

Rotaract NEWS



Rotary Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul

The 2025 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference led by RI President Stephanie Urchick in Istanbul, Turkey, during **February 20–22, 2025**, will be an opportunity for the Rotary community and partners to build on Rotary's contribution to promoting peace by exploring: Peace in a polarised world; Technology, media and peacebuilding; Environmental issues in peacebuilding; and Making peace last.

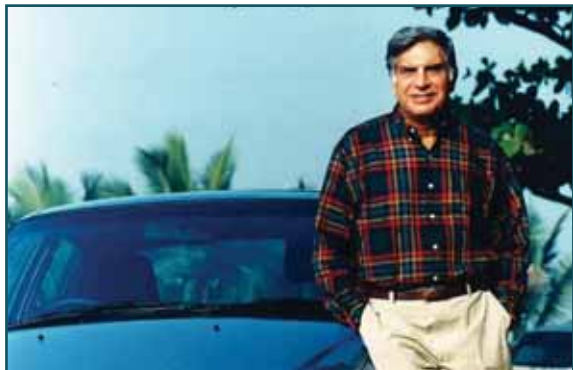
The conference will also recognise the launch of the new Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center in partnership with the Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul.

The three-day conference includes keynote speakers, panel discussions and breakout sessions that will highlight the many ways Rotarians and community leaders can advocate for peace; share stories, insights and ideas about building peace locally and globally; and foster meaningful conversations on promoting peace within our communities and beyond.

Visit www.rotary.org/istanbul25 to register for the Peace Conference and book your accommodation. Email: Istanbul25@rotary.org

Conference venue: **Hilton Istanbul Bomonti Hotel & Conference Center**





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On the cover: School students participating in a seed ball making event organised by RAC Basaveshwaranagar, RID 3192. About 17,000 seed balls were made at the event.

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The stuff legends are made of

Is it possible to be ethical, retain the high moral ground in a world riddled with intrigue, sycophancy and corrupt business practices, and yet reach the pinnacle of success?

Don't shake your cynical head, yet! The passing away of the gentle giant of Indian business, Ratan Tata, and the numerous anecdotes, some of them unknown as he was a private and media shy person, has jolted our cynical and yet firm belief that it is not possible to lead a highly successful business conglomerate without shutting your eye to all that is murky or questionable.

Stepping into the gigantic shoes of arguably India's most charismatic business leader, JRD Tata, must have been nothing short of petrifying for his barely 54-year protégé Ratan, who had to be necessarily pitted against the highly experienced pack of much older, extremely astute and highly experienced leaders at the helm of various Tata companies, led by the TISCO (Tata Steel) mogul Russi Mody.

Much has been written about how the younger scion took on so many challenges, converted failures into stepping stones to success and finally emerged as the undisputed leader of the Tata group. But business challenges and turbulence remained, through many downs such as the launch of Indica and Nano cars, acquisition of Corus and even the then struggling luxury auto brands such as Jaguar and Land Rover.

But at the end of the day, the integrity associated with the Tata brand was not only safeguarded but scaled new highs under him. The British weekly *The Economist* summed this up neatly when it commented: "Even in difficult times, the Tata Group under his leadership was seen as a uniquely benign employer. It did not swindle, it paid its debts, it stood

behind its products — and it was largely, if not entirely, free from scandal."


Well, that is saying a lot for a group which included giant profit-making companies such as TCS, Tata Steel, Tata Power and of late, even Tata Motors, which has come into the black, and how!

Why are Indians mourning so deeply the passing away of Ratan Tata? Apart from his admirable personal qualities... name it and he had it — gentle, charming, polished, soft-spoken, ever-composed, shy and reticent, courteous, firm but never offensive, philanthropist par excellence — this is mostly because in today's day and age, we are really starved of exemplary men and women. Real life heroes whose example you can unhesitatingly give to your children, your students, your mentees in a business or industry.

