



Rotary

NEWS

INDIA

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Rotary



Incredible
generosity

NOW MORE THAN EVER, ROTARY CONNECTS THE WORLD: THE 2020 ROTARY VIRTUAL CONVENTION

20-26 June 2020



GENERAL SESSIONS

08:00–09:15 in Chicago, USA (Convert Chicago time to the date and time for your area)

Saturday, 20 June: Together, We Connect

Speeches by RI President Mark Maloney, Foundation Trustee Chair Gary Huang, Foundation Trustee Chair-elect KR Ravindran, and Convention Chair Celia Giay.

See how our Rotary family is connecting across the globe to support each other and the fight against COVID-19, and find out how we can continue to support these efforts.

Sunday, 21 June: Together, We Learn

Be inspired to action by President Mark Maloney, Convention Chair Celia Giay, RIPE Holger Knaack, General Secretary John Hewko and RIPN Shekhar Mehta.

“Travel” to Hawaii and experience the Honolulu Mural Project.

Learn how e-clubs work and discover how Rotary clubs are leveraging new platforms to meet virtually and stay connected. Watch Rotary Peace Fellows in action around the world and see how an RIBI club innovated to expand membership.

FEATURED BREAKOUTS

Monday, 22 June

- 08:00 - Using virtual tools to engage members
- 12:00 - Engaging Rotary Alumni
- 18:00 - ‘Greening Rotary’ events: Be plastic-free, offset carbon, and more!

Tuesday, 23 June

- 08:00 - Grow Rotary through new club types
- 12:00 - Coffee with Shekhar for District Governors-nominee and Club Presidents-nominee
- 18:00 - How to start and manage RAGM microfinance projects (**presented in Spanish**)

Wednesday, 24 June

- 08:00 - Adopt-a-River initiative: A Rotary & UNEP partnership model
- 12:00 - Rotaract Elevated, Now What?
- 18:00 - Disruptive innovation in Rotary clubs (**presented in Spanish**)

Thursday, 25 June

- 08:00 - How to submit a great Global Grant application
- 12:00 - Forum for 2019–20 District Governors and Club Presidents
- 18:00 - Digital Trends of 2021: Using tech to engage millennials

Friday, 26 June

- 08:00 - Engage young families with service and alternative meetings
- 12:00 - The Rotary Brand
- 18:00 - Personal Growth Opportunities: Rotary’s alliance with Toastmasters

For more details visit riconvention.org

Inside

40 Kamalamma's incredible generosity

Amid the turmoil of the pandemic, this pensioner's contribution is heartwarming.

10 The post-Covid world

A peek into what the post-Covid pandemic world will look like and how our lives will change.

18 Rotarians bid a teary farewell to

Frank Devlyn

Rotary leaders fondly recall their association with the past RI president who passed away on May 28.

26 TRF's speedy response to the corona pandemic

An interview with incoming Trustee Chair KR Ravindran on TRF's role in enabling Rotarians to help communities.

30 Rotary India commits ₹1.5 crore to protect children

RIPN Shekhar Mehta pledges Rotary's support for NDTV's fundraiser to protect children affected by the migrant exodus.

44 Rotaplast camp does 148 skin graft surgeries

A corrective surgery camp organised by Rotary clubs of RID 3110 gives new lease of life to people with various forms of disfigurement.

64 Taking the Slow Train

A peep into books that highlight the romance of train travel.

66 The universal appeal of Hindi film songs

A joyful journey into the mesmerising melodies of yore.

40



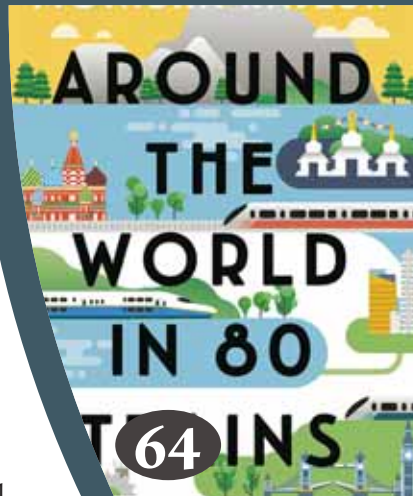
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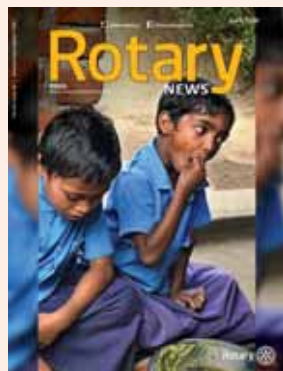
On the cover: Kamalamma who gave ₹500 out of her pension of ₹600 to RC Heritage Mysuru as her contribution to feed the hungry.



RC Calcutta shows the way

The April issue has impressive content, and a mix of Rotary and general interest topics. The most appealing is RC Calcutta's glorious 100 years and the tribute to Nitish C Laharry. We are proud to note the club's historic growth, diverse service activities, and luminaries including the Dalai Lama and Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw addressing it.

Our first PM Jawaharlal Nehru attended the Asia Regional conference in Delhi, chaired by Laharry in 1958. Surprisingly



Nehru also attended (unescorted) a social gathering held separately and spoke very highly of Laharry.

All clubs in India should follow in the footsteps of RC Calcutta and

try to replicate its extraordinary work. Our compliments to the club and the magazine.

Both April and May issues have useful and interesting content relevant to the Covid-19 pandemic including the article on social connectedness by Sheela Nambiar. In the *In Brief* column, I loved the good work done by the 54 migrant workers quarantined in a government school building at Palsana in Sikar district, Rajasthan. As a token of gratitude, they repaired and painted the school

building that gave them shelter. Thanks to *Rotary News* for bringing us such motivating snippets.

R Srinivasan
RC Madurai
Midtown — D 3000

The article *Children's Treat by RC Calcutta* inspires us to take up one such project in our club. The act of kindness and devotion shown to the kids for the past 95 years is really a great service. My best wishes to the club for such great work.

B A Prabushankar, RC
Coimbatore Industrial
City — D 3201

Exemplary service by RC Mumbai Queen's Necklace

The cover picture in the May issue stole my heart by capturing the sublime innocence and beauty of a boy's joy, moving me to tears. On his face was both hunger and desire, happiness and expectation, as he looked forward to the prospect of a sumptuous meal with a big tiffin container in front of him. What an expressive picture; it appealed to our finer sensibilities.

Kudos to Rotarians from Mumbai Queen's Necklace who have alleviated the hunger of such children. God has created the needy and poor, but also Rotarians with large hearts to give the less fortunate.

A Chandrasekharan
RC Tiruchirapalli Fort — D 3000

It's heartening to note the humanitarian service by RC Mumbai Queen's Necklace to provide one lakh meals a day to needy people during the

lockdown. The club shows us how to co-ordinate with NGOs, donors. Good to see this work being done under a woman president, Sonal Jhaveri.

Veeranna A Huggi
RC Shimoga — D 3182

When women disappear

The editorial titled *When women "disappear"* is exemplary, turning the spotlight on global crimes against women and calls for a meaningful world order post Covid-19. In *Snapshots*, DG Dhiran Datta's adorning his car with Rotary's six focus area images shows his commitment to Rotary. The *Enchanting serenity of Munnar* is well-narrated by TCA Srinivasa Raghavan. Thane Rotarians deserve applause for collecting funds for Bharat ke veer.

The two RI Directors' messages are impactful, as also the RC Calcutta cover story. The starting of RLI by PDG Prabhat K Rohatgi is amazing. A tribute to Laharry by Clifford A Randall is

interesting. Congratulations for bringing out the April issue despite the lockdown.

Philip Mulappone M T
RC Trivandrum Suburban — D 3211

In the April editorial, Rasheeda elaborates on the multiple problems faced by women in Mexico and how they protested against gender discrimination by disappearing for a day.

RI President Mark Maloney during his visit to Sri Lanka noted that a small country has contributed two great leaders — PRIP K R Ravindran and a Toastmasters International president. The Sri Lankan clubs were once part of D 3000 and were later bifurcated to form a separate district.

S Muniandi
RC Dindigul Fort — D 3000

The April editorial on the novel protest by Mexican women is quite a revelation. During the on-going

LETTERS

Covid-19 pandemic, the role of women as frontline warriors in medical, police and health departments has increased and has to be appreciated by all. There are no words to express their boundless service to society.

*R Gnanakumar
RC Virudhunagar — D 3212*

RI Director Bharat Pandya in the April issue highlighted the greater need to practise social distancing to ward off Covid-19, and asked Rotarians to conduct training events and club meetings via online platforms. Virtual meetings will attract young professionals and women into Rotary's fold, he said. Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu has urged youngsters to take agriculture as a profession, and Rotary to train youth to become agri-entrepreneurs.

The article *Relax in your Truth* is a must read, telling us how to spend our lives aiming for both positive development and relaxation to avoid stress.

*Naveen R Garg
RC Sunam — D 3090*

The article *Manipal gets a Rotary Skin Bank* (Feb issue) was excellently edited, well-written and covered all the details. Thank you Team Rotary News. You are doing a good job.

*Dr Sesappa A Rai
RC Manipal Town — D 3182*

Reduce membership dues

Rotary has decided to give importance to members' health by cancelling the RI Convention in Honolulu, and will have a virtual meet. All RI Board meetings, global events will be done virtually. RI directors won't be funded to attend an institute outside their zone. DG and other club meets will be held virtually for rest of the year. All this will save big money.

Relief not to see pics of senior leaders

I have enjoyed the May 2020 issue including your editorial. After a long long time, the magazine is devoid of reports and photographs of felicitation events, interviews and senior Rotary leaders, their family members and speeches of past, present and future Rotary leaders from India. It is heartening to see the photograph of PRID Sushil Gupta along with Mark Balla in the article on WinS in India.

This issue is a wonderful treat as it covers Rotary programmes and projects done by various districts and clubs. Old Rotarians like me appreciate and welcome this change. Maybe the Covid-19 lockdown reduced your choice!

Sampathkumar, RC Coimbatore Elite — D 3201

But we should also spare some thoughts for Rotarians who have also been hit hard by the pandemic. Instead of giving them relief, the decision to raise membership dues by \$1 in the next year is yet to be revoked. This along with ever fluctuating dollar exchange rate can topple a club's budget. Our RI Directors must take up this issue with the Board. Reducing the club fee will help in retention.

*Dr Binu Mathew
RC Alleppey East — D 3211*

Please accept my compliments for bringing out an excellent Rotary magazine. Every issue demonstrates the potential of journalism to inform and promote worthwhile causes. Apart from the articles, the detailed photo captions illustrate the professionalism of your editorial team. In group pictures, every person is named and accurately identified, something no other NGO magazine does.

*S R Madhu, RC Madras
South — D 3232*

The X-factor in corona crisis

Covid pandemic has laid bare the vast gulf between our perceptions of various professions and the reality. Medical personnel have risked their lives in combating this deadly virus. At the same time, civil servants

ranging from district officials and police to banking and transport crew have toiled tirelessly to keep the situation under control. These people had dispelled the general perception about their corruption, lethargy, inefficiency and greed.

Farmers have yet again proved that they are the backbone of the country as the health crisis has more than justified the sops and subsidies given to them. We can now understand their pain as they face uncertainties like crop failures, market fluctuations and natural calamities.

Covid-19 has taught us about the importance of interdependence in society. Rotary is an amazing platform to play a vital role in contributing to relief efforts in various ways. Let's hope for better days soon.

*Shrikanth Kolathaya
RC Puttur — D 3181*

We welcome your feedback.

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Rotary projects.



Rotary's aloha spirit



Dear fellow Rotarians and members of the family of Rotary,

My Rotary journey began 40 years ago when I joined the Rotary Club of Decatur, Alabama, at the age of 25, and it has brought my family and me many unforgettable moments. But nothing could have prepared me for connecting with the world as president of Rotary International. My individual Rotary journey has become a shared Rotary journey with each of you.

All of the incredible people Gay and I met this year — Rotarians, Rotaractors, and the extended family of Rotary — will be an inspiration for the rest of our lives. We visited clubs and projects from Uruguay to Ukraine, from Nigeria to New Zealand, and beyond. We were privileged to crisscross the globe, circumnavigating it twice and moving back and forth between the Northern and Southern hemispheres. Each country and each stop held its own Rotary magic. While in Zimbabwe in March, we participated in a medical vocational training team mission with Rotarians from India, providing health, hope, and life itself to the thousands who came for treatment. We also felt the energy of more than 300 young people at a Rotary Youth Symposium in Harare. What a thrill it was to be with these young people!

This year Rotary launched our new Action Plan, and I trust each club is putting that plan to use. And I have been energised by the efforts to embrace the priorities I set for this Rotary year: engaging families, providing leadership opportunities for all ages, celebrating our history with the United Nations in its 75th year, and, most significantly, growing Rotary.

As Covid-19 reached around the globe, we found ourselves in a world transformed. We have been forced to connect in ways we could never have imagined, testing our ability to adapt. We have made tough decisions, including cancelling club meetings, district conferences, presidential conferences, and, much to our regret, the 2020 Rotary International Convention in Honolulu. Together everyone is placing the public good and welfare first, despite the loss of meetings, events, and experiences that had been planned for years.

As we looked forward to the Rotary Convention in Honolulu, we learned about the aloha spirit. Our Rotary friends in Hawaii showed us that “aloha” means mutual regard and affection. It extends warmth and caring with no expectation of anything in return. The spirit of aloha applies wherever in the world we may live. As Rotarians, Rotaractors, and members of the family of Rotary, we are connected, and as aloha has been defined to me: *Our connection to one another is based upon mutual respect for our differences as well as our appreciation for what we have in common. Community is the sum of individuals — individuals who have concern for one another, who care, share, and take responsibility.*

As I have witnessed the members of the Rotary community act to care for humanity amid the coronavirus pandemic, I have seen the aloha of Rotary. We are indeed people of action. Every day, but particularly during this pandemic, the Rotary community has demonstrated its aloha spirit.

It is a gift to be shared, and we are each a steward of this gift of Rotary. Gay and I have been amazed, inspired, and humbled by all of you within the family of Rotary.

Indeed, I would say that the last part of our shared Rotary year was transformational. We found new ways to make the lives of others better, new ways to move forward together. And, together, we will continue to grow Rotary so that we may increase our gift of Rotary to our local and global communities.

Gay and I will always remember and treasure our year with you, our shared journey, as Rotary Connects the World!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Daniel Maloney".

Mark Daniel Maloney
President, Rotary International



Heroes emerge, at gloomy times too...

Who had ever imagined that we would live in a time like this, when we would be scared of meeting and interacting with our own friends, colleagues, or our favourite local grocery guy? As we quake with fear and put off all travel to the most exotic destinations on our bucket list, and cower behind masks, it was not surprising to see this tweet by Andy Milonakis: “Congratulations to the Astronauts that left Earth today. Good choice.” It got a whopping 3.8 million likes!

A beloved senior Rotary International leader who left our beleaguered planet for a higher plane in May, and who was universally remembered for his warmth, compassion, generosity and passion for both Rotary and the less privileged, was past RI president Frank Devlyn from Mexico. The speed and warmth with which tributes poured in from Rotarians across India, and the rest of the Rotary world, on the social media was astonishing. A remarkable number of past district governors recalled how he would greet them at the International Assembly that they had attended as incoming governors, his warm *Hola* and *Buenos Dias*, *Amigos*, were recalled, as also some magic plastic pin that he seems to have distributed to so many to keep their ties in place. Owner of reportedly the second largest optical chain in the world, he would also bring with him branded eyeshades for the spouses of past RI presidents at their dinner meets at big Rotary events.

We at Rotary News Trust (RNT) were excited to find that he had once been editor of the Rotary regional magazine of Mexico. He loved India, and visited it several times. I am sure that he and spouse Gloria Rita would have tucked in spicy Indian food without any problem, hailing as they did from Mexico. Devlyn had actually visited the

RNT office twice and one of them was soon after our new office was inaugurated in Chennai, when PDG Krishnan Chari was the Editor. RNT has also published three of his books, *Frank Talk*, *Frank Talk-II* and the third one on The Rotary Foundation.

As Rotary mourns the passing away of Devlyn, after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer, we also mourn the demise of a world and a lifestyle we had once known and enjoyed. Covid-19, the tiniest of microorganisms, has instilled such fear in our hearts that for some time to come, and certainly till a vaccine is found against it, we will be cocooned within our fearful existence. Surrounded by masks, gloves, sanitisers and hand soaps, human beings will look up at every cough, every sneeze with suspicion.

But surprisingly, an organisation such as Rotary, which has thrived on friendship and fellowship, club/district members coming together to do iconic community welfare projects, gala events, funfairs and picnics with family members, has adapted with lightning speed to what this post-pandemic world demands from it. Virtual meetings and training of new club leaders are happening with dizzy speed. But when their physical presence is required, for pandemic-related relief activities such as distribution of millions of hot meals to our stranded and starving migrant or daily wage workers, street dwellers and others caught on the wrong foot by the pandemic, they are out there on the field. With masks, gloves and taking adequate precautions of course, but standing shoulder to shoulder with the local administration to tackle this crisis.

Along with other Covid-19 heroes in healthcare, police, local administration and other NGOs active in the field, these Rotarians are heroes too in their own right.

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Message from

One-to-One



The Covid pandemic has brought home to us two important facts; good health is vital, and that the virus affects people with co-morbidities differently. They are more likely to fall seriously ill, require hospitalisation, ICU treatment and ventilators. These co-morbidities are diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases, kidney failure, stroke — all

NCDs. This brings into sharp focus the vital need to implement *Project Positive Health-Stop NCD*. I urge clubs and districts to take up this project for years to come. Focus on the *Ek Chamach Kam, Char Kadam Aage* campaign. The future of healthcare lies in preventive healthcare.

The onset of television predicted doom for books and magazines. Ditto for the Internet. But books and magazines are still influential. Can you curl up cosily with your computer and enjoy a good read? The information super highway is paved with books and magazines. *Rotary News* and *Rotary Samachar* are special because they represent good news journalism. Today when news is often a cynical, shocking commodity that showcases conflict, corruption or controversy, *Rotary News* celebrates plenty of good there is in the world. It tells us about men and women who care and share, who think that the glass is half-full and who are mostly unsung and unrecognised heroes. It tells the story of Rotary and Rotarians. Compliments to Editor Rasheeda Bhagat and her team for their hard work and dedication.

This has been a landmark year in many ways. The Covid pandemic, the outstanding work done by districts and clubs, the continuing focus on membership, proactive and timely response of TRF in disbursing grants, the leadership provided by the Torchbearer Governors and their teams. Compliments to all DGs, districts and clubs for their tremendous work for Rotary.

June is Rotary Fellowship Month — time to refocus on the lifeline of Rotary — our friendship and fellowship. We have a special responsibility to keep our bonds of fellowship strong. I appeal to all leaders to celebrate good happenings, appreciate and thank Rotarians and recognise contributions. Use virtual meetings for all things you'd do in in-person meetings. It's important to keep connected with our members to ensure their continued interest in Rotary.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'There is no planet, sun or star which could hold you, if you but knew what you are.' Know your strengths and work on them. When faced with a challenge you discover hidden strengths which you never knew were there. I am certain that a stronger, vibrant, relevant Rotary will emerge from this Covid crisis. With new opportunities to meet and serve opening up, truly *Rotary Connects the World*.

Enjoy Rotary, enjoy yourself.

Dr Bharat Pandya
RI Director, 2019-21

RI Directors

Dear friends,

The countless stories of humanity by volunteers distributing meals, essential medical supplies to the needy are awe-inspiring. During this crisis words like *I* or *Me* have become *We* and *Us*. And we have understood the power of togetherness.

– Aashta Behl (Punjab)



A new era has set in during this corona pandemic, which requires us to be more conscious of gender equity, share home and family responsibilities, break mental barriers and find opportunities for women in education, skill development, etc. This crisis gives us an opportunity for self and national development and be game-changers, taking up diverse projects similar to Project Dignity (skilling of women/widows and children of widows).

We Rotarians can never be laidback and should steadily try and regain our position in the world. Thanks to numerous technological avenues, virtual meetings have become the new normal and are being organised. Training and fellowship are also resuming virtually, and in this transformation, Rotarians are getting a substantial learning experience, breaking barriers and adapting to changes.

Fellowship is one of the core values of Rotary. June is Rotary Fellowship Month. It is the time groups of Rotarians, their spouses and Rotaractors come together for recreational activities, using this opportunity for vocational development and bigger and better service. The virtual medium gives us great opportunities to find innovative methods to explore the fruits of fellowship and friendship. I encourage each member to rekindle old friendships and make new ones, and enjoy Rotary's worldwide fellowship as you connect the world.

I commend the ***governors-elect*** for swiftly and efficiently adapting to change and conducting all training and fellowship meetings on virtual platforms. I have seen so many innovative fellowship meets — *antakshari*, tambola, music and dance competitions and meeting with civic personalities. It surely has been a fruitful exercise of reinventing the wheel.

I also challenge the district governors to continue and complete their OCVs virtually and close their year of service with 100 per cent membership retention. Use the virtual platform to reach out to all your members, inspire and ignite the passion of service in them in a world that needs our compassion.

Remember: *Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much*. We have to come together to become stronger and do our part in solidarity, the new word for unity and strength.

“One colour doesn't make a rainbow; one tree doesn't make a forest, and one leader doesn't make a change. In these trying times it is innovation and collaboration that result in any and every triumph; solidarity is the key to success.”

Kamal Sanghvi
RI Director, 2019–21

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The post- Covid world

Rasheeda Bhagat





The entire world, without any exception, is grappling with the human, health and economic fallout of the corona pandemic which is bringing back memories of the most horrific movies depicting the destruction of mankind by some virus, dinosaur, and other beings that human imagination can ever conjure. And the uppermost question in our minds is what life is going to be after a vaccine is finally found and we pick up the threads of our disrupted lives.

One thing is certain; the economic fallout of this pandemic globally, and also for India, is going to be terrible. But before we can even think of the economic fallout... the losses that our industries and businesses are going to be making and the lakhs of people who are going to lose their jobs, and the untold human misery brought to lakhs and lakhs of our migrant workers, will continue to haunt us for decades. And there are so many images to shake the very foundation of our being...

After all who will forget the image of the little child trying to wake up his dead mother, who had collapsed on the railway platform after travelling from Gujarat to Bihar without food and water? Or the sleepy child being

dragged by the mother on a suitcase? Or the images of miles and miles of long queues of migrant workers undertaking long and arduous journey back home to their villages on foot, often hungry and thirsty and totally at the mercy of both ordinary and privileged human beings with a heart to give them some food and water.

When asked why they were undertaking this dangerous journey as many collapsed and died under the scorching April/May heat, the one refrain that hit you in the gut was: "Our villages will be able to find the food to feed us. If not, we will starve to death, but at least there will be someone to cry for us."

It was heartening to see Shah Rukh Khan's Meer Foundation coming forward to take care of the child who lost his mother at the Railway station.

The manner in which Rotary clubs and Rotarians across India came forward to give food and water to the migrants is most commendable but their sorry plight is a blot on our collective conscience... how did we fail those who have worked relentlessly to build our homes, brick by brick, fix our doors, paint our walls, and beautify them with intricate and elegant woodwork. How could we as a nation fail to ensure that just before the lockdown started, they were not given special

trains, buses, trucks etc to help them reach home?

So what does a post-Covid pandemic world look like and what will the new normal be in the coming months? We will have to adapt to all kinds of behavioural changes in the months to come, whether it is how we work, network, shop, eat or travel.

Shopping habits

First of all, our shopping habits will change dramatically. Traditionally these change very slowly, and the way we buy food, clothes, accessories, all undergo a big change only if we shift cities or have a big event coming up... such as the arrival of a child or grandchild.

Also, we have to remember that with economists and almost all Central banks forecasting recession and negative growth of the GDP, consumer spending will fall drastically. But with our fear of shortages, one area where consumers are not pinching their pennies is of course grocery shopping. You don't want to run out of onions, tomatoes or green chillies in your kitchen after all. And then there is bread, rice, milk, eggs, other vegetables, garbage bin liners, paper napkins and the whole paraphernalia that keeps any kitchen going.

A Kerala district came out with a unique model to ensure social distancing — compulsory use of umbrellas.



So while garments, footwear and jewellery stores remained closed and saw little demand online even when online delivery was allowed in some areas, the average spend on grocery went up. One study in the US found that during one week in March, grocery store sales spiked 77 per cent over the previous year, as panic buying began (remember how toilet paper rolls ran out?) while restaurant sales declined by 66 per cent! In late April, grocery sales were still running 8 per cent above average, while restaurants were down 48 per cent.

Working from home

The threat of this infection will continue to loom, and as we have been warned by health researchers, new viruses after Covid-19, might hit the globe once every two years. And as two months of continuing lockdown and challenges to reach offices across the world, thanks to threat of infection, has shown, companies have found that their employees can indeed work from home. Google has said a majority of its employees can work from home until 2021. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey says his employees will be allowed to work from home permanently, even after Covid.

