

Rotary News

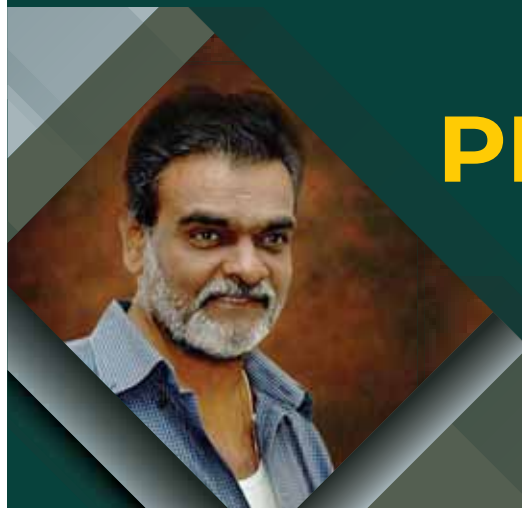
India

www.rotarynewsonline.org





Rotary
District 3212



PROJECT PREMKUMAR



A Project by
Rotary Club of Virudhunagar RI Dist-3212



95% of the students don't read beyond their text books.
Project Premkumar is reinforcing their reading habit.

- Reading enriches the mind by expanding knowledge and vocabulary.
- It enhances imagination and creativity by transporting readers to different worlds.
- Regular reading improves focus, concentration, and critical thinking skills.
- It reduces stress and provides a healthy escape from everyday life.
- Reading nurtures empathy by allowing us to see through others' perspectives.



As on
July, 2025

No. of Programs

60

No. of Beneficiaries

14578

No. of Institutions Covered

60

Man Hours Spent

62520 Hrs

LEKHA and Aug 25/ Rotary FW

Project Premkumar is a remarkable project of RID 3212 & Rotary club of Virudhunagar which focuses on encouraging the students and enhancing their reading skills. Rtn. S.Nagalingam, IRS (Rtd.), Founder and Head Coach of Nikhil Foundation, is the key speaker of the programme.

Project Premkumar is Conducted in Two Phases.

First Phase - 'Breathe Reading' Training Program

Second Phase - 10 Student Volunteers will be reviewing the book assigned to them

*** Best 5 Reviews will be awarded with Rs.5000 Worth of Books.**

Do you wish to organize
"PROJECT PREMKUMAR"
in your School / College?
We are waiting to partner with you.

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Project Chairman
Rtn. S. NAGALINGAM IRS(Rtd.)
90036 59270



IDHAYAM
PROMISE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

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Rotary 

A publication of Rotary
Global Media Network

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Save the environment.**

E-version rate Reduced

From July 1, 2024, our E-version subscription
has been revised from

₹420 to ₹324

Quality magazine; good editorials

The July editorial gives an overview of Rotary's ideals of giving and selfless service, nicely penned by the editor Rasheeda Bhagat and absolutely relevant. Whatever happens in the world is all due to cause and effect, such as one person missing the Air India flight that crashed due to a traffic jam. Stressing on Rotary's philosophy of altruism, the editor rightly connected the ephemeral world to the recent plane crash, pointing out that those who can afford to help others and give more, should certainly do so.

Surendran TPV, RC Kalpetta — D 3204

Your July editorial is well timed. In the present era of geopolitical tension and trade wars, we need to carry our Rotary message of *Unite for Good* with full force. Looking forward to more Rotary news this year. All the best to the editorial team.

Som Dua, RC Delhi South — D 3011

My hearty congratulations for the appreciation you got from PRIP Ian Riseley, who has recognised your tireless efforts and caliber in diligently covering Rotary events and presenting the same in interesting articles. He has rightly said, "your editorial is food for thought. Bravo", which is the icing on the cake. My compliments to you and your team.

The editorial *Grace in giving* is inspiring, and the previous one on Operation Sindoor was a very balanced analysis of the terror attack. The cover photo (June) of



a mother extending a helping hand to her handicapped son is touching. It was great to read about.

RC Agra is doing wonderful projects, providing computers and labs in schools; the Speed Walk event for the differently-abled children is a commendable initiative. The Go Green column titled *Set the birds free* drives home the message not to cage birds as god has given them wings to fly.

*Raj Kumar Kapoor
RC Roop Nagar — D 3080*

On receiving the July issue, I first read the Editor's note, as I always do. Rasheeda speaks the truth on the glory of charity and life being short, and the importance of the grace of giving, and we have to use the money earned in life properly and show generosity.

Director M Muruganandam and Trustee Bharat Pandya's messages are invaluable and inspiring. Such inspiring articles encourage Rotarians to do good.

Maya Mihani, RC Hinganghat — D 3030

The editorial War hysteria (June) made interesting but I felt it was out of place in this magazine oriented towards service. *Rotary News* should highlight the service and humanitarian work being done by individuals and clubs only.

*HR Seetharam
RC Bangalore Indiranagar — D 3192*

Thank you, Rotary News!

On behalf of RID 3132, we express our gratitude for the wonderful and detailed coverage of two of our major CSR initiatives — *Rotary ki Pathshala* and the district-wide diabetes awareness project — in the July issue. Your thoughtful presentation and the five-page feature have not only made us proud but have brought immense visibility to RID 3132 across the entire Rotary world. Thanks to this excellent editorial support of the *Rotary News*

team, we feel seen, valued, and are inspired to continue working with greater dedication.

*IPDG Suresh Saboo
DGE Jayesh Patel — D 3132*

It was heartening to see our club's project — ambulance service and Pranama funeral management — featured in the July issue. It is a great honour for us to have our project featured in our magazine. Thank you for your help and support. We appreciate

your dedicated and seamless service to the cause of Rotary.

*Abraham Varughese
RC Kozhencherry — D 3211*

The dabba saga

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan is absolutely right when he narrates the seriousness with which women treat the return of *dabbas* (lunch boxes and utensils) in his LBW column (July). During potluck dinners with friends, our wives ensure that every bowl,

LETTERS

dish and spoon we take is brought back, not only washed and wiped but often polished to a shine. Even if the host says “don’t worry,” there’s no escaping the ritual. Dabba must come back home.

This extends to neighbours too. If food arrives from across the fence, the container is never returned empty. It’s simply not done. Some sweets, a snack, or at least, dry fruits must go back in it. It’s not just courtesy, but tradition, diplomacy, and good-natured barter rolled into one. Unwritten rules of middle-class civility are indeed charming. The dabba isn’t just a container—it’s a vessel of goodwill, mutual respect, and an unspoken sense of community.

*Amit Goel, RC Delhi
South End — D 3011*

Non-Rotary content appreciated

It is heartening to see the gradual transformation of *Rotary News* as a magazine exploring various interest areas in Rotary with such professional presentation. I always look forward to some offbeat articles such as the LBW column by Srinivasa Raghavan and Wordsworld by Sandhya Rao. Articles on environment by Preeti Mehra are a welcome feature, as also those on health and nutrition.

In respect of membership details and TRF contribution, it would be nice to include the geographical distribution of RI districts on a map of India with the zones which will be very useful for all Rotarians, particularly new members. This is a suggestion.

*Bidyut B Sen, RC Bombay
Airport — D 3141*

Thanks for your suggestion. It has been implemented in this issue.

Editor

The cover photo of the July issue, set in the backdrop of a gurukul, is a stunning visual. It highlights the importance of adopting modern tools of education without compromising on tradition. Open classrooms result in open minds. Whoever designed it deserves a lot of appreciation.

Sandhya Rao on reading, Preeti Mehra on environment and LBW by Srinivasa Raghavan provide a whiff of fresh air to every issue which otherwise would only consist of news on Rotary, Rotary and Rotary.

*K Ravindrakumar
RC Karur — D 3000*

Thank you for the inspiring article *Eyecare in rural Jharkhand* in the June issue. The writing beautifully captures the impact of Rotary’s global grant project. I’ve shared the magazine with friends in the community, and they’ve all praised Rotary’s great work. Some are even interested in joining Rotary. I also want to commend the team on the excellent quality of *Rotary News* – it’s truly a fantastic magazine that showcases Rotary’s mission and values.

*Madhumita Santra
RC Jamshedpur — D 3250*

In her last message, RI President Stephane Urchick says that Rotary

offers friendship, purpose and belonging amidst a world-wide loneliness epidemic. In the Editor’s note, Rasheeda Bhagat says that a hefty IMF loan might have compelled Pakistan to agree to a ceasefire. It may be so. However, Pakistani air bases got blasted completely and possibly their nuclear facilities too were damaged. That may also be another factor in their urgency for the ceasefire. The letter written by PRID Ashok Mahajan is quite appropriate as he calls for healing through community outreach and other positive measures.

*KMK Murthy
RC Secunderabad — D 3150*

Thanks for publishing my letter in the April issue. I also found very interesting articles in the June issue such as *Empowering rural youth in Bengal with Bosch’s help*. The activities carried out by RC Calcutta Presidency are noteworthy.

A marathon for special children is another wonderful activity carried out by RC Calcutta Mahanagar. Photos show enthusiastic children with their relatives enjoying the fun fare. I find details of Rotary at a glance informative.

*Ajit C Shah, non-Rotarian,
Ahmedabad*

On the cover: Malliga beams with joy on receiving a new home from RC Kodaikanal’s housing project at Valaigiri village, Kodaikanal.

Picture: Rasheeda Bhagat

We welcome your feedback Write to the Editor:

rotarynews@rosaonline.org; rushbhagat@gmail.com.

*Mail your project details, along with hi-res photos,
to **rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com.***

*Messages on your club/district projects, information and links on
zoom meetings/webinar should be sent only by e-mail to the Editor at
rushbhagat@gmail.com or rotarynewsmagazine@gmail.com.*

WHATSAPP MESSAGES WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.



This month and every month

August is Membership Month, but our commitment to growth and connection is year-round. When we focus on growing Rotary, we grow our ability to serve, to lead, and to bring lasting change.

Membership growth isn't just about numbers. It's about opening doors. It's about inviting more people who are ready to give their time, talent and hearts to a cause greater than themselves. When we welcome new members, we bring in fresh ideas and new energy. We expand our impact, strengthen our clubs, and ensure that Rotary continues to evolve with the world around us.

Remember, there is now great flexibility in fashioning nontraditional club models. I'm inspired when I see these innovative clubs thrive by offering new and prospective members more ways to connect and serve.

In Korea, the growth of satellite clubs has created opportunities for nearly 1,000 new members to find their place in Rotary. In Romania, the close collaboration between Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors has built a pipeline of future leaders. In India, some Rotarians gather around a shared interest — whether it's professional development or a passion for service — and those connections deepen their commitment and their joy in being part of Rotary. And we've seen cause-based clubs thrive in regions as diverse as Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe.

There's a common thread: Where clubs are growing, membership is a priority and there is a willingness to try something new. Rotary is not limited to one structure or tradition. We are a global network of people of action, and that means there is room for many kinds of clubs, many ways to serve, and many paths into our organisation.

This spirit of innovation is also guiding our efforts to reach new communities. In places where there has never been a Rotary club — or where a club once existed and faded — Rotarians are finding ways to grow Rotary. They are identifying areas of potential and building clubs that reflect the character and needs of their communities.

Every member plays a part in this journey. Whether you introduce a friend to your club, support a new meeting format, reconnect with programme alumni, or simply share your Rotary story, you are helping our organisation grow stronger and more vibrant.

No one owns a Rotary club. It is a gift we pass on to the next generation. When we nurture that gift, when we invite others to share in it, we ensure that Rotary continues to be a force for good.

Let's prioritise membership growth — not just in August but every month of the year. Together, through friendship, creativity, and shared purpose, we will grow Rotary and *Unite for Good*.

Francesco Arezzo
President, Rotary International



Leadership: challenges or opportunities?

Whether it is a mundane development within a family, an event or celebration planned by friends or an emergency in a public arena, all of us have experienced how quickly one individual will step forward, take charge and make quick, crucial decisions that can make a huge difference. Invariably this individual is a leader in his organisation, however small or big it might be. In my journalistic career spanning 47 years, I have interviewed at least a couple of hundred leaders from diverse fields like politics, business and industry, sports, science and education, banking and finance, entertainment and various professions like medicine, law, and so on.

One of the questions I've posed to most of these luminaries is their definition of leadership. After all, they've reached the pinnacle, so, in their opinion, what were the qualities that make a fine leader. The answers they have given have defined them as human beings. A leadership position invariably brings power along with it; how the individual handles that power... with a flourish and arrogance or with grace and humility, defines that person and the route to success or disaster, or simply mediocrity, that particular organisation will take. Recently an attribute of leadership I read about described how that particular person talked about handling difficult or tricky moments and situations. Asked how he faced the various challenges that his leadership position laid bare, he said that he did not look at those situations as challenges, but rather as opportunities he was fortunate enough to get. He looked at those as opportunities to really achieve something. This really set me thinking... challenge is something daunting, and even fearsome, but opportunity sounds much more positive and a chance to achieve a memorable objective.

Of course there are all kinds of leaders; but those who truly make an impact are the ones who embrace the opportunity to innovate something that will make a difference to many, many lives. These are leaders with responsibility and a social consciousness... one example that comes to mind is of the feisty woman Namita Banka, who left a promising career as a jewellery designer to advance the cause of bio-toilets. Indian Railways, which faced a huge problem of human waste from its toilets corroding tracks, first started using bio-toilets designed and developed in partnership with the DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation). But this huge organisation still needed someone to manufacture or liaise with manufacturers. In 2012, Namita founded Banka Biolo, a company dedicated to innovative sanitary solutions, and apart from Indian Railways, she has been working very hard to put up bio-toilets in remote and rural areas, where they are most needed. With an educational background in environmental science, she firmly believes that every person deserves to have a clean and sustainable toilet.

Coming back to leadership, we have a new leader at the helm of RI — President Francesco Arezzo. Even though he has had a shorter landing time due to the sudden resignation of Mario de Camargo, the affable leader is sending all the right signals that he will lead Rotary with passion, dedication and efficiency. We wish him all the very best.


Rasheeda Bhagat



Rotary
District 3212



PROJECT FOCUS

Goal Setting / Effective Public Speaking

Project Focus is a pioneering project of Rotary Club of Virudhunagar (RID 3212), which aims at helping the school and college students, the former to achieve their goals and the latter to overcome their fear of public speaking.

Goal Setting For School Students

Size : Min 50 Students - Max 500 Students

Duration : 2 Hours

Medium of Training : Tamil & English

Audience : Government, Government Aided
and Private school students

Program that guides the school Children to fix their goals and focus on them to taste success and contentment in their lives. Through this initiative, students will have the opportunity to develop action plans and work towards realizing their dreams. Through mentorship, educational resources, and other forms of support, this transformative initiative is dedicated to helping students achieve their full potential.

As on
July 15, 2025

No. of. Programs

120

No. of. Beneficiaries

12,385

Effective Public Speaking For College Students

Size : Min 40 Students - Max 60 Students

Duration : 6 Hours

Medium of Training : Tamil & English

Audience : Government and Private
College Students

This programme empowers the youth to come out of their fear, hesitation and anxiety in public speaking. It emphasizes the importance of effective communication skills in their personal, professional and family life. It regulates their pattern of speaking, delivery skills, presentation tactics and content drafting. It helps the students to voice out their ideas, opinions and wishes in front of others, enabling them to compete with large audience. Overall, it equips the college students to crack their placement interviews with confidence.

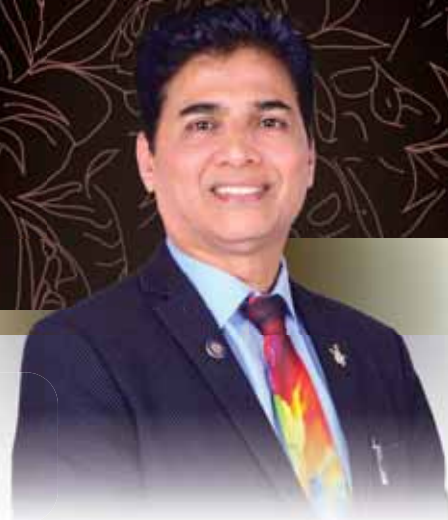
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Do you want to conduct
" **Project Focus** "
in your Town/City/District?
We are waiting to partner with you.



Project Chairman
Rtn.M.A.P.R. Rengasamy
JCI Area Trainer
99444 11961

Director speak



Unite for Good — a call for action

Dear Rotarians,

As we begin this new chapter together, let us embrace the power of unity and the purpose that binds us — doing good in the world. The presidential message “Unite for Good” is not just a slogan. It’s a direction — a bold call for collaboration, compassion and collective impact.

Rotary thrives when clubs work together and when we build bridges with partners outside our organisation. Collaboration multiplies our efforts, deepens our service, and extends our reach to communities that need us most. Let us foster synergy within districts and across borders, uniting not only in spirit but in action.

Membership is our strength. It’s time we re-energise our districts with the 10:20:30 goal — every district to achieve a net addition of 10 Rotary clubs, 20 Rotaract clubs, and 30 Interact clubs by September 30, 2025. But numbers alone won’t drive us forward — experiences will. Let’s focus on meaningful member engagement, leadership development, and creating a Rotary where every member feels valued and inspired.

The Rotary Foundation remains our engine of impact. Its power to transform lives, whether through clean water, disease prevention, or education, is unmatched. I urge every club to renew its commitment to TRF.

Every contribution matters. Every dollar brings a dream closer to reality.

We’re also launching initiatives to track engagement, support new members, and fund collaborative service projects. These tools will help us stay connected to the heart of Rotary — our people and our purpose.

To recognise and amplify our work with corporate partners, we have introduced Regional CSR Awards in every zone, culminating in a **National CSR Summit** on November 13, 2025 in New Delhi. This is Rotary’s opportunity to lead the way in showcasing how strategic giving and service can reshape communities.

Clubs should weave the *Unite for Good* message into everything they do. Use it to inspire your events, energise your meetings and strengthen your stories.

As we journey through this year, let’s recommit to our core values — service, leadership, diversity, integrity and fellowship. They are not just ideals, but the foundation of all we do.

Let us *Unite for Good* — to grow stronger, serve deeper and leave a lasting mark on the world.