Heart of hearts we all know, there aren't too many of these in today's world. A real-life hero who can tell our younger generation that it is okay to dream of a future where you can be rich, powerful, super wealthy, even while embracing values that your parents/teachers taught you and which you've held dear all your life. And on that journey, you can afford to ignore those who brand you an 'idealistic idiot' and remain steadfast. You may stumble, but you will get up, and eventually make giant strides.

Surely, Ratan Tata was the stuff legends are made of. He has given an entire generation the hope that one can lead a life which gives hope to others... and through a philanthropic heart, do good in the world.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it?


Rasheeda Bhagat

India loses its Kohinoor... again

Rasheeda Bhagat

As an entire nation is heartbroken on the passing away of the iconic gentleman industrialist Ratan Tata, and you look back upon his illustrious career in the Tata group of companies spanning several decades, you marvel at the simplicity and grace with which he lived his life, and the courtesy he extended even to the most ordinary people. Details of his philanthropy leaves you dazzled and star-struck.

As news of his passing away devastated the whole country, tributes started pouring in. The rich and the famous, celebrities, business tycoons and industrial giants, of course paid tribute, but it was the unsung heroes who really captured the true and deep pain that millions of Indians felt in their hearts. 'The man with zero haters is no more', a simple message on the social media from an unknown person summed up the essence of the man.

Unquestionably the most admired among India's

business leaders, specially for the ethical manner in which he led one of India's most trusted business empires, it was Ratan Tata, handpicked by the great JRD Tata to be his successor, who took the Tata group of companies, already trusted brand, to a highly successful multinational corporation with international brands such as Jaguar and Land Rover. We will come to the very interesting story of how he did the last a little later in this tribute.

In a Facebook interview posted in 2020, Tata recalling his childhood, said: "I had a happy childhood, but as my brother and I got older, we faced a fair bit of ragging and personal discomfort because of our parents' divorce, which in those days wasn't as common as it is today." It is difficult to understand how there was nothing flashy and flamboyant about a man who had spent his entire life, right from childhood, in utter luxury. He had grown up literally in a palace in



Ratan Tata

Bombay, that was serviced by nearly 50 domestic helpers, and went to school in a luxury Delage car, before he was sent to the US for his high school.

He graduated from the Cornell University with a degree in structural engineering and architecture. He had initially enrolled for mechanical engineering, but changed his major two years later. He served as a trustee on the Cornell board for several years, and was its largest international donor,

with 305 Tata scholarships being awarded to 89 students from India.

Philanthropy was second nature to him, in accordance with the Tatas' penchant for charity, and he was a great lover of animals. In his later years he helped scores of startups and also set up healthcare facilities for animals.

But despite his uber rich family and international exposure, his love for flashy cars and flying planes, he was a shy man,



Younger days — with brother Jimmy Tata.

who shunned publicity and limelight, made very few public appearances and was quite a loner. His humility and charismatic personality were classic examples of how a highly successful person can be graceful in his demeanour.

Almost all industrial and business tycoons have their Ratan Tata story, but Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy summed it up neatly when he described him as “competent, humble, courteous, curious, concerned, and patriotic. On the rare occasions when he disagreed, he was not disagreeable.

Whether he was speaking to an admiring teenager or a much-respected senior business person, his sincerity, depth of knowledge and his legendary courtesy shone through effortlessly.”

Even though Tata leaves behind the legacy of a conglomerate, which he literally turned into a salt-to-software giant, and whose reach and profits multiplied during his time at its helm, it was not as though he did not have to face humiliation, stiff opposition and failures (teleservices), and near revolt against his leadership in his earlier years. His

An AKS member

Did you know that Ratan Tata was an AKS member? It is well-known that JRD was a member of RC Bombay and loved to attend its weekly meetings. Well, Ratan Tata too was an honorary member of this club for well over 25 years!