According to the US Census, about five per cent American workers primarily worked from home in 2017, up from over three per cent in 2000,



When cats practised social-distancing!

As consumer spending plummets and economy moves into recession, grocery shopping will go up. You don't want to run out of onions, tomatoes or green chillies in your kitchen.

said an article in the *Harvard Business Review*, adding that by 2018, 29 per cent of workers in the US had the option and ability to work at home.

And now employers have found that during several weeks of lockdown, when threat of infection loomed, compelling them to keep their offices closed, productivity continued to be robust through online work done from

home. Of course it is much easier in some industries... say IT compared to manufacturing... to work from home. But even then, IT major Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has already raised a red flag over the ills of working from home, which would be "replacing one dogma with another" and said it can be damaging for social interaction and mental health of workers.

Two leaders speak of post-Covid world & Rotary

While talking of The Rotary Foundation's super quick response to grant applications from Rotarians for corona-related relief work (elsewhere in this issue), I quizzed incoming Trustee Chair KR Ravindran, a leading industrialist from Sri Lanka, about the impact on commerce and industry.

He says much of the business world's initial response to the virus was "firefighting. Nobody had experienced anything like this before. But then fashion firms like H&M, the Luis Vuitton group, etc, retooled production to make masks and hand sanitisers. Makers of cars like General Motors, Ford, Peugeot, Volvo and others switched from producing vehicles to ventilators. The immediate future looks challenging for them with motor vehicles sales forecasted to drop by 25 per cent."

Any economy is driven by demand or consumption. "When households worry more about their health and finance, they are likely to focus on saving not spending. This will reflect on business and commerce. On April 20, oil became less than worthless. The American benchmark plummeted to \$40 a barrel. Can you imagine? The oil producers had to pay someone for taking the oil they produced!"

Disneyland reopened a portion of its Shanghai Disney Resort as China's pandemic began to ebb. "But a trip to Disneyland may never be the same again. Guests must wear masks at all times, removing them only for eating. The number of hours and capacity are limited.



The Disneyland in Shanghai reopened with mandatory face masks.

And just to gain entry, visitors must submit to a temperature check and present a government-controlled QR code on their phone that indicates they are virus-free," he said.

A hardcore sports enthusiast, Ravindran added that the world of sports will never be the same again. "Germany's Bundesliga (its football league, which has the highest average stadium attendance worldwide) became the world's first major sports competition to emerge from the coronavirus lockdown. Players are being tested twice a week, coaches will have to wear face masks and fans will be banned from stadiums.

The League is now contemplating only 300 spectators in a stadium and players essentially sequestered for weeks at a time. But they have no choice. The Bundesliga is a Euro 4 billion (\$4.3 billion) business that has come to a grinding halt. "Clubs have lost tens of millions of euros and viewers are quitting the local pay-TV sport networks. Teams are running out of money and player values have fallen

off a cliff. So the prospects for the days ahead are certainly not attractive," he adds.

I next asked RI Director Bharat Pandya that while Indian Rotarians had taken to Zoom and online meetings on other platforms like fish to water, wouldn't something die in an organisation that thrived on physical meetings, camaraderie and fellowship.

He admitted that one of the "prime attractions, the binding force, of Rotary has been Fellowship. The warmth and welcoming atmosphere generated by good fellowship at Rotary meetings and other events has been a major attraction and reason for Rotary being relevant and effective."

But in the post-Covid world, "where the way we interact, travel or meet, are all going to change, the question is how do we ensure the continuing relevance of Rotary. One way we will remain socially connected is through virtual meetings. While there are both pros and cons of virtual meetings, there is no doubt that physical distancing is here to stay. I have always said that you cannot

email a hug or fax a handshake. So no in-person meetings will result in loss of personal touch. It is difficult to banter over Zoom but we must keep the bonds of fellowship strong.”

Pandya draws upon what Rotary founder Paul Harris had said about “being evolutionary at all times and revolutionary on occasions. This is the time to be revolutionary — think differently, out-of-the box. It cannot be business as usual. I see meetings in small groups happening in a couple of months, with all precautions — thermal scanning, distancing, personal protection. But the onus is on Rotary leaders at the club, district and international levels to make that extra effort to keep connected with Rotarians, and keep them engaged.”

He urged club and district leaders to pick up the phone and talk to their members regularly, while having meetings in different formats — small groups, at home, hybrid and virtual meetings, to discuss different ways of doing service projects, avoiding large gatherings.

“These are ideas whose time has come. The camaraderie and fellowship of Rotary has given us all *dhal mitras* or true friends, who will stand with and by you during times of happiness and sorrow, in joy and in crisis, and I have no doubt that Rotary will emerge stronger from this pandemic.”

Pandya puts his finger on the essence of friendship and connectivity when he adds: “If I want a friend, first I have to be a friend. That sums up the joyous responsibility each Rotarian has to make that extra effort, walk that extra mile, to ensure that this binding glue of Rotary becomes a strong bond that endures. Rotary friendship is like diamonds — bright, beautiful, valuable and always in style. Let’s change the trend and be a friend. That will be our gift to the Rotary world.”



In an interview to the *New York Times* he said that virtual video calls cannot replace in-person meetings. “What I miss is when you walk into a physical meeting, you are talking to the person that is next to you, you’re able to connect with them for the two minutes before and after. What does burnout look like? What does mental health look like? What does that connectivity and the community building look like? One of the things I feel is, hey, maybe we are burning some of the social capital we built up in this phase where we are all working remote.”

Cooking at home versus eating out

Another major change this pandemic has brought about is in our eating habits... we now eat more at home, both by compulsion and choice and are likely to continue to do so. So in the days and months to come, we are going to cook more at home or depend on takeaways or online ordering of food. Right now, most people are so paranoid about getting infected by either the restaurant food itself or the delivery boy who brings it, I know several homes in India are not even touching outside food.

And with several apartment complexes, especially their residents’ associations, not permitting domestic workers to report to work for fear that they may bring Covid into the complex, the burden of cooking, cleaning and washing on the women has increased severalfold.

My niece in Gurgaon, who lives in a posh apartment complex, describes the paranoia in their complex which is at a crazy high! Forget allowing domestic help, even delivery boys were not allowed during the lockdown. With perennially hungry and bored kids demanding some kind of sustenance or the other all the time, “I seem to be coming out of the kitchen only to re-enter it within 15 minutes,” she said. In desperation she started ordering food online, but had to walk 700 metres to the main gate under the scorching sun to collect the food, and while returning to her block “got sprayed with disinfectants. Our



The gut-wrenching image of a tired child sleeping on a suitcase dragged by his mother, a migrant worker, making on foot a long and arduous journey back home.

RWA really went berserk with safety norms,” she said in exasperation.

So what else is going to change? Lots of course.... the uncomfortable mask has come to stay for some time and online stores such as Myntra, desperate for customers, are now offering

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has already raised a red flag over the ills of working from home, saying this would be “replacing one dogma with another”.

stylish and colourful sets of masks for women! Offices, when they start functioning, will have sanitisers and other disinfectants in plenty, the fingerprint sign-in will be replaced by face recognition devices, and cubicles will have protective partitioning.

Think of the benefits... “knowledge workers” as they are called, will no longer have to stay close to their offices which are mainly in prime real estate space, paying huge rents... they can move out to the outskirts of crowded cities... and maybe programme their work schedule in such a way that they would be able to pick up their kids from school, and even join the family for dinner every single day!

But the problem appears to come mainly from bosses, who, as

an article in *The New Yorker* points out, need to boss. The main obstacle to the success of the work-from-home formula will be “the reluctance of bosses. Managers are often seen as standing in the way of working from home. A corner office isn’t as impressive over Zoom, and, conversely, it’s easier for a boss to keep track of employees when she can see them at their desks or in the hall.”

But as the warm hugs and firm handshakes disappear from our world, they will take away something with them... the warmth of the human touch... physical, psychological, emotional...

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Thank you for your generosity



Ni hao, Rotarians!

As I write this message, the world is in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic. I want to dedicate this column to the ways that Rotary members, as people of action, have helped and can help, and share what we are doing at the Foundation to support you.

Rotary has long been a leader in fighting disease and advancing health. The polio infrastructure that Rotarians have helped build is being used to counter the new coronavirus, in addition to serving countless other health needs. In many countries, polio volunteers have been deployed to address Covid-19.

Rotary clubs and districts have mobilised quickly to curb the spread of the virus. In Italy, clubs in District 2080 are raising funds to purchase ventilators and protective gear for overcrowded hospitals. In Hong Kong, Rotary clubs have packed medical supplies, raised funds, and visited public housing buildings to distribute masks and hand sanitiser. Rotary clubs in Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria, conducted a Covid-19 awareness campaign.

At the Foundation, the Trustees took swift action to support your work. You can use district grant funds to support local activities, such as purchasing protective medical gear for health workers. You can repurpose previously planned activities as a Covid-19 response, or reimburse Covid-19 activities dating back to Mar 15 in your district's 2020–21 district grant.

Due to your generosity to our Foundation, the Trustees were able to quickly approve millions of dollars for the Disaster Response Fund to make a multitude of disaster relief grants immediately available for club and district projects related to Covid-19 relief efforts.

As this Rotary year ends, our fight for the cause of public health is at a critical point. We must overcome Covid-19 and continue to build on the many decades of programmes and projects of our Foundation. If you have not already done so, please do whatever you can to help by making a year-end contribution to our Foundation. Your gift has never been so important.

When I think of Rotary members truly making a difference in their communities, I remember what the great Laozi once taught us about leadership: "A leader is best when people barely know he exists. When the work is done... they will say: We did it ourselves." The world depends on us to lead, and for your leadership, I will be forever grateful. Thank you for your past, present, and future leadership and support of our Foundation.

Gary CK Huang
Foundation Trustee Chair

Disaster Response Grants a lifeline to overcome the pandemic challenge



Friends,

As nations worldwide come to grips with having to confront and contain the spread of the coronavirus, the pandemic has thrown life completely out of gear, especially for frontline medical personnel, daily wage earners and migrant labourers. The heart rending sight of families undertaking *padayatra* of hundreds and even a couple of thousand km with their worldly possessions strung across their backs, little children in tow, reminds me of the importance of the words of Albert Schweitzer: "The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others."

It is in these agonising times that TRF decided to pull out all the stops. No sooner was the pandemic declared, than the Trustees acted: For Covid-related global grants they decided to waive the requirement that 30 per cent of the financing in global grants must come from outside of the country where the project takes place. Further, Rotary's Disaster Response Grants (DRG) provide a fast and effective way to respond to local disasters. The Trustees decided that for Covid work, districts can apply for a DRG for up to \$25,000 (only one per district) and transferred a total of \$3 million from the World Fund to DRG. These DRGs and GGs have been used to supply rations, ready meals, PPEs, face masks, sanitisers, ventilators, hospital beds, bronchoscopes, testing kits, etc. As on May 19, for both GGs and DRGs worldwide, TRF had sanctioned \$19.1 million (about ₹143 crore). For India, specifically, the total is \$5.36 million (nearly ₹40 crore). All this, in the space of eight weeks. Truly, Rotary connects the world.

It has been through the generous contributions of Rotarians across the globe that our Foundation has been able to live up to its *raison d'être* — Doing Good in the World. Your continued support will help the Foundation to carry on helping those in need. As writer Chip Ingram said, 'Generosity is not an act, it is a way of life'; and as an anonymous sage famously said, 'Your greatness is not in what you have, it is in what you give'.

Thank you. Stay well. Stay safe!

Gulam A Vahanvaty
Trustee, The Rotary Foundation

Rotarians bid a teary farewell to Frank Devlyn

Rasheeda Bhagat

After Past RI President Frank Devlyn succumbed to pancreatic cancer on May 27 at the age of 81, tributes poured in from across the Rotary world. As P K Acharya, who is so active on social media, quickly formed a Whatsapp tribute group, it kept buzzing for at least a few days, with a fond memory/tribute coming in every couple of minutes on the first day. And they continued to pour in on several days thereafter.

While I requested past RI Presidents Rajendra Saboo and Kalyan Banerjee to pen their memories of the departed soul, one of the most informative tributes came from PRIP Ray Klinginsmith, courtesy PRIP KR Ravindran who shared it with me.

It unearthed an interesting nugget for me; Devlyn had been Editor of the Mexico Rotary regional magazine, and that assignment did cause a few

tense moments for him when he was elected to serve as the RI Director for 1984–85. Writing about “an incident that almost altered his ascendancy in Rotary,” Klinginsmith recalls, “When I attended my first RI Board meeting as a back bencher in May 1985, the big news was a formal approval of the three-year fundraising campaign for PolioPlus with a goal of \$120 million! It was a tremendous first step in the PolioPlus programme. The Board had worked on it all year, and it passed by a unanimous vote.”

The exciting part of the meeting was that Frank Devlyn had won the 1984–85 election to serve as a RI director, and his opponent filed a complaint. When the matter came to the full board, someone suggested that Frank be summoned for an interview



Frank Devlyn with past RI Presidents KR Ravindran (centre) and Luis Giay.



to clarify what he had done and not done. “So Frank was called in Mexico City, and the next morning he was present for his interview. The board then decided that he had not violated the campaigning rules, and Frank took office as a director on July 1, 1986. It was a close call in his Rotary career!”

This later resulted in the appointment of a committee to clarify and improve the bylaws provisions on campaigning. The committee was chaired by Chuck Keller, and the other two members were two PDG lawyers; “I was the director liaison of this committee, and the work of the committee was the best I have ever observed. It clarified the campaigning rules so effectively, that the proposed bylaws amendment was quickly approved by the 1986 CoL. And these rules have not needed amendment for almost 35 years! So Frank helped to shape Rotary by impacting and improving the rules on campaigning, canvassing, and electioneering!”

In his tribute, RI President Mark Maloney said: “Frank was an impactful leader in Rotary whose warm greetings, inspirational words, and dedication to service left a lasting impression on those who met him.”

Early years

From selling US confectionery in his neighbourhood as an eight-year-old, when he would cross from his hometown on the northern border of Mexico, into El Paso, Texas, to buy chocolate bars such as Mars and Snickers, he grew into a successful founder of an optical empire. Devlyn has provided free glasses to one million Mexicans without access to eye care through the Devlyn Foundation.

Rotarians worldwide fondly remember him as a warm, friendly and compassionate human being with an undying passion for Rotary. Devlyn is survived by his wife, Gloria Rita and three daughters — Melanie, Stephanie and Jennifer.

Recalling his last meet with Devlyn, RIPN Shekhar Mehta said his passing away was a great “loss to Rotary, and to Rashi and me, who have shared some wonderful moments with Frank and Gloria Rita, the last ones being on each day of the IA at San Diego this January. He would find and greet us, unless we had already done the same to him. He came twice to my office to meet

me at the IA to discuss some plans for Mexico.”

He also recalled “fond memories of his visit to our district when I was DG or to my home when he was TRF Trustee Chair, and my visit to his home and the Frank Museum in Mexico.

What a friendly man he was. We will miss him just as the Rotary world will.”

Paying his tribute, PRIP KR Ravindran says: “Frank was larger than life and one of the few past presidents taller than me, with his crushing hug and ‘*Buenos Dias, Amigo*’ greeting. He will be missed for his physical presence as well as his uplifting personality. He was a giant of a businessman. Today the Devlyn Optical Group, of which he was the CEO, has over 700 stores in South America and Europe. When I once told Frank that his was likely to be the largest in the world, he quickly corrected me and said “second largest in the world.”

Remembering his penchant for collecting visiting cards, he adds, “He collected them and gave out his own cards with gay abandon. He must have a collection

Frank was larger than life and one of the few past presidents taller than me. He will be missed for his physical presence as well as his uplifting personality.

PRIP **K R Ravindran**

of millions of cards because I must have given him 20 myself! He and Luis Giay (past RI President from Argentina) always debated about who had attended the maximum number of conventions. Probably Frank. He had done 45 consecutive ones before Hamburg.”

Bidding adieu to the departed leader Ravindran adds, “Dear Frank, may a thousand angels lull you to your eternal sleep.”

Describing Devlyn as a “friendly, warm and compassionate human being,” TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvati recalls that he got to know him well “when he was TRF Chair and I was an RRFC. Always willing to assist, he and Gloria Rita were a very popular couple. I met him last at the IA just a few months ago and he was his same friendly, warm self. Rotary has lost an outstanding leader. In this time of grief, we pray that Gloria Rita and his family bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.”

RIDN AS Venkatesh says in the last 20 years, Devlyn would “probably

Instrumental in getting present Rotary HQ

Almost every Rotary leader recalls how Frank Devlyn was instrumental in Rotary acquiring One Rotary Center, its headquarters in Evanston, Chicago. But PRIP Ray Klingensmith has the details. “Frank helped to shape Rotary in a much more direct way during his first year on the RI Board, which was my second year on the Board as the Executive Committee chair in 1986–87.”

RI had outgrown its headquarters building at 1600 Ridge Avenue in Evanston, and “we spent considerable time in designing an addition for the building. However, we found it was going to be too expensive because the building was located in a historical district and all parking lots had to be below

the ground, and thereby below the water table! So, Frank said let’s buy the vacated American Hospital Supply building downtown on Sherman Avenue.”

But that building was 18 stories tall, which was more space than RI needed, and the sale price was a whopping \$22.5 million. “It was clearly more than we needed, and more than we could afford! But Frank persisted, and as we gathered more information about taking over the existing debt and renting the unneeded space, it became a very attractive arrangement. The RI Board voted to buy the building, which is now known as One Rotary Center, and Frank was clearly the leading advocate for the deal!”



Devlyn with RIPN Shekhar Mehta and Rashi (left).

have been the first person one met as DGE when one went to the IA. A friendly person with an infectious smile, he had the skill of making others feel comfortable. Rotary world will miss this towering personality.”

PRID C Basker who was district governor of RID 3000 when Devlyn was RI President says that he greatly enjoyed the “many fruitful and intellectually stimulating exchanges I have had working with him. His inspiring oratorical skills and uplifting message of selfless service to society made him a voice that Rotarians across the world and especially here in India listen to with rapt attention. I will always cherish the interactions Mala and I had with him and his wife Gloria. His demise is a loss not only to his family but also to Rotary and Rotarians across the globe.” ■



Arch Klumph Society

More of a good thing

The Arch Klumph Society, named after the man considered the father of The Rotary Foundation, honours Rotary's highest tier of donors—those who have given \$250,000 or more to the Foundation.

Gary CK Huang sees the Arch Klumph Society as so important that he has made adding to its ranks a major focus of his tenure as 2019–20 Chair of the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation.

From July 2019 to March 2020, the society welcomed 95 new members—which is

a 25 per cent increase over the same period of the previous Rotary year and more than the total for all of 2018–19.

Gifts to the Arch Klumph Society, like all donations to the Foundation, help fight diseases such as Covid-19. They also provide clean water, save the lives of mothers and children, support education, and help local economies grow. To learn more about The Rotary Foundation, visit rotary.org/foundation.

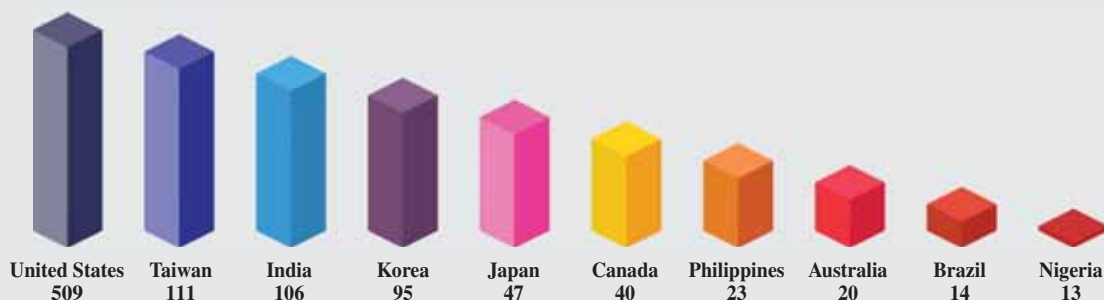
© The Rotarian



The Arch Klumph Society honoured 30 donor couples, including nine couples from Taiwan (see top), at One Rotary Center in Evanston in October 2019.

TOP 10 MEMBER AREAS*

*As of 31 March



Frank will light up heaven with his sparkling smile

Kalyan Banerjee



Frank Devlyn was always one of my most favourite persons in Rotary — a person, I'd always think of as an ideal Rotarian.

Tall, 6ft 3 inches maybe, slim, handsome, with a booming baritone, he'd always stand out in any gathering. And, when he'd see you around, he would stride over and he'd say, *Buenos Dias, Amigo*, or just *Ola*, and give you a bear hug with his typical *Abrazo* (hug, in Spanish).

I still remember the 2001
Texas Convention when
he called Gloria Rita to the
podium after a long closing
address and she brought
the house down by saying:
'Frank, it's time to go home.'

And, you would immediately start feeling it was a wonderful day. It's hard to believe that Frank is not there any more, gone up somewhere for a higher calling, and that now we'll miss his *Olas* and hugs, forever.

So, when I sit down to pen my thoughts about him, where do I begin? Maybe, by saying that he was born in 1939, and it was Dr Carlos Canseco, the Father of PolioPlus, who mentored him in Rotary. He became the Governor of RI District 4170 in Mexico in 1977–78, and rose rapidly, through the ranks, to become an RI Director in 1986–88 and a TRF Trustee in 1996–98, in an interrupted tenure and got chosen to serve as the President of RI in 2000–01.

But though Frank lived and loved Rotary, he was a visionary and hard-working businessman. Indeed, providing vision, literally, to the world was his business and the Devlyn Optical Group, which produced eyeglasses, lenses and everything optical, grew alongside with his Rotary engagement. In fact, Frank gave away a million free glasses to promote eye

care awareness, and over the years, came to be known as a great philanthropist in Mexico. His optical business too became one of the largest in the world.

It happened to be with Frank one day at some RI Committee meeting in the US, when he received a call from the Nominating Committee in Evanston, which was trying to contact him. He just said: 'Yes, I'll be happy to serve', and disconnected the phone. I asked him, 'Frank, what was that about?' He replied: 'It seems they have chosen me to be President for 2000–01.' And I said: Oh my God! Aren't you happy? He replied: 'Yes. But I hadn't expected it so soon.'

Frank chose *Create Awareness, Take Action* as his theme for his year. And his district governors formed his Action Team. Both before and after he assumed office as the RI President, Frank and his Rotary Anne, Gloria Rita, had visited India many times,

often representing the RI President at district conferences, to almost all the major Indian cities and some smaller ones too. Being Mexican, they loved our spicy hot Indian food.

Frank always encouraged Indian clubs to admit more women not only in Rotary but in positions of leadership too.

After continuing his Rotary service as TRF Trustee in 2002–05 and as its Chair in 2005–06, the next year, he chaired the emerging concept of Future Vision in TRF and headed the Avoidable Blindness Task Force in 2001–03. Even after his tenure in TRF, he served on the Rotary Action Group for Peace.

Over the years, Frank was always one of the most sought after

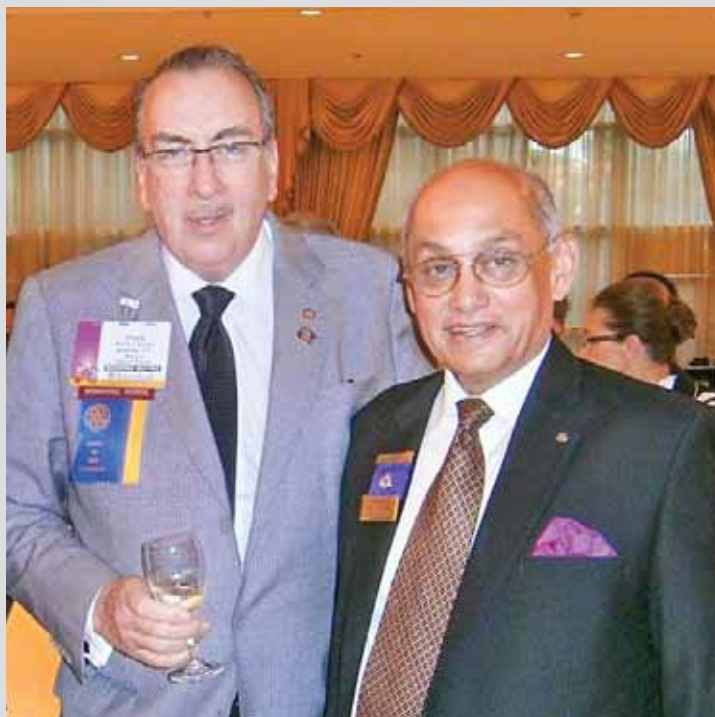
speakers on Rotary platforms. As his popularity grew, Frank went on to express his major Rotary concerns through his writings. He authored five best sellers in a few years on public speaking, on The Rotary Foundation, leadership, and two books titled *Frank Talk* and *Membership Growth and Retention*.