In Rotary service,

KP Nagesh

RI Director, 2025–27

Vacation made easy



Rotary members are an adventurous bunch and use the annual convention as a chance to explore the sights and culture in the host city and the surrounding region, often exploring with a group of RI friends. When you're in Taipei June 13–17 for the Rotary International Convention, you'll find endless getaway options — many right near the event.

Mountains are always within reach from this metropolis. A short distance from the exhibition centre, board the Maokong Gondola outside the Taipei Zoo (pandas and native scaly pangolins inside!). Ride up the slope to reach hiking trails that pass mountainside terraces of oolong tea farms, or stop at a teahouse to slurp up dumplings and slowly sip a cup of tea made from the plants growing nearby.

An exploration of Taipei may take you to night market food stalls, hot springs, a museum of ancient

treasures, or the observatory at the top of the tower that dominates the skyline: Taipei 101. And you can visit one (or more!) of Taiwan's thousands of temples for varied faiths and folk deities.

Your family or travel companions are welcome at the convention. The more the merrier when we're thinking big together about how to improve the world. Big-stage sessions are inspirational extravaganzas that dazzle the audience — with Rotary traditions including the flag ceremony, world-altering figures like Nobel Prize winners, and unforgettable singers, dancers, and other performers.

Build your travel plan around exciting convention exhibitions that everyone will enjoy. Plus, Rotary organisers in Taiwan will design exclusive experiences and tours to make seeing the island a snap. Your next vacation is planned!

Learn more and register at
convention.rotary.org

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Printed and published by **PT Prabhakar**, 15 Sivaswamy Street, Mylapore, Chennai 600004, on behalf of Rotary News Trust and printed at Rasi Graphics Pvt Ltd, 40, Peters Road, Royapettah, Chennai - 600 014, India, and published at Rotary News Trust, Dugar Towers, 3rd Floor, 34, Marshalls Road, Egmore, Chennai 600 008. Editor: **Rasheeda Bhagat**.

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Magazine

Message from TRF Trustee Chair



Get to know us

When most people join Rotary, they know little, if anything, about The Rotary Foundation.

Membership Month is a great time to highlight the powerful connection between membership and our Foundation.

People who are drawn to Rotary care deeply about their communities and want to make a substantive difference. They're looking for meaningful, hands-on ways to serve — and the Foundation helps make those opportunities possible.

Cause-based Rotary clubs are one exciting way new members are finding purpose in Rotary, and these clubs also bring fresh energy and activity to our

Foundation. I invited Marisol Chianello, president of one such club, to share her perspective:

"As a nonprofit attorney, I long believed I didn't have the time to be part of Rotary. But when I heard about a new cause-based e-club — the Rotary Club of Mental Health and Wellness District 5280 — I felt I had to be part of it.

In just three years, our club has done a lot to support mental health needs in Southern California and awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships to graduate students in the field, including one this year to a student in Uganda.

Just a few months ago, we were approved for our first global grant to provide a mix of in-person and digital mental wellness support to survivors of the 2023 earthquakes in southeastern Turkey.

Through our service, we've attracted new members from across the United States, including women and younger members who might not have otherwise joined Rotary. Cause-based clubs like ours offer a meaningful entry point for people committed to a specific cause — backed by the global reach and Foundation support of Rotary."

Marisol's story reminds us what's possible when Rotary service meets Foundation support. I wonder how many cause-based club members knew the full extent of Foundation resources when they began. How many existing clubs could partner with these groups on grants?

As we build new Rotary and Rotaract clubs and welcome new members, let's keep The Rotary Foundation at the forefront. The Foundation enriches the membership experience, supports club growth, and deepens our impact.

The Rotary Foundation is more than just a source of funding; it is an invitation to endless opportunities. It's a living expression of who we are as Rotary. The Foundation, too, can be a vital part of every member's experience when they join us or start a new club.

Holger Knaack
TRF Trustee Chair



Village leader Malliga
addressing the
inaugural event.
Club member Meera
Rajkumar is behind her.

A Rotarian gifts pucca houses to **Kodai tribals**

Rasheeda Bhagat

Everything about Malliga exudes cheer, confidence and positivity. That's why it's a little difficult to process what she shares, very cheerfully, in response to my question on her age. With a hearty laugh she says: "Madam, I have no idea about my age. Forget education, I've never seen the inside of a school... I've never even got close enough to a school building to get some shade."

And yet Malliga has effortlessly taken over the leadership of a tribal hamlet, bang adjacent to a reserved forest area in Valaigiri, about 30km from the cool and iconic hill station of Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu. Here, thanks to one Rotarian's passion, vision and dedication, Malliga's and 13 other families have got brand new brick-and-mortar homes. Till June-end, these 14 families were living in this tiny hamlet in homes that were virtually put together with thick blue and white tarpaulin sheets, along with tin plates, arranged over four wooden poles.

The Rotarian who put together this ambitious project for which he single-handedly raised ₹70 lakh from friends and acquaintances, who included a few Rotarians, is past president of Rotary Club of Kodaikanal (RID 3000) Rajkumar Raman. "I always wanted

to do a service project that would benefit some tribal families living in this belt. The idea about a project to provide homes to tribal people was first planted in my mind in 2022 by PDG Jawarilal Jain of RID 3231 when he came to our Carlton Hotel (where Rajkumar has been working for long years and is now its vice-president) for his PETS and SETS programme. He asked me to address the meeting for five minutes on the joy of giving. This was because during my year as club president I had done over 300 projects."

In the evening, in a conversation with Rajkumar, Jain appreciated the work the former had done during his presidential year and "asked me if I could look at some tribal hamlets where it was possible to build houses for tribal people. We put the cost of each house at ₹2 lakh and he said he would help me in this project."

This was also the time when Rajkumar was the assistant governor of RID 3000. The excited Rotarian started the reconnaissance work straightaway and roped in Murugesan, the local RDO (Revenue Divisional Officer), to help him identify such a hamlet. Subsequently, Jain was able to give him only ₹2 lakh, meant for one house. But the Rotarian was determined that if not a huge project,

he could do a smaller project in a smaller hamlet where fewer houses were needed.

Talking to *Rotary News*, Rajkumar said there are about 22 tribal hamlets in this area, and along with the RDO he examined the feasibility of providing homes in one of the hamlets. In three of the hamlets they visited there were challenges in getting the land and clear permissions from the government to build those homes. "If the papers were not clear and we built homes and later if the officials objected, these homes could be demolished, so we had to be very careful," he says.

Finally, in Valaigiri, he found the perfect tribal hamlet, where a lot of things fell into place. "There were 14 families living here in makeshift homes, which were actually huts made of plastic sheets and bamboo poles, a couple of which you saw. And the land where they had put up their huts was just on the edge of the reserve forest. With the RDO's help I found that the



From R: IPDG Raja Govindasamy, project chair Rajkumar Raman, his wife Meera, RDO Murugesan, former SP Kaliamurthy, Nagaraj Setty and his wife Kalpana.



land belonged to Bharat from Madurai, and I spoke to him about my project and requested him to donate a small piece of his land to build 14 homes for the tribal families who lived here.”

Bharat owns a large parcel of land which is around 33 acres and “after two sittings with him, he very kindly agreed to donate 28 cents of land — two cents costing around ₹2 lakh for each family — and I knew my dream project could finally begin.” A heartwarming feature of this project is that both the land and the houses have been registered in the names of the women in the family, eliminating the risk of the male members selling the house in the future, in case any of them was trapped in drinking or gambling debt. But for public display it is joint ownership — each house has a cute name plate in Tamil saying *Senbagham and Prakash Illam* (house), or *Paapaati and Palani Illam*.

Malliga and the other tribals inhabiting this hamlet belong to the

Paliyar group; Paliyars and Pulaiyars are the two main tribal groups inhabiting the Kodaikanal hills. The Paliyars live in the higher reaches, while the Pulaiyars reside in the lower regions. Both the tribes have a deep cultural connection with the forests, which they consider sacred. The government has given rights to these tribals to collect herbs, honey, fruits and other medicinal plants from the forest, which they sell to traders. But their main survival comes from doing farm labour and other coolie work. Owning two cents of land and building a brick-and-mortar house on that land is well beyond their reach.

From the beginning RDO Murugesan had set his mind to ensure

all help possible to see that this project got the necessary permissions and the paper work regarding transfer of the ownership of the land was completed as quickly as possible. "What normally could have been an arduous and time-consuming affair was achieved smoothly thanks to the RDO's help. He is a very sincere and compassionate man. And all the 14 women in these families have today become landowners," beams Rajkumar.

Next came the difficult part of raising funds. What sets this project apart from other Rotary projects is that

even though the sum involved is substantial — all of ₹70 lakh, and a little more now that Rajkumar has learnt the bitter truth that the electrical connections which he had earlier believed would come free from the government will now cost ₹5,600 for each home — the money has come "neither through a global grant, district grant nor my club's funds, even though I've made it my club's project. I've raised the money by appealing to my friends and corporates known to me and most of them have responded positively."

The other major problem was the escalation in cost; as the work began, all the difficulties associated in constructing anything on a rocky terrain, with each of the 14 houses being on



a different elevation, unfolded. There was a much higher cost in transporting the building material, the narrow paths made it impossible for vehicles carrying construction material to come to the building spot and human labour had to be used. All this pushed up the cost; he had estimated each house — 150sqft — would cost ₹3 lakh each, but finally the figure swelled to ₹5 lakh per house, as the Rotarian did not want to make any compromises on the quality of the material used — be it the doors and windows or the tiles in the bathrooms.

As Rajkumar relates the story, his wife Meera, also a Rotarian from the same club — RC Kodaikanal — recalls the hiccups and low points in

I have no idea about my age.

Forget education, I've never
seen the inside of a school...

I've never even got close
enough to a school building to
get some shade.

Malliga, village leader

the last three years. The *bhoomi pooja* was done in June 2022, but “there were many problems which crept up on the way. There were times when he was depressed and wanted to give up the project, and I'd tell him let us do it little by little. Let's first build two houses and then add two more, and we will take it forward slowly. And so we worked like that.”

Her husband smiles as he recalls the different kinds of help which came from different quarters. “I would send messages for help to my friends and many of them responded positively.” He is particularly grateful to his friends, many of them Rotarians, such as Habil Khorakiwala, chairman of Wockhardt; Avais Musveen, chairman, Concord Textiles; Rotary Club of Bombay North Charity Trust; Lakshminarayanan, MD, Sundaram Home Finance; Ravi Nithyanandam, MD, Vasavi Thanga Maligai; K S Nagaraj Setty and Suraj D'Souza from Mumbai; Sathish Kumar Bhonsle from Bhagwaan Project (which built



the houses); Rtms Shoba and Sriram from Chennai; RC Tiruchirapalli Rockcity; Ligi George, PDG Jawarilal Jain; Vasudevan; C Jayapaul and P Ravichandran.

He is grateful for all the help that this project got; “D Easwaran from Tirupur gave me the frames for all the doors and windows, worth about ₹3.5 lakh, the tiles were given by 4S Associates, Kodaikanal, while another friend donated electric material worth ₹1 lakh. Today, to mark your visit I wanted to give them a set comprising a saree, shirt, pillows, etc, and I asked Muthukumar, a friend in Madurai, if he could give me these things at a nominal cost, and he said he would donate the clothes. So this is the way so many people have helped.”

Even as the project was on and he had a severe health setback, past president from his club and project coordinator L Jeya Prasad overtook the supervision of the ongoing work. Others from RC Kodaikanal who have helped him see this project through include past presidents Dr Madan, D Rajkumar and Rohan Samuel.

Seated in her glistening new house, along with her grandson — she has six grandchildren — and pet

When one of the girls said she wants to become a district collector, Nagaraj Setty from Mumbai volunteered to pay the fees till she completes her college education.



dog Damu (who quickly learns the art of posing for pictures as he follows me around and jumps into the frame when I pull out my camera!), a beaming Malliga assures Rajkumar that all the children in the hamlet are regularly attending school. “Yes, I know that you had insisted that the girls in particular should go to school, and I am ensuring that,” she smiles. The children go to three different schools; six of the older ones are attending a school that is 5km away and are staying in the government hostel there.

Rajkumar explains that while Malliga’s house has a washroom, “traditionally these people do not like to have a toilet inside the house. So in the homes built later, we put the washroom adjacent to the house. Now the Forest Department has come forward to say they will build a toilet block for the families, and that will be a big blessing for them. I have also spoken to the (Dindigul) district collector

A Sarvanan, and he has promised to help the tribals get all the benefits from the various schemes that the government has earmarked for tribal people.” This includes a patch of land where they can do collective farming.

Smiling faces greet me as I walk around that small area; after all, owning a house is a lifetime dream for most people. Nageswari, along with the others, also collects herbs, fruits, honey etc from the forest but her main income comes from doing farm labour. When work is available, she makes about ₹300 a day from this work. For men like Pawanraj, farm labour, mainly plucking coffee beans, or coolie work, fetches him ₹400–500 a day, “but we do not get work every day,” he says.

But around their own homes, says Malliga, the tribal dwellers do grow some fruits such as guava and avocado, which are in demand in cities, and even coffee seeds. Rajkumar recalls with a



warm smile an occasion when he was travelling from Kodaikanal with his wife Meera, while the project was on, and as usual, they made a stop at the project site. “When we were leaving an elderly woman asked us to wait, darted inside her hut and came back with some fresh coffee powder and delicious hill bananas. Who can forget this kind of precious gifts given with so much love?”

In June 2025, when the then RID 3000 DG Raja Govindasamy inaugurated the project titled *Rotary Model Tribal Village*, there was a festive air in the village with all the homes being cheerfully decorated with banana leaf sheaths which were dancing in the gentle breeze that grazed the hamlet. The women turned out in shining new sarees and the children in colourful

dressess with the men looking bright in their new shirts and *veshtis* (dhotis). Milk was ceremoniously boiled to mark the *grihapravesham*, and each family received gifts such as blankets, bedsheets and foodgrains and other provisions to last a whole month. These were donated by Ashwin Rajkumar, Kodaikanal, and Roma Setty, Mumbai.

IPDG Govindasamy said, “This is a first-of-its-kind work being done by one individual Rotarian such as Rajkumar and it needs to be appreciated and shared, as it might motivate others to replicate it.” Sundaram Home Finance MD Lakshminarayanan, who has donated one of the homes, said that after having seen the dwellings of the tribal people earlier, he was amazed by the kind of transformation these new homes will bring in their lives. Nagaraj Setty, one of the benefactors, said he was eager to help the children here for their higher education as well. “When one of the girls said she wants to become a district collector, Setty volunteered to pay for her education till she completes her college education,” said Rajkumar.

But the star of the day was Malliga, who picked up the microphone like a seasoned orator. Dressed in a bright blue saree with matching bangles, and bright orange flowers adorning her hair, she spoke with confidence and regaled the audience with her heartfelt thanks and assurance that the villagers would make good use of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and work hard for a bright future.

The houses have been occupied but one loose end needs to be tied up — electricity connection at home. Till now this hamlet had no electricity, but now electrical supply has been initiated and all the cable work completed. “I had taken it for granted that being tribals they would get free electricity connections in their homes. But I discovered only three days ago that

Even today, when it rains in Kodaikanal, I think about the mother who had to stand for three long hours, holding her seven-month-old child in a dry spot, as water was continually running through her hut.

Rajkumar Raman

RC Kodaikanal

while each home will get 100 units of power free of cost, each connection will cost ₹5,600 per house. In all, I need another ₹1.44 lakh but PDG Selvanathan from Pondicherry and another friend have promised to help with a major part of this cost.”

Even today, though his dream project has been completed, in his mind, Rajkumar often revisits the visual of one of the women inhabitants of this hamlet, who, during torrential and non-stop rain, had stood carrying her seven-month-old child in one spot which was protected from the falling rain for three long hours. “She could not sit inside her hut or keep the child there because water was running through the hut. This was a few years ago; after I heard this story, every time it rained in Kodai, I would think only of that mother holding her little child and standing in a sheltered spot to protect it from the rain. It is comforting to know that at least these mothers in this Valaigiri hamlet now have a pucca house to give them shelter during rain.”

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

A chat with RI President Francesco Arezzo

Etelka Lehoczky

RI's new president talks about his top Rotary moments, his goals as president, and his love of olive oil and opera.

Francesco Arezzo was sitting with a friend at his district conference when he received a call, asking him to leave the room and join a Zoom meeting with the Rotary International Board of Directors. A few minutes later, Arezzo learned that he'd been chosen as RI president for 2025–26, the third Italian and the first from southern Italy to lead the global membership organisation. Since the news hadn't been officially announced, he couldn't tell anyone. But soon, he noticed phones coming out all over the room.

When the news arrived on social media at about 11pm, “we were in the middle of the gala dinner. You can imagine more than 400 Rotarians all finding out on their phones. It was quite an unforgettable moment. All of a sudden, they all lined up to kiss me and offer their congratulations. I was deeply touched,” he says.

A week after the Board held a special session in June to select Arezzo to lead Rotary, he flew to Calgary, Canada, for the convention. There, he was warmly embraced by members from around the world. Thousands of attendees interrupted during his speech with ebullient applause at the

closing session as he was officially introduced.

A member of the Rotary Club of Ragusa in Sicily, Arezzo has been part of Rotary for more than three decades. He has served as vice-chair of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, RI director, and chair of the 2023 International Convention Committee for Melbourne, among other leadership roles. Throughout his Rotary journey, he has supported initiatives that strengthen RI's impact and expand opportunities for engagement across generations. He has served as president of Fondazione Rotary Italia, a national initiative that makes it easier for Italian citizens to support Rotary's humanitarian projects around the world.

The following interview was conducted during multiple conversations with Arezzo in Calgary — in the hallway during breaks, inside a minibus enroute to a Rotary event, and at a makeshift office inside the convention hall, where Rotary members frequently stopped by to greet and hug him. Despite his packed schedule, he set aside time to talk with *Rotary* magazine about his life, his Rotary journey, his plans for the organisation, and two of his other passions: opera and olive oil.



You've worked as an orthodontist for many years. Are there things about your job that make you an effective Rotarian?

I've been a practising orthodontist for 46 years now. I work mainly with young people, and it's very important to try to understand them before beginning treatment. You have to win their cooperation. Forging those relationships is one of the best aspects of my job.

