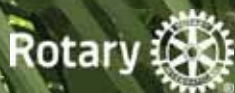




Rotary

NEWS





RIPN Shekhar Mehta and Rashi being received in Evanston by RI President Mark Maloney, his wife Gay, RIPE Holger Knaack and his wife Susanne.



Major Donor Dinesh Goyal, (D 3110) DG Kishor Katru, Governor of West Bengal Jagdeep Dhankhar, RIPN Shekhar Mehta, PDGs Sharat Chandra and Devendra Agrawal at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata.

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Lifestyle Medicine empowers people to adopt healthy habits.

On the cover: RIPN Shekhar Mehta and his wife Rashi.

Picture by Rasheeda Bhagat.



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Great service for hearing handicapped children

The cover story on *RC Mysore West's pioneering work for children with hearing loss* was a class apart and gave a detailed coverage and classy pictures.

The regret is we missed meeting you in Mysore and spending some quality time with you to discuss Rotary. I will be taking up my presidency next year and on behalf of our club, invite you to visit us and see some of our community projects.

A N Aiyanna

RC Mysore

Midtown — RID 3181

been empowered. This resonates with this year's theme: Connecting the world, as these special children get good speech and hearing training.

RC Omerga is doing excellent work in water conservation, benefitting around two lakh people in the drought-prone Marathwada. This project is the outcome of hard work of Rotarians with the participation of public and farmers and will build Rotary's credibility and public image in the region.

Navin Ramesh Garg

RC Sunam — RID 3090



are lack of facilities to train such special children at the earliest and bring them back into mainstream education. I salute the club president and its members for a remarkable achievement.

Chinmaya Mahapatra

RC Bhubaneswar

Heritage — RID 3262

The article on *RC West Mysore's pioneering work for children with hearing loss* was commendable and worth reading. RI President Mark Maloney has set forth novel ideas to be followed by clubs for eradicating polio

from the world. The Editor's Note rightly turns the focus on education of children from low-income families. The two RI Directors — Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi — have given advice worth following. One hopes the Indian DGs' goal of collecting \$30 million this year is met. Thanks for publishing the updated Rotarian Code of Conduct which is useful information. The article *Comfort books make travelling a pleasure* is an excellent piece of advice for readers. I really enjoy reading the magazine every month as it gives detailed coverage of services rendered by Rotarians to minimise people's suffering. Your team does a great job.

Philip

Mulappone MT

RC Trivandrum

Suburban — RID 3211

Literacy challenge

I endorse the views of the Editor when she says, "there are millions of Indians for whom any education, even literacy, remains a dream beyond their reach." It is all because of lack of resources. But still poor people are very serious about giving quality education to their children. Hats off to Rotary which has accepted this gigantic challenge of making India totally literate by 2025, besides its commitment to eradicate polio.

RI President Mark Maloney has laid emphasis on conquering polio with a steadfast mind and strong will. RIDs Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi have also focused on this dreaded disease through their messages. This disease could be wiped off with the help of all Rotarians.

Raj Kumar Kapoor

RC Roopnagar — RID 3080

The appeal made by RIPN Sekhar Mehta to make India literate by

2025 calls for massive involvement and commitment. We need support of the Central and State governments, social organisations, student community and the entire nation to achieve this grand vision. As per the available data, there are only seven states which have literacy rate between 60 and 70 per cent. The rest are above 70 per cent. The new data must be based on 100 per cent sampling like the Census.

The documentation has to be updated on time. The outputs from

LETTERS

TEACH can be used to identify the problem areas. It may be worthwhile to look for volunteers from PDGs from Kerala who have expertise in this regard.

*Dr NRUK Kartha, RC Trivandrum
Suburban — RID 3211*

Nice travel piece

Kiran Zehra has given minute details about the Andaman Islands which are fascinating making one want to go there immediately. Havelock, Neil and Rose Islands are described in such a way as if we are there right now. After reading this article, one won't need a guide to visit Andamans!

*O P Khadiya
RC Jaipur Kohinoor — RID 3054*

Annapurna, a great project

Sincerity, passion and meticulous planning went behind the success of RC Solapur's *Annapurna* project. I was amazed to observe the present set of office-bearers maintaining the tempo and zeal to keep going a 12-year-old signature project. I appreciate the Editor's exploration in unearthing such a beautiful Rotary service story which most often remains relegated to oblivion. Congratulations to the club for not rejecting the policies and decisions of its past presidents.

*Arun Kumar Dash
RC Baripada — RID 3262*

Exemplary articles like RC Solapur's tiffin-meal initiative motivate Rotarians to launch similar humanitarian projects for the needy. It is inspiring to see the picture of senior citizens holding Rotary tiffin boxes. Such pictures encourage us to

take up projects like distribution of woollen clothes, shoes, stationery, notebooks, schoolbags, etc to the needy people. Besides, projects like the installation of handwash stations, toilets, rainwater harvesting and distribution of cloth bags help us keep the planet green and clean.

*Ashok Jindal, RC Nabha Greater
Nabha — RID 3090*

The cover photo of September issue is really attractive with senior citizens holding tiffin boxes. The article *Little England of British India* is interesting. We are proud to get the fourth RI President (2021–22) from India in Shekhar Mehta who is rightly taking up membership as the focus area in his tenure. The retention of membership is an important; at a programme of RID 3291 on public image and literacy, Mehta addressed this issue in a forthright manner.

We were delighted to read the article on 100 years of Rotary in Kolkata in the August issue. The pictures in *Memories from Hamburg* are great and the write-up on the bone bank in Chennai was interesting. We wait eagerly every month to read the magazine.

*Soumitra Chakraborty
RC Tollygunge — RID 3291*

Right focus on girl child education

Both the RI Directors have asked us to take care of education with Dr Bharat Pandya urging Rotarians to focus on educating of girl child which will benefit the entire family. Kamal Sanghvi says that "one child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world."

Let us all welcome RIPN Shekhar Mehta (2021–22) as RI President. He has rightly emphasised on arresting the membership decline. Hearty congratulations to the RC Solapur team for continuing the 12-year-old tiffin-meal project with great passion. We hope they take up similar projects in the years to come.

Another lofty project, the greening of cyanide dump in the Kolar Gold Fields by RC Bangalore Orchards needs to be appreciated as they had to surmount many hurdles in the course of its implementation. These dumps have taken a heavy toll on the lives of locals.

*S Muniandi
RC Dindigul Fort — RID 3000*

The prestige of an organisation depends on the conduct of its members. They are the flagbearers of its philosophy and beliefs. Higher positions call for higher scrutiny. For many years, many Rotary clubs have ignored the basic principles of the organisation, with most of its members ignorant or indifferent about the objective of the Four-Way-Test. We need to ponder over this to stop deterioration in standards in Rotary before it is too late.

*Subhash Bansal
RC Ambala — RID 3080*

I congratulate Rtr Dhruv Parikh, President, Rotaract Club of ISME, RID 3141, for launching a campaign to prevent suicide. Rotaractors are the backbone of Rotary and future Rotarians. With such motivation sessions, one gets the power to overcome tough situations.

*Jay Mehta
RC Surendranagar — RID 3060*

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor: rotarynews@rosaonline.org; rushbhagat@gmail.com
Click on **Rotary News Plus** in our website www.rotarynewsonline.org to read about more Rotary projects.



Rotary and the UN share a historic relationship



Dear fellow Rotarians and members of the family of Rotary,

Rotary Day at the United Nations, which we celebrate each November, is an important reminder of the historic relationship between our organisations. But this year's event is even more important than usual, because we are building up to the 75th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter in June 2020.

You might ask, why celebrate this anniversary? For Rotary, it is entirely appropriate, because we played such a critical leadership role in the San Francisco Conference that formed the United Nations in 1945. Throughout World War II, Rotary published materials about the importance of forming such an organisation to preserve world peace.

Not only did Rotary help influence the formation of the UN, but *The Rotarian* also played a leading part in communicating its ideals. Rotary educated members about plans to create the UN through numerous articles in the magazine and through a booklet titled *From Here On!* When the time came to write the UN charter, Rotary was one of the 42 organisations the United States invited to serve as consultants to its delegation at the San Francisco Conference.

Each organisation had seats for three representatives, so Rotary International's 11 representatives served in rotation. The people officially representing Rotary included the general secretary, the current and several past presidents, and the editor of *The Rotarian*. In addition, Rotarians from Africa, Asia,

Australia, Europe, and North and South America served as members of or consultants to their own nations' delegations.

We have a deep and lasting relationship with the UN that deserves to be celebrated and appreciated. To recognise this relationship, Rotary will host five special events between now and June: Rotary Day at the UN in New York on the 9th of this month; three presidential conferences next year in Santiago, Chile, in Paris, and in Rome; and a final celebration just before the Rotary International Convention in Honolulu.

The focus on the UN in the year ahead is not only about the past; it also lights a path to our future. There are so many parallels between the work we do through our areas of focus and the work of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. While those goals are indeed incredibly ambitious, they provide inspiration and direction — and are similar to many Rotary goals, which have proven to create lasting, positive change in our world. The goals can be achieved, but only if undertaken with the same long-term commitment and tenacity that Rotary understands so well. Alone, we cannot provide clean water for all, we cannot eliminate hunger, we cannot eradicate polio. But together with partners like the United Nations, of course we can.

Please consider attending one of our five UN celebrations. I look forward to sharing news of these special events with you throughout the year.

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

Mark Daniel Maloney
President, Rotary International



Undaunted by their disability

While I am not an admirer of little girls being made to walk the ramp, or sing and dance in television competitions, a news item of 9-year-old Daisy-May Demetre, a physically-challenged girl from Birmingham, walking the ramp in Paris caught the eye. This because she was endorsing a French luxury brand for children in the fashion capital of the world, boldly displaying her two prosthetic lower limbs. Daisy was born with a disability that caused part of the bone missing in both her lower legs. Her legs had to be amputated when she was only 18 months old and she learnt to walk with prosthetic legs. This was her third catwalk, the earlier two being at fashion shows in New York and London.

That the fashion world is inclusive of a ramp walk on prosthetic limbs cheered the heart. But then came this nasty piece of news at home that disability rights activist and polio survivor Kuhu Das was asked by the security personnel at the Kolkata airport to remove her trousers as she said she could not remove her calipers without removing her trousers. Of course, the activist, who has widely travelled around the world and was going to Delhi to participate in a UN conference, was allowed to go after she protested.

To add insult to injury, her colleague Jeeja Ghosh, who has cerebral palsy, and was on a wheelchair, was first told by the airline that she couldn't fly without an escort. Both women, ironically, were going to participate in a conference to defend the rights of disabled women!

Naturally, there was a furore in both traditional and social media and the Kolkata Airport Authority

has apologised to both the women. Talking to the media, Kuhu said this wasn't unusual at Indian airports, as most often she was asked to remove her calipers, something that doesn't happen to her in other countries. When a friend first posted the incident on a social media, I commented on how insensitive, inhuman and shocking this was... that our security personnel at airports should be so insensitive to the rights and sensitivity of our disabled population. Pat came a response that this is necessary in the interest of avoiding terror attacks. Well, of course security should be rigid and ensure all air travellers' safety but surely there is a way of doing this without humiliating disabled persons.

How brave these women are, and how they have responded to the challenges posed by their disability, can be seen from the fact that Jeeja, who did her Masters in disability from the Leeds University, UK, is reportedly the first woman in India with cerebral palsy to adopt a child. Kuhu, who got polio at the age of three, is the secretary of the Disability Activists Forum. Both the women, as thousands across India, who have put their handicap behind them and have taken on the challenge of fighting for the rights of the disabled... the right to education, employment, access and housing, and above all, the right to a life of dignity, deserve not only our salute but our active support. Telling Rotarians about the adverse effects of polio is like carrying coal to Newcastle, but such incidents put the onus on us to fight more vigorously for the rights, and dignity, of the disabled.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rasheeda Bhagat'.

Rasheeda Bhagat

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Message from

One-to-One



Individually we may not be able to do much to make our world better. But through our Rotary Foundation we can do much. One of the greatest opportunities for Rotarians to work for peace is through The Rotary Foundation. Peace is not just the absence of war, but it is also a quality of life.

I believe in 3-Bs that are necessary for peace — Bread, Bed and Basic education. Our Rotary Foundation helps to provide food and water for the hungry and thirsty, shelter for the homeless and education and learning for the uneducated.

November is The Rotary Foundation Month — a time for relearning and rededication to the Foundation and its many worthwhile programmes; a time to focus our attention on the pillar which gives real internationality to Rotary. From a tiny beginning in the mind and heart of Arch Klumph as an Endowment Fund “for doing good in the world” today it has evolved into one of the foremost agencies of humanitarian service — a foundation which is respected, transparent, increasingly more agile and one of the best managed charities in the world with Four-Star Rating given by Charity Navigator. Over the years districts of our zones have actively participated in Foundation programmes — whether it is sending some of the best VTTs abroad or magnifying our service efforts through humanitarian grants. And of course, we are committed to polio eradication. District grants have ensured that the benefits reach a broader cross-section of clubs. And we are ranked Number 2 in Foundation giving.

If Rotarians are the heart and soul of Rotary, TRF is its backbone. The opportunities that we have before us will, in many cases, be transformed into success stories, thanks to TRF.

It is important to know about EREY, the Every Rotarian Every Year initiative of TRF. Only when every Rotarian contributes every year to TRF can its stability and long-term health be ensured.

Experience the joy of giving to TRF. Know that your gift is going to make a difference in critical areas of hunger, health, literacy, water and polio eradication. Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best: “To know that even one life has breathed easier, because you have lived, is to have succeeded”. TRF is that power of one multiplied many times over. Taste the beauty of giving to TRF, I assure you, you will give again and again. Remember ‘What we do for ourselves dies with us; what we do for others remains and becomes immortal’. Keep giving to TRF to do good in our world.

Light the candle of giving and lead the way as *Rotary connects the world*.

Dr Bharat Pandya
RI Director, 2019–21

RI Directors

Doing amazing work through our Foundation



Rotarians in our zones, and the entire Rotary world, can be proud that The Rotary Foundation, built through your contributions, is helping improve the lives of thousands of people in communities across the globe. It has got consistently top ranking from Charity Navigator. It is a matter of pride for our zone that in the last few years we have emerged as Number Two in giving to our Foundation. And after “receiving” for years, India is now a “giving” country to the Foundation; last year, we gave more than we received!

This should be a matter of joy for us, as the fact that Indian Rotarians are now teaming up with clubs outside India to do global grants in their countries. For a moment, pause to think of the phenomenal work that has been made possible in so many communities in Rotary’s focus areas such as health and nutrition, water and sanitation, increased economic activity, promotion of peace, and best of all, literacy and education, because of the work that Rotarians do through Foundation grants. Rotarians have excelled in reaching emergency aid to victims of natural disaster, through their immediate and generous contribution, or building low-cost shelters such as those we did in Gujarat after the devastating earthquake of 2001, in Kerala and Karnataka recently, and so many other places.

Over 102 years of the existence of The Rotary Foundation, just think of the smiles you have brought to the faces of distressed and displaced people, the tears you have wiped of thousands and thousands... the very thought should light up your minds and hearts.

By your generosity and the thousands of volunteer hours you have put in over the years, the Rotary wheel, our logo, stands proudly embedded in colonies we have built in Gujarat, Maharashtra (after the Latur earthquake), etc. Through our numerous projects we have made a dent in reducing poverty and disease, improving sanitation, the crucial factors that reduce conflict and give lasting peace a better chance, another major focus area of our Foundation. And we have helped make India polio-free!

I thank you for your generosity and urge you to continue giving to TRF. After all, the Indian ethos is to care and share whatever we have. We’ve seen our parents do it; let’s follow their great example.

Kamal Sanghvi
RI Director, 2019–21

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District Wise TRF Contributions as on September 2019

(in US Dollars)

District Number	APF	PolioPlus	Other Restricted	Endowment Fund	Total Contributions
India					
2981	7,923	101	0	29	8,054
2982	11,648	4,953	161,362	0	177,963
3000	15,259	0	3,703	0	18,962
3011	9,427	104	21,657	0	31,189
3012	155,397	600	32,000	0	187,997
3020	8,144	9,756	0	12,029	29,928
3030	2,326	0	1,423	0	3,749
3040	4,488	0	5,471	0	9,959
3053	23,903	32	331	0	24,266
3054	1,420	1	35,809	0	37,230
3060	8,032	1,436	5,229	1,014	15,712
3070	12,702	25	6,733	0	19,460
3080	25,907	3,544	12,875	1,013	43,340
3090	3,858	0	0	0	3,858
3100	21,110	0	0	0	21,110
3110	2,379	1,410	0	0	3,789
3120	19,578	0	0	0	19,578
3131	48,244	258	74,317	38,000	160,819
3132	2,062	0	5,355	15,000	22,417
3141	150,788	3,608	154,643	41,392	350,431
3142	43,961	168	0	0	44,130
3150	29,645	5,192	11,667	87,829	134,333
3160	1,578	29	0	0	1,607
3170	16,295	286	4,006	0	12,574
3181	78,133	347	0	0	78,480
3182	7,689	0	1,777	0	9,466
3190	54,899	3,309	3,171	0	61,380
3201	22,178	104	16,998	0	39,280
3202	31,659	7,589	2,035	1,000	42,283
3211	719	42	46,879	290	47,930
3212	11,663	1,720	1,050	0	14,432
3231	898	56	2,170	0	3,124
3232	4,709	14,468	43,309	7,500	69,986
3240	13,423	0	32,511	0	45,933
3250	11,841	0	85	0	11,756
3261	205	0	26,727	0	26,932
3262	8,331	1,514	5,507	0	15,353
3291	23,597	0	22,646	0	46,243
India Total	896,020	60,654	733,265	205,097	1,895,036
3220 Sri Lanka	20,430	3,000	1,150	0	24,580
3271 Pakistan	0	0	20	0	20
3272 Pakistan	1,392	225	300	0	1,917
3281 Bangladesh	17,904	0	32,000	2,000	51,904
3282 Bangladesh	16,113	149	0	1,000	17,262
3292 Nepal	68,446	12,093	189,280	0	269,819
South Asia Total	1,020,305	76,121	956,015	208,097	2,260,538
World Total	22,268,027	5,024,932	4,094,427	6,677,448	38,064,834

Source: RI South Asia Office

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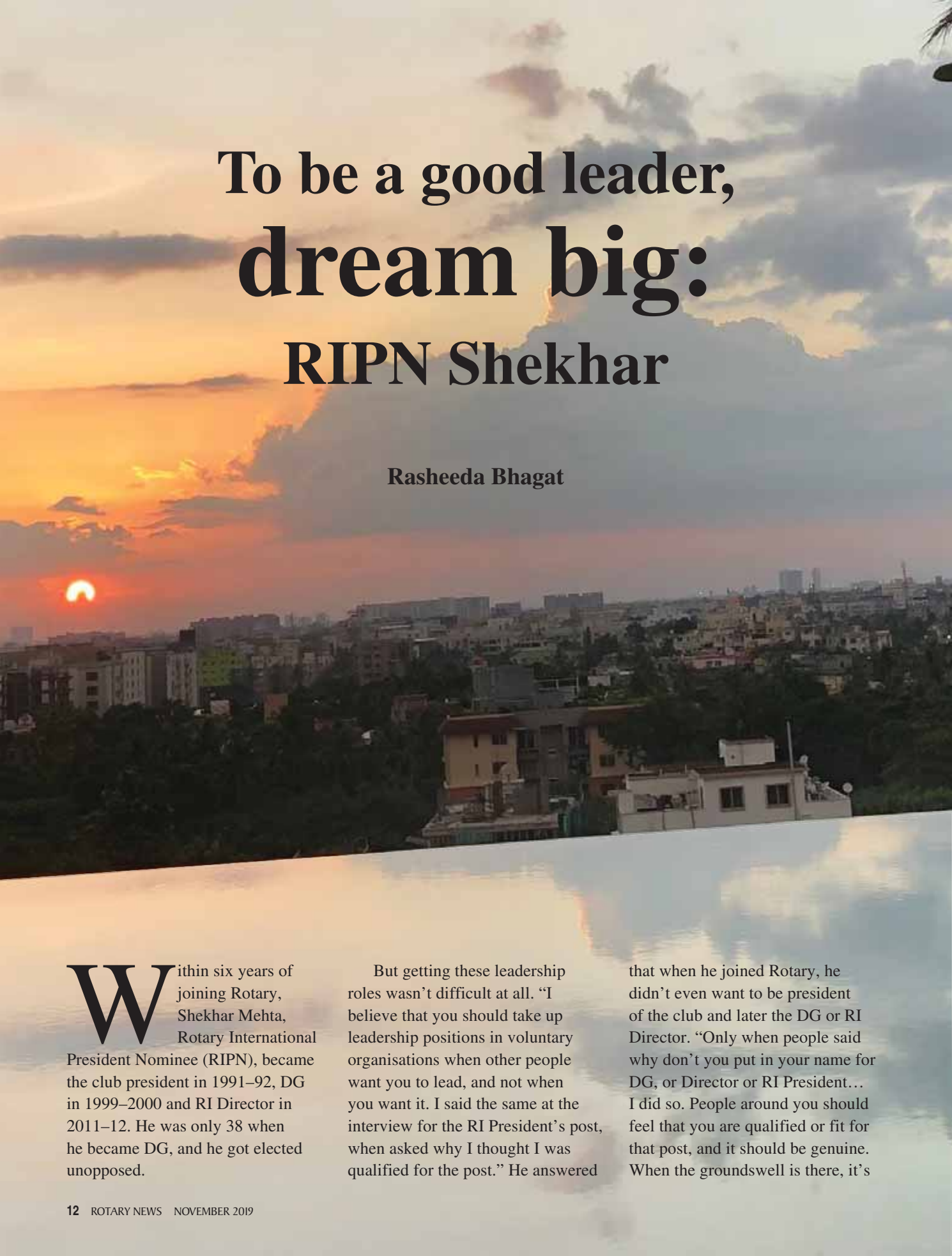
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A full-page background image showing a sunset over a city skyline. The sun is a bright orange circle on the left, partially obscured by clouds. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and blue. In the foreground, a city skyline is visible, with various buildings and structures. A rainbow is visible in the lower right foreground, reflecting the colors of the sunset. The overall mood is peaceful and inspiring.