But despite being a larger than life person, Frank always had his feet on the ground. He endeared himself to people by asking for your visiting card or calling you always by your name, or handing you plastic tie pins to hold your tie in place, or giving you a plastic sample of his glasses to try out — ‘glasses for the masses’, he called them — or wearing a badge to show you that he had attended 46 RI Conventions!

Indeed, it’s amazing how Frank left his indelible mark and his memories in whatever he did.

He would say, *Buenos Dias, Amigo*, or just *Ola*, and give you a bear hug and you would immediately start feeling it was a wonderful day.

He helped RI to purchase its present 18-storeyed headquarters in Evanston, since our first HQ on 1600 Ridge Avenue nearby was proving a bit small. For so many years our headquarters building has continued to serve our needs.



PRIP Kalyan Banerjee with PRIP Frank Devlyn.

I also remember today as clearly as if it happened only yesterday, the closing session of Frank’s San Antonio Convention in Texas in June 2001. Frank’s final closing address had been going on for some time as the Convention drew to a close. Then finally, he asked Gloria Rita, standing nearby, to come to the podium for a few closing remarks. And she brought the house down by saying: ‘Frank, it’s time to go home!’

On May 28, as Gloria Rita and their children, Melanie, Stephanie and Jennifer told us tearfully that our beloved Frank had given up his battle with pancreatic cancer, the world stood up to say: Farewell, Frank. You will always be in our hearts. May you continue to light up the Heavens forever with your sparkling smile.

The writer is past RI president.

Frank Devlyn was tall man and whenever we met, he would embrace me very warmly saying, “My President, *Abrazo*.” As he hugged me, a much shorter person, my head would reach his chest. I would always respond, “My friend, your heart meets my mind.”

My Rotary journey with Frank started in May, 1978 in Boca Raton, Florida, US, when he was the incoming district governor and I was International Group Leader (now known as International Discussion Leader). We became co-travellers from 1983, when then RI President-elect Dr Carlos Consecro introduced him saying, “Raja, you will see Frank rising to great heights.” Frank did rise to prophetic heights both in Rotary and in his profession. Indomitable spirit packed into his tall frame, he achieved success step by step.

Frank and I became totally committed to the programme Rotary Village Corps initiated by PRIP MAT Caparas during his presidency in 1986–87 and I became Chairman of the committee. Next year, I continued as Chairman and Frank became RI Director Liaison to the committee. It became very popular in Asia and South America but not the developed countries. The incoming RI leadership was not fascinated with this programme and there was a murmur that it would be abandoned.

But then came the 1989 CoL, where both Frank and I were voting delegates. There was a proposed enactment dealing with credit of attendance in the club. Frank picked it up and rose to propose an amendment that a Rotarian attending a meeting of Rotary Village Corps would get attendance credit, just like attending Rotaract meeting. Without much opposition the amendment passed. With this good thinking, Rotary Village Corps became part of Rotary’s constitutional document

Frank was the tallest of tall, and a true hero

Rajendra Saboo



PRIPs Frank Devlyn and Rajendra Saboo.

and now the programme wouldn't be touched or dropped. That was Frank.

A funny and coincidental event happened when Frank and Gloria Rita, Usha and I arrived at the Seoul Airport in May 1989 by different flights to attend the Rotary Convention. There was a common bus to take Rotarians to Hotel Intercontinental. We boarded the bus and four of us were sitting in the last row. Suddenly, Frank stood up and announced, "We have on the bus the next Rotary International President." As everyone started looking around, he continued, "He is Raja Saboo." There was applause. I had no such idea at all. The next nomination for the RI President was traditionally to be from the US, but lo and behold, just five months later in October, 1989, I was selected by the Nominating Committee to be RI President for 1991–92. Was Frank an astrologer?

In 1988–89, immediately after his directorship, Frank was Chairman of International RVC Committee and Kalyan Banerjee its Vice-Chairman. Thanks to Frank and his action, Rotary Village Corps (RVC) became a permanent programme of RI as it continues even now as Rotary Community Corps.

Since 1986, Frank's dedication towards PolioPlus was complete and he continued to pursue it vehemently. During TRF's 75th anniversary in 1991–92, MAT Caparas as Trustee Chair and I as RI President formed a high-powered committee to celebrate it and Frank was one of its members.

Frank swiftly rose to the top position as RI President, but during his ascendancy, or later, never lost his common touch, meeting Rotarians, exchanging visiting cards and having at his class reunions at the conventions about 700–800 participants. His doors were open to all with a cheerful "Hola".... but truly he spoke through his heart's language.



PRIP Rajendra Saboo with PRIP Frank Devlyn and Gloria Rita.

He was very fond of India and at any opportunity would come to visit this country. He came to Chandigarh in the late 1980s with his daughter Melanie, and later attended many conferences and institutes. He came to India also as RI President to attend the International Population Summit in 2000 in Delhi organised jointly by Rotary and the Union Health Ministry. Whether at the convention or the International Assemblies, he would always find time to spend with Usha, discussing membership, Rotary projects, public awareness. Usha always advocated Rotary to break the four walls of the club meetings and let the outside world know what Rotary does. Frank shared the same thoughts, as his theme expressed, "*Create Awareness, Take Action*". He was a live wire and forthright in his views. In the meeting of the Council of Past RI Presidents, he would give his opinion and would also be open to other views. I recollect that at these dinners he'd always bring branded goggles specially for the ladies.

Frank was a very loving and caring husband as we could see him

push Gloria Rita's wheelchair at international meetings. He was a truly devoted family man, and a giant entrepreneur as he multiplied his optical business with his daughters Melanie, Stephanie and Jennifer. He was a hero of humanity; warm, compassionate and magnanimous.

It was his inner qualities that made Frank the tallest of tall, larger than life. He was not a legend during his lifetime but has become legendary for all time for posterity.

I received an email from Frank on May 16 saying he had just learnt about PRID Sudarshan Agarwal's passing on. Asking me for Usha Agarwal's email id, he requested me to pass on his condolences to the family. What a man he was. He himself was suffering from galloping pancreatic cancer and he knew he had days to go, and yet he was thinking of our friend Sudarshan. Undoubtedly Frank will be meeting him up in the world of the angels.

The writer is past RI president.

TRF's speedy response to the corona pandemic

Rasheeda Bhagat

As the sudden emergence of the Covid-19 virus across the world brought along with it a tornado of untold human suffering, disease and death, and Rotarians got off their feet instantaneously to render help and service in their immediate communities, The Rotary Foundation, acted quickly too.

This it did to ensure that "Rotarians could respond in a strikingly impactful and timely manner. We had an emergency meeting and made some intense and far-reaching decisions on Covid-19 related expenses," incoming TRF Trustee Chair KR Ravindran told *Rotary News* in an interview.

Excerpts:

As incoming Trustee Chair can you tell us about the strategising and response The Rotary Foundation and the RI Board have come out with to deal with a special set of new challenges that the global corona pandemic has thrown up?

There was no question that nearly all of humanity was facing the biggest crisis in this generation. For the first time in its history TRF was forced to deal with a situation where the entire world was being mortally wounded by a dreadful virus. The UN's World Food Programme warns that the number of "acutely hungry" people in the world, most of whom are in Africa, could double this year.

Usually when catastrophes occur, one region of the world is affected, in which case it is possible to appeal to the unaffected regions of the world for help. But in this case, everyone was affected, and the usual big donor countries seemed to be even more deeply affected!

TRF had to react quickly and effectively. We had to react to the immediate needs and requirements of the Rotary world. More importantly, we had to react to a world which had undergone a serious trauma and a dramatically changed environment.

So what did you prioritise?

There were so many questions; but one thing was clear. We had to move fast

Incoming TRF Trustee Chair KR Ravindran and TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty.



Environmental impact

One beneficiary of this entire pandemic is the environment. With man having receded, plants and animals are getting their rightful space on Planet Earth. In the Oct 2019 Trustees Meet (as documented by the minutes), you introduced an item asking Environment to be added as another 'Area of Focus'. So you must be a happy man!

I did introduce a motion as you state and the Board agreed that Environmental issues must either be added as a new Area of Focus or added to an existing Area of Focus. There is a committee headed by PRIP Ian Riseley studying that aspect, and we will have a decision within this Rotary year.

But if you mean whether I am happy about the environment as a side effect of Covid-19; well I can be happy as one could ever

be, under the rather difficult circumstances. Today in Venice the canals are running clear, offering glimpses of fish swimming against the current. As human activity grinds to a halt, natural rhythms resume. A similar, less visible story is being played out in the skies.

People in Punjab, say they can see the snow peaks of the Himalayas, a view that has been blocked by air pollution for years. In Colombo we are getting clear views of the sacred Adams Peak. Around the world, goats are strutting through villages in Wales, antlered deer grazing on manicured city lawns in Ohio, and mountain lions are found perched by the suburban fences in California.

In Adelaide, kangaroos are hopping around a mostly empty downtown, and a pack of jackals occupied an urban park in Tel Aviv, Israel. In Toronto foxes, deer, coyotes and

exotic birds are being seen in the streets. Wild boar have descended onto the streets of Barcelona. Whales are chugging into Mediterranean shipping lanes. Hundreds of baby turtles find their way toward the water along Brazil's northeast coast, unmolested by people or pets, unencumbered by anxiety.

For centuries, humans have pushed wildlife into smaller and smaller corners of the planet. But now, with billions in isolation and city streets emptied, nature is pushing back.

Barely a few months ago, it would have been impossible to visualise the shutting down of polluting factories and slashing emissions from travel. Now we know that clear skies and silent streets can come about with shocking speed, but it seems only by an act of God and at such a considerable cost!

so that our Rotarians could respond in a strikingly impactful and timely manner. We had an emergency meeting and made some intense and far-reaching decisions.

We decided to allow Covid-19 related expenses, incurred after March 15, 2020, by way of District Grants to be reimbursed through the 2020–21 Rotary year.

We agreed to waive the 30 per cent foreign financing requirement for any new global grant that was related to a Covid-19 project.

We agreed to allow districts to designate their DDF contributions to the Disaster Response Fund and request us to hold the funds exclusively for Covid-19 grant activities. This would not apply to cash contributions.

Most importantly, we immediately transferred \$1 million from the World Fund to the Disaster Response Fund to be used exclusively for Covid response efforts;

We stipulated that these grants of up to \$25,000 be limited to one district each, on a first come, first served basis. But we also knew that this amount would get exhausted very soon. So we quickly transferred another \$2 million from the World Fund to the Disaster Response Fund for the exclusive use of Covid-19 projects again with a limit of \$25,000 per district.

So these decisions were quickly made. But as physical meetings were impossible, was all this done through online meetings? And what about the RI staff participation?

Yes, these decisions were made through virtual meetings in early March/April. But the question next was how do we execute it! To begin with, we had to constantly keep in mind that the staff was working from home.

It was very impressive to hear about two global grant applications from RID 3060 (Gujarat), to supply ventilators to hospitals to treat corona cases, which were okayed in 30 and six hours; the first for a whopping ₹1.8 crore (\$240,500). What kind of work/tweaking did it take for the Foundation to get off its feet and act so urgently, as the RI staff also has to work on the grant applications?

By the time we were contacted for these grant applications, the entire

Rotary headquarters building in Evanston had already been evacuated. Our building was empty! But I have to compliment our staff. They did a fantastic job working tirelessly from home and clearing applications, even within a day, sometimes.

By end-April we had approved 177 Covid-19 specific global grants for a value of approximately \$1.22 million. And 193 Covid-19- specific Disaster Response Grants (the \$25,000 per district ones) for a total value of approximately \$4.8 million.

But I thought you said you had transferred only \$3 million to this account...

True, so the surplus came from \$740,000 transferred from DDF to Covid-19 grants. We received another

\$480,000 from online contributions given in response to our appeal and \$312,000 from Convention refunds to members who re-directed it to the Covid Disaster Fund.

Going forward how do you see Rotary International and TRF responding to the post-Covid era, at least in the near future?

The whole Rotary world is in a trial that will have profound consequences on how we work and how we act as citizens and neighbours and Rotarians. We will of course be measured on our ability to handle the current adversity and uncertainty.

If we are going to save the environment and defeat future pandemics and similar calamities, then we will have to do it together.

We received \$480,000 from online contributions and \$312,000 from Convention refunds to members who re-directed it to the COVID Disaster Fund.

I work very closely with President Elect Holger Knaack. Together we will do everything possible next year to deliver to all Rotarians the organisation they are looking for and will be proud of.

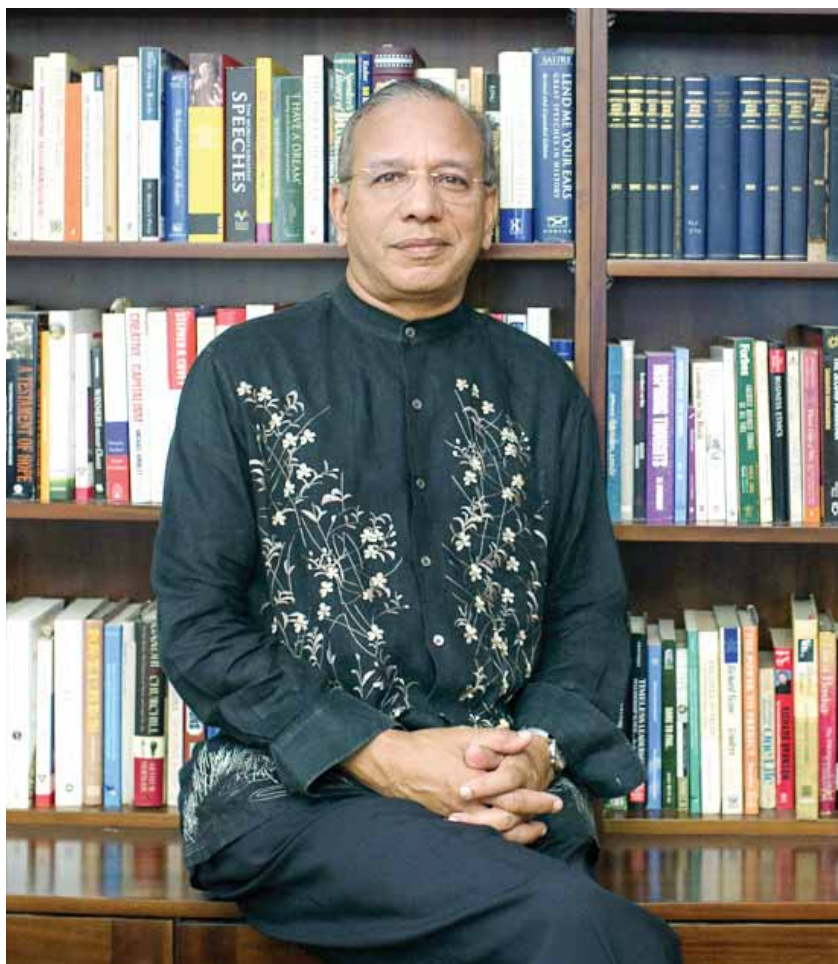
Globally, businesses have been affected as also salaried employees and other professionals. As incoming Chair, are you worried that TRF contributions can take a serious dip for a couple of years as countries go into an economic meltdown or recession?

You are right, businesses have indeed been affected. Companies big and small have laid off staff all over the world. Daily workers are severely affected. According to an ILO report, some 1.6 billion people around the world employed in the informal economy — or nearly half the global workforce — could see their livelihoods destroyed.

We are bound to see a surge in bankruptcies. Already some major companies like Neiman Marcus, JC Penny, Hertz, Thai Airways, Debenhams, Virgin Australia are in distress.

We can see that the hospitality industry including hotels and restaurants, TV and film, sports and fitness, construction, airline and travel, retail industries are all suffering and will take some time to rebound.

On the other hand, the large digital platforms, including Alphabet and Facebook, will probably come out of



the crisis even stronger. Demand for online services has exploded. New-comers such as Zoom have become household names.

Telecommunication and pharma industries are doing well and are attracting big investments.

So logically, though we should expect membership to drop a bit and contributions to come down, I always remember that we Rotarians are truly resilient in character.

Can you please elaborate on that?

History tells us that Rotarians do behave differently. After the Spanish flu in 1918, membership actually increased by 19 per cent. After the great recession in 1921, it increased by 26 per cent; after the Asian flu in 1957, it increased by three per cent; after the Swine flu in 2009, membership did not increase. But TRF contributions went up by 20 per cent!

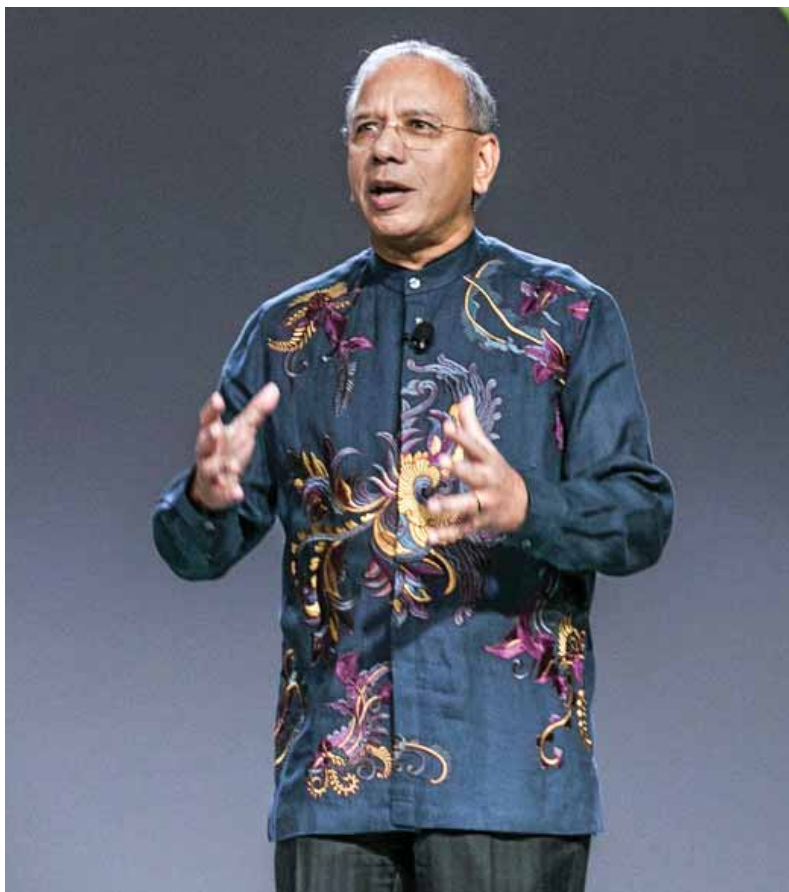
I must tell you though that our budget for global grants next year is actually down.

But that has nothing to do with Covid-19. It has to do with what Rotarians contributed three years ago, because remember we work on a three-year cycle.

Last year, the World Fund was boosted by the heavy contributions made during our centennial year three years earlier. If contributions do come down next year, we will see the effect on that in our 2023–24 spending.

Having said that, I must also add that the funding available next year

Clear skies and silent streets can
come about with shocking speed,
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will depend, to some extent, on the return and earnings in the Foundation's Annual Fund investment portfolio.

Obviously not even Warren Buffett can predict exactly what Rotary's investment portfolio will earn next year.

Remember we have three categories of funds for investment — Annual, Endowment and Polio.

We invest our Endowment funds in perpetuity for long-term growth and generally in equity strategies. We are prepared to bear more risk in this portfolio. We invest to earn a return of 7 to 8 per cent over a multi-year time horizon, but we always budget more conservatively.

On the other hand, the Annual Fund is needed as part of the three-year-cycle and thus invested more conservatively.

In contrast to the past, the Annual Fund is invested to earn a modest

return and thus the risk of loss is minimised, so that the Foundation can meet its funding obligations for global grants, district grants, and the costs of the Foundation and fulfill its mission. This conservative philosophy paid off when the markets crashed this year.

Our investment returns in 2019–20 on a portfolio of approximately \$425 million was budgeted at 4.5 per cent, but the actual return this year will probably fall short of the budget.

For the year 2020–21 we have budgeted at a more conservative 3.5 per cent in view of the possibility of lower returns.

Polio funds are invested even more conservatively in very low risk, short-term bonds because the funding is distributed relatively quickly to our grant partners.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Rotary India commits ₹1.5 crore to protect India's children during pandemic

Jaishree



Rotary was one of the participants at a two-hour 'Telethon' organised by NDTV in association with the World Vision India. The live programme titled 'Together with Children', aired across the country, was a fundraiser to support millions of children facing hunger and other forms of abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

On behalf of Rotary India RIPN Shekhar Mehta committed ₹1.5 crore for the campaign.

"Several children are living in such precarious situations; the pandemic is only making it worse. All our programmes — education, nutrition, sanitation — revolve around them," said Mehta. He first made initial commitment of ₹1 crore and revised it to ₹1.5 crore towards the end of the programme, saying, "We want to be the highest contributors".

Rotary India Sanitation Mission Chair Ramesh Aggarwal, also on the programme, spoke about Rotary's sanitation and WinS programmes. Here again, Mehta invited contributions from the public for installing handwash stations in schools and announced that "Rotary will match public contribution with an equal

amount. We will install handwash stations worth ₹1 crore in 1,000 schools this year."

He touched upon the sad plight of children forced to travel on foot, along with their parents, who were badly caught during the lockdown. "Watching the exodus of migrant workers and seeing them trudge wearily on the highways, with children sleeping in suitcases, some bawling from hunger and thirst, is a heart-wrenching experience. They are the most vulnerable members of our society and it is our duty to ensure that they are safe and get proper nutrition. Their education must not be hampered," he said. During this pandemic, Rotary is focusing on food security and education for India's poor in a big way, he added.

"Rotarians have been spending nearly ₹35–40 lakh feeding the hungry, about ₹15–20 crore in providing medical equipment and supplies. There are 4,000 Rotary clubs in India and they have provided around one crore masks. We have given ₹105 crore to the PM CARES fund and more is flowing in. The value of the work Rotarians have been doing to tackle the pandemic will be worth ₹75

crore. For people taking this money out of their personal savings, is a huge effort,” he said.

Referring to Rotary’s literacy programme, Mehta said, “With more than 10 years of experience in online education, we have suggested to the government that we can provide our curriculum for Classes 1–12 for every State.”

Aggarwal highlighted the long-standing partnership shared by World Vision and Rotary in executing several sanitation projects.

NDTV’s co-founder Prannoy Roy complimented Mehta and Aggarwal for Rotary’s huge contribution. “The pandemic can turn into a child rights crisis as children are exposed to abject poverty, hunger, malnutrition and worst of all, abuse. Even a cup of tea is a luxury for them and sleep is a mode of escapism from hunger. It is only pertinent that we rise to the challenge and reach out to these innocent little children,” he said.

The initiative garnered about ₹5 crore including ₹20 lakh from Archana and Anil Gupta, members of RC Delhi Asoka, and ₹10 lakh from GS Kochhar, past president of RC Delhi Midwest, besides ₹1.35 crore and ₹95 lakh from two anonymous contributors.



RISM Chair Ramesh Aggarwal and RIPN Shekhar Mehta.

Shobana Khamineni, Executive Vice Chairperson, Apollo Hospitals, bought the paintings done by child artist Aarav Varma (13) for ₹2 lakh which he contributed for the initiative, saying, “I am grateful that I have a family who can feed me.” Film maker Kabir Khan offered to sponsor 50 children.

The funds will be used to provide nutrition and healthcare, restore and improve livelihoods, and educate vulnerable communities and families on Covid-19 prevention.

The telethon exposed other heartbreaking challenges faced by children during the lockdown.

Henna, an HIV-positive child from Mumbai, highlighted her plight saying, “We are not able to go to the hospital for treatment nor get medicines.”

“Children of labourers are surviving only on biscuits for over 20 hours. That is horrific,” said NDTV Journalist and Magsaysay Award winner Ravish Kumar. At this point many children go through mental, physical and emotional trauma and “we need to save them from malnutrition. Many of them are walking miles and miles with their parents and this will remain in their memory forever. This is a crisis of an unprecedented scale,” he said, and suggested that the PM should video conference with the child development ministers of the States to take care of children’s welfare.

World Vision International Regional Leader Cherian Thomas, its National Director Madhav Bellamkonda, Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee, A R Rahman, Zomato Chief Chandan Mendiratta, Apollo Hospitals Executive Vice Chairperson Preetha Reddy, Fashion Designer Ritu Kumar and actor Sonu Sood were few other participants on the telethon which ended with a soulful rendition of the title song of *Taare Zameen Par* by Shankar Mahadevan.

Child Pianist Lydian Nadhaswaram opened the telethon with a live performance. ■



RIPN Mehta speaking on the NDTV channel.