And you now have grandchildren of your own, right?

I have two wonderful grandchildren. The elder one, who's three years old, has my name: Francesco. The younger is one year old, and she has my wife's name. So we have another Anna Maria and another Francesco.

You've been a Rotarian for more than three decades. Do you remember why you first wanted to join?

At the beginning, Rotary was just a place to meet new friends with different points of view. It wasn't until I became club president that I began to really understand Rotary. Now, when I speak to Rotarians, I tell them to change the verbs they use. You don't "go to" Rotary like you go to the cinema, where you sit and watch other people doing something. Rotary is something you do. You have to participate. And then you begin to grow.

How have you grown in Rotary?

When my club first proposed that I become president, I didn't want to accept. I had a stutter, so I was terrified of being obliged to address my club. But it wasn't so bad. Then they invited me to be a district governor, and again, I didn't want to accept. But once more, they

convinced me. Now, when I think about the fact that I'm going to be the Rotary International president and speak onstage in another language, I understand how much Rotary has changed me in a positive and lasting way.

How can Rotary convey a sense of this impact to members and potential members?

We have to improve our communications with club presidents, because they're on the front lines of dealing with members. While we do a wonderful job of instructing district governors on the importance of membership and new clubs, the district governor often speaks with a club president only two or three times a year. There are too many club presidents who don't have any

idea why our membership goals are so important.

What challenges do you anticipate you'll face during your term as president?

I'm very conscious that I'm beginning very late. Even if I begin studying problems and setting goals now, I can't do very much. Rotary isn't a scooter that can change



President Arezzo and his family pose for a holiday photo. Front row (from L): Arezzo, holding grandson Francesco; and Arezzo's wife, Anna Maria, holding granddaughter Anna Maria. Standing (from L): Arezzo's daughter Elena; his son-in-law Magnus; and daughter Raffaella.

direction quickly. It's like a big cruise ship: If you want to make a turn, you have to begin many kilometres in advance. I hope to work very closely with President-elect SangKoo Yun. I think SangKoo and I can create a two-year plan that will be really effective.

What has been one of your most memorable moments in all your years in Rotary?

One moment that was very, very moving for me was when, as district governor, I organised a Rotary Youth Leadership Awards event for districts bordering the Mediterranean Sea: Italy, France, Spain, North Africa, Greece and Turkey. The problem was putting together Turkish and Italian young people, because they looked at one another as very different. The first day was tense; it was clear that they didn't like each other. But after a few days, they began to discover that they had the same tastes and the same dreams.

When the last day came, they sang John Lennon's "Imagine" together and performed a skit they'd



RI President Arezzo and his wife Anna Maria at the RI Convention in Calgary, Canada, in June.

written about the cultural differences between their countries. It was one of the most beautiful things I can remember.

In your professional life, you've led trade organisations for dentists and for olive oil producers. What group is most difficult to unite in a consensus: Dentists, olive oil

producers, or perhaps Rotary members?

From my experience, it's the olive oil producers. Each producer of olive oil is strongly convinced that his olive oil is the best in the world. So they usually don't want to cooperate sincerely with others.

How long have you been producing olive oil?

My family has produced olive oil for more than a century now. I am the last, I fear, because my daughters are not interested in this field.

I understand you love opera also. What's your favourite opera or composer?

A composer I like a lot is Vincenzo Bellini. He was born in Sicily, and he died very, very young. He did only a few operas, but they are all of a very high quality. And of course, there are many other great composers — Puccini, Verdi, Mozart. It's hard to pick one.



With his presidential aide John de Giorgio, a member of the Rotary Club of Malta.

Empowering women in a rural belt

Rasheeda Bhagat

The Rotary Club of Bardhaman Heritage, RI District 3240, headed by a woman president, Nirmala Rajak, has done a clutch of projects on women's education, health and hygiene, and economic empowerment in the last Rotary year.

On top of the charts is a project to promote and facilitate menstrual hygiene management (MHM) among school and

college girls and young women. "From the very beginning of this Rotary year (2024–25) we did a needs-based assessment in our community, set up goals, and drew up an action plan taking into consideration the obstacles, cost, impact and the possible lasting change that our projects can bring into the lives of these girls/women," says the club president.

Girl students with sanitary napkins distributed by RC Bardhaman Heritage.





Club president Nirmala Rajak (4th from right) at the installation of a sanitary napkin vending machine in a school.



Herself a teacher working in a government-aided college (Dr Bhupendra Nath Dutta Smriti Mahavidyalaya) located in a semi-urban region of West Bengal, Nirmala says that in her college she had studied the pattern of usage of sanitary napkins by the students during their menstrual period. “We used to store the sanitary napkins in the library of our college and the girls could get them paying a nominal amount of ₹5. But the teachers found that the girl students felt this arrangement either inconvenient or embarrassing. As this was the case in other educational institutions too, we decided to donate 10 automatic sanitary napkin vending machines, partially funded by RID 3240’s Foundation Fund, to government-aided high schools and colleges.”

The club has also formed two RCCs, named Ankur and Sathi, with all the members being women. “We utilise their services in reaching out to girls and women in rural areas to promote menstrual hygiene and health. These women have also helped to distribute about 7,500 sanitary napkins to girls in various schools, colleges and villages.”

Taking up the topics of MHM and spreading awareness on the dangers of cervical cancer on a war-footing, apart from organising 10 awareness programmes on MHM, the club has also conducted six seminars highlighting the need for prevention and early diagnosis of cervical cancer in girls/women. Screening and treatment were provided in some cases with the help of the Rotary district’s Disease Prevention and Treatment Sub-committee at a cost of ₹65,000, with the club raising ₹30,000 of this amount.

Next, the club organised in two government primary schools programmes to educate the girls on ‘Good Touch Bad Touch’ as “young girls in this region are not aware of the difference between the two and government schools don’t really teach much on this subject. After the recent rape case in the South Calcutta Law College, we felt this was really necessary,” says Nirmala.

Apart from this, seminars were organised on social justice and women’s empowerment in colleges. Though the Supreme Court has made it mandatory for all women’s colleges to have internal compliance committees on sexual harassment, she says that many

I joined Rotary and this club during the Covid period and simply love the service projects that our club does.

I know that the objective behind these programmes is to serve and make a positive impact in our community.

Nirmala Rajak
president
RC Bardhaman Heritage



Reaching out to underserved communities.

colleges do not take this seriously and many girls are not aware that they can make such a complaint. “So our programmes explained to the girls about the existing laws and the mechanisms through which a complaint can be made when there is such harassment.”

Asked about the kind of interest these programmes on women’s issues raised among the girls who participated and the kind of questions they asked, Nirmala said, “These are not English medium colleges and the girls are very timid and shy and don’t generally ask questions. So in order to find out and

analyse the impact of the programmes, the club drafted questionnaires and distributed them among the girl students at the colleges where the programmes were held. The response was collected from 450 students, and the process of analysing the answers is on.”

The club president added that the club has recently formed an Interact club in a co-educational government-aided school, but care

has been taken to select only girls as Interactors. “We did this because we want to continue working on girls and women’s empowerment and spread our messages through the Interact club. It helps if the members are girls, because girls in this region are hesitant to connect with boys,” she added.

RC Bardhaman Heritage has a total of 17 members and has only two women members; earlier there were four but two women have left Rotary and the club, “because some families cannot afford to pay double membership fees and other club dues.” In such cases, invariably the woman bows out!

But Nirmala, who is the second woman president of the club, and is determined to take part in the club’s projects to empower woman, will continue to remain in Rotary “because I joined Rotary and this club during the Covid period and simply love the service projects that our club does. I know that the objective behind these programmes is to serve and make a positive impact in our community by uplifting the status of women through education, awareness on disease prevention, and equal treatment in society,” she adds cheerfully. ■



Club president Nirmala gives a sanitary napkin pack to a beneficiary.

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Peace: not the silence of guns, but awakening of conscience

Adhik Kadam

We live in a time when the air is heavy with the threat of war, and yet the silence between bombings is often mistaken for peace. Headlines speak of ceasefires, but not of healing. Treaties are signed, but hearts remain torn. And amid all this, one question echoes with urgency: ‘What is the true role of peacebuilders in a world where both good and evil are human?’

Rotary International has long stood as a symbol of global service, leadership and peace. But today, our mission must go deeper. Peace cannot be defined by the absence of violence — it must be understood as the *awakening of human conscience*, the deliberate act of choosing compassion in a world capable of cruelty. It is not about erasing the shadow, but integrating it with light.

In such a scenario, Rotary’s legacy is more than just service, it’s a moral commitment. From sponsoring schools in refugee camps to convening peace scholars in universities, Rotary’s commitment to Peace and Conflict Resolution has touched every continent. But what distinguishes Rotary’s peace efforts is not only the scale — it is the *spirit*. Rotarians do not work for applause. They work for alignment — with justice, with truth, with dignity.





Adhik Kadam with children at a school in Kashmir.

They do not pretend the world is perfect. They act *despite* its imperfections.

As someone who has worked on the frontlines of conflict in Kashmir for nearly three decades, I've seen the horrors that cannot be undone—and the healing that still finds its way in. I've seen children raised in the ruins of war choose love, education and hope. These are the quiet revolutions Rotary must continue to nurture.

The illusion of silence as peace

Many believe that when guns fall silent, peace has arrived. But silence, too, can be oppressive. The silence of unacknowledged pain. The silence of unhealed trauma. The silence of forgotten victims.



Kadam at a celebration event with Kashmiri children.



True peace is not mute. It is alive. It breathes through:

- The voices of children learning again in rebuilt schools
- The hands of doctors in Rotary-sponsored Malfunction Management Units (MMUs) treating conflict-zone injuries
- The courage of women who break generations of fear to build something new.

Rotary's mission must evolve with this clarity: We are not here to simply end wars. We are here to elevate humanity.

In the journey of peace, sometimes the greatest strength lies in stillness. In restraint. In choosing not to cause harm, even when you can.

Consider this: When elephants are transported by air across continents, their crates

are filled with fragile chicks — not for companionship, but as a test of temperament.

And what does the mighty elephant do?
It stands perfectly still.

Throughout the entire flight, the elephant — despite its size — refuses to shift, afraid it might accidentally step on a single chick. It passes this quiet test of conscience with noble grace. Not out of fear. But out of love.

Scientists have found that elephants, like humans, possess rare spindle cells — neurons linked to self-awareness, empathy and complex social understanding.

In the journey of peace,
sometimes the greatest
strength lies in stillness.
In restraint. In choosing
not to cause harm,
even when you can.

Peace cannot be defined by the absence of violence — it must be understood as the awakening of human conscience, the deliberate act of choosing compassion in a world capable of cruelty.

They are emotional giants, not just physical ones.

Leonardo da Vinci once observed that the elephant lives with righteousness, modesty and balance. It bathes to purify itself, never mates before the herd, never walks alone, and when death approaches, it leaves the group to die in solitude — out of compassion for those left behind.

What does this teach us?
That peace is not passive.

It is an act of inner clarity and gentle power.

It is standing firm in a world of chaos, simply so the more vulnerable are not harmed.

It is choosing restraint over dominance. Dignity over display. Balance over brute force.

If we, as Rotarians and as global citizens, learn to carry our own weight with such grace — then perhaps the journey of peace, like that elephant's flight, can remain steady.

Conflict is not alien to humanity — it is a mirror.

It shows us where we are still divided, not just as nations, but as souls.

As my Guru once told me: “Even violence has its place in human evolution. But the true path is not to eliminate it

through denial, but to transcend it through understanding.”

Rotary's work for world peace is not a Utopian dream. It is a courageous confrontation of reality. It calls us to accept:

- That good and bad are both human
- That no peace is sustainable without dignity
- That true transformation requires embracing our wholeness.

Rotary's role in a time of global crisis

With the world teetering on the edge of multi-regional conflict — from Europe to the Middle East, from Asia's fragile borders to Africa's forgotten wars — Rotary cannot be a silent observer. It must be a moral compass.

Here's how:

- Speak boldly, act fearlessly: Rotary must become a global voice urging not just ceasefires but deep reconciliation — across cultures, ideologies, and histories.
- Build from within: Peace-building must start at the level of personal transformation. Youth fellowships, peace scholarships, and leadership programmes must emphasise empathy, emotional intelligence, and interfaith understanding.
- Narrate a new story: In a world consumed by the theatre of war, Rotary must tell new stories — of compassion, of recovery, of how people heal. Let us



publish *peace victories* as passionately as we publish battlefield ones.

- Heal, don't just help: Support programmes that integrate mental health, trauma-informed care, and community resilience — especially for children of war.
- Bridge divides through dialogue: In every region where polarity grows, Rotary must create spaces for respectful conversation. Peace is often born in listening.
- Convene spiritual wisdom and practical policy: Invite spiritual leaders, indigenous knowledge keepers, and modern diplomats into a shared space of problem-solving. When hearts lead, minds follow.

Kashmir: My living testament

In the foster homes we run in conflict-affected Kashmir, I've witnessed this truth: Peace is not given. It is grown.

Rotary has helped us provide education, shelter, and healing in places where children once slept under the echo of gunfire. These girls — many orphaned by violence — are now becoming nurses, teachers, and peacebuilders themselves.

That is the Rotarians' revolution: not in noise, but in quiet transformation.

Peace as the path of wholeness

Peace is not perfection. It is participation — in life, in truth, in dignity for all.

As Rotarians, we are not here to judge who is right or wrong. We are here to hold space where both pain and potential exist. We are here to be the bridge — not the judge; the sanctuary — not the sword.

Let us not wait for the world to become calm before we speak.

Let us become the calm within the storm.

Let us not seek peace as the end of war.

But peace as the beginning of awakening.

Because ultimately, peace is not about silencing the guns. It

is about awakening the conscience of humanity — and reminding the world that we are all, still, becoming whole.

About the Author

Adhik Kadam is the founder of Borderless World Foundation, working extensively in conflict regions of Jammu and Kashmir for the last 27 years. Through orphanage care, mobile medical services, and educational programmes, his work reflects the philosophy that peace begins with dignity. He collaborates closely with Rotary and believes that healing the world begins by awakening the human spirit.

Designed by
Krishna Pratheesh S



Service in scrubs

Jaishree

The Rotaract Club of Medicrew was chartered in 2020 by the Rotary Club of Bombay Pier, RID 3141. The club has 6,102 medical student Rotaractors from 10 countries, including India, USA, England, Switzerland, Australia, Nepal, Pakistan, Belgium, UAE and Canada. “Since the club was launched in Mumbai, we are part of RID 3141,” says Saloni Shah, the club’s past president and a final-year MBBS student at KJ Somaiya Medical College, Mumbai. She joined the club in her first year and remains committed to its mission.

With members in 37 Indian cities and 50 cities globally, the club has seen rapid growth — doubling its strength from 3,000 members just a few years ago. “While we’ve always had a strong base in Maharashtra, Gujarat and South India, this year we’re seeing increased membership from Gurgaon, Delhi, Faridabad and eastern India as well,” she says.

Over the past five years, Medicrew Rotaractors have led a wide range of impactful service initiatives.

In 2024–25 alone, they organised 479 events across India: “a milestone achievement,” smiles Saloni.

One of their flagship programmes is an annual webinar that offers guidance to over 1,000 high school students aspiring for careers in medicine. “Many of them dream of becoming doctors but are unsure of the options and the path to take,” she explains. The sessions provide clarity on different medical courses, institutions, and what to expect from each of them.

Each Rotaractor contributes to service projects based on the needs of their local community and geo-tagged photos of service projects executed worldwide are uploaded on the club’s website. Project planning and approval rest with the club’s core committee and elected Board of Directors. A dedicated HRD Sub-committee, consisting of 1–2 state directors per country and regional international ambassadors, coordinates activities and inductions. “We recruit ambassadors through personal

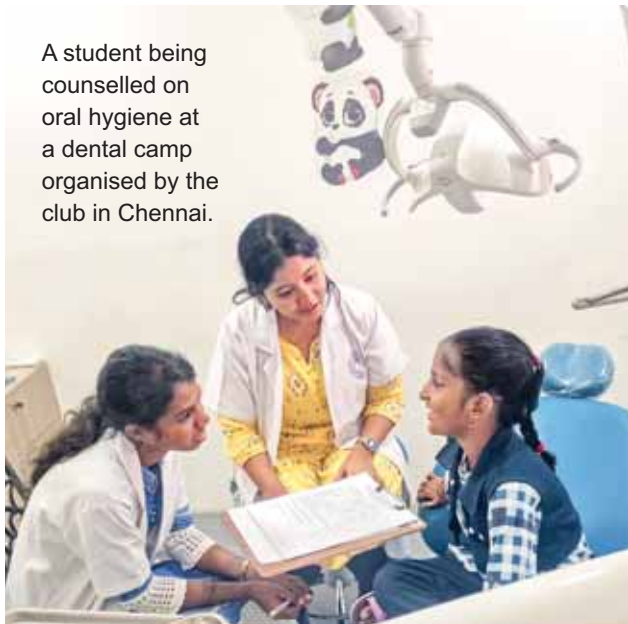
networks and Instagram. Once selected, they handle inductions — either offline or online,” she says. Orientation programmes introduce new members to the club’s past initiatives, networking opportunities and upcoming plans that focus on both community service and personal development.

As a club of medical students, health-related projects form a core part of their service. One such initiative, *Diabeaware*, held nationwide diabetes and blood pressure screening camps in collaboration with local partners. Participants reviewed the readings, and gave personalised health advice and follow-up referrals. “More than just diagnosis, our goal was to spread health literacy and help prevent complications,” says club president Jessica Gupte from Pune. In Mumbai, the Rotary Clubs of



Rotaractors test an elderly woman for blood glucose at an old age home.

A student being counselled on oral hygiene at a dental camp organised by the club in Chennai.



Rotaractors promote awareness about anaemia among children.

Bombay Pier, Mumbai and Mumbai Down Town Sea Land partnered in the initiative. Another vital project, *Rakt ki Shakti* (Power of Blood), addressed iron deficiency (anaemia) through awareness and screening camps in schools and underserved communities across Mumbai.