In 2017, with some gentle coaxing, he became an AKS member, and he handed over a single cheque of \$250,000 from the

Tata Education and Development Trust to past president of the club Nirav Shah in the presence of the then RID 3141 DG Gopal Mandhania. With this, he became the fourth AKS member from RC

Bombay during 2016–17. Recounting how Tata had been inducted into the distinguished gallery of AKS members, Nirav Shah said that a few months earlier, he was approached by a friend saying that Ratan

Tata wanted to see some 500 vintage cars. “I said I would organise that, but in return I wanted an audience with Tata.” At that meeting Shah made a personal request to Tata, and it happened!■

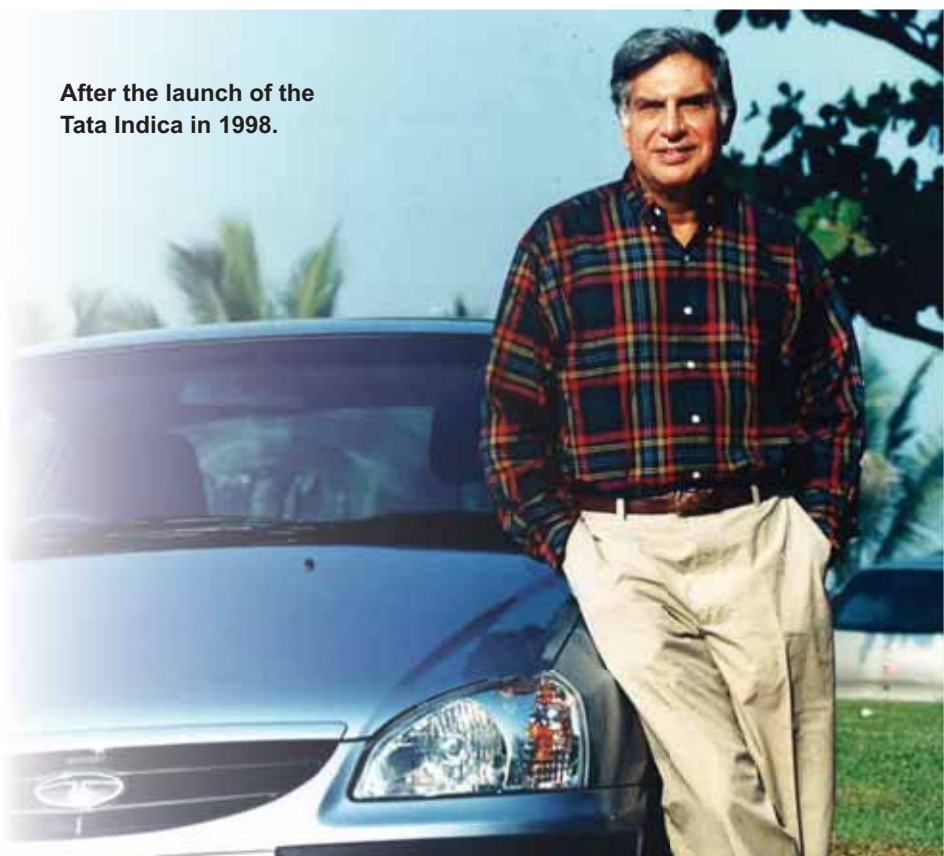


Rtn Akkshay Mehta, PDG Gopal Rai Mandhania, Ratan Tata and Nirav Shah, past president of RC Bombay.

brainchild, the Nano car, was a failure, the acquisition of the British steel giant Corus was a disaster, and the Tata teleservices business was a fiasco.

But arguably the roughest time he faced was from the then TISCO (Tata Steel) chief Russi Mody in the late 1980s. In 1991, when JRD Tata decided to step down and hand over the reins of the Tata group to Ratan Tata, there was widespread disbelief as there were several senior contenders such as Mody, who really resented JRD's choice of the young rookie.

TISCO was already a giant and Mody was a trusted lieutenant of JRD for decades, and as the CMD of the steel giant, he decided to not only defy but also revolt against Ratan Tata. Several interesting games were played



After the launch of the Tata Indica in 1998.