Rotary can have a co-branded petroleum credit card with GoI: Minister

V Muthukumaran

As part of the 'new normal' in post-Covid society, the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is willing to launch co-branded credit cards with Rotary for consumers to make digital payments at energy retail outlets across the country. "Every day, over 45 million people visit retail outlets, namely petrol, diesel and LPG filling stations, to meet their energy requirements, and Rotary should promote the use of digital platforms for retail payments for saving the cost of handling and transferring hard currency," said Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Petroleum Minister, at a virtual meet attended by 500 Rotarians including senior Rotary leaders led by RIPN Shekhar Mehta.

About 75 per cent of transactions at petrol stations, and 95 per cent at LPG refilling stations are in cash. The Minister urged Rotary India to take up a strident campaign for digital payments and encourage people to adapt to the 'new normal' after the Covid pandemic subsides. "I will talk with the oil PSUs on the issue of co-branded cards for such retail payments," he promised.

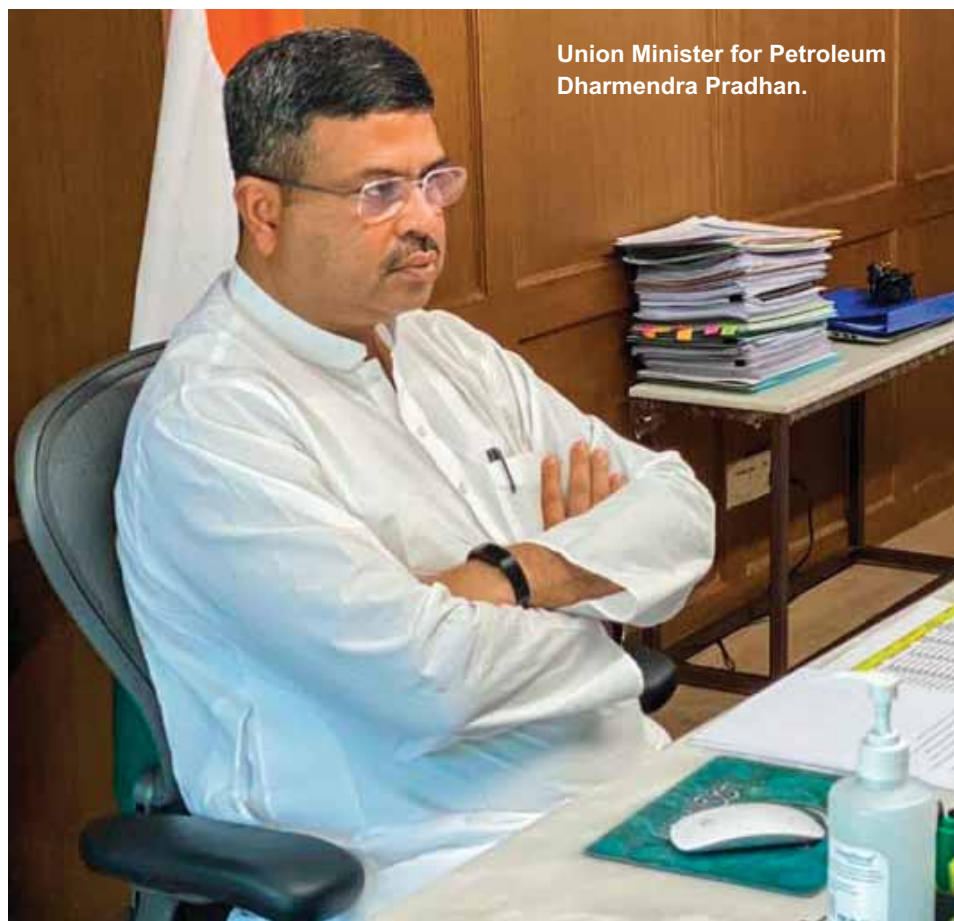
During this pandemic people's ways of working, lives and social relationships have all gone for a toss and "we will have to come to terms with a changed world by enhancing our

knowledge of digital systems that will set new benchmarks in emerging new economic models," he said.

During his interactions with the working age population (16–59 years) in China, Japan and South Korea, he had found that they always kept sanitisers in their bag even before the Covid outbreak. "Skilling is a continuous learning process in our life to improve our

living conditions. There are around 40 crore smart devices in the country, with some people using more than one smartphone. Rotary can take the initiative to re-distribute old devices among poor children and their families by forming digital banks to bridge the digital divide. This will speed up their economic progress," the Minister said, adding that skill development starting with digital literacy will play a key role in the emerging knowledge-based economy. He urged Rotary to chart out joint programmes with Union Ministry of Skill Development. RIPN Mehta intervened to add that Rotary clubs are aiming to impart skill training to 50,000 people in the next five years.

With such smart devices, people can protect themselves by using apps like *Aarogya Setu* that help in contact-tracing of Covid-infected patients, he said. Niti Aayog has identified 115 out of 732 revenue districts as 'aspirational districts' in need of development and Rotary can implement their welfare



Union Minister for Petroleum
Dharmendra Pradhan.

initiatives in health, literacy, sanitation, water, etc in these backward areas.

Lives vs livelihoods

During the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, countries that gave importance to “saving lives went on to become superpowers as they were served well by vigilant social and voluntary groups.” He listed government initiatives to reduce Covid fatalities by enforcing lockdown and providing stimulus packages to revive the economy. The social, psychological and economic impact of the pandemic would be felt for a long time, he said, “but India has managed well compared to developed countries like the US, UK and Russia, thanks to the united efforts of voluntary groups like Rotary and State governments.”

The ‘collective wisdom’ of voluntary agencies, governments and civil society has helped the country in its fight against Covid-19. Schemes like Gharib Kalyan Yojana (foodgrains, pulses to poor, direct benefit transfer), Jan Dhan Yojana (direct transfers), Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (free LPG cylinders for eight crore widows for three months), putting money in the bank accounts of disabled, old-age pensioners and widows, and crediting money into over 10 crore accounts through the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana were some of these.

In two months, Rotary has distributed masks, sanitisers, PPEs, medical supplies and equipment including ventilators, and provided food to the needy, spending around ₹200 crore, the Minister noted. He recalled various eye camps and hospitals being run by Rotary clubs in Odisha that “I have been a witness too and their impact in my State.”

GoI nod for two schemes

E-learning curriculum for Classes 1–10 was okayed by the government under its Vidyadhan Shiksha programme which can be delivered to 10 States

We’re looking forward to partner with oil PSUs in part-funding the e-learning programme.

Shekhar Mehta

RI President Nominee

and for rest of them, the Hindi audio-visual content will be translated and given as per specific needs, said RIPN Mehta in his address. “We are looking for CSR funds as the cost of developing the digital curriculum is ₹15 crore. We’re looking forward to partner with oil PSUs in part-funding the e-learning programme.” Once the GoI’s Operation Digital Board fructifies, “our e-learning will reach out to every child in every government school,” he assured.

Under Adult Literacy, the GoI has approved *Padhna Likhna Abhiyan* of Rotary on May 13, a programme “much loved by the then HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar. It aims to make 10 crore adult illiterates literate, and with the GoI taking care of another 10 crore, we can increase total literacy from 74 per cent (last census) to over 95 per cent in the next five years.” Mehta said the blueprint, curriculum and partnerships are in ready-mode for implementing the Adult Literacy project.

Noteworthy projects

Rotary also wants to implement 10 per cent of government’s water projects such as check dams and rejuvenation of water bodies. “We will be taking up 10,000 check dams and restoring 10,000 water bodies in the next five years,” he said. Under the Har Ghar Jal Jeevan Mission, Rotary will be adopting 1,000 villages and will implement ODF+ programmes in 5,000 villages in the next five years.

Over 30,000 schools were provided with handwash stations and sanitation facilities. In the next five years, 30 crore trees will be planted, 12 lakh households will get solar lights and 4,000 villages will have solid waste management systems. In the health sector, 50 eye hospitals will be set up and perform 2.5 lakh eye surgeries each year; 40 blood banks will come up; and one lakh dialysis machines will be installed, besides clubs holding medical camps that will screen 50 lakh patients in the next five years. “Rotary will be a strong hand of the government in implementing its health, water, sanitation, cleanliness and literacy programmes,” said Mehta.

Covid-19 relief efforts

Rotarians’ contributions to PM CARES Fund had crossed ₹105 crore and money was still coming in. At the ground-level, the value of work done by Rotarians stood at ₹85 crore, he said.

Rotary has given so far over one crore masks, 75,000-plus PPEs, more than four million meals, and medical equipment, supplies and ventilators worth ₹16 crore. An online mental health programme of Rotary has clocked 4,000 hours. “When corporates give, they do it from their profits. But we have to take it out from our savings which is a tough task but Rotarians have stood up to the challenge,” he said. Each of the 38 RI districts in India does 1,500 projects a year.

He complimented Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the government for taking “excellent steps to stop the spread of Covid-19 in a country with 135 crore people.” He recalled Rotary’s efforts in eradicating polio, except in Pakistan and Afghanistan, in partnerships with Unicef, US CDC, WHO and the Gates Foundation.

RIDs Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi, RIDNs A S Venkatesh and Ravi Vadlamani, and Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty spoke. ■

Rotary India to partner with GoI in different initiatives

Kiran Zehra

During this pandemic which has brought the world to a standstill, Rotarians are looking at opportunities to do good and help the government fight Covid-19.” With these words RID Bharat Pandya opened a webinar with Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road

Transport, Highways and Shipping. Senior Rotary leaders discussed future partnerships with the GoI.

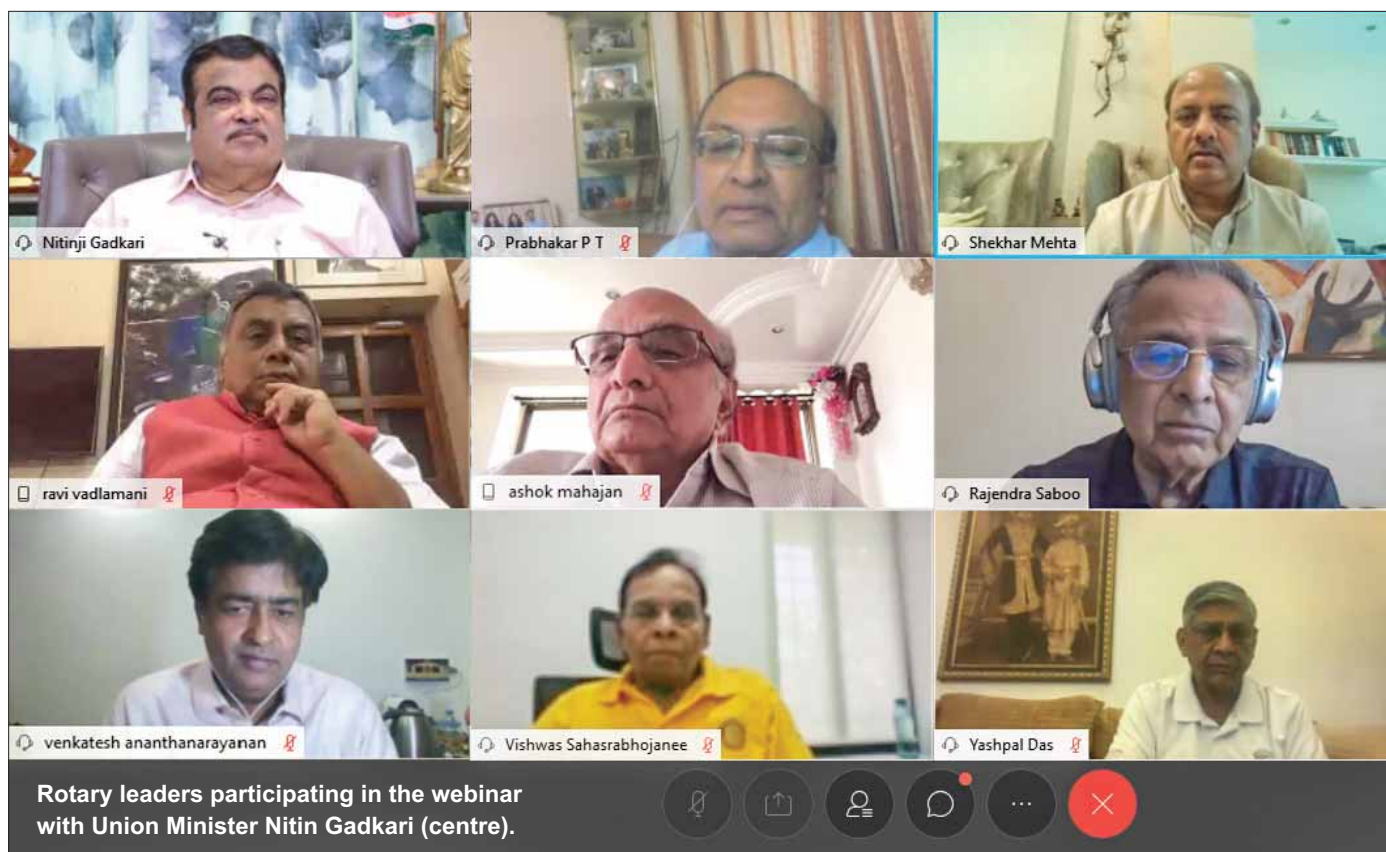
RIPN Shekhar Mehta congratulated the GoI for showing remarkable leadership in handling the Covid-19 crisis and highlighted the work done by Rotarians across India. “We have contributed ₹105 crore towards the PM

CARES fund. Corporates contribute from their CSR funds, but this money that we have donated comes from the savings of our Rotarians. At the grassroots level our Rotarians have spent ₹90 crore over food packets, sanitisers, PPE kits and medical equipment.”

He pointed out that these figures are a week-old and the money spent

by Rotarians has crossed ₹200 crore, (including ₹105 crore for PM CARES Fund). “We have converted many of our Rotary hospitals to Covid hospitals and have also been focusing on mental health.”

Stressing on mental health, the Minister said, “*Samasya ghambir hai, logon ke mann me darr*



hai (It is a difficult time and people are scared). It is good to know that you are working towards spreading positivity. I wish more Rotarians could talk to more people, boost their confidence and assure them everything will be alright soon.” On a lighter note, he said, “We will all have to learn the art of living with corona. I request Rotarians to spread awareness about safeguarding ourselves from the virus.”

Gadkari talked about the many programmes the GoI is planning to implement in future. “We are working towards solving the drinking water crisis across India. We would appreciate if Rotary



Rashi and RIPN Shekhar Mehta.

could help in creating awareness on saving water.” For a start, “we could partner to help the rickshaw pullers in Kolkata replace their hand-pulled rickshaws with electronic rickshaws. This is the worst form of labour, and it must be stopped,” he said.

He requested Rotary to help 2,000 women who work at the Baramulla Khadi Udyog in Kashmir. “Each woman makes 80 men’s handkerchiefs per day and earns ₹5 a piece. If you could do anything to make their lives better, it will be great.”

Mehta immediately said, “we will place an order for five lakh handkerchiefs, with the Rotary logo embroidered on it.” The Minister accepted the proposal and said, “Rotary has done so much in India in the areas of rural healthcare and literacy. The GoI is proud to partner with it.” Gadkari also mentioned that the government has

been planning to plant trees on the National Highways. Before he could finish, Mehta quickly rose up to the occasion and asked, “Whom should we get in touch with to start? We have put up trees in crores.”

RIDN A S Venkatesh emphasised that Rotary’s interface with the government is a valuable input for Rotary leadership in India, and said that meetings like these “help us understand the government’s priorities so we can lend a shoulder. Rotary in India has a strength of 1.6 lakh educated, accomplished and committed foot soldiers with whom the government could associate in times of such crises.” PRID PT Prabhakar introduced the 12 panel members and observed that “all 38 DGs, DGEs and DGNs are present today for this meeting.”

RID Kamal Sanghvi, moderating a Q&A

session, asked the Minister, “What are the long and short-term plans that the government has for MSMEs as many of our Rotarians who own such enterprises would like to know.” MSME is the backbone of our economy, Gadkari said, and added that within 45 days, the GoI will issue an order for the MSMEs to receive their pending payments. Apart from this, there are plans to “increase exports by 60 per cent and create five crore new jobs.” He asked the MSMEs to see this crisis as a “blessing in disguise. Every country is looking to partner commercially with new countries. India could be that new partner the world is looking for, with the help of our MSMEs,” he added.

The engaging webinar had close to 2,000 attendees and over 25,000 people watching it live on Facebook. RIDN Ravi Vadlamani delivered a vote of thanks. ■



Jamnagar's Rotary Senoras on a de-addiction drive during lockdown

Rasheeda Bhagat

The Rotary Club of Senoras, Jamnagar, RI District 3060, an all-women's club as its name denotes, has seized upon the corona pandemic lockdown time to further work on its pet project of de-addiction from the extremely harmful *gutka* and other tobacco products.

Its charter president Dr Kalpana Khandheria says that counseling of youth and getting the community rid of addiction to harmful products has been on their club's agenda right from "day 1 of our Rotary journey. And our club members felt this lockdown period was the best time to continue to work on de-addiction, as all the people addicted to harmful substances had to remain at home, away from friends and gatherings where substance abuse normally happens."

They felt it would be easier to convince youngsters and other addicts to stay away from harmful

substances "because first of all, they are in the midst of family members who will advise, motivate and support them to give up these bad habits. Also during the lockdown, *gutka* and other tobacco products' availability had also come down."

So the club started distributing a harmless and tasty substitute to *gutka* in

the form of a *Magic Mix Mukhwas*, a mouth freshener containing cinnamon, cumin, *ajwain* (carom seeds), *saunf* (fennel), rice flour and cloves.

The story of the magic *mukhwas* goes back two years. Dr Kalpana

recalls that she came across a social media post where she read about a doctor associated with Mumbai's BEST buses "who had described that he had distributed packets of these to 300 of BEST's conductors and drivers who were addicted to *gutka* and other tobacco products. I traced his number, talked to him





Cloves, cinnamon, fennel, rice, carom and cumin seeds — ingredients to prepare the magic *mukhwas*.

and got the recipe of this *mukhwas*.”

A gynaecologist by profession, Dr Kalpana is also the President of the Jamnagar Cancer Research Institute and hence deeply interested in cancer prevention. “For the coming year our DGE Prashant Jani has given me the responsibility of

District Chairperson of Mammography and Oral Cancer,” she adds.

After getting the recipe of this magic mix from the Mumbai doctor, she organised and distributed some 5,000 packets of this *mukhwas*, through her family Trust (Shree Batukbhai Khandheria Charitable Trust) to NGOs

and others working in the area of cancer prevention and tobacco/substance abuse.

From the very first day of its Rotary journey in 2014, the Senoras have taken on Vyasan Mukti

(de-addiction) and Yuva Counselling as their signature project. On the first day of its inception the club inaugurated a Yuva Counselling Centre at Dr Kalpana’s clinic.

President of the club Nisha Aiyer says that in the last six years, “we have counselled 55,997 students in 436 schools and colleges of Jamnagar and Devbhumi Dwarka districts and provided de-addiction medicines to over 5,000 workers of all industrial areas in these districts.” It has also organised a de-addiction drive taking on board all religious leaders. In partnership with the Kanoria hospital in Ahmadabad, which has an indoor de-addiction facility to admit patients, the club



RC Senoras President Nisha Aiyer (centre) giving a dabbi of the Magic Mix Mukhwas to a person in the presence of Dr Kalpana Khandheria.



Past President Hina Mehta gives a mukhwas sachet to a person in the presence of (from R) Nisha Aswar and Minaxi Shah.

arranged training of trainers by chest physician Dr Dabavala, and distributed the *mukhwas* packets to NGOs.

Dr Kalpana adds that this is an ongoing signature project of their club and the Senoras are now very keen to have other Rotary clubs replicate it. Each pouch/dabbi of the mix costs barely Rs 15–20, it is easy to make at home and its recipe is given on the container so that the recipient can start making it at home. “During the lockdown, we

thought it is the best time to push this initiative and we have started distributing this magic mix. People who wish to de-addict come to my hospital, take away two containers and then they can prepare it at home.”

On advice from DG Anish Shah, she has written to other clubs urging them to replicate

this project, which is not only good for the community’s health, prevention of cancer and other diseases but also good PR for Rotary. It can be easily replicated and is rather inexpensive — 100 pouches can be made spending just Rs 1,500–2,000, she adds.

The clubs can “distribute these either to

individuals who wish to de-addict, or keep some pouches at medical stores, a few of which can be distributed free, after which the interested person should start making it at home, as she frowns on “spoon feeding”!

“By just spending less than Rs 2,000, we can reach this mix to so many people,” she adds.

To prepare 100 pouches, one needs to take 250 grams of each of the ingredients — cinnamon, cumin, *ajwain* (carom seeds), *saunf* (fennel), rice flour and 50 cloves, and churn them in a grinder. ■

During the lockdown, we thought it is the best time to push this initiative. People who wish to de-addict come to my hospital and take away two containers.

Dr Kalpana Khandheria



Sri Sri Ravi
Shankar

Rotary and Art of Living to work together for world peace

Kiran Zehra

Peace was the central topic of discussion at the 'Re-inventing, Service and Peace for Universal Oneness' post-pandemic webinar dialogue between RIPN Shekhar Mehta and spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Mehta suggested that Art of Living Foundation could partner with Rotary to work for global peace, and appreciated the Foundation's outreach "from Kashmir in India, to Colombia, Iraq and Syria; your programmes have had an impact on people who were involved in armed conflict to pursue the path of peace."

Briefing Ravi Shankar on Rotary's Peace Fellowship programmes, he suggested that Foundation and Rotary's "peace programmes, that have already produced 1,400 peace warriors, should work together."

"We will definitely come together to make the world more peaceful and a happy place," replied Ravi Shankar. He expressed his desire "to work with your youth wing — Rotaract." Complimenting him on his ability to motivate the youth, Mehta said that though he

had never met him in person, "I am amazed and deeply impressed at how you inspire the youth to practise peace." Drawing parallels between Rotary and the Foundation, he added "I find a synergy in what both our organisations are doing. Both promote integrity, peace, goodwill and service."

The word 'service' said Ravi Shankar, "comes from the Sanskrit word 'seva.' I have been familiar with Rotary since my youth and you have done great service in the world. From building bus stops in rural villages to uniting people across the world, you are a model of a world community."

Mehta briefed Ravi Shankar about Rotary's work in mental health during the lockdown. The spiritual leader appreciated the efforts and added "Mental health issues are going to be bigger than what we are facing now. In the lockdown, people are either getting into depression or becoming aggressive. On the one side there is anger and on the other, there is fear... for us to be a sane society we will all have to work together."

On the one side there is anger and on the other, there is fear... for us to be a sane society we will all have to work together.

He added that "today eight lakh people are committing suicide globally. The whole world is looking to the East for a solution." He suggested yoga, meditation programmes and mental health activities. "More than the disease we have to deal with the fear of it," he added, suggesting that everybody work together "to have a healthy mind and free spirit during the lockdown."

Mehta told him that The Rotary Foundation has given 150 global grants of \$25,000 each towards Covid-19 relief activities. "In India the Rotarians have given the PM CARES Fund \$50 million and spent an equal amount in helping their local communities cope with the crisis." ■



Kamalamma's incredible generosity

Rasheeda Bhagat

As the Covid-19 pandemic ushered in a new challenge, the Rotary Club of Heritage Mysuru, RID 3181, took up the task of providing food to stranded, hungry and helpless migrant workers, daily wagers, hawkers, beggars, and other under-privileged people in their city.

Starting from March 20, the club members started providing 500 cooked meals a day in different parts of the city. "But what started as a moment of kindness became a movement as donations poured in kind and cash, from friends, relatives, youngsters, students and absolute strangers", says club member D M Raghavendra.

Soon the Rotarians scaled up their daily chore to 2,400 meals a day and in 40 days, till May 17, they distributed nearly 62,000 meals in the city. The total cost is ₹18.35 lakh. As the club members, their wives, Annettes, relatives and friends and students got involved in this task, they were able to reach many more hungry people across the city.

Soon the project titled *Annadanam* got high visibility

and VIPs such as Members of Parliament, MLAs, top police and Corporation officials visited the kitchen and appreciated the precautions taken such as cleanliness and hygiene, social distancing, wearing head caps, hand gloves, face masks, etc. Everyone tasted the food and vouched for its quality and nutritive value, he adds.

"Our club members themselves were packing the steaming hot food in aluminium containers and sealing them with a machine. And the food was delivered to the recipients," says Club president Talakad Manjunath.

One day, as the members were busy getting the cooked food packed, "a seemingly poor, 70-year-old woman walked into the premises. We thought she wanted a packet, and extended it to her. But she refused to take it, and visibly mustering up some courage, took out something hidden behind her saree *pallu*, and said: 'I have been watching you all supplying food to my area for over 30 days

now. And I felt I should contribute something too. So here is ₹500, from the ₹600 monthly pension I receive. I know it is a small amount, but please accept it,' she said," recalls Raghavendra.

The stunned Rotarians thanked her and tried to convince her to keep the money which she might surely need during these difficult times. "But despite making several requests to her, she insisted we accept it, which we did with gratitude, he says.