In partnership with NGOs Bhumi and YuWaah, the camps educated participants on symptoms, iron-rich diets, and causes such as worm infestations. Iron supplements were distributed, especially to adolescent girls and women at risk.

Lift the Lip, a pan-India dental screening initiative in partnership with Smile Train India, focused on

addressing dental issues and early detection of cleft conditions in children. Held across Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai, the week-long drive involved dental and maxillofacial surgeons, orthodontists and 50 volunteers. Over 200 children were screened, with many referred for free cleft surgeries and follow-up care. Families were also counselled



A volunteer educating school teachers about child sexual abuse.



Rotaractors of RAC
Medicrew with
children after giving
them school supplies.

on post-surgical support, reinforcing that the cleft lip is a treatable condition with proper intervention.

Tackling the sensitive issue of child sexual abuse, the club launched *Shielding Innocence*, a project aimed at protecting vulnerable children. Volunteers underwent training in child psychology and legal protocols, learning to use gentle, open-ended questioning and understanding reporting procedures. They conducted sessions on safe and unsafe touch and educated older children about their legal rights and available support mechanisms.

Through *Project Shiksha*, the club supported the education of orphaned children by donating school supplies and conducting career counselling

sessions. Donation boxes placed in college canteens encouraged contributions in cash or kind. This year alone, 1,600 children from 35 orphanages across the country benefitted from the programme.

Another academic initiative, *Foundations for Future*, focuses on foundational education in math, science and language for underprivileged children aged 6–14. Conducted in partnership with Child Rights and You, and Robinhood Army, weekend classes blended academic concepts with playful learning. “Rather than traditional lectures, we focused on joyful engagement,” says Jessica.

Whether it was a math relay to teach basic arithmetic operations,

‘Hangman’ game for vocabulary, poetry recitation to improve Hindi, or a simple nature walk to observe the surroundings, innovative ways were adopted to make learning more interesting. “Science and English quizzes kept teams on their toes, while Cadbury chocolates came handy in teaching fractions and decimals. Reading fluency was assessed through role-plays using Ladybird storybooks, and storytelling circles invited participants to retell *Panchatantra* tales in their own words.” The sessions also emphasised cultural learning, with festival-based activities and competitions fostering a sense of belonging and mental well-being.

Incoming president Radharani, who is also from Mumbai, is all set to carry the initiative through in the coming year, while adding some more meaningful service projects, adds Saloni. ■

RC KGF turns 70

Team Rotary News

The rich history of the Kolar Gold Fields and his nostalgic memories associated with RC Kolar Gold Fields were recalled by IPDG Satish Madhavan, RID 3191, as he addressed a meeting at the club which completed 70 years in May.

Whenever district governors visited this club, a banquet party was held at the KGF Club, a majestic British-era building, and “all Rotarians used to come in black trousers and a white coat, in typical British style” said VR Prasad, a club member. “The dining would comprise 7–8 courses, starting with a toast to the president and prime minister of India, then to the RI President, and next to the visiting Rotary governor. These arrangements were a feast for the eyes. The visiting Bangalore members greatly admired our methodical arrangements.”

Another feature of this club is that all its members used to come every Tuesday well ahead of time, at 6.30pm, for the weekly meet at 7pm at the KGF Club. “The meeting starts on time and invariably closes at 7.30pm, except

when there is a guest speaker from Bengaluru, Chennai or other places,” says Prasad. In its illustrious journey, the club has had eminent persons giving speeches including Dr TMA Pai, Supreme Court judge K S Hegde, APS Iyengar, a luminary from the then Madras, former Union minister TA Pai, litterateur Sophia Wadia from Bombay, MV Kamath, former editor, *Illustrated Weekly*, Karnataka High Court former chief justice Nittoor Srinivas, and former Karnataka CM BD Jatti, among others.

Among its remarkable projects, the construction of a primary school at Lakshmi Sagar village, two wards at the general hospital, KGF, for TB patients in 1966, and a rescue shelter for animals at the veterinary hospital on the eve of its silver jubilee year, stand out as testimonies for its diverse outreach in community initiatives.

In 1994, a mega IOL (intraocular lens) surgery camp was conducted in partnership with Dr Albert Alley and his team from the US. “We have provided drinking water to numerous villages over the years; and donated

furniture and books to rural schools.” A cancer detection camp in partnership with the Karnataka Cancer Society boosted Rotary’s public image in 1977. The club also hosted ICGF — International Convention of Global Fraternity — twice in 1993 and 2015 with the support of RCs Kolar, Mulbagal Central and Bangarpet. Ongoing projects like tree planting, blood donation camps, RYLA, cancer detection camps, quiz and debates in schools and colleges, have created a strong visibility of the club among the KGF people.

When the club was sponsored by RC Bangalore in 1955, it had 40 charter members consisting of Englishmen, top officers of the gold mines and prominent citizens of KGF, Kolar and Kuppam taluks. “We have sent many Rotarians to serve at the district level over the decades, and we will celebrate this milestone with year-long events,” adds Prasad. In his message, incoming DG Sridhar BR said, “Your 70-year journey is full of inspiring stories. These efforts may not always make headlines, but they have made a big difference in many lives.” ■

The iconic KGF Club where weekly meetings are held.



Moments at the **Calgary Convention**

Etelka Lehockzy



The 2025 Rotary International Convention in Calgary, Canada, concluded in a spirit of fellowship and rejuvenation.

Addressing the event's closing general session, RI President Stephanie Urchick urged members to recognise the power of their relationships.

"Rotary's most powerful asset has always been you, our members. But we are only as strong as the people who stand beside us," she said. "We talk a lot about goals and strategy. But without friendship, without encouragement, none of it takes hold. Rotary works because we belong here. This is our community, and it matters."

The session also featured Rotary's future leaders. President-elect Francesco Arezzo described his commitment to the 2025–26 presidential message, *Unite for Good*. "It means involving all members, but not only members, in our service. It means involving partner organisations... local administrations, other voluntary associations. In short, it means 'expand our reach,'" said Arezzo. "Let us create one great shared dream that unites us, that excites us, that changes the world, and changes our lives too."

He said that in the past he did not want to accept roles as club president and district governor because he had a stutter, but overwhelming support from Rotary members persuaded him and he went on to serve as an RI director and now president-elect. "I am confident that you will give me all the support and affection I have always found in Rotary," he said.

Attendees spent days at the convention exploring various ways to

maximise their impact. One breakout session, *The Amazing Peace Race*, explored how clubs can incorporate the eight Pillars of Positive Peace into their projects. The session *Literacy Alive* focused on the success of an initiative to build early reading skills of children in Belize.

A particularly crowded session was hosted by the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery, which fights human trafficking around the world. Earlier in the week, the action group had unveiled a permanent peace pole in downtown Calgary. The breakout session featured Cheryl Perera, founder and president of the Canadian nonprofit *OneChild* and a nominee for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize. She narrated how

RI President Francesco Arezzo addressing the delegates.

One breakout session, *The Amazing Peace Race*, explored how clubs can incorporate the eight Pillars of Positive Peace into their projects. The session *Literacy Alive* focused on the success of an initiative to build early reading skills of children in Belize.



she — seeking a way to fight child trafficking while still a teenager — served as a decoy for a government sting operation in Sri Lanka. “I wanted to get an insider’s look into the child sex trade, and contacted someone in the government branch that was tasked with protecting children and asked if there was any way I could watch an undercover operation happen. He said, ‘Yes, actually, you can play the decoy.’”

Perera aided in the capture and arrest of a perpetrator. The experience cemented her commitment to the issue and was part of what led her to found *OneChild*, which mobilises children and teens to raise awareness about child trafficking.

In the House of Friendship exhibition hall, it was impossible to miss a 20-foot-tall tipi sponsored by Rotary District 5360 (parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada). The tipi was equipped with numerous learning tools to inform visitors about the concerns of indigenous people.

“We’re very proud as a district to sponsor this exhibit, but we also don’t want it to be the last,” said Cam Stewart, a 2023 Rotary People of Action honoree. “We want to help Rotarians around the world do



Clockwise from left: RI General Secretary John Hewko, Trustee Chair Holger Knaack, Vanathy, Susanne, Marga and PRIP K R Ravindran.



RI President Arezzo along with directors including RID M Muruganandam (fourth from L).



Above: RI President Arezzo with the past Rotary presidents and their spouses.

Left: From L (seated): PRIPs Kalyan Banerjee, Ravindran and Vanathy, along with delegates, at a breakout session.

Below: From L: RI President Arezzo, immediate past RI President Stephanie Urchick and past TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney and Trustee Chair Holger Knaack, along with delegates.



more work with their indigenous population.”

As the convention’s final day drew to a close, Bryn Styles, chair of the 2025 Calgary Convention Committee, reflected on the success of the event. “Everybody has told me how much they like the venue. This building is just beautiful — warm and welcoming. And people love Calgary. I’ve got rave reviews.”

Many attendees were already looking forward to upcoming gatherings. The chair of the 2026 Taipei Convention Committee, Andreas von Möller, enthusiastically invited attendees to the 2026 RI Convention in Taiwan.

“The 34,000 Rotary members of Taiwan invite you to explore and experience the culture, impressive countryside, National Theater, and beautiful temples throughout the city. The 2026 convention will provide an experience that will remain with you for the rest of your life.”

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MEGA DOCTORS DAY AWARDS - 1



Rotary Doctors Day Awardees



Dr. H. V. Hande
FORMER HEALTH MINISTER
"ROTARY POLIO CHAMPION AWARD"

AKS. RTN. VINOD SARAOGI
District Governor 2025-26
RID 3234

Dr. K. R. Balakrishnan
HEART & LUNGS TRANSPLANT SURGEON
"LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

Dr C Mayilvahanan Natarajan
BONE TUMOUR SURGEON
"LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

Dr.Prathap C. Reddy
FOUNDER-CHAIRMAN, APOLLO HOSPITALS
"DOYEN OF MODERN HEALTH CARE
IN INDIA AWARD"

Dr. Devi Shetty
FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN NARAYANA HEALTH
"LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

Dr. V. S. Natarajan
RENOWNED GERIATRIC PHYSICIAN
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. V. S. Natarajan
LIFE
"LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

Dr. V. S. Natarajan
FOUNDER
"LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

1ST JULY 2025 BY RI DISTRICT 3234



Institutional Excellence Award for Exceptional Service.

Madras Medical College

185 years in Academic Excellence Founded in 1835.
Beacon of Academic Excellence, Clinical Leadership.

Stanley Medical College

Iconic Institution Founded in 1938.
1500 bed vibrant Clinical Training Ground.

Sankara Nethralaya

Pioneering Contribution to Eye Care in India.

Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital

Latest Technology Medical Care for Children & Women.

Dr. Mohamed Rela
"TRANSPLANT SURGEON
TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

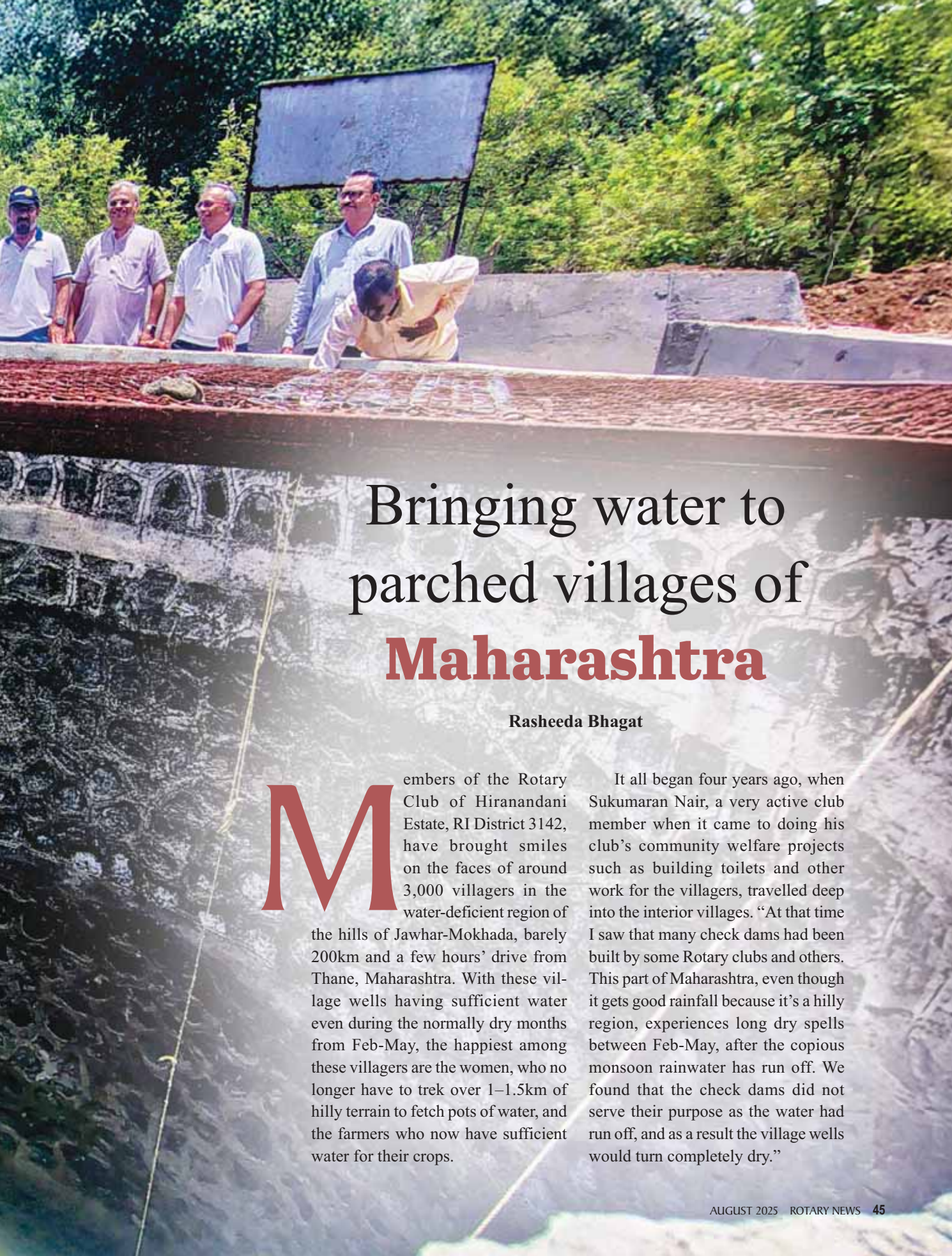
Dr. C. Palanivelu
"CHAIRMAN, GEM HOSPITALS
TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD"

**SICIAN
WARD**



Rashieda Bhagat

From 2nd Left: S K Srinivasan, Anil Raichur, Baljinder Singh with his daughter Iknor, RC Hiranandani Estate president-elect Anil Gidwani, charter president Shankar Mohan, project chair Sukumaran Nair, Dr Umesh Mundlye from Oikos Water Management, and Ravi Shankar Vobbilisetty at a water-filled well in one of the villages of Jawhar-Mokhada taluks of Palghar district in Maharashtra.



Bringing water to parched villages of **Maharashtra**

Rasheeda Bhagat

Members of the Rotary Club of Hiranandani Estate, RI District 3142, have brought smiles on the faces of around 3,000 villagers in the water-deficient region of the hills of Jawhar-Mokhada, barely 200km and a few hours' drive from Thane, Maharashtra. With these village wells having sufficient water even during the normally dry months from Feb-May, the happiest among these villagers are the women, who no longer have to trek over 1–1.5km of hilly terrain to fetch pots of water, and the farmers who now have sufficient water for their crops.

It all began four years ago, when Sukumaran Nair, a very active club member when it came to doing his club's community welfare projects such as building toilets and other work for the villagers, travelled deep into the interior villages. "At that time I saw that many check dams had been built by some Rotary clubs and others. This part of Maharashtra, even though it gets good rainfall because it's a hilly region, experiences long dry spells between Feb-May, after the copious monsoon rainwater has run off. We found that the check dams did not serve their purpose as the water had run off, and as a result the village wells would turn completely dry."

The saddest part was the hardship during this dry spell for the women, who had to cover long distances on foot to fetch water for the household's daily needs. Even more tragic was the fact that to get some help in this difficult chore, the girl children were pulled out of schools and their energy was harnessed into fetching water. "All the time we say *ladki padhao*, but here the opposite was happening and that too for which a solution could be found," he adds.

He, along with his club members, wanted to do some water augmentation/conservation project for these villages, but they thought no significant good would come from building more check dams. "Also, we felt that as in the earlier projects, the villagers were not made to contribute anything for the work, they felt no sense of ownership in the new facilities created by Rotarians and others. So we decided that whatever we do, we must make them contribute something, in some form or the other," says Nair.

After a lot of brainstorming and discussion to "get a lasting and innovative solution, and taking the views and opinion of technical expert in water management and conservation Dr Umesh Mundlye, and in partnership with the NGO Pragati Pratishtan, the club decided to find a solution by building surface dams, which would capture and store groundwater beneath the surface, ensuring year-round water availability."

The club decided to go in for a global grant to kick off the project under the leadership of the then incoming club president Sukumaran Nair and his predecessor Ravi Shankar Vobbilisetty. The first global grant of \$51,600 was supported as international

Clockwise: The land parcel being cleared; a trench is being cut; wall bund in the making; final stage wall getting ready; a subsurface dam getting its final touches.



partner by the Rotary Club of South Forsyth County, US, RI District 6910, with the local execution done by Pragati Pratishtan, under the guidance of Dr Mundlye, says past president Vobbilisetty. In this project, Rs.4 lakh was donated by AKS member and past president of the club DP Tripathi.

Another GG of \$31,422 soon followed in partnership with the Rotary Club of Grapevine, US, RI District 5790 and Blossom Charitable Trust. This time past president Vobbilisetty donated Rs.1 lakh. "Both projects were delivered on time, combining technical expertise and strong local collaboration and we have done a total number of 12 subsurface dams benefiting about 3,000 villagers. What we are happiest about is that the girl children in these villages are back to school, and we have saved the four precious hours these village women were spending in fetching water from long distance,"





says Nair. Also, the farmers, who were hard-pressed to find enough water for their crops (mainly maize and different kinds of vegetables), are happy that there is sufficient water now available for their farming needs.