Some famous Ratan Tata quotes

- The day I'm not able to fly will be a sad day for me.
- Ups and downs in life are very important to keep us going, because a straight line even in an ECG means we are not alive.
- Be persistent and resilient in the face of challenges, for they are the building blocks of success.
- Take the stones people throw at you, and use them to build a monument.
- If you want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to walk far, walk together.

with the major politicians of the day, and JRD who had never kowtowed with politicians in his life, was forced, at 87, to dash to Delhi in 1992 and meet the then PM Narasimha Rao and FM Manmohan Singh to lobby for Ratan, who he had appointed as chairman of Tata Sons. But the two sent him back with his own mantra — it would be better for the Tatas to sort out their own affairs and solve their problems internally.

After many ups and downs, Ratan Tata got the board of Tata Sons to pass a resolution to retire all company chairmen when they turned 75. He himself was 54 then. Even though this decision affected all the old boys in the Tata stable, including Darbari Seth, SA Sabavala, Jamshed Bhabha, Nani Palkhivala, etc, Mody, who was then 74, took it personally and found a loophole that technically TISCO was not

answerable to Tata Sons and the holding company did not wield the economic clout to translate its diktat into action.

Mody drummed up political support, got the trade unions on his side, etc, and really muddled the waters for the new heir of JRD. But finally, Ratan Tata outmanoeuvred the man who had joined the Tatas when the former was born — exactly 54 years ago.

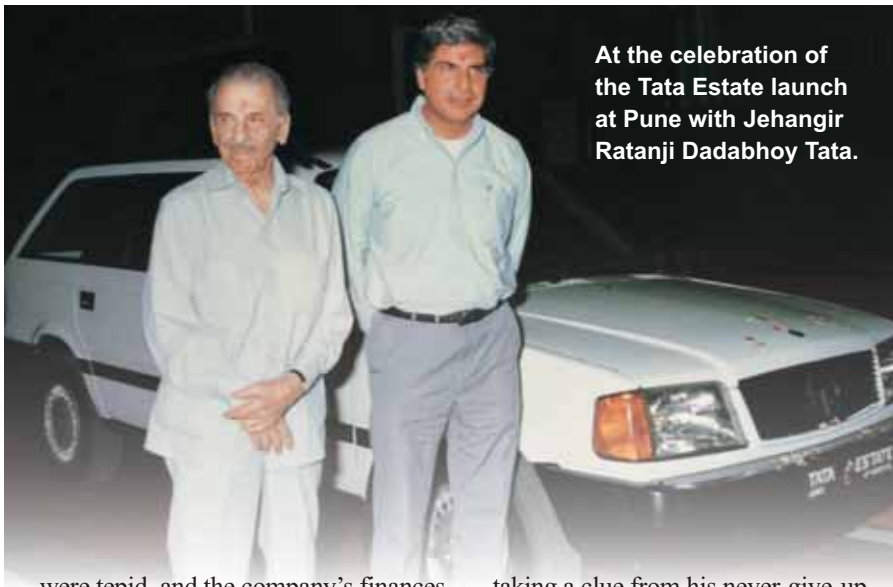
The next major ordeal Ratan Tata faced was in Tata Motors, where in 1998, under his personal interest, initiative and guidance, Tata Indica, India's first indigenously designed and manufactured car was launched. Tata's dream was to take on the Japanese and American cars that were then flooding the Indian market. But the Indica sales



Playing a tune.



With cricketer Sachin Tendulkar.



At the celebration of the Tata Estate launch at Pune with Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoi Tata.

were tepid, and the company's finances were so bad that Ratan Tata had to consider selling Tata Motors.

Ford Motors was a contender, and in 1999, the Tata chairman, with his team, flew to the US to negotiate the sale. In that meeting, the Ford chairman, Bill Ford arrogantly taunted Ratan Tata for entering the passenger car segment without understanding it, and even said he was doing them a favour by buying Tata Motors!