When he narrated this touching incident in a Facebook post with the comment that to the club members her gesture seemed "greater than that of the Tatas, Ambanis, Azim Premji, Narayana Murthy," and other billionaires, the post went viral. And now Kamalamma has become a local celebrity with television channels and the print media widely featuring her generous spirit.



Above: Club President Talakad Manjunath thanking Kamalamma for her contribution as Charter President K Manjunath (L) looks on; **Facing Page:** Kamalamma greeting Rotarians in front of her house; **Below:** Club member DM Raghavendra packing food packets for distribution.

Giving details about her background, club president Manjunath adds that every month Kamalamma gets ₹600 from the government as "widow's pension. She has three sons, but lives alone as she told us she doesn't want to be a burden on anyone. We were really touched by her gesture."

He also thanked a local industrialist Rajanna, who has given the Rotarians his convention hall, kitchen, stoves and utensils free of cost for preparing and packing the meals. "It is also important to mention here the cooks who supported us for 40 days for this initiative, for a fraction of what they normally charge and also the transporters, district administration, municipal corporation and local corporators, who helped us distribute cooked meals to different parts of Mysuru."

Manjunath adds that the club has also helped over 6,000 migrant workers boarding the Shramik trains by giving them snacks and water for the journey.

It has also supported during this pandemic, a daycare centre for destitutes, run by the Sneha Charitable Trust and Palliative Care Centre, at an additional cost of ₹2 lakh.



Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Rotary Club of Bombay's sizzling service during pandemic

Rasheeda Bhagat

A vintage Rotary club which once had JRD Tata as its member, the Rotary Club of Bombay, RID 3141, was one of the first clubs in India to spring into action to help the Maharashtra government, especially the beleaguered city of Mumbai, which has been groaning under the brutal impact of

Covid-19, deal with the corona pandemic.

Its members came together to launch at least 19 different activities associated with giving critical care equipment such as ventilators, PPEs (personal protective equipment), masks, sanitisers, preventive medicines, and above all, food for migrant workers, daily wagers and other

marginalised sections in Mumbai.

In two months, it did Covid-related relief for an amount exceeding ₹4.5 crore, pooling its own funds and getting contributions from corporates under their CSR activities. Club member and TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty said that ₹90 lakh came from IT major ATOS. According to Nasir Shaik, VP, Head, Human Resources, "we were happy to collaborate with RC Bombay to provide ventilators and PPE kits to government hospitals as Covid-19 has created unprecedented health hazards across the globe. We've already had a positive experience in working with Rotary in Kerala, where we had helped in re-building and handing over last year 28 homes to families displaced by the 2018 floods."

RC Bombay kept tweeting its activities in quick succession on Twitter. Till the first week of May it had distributed free cooked and packed

meals to more than one million persons. "We are giving out 30,000 meals every day from a kitchen operated and supervised by us to the homeless, migrant workers and daily wage earners," said a press release given by the club.

Apart from this, it also supplied 40,000 packets of ready-to-eat *upma* and *poha* to the curfewed section of Malegaon (about four hours drive from Mumbai). In "addition we are distributing free cooked and packed meals — 1,000 meals every day — until May 17."

The club has also provided 52 ventilators to hospitals run by the Government of Maharashtra. Till mid-May it also gave out 11,250 PPEs to various hospitals in Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru; 1,150 N95 respiratory masks, and a good supply of contactless digital thermometers and oximeter pulse machines to various hospitals in Mumbai; 1,200 face shields to the sanitation workers who maintain community toilets in the slums of Mumbai; and 5,000 sanitation handwash bottles to various agencies.

Mental health counselling

To help the over-burdened Mumbai police, the club put up coffee/tea vending machines at various police stations. "We have also set up a toll-free counselling



Footwear being organised for migrant workers.

helpline (all India) with over 600 trained volunteers and counsellors to help callers who are either distressed, disturbed or anxious about their mental health in view of the ongoing situation. In addition the helpline also endeavours to help those persons who need dry rations anywhere in India,” said a club member.

The second oldest club in India, after RC Calcutta, this club has an enduring relationship with the Tata Memorial Hospital, and to help it treat corona-infected patients, it supplied 2,500 Covid-19 testing kits costing over ₹20 lakh to the hospital.



Snacks were distributed to hospital workers.

In partnership with another arm of Rotary, it distributed 2,000 nutritive snack packets to the staff of KEM and Cooper Hospitals.

But the one story from the club that really

touched the heart was of a request related to migrant workers, whose pitiable plight has continued to hit us in the gut. A club member received a call from some friends in Gurgaon who desperately wanted to help the migrant workers and provide them slippers.

“Could we do anything, they asked? They said they saw pictures of blistered and bare feet and they wanted to provide slippers to these workers who were walking such long distances to their homes. It was virtually impossible to source the slippers here in Mumbai due to the lockdown so they said they would revert,” he said.

In an hour the Gurgaon friends reverted saying they had managed to source 100 pairs of slippers but those were available only at a Noida location — near Delhi. Would RC Bombay members be able to help reach these to the migrant

workers in Gurgaon, was the request.

“We at the Rotary Club of Bombay immediately made a few phone calls and within 20 minutes Kanishk Gaur of the India Future Foundation, Delhi, agreed to not only pick up the 100 pairs of slippers from Noida but also distribute them to the migrant workers!

This is but a small example which shows the power and connect of Rotary to reach out to any nook and corner of the world to serve a humanitarian cause,” said a tweet from the club.

The club is continuing to raise funds and will keep funding and executing Covid-related activities, including distribution of 30,000 packets of cooked food a day till May 31. It seeks donations from philanthropists and those wishing to help can connect with the club at contact@rotaryclubofbombay.org. ■



Ventilators donated to the Civil Hospital in Thane.

Rotaplast camp does 148 skin graft surgeries

V Muthukumaran

Thirty-five-year-old Babita had to endure pain and psychological stress for 20 years before she had an image makeover at the 10-day Rotaplast Medical Camp at the Unity Hospital in Firozabad near Agra. “Her upper parts including the torso were grievously burnt, her hands crippled and she could not move her face due to stiff, rigid neck. We had to do extensive skin graft surgeries on her for eight hours to transform her figure to some modicum of presentability,” said Project Chair Rahul Wadhwa from RC Agra Tajmahal,

RID 3110. Post-surgery, Babita is now able to move her limbs and take care of herself, even as the facial scars will take time to heal to a certain extent. Her two brothers were happy that she could smile for the first time after long years of suffering and agony.

For the Rotarians of RCs Agra Tajmahal, Firozabad, Agra North and Shikohabad, the joint organisers, this camp is the most successful one as “as the 25-member surgical-cum-volunteer team from the US performed 148 cleft lip, palate and burn procedures on 82

patients out of 185 diagnosed at the OPD,” said Wadhwa. This is the third year the clubs are organising the Rotaplast camp. The patients were accommodated at the Unity Hospital and were given food and refreshments during their stay and treatment. “Not a penny was charged on patients who had come from far-off districts of Uttar Pradesh, thanks to our elaborate publicity campaign six months prior to the medical camp through social media, hoardings and banners in the city and nearby villages.” Even the transportation



Project Chair Rahul Wadhwa (extreme R) with the Rotaplast team.



Doctors attending to patients at the hospital.

cost was met by Rotary as most of the patients can't afford to travel such a long distance to the camp venue.

The Rotarians distributed 30,000 handbills across 70 villages around Firozabad to urge people to avail treatment at the camp. Besides, autorickshaws with PA systems were engaged to publicise about the camp and standees were put up at clinics in Firozabad to spread the message. "We selected patients from 13 screening camps that preceded the surgical camp. While the doctors came from Guatemala, Colombia and the US, they were ably supported by eight Rotary volunteers from America," said Wadhwa.

Successful mission

Unity Hospital Director Dr Ravi Pachauri extended support by providing three operation theatres, pre-operative and post-operative ICUs and technical and support staff for the Rotaplast team to accomplish their mission. Sharing his experience, Rotaplast Medical Director Alex McCulloch said,

"I have not seen such burn cases in my life. I will come here again next year too to be part of this valuable project."

Mission Director Rtn Tom Fox, Director, Rotaplast International, recalled the various missions he had undertaken and said that the "potential to do good" was maximum at this mission in Firozabad as he could reach out to a large number of communities who can't afford basic healthcare.

As the doctors were able to do only 13–15 surgeries a day in their 10-day schedule, Wadhwa said a lot of patients in need of surgery

have been left out and have to wait till the Rotaplast mission next year. "We will be reaching out to all the UP districts and bring in most number of rural, poor patients next year," he said. .

Orientation session

On the penultimate day, doctors briefed the beneficiaries on the need to take care of their bandaged wound and the procedure for its weekly dressing once they were discharged. "It was a celebration of sorts with Rotarians cutting the cake and patients thanking the medical mission. Some patients who could not reach home were allowed to stay at the hospital for two more weeks," said Wadhwa. Local surgeon Dr Deepak Gupta and support staff Ajay Parashar took post-operative care of the patients. President-elect Divya Wadhwa from RC Agra Tajmahal, PDG Laxmi Kant Bansal (RC Firozabad), PDG Naresh Sood (RC Agra North) and Rtn Ashok Babu Agarwal (RC Shikohabad) were part of the Project Coordination team led by Wadhwa.■

I have not seen such
burn cases in my life.
I will come here again
next year too to be part
of this valuable project.

Alex McCulloch
Rotaplast Medical Director

Raising the bar at 60

Jaishree

As RC Mettupalayam, RID 3202, turns 60, the club members are all charged up to do more good for the community. “For starters, we have executed three global grants during the year — the first was a CSR-funded GG to procure a mobile mammogram unit, the second was to upgrade a government hospital and the third, a Disaster Response Grant,” says Club President Dr D Vijayagiri, who is an accomplished paediatric surgeon. He was part of the VTT medical mission that served in Nigeria in January this year. “It was a unique experience. In the paediatric department, more than 1,000 children were examined, and

over 50 surgeries were performed. There is no free healthcare in Nigeria. People without the means to pay therefore defer surgeries for as long as possible. As a result, we treated many advanced cases that we normally would not see in India,” he says, adding, “it also showed me first-hand the value of contributing to the Foundation. The GG would not have been possible if not for Rotarians contributing to TRF in a big way.”

The advanced digital mammography equipment is currently being imported, and vehicle fabrication is in progress. The project will be launched in June to screen rural and underprivileged women across the district for breast cancer. Project Heal, as it is

called, operates on a ‘regional partner model’, the first being RC Erode Cosmos which will cover the Erode region, says Suresh Ananthakrishnan, COO – Project Heal Trust. The total project cost was \$264,000. Encece Aromatics, a specialty chemicals and floral essences manufacturer, contributed \$33,800 from its CSR funds, DG A Karthikeyan supported it with \$20,000 from the DDF, and \$15,000 of his personal funds. Twenty-five club members pooled in \$71,000. RC Juarez Campestre in Mexico signed up as the international partner.

The club has partnered with the Kovai Medical Centre and Hospital, Coimbatore, to provide free surgery for patients with suspicious breast



DG Dr A Karthikeyan, RC Mettupalayam President Dr D Vijayagiri, Project Heal Trust COO Suresh Ananthakrishnan, along with club members and members of RC Erode Cosmos led by President Gayathri Balaji, after procuring the vehicle for setting up the mammogram unit.

The speed with which the club was able to move as a team, and the ability to build partnerships with other organisations enabled its success this year.

Dr D Vijayagiri
President, RC Mettupalayam



Food being distributed to people during the lockdown.

lesions. It also plans to provide free screening for cervical cancer.

Project CARE

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the club switched gears almost instantaneously to help the community by putting together a global grant project of \$44,000 to procure 15 beds, 15 multi-para monitors, 2 ECG machines, and a Digital X-Ray machine for a government hospital in Mettupalayam. “The hospital treats 40,000 patients every month, of which 60 per cent are from BPL families and

10 per cent are tribals from the Niligiri hills,” says Ananthakrishnan. The entire grant (Project CARE — Covid-19 And Recuperative Equipment) was approved within a week, and the additional capacity at the hospital will start functioning in mid-June, he adds.

About 650 kits, each consisting of a reusable face shield, goggles and KN-95 mask, were designed using the Disaster Response Grant funds, and distributed to hospitals and dental clinics, including government facilities and private practitioners.

More than the impact of each of these individual projects, it was the speed with which the club was able to move as a team, and the ability to build partnerships with other organisations that enabled it to succeed this year, says Vijayagiri. “For instance, considering that breast cancer is a sensitive topic, the Inner Wheel Club of Mettupalayam was co-opted to do community assessments for Project Heal.” The club has signed MoUs with other NGOs to conduct screening camps. More than 20 Rotary clubs have contributed to the club’s global grants, and the club has reciprocated the support as well.

Club President Dr D Vijayagiri with a child patient and his caretaker at the VTT Mission in Nigeria.



Other proud moments

The club has raised \$132,000 for TRF this year and its pride in brick and mortar includes the METRo (Mettupalayam Rotary) Higher Secondary School with more than 2,000 students, a gas crematorium and a school for autistic children. The club’s quarterly LN-4 hand fitment camp executed since 2019 draws a huge crowd and the tall clock tower with a Rotary Wheel at the bus stand takes care of its public image. ■

RID 3060 gets two global grants cleared in record time

Rasheeda Bhagat

RI District 3060's global grant for a whopping ₹1.8 crore (\$240,533) to provide ventilators to hospitals in Gujarat and Maharashtra for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, was "approved in less than 30 hours. This is the biggest ever grant that our district has applied for and got," said an excited District Governor Anish Shah.

The GG or Disaster Management Grant application was for funding ventilators on an urgent basis to 31 hospitals in the two States to help the state administrations to deal with people infected by Covid-19. It was submitted by RIDs 3060 and 2430. "We submitted the application during the weekend, after due diligence and

keeping in mind all the parameters and information that TRF needs. It was apparently taken up on Monday and by Tuesday it had been cleared," he says, thanking "DGSC Manish Shroff for initiating the grant and DRFC Ashish Ajmera for guiding us on this GG. And of course TRF and Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty, and RI Directors Dr Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi for their support," he added.

He said the district decided to quickly apply for the grant as "we realised that when even sophisticated countries like the US and European countries like Italy which have such wonderful medical infrastructure, are struggling to deal with the onslaught of this virus, in India our healthcare

systems are grossly unprepared to deal with the large numbers likely to be infected."

Going by the research done by ICMR (Indian Council for Medical Research), which predicted that India would need thousands, and probably several hundred thousands, of ventilators in a worsening coronavirus scenario, the district decided to do a GG to provide this critical equipment to 31 hospitals. "But in India, critical care hospitals are located in metros and big cities. And to transport or support a patient who is critically ill, particularly during the Covid-lockdown, is a huge problem for the economically challenged people in villages and small towns."

RID 3060 Rotarians are helping their community hospitals deal with the corona pandemic.



On the other hand, several government-run ICUs have limited resources and lack infrastructure, equipment and trained support staff. But when given a helping hand through private partners and the voluntary sector such as Rotary, the chances of saving a much larger number of lives improve dramatically.

In any scenario, and particularly during a pandemic, the cost of providing quality critical care is very high, and “almost impossible for the economically challenged patients to bear,” said DG Shah, adding, “this funding will help us get 31 badly needed ventilators.”

A grateful DRFC Ashish Ajmera added: “Absolute salute to our Foundation for of course approving this grant, but more than that, the manner in which they are responding to Covic-related

issues is fascinating... they are doing this for something that we never saw, heard of or even imagined.”

He added that under the disaster management grant, “we have supplied 4,900 sets (PPE kits, N95 masks and a bottle of sanitiser) to each club in our district, based on its membership strength.”

Another GG approved for RC Valsad

DG Shah said that while the grant for the district was approved in less than three days, “another global or disaster management grant for our club took an even shorter time. My club — RC Valsad — had plans to put up a high-end ventilator and provide training to use critical care equipment to the staff of the local charitable hospital — Kasturba

Hospital — where this equipment was badly needed.”

He said Valsad town is located in a district with a high percentage of economically backward people. And the club had carefully chosen to donate a ventilator that could provide a 3-in-1 service, giving critical care to neonates, children and also adults. This hospital is being run by a charitable trust and it charges very nominal amount that the locals can afford. Though it has skilled and qualified doctors, nurses and other technical staff, a constant challenge is to find funding to get modern medical equipment that can save lives.

The total budget for this grant is ₹38.65 lakh (\$51,547) and the project is being done in partnership with RC Belleville les 2 Fleuves, RI District 1710, France, he added. ■

A cancer screening camp in Panchgani

Team Rotary News

For the first time in its history, RC Panchgani, RID 3132, organised a cancer screening camp for the residents of this hill station in Satara district of Maharashtra. Around 500 people benefitted from the camp which was led by the Club President Shahram Javanmardi.

The club partnered with the Apollo Hospital, Mumbai, and the Nargis Dutt Foundation in conducting the medical camp. Addressing the gathering, Priya Dutt, former MP and Foundation Trustee, said that without the support of Rotarians, the medical camp would not have been possible and thanked



the Rotary team for the ‘exceptional partnership’.

Seven new Interact clubs

Banking on the popularity of the club’s e-bulletin Silver Oak, which was widely circulated among schools, government offices and prominent people, Javanmardi and his team approached various schools to revive four dormant Interact

clubs and chartered seven more Interact clubs. The Interact advisors were appointed by DG Suhas Vaidya. While the club is looking forward to celebrate its diamond jubilee in 2021–22, the big push to its youth power by raising its Interact membership by 350 will “add vigour and enable the club to serve its community better,” said Club Secretary Sunil Kamble. ■

Making agriculture a profitable venture

V Muthukumaran

Will Indian farmers be swamped by existential woes arising out of Covid pandemic or emerge out of lockdown with better resilience, equipped with scientific tools and farming methodologies? While the spate of farmers' suicides across the country is cause for grave concern, pointing once again to the dire need for the GoI to fine-tune its macro policies, the Chennai-based National Agro Foundation (NAF) is silently working to make sustainable farming a reality in rural India by changing its ecosystem.

Set up on Jan 30, 2000, as a charitable trust on the 90th birth anniversary

of former Union Food and Agriculture Minister C Subramaniam, more popular as the architect of the Green Revolution (1964–72), the NAF is at the forefront to create a healthy, literate and prosperous rural India. But even a statesman like CS had to endure many critical challenges to realise his dream of a farm revolution way back in 1960s. "My father had to face stiff opposition from both, the Opposition MPs and a section of the Congress party, to his move to import high-yielding seeds developed by Norman Borlaug from Mexico," says SS Rajsekar, managing trustee, NAF. They alleged that CS was inviting big

trouble as foreign pests and diseases would swamp the agricultural fields if the government okayed import of such wheat seeds for a trial run. Finding no support in the House, CS lamented in 1964–65, "I am able to convince the farmers of India, but yet to convince my colleagues in Parliament, bureaucrats and scientists."

Quitting national politics in 1980, CS returned to Chennai and started giving shape to his pet ideas and projects. When the results of the Green Revolution with incremental production of food grains began to plateau, it was time for a new growth strategy even as the old mantra 'seeds to grains'



NAF Managing Trustee S S Rajsekar (third from left) interacting with farmers at the CFRD facility at Illedu village in Chengalpeta.

CS, rebel with a calm demeanour

Chidambaram Subramaniam was a born rebel. He never tolerated obscurantism in the name of tradition or loyalty. And he was never an orthodox man. While everybody knows his contributions as the Union Food and Agriculture Minister, followed by his stint as Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission during 1964–72, not many are aware that he was chosen as the first Science and Technology Minister by PM Indira Gandhi. He served in this position too with distinction.

His son, SS Rajsekar, member of RC Madras East, RID 3232, shares interesting facets of CS, one of the tallest statesmen of India. After completing UG in Physics at the Presidency College, he did Law at Madras Law College and at the age of 23, joined the freedom movement. He was jailed for opposing the British rule and after Independence, he was inducted as a member of the Constituent Assembly (1946–52).

When the Madras Province threw up a hung Assembly in the first election, “my father proposed the name of C Rajagopalachari, aka Rajaji, to the post of CM. CS owed a lot to his guru Rajaji. And for two consecutive terms (1952–62) he held the portfolios of Education, Finance and Law in the State cabinet.” When Rajaji lost the vote of confidence among legislators in 1954, PM Jawaharlal Nehru intervened and requested the new CM K Kamaraj to retain CS in the revamped cabinet.

CS mooted the idea of ‘Green Army’ as Defence Minister when Charan Singh was PM (1979). Jawans who quit Army after the age of 30–35, were given the choice of settling on the foothills of Himalayas and joining agro-forestry scheme. “The Army funded the soldiers who took up the greening project which was not for the officers.”

In 1966, CS declared with conviction in Parliament that India would

become self-sufficient in food production, though at that time “we were having a ship-to-mouth existence with large quantities of wheat imported from the US.” His vision was fulfilled in 1971 when we achieved record production of food grains riding the wave of the Green Revolution. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee conferred Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award, on CS in 1998 for his role in the Green Revolution.

Rajsekar was drawn into the NAF after his father’s demise with former President Abdul Kalam and M K Raju, Chairman, Board of Trustees, convincing him to join the Foundation.

During the birth centenary event of CS in 2010, when a scribe asked Rajsekar to describe his father in a pithy line, the son replied: For my father, India was his constituency and the world his country.

had to be recoined to tackle the emerging challenges. Former President Abdul Kalam as then Chairman of TIFAC, a think-tank under the Department of Science and Technology, and CS signed an MoU to set up NAF which had consultant MK Raju as the Chair of the Board of Trustees and an eight-member Governing Council led by Kalam.

During the initial days, NAF had a simple, straightforward agenda: to increase the annual income of farmers from ₹10,000 to at least ₹50,000; and stem the continuous migration from rural India to urban centres, if not reverse it. “Father used to receive publications from Worldwatch Institute and articles from its founder Lester Brown who has time and again warned that we have exceeded the carrying

capacity of Earth. CS quoted Brown to interrelate the 3Ps — population, pollution and poverty; and was concerned about the widening disparity between the rich and the poor,” says Rajsekar.

After Rajsekar joined as managing trustee on Nov 11, 2000, NAF coined the term ‘soil to market’ as a tagline for the Second Green Revolution in the making. “Our primary focus is to make agriculture a viable and productive vocation. Secondly, we want to create employment in farming and farm-related enterprises,” he says.

Centre for Rural Development (CFRD)

In a path-breaking initiative that led to the setting up of CFRD, a training centre for farmers, SHGs, farm managers and bank managers at Illedu

village in Chengalpet district, Tamil Nadu, NAF invited 24 farmers to have an open forum “to find ways and means in which we can support them” in Feb 2001.

A demo project having two plots of one-acre each with corn and paddy cultivation was developed to show that high yield can be achieved with quality seeds, deep tilling with sharp chisels to cut through the ‘hard pan top soil’ and scientific management. “Our demo was a reference point for farmers to grow what is needed by the industry (as raw material) and society, instead of blindly doing agriculture,” explains Rajsekar.

At the CFRD a dynamic syllabus is followed with 70 per cent practical knowledge and 30 per cent theory classes. Besides this facility, a soil

testing lab, an R&D unit, at the Centre for Biotechnology at the Anna University campus in Taramani, Chennai, offers a range of services to farmers.

With NABARD, they are into watershed management in four projects and roped in corporates for eight more outreach initiatives in Tamil Nadu. In seven other States — Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka and Haryana — 14 command areas (at least 1,500 hectares each) are being developed with natural resource management like building check dams and renovating water bodies; livelihood initiatives; and farming systems with focus on sustainability, explains SV Murugan, director at NAF. Corporates including Larsen & Toubro, the Tata group of companies and BNY Mellon are sponsoring the rural projects which mentor local farmers in sustainable farming.

In another initiative to handhold small and marginal farmers in Tamil Nadu, 49 Farmer Producer Companies were formed with the support of NABARD and Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC).



Rajsekar distributing new clothes to farmers and their children on Diwali eve at the Illedu village.

Second Revolution

In a paradigm shift, NAF has taken up clusters of villages in different parts of the country to educate small, marginal and medium-sized farmers in sustainable agriculture along with holistic development of natural resources, watershed management and ushering changes in their livelihood.

A mega watershed and sustainable farming project was completed at Genupauli cluster in Sambalpur district of Odisha in 2016–17. “We have developed a 900-acre command area by creating irrigation channels, renovating check dams and taking up frontline demos on sustainable agriculture (lean farming),” says MR Ramasubramaniyan, executive director, NAF.