An immediate benefit of this project, completed in 2024, is that though the Rotarians were told by the water expert not to expect immediate results and wait for a year till the sub-surface dams recharge the village wells, they found that this year itself the village wells were brimming with water.

Explaining the several advantages of subsurface dams, Nair points out that “unlike check dams, subsurface dams are constructed below the ground, storing the underflow from seasonal streams and recharging aquifers. Their benefits include zero evaporation loss, availability of clean, parasite-free water, and no maintenance, displacement or ecological damage. They can cause natural recharge of wells, especially in hilly terrains like Jawhar-Mokhada, to provide sustainable, long-term water security.”

The cost of putting up each of the subsurface dams varies between Rs.4 and Rs.14 lakh, depending on the length of the dam, with the average length being between 9 to 12 metres, though some of the dams are much longer. The length of the trench dug for the dam depends on the appearance of rocky terrain at which point the digging is stopped, and a wall is built to retain the water.

The Rotarians were happy that all the 12 dams thus built successfully managed to recharge the nearby wells. Asked about laying pipes to provide tap water in the beneficiaries’ homes, Nair says, “That is the next project we



(From 5th Left): Raichur, Dr Mundlye, Baljinder Singh, Srinivasan, Mohan, project chair Nair, Vobbilisetty and Gidwani at the inauguration of a subsurface dam at Vashind village in Palghar district.



Tap water even during a dry season in May.

are considering. We want to build about 140 subsurface dams in this region in the long term. The next step will be to create a pipeline with the help of solar power to take the water to their homes. In one village the pipes were already there, but for much of the year they were not getting water in those pipes; now they do!”

He adds that the DGE Nilesh Jaywant (2026–27) is keen that efforts should be made to include and involve smaller clubs in the district in bigger projects, so once they find another international partner, “we are planning to do one more global grant for this purpose,” he adds.

Meanwhile he is happy that “this GG project has created such terrific local impact. Earlier people had to survive on 11 litres of water a day, whereas they are now getting 55 litres, enough to lead a life of dignity and good health. One local farmer told me with a big smile: ‘This water has brought back life — not just to our fields, but to our dreams.’”

He thanked IPDG Milind Kulkarni for extending his support for this project.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

RID 3131 presents CSR Awards

Team Rotary News

In a glittering event attended by RID 3131 leaders, 29 companies were honoured for their CSR projects in partnership with Rotary clubs across all the focus areas of Rotary.

More than 80 companies had submitted their nominations through an online application process. While the CSR awards had four categories based on the company size as small, medium, large and mega enterprises, there was also a special category for corporates that executed CSR projects although it was not mandatory for them. Even companies that had not submitted nominations but had partnered with Rotary for their CSR

projects were recognised by way of certificates of appreciation. All the awards and certificates were handed over by vice-admiral Gurcharan Singh, commandant, National Defence Academy, Pune, who was the chief guest.

Addressing the gathering of 300 invitees, including 100 corporate executives, vice-admiral Singh said, “true leadership lies in service. The corporate world has a powerful role in nation-building, and Rotary’s initiative to recognise their efforts is commendable.” The strength of a nation lies not just in its armed forces, “but in the compassion and responsibility

shown by its people and institutions. Events like the CSR Awards highlight the spirit of service that bind us all,” he pointed out.

A jury panel consisting of Lt Gen (retd) D B Shekatkar, former state principal secretary Mahesh Zagade, Maher founder Sister Lucy Kurien, Mohan Agashe, a fine arts celebrity, sportswoman Anjali Bhagwat, Ernst & Young director Arvind Sethi and his associate Prasad Giri vetted the shortlisted companies to select the awardees.

In his address, DG Shital Shah said the CSR awards represent a ‘shared commitment to sustainable and inclusive development. Rotary is proud to facilitate

such impactful partnerships.” DRFC Shailesh Palekar dwelt on the value of long-term partnerships between corporates and Rotary clubs by highlighting the “mutual benefits of collaboration. That is, while enterprises fulfil their CSR goals, they also contribute meaningfully to Rotary service projects.”

Rotary CSR Awards convener Ravi Kapoor said the “depth, innovation and social commitment reflected in the nominations were remarkable as CSR projects have evolved from the corporates’ obligation to a genuine societal impact.” Seven Rotary clubs of RID 3131 co-hosted the third edition of Rotary CSR Awards in Pune. ■

DG Shital Shah (7th from R, back row) and PDGs Pankaj Shah and Manjoo Phadke (back row), along with recipients of Rotary CSR Awards in Pune.



Prosthetic camps of RC Tinsukia

Jaishree

When we saw nine-year-old Anupam ride a bicycle, his face bright with joy, and when Aarav struck the ball bowled by one of our members, our hearts swelled with happiness and satisfaction, and our eyes welled with tears,” recalled Niraj Agarwal, immediate past president of RC Tinsukia, RID 3240. Anupam and Aarav were among 30 individuals fitted with LN-4 prosthetic arms at a camp organised by the club in August at Tinsukia, Assam. The Rotary Club of Kolkata Presidency, RID 3291, partnered with the club.

Anupam had lost his right arm in an accident when he was four; Aarav was born with a congenital

Assistant governor
Sailesh Sarmah
with a child fitted
with an LN-4 arm
at the camp.

The camp became a turning point for Rashmi Paharia, a peppy nine-year-old burn survivor, whose right arm was badly burnt and disfigured in a fire accident at home.



limb deficiency. “The beneficiaries included young children who can now attend school confidently, and youngsters who are better equipped to seek employment or vocational training,” he said.

The camp also became a turning point for Rashmi Paharia, a peppy nine-year-old burns survivor. Five years ago, a fire accident at home left her with severe burn injuries; her right forearm was fused to her upper arm and fingers stuck together. “Her mother had brought her in the hope of fitting an LN-4 arm. The doctors at the camp advised plastic surgery instead. Immediately, we decided to sponsor her treatment in Dibrugarh,” said Agarwal. A few more procedures are planned, and her arm is expected to be fully restored. Club members Sailesh Sarmah, Rajiv Mittal and Agarwal, with businesses related to medical services, supported Rashmi’s transformative treatment in various ways.

Enthused by the success of the LN-4 camp, the club, in association with the



An elderly man gets an artificial limb at the camp.



Burns survivor Rashmi Paharia with burn injuries on her right arm; Right: Rashmi after a plastic surgery procedure.

Mahavir Seva Sadan, Kolkata, organised a three-day artificial limb and calipers camp in December. Sixty individuals who had lost their lower limb due to various reasons benefitted from the camp.

Founded 56 years ago, RC Tinsukia presently has 66 members, including 12 women Rotarians, and has the distinction of producing two governors — Kirti Ranjan Dey and MS Kumar. The club runs a vaccination centre and is passionate about promoting literacy in the community.

Eight years ago, it transformed a village primary school into a Happy School, and continues to support it with educational supplies and scholarships for students from underprivileged families. “It is our way of ensuring no child is left behind,” said Agarwal. ■

RID 3234 honours 8 outstanding doctors, 4 hospitals

V Muthukumaran

At a UN medical conclave in New York recently, the *Makkalai Thedi* (in search of people) scheme of providing free health-care services including medicines to senior citizens and those living in remote areas in Tamil Nadu was appreciated by the global body, said Ma Subramanian, health minister, while addressing the medical fraternity and Rotarians at the Doctors' Day event hosted by RID 3234. A UN Inter-Agency Task Force in its latest report lauded the state government for "this pioneering initiative with a bold vision of making medical services accessible to all," he said.

Launched by TN chief minister MK Stalin in August 2021 with the aim to tackling five major non-communicable diseases (BP, diabetes, thyroid, etc), "already 2.28 crore people have benefitted from the *Makkalai Thedi* scheme," the minister said. The CM's Health Insurance Scheme and other innovative medical schemes have "made TN number one in the country in providing free, efficient and quality healthcare to all. Whether it is organ donation, transplantation, or heart care through regular check-ups, we rank top in the country."

Another scheme, *Imuyir Kaapom* (saving lives) provides free medical treatment to road accident victims if they



are admitted to enlisted hospitals within 48 hours of the incident. "Nearly four lakh people have benefitted from this medical scheme," he said. The Chennai Corporation has entered into the Limca Book of Records for holding 155 health camps that screened 64,000 people on a single day with the support of NGOs like Rotary and Lions clubs and private hospitals in 2006, recalled the minister.

Since 1991, India is celebrating July 1 as Doctors' Day to mark the birth anniversary of Dr BC Roy, former chief minister of West Bengal and a pioneer of public healthcare, said the Minister. Recalling the exceptional service of doctors and the medical fraternity during the Covid pandemic, he praised Rotary for honouring "eight renowned doctors, two government and two not-for-profit hospitals."

Recalling his long relationship with Dr HV Hande, the 97-year-old endoscopic surgeon and former TN health minister, Subramanian said, "I was treated by his son Dr Krishna Hande at their hospital for a serious illness in early 1990s." CM Stalin relied on the support of Dr VS Natarajan, geriatric physician and an awardee, while setting up a mega hospital — National Centre of Ageing and Hospital — for senior citizens in Saidapet.



Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian presents Dr HV Hande with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Also seen are DG Vinod Saraogi (left) and PDG Abirami Ramanathan.



From Left: Mohamed Rela, Mayil Vahanan Natarajan, C Palanivelu, HV Hande, VS Natarajan, PDG Ramanathan, Health Minister Subramanian, DG Saraogi and K R Balakrishnan at the Doctors' Day event in Chennai.

Hub of medical tourism

Tamil Nadu gets 25 per cent of medical tourists visiting India for affordable healthcare from all over the world, thus attracting over 15 lakh foreign patients each year, said Subramanian, and noted that Rotary clubs spend around ₹20 crore in medical projects and services in Chennai each year.

DG Vinod Saraogi said from free health camps across the underserved regions that included regular check-up, basic treatment and essential vaccination to mobile mammography units, which screen women in remote areas, Rotary clubs have made healthcare accessible to all people. Paediatric surgeries have given children a new lease of life, laparoscopic procedures have led to faster recovery among underprivileged patients, and general health and dental check-up across government schools in Tamil Nadu have provided early intervention where it matters, he said.

“Rotary clubs have taken up large-scale campaigns to vaccinate girls in schools, protecting them from cervical cancer. Through the PolioPlus campaign, we have led the charge in global immunisation efforts, not just in eliminating the disease but also helping

rehabilitate the survivors with dignity and care,” he said.

Through sanitation and hygiene projects, “we have built toilets in villages, equipped girls’ schools with facilities for menstrual hygiene, and ensured the supply of sanitary pads and health education, thus preserving their dignity while promoting wellness.” Health education remains a cornerstone of Rotary clubs’ outreach, improving awareness on hygiene, nutrition, and disease prevention, the DG added.

Rotary’s Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented to eight doctors—HV Hande, former health minister; Pratap C Reddy, founder-chairman, Apollo Hospitals; Devi Prasad Shetty, founder-chairman, Narayana Health; Mohamed Rela, chairman-director, Dr Rela Hospital; C Palanivelu of Gem Hospitals; Mayil Vahanan Natarajan, orthopaedic oncologist; VS Natarajan, geriatric physician; and KR Balakrishnan, heart and lung specialist. They were given citations and award shields.

Likewise, the Institutional Excellence Awards were given to the Madras Medical College Hospital; Stanley Medical College Hospital; Sankara

Nethralaya; and Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Hande said, “we should make full use of opportunities that come our way. When I was made health minister by the then CMMG Ramachandran, who gave me full freedom to take decisions and follow through, I found there were lot of patients at the leprosy homes across the state in the early 1980s.”

After deliberations with DEOs, DHOs and district collectors, and having studied the root problem, he set up a pilot multidrug regimen facility for leprosy treatment in Oragadam, near Chennai.

Within few months all the leprosy homes were empty as “the new treatment procedure was a huge success. Also, when I became minister there were just 2,000 PHCs and their subsections in TN. However, the number rose to over 8,000 centres when I demitted office,” recalled Hande who was also given the Rotary Polio Champion Award by DG Saraogi. PDG Abirami Ramanathan addressed the meet. Around 400 Rotarians and 400 Rotaractors from RID 3234 participated.

Pictures by Muthukumaran

From a dump yard to a green paradise

Jaishree

The Miyawaki Eco Tourism Park, developed by the Rotary Club of Pondicherry Beach Town, RID 2981, is fast becoming a green jewel in the heart of Puducherry (Pondicherry), South India. What was once a sprawling 35,000sqft dump yard at the Mettupalayam truck terminal in the town has been transformed into a vibrant urban forest and eco-park, thanks to the club's initiative. The Oulgaret Municipality and Government of Puducherry have partnered with the club.

"For over 12 years, the site was an eyesore, a dumping ground for industrial waste. Last Rotary year we resolved to clean it up. It took three months to remove 250 tonnes of harmful debris, which had piled over three feet high," said club secretary S S Prakash. The waste was disposed of safely by the Oulgaret municipality.

The first phase of the project focussed on converting 17,000sqft of this wasteland into a Miyawaki urban forest. "Using the Miyawaki afforestation technique, known for its dense planting of native species to mimic natural forest ecosystems, we planted 1,050 saplings of 40 indigenous tree species. This method accelerates forest growth and ensures the area becomes self-sustaining in a few years," he explained.

In the second phase, the club spent two more months developing an 18,000sqft eco-park alongside the forest. This lush

park features 900 flowering plants, a butterfly garden with 500 nectar-rich flowering plants, and a herbal garden with 12 varieties of traditional medicinal plants. This integrated eco-park was inaugurated in January by the Union Territory's Lt Governor K Kailashnathan. "Since then it has become a hotspot for school picnics. Students from nearly every school in Puducherry have visited it. For the older children it gives hands-on education in botany and environmental stewardship. For senior citizens, the park is a peaceful retreat, a place to walk, socialise and re-connect with nature,"





Above: A section of the park which houses a Miyawaki urban forest, an eco park, a herbal garden and a butterfly garden.

Below: Members of RC Pondicherry Beach Town at the Miyawaki Eco Tourism Park developed by the club. Club president Vinod Sharma (fourth from R, top row) and secretary SS Prakash (on Sharma's left) are also seen.



said club president Vinod Sharma. The Miyawaki forest was earlier inaugurated by former Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.

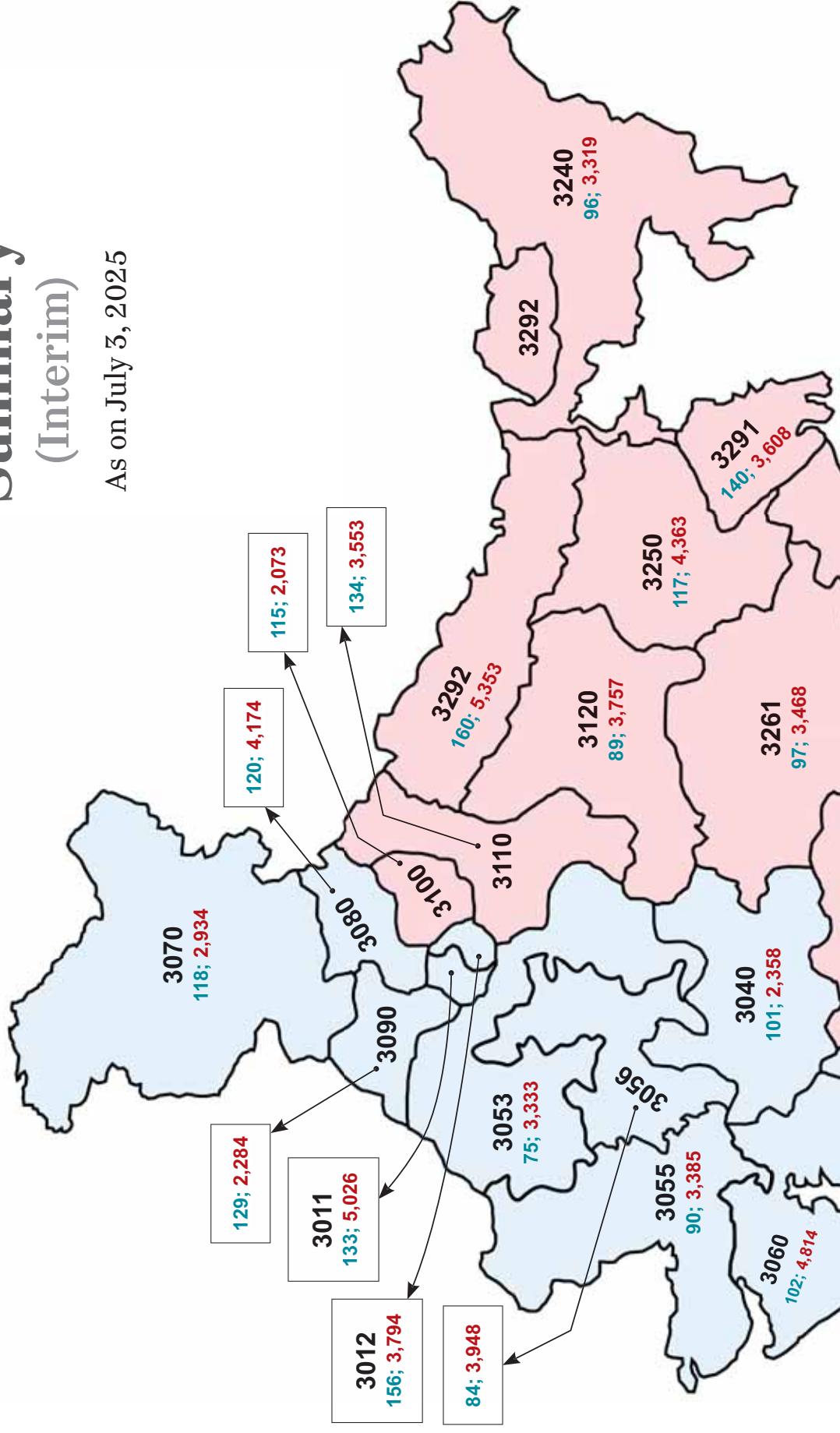
Next the club installed a rainwater harvesting system within the park. "Spanning 400sqft, the set-up includes two pits 125ft deep and is designed not only to collect rainwater from the park but also excess runoff from the surrounding areas," he said. It has a storage capacity of 42 lakh cubic feet.

