise funds for a library which is run and maintained by the club. Project Chair Divyesh Aghera with the help of 95 Rotarians, 30 Anns and 60 Annettes teamed up with members of the Rajkot Cycle Club. Bicycles were donated to 30 girl students.

RC Dhauladhar Palampur — D 3070

The club, under its Gift of Life project, sponsored heart surgery for a 12-year-old girl from a remote village in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh.



RC Pune Cantonment — D 3131

More than 6,000 sleeping kits were distributed at six different places covering 350 schools under the SCAW (Sleeping Children Around the World) project. PP Parvez Billimoria, trustee at HV Desai Eye Hospital, also organised an eye camp for the children at the site.



RC Mira Road — D 3141

A talk on water conservation and use of renewable energy was organised in Mumbai for the benefit of the public. The club also honoured people with awards for their vocational excellence and selfless service. Children were recognised with Rising Star Awards.



RC Nizamabad — D 3150

Over 30 dual desks were presented to the Zilla Parishad High School at Gupanpally village. It would benefit nearly 200 students. Past President Ashok Ramrakhyani was the chief guest at the event.



RC Bidar Fort — D 3160

A health awareness workshop was held in partnership with its satellite Kalyan Historic Club and Rotaractors of Young Star Club in which basic life support aid and cardio pulmonary resuscitation were demonstrated. Doctors from Uday Hospital gave lectures.



RC Mundgod Heritage — D 3170

District Governor Anand Kulkarni inaugurated a sanitary napkin incinerator installed by the club on the premises of Loyola School in Mundgod. The girl students were also sensitised on menstrual hygiene.



RC Cochin Queen City — D 3201

An eight-member team visited an orphanage in Kanthallor, 450 km from Kochi, to donate garments for the inmates. They also gave rice bags, groceries and snacks and presented a cheque for ₹50,000 as a token of support.



Matters



RC Tinnevely — D 3212

A mega job fair was held which was visited by 5,000 job seekers. Offer letters were given to 500 candidates. The event created a goodwill in the community for Rotary as the public appreciated the efforts in providing career opportunities to the eligible youth.



RC Vellore North — D 3231

Laptops were donated to various government schools in Katpadi. An Interact Charter was also presented to the Devalois School.



RC Patna Kankarbagh — D 3250

Cataract operations were done for around 50 people by Rtn Dr Rakesh Kumar at Netra Nidan Hospital in Patna. The club took care of transportation, food, accommodation and post-operative medicines for the beneficiaries. Free spectacles were given for the needy.



RC Jabalpur South — D 3261

Sewing machines were presented to underprivileged girls to help them earn their livelihood.



RC Kasba — D 3291

Every weekend around 20 girl students from two Bengali medium schools are being given basic computer training and taught spoken English for two hours as part of the Literacy project. The club plans to extend these lessons for at least 200 girls in the locality.

Compiled by V Muthukumaran
Designed by L Gunasekaran



TEACH programme in Andhra Pradesh

Rotary India Literacy Mission has partnered with the Department of School Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh, to take the T-E-A-C-H programme in government and government-aided schools.

Under **Teacher Support**, the Commissioner of School Education (CSE) will work with RILM to prepare master trainers for skill improvement of teachers. The training organisation will be identified by RILM.

In **E-learning**, CSE and RILM will work together to provide 45,000 E-learning kits to government and government-aided schools. CSE will initially share the



RILM Chairman Shekhar Mehta exchanging MOU with the Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh Srinivasa Rao Ganta, in the presence of PDG Kishore Kumar, D 3020.

list of 5,000 schools with RILM where E-learning facility (32 inches TV, android stick and content in Telugu, mapped as per State board) will be installed.

Adult Literacy: RILM will provide Diksha Primers in Telugu for students to teach illiterate adults. CSE will allocate 15 marks under SUPW for students opting for the project.

Happy Schools: RILM will establish libraries in the State's schools and stock them up with books while CSE will provide the required furniture for establishing libraries.