To be a good leader, dream big: RIPN Shekhar

Rasheeda Bhagat

Within six years of joining Rotary, Shekhar Mehta, Rotary International President Nominee (RIPN), became the club president in 1991–92, DG in 1999–2000 and RI Director in 2011–12. He was only 38 when he became DG, and he got elected unopposed.

But getting these leadership roles wasn't difficult at all. "I believe that you should take up leadership positions in voluntary organisations when other people want you to lead, and not when you want it. I said the same at the interview for the RI President's post, when asked why I thought I was qualified for the post." He answered

that when he joined Rotary, he didn't even want to be president of the club and later the DG or RI Director. "Only when people said why don't you put in your name for DG, or Director or RI President... I did so. People around you should feel that you are qualified or fit for that post, and it should be genuine. When the groundswell is there, it's



At a glance



Fitness: This is one area where I have failed; I am not a lazy person but on this matter (exercising), I am lazy! I do it in bits and pieces; right now I am exercising... walking and yoga, but not on a sustainable basis. My extraordinary travel makes exercising difficult as I want to make full use of my day. I take early flights going in and late flights coming out, leaving little time for a fitness schedule.

Relaxing: I am always relaxed; I don't need to do anything to relax. I am passionate about my work and that relaxes me.

Food: Vegetarian, particularly street food which is outstanding in Kolkata. It's always a South Indian breakfast while travelling. At home it is *daal-chawal*, I love it.

Cooking: Fortunately for other people I haven't tried my hand at it!

Music: I love music; mostly Bollywood music, both old and new Hindi songs, but my preference is for old songs. When I was younger, I loved western music too.

Reading: My favourite writer is Jeffrey Archer. His narrative is amazing; I love the way he can transform a simple story of a person's life into a gripping narrative of 400 pages, I like reading different writers.

Religion: I believe in god; there was a time I didn't, and strongly too, when young. But one day my father said 'Shekhar if you don't spend just five minutes a day thinking of god, this system will go out of our family. I started doing it, and when you start a good thing, it remains! Every morning starts with a five-minute prayer. I have faith in the powers that be. I am equally comfortable at any place of worship, be it a mosque, temple, church or gurudwara.

Women's membership

I am a strong believer in women. Give a woman a job and it will be done with greater sincerity, faster and better. It's the way they work; I can see it right here at home. In our family everyone knows... your first impression when you entered our home was 'Wow'. Yes, I made it but it is Rashi who maintains it. Can you believe this house is 20 years old? Women do an outstanding job of anything they take up. And Inner Wheel members do more Happy Schools than us! This is an untapped area and I will give a huge thrust to it.

Was RI President's post his dream?

No, these are not dreams for me; and I don't say it with a halo. I genuinely believe it. I've not yearned for this; it was at the back of my mind, or else why would I put in my name? My dream is a totally literate India, that RI gets the Nobel Peace Prize. That whenever we talk of service internationally, we think

of Rotary. That Africa should have clean water, its children should get excellent healthcare and go to schools regularly. These are my dreams.

Rashi's role in his journey

If I am the face, she is the back office, which is so important! The front would crumble if the back office was not there. She doesn't like to come to the forefront; there is an average quota allotted to any couple to speak. Because I speak 80 per cent, she speaks only 20 per cent! But she is the one who nudged me to join a voluntary organisation.

Journey in Rotary: Just outstanding, and transformed me completely. When I got inducted as an RI Director-elect in 2010–11, I decided and Rashi agreed, that if I'm giving so much of my time, energy and money in service of other people, the rest of my life will be devoted only for doing good in this world. My business can take care of itself. I am comfortable, rather extra comfortable, in life. I would like to live for other people. In future, if I am asked, I'd like to serve the country in a larger role, maybe in politics. I strongly believe that every senior leader in India at some-time or the other should be asked by the government to join politics, either in an honorary position or otherwise, as they have so much experience and can help others. A Rotarian might do a \$1 million project, maybe once in a lifetime; for a minister, it's probably two days' expenditure. So Rotarians can do great good in transforming the country.

A leader can't say this won't happen.

If there is a good idea don't tell me it cannot happen because if you give me 10 reasons why it can't happen,

I'll give you 100 why it can!

Leadership: In a voluntary organisation, a good leader should dream big and have a positive attitude. A leader can't say this won't happen. If there is a good idea don't tell me it cannot happen because if you give me 10 reasons why it can't happen, I'll give you 100 why it can! Give me two ideas how this difficult thing can be accomplished. I take huge inspiration from our polio story. If somebody had said then we can't eradicate polio, and Rotarians had agreed, today we wouldn't be on the brink of eradicating polio. So dream big, have a positive attitude, discuss things with others, work hard, keep your ears close to the ground but be ready to take bold decisions and be ready to fail. That makes a good leader.

Role model in Rotary

Kalyan Banerjee, clearly. He was RI Director when I first met him. I've seen his cool and calm way of working, his simplicity... he is down to earth, soft spoken, humble and a very good speaker... actually, an outstanding orator. I've learnt a lot emulating him, seeing him, understanding him, but at the same time I am a different person from him, very different. But I like some of his qualities, I don't imbibe all of them, because I am me. But he is my role model. I like the way he functions, is non-interfering, non-politicking, has a large vision which gels with my way of thinking. Also, to me, his humility is very important.

Public image of Rotary: To make a difference, we have to do big things. When a Rotarian walks into any government office, the other person should get up, greet you and say we love the work you're doing. That should be Rotary's image... of people who work, and not of people who want to take pictures. If there is a one thing we need to improve, it's this habit of taking pictures with everyone. Within Rotary, it's fine, outside, please don't do it.

When a Rotarian walks into any government office, the other person should get up, greet you and say we love the work you're doing. Rotary's image should be of people who work.

the best time." Perhaps that was why ascent to all the leadership positions he has held has "been absolutely smooth". He is also one of the rare ones to get the RIPN position at first shot.

To what does he attribute this ease with which he got such top posts, I ask Mehta. "I've come up in Rotary because of my work, and seniors who supported such work. And probably an ability to take people along with me throughout."

I experienced this the previous evening, when after the *Ignite* meet in Kolkata, he was crowded by a bunch of senior Rotary leaders, including PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, for hours in a small hall. I was marshalled to be part of that "think tank" and suffered long hours there on an uncomfortable chair, making little contribution and picking up back pain for a week. "This is how Shekhar works," chuckled PDG Shyamashree Sen, who had to leave a pot boiling in her kitchen after suddenly being summoned by Mehta for an *Ignite* session. "He works for crazy long hours, and drives those around him crazy too," she adds.

Earlier in the morning Director Kamal Sanghvi had described how

Imagine the diversity
in a Rotary club
with some 100–200
members, each with a
different viewpoint. To
veer them towards the
same goal is a challenge
but great fun too!



Mehta library



Above: With Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi at a South Asia Literacy Summit. Also seen in the picture (from left) RID Kamal Sanghvi, Rashi Mehta, PDGs Babu Peram, Chandu Agarwal, Manpreet Singh Gandhoke and Sumedha Satyarthi.



Mehta library



(Clockwise from top) With Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee; with PRIP Rajendra Saboo; with PRIP KR Ravindran, PRID Manoj Desai and RI Director Kamal Sanghvi; with Vallabh Kumari (mother) and Rashi.

Mehta had landed up at the hotel at 2 am to see if the arrangements for the event were spic and span.

Seated in his plush apartment in an upmarket area in Kolkata the next morning, after fortifying my aching back with a pain gel, I quiz Mehta on his ability to involve large numbers of people in any cause he takes up; the latest being literacy, in which at least 100 PDGs

are involved. “Well, you have to do that. In a Rotary club with some 100–200 members, imagine the diversity; each person has a different viewpoint but to be able to veer them towards the same goal is a challenge but great fun too. And you can do this when the cause is good and serves others,” he says.

What about his reputation for making people work long hours and himself clocking some 16 hours a day? He grins and says, “There was a time when I did that, for literacy, which is not just any other

programme of Rotary, it’s a mission we’ve undertaken to make India literate... a very big deal as every fourth Indian is illiterate. How many voluntary organisations can even think this big?”

A chartered accountant by profession, he is also a cost accountant and company secretary, with an MCom degree to boot. “That was the maximum you could study then

India is the Kohinoor in Rotary's crown

To RIPN Shekhar Mehta, India is the “Kohinoor in the crown of Rotary... a rare jewel. I have respect for all countries; you asked me about India so I am responding to it. If you ask me about US, I'll tell you its good points,” he says.

Today India is No 2 in both membership and giving, “but No 1 in projects. To me that is the biggest asset of Rotary in India. Whether it is heart surgeries or providing drinking water or building schools, India has done some outstanding work in all sectors and focus areas of Rotary.”

As one who has worked in the field for years, “I know what pains you have to take to do even one

of these projects and what joy it brings to the beneficiaries. These are life-changing things. I can narrate 20–30 major projects which have left an impression on my mind and heart. Where else in the world is a single country doing so many service projects?”

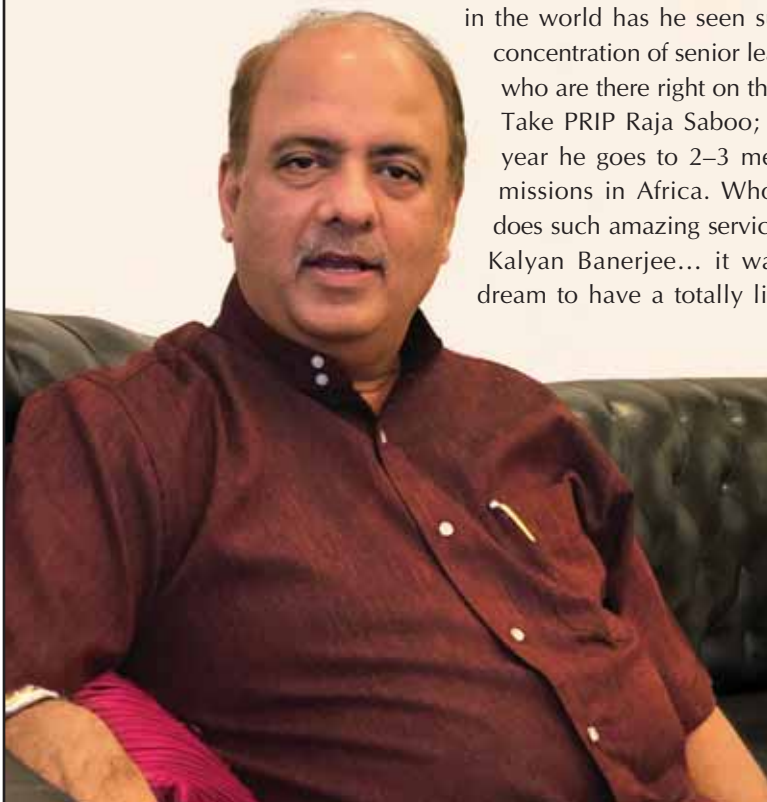
He adds, “It is easier to write a cheque than to go 100 km away from your home, month after month, and ensure that people in that village get drinking water or open-defecation is now replaced with toilets in homes. That's not easy.”

Extolling the “amazing, excellent leadership” that Rotary has in India, he quotes PRIP KR Ravindran who “say all the time that nowhere in the world has he seen such a concentration of senior leaders, who are there right on the job. Take PRIP Raja Saboo; every year he goes to 2–3 medical missions in Africa. Who else does such amazing service? Or Kalyan Banerjee... it was his dream to have a totally literate

India and at his age he is there at every important meet on literacy; he doesn't have to do it.”

He adds, “Think of water and sanitation, and PRID Sushil Gupta was there. After the Uttarakhand earthquake, Yashpal Das built some 32 outstanding schools in the hills. You want money for any project, tell Ashok Mahajan and at the snap of a finger, he will organise the money because he is sitting in the financial capital of India. PRID PT Prabhakar is actively working in WinS, look at Manoj Desai's extensive corrective polio surgeries, and Sudarshan Agarwal, till his last breath, was working for Rotary, managing the Him Jyoti school and he set up an excellent blood bank in Delhi. It was the same with O P Vaish; he was the brain behind so many projects. Panduranga Shetty runs 27 educational institutions and he himself is an institution. PRID C Basker who just finished his term, worked so hard; if any natural disaster happens Kamal Sanghvi rushes aid through Shelter Box. Bharat Pandya has introduced an excellent project on health. Hats off to all these people. India provides great leadership and we have outstanding partnerships.”

What ails Rotary in India? “Nothing... 7 or 10 people doing something questionable, is not the organisation. Everything is working great, if there were problems in Indian Rotary, how could such great work happen in service projects, contributions and membership?”





RC Mahanagar is a strong club; we have 85-plus members and done some outstanding projects.

There is great friendship and camaraderie in our club and we're ready to take up any challenge.

in the commerce field. I believe there are very few people who have done all four!"

He became a CA following the family tradition — "there are 30 of us in the family" — but "there is no family firm as such. We come from Jodhpur which produces the highest number of CAs in the world. They say if you throw a stone in Jodhpur, chances are it will fall on a CA!"

Mehta first joined RC Central Calcutta, RID 3291, where he made friends for life. Later he shifted to RC Calcutta Mahanagar, then called RC Calcutta Bada Bazaar. With only three members, "it was a shell club which met in a dingy place. Within a year we grew it to 40 members, changed the name to Mahanagar as Bada Bazaar reflected one of the not-so-clean localities, shifted our meeting venue first to Park Hotel and then Taj Bengal. Since then it's been one of the stronger clubs in the district; we have done some outstanding projects and are 85-plus members. There is great friendship and camaraderie in our club and we're ready to take up any challenge."

When he was DG, at \$250,000 TRF collection, the district was the highest; "I don't mention the figure much as it is peanuts in today's terms," he laughs. Membership

grew, many new clubs were started, and the focus was on big projects. "I always want to dream big and do big things, because if so many people are going to put together their brains, time and resources, we have to do something really big." Setting up 500 row houses with the Rotary wheel and getting a 3H grant in record time were some highlights of his year.

In his new role, growing Rotary will be his top focus, "but when I say growth, our basic values such as diversity will remain. Fortunately, in India we do have diverse membership as our club members include the elderly, middle-aged and young, and women, and members represent all religions. We don't even think in terms of religion or region in

Rashi speak

Ask Rashi Mehta about her husband's passionate engagement with Rotary and she smiles and says: "Shekhar joined Rotary soon after we got married (1984). I am not a Rotarian but have been there in all club and district projects and activities, along with Shekhar from day 1. We started with very small projects and what followed is like a huge rainbow."

Rotary became a "way of life" for both and "when the children came, they understood our involvement in Rotary." In 1991-92, when Mehta became club president, she became her Inner Wheel club's president and later served as treasurer of her district for two years.

Some of the work she remembers is "the relief material and the shelter kits that we reached to the devastated people after the Bihar floods. And the visit to Kashmir after the Uri earthquake (2005); it was here we found to our delight the huge respect that the Indian Army had for Rotary," she says.

Rashi particularly remembers the "huge landslide; just in front of our jeep. We could see the land falling and Shekhar said 'Rashi, we may not return from this journey.' But the Rotary spirit prevailed, we completed our work and returned home," she smiles.

On how they met, she says, both their parents were members of a Lions club and "became very close friends if so that's how the children met too. We used to hang out together, go for various Lions programmes." They met in Class 11, started courting in the first year of college, and got married in 1984. They have a son, Chirag and daughter Chandni, daughter-in-law Geeta and grandson Veer, who is a year old. All of them live in Delhi.

On his rise to the pinnacle of Rotary leadership, Rashi smiles: "That he got it at first shot is very interesting. He gave his name much later at the suggestion of some senior leaders. It's been a roller coaster ride; the love and affection we received even before he went for the interview to Evanston made everything worthwhile and proves he is a people's man."





Rotary; it would be difficult to know if as Rasheeda Bhagat you are a Muslim, Punjabi or a Gujarati. If you are a Rotarian, you are welcome. “

Along with membership and taking projects to the next level, another priority is tapping CSR funds. “TRF funding is limited, because we are talking programmes which top over \$1 billion. Global grants can’t bring in this kind of money; CSR is the answer.”

But to get effective CSR funding, structuring and scaling up and standardisation will have to be done. “This requires tremendous focus, time, energy, a format and collating data which can be constantly monitored.”

His simple message to Rotarians is that instead of individual clubs asking corporates, CSR funding should be done through district or national-level. “If a club has an opening with a corporate, don’t just go and ask for ₹2 lakh or ₹5 lakh for a project. You are underselling yourself and the corporate can turn around and say I’ve already given money to Rotary.” Also, be specific and not vague; “literacy could mean anything, so ask specifically

In India, we have a diverse membership and don’t even think in terms of religion or region. You may be a Muslim, Punjabi or a Gujarati. If you are a Rotarian, you are welcome.