Now in its 23rd year, RC Pondicherry Beach Town has 37 members. It provides mobility aids to the disabled and support equipment such as hearing aids to children with congenital disorders. Computer labs have been set up in government schools in rural areas over the years.

During Cyclone Fengal which battered South India's coastal regions in November 2024, the club swiftly mobilised relief efforts. "We were among the first on the ground, delivering essentials such as mosquito nets, water, sanitary napkins, preventive medicines, diapers and milk, even wading through knee-deep water to reach those stranded," recalled Prakash. ■

Membership Summary (Interim)

As on July 3, 2025



Cancer detection a priority

On top of his priority list is cancer awareness and detection camps, which he plans to take up from August. "First, we will hold awareness sessions, reaching out to 10,000 rural women, after which at least 40 screening camps will be held. Around 30 women will benefit from each such camp," says Ravi Prakash. Till he procures a mammography bus (GG: ₹1 crore), it will take 4–5 months, "we will use the vehicle from our neighbouring RI district."

From July 1, school bags will be distributed to 20,000 students of government schools in a phased manner. "I have urged club presidents to identify schools and their requirements, so that we can do 100 *Happy Schools* with CSR funds," says Prakash. Around 1,000 solar streetlights will be installed at 100 villages (₹70 lakh) through a CSR grant; and each club will do 2–3 diagnostic camps.

RID 3080 has been hosting a Rotary medical mission, mostly in Africa, a brainchild of PRIP Rajendra Saboo, for the last 28 years; and a rural medical camp in either Chhattisgarh or MP. "We will hold a plastic surgery camp in Haridwar, and cleft lip surgical camp in Dehradun as a district initiative."

His target for TRF-giving is \$500,000, and around 1,000 new members and 20 new clubs will be added to the existing 4,300 members and 117 clubs. He joined Rotary in 2010, and is happy with the satisfaction that community service brings.



Ravi Prakash
*Electronics
manufacture
RC Roorkee Midtown
RID 3080*

Meet your Governors

V Muthukumaran



Palaksha K
*Retd professor
RC Hassan
RID 3182*

Gifting milch cows to farmers

The district clubs are doing a survey to identify the beneficiaries for a cow donation project in rural areas. "We will shortlist around 60 poor farmers and give milch cows to them under a GG project worth ₹35–40 lakh to improve their livelihood," says K Palaksha.

Education is close to his heart, being a former Chemistry professor. "I plan to hold career guidance workshops for over one lakh students from Class 7–9 in government schools. Eminent persons across various fields will relate their success stories to motivate the students, and share some useful tips for shaping their career." Under a sanitation project, RO water filter units, hand-wash stations and proper toilet facilities will be set up at a couple of schools (GG: ₹50–60 lakh). "This sanitation initiative will benefit over 2,000 rural schools across our RI district," he says.

All the clubs will take up a mega anti-plastic drive in which awareness sessions will be held for different stakeholders, and "each club will distribute one lakh cloth bags and drive home the message of protecting the environment." Around 200 medical camps will be held this year. He aims to collect \$300,000 for TRF. With 86 clubs and 3,700 members on July 1, Palaksha wants to add 1,000 new Rotarians and Rotaractors, and charter 7–8 new clubs. Service projects and fellowship drew him to Rotary in 2001.

Focus on Happy Schools, healthcare

At least 20 Rotary shelters and *chowks* (square) will be installed to boost Rotary's public image (each costing ₹1 lakh) in Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, says Bhupesh Mehta. The funding will be a mix of member contributions, CSR funds and global grant.

Toilet blocks will be built at a couple of government schools (GG: \$100,000). During his club visits, he will gauge "the requirements of their communities, and then decide on the nature of the Happy Schools and healthcare projects." Stating that it will take around two months to fine-tune the service projects, Mehta says, "I have set a target of 20 per cent in net membership growth, and will charter 20 new clubs in the coming months." At present, the district has 130 clubs with around 2,700 Rotarians. His target for TRF-giving is \$250,000.

Recalling his over four-decade journey in Rotary, he says that having joined as a Rotaractor in 1984, "I became a DRR in 1991, which became a turning point in my life." He was part of a Group Study Exchange team to Sweden, an experience "that gave me a new perspective on life."

After he returned from the GSE visit, "I was inspired by Rotary's ideals and its youth programmes and joined this global NGO in 1991, and got fully involved in its PolioPlus campaign." Rotary offers a great opportunity for networking, personality development through leadership training for its members "which I found most attractive," he smiles.



Bhupesh Mehta
Agriculture
RC Sirsa Senior
RID 3090

DG Bhupesh Mehta became a DRR in 1991 which was a turning point in his life. He was part of a GSE team to Sweden and joined Rotary in the same year.



Dhinesh Babu
Film exhibition
RC East Coast Ramnad
RID 3212

Saving biodiversity

His primary focus will be on environmental projects with the district theme being *Palluyir Kaapom* (Save biodiversity). "We avoid single-use plastic at Rotary events like seminars and programmes over the last few years. Now, we are identifying at least 10 water bodies that need to be rejuvenated for which we will apply for a global grant," says Dhinesh Babu. "After desilting and sprucing up, we will create an eco-park near the water bodies."

Following positive feedback on a pilot garbage bank set up in Virudhunagar with the help of students, "we plan to install 20 such banks in partnership with schools. The idea is to spread the message of segregating non-bio waste to families through students." On the sanitation front, he plans to set up 20 toilet blocks, along with handwash stations, at government schools through a directed gift of \$60,000. Small shops will be set up for 100 differently-abled, each costing ₹1.5 lakh, to help them earn a decent income. A cardiac screening bus, launched two years ago, will examine 2,000 Rotarians and spouses this year.

With 120 clubs having 4,700 Rotarians at present, Babu wants to induct 450 new members and charter 10 new clubs. His TRF-giving target is \$1 million. His wife and elder son are Rotarians, while the younger one is an Interactor. "Fellowship and networking help me to increase membership which expands our service," adds the DG who joined Rotary in 2000. ■

An Indian teen's RYE experience in France

Jaishree

When 18-year-old Kamakshi Bhagat boarded her first international flight from Mumbai to Paris enroute to Toulouse, she was filled with a heady mix of excitement, curiosity and just a tinge of nervousness.

She was about to spend ten months in Cahors, a picturesque town in southern France, where she would live with a host family she had never met, speak a language she had only studied in school, and immerse herself in a culture vastly different from her own. As a participant in the Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) programme, Kamakshi was about to embark on a journey that would expand her worldview and transform her in profound ways.

Daughter of Jayeshkumar Bhagat, past president of RC Baroda, RID 3060, and Sneha, district secretary of Inner Wheel 3060, Kamakshi was sponsored by RC Baroda, RID 3060, and hosted by RC Cahors, RID 1700. On her arrival in Toulouse, she was warmly received by her host mother Isabelle and her daughters, Nora and Maina.

Just days later, from August 29, 2024 she participated in a gathering of exchange students from Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, Mexico, Brazil and Colombia. "I introduced Indian culture by performing *Ganesha Vandana* in Bharatanatyam," Kamakshi recalls. She soon became an informal cultural ambassador, explaining the RYE

programme at her French school, making presentations on RC Baroda's community service initiatives at various Rotary meetings, and engaging in community activities alongside her host club.

She actively contributed to fundraising efforts, collecting donations to provide daily supplies to NGOs Intermarché and Crédit Agricole, and helped procure medical equipment to treat people suffering from cancer. One memorable project was *Operation 30,000 Pommes*, a Rotary fundraiser, where apples and apple-based products were sold to raise money to provide guide dogs to the visually-impaired, an event also supported by the Lions Club of Cahors.

"It was both fun and an enlightening experience to take part in 'Repas Internationale,' a programme that celebrated world cuisines. I had several opportunities to share Indian culture and traditions at clubs, schools and



RYE student Kamakshi Bhagat participating in *Project 30,000 Pommes* to raise funds to provide guide dogs for the visually-impaired in Cahors, France.



public institutions. And through fellow RYE students, I got to learn about many other countries as well. It truly felt like stepping out of the well to see the ocean.”

Talking about the selection process, her father, Bhagat, notes that Kamakshi was chosen through an interview conducted by a five-member panel after the district extended an invitation to the clubs. “Our club sponsored her journey to Cahors. The district also gave her pre-departure orientation,” he says. Kamakshi was the only Indian student placed in Cahors for the long-term programme that year. The club had previously hosted a German student in 2013, and the Bhagat family had earlier hosted Owen Bass, an RYE student from Ohio, USA. “We’re still in touch,” he adds.

Looking back on her journey, Kamakshi, who returned to India on June 10, says the experience changed her completely. “When I arrived in France, I could barely follow a French conversation, despite revising my school lessons. But now I can speak the language with ease.” A standout moment for her was performing a solo soprano piece with her French school choir. “It was such an honour and a



Kamakshi performing a solo soprano.

unique cultural exchange.” Over the course of 10 months, she lived with multiple host families, including one in a rural village. “That taught me to adapt to new environments and routines, to different people and perspectives. In a foreign land, flexibility becomes your best friend.”

One of the highlights of her RYE year was the Euro Tour — an unforgettable whirlwind trip across

Germany, Austria, Monaco, Italy and various French cities. “Every single day brought something new, something unexpected. Just as you were soaking in one experience, another came along to amaze you. But the most beautiful part? I made friends for life, with people whose cultures, languages and habits are so different from mine, yet who became so close to my heart,” she smiles. ■

With exchange students from other countries.



Making a difference

Beds donated to girl students

Beds were donated to 225 girl students by RC Srikakulam, RID 3020, at the Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Singpuram, a residential school, to ensure them restful sleep. The initiative was made possible with the efforts of club members including district secretary for Srikakulam zone Sivashankar Devarasetty.

KGBV principal Jampu Laitha thanked the club for the gesture. “As many of our students come from remote areas and underprivileged families, these comfortable beds will provide them with a sense of dignity and security.” ■



Beds donated to girls at the Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Singpuram, by members of RC Srikakulam.



Kapurthala district magistrate Amit Kumar Panchal flags off a mortuary van in the presence of RID 3070 PDG SP Sethi (to his right), and RC Phagwara Gems immediate past president Pawan Kumar Kalra (3rd from R).



Mortuary van donated in Phagwara

An air-conditioned hearse van was sponsored by RC Phagwara Gems, RID 3070, to provide funeral services in and around the town.

The mortuary van was flagged off by Kapurthala district magistrate Amit Kumar Panchal in an event attended by PDG SP Sethi, then club president Pawan Kumar Kalra and other members. Catering to the residents of Phagwara and nearby villages, the hearse van with the Rotary Wheel logo will boost the public image of the organisation in this textile town. ■

E-autos for 15 beneficiaries

IPDG Mahadev Prasad handed over E-autos to 15 beneficiaries, including seven differently-abled persons, at the Chronic Foundation, Bengaluru, under the annual CSR project of RC Bangalore West, RID 3192. The club has tied up with Atos India to donate E-autos to over 40 beneficiaries till now.

The vehicles are fitted with fire extinguishers, first aid kits, water bottle pouches and reading material. The drivers' aprons have Rotary branding. The project is supported by RCs Bangalore Greenpark and Oasis, along with the Chronic Foundation whose managing trustee Ramesh Shivanna was among those present at the event. Naveen Kolavara is the project chair. ■



RID 3192 IPDG Mahadev Prasad (right) hands over an E-auto to a beneficiary in the presence of Chronic Foundation managing trustee Ramesh Shivanna (4th from L) and Rotarians.



RC Veerbhumi Sambalpur charter president Manoj Chowdhury felicitates artists. RID 3261 IPDG Akhil Mishra is on the left.



Rotary Art Academy in Sambalpur

With the aim to promote visual, performing and literary arts, RC Veerbhumi Sambalpur, RID 3261, has launched the Rotary Art Academy under the leadership of its charter president Manoj Chowdhury and Rohit Supakar. The academy will host workshops, seminars and competitions to make arts accessible to all.

A solo painting exhibition of Chowdhury was held at the launch, and the new academy was one of the sponsors of the hockey tournament for school students in Sambalpur. "The motto of the academy is to showcase the hidden rural talent on the global stage," said Chowdhury. They organised a painting workshop titled *Abhuday* for Odisha artists which was followed by a seminar at the discon of RID 3261. ■

The Rotary Foundation Trustees 2025–26

The Trustees of The Rotary Foundation manage the business of the Foundation, the charitable arm of Rotary that funds service activities. The RI president-elect nominates the trustees, who are elected by the RI Board to four-year terms.

Three new trustees take office on July 1.



Holger Knaack

Chair 2025–26

Trustee 2022–26

**RC Herzogtum Lauenburg-Mölln
Germany**

Holger Knaack was the owner of Knaack KG, a real estate company, and Knaack Bakery Enterprises, a family business founded in 1868. He is a founding member of the Civic Foundation of the City of Ratzeburg and the founder and chair of the Karl Adam Foundation.

A Rotarian since 1993, Knaack has served Rotary as president, treasurer, director, moderator, member and chair of several committees, CoL representative, endowment/major gifts adviser and learning facilitator.

He and his wife, Susanne, have hosted more than 40 RYE students and are Major Donors to TRF. They are also members of the Paul Harris Society and the Bequest Society.



Jennifer Jones

Chair-elect 2025–26

Trustee 2023–27

RC Windsor-Roseland, Ontario

Jennifer Jones served as president of RI in 2022–23, becoming the first woman to hold the role in Rotary's then 117-year history. A communications executive, she is the founder of Media Street Productions Inc, an award-winning media company in Windsor, Ontario, that helps corporations and nonprofit organisations tell their stories with conviction and credibility.

As president, she embarked on the Imagine Impact Tour, bringing top-tier media professionals and social influencers with her to showcase stories of sustainable, large-scale projects by Rotary's people of action around the world.

Jones has received Rotary's Service Above Self Award, The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service, and the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award. She

has also been recognised for her service with numerous honors, including the YMCA Peace Medallion, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and Wayne State University's Peacemaker Award, a first for a Canadian. She holds a Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Windsor and one from Queens University.

Jones is married to Nick Krayacich, a family physician. They share a love for Rotary, travel, cycling, golf and relaxing at their family cottage on Lake Erie.



Greg E Podd

Vice Chair 2025–26

Trustee 2022–26

RC Evergreen, Colorado

Greg Podd is a retired certified public accountant and personal financial specialist who opened his own firm in 1979. He joined Rotary in 1982, and has served RI as vice-president and director.

As a Rotary Foundation major gifts adviser, Greg organised his district's Million Dollar Dinner, which raised over \$3.1 million in one night. He has received the Service Above Self Award and TRF's Citation for Meritorious Service. He and his spouse, Pam, are Major Donors and members of the AKS, Bequest Society and Paul Harris Society.



Ann-Britt Åsebol

Trustee 2024–28

RC Falun-Kopparvågen, Sweden

Ann-Britt Åsebol retired as a member of the Riksdag, Sweden's parliament, in 2022 after several terms as county councillor for Dalarna County. As an MP, she served on several committees, including the Committee on the Constitution and the Committee on Education. Before she entered politics, she worked as a teacher, a principal, and a trainer at the Teachers Training College in Falun, her alma mater. She later founded a private secondary school and served as its CEO.

Åsebol joined Rotary in 1993 as the first female member of her club. One of her first international projects was a home that helped children who had formerly lived in the sewer tunnels of St Petersburg, Russia. Åsebol also led a global grant project that provides clean water for a rural hospital in Nepal. She has also led Rotary projects in the Baltic countries and Ukraine, and she helped Ukrainian refugees in Sweden.

Åsebol is a Rotary Foundation Benefactor, a Major Donor, a multiple Paul Harris Fellow, and a member of the Paul Harris Society. She has received the Citation for Meritorious Service.



Martha Helman

Trustee 2022–26

RC Boothbay Harbor, Maine

Marty Helman spent her career as a writer for business executives and as a magazine editor at McGraw-Hill and the American Management Association.

Later, she served as president of the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, a nonprofit that has helped build schools in developing nations, provided scholarships for youth, and supplied humanitarian aid to Holocaust survivors, among other initiatives. The Walter Foundation partnered with TRF to fund the Rotary Peace Center at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul, which opened in 2025.

Marty and her late spouse, Frank, joined RC Boothbay Harbor in 2003. She is also director-elect for Zones 28 and 32.

A keen fundraiser for TRF, she initiated an effort to support the Sakuji Tanaka Rotary Peace Fellowship, which raised \$1 million for the Rotary Peace Centers.

Marty is an AKS member, and she chooses to support Rotary as a member of the Paul Harris Society and PolioPlus Society. She and Frank were charter members of the Legacy Society of TRF.



Frank Ching-Huei Horng

Trustee 2024–28

RC Panchiao West, Taiwan

Frank Horng heads the Trojan Orthodontic Clinic, which he founded in 1988. He joined Rotary in 1993 as a charter member of his club.

As a member of TRF's Cadre of Technical Advisers, he connected craniofacial surgeons in Bali and Taiwan and led a vocational training team in Mongolia and Nepal. That project eventually became a global grant initiative to promote oral health that helped train 360

Mongolian health workers. Horng's district received a Presidential Citation during his term as governor.

His partner, Shu-Yann Chuang, is also a member of his club. The couple are AKS members. Horng has received the Service Above Self Award and Citation for Meritorious Service.



Chun-Wook Hyun

Trustee 2023–27

RC Seoul-Hansoo, Korea

Chun-Wook Hyun is senior partner at Seoul-based Kim & Chang, one of the largest law firms in Asia, where he has worked since 1981 as a head of the

labour and employment practice group.

He joined his club in 1991 as a charter member. He also serves as director of Rotary Foundation Korea.

Hyun and his partner, Jung-Rhim Oh, are AKS members.



Gordon R McNally

Trustee 2024–28

RC South Queensferry, Scotland

Gordon McNally was chair of the East of Scotland branch of the British Paedodontic Society and has held various academic positions.

He joined Rotary in 1984 at age 26. He served as RI president in 2023–24 and as president and vice-president of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland. He and his partner, Heather, who is a member of RC Borderlands (Passport Group), are Paul Harris Fellows, Major Donors, Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation, and members of the Bequest Society.