Unable to stomach this insult, Tata walked out, scrapped the deal, and

taking a clue from his never-give-up spirit, resolved to work much harder on their passenger car segment, improving the vehicles' fuel efficiency, making them safer, etc. The results can be seen from the leadership Tata Motors has taken in the EV passenger car segment, the company moving into the black and its share price going up from hitting a low of around ₹67 in 2019 to a high of ₹1,179 in 2024!

Ratan Tata had his sweet revenge moment during the great recession of 2008, when Ford Motors had to sell

many of its subsidiaries such as Volvo and Hertz, and was looking at suitors to buy the loss-making Jaguar and Land Rover. Tata Motors, steered by Ratan Tata's personal interest and passion for luxury cars, entered the fray and closed the deal. Not only that, Tata Motors turned these businesses into some of the most profitable automobile divisions in the world!

As eulogies pile up for India's best loved business leader in decades, the man will be most remembered for showing by example that it is possible in India to do extremely profitable business without bribe and corruption. With him at the helm, the integrity associated with the Tata brand scaled new highs. The British weekly *The Economist* summed this up neatly when it commented: "Even in difficult times, the Tata Group under his leadership was seen as a uniquely benign employer. It did not swindle, it paid its debts, it stood behind its products — and it was largely, if not entirely, free from scandal."

Designed by Krishna Pratheesh S

Nurturing nature and education

Jaishree

The Rotaract Club of Basaveshwaranagar, RID 3192, along with RC Bangalore Basaveshwaranagar and its Inner Wheel club of Bangalore Basaveshwaranagar, organised a seed ball making event at the Cadambi Composite PU College. The activity had 150 students, along with Rotaractors, Rotarians and Inner Wheel members, making 17,000 seed balls of various plant species.

Following this event, the Rotaractors went on a tour to Sirsi to participate in a local festival. “On our way there, we dispersed seed balls across open fields,” says project coordinator Megha. Along with members of the Inner Wheel Club of Mahlaxmipura and the Smile Foundation, the Rotaractors planted over 100 samplings in various locations in the town. Around 7,000 seed balls were later donated to Sampige Foundation, an NGO dedicated to environmental conservation; around 3,000 seed balls were given to Eat Raja, an eco-friendly juice outlet in Bengaluru. “Every year the shop owner keeps a bag full of seed balls outside his shop and interested customers gather them to be sown at various places.” This is a flagship project of the club since its charter six years ago. “Every year we make and disperse 15,000–20,000 seed balls,” says club president KN Manjunatha.

In another endeavour aimed at environmental conservation, the club hosts an annual wildlife awareness event for school/college students.



This year, under the theme *Gajadwani*, the focus was on elephant conservation, covering topics such as poaching for ivory, habitat protection and maintaining elephant corridors. “The event was a special tribute to two elephants — Bogeshwara, the legendary tusker from Kabini, which recently passed away at 60, and Arjuna, the majestic Dussehra procession elephant that died 10 months ago. This annual event deepened our understanding of these gentle giants, emphasising the importance of peaceful coexistence.” Various contests including painting, essay writing and photography were held for students. “The proceeds were donated to support the education of the mahouts’ children,” he says. An interactive session *Voice of the Elephant* had the elephant Arjuna’s mahout sharing his experiences with the pachyderm.

Vidya Sankalpa is another signature project of the club being executed for the past four years. Under this initiative, the club renovates government schools and provides sponsorships to children from less privileged families. “We have renovated six government schools in these four years,” says the club president. This year, the club, with financial



District Governor Mahadev Prasad (L) inaugurating the renovated department in a polytechnic college.

backing from the IT giant Yahoo, renovated a government polytechnic, benefitting 200 students. The project’s second phase focuses on providing annual scholarships to 20–30 government school students. The funds are collected through crowdfunding and social media campaigns. “This year, our support has led to an increase in student enrolment from 25 to 65 in a government school at Dodaballapur. We have promised them that with every significant increase in students, we will also increase the number of sponsorships,” says Manjunath. ■

Left: Seed balls left to dry.

Below: Club president KN Manjunatha honours the elephant Arjuna’s mahout and his son.