In Maharashtra, three ongoing projects spread over 3,000 hectares across 15 villages are setting up watershed facilities and ushering in best practices among farmers. With 122 employees including agri specialists, watershed engineers, IT people (for GIS, remote sensing et al), community organisers and 11 project officers, NAF is on a mission to fulfil its dream of making Indian farmers self-reliant by elevating their skillsets through support systems and extension activities. Over the last 20 years, NAF has reached out to over 770 villages in eight states and lifted the livelihood of thousands of farmers by equipping them with best farm practices thus ushering in a profile makeover for the beneficiaries. ■

Covid relief work

During lockdown, NAF has reached out to frontline warriors against Covid-19 by providing around 50,000 face masks, 17,000 gloves and sanitisers (1,750 litres) to Chennai and Madurai police, health workers and other volunteers. Dry ration kits containing rice, wheat flour, dhal, cooking oil, masala items, salt, sugar, tea and soaps worth ₹850 per bag were given to over 3,500 daily wage labourers. A complete set of 250 PPE kits were donated to Stanley Hospital and

government hospitals in Chennai and Villupuram. One ventilator was donated to Chennai Corporation. “Our community kitchen provided food three times a day to 600 migrant workers for two weeks in Tiruvallur district. Besides, 4,000 fishermen in Royapuram were given food prepared at this kitchen,” said Ramasubramaniyan, Executive Director, NAF. In all, relief material worth ₹1.5 crore were provided to various beneficiaries through the CSR funding from BNY Mellon, an IT conglomerate.

Interactors enjoy conference, learn the power of choice

Kiran Zehra

Rotary Interact Annual Festival (RIAF) 2020, hosted by RC Baroda Cosmopolitan, RI D 3060, had specially outlined topics and discussion to make the 260 teenage participants from across Gujarat and parts of Maharashtra understand the power of choice. DG Anish Shah asked the students to understand that “everything in the end will be a result of the choices you make, so make the right choices.”

District Interact Chair Kalpa Rachh said, “To make the event more interactive and interesting for the students we had young achievers speak to them.”

Interact District Representative Aayushi Dholakia, who won the Miss Teen International 2019, Mira Erda, the first Indian woman driver to race in the Euro series and Umang Shah, a teen CEO addressed the students. All the three speakers have achieved success in the fields they are passionate about while continuing to go to school. “Almost all the students wanted to know how they did that?” said Kalpa.

The one-day conference was spilt into outdoor and indoor activities. The programmes included sessions on information on scientific toys project, waste segregation, an

open-house discussion on the ‘power of choice’, followed by a short video competition on the topic, and a play on organ donation. “It was impressive to see the participants confidently talk about projects on sensitive issues like Good Touch Bad Touch, menstrual health and women’s safety,” she said.

But what was most heartening was to see the hearing-impaired and visually-challenged students participate in a unique Printmaking art activity conducted by artist Kavita Shah. Kalpa recalls that “they were the most enthusiastic participants and it added so much joy to the creative chaos in a room of full of children.”

Rotaractors of RAC Baroda Cosmopolitan conducted an exciting treasure hunt challenge for the students followed by cultural performances by different Interact clubs.

The conference ended with the National Anthem being sung by the hearing-impaired Interactors of Om Interact Club from Amreli.

Priyanjal Singhal, President of Interact Club of Billabong High School said, “This was a great experience. We got to interact with students from different parts of the State and I wish to be part of more such conferences. I thank my Interact club and our sponsor Rotary club for this wonderful learning experience.”■

DG Anil Shah, his wife Swati, Conference Chair Kalpa Rachh with Interactors at the Interact Conference. Interact District Representative Aayushi Dholakia is seen fourth from left.



Amphan triggers reminiscences of the Gorkha agitation

Debi Patra



Debi Patra driving out of the District Magistrate's Bungalow.

Coming as it did, in the midst of Lockdown 4.0, Amphan was feared to be among the strongest cyclones over Bay of Bengal for over a century. Covid-19 had already set everyone wondering whether life will ever be the same again and Amphan added to the depression.

TV News blared; 48 hours before landfall this super cyclone raked up a speed of 270km at a distance of 600km south of Digha, the place of its landfall, and rose four miles into the sky. Its anticipated speed when it fell on the coast was 190km. At Kolkata, it was around 130km. Scary. The day before, on May 19, it was an eerie calm before

the storm. By late afternoon, strong winds and a thick cloud cover with sprinkles of rain gave an idea of much worse to come.

On D-day, the morning was like a peak monsoon showers. By noon the wind speed gathered. News of landfall 100 metre down south started trickling in. The factories at Haldia were on red alert. Within an hour, communication with the industrial town got disrupted. Reports of extensive damage came in; though this region is not a stranger to cyclones, I was told the destruction was nothing like in the past.

By 5pm, in Kolkata the storm arrived. Soon power lines went off. Trees started swirling, with the

high-speed winds grazing the trees, letting out an eerie whistling sound. It was nature in a different avatar. Restless. Aggressive. The weaker trees gave way, some falling sooner than expected. The intensity kept increasing rapidly. Mobile connectivity became patchy.

By 6pm, the windows started rattling fiercely — as if a poltergeist was out to scare weaklings. No way one could step outside to watch the spectacle, as keeping balance in face of the enormous pressure of the fast intensifying storm would, to say the

least, have been a challenge. Three hours of peak turmoil followed. In the all-pervading darkness it was impossible to see what was happening around. No TV. No mobile connectivity. Left alone to go through an unprecedented experience of the most feared super cyclone, I helplessly waited for the semblance of normalcy to return soon.

Around 10pm, in the darkness, I opened a side window, to get a whiff of fresh air and feel at least a part of nature's fury. Chilled winds barged in, lifting the mood instantly. The mind started racing — memories of my days as district magistrate in South 24 Parganas, where estuarine islands occupy half of the area, came rushing in. Memories of managing an emergency to tackle the storms raging then.

The chilled wind also reminded me of much cooler environs — Darjeeling, where I spent the best and the worst of times of my life. Memories of the militant agitation for a Gorkhaland province.

In Darjeeling, during the peak of GNLF agitation in 1986–89, on days of bandh (once it was for 40 days), on rare occasions in the night while at home, I would sit in darkness — there was no power — near the French window, with a peg of whiskey, and a revolver in my kurta pocket, and stare at the faintly visible moonlit Kanchenjunga. It elevated me to another world... of idyllic Shangrila!

Those moments were total bliss. The surrealistic feeling of sublime loneliness, the calm of the mind, as the thought of the all-pervading war-like situation outside (despite shattering sounds of bombs disturbing peace of mind in between) receded with the magical attraction of nature in all its splendour and glory.

It was expectation of death almost all the time in the 28 months of the Gorkha agitation, and was the most memorable phase of my life.

I miss those days — the memories of hardship, constant thoughts of a possible attack, and the struggle one had to go through to be the only voice of sanity amidst warmongers. Only the best of memories remain now at the top of mind, adding a little to my inner peace and calm even now.

This raging storm took me back to Jan 17, 1987. The night before, DIG Handa and I, along with two IPS officers, and around 150 policemen, moved from Siliguri via Gorubathan to Kalimpong. We had started at around 11 pm.

The first four vehicles were civilian cars and all of us were in plain clothes — with revolvers in pocket. Destination — the 10th mile in Kalimpong. Objective — to surprise CK Pradhan who used to stay at the

10th mile. And to arrest him. He was the unchallenged boss of GNLF, Kalimpong. A ferocious name... a man who lived a life of Robinhood, with enormous following.

We reached the 10th mile at around 5 am. Quietly we got down from the cars. Spotted his house on the hillside, about 200 metres above road level. Six of us started climbing up stealthily, with minimal sound. Reached his place and two of our officers in front barged into the house by breaking the front door. But in a flash, Pradhan jumped out of the backside window and he was gone. Frustration.

The town looked like it was taken over. All of us decided to camp in Kalimpong for the next few days (we were not prepared for night halt). To control an area that seemed to have declared virtual autonomy — because of the distance from Darjeeling and a high proportion of ex-Army men leading a violent movement. The streets had so many GNLF flags hanging crisscross on ropes across the roads, that one could barely see the sky above.

We reached the thana (local police station) with around 120 CRP and State policemen guarding it as if just



A scene of wreckage left by Cyclone Amphan.



The writer with GNLF leader Subhash Ghisingh at a press conference post the Darjeeling Accord in Aug 1988.

prior to a big operation. We thought that would help to send a signal of fear among locals. But reality was otherwise. When DIG Handa and I stepped outside, we saw the local boys, many in Army-type jungle uniform, ignoring us completely as if we were inconsequential.

Handa intercepted two boys in their teens; put his hand in one boy's bag and found a bomb. He shouted at him — and I instantly slapped him. That was enough. The CRP just got cracking. They did not wait for any orders, and started a robust and random lathi-charge on anybody they could lay hands on. Shops were shut, stones were thrown and a number of arrests were made.

The next four hours witnessed many small incidents that are difficult to forget. A person revealed his name as Kalu. And someone said he was the driver of Pradhan. In a minute or two, around 200 lathi blows were showered on him. But when I asked in Nepali, the guy, in extreme pain, pleaded that he is not the one we thought he was. I gave

him the benefit of doubt, feeling sad about collateral effect on an innocent person. This is the story everywhere. The feeling was we could establish our presence by the afternoon and restore some kind of normalcy, by demonstration of force, pulling down all GNLF flags, arresting several men, and looking for Gorkha Volunteers Cell (their private Army) activists.

But at twilight the story changed — the entire town looked like it was Diwali. Bombs flying from the hillside to the road where we were standing, following us — from almost all houses. There were casualties, arrests. Late that night, we thought the best place to take rest would be the Silver Oaks Hotel in front of the thana. But the staff had fled in a kind of a boycott, with only two non-locals staying on. One of them was forced to cook some food; the bar had to be broken open to wet our dry lips. A little relief in a hugely tiring day that exhausted officers and men alike.

After midnight, as we sat down for dinner, there was a deafening sound, a bomb went off, and splinters of the

shattered glass fell on our bodies and food. Fortunately, there were no injuries. We fired from inside to the dark areas outside, got no response and returned to our dinner. But this time there were gun shots and we now knew this was serious business. Firing continued from both sides and we later knew they had planned to burn the hotel... the age-old method of information leakage had happened. And thus we spent one of the most tense nights in the turmoil days in Darjeeling. This was one more turning point of the agitation. The movement got more violent, our response got more intense.

The raging Amphan storm brought more memories; of Feb 18, 1987, I was driving the DM's Ambassador car and the DIG was by my side, and others in the back seat. We were returning from a night-long operation and our convoy had 24 vehicles. We were ambushed 5km before Mirik — in the attack a huge boulder was rolled, perfectly aimed at our car, from the height of around 1,000 feet on the hillside left to our car.

The boulder crashed on to the rear of the car on the right side, severing the back door on the right, and then jumping down the valley side to a depth of 4,000ft, taking a hut on the road down all the way. But there were no injuries; and as we got back, I joked: "This is the third time we have escaped death in 45 days. We are not going to die anytime soon."

Every time I went out of the bungalow, the thought of assault by a sniper crossed the mind. It was expectation of death almost all the time in the 28 months of the Gorkha agitation, and was the most memorable phase of my life.

The writer is a retired IAS officer.

25 more homes in flood-devastated Kodagu handed over

Rasheeda Bhagat

Bang in the midst of the corona pandemic and the lockdown, Rotarians of RID 3181 kept their promise to the people of Kodagu, Karnataka, who along with the people in many parts of Kerala, were devastated by the floods two years ago. “In the second phase of our project Rebuild Kodagu (50 homes at a cost of ₹2.56 crore), we were extremely happy to hand over completed homes on May 10, 2020, to 25 more beneficiaries at the Gargandhur-Madapur area in Kodagu,” said Project Chair PDG Ravi Appaji.

He recalled that the first phase had been completed in June 2019, and under this project the District had handed over 25 homes to beneficiaries in the presence of PRIP Kalyan Banerjee. The project was undertaken in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity India.

IPDG P Rohinath, Chairman of the Rotary Rebuild Kodagu RID 3181 Trust, said these 50 families were selected on the basis of criteria such as

the worst affected and the most deserving, and the beneficiaries were identified jointly by Habitat, community leaders and local people. The land and title belongs to the beneficiaries, as homes were rebuilt on their own land.

Appaji said the cost of each home was Rs 5.05 lakh each, and the total amount of Rs 2.56 crore was raised by contributions from donors, Rotarians and friends in India and overseas. “After the 2018 floods had destroyed their homes and devastated their lives, this project was initiated and encouraged

by PRIP Banerjee and the then RI Director C Basker, and supported by all the district governors and of course, Rotary’s great benefactor Rajashree Birla, Chairperson of the Aditya Birla Foundation for Community Initiatives.”

Unlike in the first phase when the homes were handed over to the beneficiaries, this time due to the corona lockdown, “there was no formal stage ceremony, invites or other arrangements. What mattered was that the beneficiaries should start living in their new homes as soon as possible so a

simple transfer of homes was done. It was important to ensure that the home owners occupy the houses before the monsoon rains start this year,” he added.

This project was executed and implemented by Habitat for Humanity India and Abhivruddhi group.

“We thank our sponsors, donors, Rotarians and the members of the local disaster committee which was immediately formed to help the devastated people of Kodagu, the local Panchayat leaders and of course, Habitat and the Abhivruddhi group,” he added. ■



PRIP Kalyan Banerjee with PDGs RS Nagarjun, K Krishna Shetty, P Rohinath, Devdas Rai, Project Chair PDG K Ravi Appaji and DGE M Ranganath Bhat after handing over a house to a beneficiary.

An Ironman Club President

Jaishree

A club leader in his thirties and with a strong interest in sports, enough to run marathons and ultimately win the Ironman title, is not someone we come across everyday. He lends significance to Rotary's newest programme — *Project Positive Health* — that urges physical fitness in people to keep NCDs at bay.

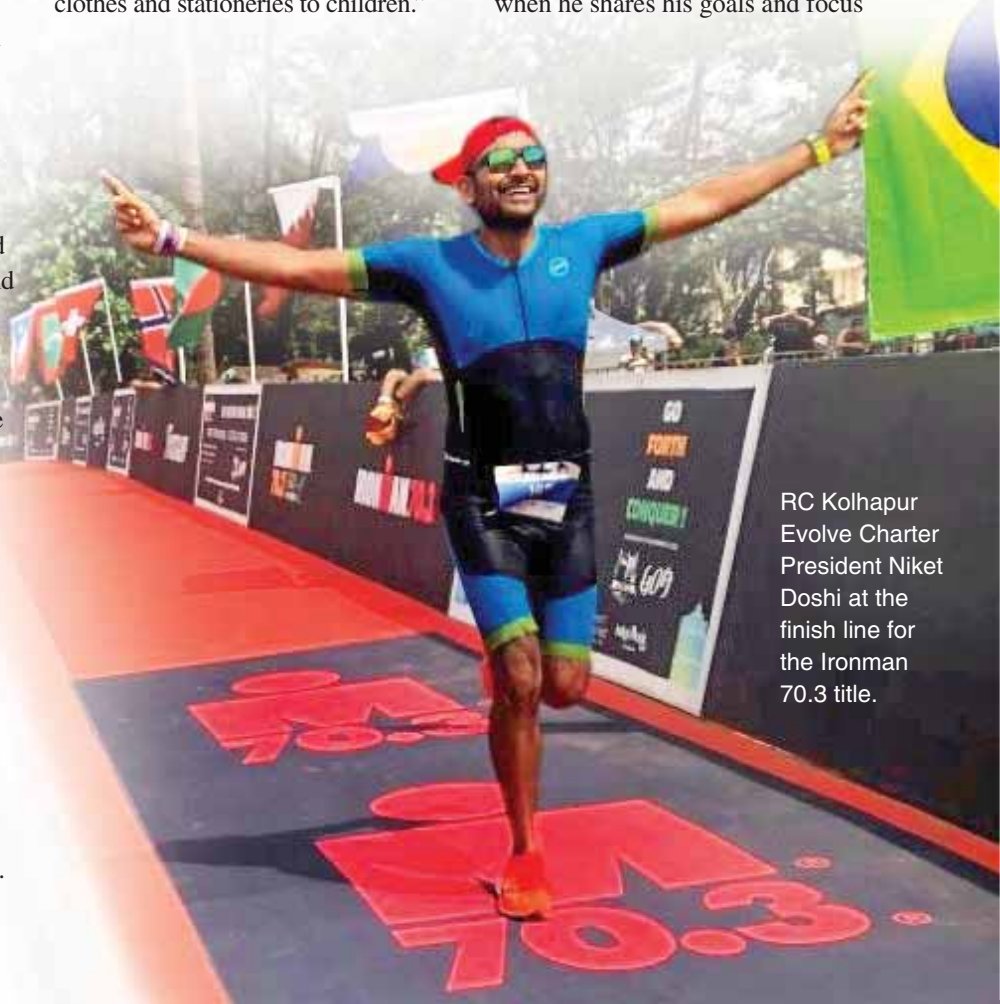
Niket Doshi (33) is a third-generation Rotarian and charter president of RC Kolhapur Evolve, RID 3170, a club that is just a year old. His father Rajendra (Raju) Doshi was district governor in 1999–2000, and grand-father Motibhai Doshi led the district in 1977–78.

Niket won the Ironman 70.3 title in Oct 2019 at the country's first Ironman Triathlon held in Goa. "I had to compete with 1,000 participants and it involved 1.9 km swimming, 90 km cycling and 21.1 km running — all done sequentially within eight hours," he says. Being a long distance runner and having done a dozen half-marathons, he prepared for the event for over a year. "Pushing the limits beyond my capacity is what really inspired me to participate. And the combination of swimming, bike and run was something lethal and exciting," he says, adding that the endurance challenge calls for strict discipline of the body and mind, a healthy diet and regular exercise — "a perfect rigmarole for positive health, especially among youngsters".

He recalls meeting PRIPs Rajendra Saboo and Kalyan Banerjee at his home as his grandfather used to regularly host national and international Rotary leaders. Nitin has accompanied his father for district conferences and installations. "Rotary has been part of my upbringing." He was a Rotaractor of RAC Kolhapur Yougenics when "every week we would enthusiastically go around cleaning or painting the walls in some slum locality and distribute new clothes and stationeries to children."

His wife Priyanka is also member of RC Kolhapur Evolve which is a couples club with 75 members, the average age being 32. "The members have so much fun and enjoy the same wavelength as we share similar interests and goals. The fellowship is also much more fun because it is not like only the husband or the wife is going for Rotary events. It has become a good social circle for the members," says Niket.

It does not come as a surprise when he shares his goals and focus



RC Kolhapur Evolve Charter President Niket Doshi at the finish line for the Ironman 70.3 title.



Club President Niket Doshi (third from L) with wife Priyanka and Secretary Neelabh Goenka (third from R) with wife Sidhika receive the club charter from RID Bharat Pandya, PDG Ravi Kulkarni and DG Girish Masurkar. PDGs A Sanatkumar Vasudeo (L), Avinash Potdar and DGN Gaurish Dhond (R) are also present.

for his club which is primarily promoting sports and physical activity for the members and the community. “I want to get the youth out of their comfort zone and be physically active. Today life seems more work-centric. We want youngsters to move out, dump their mobile phones and concentrate on their health. We plan to include programmes to address mental health. Many youngsters today are on a short fuse and require counselling to beat mental stress.”

The club had organised an international paraplegic cyclothon from Kolhapur to Mumbai, about 600 km, in six days, in partnership with a German NGO, to promote awareness for paraplegic sports. “We also did a large number of rescue activities and relief work and fundraising during the floods last year, built shelters and did a car rally fundraiser for polio,” he says.

Now the club is partnering with 30 Rotary clubs in the town for a global grant project worth \$70,000 to provide medical infrastructure to a government hospital for treatment of Covid patients. “We have distributed

1.5 lakh meals to migrant workers and plan to continue distributing ready-to-cook food along with the NGO Rise against hunger.”

He recalls the words of RI Director Bharat Pandya who, at the charter presentation had said, “social work will happen. But building a strong foundation with healthy fellowship is most important for a club. If you succeed in accomplishing this in three years, your club will certainly flourish. Only when you all start enjoying Rotary from within and members start networking among themselves, you will be able to move ahead.” “All our members enjoyed his inspirational speech,” he smiles.

We have to keep the spirit alive.
It is easy to lose steam now. Our
weekly meetings on Zoom are
equally interesting. We have excellent
speakers and all our members
promptly log on to online meets.

So don’t the club members miss the fun of physical meetings, I ask, and his reply: “We have to keep the spirit alive. Because it is easy to lose steam now. Our weekly meetings on Zoom are equally interesting. We had some excellent multi-dimensional speakers and all our members promptly log on to it. We had a nutritionist, motivational speakers and a vocational speaker is scheduled for next week.”

Niket feels that “in Rotary we fail to tap the power of the youth. We found an opportunity in our town. A lot of clubs do not have the right age-mix. Basically it would have been very easy for me to join any of the existing clubs.” But then he and his friends — the present Club Secretary Neelabh Goenka, Treasurer Karen Parekh and President-elect Niladh Kedia — came together, along with their wives, to form this club. It was a conscious move to form a club of youngsters “so that we are flooded with fresh ideas and can work with renewed zeal every day to make a sustainable and impactful transformation in the community,” he says. ■

The Rotary India Humanity Foundation

Rotary India Humanity Foundation (RIHF) was formed in 2010 by senior leadership of Rotary India. It seeks to guide, support and execute humanitarian services in India and around the world through Rotary clubs, NGOs, government organisations, faith and community-based organisations. RIHF has already made a difference in the lives of thousands by facilitating several service projects in different Areas of Focus and seeks to continue this work through service, facilitation and mobilisation.

Areas of service:

Rotary India Literacy Mission, Rotary India Water Mission, Rotary India Sanitation Mission, Rotary India Health Mission (Preventive), Rotary India Health Mission (Curative), Rotary India Environment Mission and Rotary India Disaster Management.

Trustees

Advisors: PRIP Rajendra Saboo, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and RIPN Shekhar Mehta; PRID Ashok Mahajan, Chairman (one-year term); PRID YP Das, Co-chairman; RID Kamal Sanghvi; RID Dr Bharat Pandya; TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvati; PRID Panduranga Setty; PRID PT Prabhakar; PRID Dr Manoj Desai; RIDN Ravi Vadlamani and RIDN AS Venkatesh.

Goals

- **Rotary India Literacy Mission:** Teacher Support: To reach out to 30 lakh teachers, Take E-learning to 25 States, Adult Literacy: 6 crore adults to be made literate, Child Development: To send 1.5 lakh



Little Shiba Saha recovering from heart surgery sponsored by Rotary.

children back to school, Happy School: To transform 10,000 schools into Happy Schools, and create 25,000 libraries.

- **Rotary India Water Mission:** W – Watersheds: Build 10,000 watersheds and 10,000 check dams; A – Awareness: Reach out and touch lives of 500 million people; T – Transformation of 10,000 waterbodies; E – Efficient use of water: Reduce consumption in 25 lakhs households, installing 15,000 drip irrigation systems, recycle grey water in 5,000 sites; and R – Rain Water Harvesting: Install 50,000 Rain Water Harvesting structures.
- **Rotary India Sanitation Mission:** 5,000 ODF-plus villages; 1,000 household tap connections; 1.5 lakh WinS structures; 500 WASH in Healthcare; 500 community toilets and 500 public toilets.

- **Rotary India Disaster Management:** 10,000 emergency consumables (hospital equipment, tents, furniture and utensils and ration for community kitchen) and 20 Shelter Kits.
- **Rotary India Health Mission (Preventive):** Project Positive Health: Know your number camps – 1,500 clubs x 4,120 checkups/camp + non-special days camps to benefit 44 lakh people; School Awareness with Aarogya – one club per 2,000 schools – 2,000 clubs, 300 children in Classes 7 and 8; Total beneficiaries – 40,50,000. Mobile Health Messages – 2 SMSes per week for six months; Total beneficiaries – 39,00,000. RFHD – 10 health camps; Total beneficiaries – 32,00,000. Health checkups; Total beneficiaries – 74,00,000.
- **Rotary India Health Mission (Curative):** Blood Banks – 40, Eye Hospitals/ Eye Banks – 50,

Cataract Surgeries – 9,00,000,
Dialysis machines/beds – 1,000,
Heart surgeries – 25,000, Health
Camps (P+C) – 9 million and Skin
Banks – 40.

- **Rotary India Environment Mission:** Solid Waste Management–4,200 villages and 8,400 machines, Tree plantation–30 crore trees, Awareness campaign–3,000 schools, 60,000 car stickers, 60 RYLA, 300 nature camps, Renewable energy–12 lakh houses.

Training programmes

Continuous training is the key to smooth execution of the programme at the club and district level. RIHF has three levels of training to ensure that all the information percolates down properly to the district and club levels.

Level-1 training was undertaken by the Zone Coordinators for all areas of service. Around 304 training programmes took place over Zoom in less than a month. It was attended by DG, DGE,



A flood-affected family with Rotary's Shelter Kit.

DC and district team members for RY 2020–21 for all the areas of service.

Level-2 training is being imparted to club presidents and committee chairs for year 2020–21. It is conducted by DGs and DCs under the guidance of ZC.