Nation Builder Awards

During the year 2017–18, more than 100 Rotary clubs and 200 Inner Wheel clubs presented the Nation Builder Awards to the best teaching faculty. RC Jaipur

Round Town, D 3054, under the guidance of Zonal Literacy Coordinator PDG Ramesh Agrawal, presented the Award to 80 teachers across 80 schools, after an

elaborate evaluation process by the principal and 10 students from each school. This is the highest number of schools reached out for this project by a single club. ■

Happy School

RC Calcutta Yuvis, D 3291, adopted the Gayatri Hindi Vidhyalaya of Hooghly district, West Bengal, transforming it into a Happy School. A need assessment conducted at the school revealed lack of basic amenities.

The toilets were unusable and there was no drinking water facility or play material to hone the extra-curricular skills of the students. The children were sitting in the floor as there were no benches and desks in the classrooms.

The club provided furniture, installed hand wash stations and drinking water facilities and constructed gender-specific toilets.

To ensure that the toilets are kept functional and clean, workshops were organised to sensitise children about health and hygiene. Nearly 200 students have benefitted from this project. ■

Digital classroom



Rtn Kishore Lulla, RC Sangli, D 3170, presents his contribution sponsoring E-learning facilities in 32 schools in Washim, Maharashtra, to DG Anand Kulkarni in the presence of Club President Suhas Kunta.

RILM, in association with the SBI Foundation, is setting up digital classrooms in 310 schools across three States — 50 in Karnataka, 118 in Maharashtra and 142 in Uttar Pradesh. The TRIUMPH Foundation, a trust of RC Thane Hills, is also partnering with RILM in this project.

Multi-media content in local language mapped with

State Board curriculum have been installed in the projectors. An online portal has been designed and linked to RILM website for procuring all information related to the implementation of the project. The portal will be accessible to RILM, host Rotary clubs/Inner Wheel clubs and vendors. Post installation and monitoring reports will be captured through this portal. ■

Padho Bharat

LIBRARY CREATION PROJECT

A T-E-A-C-H INITIATIVE

Leading publishers Orient Blackswan has donated 2,54,070 English learning reference books and story books worth ₹3.5 crores to establish libraries across India.

Clubs interested in creating libraries will get books worth ₹13,000 free of cost. For establishing one library RILM will give 50 each of primary and secondary books to the clubs.

Clubs will have to donate ₹2 for each book as handling charges. The clubs will then have to match it with 100 Hindi/other vernacular books and donate it to a school to establish a library.

This endeavour is part of the Padho Bharat — Library project of the T-E-A-C-H programme of RILM.

To participate in this project visit www.rotaryteach.org or write to happyschool@rotaryteach.org

Sponsored a child under the Asha Kiran programme?

View your sponsored child by downloading the TEACH App or visit www.rotaryteach.org. Get to know about your sponsored child by visiting the 'My Asha Kiran Child' in the TEACH App.

34,236 children are enrolled in the Asha Kiran programme. So far, 15,820 of them have enrolled into the formal school system. Each of these children are tagged with donors. ■



When the media can twist, turn or do worse

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

From 2004 to 2011, I worked as a consultant to the history cell of the Reserve Bank of India. Once, in 2006, an assignment involved travelling to almost all the cities where the RBI had an office. It somehow happened that at each of these places, as a member of the print media, I found myself addressing the senior staff on how to deal with the media, TV included. Websites were just making their appearance and social media hadn't been thought of. Those were also the days when the media hadn't sunk to the depths it has now.

Nevertheless, as someone who had worked in newspapers for over a quarter of a century, I had one simple message: don't take on the media because you can't win as it would always have the last word. And I gave them some examples of their own governors who had been quoted out of context and looked foolish as a result.

My favourite example was the art of quoting someone verbatim but totally out of context. This involves two tricks: one, you put the quote in the headline. There is no reference to what went before or what follows. Since most people don't read beyond the headlines, you succeed in making the person look like a complete fool or rascal. No amount of clarifications and explanations after that help because the damage has already been done. TV news excels at this with the news slugs they run at the bottom of the screen.

The best remembered example of this sort of thing is the statement by Rajiv Gandhi that the earth is bound to shake when a big tree falls. I was present at the meeting when he said this, and if you see what he had said before and after, it becomes clear he wasn't talking about revenge against the Sikhs. Likewise, when Narendra Modi made that remark in 2012 about a puppy being run over, he wasn't calling Muslims dogs.