Striving for green Odisha

V Muthukumaran

With an alarming rise of deforestation and growing demand for urban housing in and around Bhubaneswar, the city Rotaractors have been disbursing seed balls for the last three years in groups. “Our aim is not only to create a green, sustainable environment, but also educate the public on the need to nurture trees and preserve our ecosystem,” says Mukesh Samal, club advisor, RAC Bhubaneswar Royal, RID 3262.

This year (2024–25), the club entered into a partnership with IG Drones, a local company, which has provided two drones for aerial disbursement of seed balls. “Unlike the last two years where we disbursed over 10,000 seed balls through manual work, this time we have already scattered 20,000 seed balls and have a target to reach 50,000 disbursals. Such a huge leap in our greening efforts is possible only through drones,” explains Samal. Apart from 35 Rotaractors, around 20–25 volunteers from different NGOs are involved in seed ball disbursement on riverbeds, dried ponds, urban areas, villages, barren lands and denuded forests.

In the coming months, the club will rope in students from city schools and colleges for

making seed balls in groups at a community hall, a meeting hub for journalists and media persons. “We thank our partner company for leasing their drones for free that has enabled us to reach out to far-flung areas with good penetration,” says Samal.



Every year in October, *Project Daan Utsav* celebrates the joy of giving. It is a week-long project starting from Oct 2 and held in different venues with different themes. “An elaborate, tasty dinner was served to around 50 students of the Odisha Association of the Deaf School this year. We staged small rallies at three places across the city to create awareness on cervical cancer. A team of 26 Rotaractors held aloft placards and banners that drove home the



Enthusiastic volunteers making seed balls.



message of vaccinating young girls against cancer. We also engaged the public at these places to spread the message,” explains Samal.

On the third leg of *Daan Utsav*, Rotaractors rallied and spoke to the public on mental health issues at a busy locality in Bhubaneswar.

Left: Rotaractors and volunteers create seed balls.

Below: A drone ready to take off for seed ball disbursal.



“We distributed 200 handbills and leaflets to public and urged them to take care of their mental health through preventive steps.” The club has a plan to hold a quiz competition for college students in January, “but this project is still in the drafting stage and once finalised, we will select a college for holding the contest,” says club president Som Shastri.

Support from parent Rotary

Their parent Rotary, RC Bhubaneswar Royal led by its president Bibhuti Kar is extending both moral and material support for the Rotaractors to take up impactful projects. “Rtns Pratap Chaudhary and Ajay Patnaik are of great help to us in planning and executing service activities. Through our network of friends and parent Rotary, we mobilise funds for our projects,” says Samal.

An executive at the state department of Housing and Urban Development, Mukesh Samal is a dual member and has been a Rotaractor for 12 years. “Rotaract is like a family to me and I enjoy doing community work,” he says, and adds that “I will shift my work to Rotary in the next two years,” as he wants to expand his service in the near future. ■

Rotaract skill contest for students

V Muthukumaran

An inter-school arts competition for school students in Thane has given a platform for young talent to display their skills in a range of crafts under *Project Hooner* (skill in Hindi) being conducted by RAC Thane North, RID 3142, for the last 25 years. "The art competition is our flagship project earning us goodwill and boosting our public image among schools in Thane," says club president Siddhesh Naik.

The Rotaractors led by the club president approach over 70 schools to

Children at *Project Hooner*.



enrol students for the arts competition, usually held in August as “there are no exams in this month, after consultation with school principals and teachers. This year we had 2,500 students from 26 schools, one from the nearby Mulund district, who displayed their skills in clay modelling, colouring, craft-making, drawing, essay writing and handwriting.”

Students from Class 1–10 were divided into four categories, and the mega contest was held at the Saraswati Mandir Trust Primary School at Naupada, a suburb of Thane, “but we

change the venue each year after discussion. Top three winners in each category were given a trophy, certificate and gift hampers,” says Naik.