Ijeoma Pearl Okoro

Trustee 2024–28

RC Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Ijeoma Pearl Okoro has 30 years of experience leading transformation, market development, and management efforts in the insurance industry.

In memory of her father, Okoro founded the Romanus Emeanuru Foundation for Empowerment and Education Development, dedicated to empowerment of women. She volunteers for the Sir Emeka Ofori Foundation.

Okoro joined Rotary in 1999. She was called one of the "five Rotary women leading the fight to end polio" in 2019 and received a certificate of appreciation from TRF for her polio eradication efforts. She has also received

Rotary's Distinguished Service Award and the Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World. She and her husband, Kingsley, are both Major Donors, Bequest Society members and Benefactors. They and their two children are Paul Harris Fellows.



Bharat S Pandya

Trustee 2022–26

RC Borivli, India

Bharat Pandya is a practising general and laparoscopic surgeon. He and his wife, Madhavi, a gynaecologist, own a private hospital in Mumbai. Pandya joined Rotary in 1989 as a charter member of his club. During his year as governor of then District 3140, his district contributed over \$2 million to TRF, making it the top contributor worldwide for 2006–07. He has led numerous projects, including water and sanitation projects funded by Foundation grants that installed check dams so that villagers no longer needed to walk long distances to collect water.

Pandya has been an RI director, treasurer, regional Rotary International membership coordinator, and learning facilitator and served on Rotary's Membership, Strategic Planning, Leadership Development, and Convention Promotion committees and on the India PolioPlus Committee. He served as trustee vice-chair in 2023–24. He is also a charter member of his district's Paul Harris Society.

He has received the Service Above Self Award, Citation for Meritorious Service and the Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award. He and Madhavi are Major Donors.



Vicki Puliz

Trustee 2025–29

RC Sparks, Nevada

Vicki Puliz joined Rotary in 1992 as the first woman in her club. She serves on the Rotary Peace Centers Committee and has participated in events at the peace centres in Bradford, England, and in Istanbul.

Puliz and her husband, Tim, who is also a Rotarian, live in Reno, Nevada. They support The Rotary Foundation as AKS members and members of the Paul Harris, Bequest and the PolioPlus Societies.

Puliz is also interested in leadership development for young people. It was when she witnessed more than 100 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards participants supporting one young woman who was struggling that her vision of the power of Rotary expanded.



Carlos Sandoval

Trustee 2023–27

**RC San Nicolás de los Garza
Mexico**

Carlos Sandoval is chair of Orsan Corp, a leading company in the energy sector and the main distributor of Exxon Mobil in Mexico, with more than 270 service stations and over 3,000 employees throughout the country. He is also regional consultant of the Mexico division of BBVA, the multinational financial institution.

He joined Rotary in 1975. He has participated in and led numerous projects. One project, supported by Foundation grants, helped provide bakery equipment and professional bakery training to people who had recovered from drug addiction. In honour of his late son, Carlos, he established a directed gift to TRF that supports community and economic development projects focused on women entrepreneurs throughout Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Colombia. His philanthropy work outside of Rotary includes establishing the Orsan Foundation, a nonprofit that promotes health initiatives among underprivileged groups and provides assistance in disaster situations. In addition, he sponsors three addiction rehabilitation centres in the Monterrey area and serves on the boards of the Monterrey branch of the Mexican Red Cross and the Autonomous University of Nuevo León Foundation.

Sandoval is a recipient of The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service. He and his spouse, Martha, are AKS members.



Dennis J Shore

Trustee 2023–27

RC Hawthorn, Australia

Dennis Shore is a chartered chemical engineer with bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of New South Wales. He is a fellow of the Australasian Pulp and Paper Industry Technical Association and a recipient of its Distinguished Service Award.

Shore joined Rotary in 1980. With his club, he has supported projects ranging from scholarships and water tank installations in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, a hospital in Cambodia, and mental health initiatives in Australia to the club's signature Rotary Safe Families programme. Shore, who has done a lot of grassroots work to grow Rotary Foundation grants in his zone, also convened a million-dollar dinner in 2017 that raised over \$3.5 million for the Foundation. He and his wife, Lynda, are

Major Donors and Bequest Society members. He is a member of the District 9800 Paul Harris Society and PolioPlus Society and a recipient of TRF's Distinguished Service Award and the Citation for Meritorious Service.



Katsuhiko Tatsuno
Trustee 2025–29
RC Tokyo-West, Japan

Katsuhiko Tatsuno serves as the CEO of Tatsuno Corp. He is a Rotarian since 1982. He was a member of the Japanese Rotary Committee that supported recovery efforts and survivors after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, one of the most powerful earthquakes recorded in Japan.

He supports TRF as an AKS member, a multiple Paul Harris Fellow, a Benefactor and a Major Donor.



Stephanie Urchick
Trustee, 2025–29
RC McMurray, Pennsylvania

Stephanie Urchick led Rotary as its president in 2024–25. She has served as an RI director and Rotary Foundation trustee and as chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and TRF's Centennial Celebration Committee.

A Rotary member since 1991, Urchick has participated in a variety of service projects, including National Immunisation Days in India and Nigeria. In Vietnam, she worked with clubs to help build a school, and she installed water filters in the Dominican Republic.

Urchick has mentored new Rotary members in Ukraine and coordinated a Foundation grant for mammography equipment and a biopsy unit for a hospital in Poland. In its commemorative book, the Rotary Club of Kraków, Poland, noted Urchick as a key figure for helping with the rebirth of Rotary in post-Communist Poland. In 2025 she hosted a Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul.

John Hewko
General Secretary
RC Kyiv, Ukraine
Refer July 2025 issue for his bio.

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Paul Harris bust adorns Rotary clubs

Team Rotary News



RID 3090 PDG Bagh Singh Pannu and members of RC Bokaro Steel City near Rotary founder Paul Harris bust on the club premises.

Rotary founder Paul Harris bust mounted on a pedestal is a familiar sight during a visit to Rotary clubs in North and other parts of India. The credit for installing this three-feet tall bust made of black metal at many clubs goes to PDG Bagh Singh Pannu, RID 3090, who is gifting these catchy statues over the last few years.

The Paul Harris busts are also installed at Rotary schools, hospitals and institutions owned by Rotary clubs across India. “This is a compliment as the entire project is funded by me. So far, we have installed 284 busts in many Rotary clubs across North and East India, and a few in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Puducherry,” said PDG Pannu.

Recently, he had installed six busts at clubs across RID 3250 which comprises Bihar and Jharkhand. His aim is to install 800 Paul Harris bust to “recognise this noble gentleman who had created the first social service organisation in the world.”

Those clubs interested in having Rotary founder statue on their premises, can contact PDG Pannu at mobile no: 98142 21415. ■



RID 2982

RC Jalakandapuram

On the first day of the new Rotary year the club members served midday meals to around 120 children at a differently-abled school. The school authorities and children thanked the club for a delicious meal.



Club matters



RID 3011

RC Delhi Safdarjung

A water cooler and purifying system was installed at a dental hygiene awareness session for 250 underprivileged children of a school. The school authorities thanked the club for installing the drinking water unit.

RID 3020

RC Visakhapatnam

Twelve benches were donated to a tribal school at Boodi village in Anantagiri mandal of Alluri Sitarama Raju district, Andhra Pradesh, with donations from Interactor Nia from the US, and three club members.





RID **3090**

RC Patran Royal

Ten ceiling fans were donated to Mata Prem Lata Sarvhitkari School, Patran. This gesture will provide relief to students during the summer season. The project was supported by Narain Garg and Jiwan Singla.

RID **3000**

RC Madurai Down Town

A *Rally 4 Life* was conducted by eight Rotarians from Kanyakumari to Madurai to raise awareness on cervical cancer and environment. They distributed 2,000 cloth bags and 5,000 pamphlets. It was held in partnership with RC Tamiraparani Tirunelveli.



RID **3132**

RC Barsi

The club has started 11 book banks in rural areas, each having around 300 books of all genres, which benefit 2,500 children and students as they borrow books regularly from these centres.



RID **3142**

RC Dombivli Midtown

Lunch packets are being given to 25 expectant mothers daily at the maternity ward of the Shastrinagar Municipal Hospital, Dombivli. An MoU was signed with the civic body for monitoring the annual project.

Ride for a drug-free India

Kiran Zehra



Ilayaraja Sunderesan at the world's highest motorable pass, Umling La.

Ilayaraja Sunderesan, club service director of RC Nanganallur Elite, RID 3234, has completed a solo motorcycle journey from Chennai to Umling La, the world's highest motorable pass at 19,024 feet. The 17-day journey, spanning over 5,000km across India's

varied terrains, was undertaken to raise awareness about the importance of saying no to drugs.

The ride was flagged off from Chennai on May 9, 2025, by the then DG NS Saravanan. "This mission was made possible thanks to the unwavering support of numerous clubs and

Rotarians who welcomed and encouraged him along the way. At a time when our country is grappling with rising substance abuse among youth, initiatives like this can inspire young minds to channel their energy into discovering their true potential," says club president Sathish Rajasekar (2024-25).



Sunderesan being flagged off in Chennai by IPDG NS Saravanan (third from L).

Sunderesan's first stop was at Hyderabad, where RC Hyderabad North, along with RCs Kokapet Ekam, Hyderabad Pearls, Jubilee Hills, Mid Town, Hyderabad Royals, and Hyderabad East, hosted him for a dinner and breakfast meet. DG Sharath Choudhary (RID 3150) flagged off the next leg of his journey.

Over the following days, he was hosted and supported by clubs in Nizamabad, Nagpur, Jhansi and Faridabad, "where I was welcomed with warmth and hospitality. DG Mahesh Trikha (RID 3011) coordinated a series of flag exchanges across his district. This was truly special for me as it showcased Rotary's connections," he says.

On May 13, he reached Jammu, and on the next evening, Srinagar. "Battling sub-zero temperatures and treacherous roads, I arrived in Leh

This journey was a way to start a conversation. Not to preach, but to remind people that life itself is the bigger high.

Ilayaraja Sunderesan

and paused for a day for acclimatisation. From there, I set off for the final stretch from Hanle to Umling La."

On May 18, his birthday, "navigating snow-covered roads to reach Umling La. I completed my journey. It was the most difficult stretch, but the people I met along the way, their

kindness and encouragement, made it all worth it. We speak different languages, but the warmth of people is universal," he smiles.

On the return leg, at Secunderabad, RC Hyderabad Deccan hosted a "Walk the Talk" session that discussed why young people turn to drugs. He encouraged Rotarians and Rotaractors to take action. "You don't have to ride across India. But talk to one school. Visit one child in a rehab centre. One step is all it takes."

The initiative received support from 19 Rotary clubs across multiple states. Ask Sunderesan why he did this, and he says: "I have seen too many bright young lives dimmed by drugs. This journey was a way to start a conversation. Not to preach, but to remind people that life itself is the bigger high." ■

A Rotary Chowk at Rourkela

Team Rotary News

A KS member DR Patnaik inaugurated a Rotary Chowk (square) built by RC Rourkela Mid Town, RID 3261, at the entrance to the city. With support from Rourkela Smart City Ltd, the club took up this public image project for which they had put in two years of planning, design and execution.

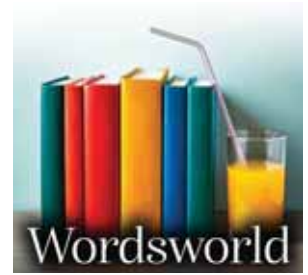
The project site witnesses around 15,000 vehicles passing through it each day, and "the idea was not just to put up an edifice, but to create a visual



symbol of Rotary's presence and purpose," said Ankit Kedia, then club secretary. A feature of this Rotary Chowk is a GPS-enabled analogue clock, and entire design blends "aesthetic charm with technology, thus offering both functionality and visibility," he said.

PDGs FC Mohanty, Manjit Singh Arora, Harjit Singh Hura, club president Bijay Das and secretary Kedia were present, along with project chair SK Meher and members from other Rotary clubs in Rourkela, at the inaugural event. ■

Of badshahs, badasses and books in a boxcar



Everything different yet everyone connected. Three books, indeed the best books, show us how.



Sandhya Rao



What's common between Shah Rukh Khan, the Cholas, and three women from the Depression-era US? To discover this, you will have to dive into *Legend Icon Star: Shah Rukh Khan* by Mohar Basu, *Lords of Earth and Sea: A History of the Chola Empire* by Anirudh Kanisetti, and *The Boxcar Librarian* by Brianna Labuskes — biography, history and fiction respectively. However, you will be amazed by the number of similarities across the eras, starting some thousand years ago, through the early-to-mid-twentieth century, and in the present time. And, of course, the *badshah* is SRK, the badasses are the Cholas, and the books reference a library on rails that reached mining communities in Montana, US.

I picked up the SRK book at the Kempegowda Airport, Bengaluru, and, as with anybody reading about celebrities, the first thing I looked

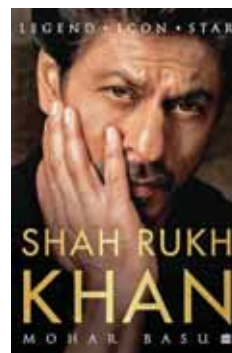
for were photographs, of which there are lovely ones. Sadly, though, the photographer, Pradeep Bandekar, passed away before the book could be published, but his son, Prathamesh's words, pithily sum up his connection with SRK: "I never fully understood my father's enduring love for Shah Rukh Khan. I would often joke: 'You have more pictures of him than you have of me!' It was only after his death that I was able to make sense of his bond with Shah Rukh when the actor spoke at my father's prayer meet: 'Pradeep was one of my first friends in the film industry. When he took my first photograph, I felt like a star...'"

Usually, much of Bollywood-related stuff has a 'North India' bias; happily, the author of this book, although based in Mumbai, and chief correspondent (entertainment), *Mid-day*, the book has a Kolkata slant, with many of her primary sources being Kolkata-based. That only goes to underline SRK's cross-country fan base. Mohar Basu says that she has always been surrounded by SRK fans, starting with her mother, which brings to mind my mother's observation as we watched an episode of *Fauji* together back in the 1980s. Watching

SRK in it, she said: "This boy is special. He will go far, mark my words." While you could say the book is a love song to SRK, it also examines his career, serial by serial, film by film, while reiterating his commitment to fans, entertainment and respecting women.

So, then, the badasses! The political dispensation today is all hands on deck promoting the idea of one India, one people, one language, one cuisine, one everything. It's a fact, though, that whenever 'Indian history' is told, it largely contains north of the Vindhyas and the Mahanadi. Travel south, and you have the Rashtrakutas, the Chalukyas, the Kadavas, the Cheras, the Pallavas, the Pandyas, the Hoysalas, the Irukkuvels... lording it above all of them are the Cholas.

Historian Anirudh Kanisetti sets out to unravel the Chola dynasty which, at one time went as far north as Bengal and the Ganga while at the same time dominating the Deccan, the Cauvery plains and what is now Sri Lanka and the Malayan peninsula. And if you were of the opinion that the Cholas had a mighty navy, you would be wrong. It was trade and merchant ships that took the name and fame of southern rulers across the oceans, and even built temples in their name.

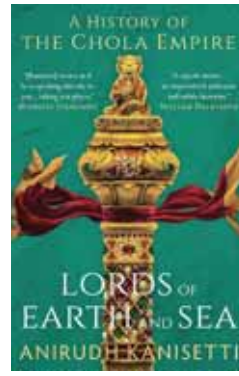


“A major theme of this book,” writes Kanisetti, “is that Indian kings were not kings in vacuums, they had to constantly prove their power, their right to be obeyed. This was true for all civilisations, and India was no exception. ... Chola kings, having risen to rule over a land of vigorous regional collectives, had to campaign not just militarily but politically and, just like contemporary politicians, they found that temples were excellent sites for political advertisements...” The case in point is the mighty Rajarajeswara or Brihadeeswara temple in Thanjavur, at one time next in size only to the Pyramids of Egypt. Defying the typical history book that weighs the reader down with names, dates and other ‘bore stuff’, here, Kanisetti’s descriptions, details, anecdotes and style of presenting dynasties, lineages, battles, conquests, strategies... all of it is meticulously researched, presented with objective relish that combines amazement and wit, and is really easy to read. Nor does he omit the major role played by women who, even if they were not rulers themselves, wielded tremendous power and influence.

What was the major channel of their influence? Temple-building! Kanisetti explains how the iconic dancing Nataraja came into prominence, thanks to Sembiyan Mahadevi, the consort of Gandaraditya (949–957), a predecessor of the most famous Chola ruler, Rajaraja Chola I (985–1016). Mesmerised by the wild dancing figure of the deity in bronze at Thillai, now

known as Chidambaram, Sembiyan Mahadevi ensured that a stone sculpture of the deity she called Adavallam, expert dancer, was consecrated at a temple she commissioned to be built at a place called Nallam. The rest is history. Kanisetti notes that “The ascent of Sembiyan Mahadevi was the ascent of Nataraja. And it marked the emergence of a new Chola world empire.”

What was the defining feature of Chola imperialism? “The Cholas certainly established and maintained new centres through conquest, and generally preferred Tamil-style institutions. But they were not at all interested in wiping out older cultures. Such a concept was quite alien to the Indian Ocean world, which thrived, in fact *profited*, from diversity. Chola imperialism added new elements to an already diverse mosaic, and offered new opportunities to Chola collaborators — whether islander or mainlander. Polonnaruwa (in Sri Lanka) soon became a bustling little town, a military and trading outpost. It was home to Lankans (both island Tamils and Sinhala speakers), as well as mainland Tamil merchants, artisans and priests.” Kanisetti reminds us of the creativity, imagination, daring and influence of the Cholas in words and images that are entertaining as well as enriching.



Enriching lives with books was a librarian called Ruth Worden in Missoula County, Montana. She, along with another woman whose name has been lost to us, founded the Lumberman’s

Library in a hotel for the use of workers. She approached a man called Kenneth Ross of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company to help build the collection. He liked the idea, but worried that books would give the workers ‘strange’ ideas — perhaps of freedom, liberty, choice and what have you! In any case, he supported Ruth Worden and her partner, and when he saw that the programme worked well, he enabled the building of a boxcar or bogie with shelving to house the books. And so the books travelled by train to readers all along the line!