Under Level-3 training, the information of programmes and projects related to Rotary India's eight areas of service will be provided to all Rotary members in the district through seminars organised over three months. ■

Doing good with TRF help

A Rotary-corporate partnership supports healthcare

Team Rotary News

When the authorities of the Holy Cross Hospital, Thane, requested RC Kalyan Riverside, RID 3142, to provide them with a dialysis equipment Club President



TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty greets Project Contact Santosh Bade with a fist-shake in the presence of (from L) RID Bharat Pandya, DG Mohan Chandavarkar, IPDG Ashes Ganguly and RC Thane Midtown President Rajendra Zende.

Pratik Gujar immediately connected the hospital with RC Thane Midtown. "I was aware that they were processing a GG application with focus on disease prevention and treatment and this bigger participation will help the hospital get better infrastructure for extending efficient healthcare for patients," said Gujar.

Subsequently, RC Thane Midtown identified a corporate, Birla Estates, and international partner RC Walsall, UK, RID 1210, and alongwith TRF, equipped the hospital with four renal hemo-dialysis machines. Birla Estates gave a Term Gift contribution of \$30,125; RCs Thane Midtown and Kalyan Riverside pitched in with \$1,727 and RIDs 3142 and 1210 contributed \$4,700, and with TRF's support of \$5,504, the project was executed at \$41,973.

The equipment were handed over to the hospital in the presence of RID Bharat Pandya, TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty and DG Mohan Chandavarkar. ■

District Wise TRF Contributions as on April 2020

(in US Dollars)

District Number	APF	PolioPlus	Other Restricted	Endowment Fund	Total Contributions	EREY Donors (in numbers)	EREY %
India							
2981	30,801	7,175	0	18,341	56,317	160	3.5
2982	29,621	22,265	185,807	720	238,413	139	4.6
3000	78,947	2,403	189,535	296	271,181	103	2.0
3011	88,701	1,915	144,838	6,667	242,121	103	2.9
3012	166,649	15,646	252,010	58,986	493,292	147	4.0
3020	48,323	47,270	0	12,029	107,622	120	3.2
3030	8,964	3,008	1,423	2,203	15,598	12	0.2
3040	17,135	418	9,949	0	27,502	27	1.3
3053	64,986	232	169,544	0	234,761	115	4.0
3054	11,075	529	46,577	0	58,181	35	0.6
3060	79,277	60,197	174,279	36,876	350,630	914	22.6
3070	33,087	705	16,869	0	50,661	162	5.3
3080	54,948	8,087	14,505	1,013	78,553	153	4.5
3090	17,854	301	0	1,000	19,156	45	2.3
3100	33,258	100	0	0	33,358	97	5.1
3110	26,766	1,810	1,045	0	29,621	32	0.8
3120	61,815	141	140,199	0	202,155	144	4.3
3131	162,227	4,207	522,050	43,250	731,734	758	14.4
3132	14,175	607	34,498	30,000	79,280	72	1.9
3141	621,736	16,677	1,422,584	220,225	2,281,222	929	16.9
3142	132,656	1,944	87,028	42,763	264,390	388	12.0
3150	77,895	7,711	35,504	203,668	324,779	606	17.0
3160	3,750	3,129	0	8,222	15,101	24	0.9
3170	85,185	12,139	61,421	0	158,745	261	4.7
3181	285,584	16,173	0	0	301,757	540	15.1
3182	81,514	7,616	24,493	0	113,624	309	9.9
3190	291,761	40,839	327,172	0	659,773	657	13.8
3201	64,830	35,685	437,529	32,442	570,487	222	4.1
3202	127,781	58,578	184,558	1,000	371,917	287	5.8
3211	31,468	1,043	65,915	1,422	99,848	30	0.7
3212	59,075	19,937	10,081	1,972	91,065	97	2.4
3231	3,725	1,973	16,459	0	22,157	48	1.3
3232	117,055	72,455	474,012	7,500	671,022	346	6.6
3240	224,250	42,679	33,004	0	299,932	315	10.4
3250	33,452	0	18,952	10,000	62,403	66	1.7
3261	3,275	0	30,682	0	33,958	6	0.2
3262	41,016	4,029	5,507	0	50,552	79	2.4
3291	82,345	3,542	56,798	12,500	155,185	82	2.3
India Total	3,396,963	523,168	5,194,827	753,095	9,868,053	8,630	5.9
3220 Sri Lanka	64,442	8,057	106,112	1,000	179,612	144	7.4
3271 Pakistan	4,513	14,552	20	0	19,085	12	0.9
3272 Pakistan	16,402	1,037	300	0	17,739	57	3.5
3281 Bangladesh	113,195	4,345	127,600	7,000	252,140	290	5.1
3282 Bangladesh	32,264	15,216	(2,703)	2,000	46,777	74	1.6
3292 Nepal	171,586	17,870	1,126,888	0	1,316,344	324	7.0
South Asia Total	3,799,365	584,244	6,553,044	763,095	11,699,749	9,531	5.8
World Total	92,818,023	24,092,142	23,098,562	30,904,468	170,913,195		

Source: RI South Asia Office

A Rotarian, part of the Covid War Room in Karnataka

Team Rotary News

One of the Covid warriors in Karnataka, Rtn Karthik Kittu is part of the professional team that put together a website and dashboard to keep the public informed about the spread of coronavirus in the State.

Kittu, a member of RC Bangalore South West, RID 3190, is a key member of the Karnataka Chief Minister's Covid-19 War Room. The State Department of Information and Public Relations in coordination with the academia and start-ups had developed the website and dashboard in a short period to provide



Karthik Kittu (L) in action in the Covid War Room.

emergency help to people who call for assistance.

The Hunger Helpline Number 155214 set up for migrant labourers and

homeless people also works out of this War Room.

A large electronic wall traces the location from which call is made and the

volunteers reach out to that site. Since the lockdown, more than 10 lakh meals were provided to the labourers and needy families.■

Pune clubs open Covid ICU for the lesser-privileged

RI Director Bharat Pandya inaugurated a Rotary Covid-19 ICU facility at a Pune hospital listed under the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat

Yojana that treats only underprivileged patients. Twelve Rotary clubs in Pune, RID 3131, jointly set up this exclusive ICU for coronavirus patients under

a global grant which was approved quickly.

With a grant value of \$94,750, the facility was put up at rapid speed and inaugurated in just three weeks after the project got approved for funding. The facility is equipped with ventilators, patient monitors, syringe pumps, defibrillators, ECGs, Laryngoscopes, PPE kits and testing kits, among others, for treating Covid patients.

The ICU will continue to serve needy patients even after the Covid crisis, said Rtn Sudin Apte, past president, RC Pune Pristine. At present, the ICU is treating 50 Covid patients. Later on, the facility will offer free treatment to at least 500 patients a year, he said.■





Taking the Slow Train

Sandhya Rao

What better way is there to travel in these travel-less days than to read about Monisha Rajesh's 72,000-km long journey *Around the World in 80 Trains*?

Many saw the shocking instance of an Indian Railways train bound for Uttar Pradesh ending up in Odisha with not a word of warning or apology to the hundreds of passengers on board and the hundreds more awaiting the arrival of their loved ones. Given that trains run on route-specific tracks, how this happened is a mystery in itself. In this scenario, British journalist Monisha Rajesh's books provide much-needed relief and perspective.

A couple of years ago, I had picked up *Around India in 80 Trains* at a local bookstore. Published in 2012, it records Monisha's 40,000 km-long travels across India over four months in 2010. You name it and she's been on it, literally from Kashmir (well, not Kashmir, but Delhi) to Kanyakumari. Meera Dattani's interview with Monisha on *adventure.com* recalls how those trains granted her "privileged access to people in a way no other form of transport would. The network covers the length and breadth of the country, worming its way into every nook and cranny. It took me almost everywhere on my bucket list: the Golden Temple in

Amritsar, Ranthambore National Park, Taj Mahal, the beaches in Kerala, the forts in Jaisalmer..." Simultaneously, meeting and chatting with people from all walks of life helped her "understand the dynamics of India, its class system, politics, its positives and negatives", not unlike a certain other person by name MK Gandhi nearly a hundred years ago.

A few years on, the train bug bit again: this time she took along her fiancé, Jem. Together they travelled for seven months over 72,000 kilometres (which is nearly twice the circumference of Earth), covering places as different and far-flung as Russia, Mongolia, China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Europe, Canada, USA, Tibet, North Korea and Kazakhstan. *Around the World in 80 Trains* was published in 2019 and provided the perfect reading material at a time when travel itself has been locked down.

Monisha writes with loving detail and a critical eye both about journeys that uplifted her and those that gave her nightmares — and there are plenty of those. Her favourite in India was the Konkan route, a journey that covers

over 700 km along the Arabian Sea with the Sahyadri mountains overlooking on the other side. She also pays tribute to the inspirational Lifeline Express, the world's first hospital train, that brings free medical assistance to the unreachable and forgotten. If people cannot get to hospital, the hospital gets to them, thanks to the thousands and thousands of kilometres of rail track criss-crossing the country, keeping the oxygen pumping to India's heart.

Between alighting from one train and taking the next, there are places to see, people to meet, cultures to be experienced, not to speak of cuisines to be tried. Taste this anecdote, for instance: Wandering around Zhujiyajiao 'built on canals running off the Yangtze river', Monisha and Jem meet a middle-aged Chinese couple. The lady, whose white make-up is running in rivulets down her cheek, asks: 'Have heard of Three Squeaks?' This is the conversation that follows:

'Three squeaks? No, what on earth is that?'

'New-born mice. Tiny, tiny,' she said, pinching her thumb and index finger together. One of her eyebrows had now begun to slide away.

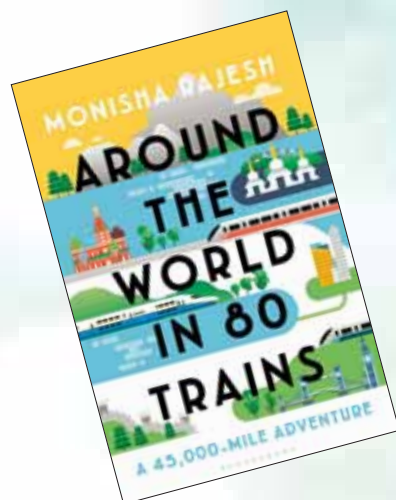
'They cook new-born mice?'

She laughed. 'No cooking. They alive. First squeak, you pick up with chopsticks. Second squeak you dip in chilli. Third squeak you put in the mouth.'

How much preparation must have gone into organising the itinerary! It is mind-boggling. Imagine: connecting trains and matching time zones and allowing for delays and a million other hiccups, not to speak of keeping good health. For instance, Monisha plans it so they arrive in Hiroshima in time for the 70th anniversary of the dropping of the A-bomb. Tetsushi Yonezawa was 11 and travelling on the Hiroden streetcar with his mother to visit his grandmother when the bomb fell. While the city fell

apart, he and his mother remained unhurt, protected by the sturdiness of the streetcar. 'Now 81 years old, Tetsushi wiped the orange juice from his mouth, and peered from under velvety lids. "For me, Japanese trains are a symbol of strength."' The world associates Japan with its bullet trains, Shinkansen. That's only a very small part of a story the Japanese have chosen never to forget. As Monisha records: 'To the Japanese, the railways embody the resilience of their nation. The Hiroden street car began to run soon after the uranium bomb hit Hiroshima, and even today, two bombed cars continue to sail up and down the city's street.'

Japan, Monisha writes, is misunderstood. 'A mistake I made before traveling,' she tells Dattani, 'was watching *Lost in Translation* and falling prey to Sofia Coppola's soft-focus exoticised illusion. After two weeks of shooting around the country by Shinkansen, I realised the film was little more than a racist, ignorant portrait of a magnetic, complex and multi-layered nation. The country is often described as being futuristic and years ahead of everyone, but I disagree: I don't think any country will ever emulate Japan's efficiency and simplicity of living. Everything is designed to make lives easier... And Japanese people are incredibly friendly, helpful and amenable.'



Travelling by The Canadian, connecting Vancouver in the west and Toronto in the east, a 3D/4N journey over some 4,466 km, is a different packet of popcorn altogether. It's also a route few Canadians care to take — who has the time, right? — except those who love looking out of windows at mountains and moose. Karen, who boards at Winnipeg, calls herself a train evangelist. 'For me,' she tells the two, 'the journey is my destination. On my 50th birthday I vowed never to fly again and I've stayed overland since.'

Karen turns out to be an encyclopedia of Canadian railways. 'For every mile of track in Canada there's a dead Chinese person. They were all brought over to build the railways and then whoever was left was sent back afterwards. They weren't even allowed to have their families over here,' she points out. Monisha goes on to say how she learned 'how Chinese and First Nation workers had been killed in rock explosions, their bodies buried on a little island in the middle of the lakes. "First Nations" was the term commonly used to describe a number of indigenous people of the Americas, rather than "Indian" or "aboriginal" — insinuating their primary position as stakeholders to the land. Unfortunately, that was as far as their power went, and I'd read a number of magazines stuffed into seat pockets that pinpointed Karen's hometown of Winnipeg — better known as Murderpeg — as the hub of racially driven poverty.'

As a tourist, it is important to be mindful of local customs and culture. Talking about the obvious lack of freedom in North Korea which made even China seem liberating, Monisha explains that it's simply unwise to bring up politics with the guides in the context of the rules that govern a particular nation, quite apart from being bad manners to put them in danger with the possibility of their being

The Hiroden street car began to run soon after the uranium bomb hit Hiroshima, and even today, two bombed cars continue to sail up and down the city's street.

overheard. She tells Meera Dattani, 'I was content to have general chats with our North Korean guides. Usually this was about what kind of history they were taught at Kim Il Sung University, the kind of music they downloaded, where they wanted to holiday — all far more revealing than interrogating them.'

The adventure begins the moment you board a train, you leave far fewer carbon footprints, nobody can question how many bottles of how many liquids you want to carry, you never go hungry (at least in India) and overall, it's cheaper. There are fewer delays and hardly ever cancellations — take that, you airlines! And for sure, you make friends, sometimes for life, as I can vouch from experience. There's time to be had, time to be savoured. People often say, who has the time? Train travellers do.

Monisha's sharp and discriminating eye for context and felicitous writing, particularly in *World*, make both books an engaging read. Preconceived notions dissolve, new insights emerge... best of all, the books tickle your take-a-train bone. It's all about slow and easy, meet and greet, drink in the sights and sounds, else life will pass you by as you sit checking WhatsApp messages, never exchanging a word with another human being. So the next time you travel, take the time, take a train, and take these books along. Happy journey! *Aasha karte hain aapki yatra sukhad rahe.*

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

The universal appeal of Hindi film songs

S R Madhu

Youngsters today would be amazed to know that Hindi film songs — the pet craze of all Indians no matter where they live, what they eat, how they pray — were in 1952 actually banned by All-India Radio. Reason: Dr B V Kesar, the then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, felt that Hindi film songs were vulgar and westernised.

This inspired the birth of *Binaca Geetmala* on Radio Ceylon — a

one-hour programme, every Wednesday evening, of top Hindi film songs. Millions of Indians tuned on to Radio Ceylon on Wednesday evenings. Sri Lanka had hit the entertainment jackpot, thanks to Hindi film songs.

India reversed its ban, and Hindi film songs returned to the centre stage of entertainment with the birth of *Vividh Bharati* in 1957.

The Kesar episode highlights the irresistible appeal of Hindi film songs, which know no expiry date

and no borders. Magic, nostalgia, national integration — call it what you will: There's a memorable song to celebrate every occasion, every mood, every event, every season, every family role (that of mother, father, grandparents, uncle, aunt, son-in-law, daughter-in-law).

Hindi film songs can electrify with their exuberance. They can charm with romance, drip with melancholy or take lofty philosophical wings. They can spark religious



Raj Kapoor in
a still from the
song *Ramaiya
vastavayya*
(*Shree 420*).

fervour, inspire patriotism. Through them, you can relive old love and friendships, heal wounds, recall old festivities and revelries, the glories and embarrassments of your boyhood and adolescence.

Nehru and Ramaiya vastavayya

A personal anecdote on the memories that music kindles. Whenever I hear *Ramaiya vastavayya*, the *Shree 420* hit, I think of Jawaharlal Nehru. Ridiculous? Let me explain. Early in 1956, PM Nehru was to address a public meeting at Lal Bagh in Bangalore. I was then a schoolboy — smitten, like thousands of others, by Panditji. He was late, and a huge crowd waited patiently. The authorities entertained the crowd with songs from *Shree 420* on the public address system. *Ramaiya Vastavayya* blared



A still from the song *Man tarpat Hari darshan ko aaj* (Baiju Bawra).

out several times. The PM arrived. His charisma was overpowering. His speech was a trifle clichéd. But the audience clapped with delight every few minutes.

Whenever someone mentions this song, the image that comes to mind is not that of a feisty Raj Kapoor or a bubbly Lalita Pawar, but of a dapper rose-in-buttonhole Jawaharlal Nehru whom I saw for the first time in flesh and blood on a balmy Bangalore evening.

Touching all human emotions

Says Gopal Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal, “There is no human emotion that Hindi film lyrics haven’t dealt with”. Old Hindi songs remind you of occasions happy and sad, of parents, of sweethearts, of triumphs,

tragedies and heartbreaks, of crises faced and overcome, of weddings and funerals, births and deaths.

Even purists of Carnatic music get besotted with Hindi film songs. Stalwart singer Madurai GS Mani has said that when *Mughal-e-Azam* was released in 1960, he loved the music so much that for a few weeks, he watched the last shows of the film every night. He would walk home after the shows because buses would stop plying before 1 am!

Three Muslims put together an internal bhajan

In 1953, Rafi’s immortal song *Man tarpat Hari darshan ko aaj* (from *Baiju Bawra*) took India by storm. It was written by Shakeel Badayuni, composed by Naushad, sung by Rafi. Three Muslims had masterminded the most eternally brilliant bhajan of Indian cinema. It did more for national integration than tons of speeches and exhortations.

Raj Kapoor told me in an interview way back in 1965 that hundreds of foreigners were trying to learn Hindi so that they could appreciate Hindi film songs better. I was a bit

In earlier years, the orchestra
gave singers a rest, today we sing
to give the orchestra a rest.

Lata Mangeshkar





Another still from the song *Ramaiya vastavayya*.

sceptical of this claim then. But more than 40 years later, an English economist asked me whether I could recommend a Hindi language manual. Why, I asked. He said he loved Hindi film songs but didn't understand the meaning, he would like to learn the language. I remembered Raj Kapoor's words — he wasn't exaggerating.

Over the years, melody in music seems to have given way to rhythm, aesthetics to electronics. "*Dang badal gaya, rang badal gaya*" (The style has changed; the colours have changed.) remarked lyricist Anand Bakshi. "In earlier years, the orchestra gave singers a rest, today we sing to

give the orchestra a rest," said Lata Mangeshkar in the late 1990s. Talat Mahmood was once asked why he quit singing for films. His response: "Romance is out, violence is in. Melody is out, western pop is in. How can I sing about beauty in a disco?"

But AR Rahman has a counter to those who decry the fading away of melody in Hindi film music. "Music has to keep moving with the times," he contends. "It can't be static, it must reflect trends in society."

Mesmerising melodies of yore

Melody does glow now and then in today's cinema but it's a rarity. Today's orchestra-powered music has its devotees, but for millions of music fans, there's no substitute for the mesmerising melodies of Naushad, Shankar Jaikishen, SD Burman, C Ramachandra, Madan Mohan or OP Nayyar.

Hindi film fans will remember that many years ago, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf said that some Pakistani soldiers had told

Indian counterparts in jest "*Madhuri de do, Kashmir le lo*" (Madhuri Dixit was a craze in Pakistan). An article in Pakistan's best-known daily, *Dawn*, remarked, "Let's ask for Lata Mangeshkar instead. We have Noor Jehan already, so both queens of music will be in Pakistan."

Which are the best, the greatest-ever Hindi film songs? It takes courage to even pose such a question. How do you pick a few from thousands of gems? However, it is possible to list around 40–50 immortal songs of the 1950s, the richest and the most resplendent era of Hindi film music, from top composers like Naushad, Shankar-Jaikishen, C Ramachandra and OP Nayyar, who were at their best then, along with Lata and Rafi.

Visit <https://rotarynewsonline.org/the-universal-appeal-of-hindi-film-songs/> for the list of the best Hindi songs.

The writer is a member of Rotary Club of Madras South, RID 3232.

Romance is out, violence is in. Melody is out, western pop is in. How can I sing about beauty in a disco?

Talat Mahmood

From RI South Asia Office desk

Contribution to Rotary's Disaster Response Fund

Contributions directed to the Disaster Response Fund will be credited toward a club's annual giving goal and per capita giving calculations but will not apply to SHARE and DDF calculation. Likewise, these contributions are eligible for all recognition opportunities, including Every Rotarian, Every Year; Rotary Foundation Sustaining Member; Paul Harris Fellow; Paul Harris Society; Major Donor; and Arch Klumph Society. They also count towards all club recognition opportunities.

Individual donors, who will generally use the online platform to make Disaster Response contributions, cannot earmark their contribution directly for Covid-19, but they may rest assured that their contributions to Disaster Response Fund will help clubs and districts fight the pandemic through Disaster Response Grants.

The link to make contribution towards Disaster Response Fund is <https://my.rotary.org/en/disaster-response-fund>

2019–20 Top 5 Giving districts from S Asia as on 30 April*

Zone	District	Total Contribution (in US \$)	Worldwide Rank
4	3141	\$2,212,508	3
6	3292	\$1,313,473	12
7	3131	\$691,079	58
5	3232	\$673,022	63
7	3190	\$659,693	65

*interim update

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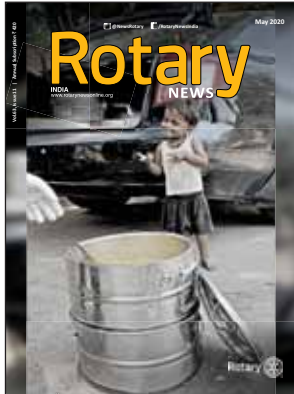
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- In case of inability to report member data online, please print and complete the *Member Data Form* (located in My Rotary's document library) and submit a scanned version to data@rotary.org before June 25, 2020 to ensure member information is updated before Club invoices for July 2020 is generated.
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15. We are in the process of tallying our subscriber list with RI membership from India.

Be a calm mountain

Bharat and Shalan Savur

Once, while driving from Mumbai to Mahabaleshwar, our car encountered several rumble strips. We'd go bumpity-bump-bumpity bump... No one grumbled, no one even *thought* of grumbling. Every time we sighted one more rumble strip in the distance, we'd laugh and hail it and go bumpity-bump-bumpity-bump... Life does have quite a few rumble strips, doesn't it? The trick is to keep those bumps where they belong — on the road — and not pick them up and place them in our mind. Keep the mind free — our mental and physical health remains robust in freedom.