With RIDs Kamal Sanghvi (L) and Bharat Pandya (R).

for 50 Happy Schools or so many E-learning kits. Giving pencils, erasers or benches doesn't excite a corporate. You will have to do big, visible things such as schools or E-learning programmes that make a real difference."

In India, says Mehta, Rotary is sitting on a volcano of talent; "we need to explore it for doing good."

If a club has an opening with a corporate, don't ask for ₹2 or ₹5 lakh for a project. You are underselling yourself and the corporate can say I've already given money to Rotary.

Our responsible membership needs to grow... not coming in this year and leaving the next. If you focus your energy, you will get results." Also, the right training is very important. "We should learn this from the western world, especially Americans, who always know how to scale up. Look at their burger, it has travelled all over the world. But is a burger rocket science? The *vada paav* made in Mumbai is as tasty but hasn't travelled from Mumbai to Kolkata, which the burger has done... thanks to standardising, training and skilling."

Mehta's advice to Indian Rotarians, "who are already doing great", is to now increase our pace and have structured programmes. "The literacy programme is the best example; in five years we've not had to tweak it. Why should we not replicate it in Health and WinS, environment or disaster management? If we did that, we would be in a different league altogether, as our projects will become replicable models for other countries."

Americans know how to scale up. The burger, thanks to standardising, training and skilling, has travelled all over the world. Is it rocket science; Mumbai's *vada paav* is as tasty but hasn't travelled to Kolkata."

But, adds Mehta, if at all there was a flaw, which thankfully, was reducing, it was pulling down a person who was moving ahead. It had happened to him too but he wasn't adversely affected "thanks to my work, which gave me many friends. But this doesn't happen with everybody."

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat
Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

Mehta's dream, Nobel Prize

Jaishree



PRIP Kalyan Banerjee honours RIPN Shekhar Mehta with *pagdi* as Rashi (R) and Sonal Sanghvi (L) look on.

As Shekhar Mehta prepares to lead the Rotary world in 2021, he dreams of Rotary being honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts in polio eradication, and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee too backs it. “Polio need not be completely finished for Rotary to get a Nobel Prize. With 99 per cent of the world polio-free, it is a matter

of time we reach that one per cent and we will do it. It is time to recognise Rotary’s enormous role in conquering the virus. Have a committee in place for 3–4 years so that by the time your tenure is over, a decision will be taken on this,” said PRIP Banerjee at a grand felicitation event in Kolkata in honour of the RIPN. Rotarians of Kolkata, and neighbouring

districts, had pulled all the strings to make the event a memorable one for the ‘son of the soil’. It was a star-studded evening and an extra special one as the guests celebrated Mehta’s 60th birthday with great fanfare.

Another suggestion Banerjee made was to consider having several regional sub headquarters so that Rotary can be run continent-wise and

country-wise. People in various regions think and act differently. “One plan for the whole world is not the solution. We need to address the differences of the lands differently and still keep growing. This is how we can attract the current generation. Good luck to you. Go and conquer the world.”

He noted the special connection Kolkata has with Rotary “just like how

Aamne Saamne

The audience was treated to wit and humour as RID Sanghvi quizzed Mehta, Rashi and their family on a range of topics. The couple knew each other from school days as both their families were good friends and they courted for seven years before they married. “We all know Shekhar as a literacy man, a man building toilets, but this is the other side of Shekhar, the lover boy. It is beyond our imagination,” said Sanghvi.

Rashi recalled how “he used to make me wait for hours. If he had said he will come at 11 am, he would come only at 1 pm and I would just wait for him.” Referring to his affection for his two sisters, Rashi recalled how he wanted to take them along during their honeymoon!

“What is the one thing that you have not said to your son Chirag and you want to tell him now?” asked Sanghvi. As Mehta pondered, pat came the reply from PDG Ravi Vadlamani from the other side of the hall: “Join Rotary.” Mehta caught that and said, “Yes, bang on! I have never said that to him. Join Rotary.”

Reflecting on the moment when he transformed into a true-blue Rotarian, Mehta talked about a mobility aids camp that his club RC Calcutta Mahanagar had organised for physically-challenged people where they were given calipers, artificial limbs, crutches or wheelchairs. His job was to check if the people had strong hands to push the wheelchairs to move around. He would check their strength by asking them to pull his hands. “The first person came crawling.

I saw that his hands were soiled. And I reluctantly stretched out my hand for him to put his hand on mine. I didn’t like it at all, but I had to. The next was a leprosy patient. I had no option. But as the exercise progressed I came to terms with it and empathised with them, realising that they had a huge challenge of mobility which they overcame by whatever means they could. That project changed me into a Rotarian from just a club member.”

What do you like the best about your club? “They stand by me like a rock and support my craziest ideas. Thank you. You are the place where I learnt everything,” he said.

Mehta wants to write a book, and a sensational chapter in it will be “on the clichés of Rotary. When they say ‘a short introduction’ it is always a long one; they say ‘now we will present a small memento, not memento, and four people will be bringing that small memento... these are few samples.’”

When asked about his choice for a dinner date, a role model and a guru, it was “Kalyanda” for all three. Next Sanghvi asked: “If you are stranded on an island, and can save just one person, who would you choose among your mother, wife, Katrina Kaif and Kalyanda?”

Mehta replied: “I will still choose Kalyanda, for he will show the way to save the other three.

A few other witty, yet wise rejoinders to Sanghvi’s rapid fire questions included a choice between Kamal Sanghvi or Mahanagar, his answer was “Kamal Sanghvi in Mahanagar”; and between Rashi or his Ma, “Ma — both mine and Chirag’s.”



Chicago is special for RI. Today efforts are on to revive the home of Rotary Founder Paul Harris and preserve it as a monument. It is only right that we in India collectively make plans to revive the home where Nitish Laharry lived as a Rotary heritage place. And now as India celebrates its centennial

It was Shekhar’s initiative that made eradicating illiteracy a viral proposition in India.

Gulam Vahanvaty
TRF Trustee

RIPN Shekhar Mehta and Rashi with his mother Vallabh Kumari, Sonal Sanghvi, son Chirag, daughter-in-law Geetha, daughter Chandni, sisters Madhulika and Rashmi and brothers-in-law. Mehta has his grandson Veer on his lap.



Rotary year, it is only apt to do so. Perhaps Shekhar will show the way,” he said.

PRIP Rajendra Saboo shared his joy through a video message from the US. He commended Mehta’s efforts in reaching shelter kits to the needy during disaster relief. “Shekhar has integrity, ability and commitment. Rotary will be fortunate to have him as a leader. God bless him,” he said.

The event, anchored by RID Kamal Sanghvi, was an interesting potpourri of fun, grandeur and camaraderie, and attended by delegates from various districts across India, Bangladesh and



RID Kamal Sanghvi and Sonal Sanghvi greet RIPN Mehta and Rashi.

Polio need not be completely finished for Rotary to get a Nobel Prize.

With 99 per cent of the world polio-free, we will reach the one per cent soon.

Kalyan Banerjee
Past RI President

Nepal. Mehta was given a traditional felicitation by the senior leaders. PDG Anirudha Roy Chowdhury welcomed the delegates.

TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty traced Mehta's role in the formation of RILM, after the Colombo Declaration was adopted at the South Asia Summit

for Peace, Development and Cooperation organised in Colombo, when Mehta and Y P Das were RI Directors and Banerjee was RI President. The document led to the formation of the Rotary South Asia Society and the Rotary India Literacy Mission. "It was Shekhar's initiative that made eradicating illiteracy a viral proposition in India," he said.

Mehta shared fond memories of the "two lovely years" he served as RI Director, along with PRID Y P Das. "The four of us would go for dinner. Rashi, Manju and I are vegetarians and as we sat for dinner, Das would say, Oh... how I miss the non-veg food! You know the last time when I was in

Vietnam, they would serve live snails on our plate. And I would say, Oh god, here we are eating vegetarian food and you talk about snails... He would do that every time we sat down for dinner. But jokes apart, we had a great time together."

Das recalled how the Indian leaders — Mehta and he as Directors, Banerjee as RI President and Ashok Mahajan as TRF Trustee — were then referred to at the RI headquarters as the 'Indian Mafia'. "But we enjoyed a wonderful working relationship right from when we were Directors-elect and then Directors. Shekhar is a workaholic, working late in the night. He dreams big and is an achiever. His

literacy programme is a tell-all. Rashi is the silent force pushing him in that direction," he said.

RID Bharat Pandya eloquently highlighted Mehta's 'charisma' — Commitment, Hope, Attitude, Refining his goals, Innovative efforts, Sensitive to others, Motivational leader, Action-oriented —and complimented him for designing the TEACH verticals which make RILM a big success. "Together with Kamal, Gulam and me, we will make the Indian troika, and not an Indian Mafia," said Pandya.

"When I googled what Shekhar means, it mistook the word for *shikhar* and threw up the answer that it means 'peak'. Indeed, he

PDG (D 3131) Vinay Kulkarni hands over a cheque for ₹50,000 to RIPN Shekhar Mehta for Polio Fund, on the latter's birthday, in the presence of PDGs Mahesh Kotbagi, Anirudha Roy Chowdhury, RID Kamal Sanghvi and DGN Pankaj Shah.





PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, Madhavi and RID Bharat Pandya, Sonal Sanghvi, Rashi Mehta, TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty and RID Kamal Sanghvi at the felicitation in Kolkata.

is a pinnacle of dedication. Be it heart surgeries for children or promoting literacy, he works with such devotion,” said PRID Manoj Desai.

PRID PT Prabhakar, who was part of the Nominating Committee that elected Mehta as RIPN, explained the procedure. It is a stringent process and not even the RI President or General Secretary can enter. “It is a norm that when the committee meets the President should not be in Chicago.” The committee is asked to choose the best candidate irrespective of gender, age or region. “So we cannot choose a woman candidate just because we have not had a woman president so far.”

One of the questions to the candidates was, ‘Where do you see Rotary in the next 10 years?’ Answers ranged from ‘Rotary will have 1.3 million membership’; ‘The Foundation will have double the contributions’. “Shekhar stole the show with his answer: Rotary will be honoured with a Nobel Prize in three years from now for our work in polio eradication, and the committee was floored by his answer,” he said.

As the programme drew to an end, an overwhelmed Mehta thanked everyone for the good wishes and blessings, and specially thanked all the senior leaders “for shaping me. I am influenced and inspired by

Enough of bashing India.

It is time we blow our own trumpet. Why should we put ourselves down in international meetings?

Shekhar Mehta
RI President Nominee

each one of you one way or the other.”

He spelt out some of the ideas he wanted to introduce during his year. “Enough of bashing India. It is time we blow our own trumpet. Why should we put ourselves down in international meetings? After all, we stand tall in membership

and contribution and we are doing a great job with several global grant projects here.” He spoke about his plans to increase membership to 1.3 million and urged each Rotarian to introduce one member in the next three years. “We can do it. Remember when we promised Kalyanda that we will contribute \$300 million to TRF when he was its Chair, and we did it.” Another idea he shared was a common India Central Disaster Management Fund instead of different trusts to raise funds for disaster victims.

Pictures by Jaishree

Images of the event in the next issue.

RC Calcutta to do projects worth ₹20 crore in centennial year

Rasheeda Bhagat

It was nostalgia galore on the evening of Sep 26 in the hall in Kolkata, where Rotary Club of Calcutta was celebrating its 100th birthday. There was a combination of different

cultures and vibrant colours... the *jamdanis* of Dhaka were there, worn by delegates from Bangladesh, matched by the elegant off-white and gold bordered sarees from Kerala, worn by members of Rotary

Club of Lucknow; both RCs Dhaka and Lucknow have been sponsored by RC Calcutta!

The event was held as the club's 4,427th meeting, the Centennial bell was there and the compere for



the evening, Centenary Committee Chair Saumen Ray, past president, took the audience down memory lane by highlighting the salient points in the club's 100-year journey.

Founded on Sep 26, 1919, the club was chartered on Jan 1, 1920, and is the oldest running Rotary club in mainland Asia. It has sponsored 28 clubs in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In the audience I spot PDG (1984–85) Somendra Chandra Nandy, the oldest living member of the club, who tells me he joined the club in May 1964. Asked about the greatest gift the club has given him, he smiles and says: "I learnt to write

English. I was the editor of *The Chaka*, our club bulletin, for many years. And I wrote so many books."

What did he enjoy the most during his 55 years' membership? "Making new friends, and meeting so many different people. It has been a fantastic journey."

That journey and nostalgia were captured over the next few hours, with 12 of the 28 clubs that RC Calcutta has sponsored sending their representatives to the event. There was a large contingent from Bangladesh led by RID 3281 PDG Sam Showket Hossain (RC Dhaka Central), and Rotary Clubs of Dhaka, Patna, Lucknow, Darjeeling, etc.

In my 55 years of Rotary journey I enjoyed making new friends, and meeting so many different people.

PDG Somendra Chandra Nandy
the oldest living member of RC Calcutta

Conducting the meeting, Club President Purnendu Roy Chowdhury said 20 past presidents of the club were there that day, and "we are forming a new club today of young professionals and businessmen. Their meetings will be short, sweet and crisp and followed by networking sessions."

Expressing his gratitude for the "overwhelming response" from RI District 3291, and many of its sponsored club, he said, "in Rotary there are no barriers. It's Rotary's centenary in India, so let all of us jointly celebrate." He was lucky to have the "rock solid support" of 20 past presidents; "I am extremely privileged to be the 100th president, we've had 99 excellent presidents and I can name all of them but please don't quiz me now!"

He added that the Rotary Sadan in Kolkata now bears the names of "all the 28 clubs we've sponsored so that people can recognise our reach and extent to connect with Rotary in this part of the world." His team had already visited Colombo, and would be going from Oct 16 to 21 to Shanghai where RC Shanghai was also celebrating 100 years of Rotary, though it had not existed continually, having been shut down and then reopened.

Soumen Ray said the first club RC Calcutta had sponsored was Lahore. There were many



The youngest and oldest members of RC Calcutta cut a cake in the presence of (from L) DG Ajay Agarwal, Club President Purnendu Roy Choudhury, RIPN Shekhar Mehta, Club Secretary Anusua Das and RID Kamal Sanghvi.

Rotary history in the City of Joy



Club President Purnendhu Roy Choudhury and Soumen Ray presenting the club bulletin, *The Chaka*, to PRIP Kalyan Banerjee.

Addressing the Centennial celebrations of RC Calcutta, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee said that while preparing to celebrate with the club's Rotarians he had referred to some Rotary history and "I read that in 1919, an expatriate businessman dealing in steel, RJ Coombes, had returned to Calcutta from a business trip to the US with authority from Rotary headquarters to organise

a club in Calcutta." He had succeeded in roping in a few of his European friends mostly Freemasons, and at a luncheon meeting of some 45 men, a formal resolution was passed to organise a Rotary club in Calcutta. Dr William Willoughby Kennedy, a physician and surgeon, became its first president.

Quoting from Rtn James Davidson's book *Making New Friends*, on his Rotary travel to the Middle and Far East

to establish new Rotary clubs east of Suez Canal, Bannerjee said on Aug 23, 1928, on board the ship *Duchess of Athol*, that sailed from Montreal, were Davidson, Honorary General Commissioner of RI, and his wife and their daughter. On a 3-year mission from RI, they travelled by steamers plying between London and Tokyo, meeting 2,000 business and professional men, explaining Rotary and its principles.

In Calcutta, Davidson was very impressed with the "only offspring of our youthful international organisation between the English Channel and the China sea," with no other Rotary contacts for thousands and thousands of miles, and no RI representative having visited it over nine years of its existence. He said in his official report to RI: "RC Calcutta awakened in me both pride in Rotary and amazement. Rtn WK Battey, the only

surviving charter member resident in Calcutta and still a tower of strength, speaking at the club's 10th anniversary celebration, described it as 'a very feeble infant which at times seemed likely to expire from lack of nourishment.' He recalled one memorable meeting when only five were present, two of them guests!"

But, a prominent charity event in the city had attracted strong support. Davidson was happy to find at the two luncheons he attended, "the happy atmosphere and good fellowship prevailing between the European and Indian members, now some 80." He also mentioned the "many services the club has rendered to the community and their long list of distinguished visitors is a roster of the strong men of India, both Europeans and Indians, among whom have been several viceroys, including the great-hearted, person, Lord Irwin."

Of course, in 1928, Gandhiji had not yet become the father of the nation or won the sobriquet 'Mahatma'. But the fact remains that in September 1925 Gandhiji addressed a meet of

RC Calcutta on the "Economic and Spiritual value of the Charkha!"

Returning to Davidson, Banerjee said, he was happy to find that among the club's members, 30 were Indian, including the president.. "a man of such culture and courtesy as Rtn Abdul Ali." His successor was Alfred Watson, editor of *The Statesman*.

That Davidson had a keen eye can be seen from his singling out "an enthusiastic, exceedingly well-informed Indian member, NC Laharry, who has served the club faithfully for years in many capacities, such as secretary, treasurer, editor of *The Chaka* — the club's exceptionally fine weekly magazine, and on various committees." Added Banerjee, "Well, it is obvious that the Rotary spark had already been kindled in Laharry, who later served RI as its first Indian President in 1961–62. And your *Chaka* still keeps wheeling along."

Since then, India produced two more RI presidents, both with a Kolkata connection — Rajendra Saboo and Kalyan Banerjee. "Director Sushil Gupta was elected to serve as the fourth RI President in 2020–21. Unfortunately,

his unexpected ill health forced him to withdraw from the assignment. But we pray he regains his health and gets back to Rotary soon. And now, Kolkata has again its own world President of Rotary in Shekhar Mehta to serve in 2021–22. Well, Kolkata seems to have produced really a wonderful array of Rotary leaders; maybe it has something to do with the Holy Ganga waters here!"

In a lighter vein he noted: "I have heard that quite a few Rotarians are planning to settle in Kolkata in the belief that if you want to get to the top of the ladder in Rotary, then Kolkata is the place to start climbing from."

Banerjee added that as RI President he had the privilege to attend the Centennial ceremony of several great clubs outside the US — Belfast in Ireland, the first Rotary club in Europe, followed by Rotary Club of London and the Rotary club of Birmingham, both in the UK. "But nowhere did I find Rotarians to be as proud and serene as here in Calcutta, where you all have a gravitas and an attachment and affection for your club that is unique. May this attachment continue forever."

In September 1925 Gandhiji addressed a meet of RC Calcutta on the "Economic and Spiritual value of the Charkha".

octogenarian clubs in the hall such as Jamshedpur, sponsored in 1936; Dhaka (1937); and Lucknow (where former Prime Minister AB Vajpayee was an honorary member.

Listing some of his club's significant projects, Chowdhury said one of these was the Annual Children's Treat "which we started in 1925 and it is running non-stop for 95 years. We also have an archive which is a treasure trove and our past president Nandita Sen, who is the first woman president of our club, and is present here today, has taken keen interest, along with past president Dr Dipak R Sarbadhikari to maintain it.

Not many Rotarians might know this but it was RC Calcutta that brought cultivation of broccoli into India; next on the cards is to expand asparagus cultivation in India by going to the hills of Darjeeling, a perfect region, with the help of



Club members dressed in period costumes enacting a skit recalling nostalgic moments from the past.

Rotarians of Netherlands. “There is a huge demand in this city for asparagus,” he said.