My headline was "The Government is Broke." But the Editor had changed it to: "The Government is facing a Severe Ways-and-Means Crisis." I had come with a bang and gone with a whimper.

Another trick in those days, when photo-shopping and fake audio/video hadn't made their appearance, was to either exaggerate or play down. This time the journalists did this to each other.

I have had the singular experience of both being done to one of my articles. It happened in 1982, when India was under the IMF discipline

and had to present its expenditure numbers in a favourable light. So the government asked all public sector companies with surplus cash to deposit the money with the government.

When I found out about this, I wrote a story and gave it what I thought was a brilliant — and accurate — headline: "The Government is Broke." But when I woke up the next day and saw the paper, I found that the Editor had changed it to, yes, this: "*The Government is facing a Severe Ways-and-Means Crisis.*" Ways-and-means Crisis? I had come with a bang and gone with a whimper.

It is not just in the headlines where mischief can be done. There is another method, a highly developed art form where you manipulate the main body of the story by sequencing the paragraphs in a particular way so that the impression created is nearly the opposite of what was intended. Everything is reported correctly; it is the ordering of each point that causes the mischief. The beauty of it is that no one can complain because everything has been reported correctly. Whenever I mentioned this at the RBI meetings, someone would ask if I had ever done it. My answer would always be: what else do I do, do you think?

Moral of the story: don't rely on one source for your information. If it is sufficiently suspicious, check different websites. ■

In Brief

Marriage made in Heaven

The transgender community in Kerala celebrated the marriage of transman Ishan (33) and transwoman Surya (31) when they tied the knot recently in Thiruvananthapuram. Ishan, a Muslim, and Surya, a Hindu, took their vows as per the Special Marriage Act. Apart from family and friends, the ceremony was attended by several LGBT and rights activists from other States too. Earlier, in 2017, transcouple Sukanyeah Krishnan and Aarav Appukuttan made news in the State when they got married.



What's in a name?

Italy, known to be conservative in baby names, has a presidential decree that children should be given gender-specific names. Recently, when Italian couple Luca and Vittoria named their 18-month-old daughter Blu, the court sent them a notice to change it to a traditional girl's name or face being imposed with one. Since the first day of the child's birth, the parents had decided to name her Blu, meaning Beautiful, Luminous and Unique. But the summons read that it is 'a modern name based on the English word Blue and it cannot be considered for a person.' The parents, however, plan to challenge the order claiming that several girls across the country and around the world are named Blu or other colours such as Verde (Green).



Death by Coffee

Bangkok's Kid Mai Death Café promotes a strange gimmick that encourages customers to lie down for a few minutes in a coffin with the lid shut, in return for a discount on the beverage menu. Veeranut Rojanaprapa, the café owner and a social reformer, wants to teach 'death awareness' to the Thai people who are mostly Buddhists and propagate the Buddha's teaching that when one is aware of his own death, he will do good. The menu also features skeleton-shaped snacks and morbidly-named drinks and even has a skeleton seated on a chair.



For a landmark abortion poll

The photograph of Savita Halappanavar (31), an Indian-origin dentist, is one of the prominent posters used by the Yes camp of the historic abortion poll being held in Ireland. Savita died in 2012 after her request to terminate a 17-week pregnancy was denied by the Irish Constitution. She had a miscarriage and died of septicaemia. The country is holding a referendum to liberalise the abortion law. With a total ban on abortion in this Catholic country, people fly to England or other countries to terminate pregnancies. As intense debates continue over abortion in the country, Savita's Karnataka-based father is happy that his daughter's image is being used for a historic and life-saving vote.



Washing machines for Dhobi Ghat

Soon washing machines and mechanised dryers will replace the flogging stones of Mumbai's 150-year-old iconic Dhobi Ghat at Mahalaxmi. The BMC is planning the makeover in the next three years. The British, in the 19th century, built 731 washing pens and flogging stones in 2.5-acre area and allotted them to the dhobis and their families. Today, this place is considered a Grade-III heritage site and more than a lakh clothes are washed and dried everyday here.



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