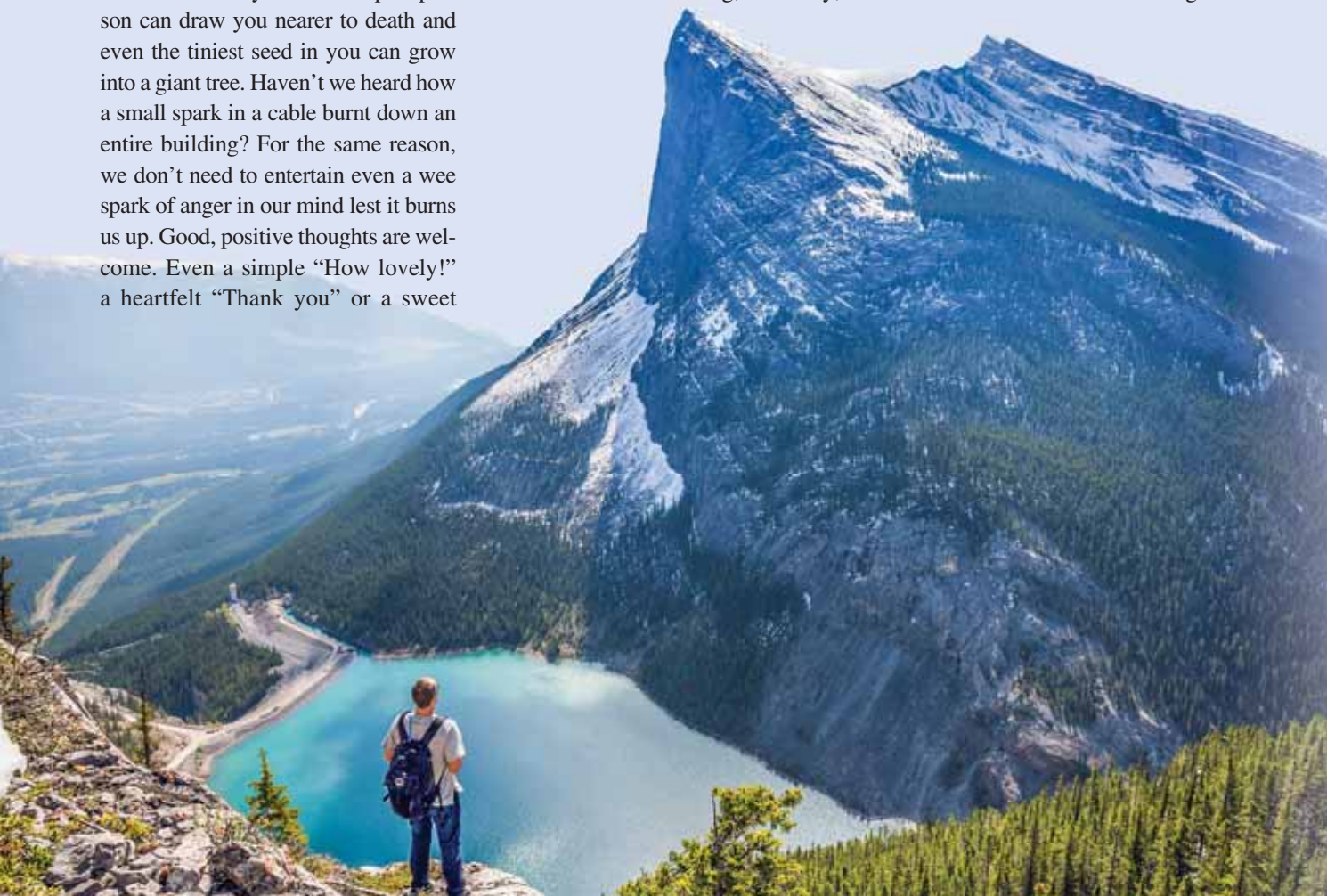
The Wise say: even a drop of poison can draw you nearer to death and even the tiniest seed in you can grow into a giant tree. Haven't we heard how a small spark in a cable burnt down an entire building? For the same reason, we don't need to entertain even a wee spark of anger in our mind lest it burns us up. Good, positive thoughts are welcome. Even a simple "How lovely!" a heartfelt "Thank you" or a sweet

gust of laughter soothes the mind and body. There's nothing like a rumble of good-humoured laughter arising from a belly to lift our spirits as we tumble over life's rumble strips. Ripples of mirth win over raised eyebrows every time.

Essentially, we have to watch our attitude that begets thoughts. Let's not be ready to find fault, to complain, rather, let's be ready to be pleasantly surprised, sporting and grin widely. My sister Pushpa sent me a beautiful message: "Time does not heal everything but acceptance does." As I read it, I felt something like a prayer rise in me. It's so true because from acceptance we can build a wonderful life full of understanding, harmony,

empathy and peace. We have to be careful, really watchful about the kind of fire we build in our mind. The fire of anger destroys, whereas, the flame of acceptance is steady and the flame of inspiration is...well...*wow!*

No news is the best news. Take it from me, you will greatly bless yourself when you stop reading the newspaper and listening to the news on TV the first thing in the morning — these activities build a reactive mind, quick to get agitated, quicker to get angry, fearful and depressed. You also create a belief in the mind that everything is going wrong in the world which itself is an erroneous notion. There are good



and bad things but, as you know, the news focuses purely and starkly on the bad, the horrifying and the ugly. What you are doing is rudely and violently shaking your mind from the naturally restful state it was in all night with the alarmist, “Wake up! Everything is collapsing!” It’s a terrible way to wake up, don’t you agree?

The strength of a mountain. First thing in the morning, please give the mind peace, give it strength and poise so that it can face the world, the new day calmly. There is a wonderful body-posture to keep the mind steady, stable, unshakable — the posture of the mountain. Stand with feet apart so you know you cannot be easily thrown off balance. Draw yourself to your full height. Stand with natural ease, with rock-like steadfastness. Keep your spine straight like a bamboo so that the natural energies can run up and down without any bends, blocks or hindrances. Square your shoulders and raise your lower back so there is neither slouch nor slump. Keep your head balanced on your neck. There is no tension in such a posture, only strength and grace. If this mountain shakes, it only shakes by the power of its own humour, its own laughter.

Close your eyes so as not to be distracted. Stand where you are, unmoving in body, unmoved in mind. Shut your ears to sounds. If you can’t tune off, let the sounds flow around, ignore them, remain unperturbed, undisturbed. Be a mountain in mind, heart and spirit.

When you feel you are well anchored, beautifully established, relaxed and rested in your pose and strength, open your eyes slowly. Everything will appear bright yet quietly ‘respectful’ towards you and you will feel your gaze as calm, peaceful and level. This is the way to wake up the mind to its own power and radiance.

Inspire the mind. After this practice, ‘feed’ the mind with inspiring thoughts or do some work with peace and joy. As the great Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh says, “Planting a seed, washing a dish, cutting the grass are as eternal, as beautiful as writing a poem.” He advises eating, sleeping, working and living everyday life in “the sunlight of awareness.”

Being alert and aware are necessary for understanding what is really happening. Once I witnessed two people disagreeing. At one point, the woman raised her hand in a peace-making gesture and said, “It’s fine. You are right too.” The man, prone to anxiety and agitation, perceived the raised hand as a threat, as “Shut up, I don’t want to listen to you.” Agitation creates stress and the true meaning of a gesture or words can be completely misunderstood.

I learnt from Dr Hansaji Yogendra, who heads the Yoga Institute, Mumbai, that, “it is the mind’s nature to think. If you don’t keep it busy, it thinks negatively,” she said. “It thinks ‘who cheated me’, ‘how hurt I am’... it goes in the past. Bring it back to the present.” “How do we do that?” asked a listener. She answered, “Concentrate fully on every task. If you are brushing your teeth, focus on every tooth as you brush. Keep the mind busy and it won’t be negative,” she advised.

It is true. A busy mind knows no agitation. If you observe, most people groan about the tedious process involved in filing tax returns. But, when they sit down and actually work on their income-figures, they become quiet and calm. On a day-to-day basis, the mind would enjoy noting down expenses, looking at investments, assessing them, renewing or changing them. As I’ve experienced, mantras, maths, music and meditation are great mental processors. They allow our mind to peek and participate in

dimensions of rhythm, order, beauty and tranquillity.

Daily healthy practices. Hansaji also advises being “constructively occupied in duties to ourself and others.” She explains, “Physical activity is required to generate energy in our system. A person bubbling with energy will never be negative.” My sister Deepika is a prime example and proof of this truth! Though a busy doctor, she has time for everything — trans-creating the *Bhagwad Gita*, cooking up a storm, baby-sitting and playing with her grandkids, not to mention scores of active hobbies. I’ve never heard her complain of traffic jams and potholes on Mumbai’s roads or anything even once.

Some more beautiful ways to live by are:

- Eat balanced meals. Overeating depletes energy. Spicy and salty foods drain energy too. The body has to struggle to keep its equilibrium.
- Cut down, by at least 50 per cent, unnecessary thoughts and talks. You will feel the positive difference!
- Nurture good thoughts, nourish the mind by always keeping something joyful in it.
- Observe sweet, happy scenes such as puppies frolicking, colourful flowers swaying gently in the breeze.
- Be useful to somebody — service done is joy earned.
- Be aware of being blessed. When you count your blessings, you court more blessings.

As the Sadhguru puts it so aptly, “Create a good chemistry within you.”

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

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Rotary at a glance

Rotarians : 1,217,616

Clubs : 36,158

Districts : 525

Rotaractors : 174,585

Clubs : 10,529

Interactors : 337,502

Clubs : 14,674

RCC : 11,025

As on May 18, 2020

*Please note Interact clubs that have not reported Interact Adviser in the past two Rotary years, are placed in "Suspended" status effective Oct 1, 2019.

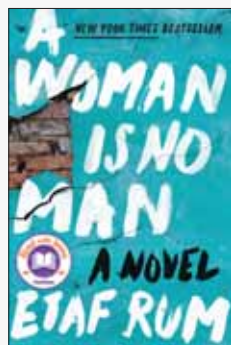
Membership Summary

As on May 1, 2020

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians	Rotaract Clubs	*Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	114	4,940	268	49	39	223
2982	71	3,184	186	85	92	55
3000	130	5,507	525	188	253	211
3011	88	3,721	941	51	87	26
3012	102	3,796	952	54	69	59
3020	73	4,272	248	54	155	351
3030	94	5,145	697	107	161	287
3040	90	2,153	252	37	45	144
3053	64	2,831	491	19	39	103
3054	129	6,284	1,169	81	138	523
3060	96	4,571	678	56	60	143
3070	106	3,165	440	46	20	58
3080	84	3,494	325	90	139	115
3090	79	2,084	55	37	5	122
3100	100	2,690	378	13	14	146
3110	128	3,811	333	29	7	105
3120	80	3,383	471	43	18	53
3131	138	5,641	1,254	105	174	117
3132	85	3,596	394	33	81	158
3141	103	5,830	1,419	118	130	87
3142	93	3,444	721	79	118	65
3150	93	3,684	386	58	122	116
3160	73	2,527	178	28	3	83
3170	129	5,798	766	80	192	169
3181	81	3,590	348	63	192	118
3182	83	3,238	275	49	90	97
3190	130	5,233	798	136	133	60
3201	145	5,733	481	106	72	50
3202	130	5,371	342	87	244	46
3211	143	4,679	352	8	24	132
3212	103	4,228	333	101	187	147
3231	93	3,823	459	52	74	357
3232	127	5,359	938	129	185	92
3240	91	3,150	426	51	365	190
3250	102	3,964	715	64	63	183
3261	72	2,685	395	16	18	43
3262	106	3,747	454	46	36	77
3291	155	3,854	806	88	86	619
India Total	3,903	154,205	20,649	2,536	3,930	5,730
3220	71	2,003	287	83	123	73
3271	94	1,514	279	65	19	22
3272	150	1,810	312	51	15	43
3281	223	6,016	953	232	45	196
3282	168	4,554	542	186	39	45
3292	125	5,047	806	132	113	115
S Asia Total	4,734	175,149	23,828	3,285	4,284	6,224

Source: RI South Asia Office

On the racks



A woman is no man

Author : **Etaf Rum**
Publisher : **Harper Perennial**
Pages : **368; ₹322**

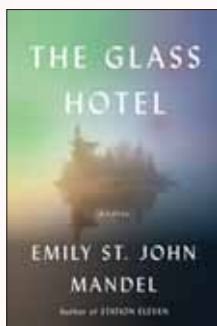
Palestine, 1990. Seventeen-year-old Isra prefers reading books to entertaining the suitors her father has chosen for her. Over a week, the naive and dreamy girl finds herself quickly betrothed and married, and is soon living in Brooklyn. There Isra struggles to adapt to the expectations of her oppressive mother-in-law Fareeda and strange new husband Adam, a pressure that intensifies as she begins to have children — four daughters instead of the sons Fareeda tells Isra she must bear.

Brooklyn, 2008. Eighteen-year-old Deya, Isra's oldest daughter, must meet with potential husbands at her grandmother Fareeda's insistence, although she desires to go to college. Her grandmother is firm on the matter: the only way to secure a worthy future for Deya is through marriage to the right man.

But fate has a will of its own, and soon Deya will find herself on an unexpected path that leads her to shocking truths about her family — knowledge that will force her to question everything she thought she knew about her parents, the past, and her future.

In her debut novel, Etaf Rum tells the story of three generations of

Palestinian-American women struggling to express their desires within the confines of their Arab culture in the wake of shocking intimate violence in their community. This is a story of culture, secrets and betrayals, love, and violence. It gives us an intimate glimpse into a controlling and closed cultural world, and a universal tale about family and the ways silence and shame can destroy those we have sworn to protect.



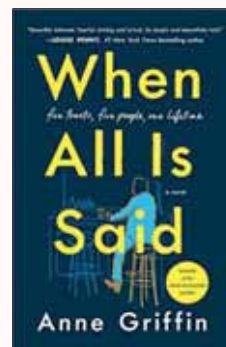
The Glass Hotel

Author : **Emily St John Mandel**
Publisher: **Knopf Publishing Group**
Pages : **302; ₹353**

Jonathan Alkaitis owns the Hotel Caiette, a five-star glass palace on a British Columbia island. Smooth talker and immoral Alkaitis gives his card with a handsome tip to Vincent, the bartender at the hotel. She looks at the money as a way of transforming her life. Angry at her choice her half-brother, Paul, scrawls a note on the glass wall of the hotel: "Why don't you swallow broken glass." A guest at the hotel Leon Prevant, who is a shipping executive for a company Neptune-Avramidis, sees the note from the hotel bar and runs scared. Putting together the lives of these characters the story revolves around a ponzi scheme, a

young woman who goes missing from a ship and the disastrous fall of Alkaitis, living between the timeline 1990 and 2029.

From a remote island hotel to a container ship and the skyscrapers of Manhattan, this book paints a breathtaking picture of money, beauty, white-collar crime, ghosts and moral compromise.



When all is said

Author : **Anne Griffin**
Publisher : **Thomas Dunne Books**
Pages : **336; ₹922**

At the bar of a grand hotel in a small Irish town sits 84-year-old Maurice Hannigan alone and ready to tell his story. Over the course of the evening, he will raise five toasts to the five people who have meant the most to him. Through these stories — of unspoken joy and regret, a secret tragedy kept hidden, a fierce love that never found its voice — the life of one man will be powerful and poignantly laid bare.

Heartwarming and powerful, the voice of Maurice Hannigan will stay with you. He will leave you with these questions — If you had to pick five people to sum-up your life, who would they be? If you were to raise a glass to each of them, what would you say? And what would you learn about yourself, when all is said?

Compiled by Kiran Zehra



RC Nagapattinam — RID 2981

As part of its Covid-19 relief efforts, the club distributed *kabapura kudineer* (herbal water) to policemen, conservancy staff and public to strengthen their immunity. Rotarians also distributed masks and handbills (dos and don'ts) to the public.

RC Pudukkottai Central — RID 3000

Special children at the Livelihood Training Centre of Mental Health Mission entertained the Brazilian delegates touring under a Friendship Exchange programme with dance and yoga performances. DGE AL Chokkalingam briefed the guests on the activities of the special home.



RC Nidadavole — RID 3020

Sewing machines were given to 26 jobless women to create a sustainable livelihood to them in partnership with a local welfare group. Local MLA G Srinivasa Naidu presented the machines in the presence of Club President Ayineedi Pall Rao and Secretary Gopireddy Srinivasu.

RC Ghaziabad — RID 3012

The club donated medicines to Chikitsya Kendra, a dispensary for the poor, as per the medical prescription of a doctor. Club President Kshitij Gupta made a generous contribution for this project.



Matters



RC Nasik West — RID 3030

The club distributed 2,500 face shields to the Nasik Police department to protect them from coronavirus infection while on duty.

RC Alwar — RID 3053

Winter uniforms were given to around 80 children at a government upper primary school at Aravali Vihar. Club Secretary Shashank Jhalani, Rtns Nirmal Modi, Vikas Gupta, Ruchi Jain, Shankar Khandelwal and Amit Chhabra, the school principal, were present at the distribution event.



RC Dasuya — RID 3070

The club donated school uniforms to students at a government senior secondary school at Jhingran Kalan village. The school authority thanked Rotarians for the thoughtful gesture which lifted the morale of the students.

RC Ankleshwar — RID 3060

The club started Adult Literacy classes at Prayogshala School located on the premises of VT College. Most of the beneficiaries have never been to school and they were enthusiastic to attend the literacy classes regularly.



RC Dehradun Central — RID 3080

The club donated woollen blankets and dress material to school children to protect them against the chill, wintery nights. The club is holding a number of health and sanitation projects in government schools.



RC Lonand — RC 3132

The club supplied essentials including vaccine at 32 polio centres in the town as part of its End Polio activities. The gesture facilitated timely vaccination for newborns in the neighbourhood.



RC Ambarnath Smart City — RID 3142

In the second phase of its Digital Anganwadi Project, the club donated sanitisers, first aid box, cotton mats, dustbins, audio systems and toys to 32 anganwadis. DG Mohan Chandavarkar, AG Anil Sahajwalla and District Secretary Lalit Manik were among those present.

RC Mumbai Kandivli West — RID 3141

Nine toilet blocks were constructed at Tawa School, Dahanu, at a cost of ₹4.4 lakh. The project would benefit over 200 students who were from underprivileged families. The inaugural event was attended by 10 Rotarians.



Matters

RC Kumta — RID 3170

DG Girish Masurkar donated a drinking water facility, dresses and utensils to Gurukala, a residential school for students of north-eastern states, near Karki village of Honnavar taluk. He also inaugurated a computer lab at Mahesh PU College. The lab was sponsored by Club Secretary Kiran Kashinath Nayak in memory of his father, a past president.



RC Balehonnur — RID 3182

Over 500 face masks were distributed to the Government Hospital, Balehonnur, for patients and paramedics to guard against coronavirus. The hospital authorities thanked Rotarians for the gesture.



RC Coimbatore Industrial City — RID 3201

Hand sanitisers and foot-operated dispensers were donated to the district court complex as part of the club's Covid relief efforts in the city. The project lifted Rotary's image in the neighbourhood.

RC Bangalore Udyog — RID 3190

The club honoured 16 women conservancy staff of the Municipal Corporation who clean the streets daily and organised a health camp for 500 migrant women labourers in a garment industry.



RC Trikaripur — RID 3202

More than 160 persons attended a cataract detection camp at a government high school hosted by the club along with Mam Comtrust Hospital, Kanhangad. The camp was inaugurated by PDG V G Nayanar and free treatment and surgery will be provided to needy patients by the club.



RC Chathannoor — RID 3211

An ambulance was donated to the Different Art Centre in Thiruvananthapuram which shelters differently-abled children. The vehicle will facilitate speedy medical care to children who need frequent shifting to hospitals. DG Shirish Kesavan handed over the keys to Mayor K Sreekumar in the presence of Club President Shajahan MK and other Rotarians.



RC Chennai K K Nagar — RID 3232

Students of Holy Cross Matric HS School collected ₹10,000 towards PolioPlus and presented a cheque for the same amount to the club's Foundation Chairman R Selvaraj. Rtn Anuradha Ravi is the school trustee.



RC Sivakasi Central — RID 3212

The club members joined hands to distribute 50 food packets to needy people. Also, they donated 300kg of rice to tahsildar for giving to poor families hit hard by lockdown.

Matters

RC Burdwan South — RID 3240

Gumboots, gloves, masks, sanitisers and rain-coats (for rainy season) were given to around 100 garbage collectors and ragpickers who toil to keep the surroundings clean in this municipal town. Rotarians are planning to train the beneficiaries on making the best use of the protective gears with orientation lectures.



RC Jamshedpur East — RID 3250

A mega medical camp was organised at Mahulia village, a remote area, in which over 500 people were examined for various illnesses and given consultations.

RC Bhilai Greater — RID 3261

An LN-4 prosthetic hand camp was held in association with RCs Raipur Royal and Jamnagar (Main) with over 100 amputees fitted with artificial limbs. They also received orientation on how to use their new hand.



RC Ballygunge Uptown — RID 3291

A health camp was held at the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission, Rania, in South 24 Paraganas district in which over 75 patients were diagnosed for various illnesses and 120 were examined for eye disorders.



Compiled by V Muthukumaran
Designed by L Gunasekaran

Desi crime novels set in British era



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

The extended lockdown has had one good outcome that no one is talking about: Indians are reading more, reluctantly perhaps but how long can you watch TV and play on your phone? For me the biggest plus has been the discovery of a completely new genre of books, namely, the historical crime novels situated in India. What's more, these novels are by writers of Indian origin. This gives them that little feel or empathy about the people they are writing about.

The first such I discovered is Sujata Massey who has created a female Parsi lawyer character working in the first quarter of the 20th century in Bombay, as it was then. She is young Perveen Mistry who also solves murder mysteries. These books are wonderfully written, in a calm and polished style. They bring the old Bombay to life, some of which had lasted till the building boom since 1980.

Another such writer is Abir Mukherjee, born in Scotland. I have so far read only one book by him and am looking forward to reading the other three whenever it becomes possible to buy them after this coronavirus thing is over. Be warned, though. There is another writer of the same name who writes entirely a different sort of novel. In fact, the two Abirs are not unlike my cousin and I. We have very similar names and identical initials. But he

writes books that show history must be taken seriously, while I write books on modern economics. Mine show that economics is good fiction.

Anyway, the Abir I am talking has created a dogged English character called Sam Wyndham of the Imperial Police, that's what IPS was known before 1947. This Wyndham has many weaknesses, one of which is a preference for opium — the purer the better because, like good scotch, it doesn't give hangovers.

He has a sidekick, a young Cambridge-educated Bengali called Surendranath. The Brits call him Surrender-not. This is a little dig by the author at their pronunciation of Lord Jagannath, who became Juggernaut. Surrender-not's surname is Banerjee. For those who don't know, and I am sure most don't, there is another Surendranath Banerjee in Indian history, an important politician of the late

19th and early 20th century. So that's a nice aside, too.

Mukherjee writes in that polished way where not a word is out of place, not a sentence superfluous. This is hard work of a different kind, almost like writing an intricate musical core. That makes his book a page-turner. You want to find out who did it but you don't flip through the pages to the end. That, to my mind, is the hallmark of excellence in crime novel writing. That's a rare quality amongst mystery writers.

Nor does he waste many words describing colonial India in very great detail or lament its racial inequities as self-conscious Brits who write about it tend to do. He accepts India as it was then — *gora boss, kala naukars*. Some *goras* are fine, just as some *naukars* are, too. The plots are intricately woven but with a very light touch. So, you never get that sense of oppression that some mystery writers impart.

That said, these books — Massey, Mukherjee etc — don't seem to be written for an Indian audience. They are intended, I think, for a predominantly British readership that likes to think of India in a certain happy way. Never mind. These writers have created a new genre. That, by itself, is a good enough reason to read them. It's completely different from the crime novels set in India by British writers. Those are good but don't quite make the cut. ■

Abir Mukherjee writes in that polished way where not a word is out of place, not a sentence superfluous. That makes his book a page-turner.

In Brief



Viennese get paid to eat out

Post the Covid lockdown, the Mayor of Vienna, Austria, has decided

to give out vouchers of €50 (₹4,075) to every family and €25 (₹2,030) to individuals to encourage them to eat out at the local restaurants. The vouchers were sent by mail and the restaurants and cafes can exchange these vouchers for cash. This €40-million measure is meant to support the restaurant industry which suffered huge losses since the lockdown was enforced on Mar 16 across Austria.



Babies stranded in Ukraine

At least 100 babies from surrogate births are stranded in Ukraine after the country imposed travel ban for foreigners. Surrogate motherhood is a booming business here and surrogate mothers earn around \$15,000 per baby. It is estimated that as many as 1,000 surrogate births will happen before the ban is lifted. The biological parents are mostly in the US, Italy, China, UK, France, Spain, Romania, Austria, Mexico and Portugal. Doctors and caregivers take care of these infants, feed them formula, take them for walks and show them to parents on video calls, all while in quarantine.



Other ways to say hello

With the coronavirus outbreak, the forms of greeting people have undergone a drastic change with a no-touch etiquette. The Wave, Namaste,

Wuhan Shake (foot-shake), Elbow bump, fist bump and Thai Wai (similar to the Indian Namaste) are the new normal in greeting friends and family. Celebrities and Royals have quickly adapted to the new forms of greeting, with fear of the pandemic looming large.

Insatiable appetite in quarantine!

A 23-year-old migrant who had returned from Rajasthan and was quarantined at the Manjhwari Quarantine Centre in Buxar was reported to be consuming 40 rotis and 10 plates of rice a day, besides eating a whopping 85 *littis* (a Bihar delicacy made with wheat flour stuffed with roasted chickpea) on one of the days. The officials instructed the manager at the centre not to deprive him of food or slash his diet until the end of his quarantine period.



A costly flight

While hundreds of migrant workers, with women and children in tow, walked miles to get back to their homes during the lockdown, a liquor baron in Madhya Pradesh hired an 180-seater Airbus-320 from Delhi to fly his daughter, two granddaughters and their maid, from Bhopal to Delhi, after they were stuck in Bhopal during the Covid-19 outbreak. According to aviation experts, the cost of hiring the airbus would be about ₹20 lakh.

A call for Covid-19 heroes

Calling upon all our readers in Rotary clubs and districts to write in and tell us about the Covid-19 heroes you have come across in your community. It has to be an individual, who showed exemplary courage, devotion to duty, compassion and grit to help

those affected adversely by the corona pandemic. These heroes can be from diverse fields such as healthcare, local administration or municipal corporation, voluntary sector, police force etc.

A profile of the person, detailing the work he/she has done, with a few

candid, high resolution pictures should be sent by email — no Whatsapp messages will be entertained — to rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com with contact details of the person. *Rotary News* will choose a few of these and honour them in one of our next issues.