Chowdhury also shared that in 2011, with the active involvement of past president Soumen Ray, Rotarians had advocated changes in the Indian Railways sanitation facilities. “As a result, most Indian Railway coaches have been upgraded with the control discharge toilet system and bio toilets.”

Over 100 years, the club had done extensive work in healthcare, water and sanitation, literacy and education, and had an extensive outreach through its projects in slums and villages. Having saved the lives of vulnerable children who lived on the streets through its health outreach programmes, now the club plans to build small ‘platform schools’ to support the education of children of ragpickers, daily wage workers, construction workers, etc. They will later be integrated into regular schools. “The brightness and energy of those children is infectious; you should see them when they try to speak to us in

English! We will ensure they keep on studying.”

Some of the Centennial projects of the club include a heart surgery project (1,000 surgeries), a school hostel for 200 tribal students, making 25 villages ODF, building a “platform school”, prevention of blindness in children, water, sanitation and other health projects.

A highlight of the evening was a short enactment of a skit that took the audience back to the hallowed history of the club with past presidents — both British and Indian — dressed in period costumes, including top hats, recalling some salient moments from the club’s rich past.

Expressing his admiration for its 10 decades of “magnificent existence and service”, and congratulating RC Calcutta for the “wonderful, gala, celebratory event of your 100th Foundation Day, a once-in-a-lifetime occasion,” PRIP Kalyan Banerjee said Rotarians in India had always believed

that Rotary came to India first in 1920. That RC Calcutta was the second Rotary club in Asia, RC Manila in Philippines being the first. “But you had assembled your club here in 1919, before Manila. So, maybe you were the first provisional club in Asia, before you were chartered. But whatever the historical facts, to me, blind supporter that I am, it is always Calcutta first, Calcutta next, Calcutta always. So, happy birthday!”

He was amazed that from the day of its organisation 100 years ago, the club had held its weekly meetings unfailingly every week, “come war, famine, pestilence or floods. What a magnificent performance!”

Giving more interesting details of the club’s rich history (see box), Banerjee complimented its members for their projects such as “your unique Rotary Sadan, your magnificent library; I don’t want to talk about the leaders you have given us nor the leadership you have provided again and again. Your projects and your people, they all speak for themselves. But I want to thank you DG Ajay Agarwal and President Purnendu Roy Chowdhury and your club’s 80 plus Rotarians for the wonderful and lasting vision you have created through your benign leadership, your imaginative service, your upholding of the traditions of Rotary.”

RIPN Shekhar Mehta, who has been talking tirelessly about Rotary India’s upcoming centennial, said, “We’ve been waiting for this evening for two years, meeting regularly and I’ve always urged you to do something really big and how well you’ve taken it up. Purnendu, as Kalyanda rightly said, is not only dynamic but also dynamite; he is everywhere...

When “grassroots wisdom” got TRF \$20,000

When past president of RC Bangalore Orchards D Ravishankar, famous for his ₹100 crore donation to TRF, did some plain speaking at the 100th Foundation Day of RC Calcutta, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee, who followed his Q&A session with PDG Anirudha Chowdhury, commented: “It’s always a delight to hear Ravishankar speak; he always brings in some grassroots wisdom that you don’t normally find in other places. Keep doing that Ravi, you are making a difference to Rotary in India.”

A special guest at the event, Ravishankar, while answering

questions posed by PDG Chowdhury, said that he had decided to give away ₹100 crore as he had to return substantially to his city (Bengaluru) and society which had made him what he was today as well as Mother Earth. “And I thought Rotary was the best platform to give, and I am very happy with my decision.” During his year as president, his club had brought down a government school for some 160 children in Bengaluru and rebuilt it to accommodate 800 children. It had also made 126 Happy Schools at Kolar, about 160 km away from the

city and pledged to plant one crore trees.

When queried on his pet peeve on how the “educated” give or donate, he said, “I am not educated, so I can’t make fun of those who are. But I think they, the educated, think they are very smart in avoiding being generous and sharing what they have. By amassing wealth and keeping it to themselves, they miss experiencing the joy of giving. This is what I think, and every time I am proved right.”

He then turned around and asked Chowdhury: “I don’t know about your district. How many AKS members do you have?”

When the answer was ‘one’ he quipped: “I think I am in the wrong place and wasting my time.” When asked for “tips” on how a club or district could raise funds for TRF or projects, he said, “I know Kolkata very well, it has given me the sweetest gift in my wife Paola, who was educated at Loretto, and who taught me English so I can today talk to you today.” He also knew there were many rich people in Kolkata, including those in the audience. “They all need to go home and think how much they have taken from society and how much they will be able to take with them when it is their time to go. They have to ask themselves and decide.”

Soon after Ravishankar said this, Club President Punendru Choudhary announced that one of his club members, Sourav Khemani, had taken an on-the-spot decision to become an AKS member and wanted to know the modality of doing so. He was announcing a donation of \$20,000 that day. Congratulating and embracing him, Ravishankar said, “Today this man has saved your district’s prestige!”



Rtn D Ravishankar replying to PDG Anirudha Roy Chowdhury at a Q&A session. Club President Purnendhu Roy Choudhury and Saumen Ray are also in the picture.



PDGs (D 3281) Sam Showket Hossain, (D 3291) Somendra Nandy, PPs S K Sharma, Nandita Sen, Sonal and RID Kamal Sanghvi at the inauguration of the centennial celebrations.

a perfect ambassador of RC Calcutta in its 100th year!”

Mehta said the ripple effect of this celebration was going to reverberate throughout India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Elsewhere, a Rotary club that had completed 100 years, had just one dinner and “that was it. But here, only one club is going to do projects worth ₹20 crore in one year! This is outstanding.”

The district was extremely enthused about the celebrations; “When DG Ajay and I coined the term ‘100 years, ₹100 crore’, we soon had to revise the figure to ₹150 crore. And within 15 days of my talk with DG Ajay, I came to know about a man (D Ravishankar) who had himself donated ₹100 crore to TRF. And he is sitting right here!”

When he started talking to other DGs, “the ripple down effect went up to ₹2,400 crore! Yes, that is the value of projects our governors will do this year to celebrate 100 years of Rotary in India.”

Mehta added that hearing this colossal figure, many people were sceptical. “But last week I met the DGs at an *Ignite* session; and they

reiterated that they will do projects worth ₹2,400 crore. Ravishankar’s DG (Sameer Hariani) even revised his original figure of ₹800 crore to ₹1,000 crore. This is the ripple effect of what your club is doing. That is the leadership you torchbearers have provided!”

Mehta then spelt out his vision for Rotary in the next few years; to get a Nobel Peace Prize for its work in polio eradication; grow Rotary’s membership to at least 1.3 million, and evolve into the biggest service organisation in the world. He also wants India to become No 1 in TRF giving. “When Kalyanda was RI President, India got rid of polio. Who knows when another Indian is RI President, the world might get rid of polio,” he said, amidst applause, adding “*Insha Allah!*”

Striking a lighter note RI Director Kamal Sanghvi said PRIP Banerjee had touched upon Kolkata producing so many RI Presidents. “I’d like to say it’s the genes, *pani-poori* and *jhal-muri*!”

He congratulated RC Calcutta for its “strong legacy, incredible journey, celebration of culture at its best... you wrote the first page of Rotary in India. This is an occasion for stocktaking

and review; as you celebrate your past, it is very important to plan for the future.”

Sanghvi said that in today’s world “where needs are huge and diverse, service is a serious business; it’s not something you flirt with on an evening.” So they would have to do bigger and more meaningful projects.

Addressing the meet RID 3291 DG Ajay Agarwal said it gave him goosebumps to go down memory lane that evening and absorb the full implications of the way Rotary has grown in India and our zones. From a start of only 20 Rotarians, we have grown to around 170,000, and “all this due to the ‘Old No 1’ — that’s how RC Calcutta was referred to in earlier days.”

One could imagine how hard the man behind this club’s formation, RJ Coombes, must have worked to establish Rotary in India. Agarwal also urged the Rotarians in India to reset their goals and priorities. “I am sure we will have another historic 100 years of greatness after this centennial year,” he added.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

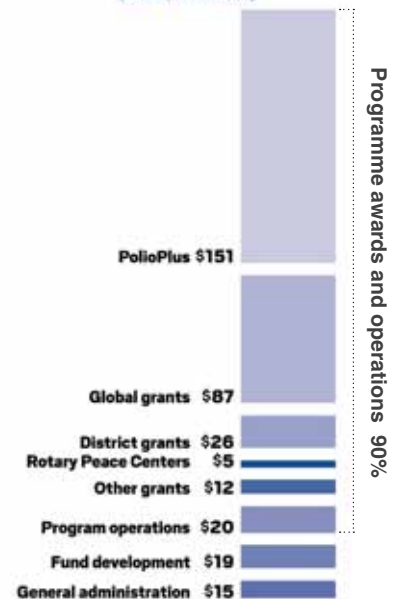
A Foundation to build on



The Rotary Foundation is recognised as one of the most effective and well-managed charitable organisations in the world, with 12 consecutive four-star ratings from Charity Navigator and an A-plus rating from CharityWatch. We know that the Foundation is helping Rotarians do good in the world, but it can

be difficult to convey the full scope of its work. So we've put together some figures from the past five years — 2014–15 through 2018–19 — to tell the story of the generosity of Rotarians and the good work that the Foundation supports. November is Rotary Foundation Month; to make a contribution, go to rotary.org/donate.

2018-19 TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$335 (in millions)



FIVE YEARS OF GLOBAL GRANTS BY AREA OF FOCUS



GLOBAL GRANTS APPROVED



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A Centennial celebration



RC Calcutta's past president Dr S K Sharma and its first woman president Nandita Sen.



RID Kamal Sanghvi with DG Ajay Agarwal and his wife Mamta.



Above: Sonal Sanghvi, Rashi and RIPN Shekhar Mehta.

Left: RC Calcutta President Purnendu Roy Choudhury (L) and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee (fifth from L) with Lucknow Rotarians.



RC Bangalore Orchards past president D Ravishankar in conversation with PRIP Banerjee.



RIPN Mehta with PDG Somendra Chandra Nandy and RC Calcutta Secretary Anusua Das.



Above: PRIP Banerjee in conversation with Rtn Bani Roy Choudhury (Purnendhu's mother).

Left: Rtn Saumen Ray and RC Calcutta President Purnendhu Roy Choudhury honouring a club sponsored by RC Calcutta.



Purnendhu Choudhury and Rashi Mehta with Rotarians from Dhaka.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Trustee Chair inspects service projects in RID 3201

Rasheeda Bhagat

In our endeavour to take the State's healthcare to the desired level, getting sophisticated equipment to upgrade the facilities in the government sector, Rotary is helping us much more than any other voluntary organisation," said Kerala's Health Minister KK Shailaja.

Inaugurating a bunch of equipment such as the CT Simulator and

Dosimetry unit (an advanced version of the CT scan systems) at the Ernakulam General Hospital through a global grant done by RC Cochin South, RID 3201, with a Malaysian club, valued at over ₹3 crore, she said the money earmarked for the health sector by GoI, two per cent of the GDP, from which Kerala was getting its due share, was not sufficient to meet

the healthcare needs of the population. This was particularly so for those sections who depended totally on the Government healthcare system.

"The Kerala government is always trying to convert government hospitals to patient-friendly, high-technology centres and reduce out-of-pocket-expenditure for the poor. Of course the

GoI is declaring new health initiatives but the financial resources are not sufficient."

Thanking Rotary, particularly DG Madhav Chandran, for helping her department in areas such as mental health, cancer detection, eye care, etc, she urged Rotarians to support her government's massive task to convert primary health centres into family health centres. She

(From Left) Kerala Health Minister KK Shailaja, PDG John Daniel, Trustee Chair Gary Huang, former MP P Rajeev, Hibi Eden, current MP, Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty, Corinna, DG Madhav Chandran, AKS members Kochouseph Chittilappilly and Nawas Meeran and DRFC R Jayasankar.





Trustee Chair Gary, Corinna, Trustee Vahanvaty, with DG Madhav Chandran, PDG A V Pathy after visiting a house constructed by Rotary.

We are ready for partnerships with the corporate sector and will be grateful for your help.

KK Shailaja
Kerala Health Minister

also thanked Rotarians Nawas Meeran (Chairman, Eastern Condiments) and Kochouseph Chittilappilly (Chairman of V-Guard) both AKS members, from whose donations to the TRF this project fructified, for their generosity. She sought their further support through CSR funds for starting more super specialities such as cardiac surgery, nephrology, etc in government hospitals in Ernakulam and beyond. “We are ready for partnerships with the

corporate sector and will be grateful for your help. As you know, floods have affected many PHCs across Kerala. Let’s rebuild them as family health centres, particularly in North Kerala as we do not have so many big companies there.”

TRF focus on healthcare
Inaugurating the new equipment, Trustee Chair

Gary Huang said TRF was happy to partner with the Government of Kerala to improve health services as that was one of Rotary’s major focus areas. “We have worked very hard to eradicate polio from the world and have managed to do so by 99.9 per cent.”

He added that in Rotary disease prevention and treatment for ailments

is one area that has attracted most funding and a bulk of Rotary projects centred around preventive health as well as treatment for diseases. “Our global grants cover initiatives such as purchase of equipment, prevention and treatment of non-communicable and communicable diseases, life-saving surgeries, training of doctors and





Trustee Chair Gary, Corinna, Trustee Vahanvaty and DG Madhav Chandran with beneficiaries.

other medical personnel and much more.”

He congratulated DG Chandran and Rotarians in Kochi for striking “such a wonderful partnership” with the government in Kerala, and urged them “to continue working hard to bring lasting change in our communities.”

Addressing the meet, TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty recalled his long association with Kochi and said TRF was very happy to be associated with the

government of Kerala in its bid to upgrade health facilities and give quality healthcare to its people. He assured Minister Shailaja that “this cooperation will continue”.

Vahanvaty said he was very impressed by the 4-way partnership in which these service projects were being done in Kerala — the involvement of Members of Parliament, champions of industry such as Chittilappilly and Meeran, the local Rotarians and the TRF. They had all come together to make a difference to the community. “I do hope this partnership continues; you in Kerala should be proud about what you have achieved. No State in India can match the parameters of health in Kerala, where the infant mortality rate (IMR), for instance, is better than

even that in the US. So your primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare is a great example for the rest of India to follow. But of course, we always need to improve, and we will be in the forefront to assist you with that improvement.”

He added that last year, after the devastating floods, Rotary had partnered with several organisations to rebuild homes. One such partnership with the Aster group was to rebuild 75 homes.

Describing his experience in working with this global grant project, DG Chandran said, “While working on this project, the kind of enthusiasm and commitment these doctors showed in working with Rotary was remarkable, and it was difficult to believe that this is just a government hospital.”

He announced that the next project Rotarians are working on is a palliative care centre to be set up in the same hospital to help patients after treatment or the terminally ill, who



The commitment of the doctors in working with Rotary was remarkable. It was difficult to believe that this is just a government hospital.

DG Madhav Chandran

have nobody to take care of them. He thanked the hospital superintendent and the team of doctors for their involvement in these projects. “We have created a milestone for an NGO and government to work together; let us do even bigger and better projects,” he added.

Giving the genesis of the hospital project, Algiers Khalid, District General Secretary, said that someone from the Ernakulam Government

After the devastating floods, Rotary partnered with several organisations to rebuild homes.

Hospital had approached Meeran, a member of RC Cochin South, for upgradation of the equipment and he expressed his willingness. The amount came to around ₹2 crore. “We advised him that if he could donate the money to TRF, we could multiply it through a global grant.”

Added, RID 3201 Foundation Chair R Jayasankar, “When we told him this, it did not even take him 15 seconds to agree and he became an AKS member. Finally, the project cost crossed ₹3.5 crore, and a part of the shortfall was taken from the term gift that Chittilipilly, another AKS member from the district, had given. The final cost of the project was \$497,000.”

Responding to Minister Shailaja’s appeal for help from corporates, Meeran said that he was open to future partnerships with the government in the health sector. “You have made an appeal for upgrading primary health centres into family centres and I assure you my support for doing this work.”

Low-cost shelters

Later in the day, Trustee Chair Gary laid the foundation stone for one of the low-cost homes that a few clubs in RID 3201 are building for the flood-affected people of Kerala. Apart from the Aster group, Atos India has also got into a partnership with RID 3201 to build low-cost shelters in flood-hit Kerala.

This is one of the 11 houses that RC Kochi Central will be building for the flood ravaged, thanks to the keen interest taken by the immediate past president of the club Biju John. “You won’t find him anywhere in the front at this event. But he travelled over 10,000 km to identify the most adversely affected beneficiaries and he spearheaded a fund-collection drive which resulted in the collection of over ₹1 crore,” said one of the members of RC Cochin Central.

I manage to track down and talk to the reclusive past president, who tells

Rtn Biju John spearheaded a fund collection drive which resulted in the collection of over ₹1 crore.

me that this particular house was being built for a woman whose husband had died in a gas explosion and was now left with two children. “It will have an area of about 500 sq ft and will be ready in six months,” he says.

Gary, Vahanvaty and Chandran visited a spanking new house that has been built by Rotarians and were welcomed gratefully by the family.

They also inspected two other GG projects in Kochi — an eye screening van and a mammogram screening equipment fitted on a van.

A CSR Conclave

Later that evening a CSR Conclave was held to raise awareness on the community service projects that Rotary does and the possibility of striking corporate partnerships for spending CSR funds. A presentation was made on the kind of service projects where corporates could partner.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Trustee Vahanvaty, Corinna, Trustee Chair Gary and DG Madhav Chandran inside the mamography van.



Your money can make the

V Muthukumaran

Rotarians have an enormous potential to change the world as they are people of action, said Trustee Chair Gary CK Huang and thanked the Foundation which fuels everything that Rotary is doing throughout the world. “It is your investment which keeps the Foundation running. Your dollars are at work in hundreds of places, serving humanity and making the world a better place.”

Addressing members of RC Madras, RID 3232, he cited an instance in which Rotarians found that infant mortality was higher than the national average in a place in Brazil. They spoke to doctors and soon provided an ICU facility and prenatal training courses

for young mothers which halved the infant mortality rate in that region. In Lebanon, Rotary had installed water tanks, filter units and faucets at 19 schools where children were drinking contaminated water. “Now over 6,700 children have access to clean water every day. Think of their joy as they could now drink clear, clean water,” he said. The WASH in Schools (WinS) project taken up across Indian schools is a model that could be showcased to rest of the world, he pointed out.

Rotary clubs must be proactive to get their gender balance right by inducting more women members and a club’s profile should represent the communities in which it was located, said Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty. “RCs

Madras and Bombay, to which I belong, share a strong bonding as both are celebrating 90 years of their existence,” he noted. While the Madras club has given \$260,000 to TRF and received \$248,000 for global grant projects last year, the Bombay club has given \$870,000 to TRF and got \$1.2 million for GG projects in the same period (2018–19). Besides TRF giving, it is essential that Rotarians must contribute to Polio Fund and Annual Fund of the Foundation to designate grants to community projects, he said.

Technical Training Centre

A Technical Training Centre (TTC) will be set up at the Boys Town in Gummidipoondi through a global grant

Trustee Chair Gary Huang launching the End Polio Now flame along with Corinna in the presence of (from left) NK Gopinath, SN Srikanth, PRID P T Prabhakar, TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty, RC Madras President R Vijaya Bharathi, DRFC M Ambalavanan, Secretary Sesha Sai and Rajesh Somasundaram.



world a better place: Gary



From left: George B Cherian, Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty, PDG JB Kamdar, Ranjit Pratap, Trustee Chair Gary Huang, RC Madras President R Vijaya Bharathi and Secretary Sesha Sai.

and with the support of RID 7570, US, and its four clubs. “We have tied up with Worth Trust, a global NGO, to educate, train, employ and empower the differently-abled boys from rural families. A two-year residential TTC will offer boys (16–30 years) training in turner and machinist trades which will help them to get secure jobs,” said IPP Ranjit Pratap.