Inspired by this story and the presence of the original Lumberman’s Library boxcar in Fort Missoula, Brianna Labuskes wrote *The Boxcar Librarian* in which she brings together the narratives of three intrepid women — Alice Monroe, Colette Durand and Millie Lang — in which Alice has the idea and she engages Colette as the librarian. The story is spiced up with mystery and adventure, with a further reality twist that brings in Millie by weaving in a government programme for “desperate creative professionals during the Great Depression.”

The book is as much an adventure story as a tribute to the role books, art, theatre and music play in connecting people. In effect, it acknowledges the Roosevelt government’s sagacity in understanding and enabling this fundamental principle of life.

The columnist is a children’s writer and senior journalist

“You will be amazed by the number of similarities across the eras... the badshah is SRK, the badasses are the Cholas, and the books reference a library on rails that reached mining communities in Montana, US.



Teach your children well

Preeti Mehra

Schooling must include climate change in the curriculum.

It is often said that, “Today’s children are tomorrow’s citizens.” It follows from this truism that if we must build a better world, we must educate and equip our kids to bring about meaningful change that will contribute to the better health and well-being of our planet and its inhabitants.

Among the many concerns that dominate our lives, one is related to global warming, climate change, and environmental issues. Over the last few decades, we have been working to mitigate the damage humans have inflicted on Mother Earth. But we realise that a lot more needs to be done. Our children have no choice but to

extend themselves a lot more than our generation to save the planet.

How do we equip them to do that? We can live green lives and set an example for them to follow. We can practice basic environmental rules at home, including waste segregation, reducing plastic use, and conserving water and energy. That is laudable, but is it enough? Friends who are environmentalists argue that incorporating topics such as climate change, environmental pollution and water conservation into the school curriculum has become crucial for formally educating children.

According to Mala Balaji, researcher, environment and climate action, at Chennai-based Citizen

Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG), climate change needs to be a standalone subject in schools, not just a chapter in science textbooks or a passing reference in social studies. However, until this new subject is incorporated, schools need to become more proactive and not just remember climate change on World Environment Day.

Writing in her blog on the CAG website, Mala notes: “We need to treat climate education with the seriousness it deserves. It should be a subject in its own right. If full curriculum integration takes time, schools can begin by regularly including it through after-school programmes, workshops, eco-clubs or dedicated class time.”



CAG has developed a climate change curriculum that schools can adopt, featuring interactive lessons, real-world examples, and hands-on activities. “The purpose of having a stand-alone curriculum is not just to inform, but to engage and inspire action, connecting classroom learning to everyday life. In doing so, we can empower students not just to understand the climate crisis but to become part of the solution at a young age,” writes Mala.

The CAG curriculum suggests that schools should introduce students to climate change concepts through their relevance to daily life, rather than complex scientific explanations. Thus, severe heatwaves, air pollution and adverse climate events are issues they would have faced and can relate to. Students in rural areas would be aware of how changing rainfall patterns affect farming. Adds Mala: “When students see these changes happening around them, climate change becomes a tangible issue rather than a distant theory.”

The CAG curriculum emphasises teaching through activities in which the students participate. This makes learning fun and not a drudgery. Much of the same focus is in the Green Schools Programme developed by the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) which is designed to promote environmental education and sustainable practices in schools. The programme encourages schools to use their campuses as living laboratories for learning about sustainability.

Writers of children’s books focusing on climate change and related concerns are a clear indication that the younger generation is curious to learn about the issues involved. *Mongabay*, a portal that focuses on the environment, reports that there is a growing interest in children’s literature on the environment and climate and that the effort seems to be to “tackle complex



subjects while infusing them with hope and humour.”

The veritable explosion of children’s literature on the environment started some seven years ago with Rupal Kewalya’s *The Little Rainmaker*. The story is about a world without rain for a decade and how ten-year-old Anoushqa seeks the help of scientists and magicians to honour her grandfather’s wish to see rain again. This was followed by a spate of books, including Siddhartha Sarma’s *Year of the Weeds*, Bijal Vachharajani’s *A Cloud Called Bhura*, Ranjit Lal’s *Budgie, Bridge and Big Djinn* and Nandita da Cunha’s *The Miracle on Sunderbaag Street*.

Meghaa Gupta, publisher, author, and co-founder of the Green Literature Festival (GLF) in India, told *Mongabay* that the number and diversity of books in this genre have been increasing. “We started in 2020 with 32–33 titles and were able to locate over 40 new releases in 2024. This is just based on the English language publishers of children’s books in India and does not include regional literature,” said Gupta, who curated the children’s programme at GLF till 2024.

The growing interest in books for children dedicated to climate and environmental concerns is reflected in the Azim Premji University’s Centre for

Climate Change and Sustainability, which runs a newsletter, *Nature Writing for Children*, that discusses and reviews new books in this genre. It also includes writers in the discussions.

The need to involve and engage young people on issues like climate change cannot be overstated. A survey conducted by the CSE last year among 1,931 school and college students revealed that 94 per cent of the respondents said they were directly impacted by the disruptions caused by climate change. For them, eco-anxiety was not a distant possibility but an immediate reality.

Analysis of data from 1973 to 2023 indicates that 85 per cent of Indian districts are vulnerable to floods, droughts, cyclones and heatwaves. Additionally, 45 per cent of these districts have exhibited a climate shift trend, with flood-prone areas becoming drought-prone or rain-deficient zones, and rain-deficient zones experiencing excess rainfall. Given all these impacts, our children have a right to know and be prepared to face the challenges of the future. They also need to learn how they can limit the damage being inflicted on Mother Earth.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on environmental issues

Trampoline as an effective fitness tool

Bharat & Shalan Savur

Harvey and Marilyn Diamond, pioneers and authors of 'Fit for Life' hail the rebounder thus: 'Resistive rebounding will probably revolutionise the fitness movement... not only for world-class athletes, but for everyone interested in fitness, from the weakest to the strongest, from the clumsiest to the most fleet of foot.'

George Nissan, an American, designed the first rebounder in 1936. He was inspired by trapeze artistes under the 'Big Top' (American for circus) who ended their act with a fall and bouncing flourish that climaxed their event. Shortly after

the invention, the American Armed Forces adopted the device as a part of the training programme for US troops to 'obtain aerial orientation and motor skills' in their war effort.

Decades after the Second World War, the erstwhile USSR launched satellites into space in the late 1950s. Then, driven by their President John F Kennedy's vision, the Americans accomplished his 'mission moon'. The first country to plant its flag on Earth's only satellite. 'A first step for man. A giant leap for mankind,' famously declared astronaut Neil Armstrong, the first human to moonwalk.

This is now history. What is largely unknown however, is that astronauts exercise by throwing themselves against the walls and floor of their space craft to strengthen bones and muscles.

Gravity (G-Force) is the great leveller on earth. It anchors our universe. Stars, planets, etc, are kept in place. Each of them has its own G-Force. Outer space is designed by a divine force that compels objects to their given/granted universal traffic

NASA, the ultimate authority on outer space, positions the rebounder as 68 per cent more efficient than jogging.





lanes and line. Thanks to gravity. You have the G-Force power with the rebounder. Here's how.

It is about the only thing to challenge and change the horizontal flow to a vertical one. With the rebounder beneath you, you can improve your body with literal leaps and bounds. As you step it up, you get the feel of it — the only exerciser that utilises three natural forces — acceleration (start), deceleration (halt) and gravity now transcend to the vertical plane. Once on the rebounder, every human cell is stimulated by these three natural forces. The subconscious mind doesn't distinguish these three forces. It computes them as three gravities and reacts to the trio by commanding the cells to adjust positively. The rebounder is, simply put, a mat, supported and suspended on a set of springs and four legs. The University of Oklahoma, US, concludes that the rebounder absorbs 87 per cent of the shock of the bounce. NASA, the ultimate authority on outer space, positions the rebounder as 68 per cent more efficient than jogging. Indeed, rebounding is the complete all-rounder that stimulates the cells of your internal organs, veins and arteries. This also works out your bones and muscles besides increasing circulation and flushing your lymphatic systems. As noted earlier, its alignment with the vertical is its unique safety property.

Disarming arthritis

White blood cells, the body's army, rush to the troubled joint to defeat the intruder. The resultant toxins and the pile-up of dead white cells caught in the 'friendly fire' in the inflamed joint are trapped by the injured joint rendered helpless by the pain. Gentle health bouncing helps clear the road block. And offers a way out to the new white-celled force.

**Rebounder exercises help
manage osteoporosis,
arthritis and bladder
incontinence.**

Ousting osteoporosis

Multiple factors lead to this condition caused by cells accumulating and absorbing more minerals than they can dispose of. The acceleration and deceleration coupled with the increased pull of gravity (mentioned earlier) targets the bone cells for better disposal. Rebounder exercises ensure that your bones become denser and stronger. If you already suffer from osteoporosis, consult your physician. The doctor would recommend dietary changes. Please also check out rebounding with her/him.

Incontinence/bladder control

To pee or not to pee is not an option for a person suffering from this condition. This is 'nature calling'. This problem can strike people as early as the thirties. The solution is simple. Strengthen the sphincter muscles that control the flow of urine from the bladder. Spread your rebounder exercises over several short sessions per day. You'd find yourself returning to normal activities soon without the 'number one' ghost haunting you.

PS: Trampoline 100 is available at Decathlon and Amazon at around ₹3,000.

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



RID **3160**

RC Gulbarga

Club member Chetan Gangji donated a water purifier (₹40,000) in memory of his late father Laxmansa Gangji to VTS Primary and High School, a unit of Kalaburagi Education Society which is sponsored by the club.



Club matters



RID **3192**

RC Bengaluru Heritage North

Two anganwadis were renovated (₹3 lakh) and handed over to the teachers who thanked the club. The centres sported a radiant look with gleaming walls painted with wildlife pictures.



RID **3211**

RC Alleppey Greater

Alappuzha district police chief Mohanachandran inaugurated an anti-drugs abuse campaign at the beach in which Rotarians created awareness among the public on the need to avoid substance addiction for a healthy lifestyle.





RID 3212

RC Ramnad

Nutrition supplement bags were distributed to TB patients at the District TB Centre attached to the government hospital, Ramanathapuram, as part of the club's ongoing project. Club president Jegadesh S and past AG Geetha Rameshbabu were present at the venue.

RID 3191

RC Bangalore Metro

An ambulance was donated to the primary health centre at Chikkajala with CSR funding from TVM Signalling and Transportation Systems. The handover event was attended by Meenukunte panchayat president Vasanth Kumar and club president Akhtar Ali.



RID 3261

Rotary E-Club of Bilaspur United

Tubelights for homes and sweaters were distributed to children from underserved communities to provide light and warmth to them during winter.



RID 3262

RC Bhubaneswar Meadows

A water booth offered cold drinking water and soft drinks to 650 passersby as summer relief under *Project Jala Chhatra*. IPDG Yagyansis Mohapatra, PDG Aswini Kar and club president Buddha Mohapatra were present.

Compiled by V Muthukumaran

A hi-tech device for Karur hospital

RC Karur, RID 3000, has installed a high-speed, automated chemical analyser at the Government Medical College and Hospital, Karur, through a Directed Gift of \$50,000 by PRID C Basker to TRF. The machine costing ₹40.12 lakh can carry out 800 urine and blood tests an hour, and can do 125 different types of chemical analysis, said the project's primary contact K Ravindrakumar.



PRID C Basker with members of RC Karur after installing the chemical analyser at the hospital.

HPV vaccination drive

RC Guwahati Luit, RID 3240, has launched a flagship cervical cancer prevention campaign, administering HPV vaccines to 144 beneficiaries, including girls under 15, and women from underserved communities. Supported by SERUM Institute and local hospitals, the initiative combines vaccination camps with awareness sessions to tackle myths and promote early prevention.



Vaccine being administered to a beneficiary.

Cage fish farming for livelihood

RC Kumta, RID 3170, in collaboration with RC Biratnagar Fusion, RID 3292, Nepal, launched a global grant-backed cage fish culture project in May '25 to restore livelihoods in coastal Karnataka. Targeting widows, youth and marginalised fishers, the initiative provides training, equipment and market linkages for sustainable aquaculture.



From 2nd L: Zonal coordinator Jayashree Kamath, Padmaja and IPDG Sharad Pai, DRFC Vinay Pai Raikar and club IPP Atul Kamath at the launch of the project.

Doctors, CAs honoured

RID 3090 DG Bhupesh Mehta felicitated doctors and chartered accountants to mark the special occasion on July 1 in a colourful event hosted by RC Fazilka. "Both professionals are essential part of our lives today. We salute their dedication and honour them," he said. The club also honoured BSF officers for their service to the nation.



DG Bhupesh Mehta (centre), and club president Anmol Grover (third from L) at the felicitation event.

From RI South Asia

EVERY ROTARIAN EVERY YEAR

Your gift to The Rotary Foundation's Annual Fund empowers Rotary members to take action and create positive change in communities close to home and around the globe. When you donate to Annual Fund- SHARE, your contributions are transformed into grants that fund local and international projects, scholarships, and other activities.

For details on TRF-giving, visit: rotary.org/donate

For more on Annual Fund, visit: my.rotary.org/annual-fund

Zones 4, 5, 6 & 7 — The Rotary Foundation Zonal Team 2025–26

Zone-4		Zone-5	Zone-6	Zone-7
Designation	Name	Name	Name	Name
RRFC	N Subramanian	Gowri Rajan	Debashish Das	Surendra Reddy Bommireddy
E/MGA	Ashish Ajmera	Aruljothi Karthikeyan	Ajay Agarwal	Sam Movva
EPNC	Ashes Ganguly	V R Muthu	Uttam Ganguli	Girish Gune
ARRFC	Ashok Agarwal	Chandra Bob Calidas	Anand Jhunjhunwala	Gaurish Dhond
ARRFC	Sanjiv Mehra	Sridhar Jagannathan	Pawan Agarwal	Thirupathi Naidu
ARRFC	Sandip Agarwala	Zameer Pasha	Manjit Singh Arora	Krishna Shetty
ARRFC	Kailash Jethani	S Balaji	Sudip Mukherjee	Deepak Pophale
ARRFC	Gustad Anklesaria	Pubudu De Zoysa	Rajan Gandotra	Bhaskar Ram
ARRFC	Shrikant Indani	Vijaykumar Thandassery R		
AEPNC	Manish Gyani	T Shanmugasundaram	Ashok Gupta	Harish Motwani
AEPNC	Arun Mongia	Gunasekaran	V N Singh	Jagadeeswararao Maddu
AEPNC	Sangita Shukla	A L Chokkalingam	Pratim Banerjee	Muralidharan Nagarajan
AEPNC	Sarthika Narang	P Bharanidharan	Saurab Deb Roy	Nasir Huseni
AEPNC	Namrata Suri	S Sundararajan	K S Rajan	Deepak S
AEPNC	Sudhir Mangla	Scaria Jose Kattor		
AE/MGA	Dhiran Datta	Balaji Babu	Bipin Chachan	Satish Madhavan
AE/MGA	Chetan Desai	J K N Palani	Rajib Pokhrel	Sharat Babu Chilukuri
AE/MGA	Tushar V Shah	G Chandramohan	Shashank Rastogi	Pramod Sasikant Parikh
AE/MGA	Sharat Jain	Rajmohan Nair	Chandu Agarwal	Vinay Pai Raikar
AE/MGA	Maulin M Patel	J Jesiah Vilavarayar	Krishnendu Gupta	B Rajaram Bhat
AE/MGA	Sanjay Malviya	Dhamodharan		



Wanted English-speaking nannies!

LBW



TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

There is a certain class of Indians who like to entrust their children to the care of nannies. They used to be called governesses in England, ayahs in India and ammas in East Asia. This dependence wasn't always there. In the days when mobility was low and joint families the norm, no one worried about the children. There were always enough relatives around in the house with their own children.

But internal migration slowly broke the joint families living under one roof. Even then, children were taken care of as long as only the husband was employed because the wife was always at home. Then came double income families where both the husband and wife were employed. They then needed someone to take care of the children until they were old enough to be sent to nurseries and schools. Then, finally, about 25 years ago came the NRI phenomenon where a couple would come back to India for vacation. Since they didn't have a moment of rest from their children when abroad, while in India they wanted total freedom from the babies and toddlers. The grandparents were there, of course, but being elderly, they could only do so much. Thus, from being the oddity practised by the British sahibs in India, the nanny, ayah or amma has become ubiquitous. Everyone has them.

All very straightforward, no? Not really. India is a large country and it has scores of languages. Again, in the old days there wasn't much internal migration at the lower income levels, especially female migration. But gradually that has changed and in the last two decades internal migration, both male and female, has really taken off.

This has meant an increase in the supply of nannies, which is good, right? Well, yes and no. The problem is language. Just as the ayahs during

the British Raj had a hard time communicating with the English babies, now it's the Indian nannies who have the same difficulty. How does a girl from Jharkhand, which is the biggest supplier of these services, speak to a baby whose parents are from some other state? The problem is compounded if the two parents are from two different states because, let alone the babies and the ayah, they find it hard to communicate even with each other. So everyone speaks English — except the nanny. It's not quite the Tower of Babel but nearly that.

So there is a premium on nannies who can understand English, even if they can't speak it. They charge anything between ₹1,200–2,000 per day. Obviously, they need a room to stay in with a separate bathroom. Some even demand an AC and a TV in the room. Plus, four meals a day, of course. It all works out to a very tidy sum but apparently not wholly unaffordable, especially if you are an NRI. What the couple spend in a month here they would spend for just a four-hour babysitter there for a mere three or four days.

At the other end of the age range are old people. They also need nannies who are called attendants. But for some reason, these attendants don't charge quite as much as the nannies even though the duties are exactly the same and even though they have some rudimentary training in nursing which the nannies don't. This demand from the young and the old has led to a thriving agency business. The agents take 15 per cent of the monthly salary of the nanny or the attendant. So you end up paying two individuals.

That's when the market kicks in. The service providers simply dump the agent which is why the agents demand an upfront fee. As I said, it is a very expensive proposition. ■



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