TTC project cost \$327,260 including a TRF contribution of \$78,690. “We got the project going with seed funding of \$50,000 by PDG JB Kamdar and a significant donation by Club President Dr Vijaya Bharathi,” he said.

Gary felicitated Kamdar for giving more than \$500,000 to TRF till now, thus reaching AKS-Level 2 and M Srinivasan for completing 25 years in the club. Earlier, Dr Vijaya listed out some of the iconic projects of RCM such as the mid-day meal scheme (1971); Rotary Nagar (1943–45); and the 3-H projects which focused on water, sanitation and hygiene;

education and vocational training for empowerment. A parched lake spread over 105 acres was restored at a cost of ₹50 lakh near Sholinganallur, a suburb in Chennai, benefitting 5,000 families in the vicinity; while another dried lake (60 acres) near Tambaram on the outskirts is being revived at a cost of ₹40 lakh. “Once completed by July 2020, the lake will benefit over 50,000 people.”

The Boys Town in Gummidipoondi with 104 orphaned students offers

Rotary clubs must be proactive
to get their gender balance
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Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty

them a secure living, food and vocational training for the last 35 years, she said. Pink cabs driven by trained women will offer call taxi services, which will be another initiative by RCM to empower women.

Rotary End Polio Flame is being revived again after its successful run in 2014–15 passing through 35 countries to commemorate polio-free India when Gary was RI President. “This time two flames will be taken on a pan-India rally from Kanyakumari to reach Kashmir by May-end to raise funds for End Polio Now campaign,” said N K Gopinath, past president. “We have handed over the two flames to RID 3232 as the lead club in implementing the K-to-K project.” The K-to-K rally will kick-off from Kanyakumari on Oct 24 — World Polio Day. Dr Vijaya Bharathi, IPP Ranjit Pratap and PDG Kamdar gave \$15,000 each to TRF to mark the special occasion of Gary’s visit to the club. ■

Family fun

Hank Sartin



As you make plans to attend the Rotary International Convention in Honolulu, June 6–10, don't forget to include the kids. Honolulu is a perfect place to make memories that will last a lifetime — and to introduce your children to the worldwide Rotary family.

The luau, a big party with a focus on eating and entertainment, is a Hawaiian tradition dating back to the time of King Kamehameha II. At most luaus, you'll see hula dancing, which is a meaningful part of Polynesian culture, telling stories through a set of codified movements. Luaus have become an expected part of any visitor's experience in Hawaii, and you will find many happening around Honolulu.

Hawaii's natural beauty is legendary, and an ideal way for your family to experience it is by getting out on the water. If your family is adventurous, you might want to try surfing. There are a number of places to get lessons in Honolulu. If you want to experience the water at a more gentle pace, try kayaking or snorkelling in Kane'ohe Bay's pristine patch reef systems.

And even if you and the kids simply want to build sand castles together, Honolulu has you covered: The beaches of Oahu are legendary. Just remember to pack sunscreen.



**Don't miss the 2020
Rotary Convention in Honolulu.
Register at riconvention.org
by Dec 15 to save.**

A successful fundraiser in Taiwan



Ni hao, Rotarians!

We just had our first-ever fundraiser in Taiwan for The Rotary Foundation — and it was a great success.

The Taiwan AKS Members Association organised the event in August in Taipei. We were treated to an inspirational speech by Ravishankar Dakoju of the Rotary Club of Bangalore Orchards, India, in District 3190. He shared why he contributes his time and money — and why he's an organ donor. His generosity is legendary, and he wants to help the world in any way he can. His speech touched everyone who attended the event.

We are pleased and honoured to announce that the final total for the fundraiser was \$5.5 million. We have 11 new Arch Klumph Society members contributing at the Chair's Circle level (\$500,000 to \$999,999) and 14 at the Trustees Circle level (\$250,000 to \$499,999). Thank you to our generous donors in Taiwan!

At great events like this one, I am reminded how Rotary gives us something good that we can all do together. Our service puts us in touch with so many interesting people from all over the world. When we meet, we hear about projects of all kinds, and it is always inspirational. And we never stop learning from one another.

This provides such a wonderful lesson to our children. We share with them the importance of fellowship and forming new bonds with other people. We also show them what is really important in life: making connections, improving life for those in need, and doing all we can for others. Rotary is the best education a family can have.

I am excited that Rotary President Mark Daniel Maloney has made expanding the family of Rotary a priority. We must bring our family members to Rotary events and do all we can to encourage them to be part of this wonderful organisation. And through The Rotary Foundation, we can make these family connections part of our legacy. You are never too young or too old for Rotary.

So give your high-five to Rotary and find ways to bring your family into Rotary. It's the most wonderful gift you can share with the people you love.

Gary CK Huang
Foundation Trustee Chair

Special recognition for contribution to Polio Fund

Team Rotary News

With 99 per cent of the polio virus eradicated from the earth, the one per cent that is left in Pakistan and Afghanistan proves to be much harder to vanquish. Rotary needs to step up its efforts in surveillance, advocacy and immunisation. And all this costs more money.

RI is urging districts to contribute 20 per cent of their unutilised DDF to the Polio Fund and TRF will match it 1:1. Indian districts do not have much unutilised DDF. So a new scheme has been designed by End Polio Now Coordinator (EPNC) Dr Sagadhevan to increase cash contribution to the Polio Fund. Rotarians contributing \$1,500 or ₹1 lakh to Polio Fund will be adorned with End Polio Fellow (EPF) Pin and certificate signed by RID, TRF Trustee, EPNC and DG.

EPNC PDG Keshav Kunwar and TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty have welcomed the idea. It has been approved by RI and TRF. It was launched recently at the National Polio Meet in Delhi in the presence of RIDs Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi, RIPN Shekhar Mehta, PRIP Rajendra Saboo and INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur.

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will match the contribution 1:2 and contribute \$3,000 or ₹2 lakh. So a total of \$4,500 or ₹3 lakh will go to Polio Fund. Donors can contribute online at www.endpolio.org or rotaryfoundationindia.org or rotary.org or pay by cheque or DD favouring "Rotary Foundation (India)". On receiving receipt for their contribution, donors must transfer ₹1,000 to "Rotary EPF Account" (AC

No: 919020065960568, Axis Bank, Gandhiji Road, Erode. IFSC Code: UTIB0002146) to receive the District Special Recognition by courier.

District Governors can inspire at least 100 'End Polio Fellows' from their districts and encourage Rotarians who are willing to contribute to PHF/MPHF or Major Donor to give the fund to the End Polio Fellow scheme. The contribution can be a single payment or multiple payments within this Rotary year. Donors will receive the recognition on completion of their full payment.

For details contact End Polio Now Coordinators Keshav Kunwar: 977-9851020711/ dgkeshav1516@gmail.com and Dr Saga: 9994477725/ pdgdrsaga@gmail.com ■

From L: DGs Anish Shah, Sivannarayana Rao, A K Natesan, PDG Sagadhevan, RID Bharat Pandya, RIPN Shekhar Mehta, PRIP Rajendra Saboo, PDG Keshav Kunwar, INPPC Chair Deepak Kapur, DGs Shirish Kesavan, Rajendra Bhamre and Suhas Vaidhya.



Project Positive Health gains traction among clubs

V Muthukumaran

In a path-breaking initiative in the health-care segment, Rotary clubs have taken up *Project Positive Health (PPH): Stop NCD* as their focal point at the health and awareness camps organised to mark the World Heart Day on Sep 29. This July the PPH campaign was launched with district governors being requested to take up this healthcare initiative in a big way with their clubs. “Earlier we were doing health and screening

camps for chronic diseases. But now with the advent of PPH, we are doing it in a systematic manner starting from World Heart Day. From next year, clubs will have a structured process to conduct the Stop NCD camps and awareness talks,” said PDG Dr Ashok Singh, National Committee Member, PPH.

Here are few glimpses of the Stop NCD campaigns that were held across zones with the DGs and club

presidents leading from the front to stamp their presence in this pan-India initiative. All the six clubs in Sambalpur, RID 3261, reached out independently to schools and institutions to test people for blood pressure (hypertension), blood sugar (diabetes) and weight-cum-height index (obesity). “Four clubs went to institutions (schools and a pharmacy college) with Rotarian doctors, testing teachers and other staff for hypertension and

diabetes,” said Singh. Across Sambalpur, 300 people were screened in a single day.

In RID 3030 covering Maharashtra, more than 50 per cent of the clubs carried out this activity, while in RIDs 3261 and 3262, 30–40 per cent clubs engaged with the programme.

Massive floods in Patna hampered organising the NCD camps in a big way, but six clubs organised health camps later,



said DG Gopal Khemka, RID 3250. “Rotarians in Patna were busy with flood relief assistance, but in Jharkhand, 20 out of 40 clubs organised the NCD detection camps with good response from the community,” he said.

Street plays, lectures

All the six clubs in Jamshedpur organised four diagnostic camps at four different venues in the steel city. “We entertained the patients with *nukkad natak* (street plays) where Rotaractors and Interactors

performed awareness skits; 300 people were screened,” said Sangeeta Jha, President, RC Jamshedpur, RID 3250. A big hoarding titled *Keep Your Heart Healthy* at a vantage point in the city advised people to have “one spoon less of salt, oil and sugar, and to move forward by four steps.” Dr Vijaya Bharat and Dr Mandar Shah gave awareness talks on prevention of NCD at the camps, and later on radio.

RID 3250 will be hosting a pan-district

Below: RIPN Shekhar Mehta and RID Bharat Pandya with NCMs (standing from L) R Bharat, Girish Gune, Sarbjeet Singh, Dr G V Mohan Prasad, Jayprakash Vyas, Ajay Nayar, Sayantan Gupta, Zamin Hussain and Ashok Singh, (seated from L): K Vijayakumar, Ravi Appaji, E K Sagadhevan and Indumathi Gopinathan.



The National Committee members had used their leadership skills and ingenuity to reach out to the public in their districts.

RID Bharat Pandya

heart check-up camp for Rotarians in Patna shortly, said DG Khemka.

Multi-zonal seminar

RC Srivilliputtur Green City, RID 3212, hosted a multi-zonal seminar inaugurated by PDG K Vijaya Kumar. Other clubs will follow suit.

“A five-member team from PACR Rotary Blood Bank, Rajapalayam, conducted tests for BP, blood sugar, body weight and height on the delegates,” said S Shanmuganathan, Club President.

In Kanyakumari, 20 clubs staged a mega heart awareness rally. “Rotaractors, Interactors, and student volunteers made this rally a Rotary’s show of strength,” said Sreedevi Prince, President, RC Nagercoil Blossoms, RID 3212. More than 350 students took part in the rally.

Mumbai Rotarians (RIDs 3141, 3142) organised 54 camps that screened around 4,000 people; of which around 900 persons were found with higher than accepted blood sugar and BP levels. In RID 3020, the clubs

tested 10,380 people, of which 4,070 were found with hypertension, 2,340 high blood sugar and 3,010 with obesity.

Rotarians from RID 3070, 3080 and 3090 took a pledge to join the *Ek Chammach Kam* campaign as part of a larger PPH initiative in the districts.

Let’s sustain the campaign

Happy at the success of the “first pan-India drive” RID Bharat Pandya noted that the National Committee members had used their “leadership skills and ingenuity to reach out to the public in their districts. The enthusiasm and passion they have shown for this programme was amply evident,” he said.

But, he added, sustained efforts were required to modify the unhealthy lifestyles of people and make them adopt the ‘*ek chamach kam and char kadam aage*’ mantra. The next set of activities is planned for World Diabetes Day on Nov 14.

(With inputs from
Dr Vijaya Bharat,
RID 3250)

Annettes on a Plogging

Jaishree

Even as PM Narendra Modi's 'plogging' on the shores of Mammallapuram in Chennai made waves on social media, the Annettes of RID 3232 participated in a Plog-

ging Run to promote a cleanliness and anti-plastic drive in Chennai. Plogging is a Swedish concept introduced in 2016 following increased concern over plastic pollution and it has spread globally since then. It is a

combination of jogging with picking up plastics littered on the path.

The District Annettes Council (DAC), along with RC Madras Central and Bhumi, a city-based NGO, organised the event on Oct 2,



Run

Annettes all set for the plog.



commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Around 80 participants, or ploggers as they are called, were given kits comprising a cap, mask, gloves, an apron and trash bag. They had to jog through a 3-km stretch by the beach gathering garbage along the path. Annettes, Rotarians and Anns were part of the programme which was initiated by Project Coordinator Annette Gouri Ravikumar with support from District Annette Council Chair Rtn Asha Marina.

The event was co-sponsored by RCs Madras South, Chennai Utsav, Renaissance, Bay Watchers, Aadithya and Adambakkam. Cer-

tificates and goody bags, besides refreshments, were distributed to the participants at the end of the event.

It was an awareness exercise to sensitise youngsters and public to keep the city clean and free of plastics, says Asha. The Council designs two workshops for Annettes every month. "Around Diwali, we are planning a programme to sensitise people on the harm bursting crackers will have on animals. That is our next project." Apart from the council's programmes, Annette clubs sponsored by Rotary clubs also work on individual projects and "we help them with suggestions," she says. The DAC has 40 Annette-members and is led by Prageetha Joseph this year.

"It is more a case of catching them when they are young. The Annettes are always excited to get on with any project. The baking workshop last month, for instance, was a huge hit," says Asha, adding that such interactions keep the Rotary connection alive with the youngsters and they do not feel left out when the Rotarian-parents are engaged in a Rotary activity. ■

It was an awareness exercise to sensitise youngsters and public to keep the city clean and free of plastics.

Asha Marina
Annette Council Chair

Talking **menstruation** to men

Kiran Zehra

Do you know which sanitary napkin your wife uses and the contents of that pad,” asked Dr Amisha Mehta, member of RC Vapi Riverside, RI District 3060, while addressing 250 men from Anchor Panasonic India Ltd, in Daman. She has initiated Project Red Revolution to make both men and women aware of menstrual hygiene. It is important to talk to the men and it has to start at an early age, she says. “A well-informed boy becomes a caring son, brother, and husband. Imagine what a wonderful father he’d make!”

She says that an average woman spends 10 years of her life menstruating. “We have to make it a priority for women and girls to access with dignity the necessary knowledge, facilities and

create a healthy social environment to manage menstruation.” Together with members of 100 clubs from her district, she has started this “revolution to open the minds of men and women and help them talk about it and find an eco-friendly solution, in the process liberating menstruating women from the clutches of superstitions and help them live a healthier, happier life.”

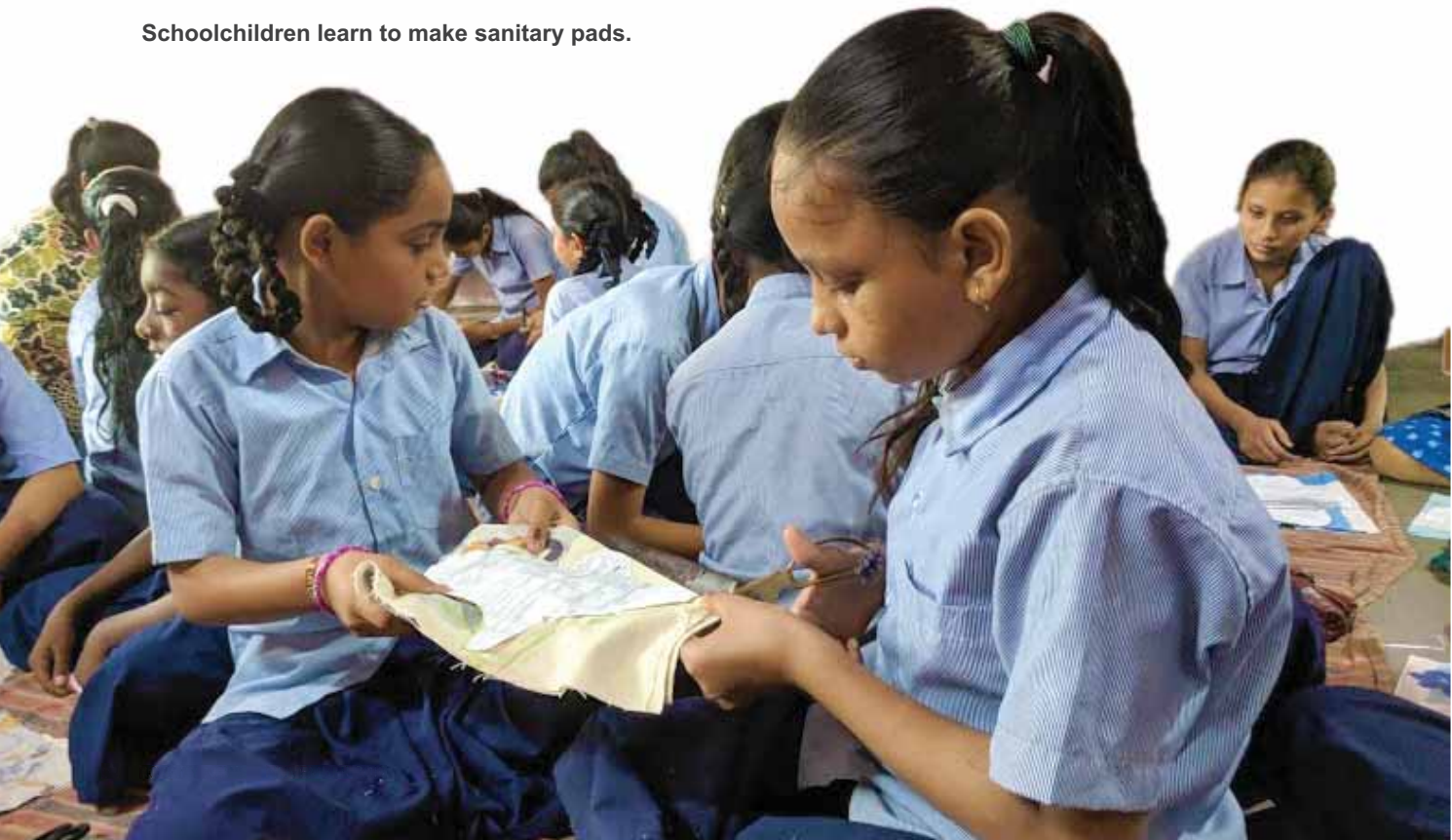
At a school, during an interactive session with teenaged girls, she was surprised to get such answers on menstruation: ‘Mama told me this isn’t my age to know about it. I will know when I grow up. The teacher too wasn’t willing to talk about it. In most countries, menstruation has a cultural taboo which translates into inadequate menstrual hygiene management. When

is the right time to talk to girls about it? The answer is now!”

There is an absence of guidance, facilities, and materials for women and girls to manage their menstruation in low- and middle-income families. “So we decided to talk to such women and help them understand the science behind menstruation and help them make their own pads.” Since there is limited access to affordable, hygienic sanitary products, it makes the management of this cycle uncomfortable and unhygienic for many girls/women.

With the help of the First lady of RID 3060, Swati Shah, reusable cotton pads were got in bulk from Unipads India, a reusable sanitary pad manufacturer from Ahmedabad. Over 1,000 packets were distributed to school girls

Schoolchildren learn to make sanitary pads.





Dr Amisha Mehta with staff of Anchor Panasonic India.

and working women. Reusable sanitary pads, says Swati, are getting more popular. “They are healthy, affordable and sustainable.”

Amisha says that as sanitary pads are listed as ‘medical products’,

maintaining quality is a problem in India. Toxic material and artificial colours, polyester, adhesives, polyethylene, etc are used, and can cause medical complications such as hormone disruption, cancer, birth defects,

dryness, and infertility.” She believes that making the switch from the traditional disposable napkins to reusable cloth sanitary pads may sound daunting, “but it is probably the wisest decision in the interest of your body and the planet.”

She stumbled upon the reality of feminine hygiene products four years ago when her daughter who was studying in a residential school, “told me about her roommate who made her own cloth pads. Living in an age and time where you have a use and throw pad why would anyone put in effort and time to make a cloth pad, she wondered, and learned from the mother of the girl that the readily available pads were affecting her child’s health.

Amisha’s four-year research helped in shaping Red Revolution and now from talking to men and women about menstruation and teaching school girls to make their own low-cost sanitary napkins with available material to distributing free reusable pads, Rotarians of RI District 3060 have completed 195 workshops spreading awareness to 65,060 individuals. ■



Students show off the sanitary pads made by them.

From RI South Asia Office desk

Update your Interact Club advisor:

It is mandatory that Interact clubs appoint an advisor by June 30. The advisor can be a member of the sponsoring Rotary club, a school administrator or faculty member, or community volunteer to serve as an adult contact to the Interact club. The information can be updated online. Please note Interact clubs that have not reported Interact Advisor in the past two years must report an Interact club adviser before Dec' 19, failing which the club will be automatically "Terminated" effective Jan 1, 2020.

Interact Video Awards

Interact clubs can participate in the Interact Video Awards. Show us your club's best service project in a short video. The winning club will be awarded \$1,000 for its next project! For more details: <https://xd.wayin.com/display/container/dc/310c6437-c69d-4d1d-a73c-746a944ab1ec/details>.

Use of Grant reports on My Rotary

Reports are available on *My Rotary* to help district leaders manage grant activities. The table nearby shows the reports to be used to get various kinds of information.

Grant Centre reminder

Before you submit your global grant application, make sure that the grant sponsors are listed correctly in the application.

Report	Use it to...
Grant Detail	get comprehensive details about one grant
Grant Location	show all approved global grants taking place in a selected country
Grant Participation	measure club, district, and zone participation in global grants and district grants
Grant Productivity	see global grants and district grants in all statuses for a selected club, district or zone
Grants by Sponsor	see grants by a selected club or district and their current status (closed and cancelled grants are not included)
Cadre Member Information	find cadre members

It is important to note whether the grant is club or district sponsored. Incorrect information would mean delay in processing the grant, particularly if changes have to be made after the application is approved. More information is available through "A Guide to Global Grant" available at <https://my.rotary.org/en/take-action/apply-grants/global-grants>. ■

A special vocational centre

Team Rotary News



The Rotary Club of Rewari Main, RI District 3011, and Navprerna Society have jointly set up a vocational training centre for mentally challenged-children of the district. The children learn how to make and decorate *diyas* (terracotta lamps), sweet boxes, candles, doormats and gift

envelopes at the centre. "The objective of this centre is to let these special children learn making new things so that they can become self-dependent by earning from the simple things they make," says Project Chairman Harish Malik. The centre has enrolled 20 students post its inauguration in September 2019. ■



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Selling through
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Only Companies owned by Rotarians participating
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A school with a difference

G Singh

Jamir Sardar is a meritorious student, an avid dancer and a good painter. His teachers are fond of him and acknowledge his talent. The sixteen-year-old had performed dance shows along with his friends in Denmark last year under a cultural exchange programme. Despite his skills in dancing, he wants to become a painter.

But it is the background of Jamir that makes his achievement really sweet. The Class 9 student lives in the Sundarbans in West Bengal, one of the toughest accessible places in the State. His father died of cancer when Jamir was just in Class 2. His mother did odd jobs to raise her four children.

She could not earn enough to give proper education for them. Jamir was fortunate. A good Samaritan brought him to Vivekananda Shiksha Niketan, a school run by a non-profit at Joygopalpur village in the South 24 Parganas. The school offers concession for students from economically-weak background. Jamir's talent was spotted by a couple from Denmark who were funding the education of children in the school. They decided to fund his education too.

Jamir says he couldn't have dreamt of coming so far had it not been for the support provided by the school authorities and his teachers. "This school brought a radical change in my life. I can now think big and believe in achieving my dreams," he says, showing one of his paintings.

He is not alone. The school has waived off or reduced the fees for 20 per cent of its 500 students, to encourage

them continue their education. "We charge very nominal fees — a maximum of ₹250 is charged from students. We also offer free hostel facilities for those who cannot afford to pay. The aim is to minimise dropouts," said Madhusudan Mandal, rector of the school.

Among the students are children of widows whose husbands were killed by tigers when they had gone to the forest to catch fish or collect firewood. Over 3,000 'tiger widows' live in the Sundarbans. Tigers and crocodiles are

a regular threat to several villages living close to the forest.

Babita and Latika Mandal, two sisters who live in Jharkhali in the Sundarbans have cleared their Class 10 exams this year. Two of their uncles were killed by a crocodile and the grandfather was killed by a tiger. In this scenario, their father, who also ventures into the forest to collect crabs, stopped their education as he could not afford the fees. The school authorities stepped in and admitted the children in Class 6 in the school. "We



could have never thought of getting education had the school teachers and non-profit didn't help us. The teachers stood by us and provided extra classes before the exams. We want to earn a decent livelihood so that our father does not have to risk his life venturing into the forest," said Babita Mandal. The sisters are getting trained in tailoring in the school to help them stand on their feet and earn alternative livelihood.

The education system is different in the school. At a time when too much stress is given on improving academic performances, the school trains students in fishing, farming and other activities, "It is not correct to put too much burden on the students which often forces them to take extreme steps. We encourage them to learn fishing, farming or dancing so



From top: Jamir Sardar with his artwork; Students of the school.

Left: Children learn farming in the Vivekananda Shiksha Niketan in the South 24 Parganas.



that they might excel in the respective fields. The students are trained based on their interest in a particular discipline, said Madhusudhan Mandal.

The school authorities follow the principles of Swami Vivekananda and Rabindra Nath Tagore while imparting education and traditional Indian dress — saffron kurta and white pyjama — is the uniform for the students. Around 17 members of the school including students and other staff visited Denmark last year for fifteen days under the cultural exchange programme. They mesmerised the audiences there with their dancing skills.

"The Sundarban area witnesses a lot of dropouts especially after the students complete their secondary level making themselves a burden for the society. We have adopted a special kind of insurance programme for students who passed the secondary level. The students start saving their money and after a certain time, they get it back along with 50 per cent contribution from the school. It also ensures protection of the environment through various programmes and activities by involving students in the programme," pointed out Biswajit Mahakur, Secretary of Gopalpur Gram Vikas Kendra, the non-profit running the school. ■

Get to know the technical team behind GG Projects

Dr Indumati Gopinathan

A large contingent of Rotary volunteers give their time and expertise to assist TRF staff and trustees in proper grant planning, monitoring and evaluation. These Rotarians belong to a group called Cadre of Technical advisors

The Rotary Foundation's Cadre of Technical Advisers extend their niche expertise from different fields to carry out global grant projects across the world. They are classified into two groups:

Resource people for guiding and advising global grant applicants and conducting community-needs assessment which is mandatory from July 2019 for any global grant project.

Technical experts who help clubs to carry out effective, sustainable and accountable GG projects around the world.

Profile of Cadre members

They are Rotarians drawn from various professions that correlate to Rotary's six areas of focus. In addition, cadre members include a team of auditors to review project finances and grant management. Cadre members include diverse professionals from lawyers, diplomats to arbitrators, mediators to engineers, teachers, city planners, financial advisors and even social activists.

Specific role of cadre members

They review, monitor, and evaluate projects and ensure proper utilisation



Indumati Gopinathan, along with other cadre members, engaged in a discussion.

of grant funds. Their assignments could be online technical reviews, site visits and audits among other key assignments.

Any Rotarian wanting to receive guidance on project planning or implementation from a cadre member familiar with your project type, can contact cadre@rotary.org or the technical coordinators.

You may also ask questions to experts directly through the Rotary Discussion Groups. Each area of focus has three technical coordinators from around the Rotary world and they help recruit cadre members and serve as leaders in each of the technical sectors.

How to join the TRF Cadre

Check out what skills the cadre needs in your part of the world by choosing the relevant region. Rotary is looking for Rotarians in all technical areas. Eligibility requirements include:

- Current, active member of a functioning Rotary club
- Good standing with The Rotary Foundation and Rotary International
- Professional experience in at least one of the technical sectors.

The cadre members play a crucial role of getting everyone see the perspective of the Rotary Foundation and also drive home the fact that they are here as guiding forces and advisors to help serve community better. All the money Rotarians, donors and sponsors donate with so much faith needs to be accounted for and used effectively to benefit communities across the world. Finally, it is the Rotary team of club Rotarians, TRF staff, trustees and cadre who make “doing good in the world” happen meaningfully well.

The writer is member of RC Bombay Chembur West, RID 3141, and a cadre member since 2014.



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From Iran to Erode, the glow of kindness spreads

Kiran Zehra

The smile on the little boy's face when the shoe fit is something I will never forget," says Gayathri Devi, President of RC Erode Cosmos, RI District 3202. She initiated the *Wall of Kindness*, a project where people of Erode can donate used and excess items that can be picked up by people in need. By the corner of the Kalaimagal School Road, a small store houses these items ranging from clothing, household items, to books and toys to be picked up by the needy.

"This is a great way to make sure that what one doesn't need finds its way to those who need it," she adds.

She explains that the Wall of Kindness idea is a charity project that has found its way to India from Iran. "During cold weather in Mashhad, someone hung out warm clothes on hangers on a wall with a message: 'If you don't need it, leave it here. If you need it, take it.' Soon donations from neighbours started to appear and fuelled by social media the idea began to spread to other cities."

The goal of the wall is to reach needy people in the community. In Erode, it is located in two government-aided schools and a hospital. Many people donated items but they weren't getting picked up. Gayathri says, "Only a few people knew about the Wall of Kindness, so we had to promote it like any other business." After few months of promoting the Wall on social media and advertising through posters and hand-outs, the number of walk-ins increased. So did the donors.



PDG E K Sagadhevan (fourth from L) inaugurating the project in the presence of Club President Gayathri Devi. PDG PM Sivashankaran (behind) is also in the picture.



Children try out footwear placed at a Wall of Kindness.

Gayathri came up with the idea after she came across one in Bengaluru. “I wondered why we couldn’t replicate

it at Erode.” There was a lot of work to be done including government permissions, local support and a place to

set up the wall. She converted one of the three shops she owns into the Wall of Kindness by investing ₹70,000 in setting up storage racks, iron holders and hangers and proper lighting.

Once the project had gained momentum, the club received 250 pairs of new shoes from a leading sports shop in the city. “Every day we put out 10 pairs of shoes and it surprised all of us at the club that not once did the same child come in a second time to pick up the shoes. We have 10 more pairs to go and are sure it will be taken by needy students,” she says, adding that if the adults “were picking up more than three or five items from the racks for their needs we did not intervene. Now most of them understand and pick just one item from the rack.” This project was inaugurated by PDGs Dr Sagadevan and PM Sivashankaran. ■

Educational workshops for students in Mandvi

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Mandvi, RI District 3054, organised an educational workshop for students of Classes 10 and 12. Close to 120 students attended this workshop to promote a healthy attitude towards learning and education. Educationist Giju Bharad, who has more than 40 years of experience in training students preparing for their board exams, addressed the gathering on various topics.

The three-and-a-half-hour interactive session was conducted at the Rotary Hall, Mandvi. It covered the cognitive



techniques that would help the students to enhance their learning and memorisation skills and enable them to prepare better for their exams. Tips on writing with speed while maintaining precision was also shared with the students. The activities in the workshop focused on making exams stress-free by using

learning techniques like mind maps. “Our club wanted to help empower students by supporting them to reduce their stress, and help them prepare for their exams and by way of explaining to the parents to support their children and pressure them less during exam,” said Club President Bhavin Ganatra. ■



A Rotarian since childhood

Sunil Nagpal

Information Technology, RC Palampur, RID 3070

In a sense, I am a Rotarian for 41 years since my father Y P Nagpal became a member of the same club,” says Sunil Nagpal. He has been part of Rotary since childhood, accompanying his father to club meetings, conferences and project sites. Eventually, he joined Rotary in 1997.

The club’s charter president Dr Shiv Kumar is another mentor. “As a child, I remember how he used the sale proceeds of ₹20,000 from the club’s raffle to construct the Rotary Bhavan in Palampur. Today the building is 7,500 sq ft spread across three floors and is by itself a sustainable project.” The other permanent projects include the Rotary Eye Hospital in which his father is the Senior Vice Chairman; a mother and child hospital; Rotary Helpage Foundation which runs an orphanage; a physiotherapy clinic; and a school for the differently-abled. “Land for these projects was donated by the community. One philanthropist has been funding some of our eye surgeries for the past 35 years. That’s the level of trust Rotary enjoys in our region,” he says.

Nagpal is keen on providing skill development courses for war widows and their children. He is working on a mega medical camp to be held in Ludhiana in Feb’20 with global grant support. He is proud of having recently inaugurated the Rotary Hospital in Jalandhar. “The building was donated by a corporate and we made it functional with support from a German club through global grant.” He is also planning to equip schools with e-learning facilities.

The district has grown by 140 members and one new Rotary club this year. He is looking at a net gain of 10 per cent with focus on retention and installing five new clubs. He wants aspiring members to first attend at least three Rotary projects or programmes and then take a call. “That’s how they can add value to the club.”

He is confident of raising \$150,000 for TRF, having already got \$10,000 at the recently-held TRF seminar. The district covers three States — Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and J&K, and there is plenty of scope to garner more contribution, says the governor.

Archana, his wife, is also member of the same club.

Meet your Governors

Jaishree

Projects galore

Hari Gupta

Logistics, RC Meerut Stars, RID 3100

He has several plans for his district and that includes an eye bank, hospital, blood bank, solar energy panels and a cardiac-specialty ambulance. “Promoting literacy tops the list,” says Hari Gupta, adding, “The immense joy on the faces of people when they are able to read and write, and sign their names, is something that has to be seen to be appreciated.” Installing e-learning facilities in schools and adult literacy tops his list.

Gupta was a Rotaractor during 1989–96 and became Rotarian in 2007. He wants to increase the number of Rotaract clubs from the present

13 to 40 and is excited about the upcoming RYLA that is planned in Jan’20. “The district is going to see this event after 20 long years.” He has ambitious plans to double his district’s membership to 3,000. “It is possible. Sixteen new clubs have been chartered and we will have four more. If each club has 30 members on an average, it is a cakewalk,” he says with confidence.

The district is planning six global grant projects and the governor aims at a contribution of \$200,000 for TRF from the district.

His wife Nidhi too is a member of the same club.



Literacy is his priority

Kishor Katru

Automobile financier, RC Bareilly Central, RID 3110

He is a Rotarian since 1991 after being a Rotaractor during 1986–89. His most cherished work in Rotary was when his club renovated a mortuary run by the district administration. “It was in a real bad shape. I personally felt that we were giving dignity for the dead through this project,” says Kishor Katru.

He has plans to set up dialysis centres in Bareilly, Agra and Aligarh. Promoting literacy is also his priority. “Major areas of UP have a huge illiterate population. Clubs will be setting up

toilets and wash stations in villages and imparting basic education for people there.”

His membership goal is to induct 1,000 new members including a good number of women members.

He aims at raising \$400,000 for TRF. DRFC Devendra Agarwal’s dedication has brought in 20 Major Donors so far, he says.

Katru’s wife Sangeetha is an active Inner Wheel member.



Care for the elderly

Joseph Mathew

Educationist, RC Mysore West, RID 3181

My Rotary moment is when Abdul Kalam visited a science exhibition that my club conducted for schoolchildren,” gushes Joseph Mathew. He joined Rotary in 2001, and was the Staff Coordinator for the Rotaract club in the college where he was working.

Mathew has two projects lined up for his district. One is *Jeevan Sandhya*, a programme to take care of senior citizens. “Rotarians here are ready with plans to visit old-age homes, repair and renovate some of them. One of the clubs is building a senior citizens home here.” The other one is called *Save a Life*, where clubs will organise first aid workshops in colleges, schools and offices. Cancer detection camps are also part of this programme.

Mathew wants to increase district membership with 1,000 new members, including women members, and install ten new clubs. He is happy that of the 300 new members, 30 are women and “they all are spouses of Rotarians.” Talking about Rotaract clubs, he says that community-based clubs are very active in providing education for rural people. As for institution-based clubs, since there is a change in their examination pattern, the students are busy with academics now.

He is planning a global grant to purchase a mobile cancer screening unit. He aims at \$500,000 contribution for TRF, and has 20–25 Major Donors to pitch in with funds.



Promoting Rotary-CSR ventures

Harish Gaur

HR consultant, RC Bhiwandi, RID 3053

He joined Rotary in 2005 for fellowship and social work. “Bhiwandi is an industrial town with a floating population. There is a lot of opportunity for improving lives and I saw Rotary at work here before I became a Rotarian,” says Harish Gaur.

Water harvesting and literacy form major part of his priority projects. He is concentrating on working out global grants with CSR participation and has got five such sanctions to work on projects to enhance basic literacy and e-learning. “We will be introducing a mobile digital library shortly with CSR partnership.” A mobile TB detection unit and rigorous anti-plastic campaigns are also in his to-do list.

To promote Rotary’s public image, Gaur is happy that three clubs in the district have entered the India Book of Records and Limca Book of Records for their endeavour.

He is planning 10 per cent increase in membership with a keen eye on retention. Inducting more women members is also on his agenda.

The governor is slightly sceptical about meeting his target of \$325,000 contribution for TRF. “It is big money for the district, but we will try to get as close to it as possible,” he says.



Designed by N Krishnamurthy

A Rotary-Corporate endeavour to end open defecation

Jaishree

About 955 people in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, are now happy to use toilets, thanks to a joint project of RC Bareilly South, RID 3110, and a corporate BL Agro Oils. Several families in villages around Bareilly are defecating in the fields with no toilets in the vicinity. The State has been identified by the government of India for its poor hygiene conditions and sanitation facilities.

When the Rotarians of RC Bareilly South decided to address the issue of open defecation in the surrounding villages, club member Ghanshyam Khandelwal, who is the Managing Director of B L Agro Oils, came forward to fund the project under the CSR commitments. After an exhaustive community assessment, and direct interaction with village heads and villagers, 191 households across three villages — Parsakhera Gautiya, Gokilpur



PDG Arun Jain (third from L) inaugurating a plaque in one of the villages. PDG IS Tomer (third from R) and Ghanshyam Khandelwal (second from L), MD, B L Agro Oils, are also seen.

and Nandausi — were identified. A CSR-funded, district-sponsored global grant project was drawn up to build toilets for each of the households under guidance from Project Coordinator PDG IS Tomer. RC Corning, RID 7120, pitched in as international partner. RC Aligarh

City helped in implementing the project. The total value of the project was ₹35.24 lakh of which ₹21.76 lakh was contributed by the corporate and the rest was sponsored by the district.

After construction of the toilets, a team was formed to train villagers on the maintenance and good sanitation practices. They taught them the importance of handwash and how the simple practices can keep diseases at bay.

An MoU was signed between the project partners comprising the UNICEF, Indian Medical Association and Rotary District 3110 for conducting training sessions. The villagers vowed to maintain the toilets and practice hygiene lessons imparted to them.

The facilities were handed over to the beneficiaries in an event presided over by PDG Arun Jain. ■



Villagers being trained in hand wash practice.

Friendship Trees of Rotary

Scaria Jose

Rotarians have planted trees in the name of fellowship, friendship and community service since the early 20th century. These trees, planted worldwide, have grown into enduring monuments of Rotary's ideals.

As president emeritus, Paul Harris travelled extensively during the 1920s and 1930s, often accompanied by his wife Jean. During these trips, he had planted trees to symbolise goodwill and friendship. In the fall of 1932, Harris embarked on a five-week tour of the European Rotary clubs and planted trees along the way. In my district, RID 3211, 'Rotary Friendship Trees', as we call them, has been the norm for a long time now.

In 1994, RID 3211 launched its first artificial limb fitment camp for 1,000 physically-challenged people, with the help of The Rotary Jaipur Limb, UK. As a young, 27-year-old Rotarian with just three years of service in Rotary, for me it was a life-changing event. That day I felt the power of Rotary



Margot Lassagne, an Exchange student from Toulouse, France, planting a sapling. Her grandfather Philippe Guillion funded a limb camp in 2004.

and the love of Rotarians around the globe, as I saw smiling recipients 'walking' back home. I wrote to my primary contact Rtn John Wilton of RC Eastbourne Sovereign, RID 1120, thanking his team and inviting him

to India. With no email or Facebook, it took 30 days for the mail to reach England. After two months, I got the reply: "I am coming to see you all." Wilton's visit was like a festival in our district and it coincided

with Onam, the grand festival of Kerala.

I was under the impression that the money was raised by rich Rotarians. But Wilton surprised me saying that school students sold lemonade during summer;

another school organised a sponsor walk to raise funds for the camp. When it was time for him to leave, I requested Wilton and his wife Liz to plant a tree commemorating his visit to the district.

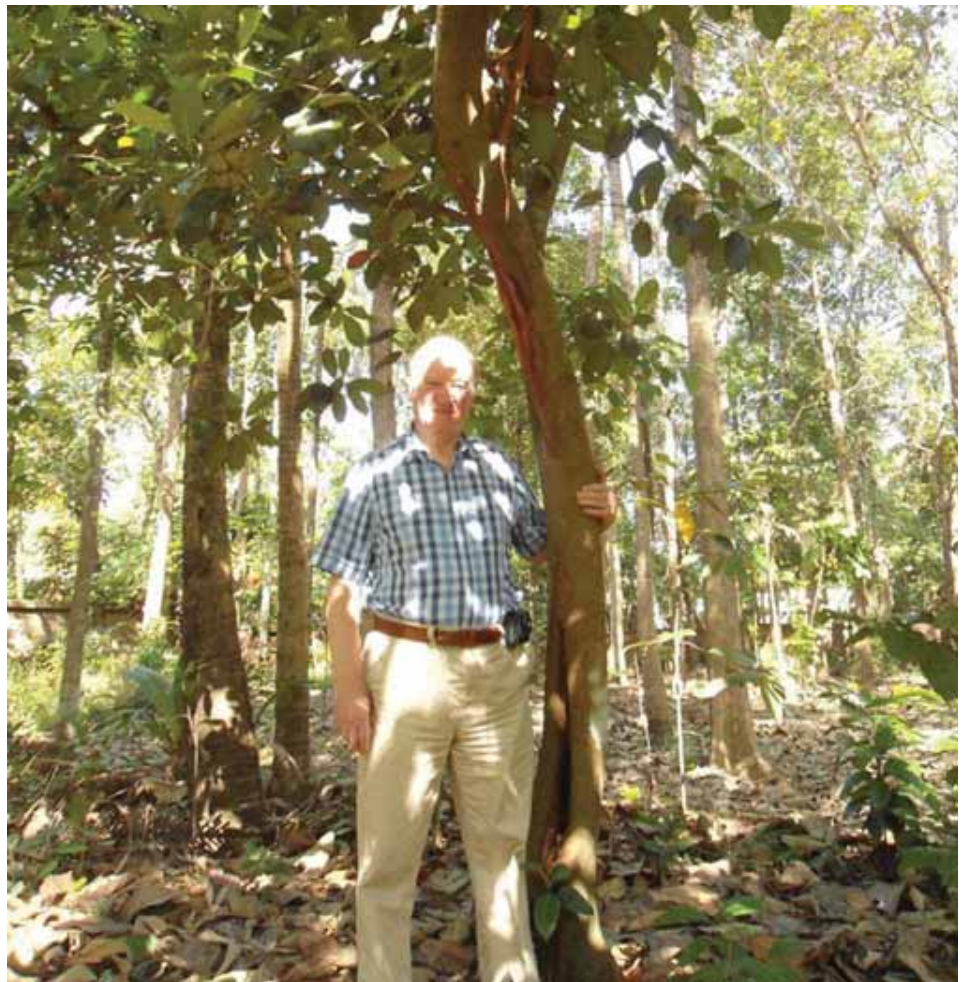
They planted a jackfruit sapling at home which I named 'John'. Today that mighty 25-year-old jackfruit tree bears lots of fruits. Continuing the project, we have provided over 14,000 limbs through the same charity.

Twenty-four saplings of various fruit-bearing trees have been planted by Rotarians from across 16 countries. Later Wilton and Liz came as RIPRs to our district. It was the jackfruit season in Kerala and they could taste the fruit from the 'John tree'.

We worked with RID 5240, along with the Free Wheelchair Mission, California, through which we provided 9,000 wheelchairs to people in my district.

After volunteering in Sri Lanka after the tsumami, I brought a flowering tree sapling, which is still in my

In RID 3211, 'Rotary Friendship Trees', as we call them, has been the norm for a long time now.



PDG John Wilton under the jackfruit tree that he had planted.

garden, as well as a Hollyhock from the UK after my visit to study the educational system followed there.

As DGE, I had a fruitful interaction with E Russell Smith of RC Santa Barbara Sunrise, RID 5240, working on our first matching grant wheelchair project. This resulted in the distribution of 550 wheelchairs in my district. Five friendship trees were planted in my garden, and since then Smith and I collaborated on many wheelchair

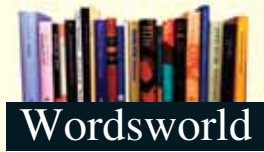
shipments to India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Pakistan.

I introduced Smith and DG Maria to the then DGE Shehzad Ahmed (RID 3272, RC Lahore Garrison, Pakistan) during the RI Convention in Birmingham, England, in June 2009. And there began another Rotary friendship and the opportunity of building communities and bridging continents for thousands of people in need in Rotary's newest district in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Today as I walk through my garden, I see my friends who serve humanity with passion. Each friendship tree has its own story on the valuable transformation Rotarians are making for humanity.

This year we are conducting five artificial limb camps in RID 3211 and one in Cochin (RID 3201) to benefit 650 people. It is in celebration of 25 years of our partnership with The Rotary Jaipur Limb UK.

The writer is past governor of RID 3211.



Books come alive...

Sandhya Rao

When people and places come together
to create memorable moments

Mathamma works at the Madras Literary Society (MLS) located on the campus of the Directorate of Public Instruction in an early 19th century sandstone building with a high ceiling and beautiful rosewood embellishments. For some years now, diehard fans and well-wishers of the MLS have been trying to revive its old glory and breathe new life into it. It was probably in the spirit

of revival that an event was held there recently, crafted around the translation into five Arunachali languages (Nocte, Adi, Apatani, Miju Mishmi and Nyishi) and Bodo, a language of Assam, of a children's book on Mahatma Gandhi.

A small group comprising children and adults sat in a circle on the floor, sharing stories from the book and other sources, when a voice floated across: "Can I sing a song about Gandhi?" The

request came from an elderly woman called Mathamma who works at the MLS. Of course she could and all of us sat enthralled, including a two-and-half-year-old, as she sang melodiously and fervently. By the time she finished, there was no doubt the event had been transformed into an unforgettable experience. And it all started with a children's book.

Later, Mathamma said she was so happy to sing because it transported her back to the time she was a little girl during India's freedom struggle. "We sang patriotic songs whenever and wherever we could," she recalled. "And even now, my heart swells up when I sing them."

Serendipity. That's the word that describes the happy chance that makes amazing things happen. Only a few days earlier, on a visit to Bengaluru, a dear friend had talked with great affection about her book club and its oldest member, a remarkable woman who had lived through the holocaust. She recalled the chill that ran through the blood of the warm-hearted, family-tight group when she showed them her 'Star of David' badge. It was a sad moment, but it was also one that amazed.

Book clubs tend to be small and private as my friend's group is. In a





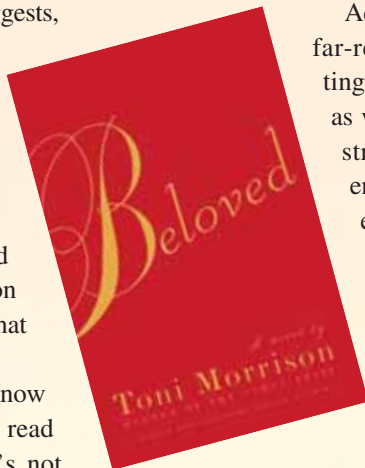
Toni Morrison

huge leap of faith, they let me into their embrace to be part of a discussion on Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Published in 1987, *Beloved* is inspired by the true story of Margaret Garner who escaped slavery in 1856 by fleeing from the slave State of Kentucky to the free State of Ohio. In another instance of serendipity, Toni Morrison had edited *The Black Book*, an anthology of black history and culture, when she worked as editor in Random House, New York. In it, she came across an article reproduced from the *American Baptist* newspaper, called 'A Visit to the Slave Mother Who Killed Her Child'. It had been written in 1856. As the title suggests, Margaret Garner had chosen to kill her little daughter rather than submit her to slavery. This was the only way she could have her be free and this was the inspiration for *Beloved*, a story that simply had to be told.

The only way to know what it is about is to read it. But be warned: it's not easy. It is beautiful writing, mesmerising and tantalising as is Toni Morrison's wonted style, typically, in all of her writings. But you have to work at it. You have to surrender to the story and read every word because every word is so compelling, there

because it belongs there. There is fear and dread and sorrow, yet the prose is tantalising and beautiful. And you hear the cadences of Black voices. That is Toni Morrison's special quality.

Incidentally, *Beloved* is still banned in some schools for what they call its depiction of bestiality, infanticide, sex and violence. It won the Pulitzer for fiction in 1988 and there are some who rate it among the best American fiction ever. Toni Morrison was the first African-American woman to win the Nobel for literature, in 1993. Writing about her in the *New York Times* upon her death, earlier this year, Margalit Fox said, "In awarding her the Nobel, the Swedish Academy cited her 'novels characterised by visionary force and poetic import', through which she 'gives life to an essential aspect of American reality'. Ms Morrison animated that reality in prose that rings with the cadences of black oral tradition. Her plots are dreamlike and nonlinear, spooling backward and forward in time as though characters bring the entire weight of history to bear on their every act."



Acts of oppression have far-reaching effects, cutting through generations, as we often observe. The struggle for independence from despotic rulers and oppressors, the horrifying experiences of being held in concentration camps, the ruthlessness of bonded labour and slavery, the tyranny of being forced to become child soldiers... the cruelty of human beings is endless. The evil that was slavery and the psychological scars it left in people's memories led to a loss of identity and self-worth, among other things. Toni Morrison explores several aspects of the impact

You have to surrender to the story and read every word because every word is so compelling, there because it belongs there.

of slavery in the brilliantly layered and textured *Beloved* which hovers somewhere between dream and reality, and is at the same time unbearably painful.

Beloved takes its title from the character Beloved, who is killed by her mother and who later returns, as a young woman, to her home. To this day, readers argue if she is real or if she is a ghost; the novel leaves many confused. At the same time, what it does, with lyricism and power, is to stir up memory. In fact, one of the characters in the novel evocatively calls it 'rememory'.

Margalit Fox recalls some lines from *Beloved* that are remarkably universal. The world of that novel, she writes, is one in which "anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forgot who you were and couldn't think it up." Immediately your mind goes to the rapes, the lynchings, the honour killings, the random murders to obliterate other ways of seeing...

What she writes is not the history or the story of someone somewhere far away, it is the story of everyone. It is my story as much as yours and hers. Toni Morrison is a writer whose works will live as long as there are books to read, and readers to read them.

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

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

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RILM promotes Asha Kiran in Haryana

Team Rotary News

Rotary India Literacy Mission, through its Asha Kiran programme, has successfully reached out to 37,436 out-of-school children from 13 States across India through 32 partner NGOs. Of this, 93.7 per cent of the children have been put in mainstream education under the first phase of the programme.

RILM has joined hands with the Human People to People India (HPPI) to work with 3,000 out-of-school children from Haryana in the beginning of the second phase. HPPI has an agreement with the Haryana government's School Siksha Pariyojna Parishad which will provide a list of out-of-school children and identify schools and teachers who will participate in the programme. HPPI will ensure access to quality bridge course education to all underprivileged out-of-school children through a learning toolkit *Kadam*.



RILM's working committee member PDG Anirudha Roy Choudhury (R) and HPPI Director Kailash Khandelwal (third from L) signed an MoU for Asha Kiran-Kadam at the RILM office in Kolkata. PDG (D 3011) Vinod Bansal, RID Kamal Sanghvi, RIPN Shekhar Mehta and PDG (D 3020) Kishore Kumar were also present at the event.

The kit is a blend of cognitive and thematic learning, designed in a step-wise system, allowing each child to adopt his/her current learning level regardless

of age. When the children reach an appropriate age, the project gets them to mainstream school, following up for six months to ensure retention. ■

Dental care for special children

Rotary Club of Indore Meghdoot, RID 3040, in association with the Government Dental College, organised a free dental check-up camp at

Anubhuti Vision Seva Sansthan that takes care of children with various disabilities. A team of eight doctors examined around 70 special children

for various dental ailments and 30 of them were recommended treatment for various deficiencies. All children detected with dental problems will be provided free of cost treatment at a private hospital, said Club President Ghanshyam Singh.

Dr Vrinda Saxena who headed the team of dentists pointed out that "most of the students were not taking proper care of the teeth. A major issue common in the students was deficiency of essential vitamins which was adversely affecting their teeth." The club members also helped doctors teach children and their parents about oral hygiene. To ensure that the students practise healthy oral habits, the club distributed dental kits to them. ■



Dental screening being done.

Dinner in the Dark

Team Rotary News



DG Jitendra Dhingra (fourth from L) with the other participants of the Dinner in the Dark event.

Have you ever thought of closing your eyes for a few moments while doing your daily routine? Try it, and you will very well understand how visually-impaired people go about their lives, some with enthusiasm and a ready smile, despite having lost their sight and without much help from others. With an aim to sensitise Rotarians about the needs and daily hassles of sightless people, RC Chandigarh Shivalik, RID 3080, organised a novel fund-raiser called *Rotary Dinner in the Dark* (RDID) which was inaugurated by DG Jitendra Dhingra and attended by a galaxy of district and club office-bearers.

A four-member team of visually-impaired youth volunteered for the programme and were supported by Rotarians. Simply put, the sightless people guided invitees in a pitch-dark room to their seats and dinner was served in a dark environment. “Dining in pitch darkness, being hosted and served by

visually-impaired, was a new kind of sensory experience as we had to navigate with touch and feel to get our food, drink and at the same time, hold conversation with our colleagues,” said Aneesh Bhanot, Club President. Apart from creating awareness on the special needs of sightless people, and the ‘daily struggles’ they undergo, the RDID mobilised funds for annual scholarships for visually-impaired, meritorious students for their higher studies.

The gift of vision

The novel ‘dining in the dark’ made the Rotarians realise “how lucky they are with perfect eyesight to enjoy the colours of the world. Also, the event imbued in us a deep respect for people who had lost their vision,” said Bhanot.

Another lesson drawn from the event was that people should value simple things in life such as eyesight and “not just fritter away precious

moments in life grudging and being crazy over material pursuits.”

DG Dhingra inducted Shiv Kumar Sharma, a visually-challenged person, as an honorary member of RC Chandigarh Shivalik. Three members — Dr VD Singh (and spouse Monica), Ashok Laroia (and Indu), and President Aneesh Bhanot (and Shanti Bhanot) — were honoured by the DG for donating to the scholarship fund.

Dhingra himself sponsored a ₹21,000 scholarship for the current year. “Till now scholarships worth ₹3.8 lakh were disbursed to visually-challenged students from poor families over the past two years,” he said.

District Secretary Ajay Madan, AG Brig Daljit Dhillon, District Public Image Chair Dr Rita Kalra and PDGs Yoginder Diwan, JPS Sibia and Shaju Peter, besides club presidents and secretaries, had this unusual experience of dining in the dark. ■

RC Gandevi holds cancer screening camps

Team Rotary News

More than 800 rural and tribal women were examined at a week-long breast cancer awareness and screening camps held across seven villages by RC Gandevi, RID 3060, in partnership with RC Chikhli River Front. DGE Prashant Jani inaugurated the camps in the presence of Dr Mehsul Deliwala from the District Health Office, Navsari.

Thanks to the mammography bus provided by RC Amravati, RID 3030, the club toured the villages to examine rural women. With good support from the local health department, specifically from ASHA workers, all the seven camps saw a good turnout of women from the surrounding villages. “More than 175 mammograms and over 385 pap smear tests were

done free of cost for the beneficiaries. All the expenses were borne by us through donations,” said Parimal Naik, Grants Coordinator and charter member.

The club had earlier organised two cancer screening camps in 2010

and 2014 with a mammography bus given by the Gujarat Cancer Research Institute. “Chartered in January 2000, the club has become quite popular in more than 40 villages for its service projects for the deprived people,” he said.

The club is planning for a global grant to own a cancer screening van worth ₹1 crore by next year. “We will use the medical van to detect cervical, oral, prostate, ovarian and blood cancer, besides for mammogram services,” he said. ■



Villagers with Rotarians at a cancer screening camp.

Changes to Areas of Focus

The Rotary Foundation recently made changes to Rotary’s Areas of Focus. Some of the goals of the areas have changed, and activities that relate to the environment have been included for most areas. The names of three of the six areas (marked with asterisks) have been adjusted to better reflect the types of

projects that Rotary members are carrying out. The Areas of Focus Policy Statements, available at my.rotary.org/en/document/areas-focus-policy-statements, reflect these updates.

The areas of focus are now:

- Peacebuilding and conflict prevention*

- Disease prevention and treatment
- Water, sanitation and hygiene*
- Maternal and child health
- Basic education and literacy
- Community economic development*

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Lifestyle Medicine

Changing paradigms in medical care

Sheela Nambiar

The (relatively) new field of Lifestyle Medicine (LM) is changing the way doctors and patients approach health and well-being. No more do we believe that symptomatic treatment of chronic diseases is feasible or appropriate. We need interventions that reach the source of the problem and address it. Lifestyle Medicine focuses on behaviour and lifestyle changes for the understanding of long-term management and cure. These include chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, depression, obesity, psoriasis and many more seemingly irreversible ones.

Lifestyle medicine is evidence-based therapeutic approach to prevent, treat and reverse lifestyle-related chronic diseases (American College of Lifestyle Medicine).

The application of medical, behavioural, motivational and environmental

principles to the management of lifestyle-related health problems in a clinical setting including self-care and self-management (Egger G. *Lifestyle Medicine* 2011).

This is not to say that modern allopathic medicine is at odds with LM. In fact, they are complementary to each other. Allopathic medicine has taken monumental leaps in the progress of treatment of acute conditions, infections, surgical and diagnostic procedures, stellar research and the like, which have saved human lives over the years. Being an allopathic physician practising obstetrics and gynaecology myself, I am all for medication, surgery and so on, as and when required, especially in acute conditions. LM fills in the gaps in healthcare that we miss in a busy medical practice.

Today, however, we are faced with chronic diseases, which cannot and should not be managed with medication alone. We need a behavioural change from the patient's side. Idealistic, as this may sound, we need the patient to participate in his or her own care.

Started in America as the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, LM has now spread all over the world with countries having their own independent organisations. We in India have established the Indian Society of Lifestyle Medicine. The objective is to spread the approach of looking at a patient and his/her ill-health holistically (his/her diet,

exercise and movement, sleep, stress, exposure to toxins and so on) and help him/her address these issues during the recovery. It is a way of empowering patients to take their health into their own hands and influence its outcome.

Normally, as doctors we find ourselves with limited time in a busy clinic to take long case histories, have long counselling sessions or even frequent reviews. This is where lifestyle medicine helps as it is a collaborative approach between medical doctors, (who take the main responsibility for the patient), nutritionists, exercise physiologists, psychologists, fitness trainers, coaches and other allied health professionals to help manage the patient. This joint effort brings about a more holistic care under the umbrella of LM.

LM applies to every patient and every disease in different degrees and at various stages. Obviously, in an acute event (for example if an older woman has a fall), lifestyle modification is not the first line of treatment. She needs diagnosis, perhaps, surgery and medication. Once she overcomes the acute event, however, introduction of lifestyle medicine will address her underlying problems. The lifestyle changes include nutrition (perhaps she is deficient in calcium,





protein or any number of nutrients), her level of frailty (as a result of muscle loss with age and inactivity can be helped with a plan of a proper exercise programme), her balance (helped by balance improving exercise modalities), and her psychological state (once a fall has occurred, people develop fear of falling again which in turn keeps them immobile, further compounding the problem). A multispecialty collaborative care model for her health will help her heal more completely.

The proposed new discipline of LM differs from other closely aligned fields in medicine, such as preventive medicine, individualised or personal-



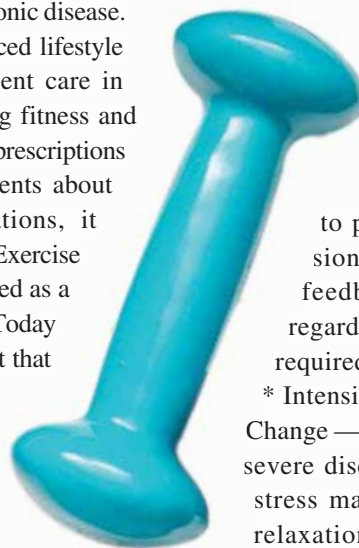
ised medicine, and integrative medicine. Certainly, there is an overlap in the targets of intervention, but there are also important differences in philosophy and scope of practice.

With LM establishing itself in India, we hope that more physicians will embrace it as a complementary modality to their own practice and learn the skills of addressing behavioural change, nutrition, exercise and sleep that are critical aspects of a person's health. If neglected, they will only provide a symptomatic treatment of the chronic disease.

When I introduced lifestyle change to my patient care in 2000 by introducing fitness and nutrition to all my prescriptions and talking to patients about lifestyle modifications, it was not the norm. Exercise was barely recognised as a form of treatment. Today we know and accept that regular exercise can be hugely beneficial in many areas — not just for obesity, diabetes or depression. Many patients were surprised that I was counselling them to make changes in their lifestyle instead of just prescribing a pain pill, for instance. It took time and effort but now most of my patients are used to being questioned about their lifestyle, family background, work and stress. I think the extra mile that one goes in just talking to patients about the various aspects of their life solves half the problem.

Unique role of Lifestyle Medicine

- * Focuses on lifestyle behaviour for long-term management and cure.
- * Applies to every practice and every patient.



* Emphasises the use of collaborative care model with incorporation of allied healthcare professionals to provide counselling as and where required.

* Uses a defined number of interventional approaches (fitness counselling and prescription, dietary advice and counselling, CBT, motivational counselling, health coaching, group-based therapy and intervention)

* The outcome depends on active participation of patients.

* Often involves the patient's family to help with adherence to advice in the form of group therapy.

* Collaborates with allied fields and specialties by involving a responsible specialist to participate in group sessions, if possible, and give feedback to the specialists regarding the patient, wherever required.

* Intensive Therapeutic Lifestyle Change — in-patient care to reverse severe disease with diet, exercise, stress management, counselling, relaxation, meditation etc being provided.

In the future LM should become the primary model of healthcare for chronic disease by identifying and eradicating the root cause of the disease. When practised properly it has the potential to eradicate chronic diseases which are not only financially depleting for patients, but also decrease quality of life, only managing to add years to your life and not life to your years.

*The author is a lifestyle medicine physician and can be contacted at sheela.nambiar@gmail.com.
www.drsheelanambiar.com*

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



RC Kattumannarkoil — RID 2981

A cardiac screening camp at the RC High School benefitted over 400 people in the neighbourhood. ECG and Echo were taken on 295 beneficiaries and 26 patients were referred for follow-up treatment.

RC Salem Gugai — RID 2982

Educational aids were given to needy students. DG Dr A K Natesan, the chief guest, presented the study material to the beneficiaries.



RC Ujjain — RID 3040

An e-learning programme was launched in association with RILM. Forty-six LED television sets were installed at government schools, apart from the curriculum software at 50 schools. RIPN Shekhar Mehta, PDGs Gustad Anklesaria, Ravi Prakash Langer and DG Dhiran Datta took part in the event.

RC Chopda — RID 3030

Eleven teachers were felicitated with Nation Builder Awards by Tahsilder Anil Gavit. AG Vilas Patil was also honoured for bagging the Best Engineer Award from the Maharashtra Government. Club President Nitin Jain and other Rotarians were present.



Matters

RC Bikaner Midtown — RID 3053

The club, in association with Bank of Baroda, donated a water cooler and filter unit to the Sister Nivedita Girls College to benefit students.



RC Chikhli River Front — RID 3060

The club, in partnership with RC Gandevi, donated two RO plants to DE Italia Sarvajanic High School in Chikhli and another school in Khergam. More than 2,000 rural children will get access to pure drinking water with this initiative.



RC Amritsar North — RID 3070

Eight teachers from government primary and secondary schools were honoured by PDG Arun Kapur with National Builders Awards to mark the Teacher's Day. District Education Officer S Salwinder Singh Samra was present at the event.



RC Sunam — RID 3090

More than 300 students and teachers benefitted from a medical and dental camp at the Dr Gagandeep Rotary Public School. Doctors from the Bhagwan Dass Arora Charitable Trust and Guru Nanak Dev Dental College examined the patients.



RC Chandausi City Star — RID 3100

A campaign was launched to create awareness against single-use plastic and polythene bags. Rotarians distributed cloth bags to the public and shopkeepers and this initiative was praised by the Nagar Palika Chairperson Indu Rani.



RC Lucknow — RID 3120

A health awareness campaign titled *Swachh Raho Swasthi Raho* was kicked off with Dr Sarita Saxena, CMO, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, as the chief guest. Besides, a workshop on women's health was organised in which sanitary napkins were distributed to over 200 girls.



RC Pradhikaran — RID 3131

In partnership with Aditya Birla Hospital, the club hosted a health camp for 400 staff including the bus crew at the Nigdi bus depot. A range of tests including ECG, sugar, blood pressure, dental and health consultations were given to the beneficiaries.



RC Bombay Chembur West — RID 3141

A tree plantation drive was taken up at the Karnataka High School in Chembur with the involvement of student volunteers. The project costing ₹2,000 enhanced the public image of Rotary in the locality.



RC Ulhasnagar — RID 3142

Eleven schools took part in a competition of science projects at Pet Oxford School with 45 demos/displays across three categories. The best projects were awarded a trophy and cash prize.



RC Bhadrachalam — RID 3150

Notebooks and stationery items were distributed to students of MPP School at Adarsh Nagar. Teachers and children expressed thanks to Rotarians for their gesture which would help in their classroom education.



Matters

RC Tadipatri — RID 3160

Grocery kits worth ₹300 each were distributed to 40 physically-challenged persons. Notebooks, school bags and slates were given to students at Yerraguntapalli Elementary School, Rotary Elementary School and ZPH School, Narasapuram.



RC Kumta — RID 3170

Around 100 contestants took part in a swimming competition organised at the Vishnu Thirth held in memory of late Rtn Mohan K Shetty. Rotaractors extended their support. The club gave over 400 saplings to school students in Honnavar.



RC Balehonnur — RID 3182

A mega health camp was organised with the support of Sahyadri Narayana Multi Specialty Hospital, Shimoga. Over 300 patients were examined and medicines worth ₹40,000 were distributed.



RC Coimbatore Meridian — RID 3201

A special camp was held in partnership with One Care Medical Centre for differently-abled children for deformity correction surgeries. Around 20 children were selected for surgery and they will undergo further evaluation.



RC Chennai Green City — RID 3232

A breast cancer screening camp was held at Alamathi village near Chennai in which 105 women were examined. The medical camp was a blessing to rural women in a place that is far off from accessing modern healthcare.

Compiled by V Muthukumaran
Designed by L Gunasekaran

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Rotary at a glance

Rotarians : 1,217,369

Clubs : 36,023

Districts : 538

Rotaractors : 164,445

Clubs : 9,933

RCC : 10,704

As on October 20, 2019

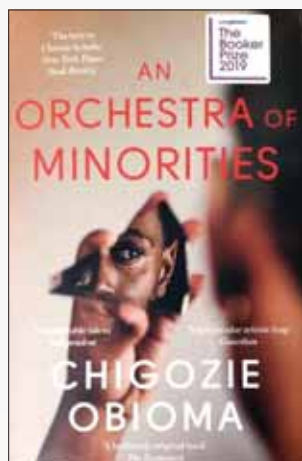
Membership Summary

As on October 1, 2019

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	114	4,759	221	33	231	177
2982	69	3,135	154	62	113	51
3000	128	5,221	463	219	672	195
3011	81	3,501	748	46	112	25
3012	87	3,604	756	41	130	56
3020	78	4,064	232	39	466	349
3030	90	4,871	593	65	310	165
3040	97	2,161	239	30	124	140
3053	71	3,063	554	9	56	95
3054	130	6,078	1,043	71	321	470
3060	101	4,290	531	59	125	138
3070	103	3,096	314	42	161	57
3080	79	3,318	260	63	218	108
3090	76	1,982	50	27	37	122
3100	75	1,804	94	7	75	146
3110	116	3,926	347	23	49	104
3120	75	3,299	408	19	62	52
3131	130	5,448	1,205	80	294	90
3132	99	3,772	367	37	213	150
3141	91	5,448	1,251	104	258	84
3142	94	3,434	621	67	203	65
3150	98	3,598	347	51	235	109
3160	71	2,439	128	19	48	81
3170	125	5,562	563	48	317	161
3181	74	3,310	281	28	216	108
3182	84	3,227	231	19	275	95
3190	131	5,048	661	111	362	51
3201	141	5,309	332	89	133	49
3202	130	5,006	258	68	437	46
3211	139	4,473	289	6	89	124
3212	99	4,167	377	86	280	142
3231	78	3,266	267	35	204	239
3232	113	4,667	717	107	325	80
3240	88	3,054	353	34	151	156
3250	101	3,967	700	47	210	183
3261	71	2,609	348	3	102	43
3262	90	3,444	432	37	73	75
3291	146	3,738	702	82	134	599
	3,763	147,158	17,437	2,013	7,821	5,180
3220	67	1,921	260	74	202	72
3271	83	1,500	265	46	17	13
3272	162	2,875	412	41	37	38
3281	206	5,657	825	193	93	188
3282	143	4,084	446	98	48	41
3292	119	4,570	686	119	121	109
S Asia Total	4,543	167,765	20,331	2,584	8,339	5,641

Source: RI South Asia Office

On the racks



An Orchestra of Minorities

Author : **Obioma Chigozie**
 Publisher : **Hachette India**
 Pages : **528; ₹599**

Shortlisted for the Booker Prize 2019, this book is about a young farmer named Chinonso who prevents a woman from falling to death. Bonded by this incident, he and Ndali fall in love. But it is a mismatch according to her family who rejects him because of his lowly status. You cannot tell if it is love or madness that makes Chinonso think he can change his destiny. Set across Nigeria and Cyprus, the book is written in the mythic style of the Igbo tradition and weaves a heart-wrenching tale about fate versus free will.



Temple Tales

Author : **Sudha G Tilak**
 Publisher : **Hachette India**
 Pages : **200; ₹299**

This delightful book opens the doors to the secrets and surprises hidden in temples across India. These unique temples are not just places of worship, but living museums of architectural wonders, mind-boggling sculptures, graceful dances, colourful crafts and other cultural legacies of the country. More than anything, they are treasure troves of lore and legend, teeming with tales of gods and goddesses, demons and devotees, plants and beasts, the magical and the mysterious — all just waiting to be discovered by you. The author takes you on an unusual journey to the country's most sacred places, where the lines between fact and faith are blurred, thus creating interesting stories.



Look Young, Live Longer

Author : **Glenn Harrold**
 Publisher : **Hachette India**
 Pages : **170; ₹299**

Re-programme your mind to build the confidence and motivation you need. In this straightforward, no-nonsense seven-step programme, clinical hypnotherapist Glenn Harrold shows you how to reconfigure the mind for a better life. Sprinkled with tips and suggestions on how to lead a happy life, the book has easy-to-follow tools, techniques and guidance on how to set aright problematic issues. Setting personal goals and how to achieve them; working out an exercise plan to improve your health; boosting self-esteem and banishing negativity; adopting good sleep patterns; cultivating positive relationships; and coping with stress are dealt in a crisp and straightforward manner. Read the book to become a fitter and younger you.

Compiled by Kiran Zehra
 Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

Travel blues in Europe

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan



Ever since I retired six years ago, I have had all the time in the world to do whatever I want. So mostly I watch TV and read low-brow fiction. Sadly, travel has been pretty much ruled out because my wife teaches in a university and gets only the summer off — which in India is not the time for travelling. So we try and go abroad for a couple of weeks every summer and stay either with my son who teaches at a university in Europe or in some downmarket Airbnb flats. This is because my son says hotels are terrible in Europe, which indeed they are. Compared to India they are not much better than Airbnb accommodation, and cost an arm and a leg.

In India, even very ordinary places — like three-star hotels and government guest houses — offer so much more than European hotels in terms of space, food and service. And the ones that compare well are absurdly expensive. This, by the way, is in sharp contrast to their trains in which even the second class is better than our First AC. Given that their journeys are short and ours so long, I'd have thought it would be other way round. Strange.

India and the rest of Asia really pamper their guests. Even the cheaper hotels are heavenly compared to what you get in Europe. I remember staying at a wonderful, old, and restored colonial bungalow in Mussoorie once. It had been built by Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert, a government lawyer, who came up with a very good idea in 1883: he

drafted a legislation that would allow Indian magistrates to try white people.

The white people, especially in Calcutta (now Kolkata), became very upset with this and got the law substantially diluted after spreading rumours that Indian judges would fill their harems with white women!

A major problem in Europe during summer is the absence of air conditioning. It can get very hot and humid there. After a full day's arduous sightseeing when you return to your room or Airbnb flat, you have to suffer the heat till about midnight when the air finally cools. They don't even have fans, for which you have to ask and which they may or may not have. Mostly they don't.

In India, many government guest houses are also, in a sense, restored colonial bungalows. Between 2001 and 2010, I used to go to Mussoorie once or twice a year to the IAS Academy to give lectures. They let me stay in their VIP guesthouse which is a very nice place, but there was a pattern that I noticed.

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In winter when the sahibs
were not visiting, I got large
rooms with a splendid view; in
summer it was the doghouse!

In winter when the sahibs were not visiting, they would give me large rooms with the most splendid views of the mountains but which couldn't be seen because of the fog and sleet. In summer, however, when the sahibs would land up *en famille*, I was given the doghouses — the smaller rooms with a view of the admin block. Once a very senior professor from the Delhi School of Economics was given a room in the basement. In winter, however, he would have got the VIP suite.

When I told a colleague about this typical bureaucratic practice, she suggested I stay at the Ilbert Manor. I don't know if it's still there but if you go to Mussoorie, it's a good place to spend a weekend, not least because there's absolutely nothing to do except just laze.

Happily, now my wife is on a year's sabbatical and we can travel more in India and South Asia. I am really looking forward to that. No visa hassles. No extortionate price. No muted racism. Just us brown fellows who know what hospitality means. ■

In Brief



Writing out-of-the-box

A college in Karnataka was issued showcase notice for a weird experiment. When students of the Bhagat PU College in Haveri arrived for their midterm exam, they were given modified cartons

to wear over their heads. The college administrator had devised this demeaning attempt to check copying among students. The cartons had opening on one side to enable the students to see their answer sheets and not on the sides. The administrator landed in trouble after he posted on WhatsApp a picture of the students writing their exams with these contraptions. When brought to the notice of the Deputy Director of Pre-University Education, he immediately visited the college and stopped the students' torture.



Conquering Kilimanjaro with crutches

Physically-challenged and on crutches, Neeraj George Baby (32), from Aluva in Kerala, recently conquered Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. His limbs were amputated following a cancerous tumour when he was nine. His baggage for the climb included multiple pair of crutches and a dozen bushes to replace the worn-out ones during the arduous climb. Neeraj, an employee at the Advocate General's office in Kochi, had earlier trekked up the Pakshipathalam in Wayanad, and another peak between Munnar and Kodaikanal. He had won a gold in badminton doubles and silver in singles at the 2008 Asian Paralympics.



Marathon, the Indian way

Running the marathon in traditional Indian attire is becoming popular now. Many women (and men) are now being found running in saris, salwar kameez and burqas. Kranti Salvi (50) and Jayanthi Sampathkumar (46) created world records by running wearing nine-yard saris, in 2018 and 2017.

Recently, Mumbaikar Shaheda Karolia (31) ran the marathon in a burqa and Pune is even organising sari runs. The idea is to prioritise women's health, without them having to worry about their attire. Jayanthi finds the Tamil *madisar* style of draping the most convenient for running!

Catwalk with prosthetic limbs

Daisy-May Demetre (9) from Birmingham was born with fibular hemimelia, where part or all of the bone in her lower leg is missing. Her legs were amputated when she was just 18 months old, after which she learnt to walk with prosthetic legs. Daisy caught the attention of the fashion world as she walked the ramp at the Eiffel Tower in Paris for a luxury French children's brand. This was her third catwalk, after two other fashion shows at New York and London.



Safeguard your pets from delivery boys

Vandana Shah of Pune found her pet beagle Dottu missing after she got her food delivered by an online delivery boy. When the family could not find the dog for hours, Vandana went searching for it. Enquiries in the neighbourhood revealed that the delivery boy had carried the dog with him. Vandana called him on his mobile, and after several minutes of grilling, he confessed having picked up Dottu but said he had sent the dog to his village. After several rounds of complaining and shaming on the social media, the pup was finally reunited with its owners.

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