All the 43 Rotaractors of the club are involved in organising the mega arts show, taking care of logistics and coordinating for the smooth conduct of the one-day event attracting thousands of Thane students. Another initiative, *Project Deepanjali* (prayer lamp) celebrates Diwali with around 80 special children at the Dharamvir Aanand Dhighe Jidd Shala being run by the Thane Municipal Corporation. “We

arrange a number of variety entertainments for both differently-abled and physically-challenged students who miss a normal life and yearn for the fun and happiness we take it for granted during Diwali.” Around 50 Rotaractors including those from other Rotaract clubs visit the special school, and fine-tune the venue with prop-ups and create festive settings for a series of stage shows — from stand-up comedy, magic show to light music, joker cycling, balloon sketching, mehndi art and tattoo-piercing. “All the special children are given snacks and gift hampers.”





Students at a drawing competition.



A Rotaractor takes a selfie with students at *Project Hooper*.



A girl displays her craft.

There is a plan to take a group of Rotaractors and members from the public for a 10-day trip to Manali, a tourist resort in Himachal Pradesh, in December under *Project Snowy Trails*, “which we are attempting for the first time.” Till now, 50 persons have registered for the winter tour, around half of them consisting of the general public.

Naik thanks their parent Rotary, RC Thane North, as “they are always ready to help us by getting sponsorship and donors for our service projects.” Their club president Medha Joshi and secretary Amol Nale are fully behind the Rotaractors who also have the support of a large number of Rotarians. “The mentorship from our Rotarians is crucial for the success of our projects,” says Naik.

A software engineer in an IT firm, Naik (25) recalls, “I started my eight-year-old Rotaract journey in community service, and later on explored many avenues of Rotary. Over the years, I have built a strong network of Rotaractors and friends to socialise with, ideate on new projects, and rely on their volunteer base.” With the RI removing the upper age limit for Rotaractors, “I would like to remain in Rotaract as far as possible, and keep doing projects that make a change for good in the society,” he smiles. ■

Monsoon warriors

Team Rotary News

RAC Nagpur United, RID 3030, organised a 10-day *Raincoat Rescue* project, distributing 50 raincoats at different places including Nagpur Railway Station, Kharbi, Hingna and Dosar Vaishya Square.

Supported by RC Nagpur Mihan Town, the project was held from Aug 15 to 25 this year. Eight club volunteers



A Rotaractor handing over a raincoat to a beneficiary.



A woman being assisted at the Ladki Bahin Yojana camp.

distributed raincoats to homeless and underprivileged persons, as well as children, to reduce health risks during the rainy season. “Providing raincoats to these groups not only protects them from exposure to heavy rains but also reduces the risk of illness,” said club member Sriya Chikate.

At a one-day camp, the club assisted 133 women in applying for *Ladki Bahin Yojana*, a Maharashtra government scheme providing financial aid to economically vulnerable women, including those who are married, widowed, or divorced, with family incomes below ₹2.5 lakh annually. Six volunteers helped participants verify documents and complete applications, aiming to improve their financial independence and social security. “This project empowers them and fosters gender equality,” added Sriya. ■



More than a

Kiran Zehra

In a room filled with children softly gliding their pencils over paper at the Yuktha Charitable Trust, an orphanage in Bengaluru, Prathap, a 10-year-old boy, intently sketched the iconic Dali mask, famously worn by the robbers in *Money Heist*, a Spanish TV series. While he has not watched the Netflix series, he has seen short reels on Instagram and YouTube that captured his imagination. He and the other children were sketching and drawing different objects for *Chinnara Chillipili*, a talent competition organised by RAC Atria IT, RID 3191.



Members of RAC Atria IT with the talent competition participants.

competition

Vaishnavi DP, the club president says “The children were incredibly talented. With just a pencil, paper and eraser, they created artwork like true artists,” and adds that the club provided each child with a stationery kit for the competition.

The club also held singing and dancing contests to “spark creativity and bring joy to children whose daily lives often lack excitement.” Each child had 30 seconds to perform their favorite song in the singing segment. “From Bollywood hits to local tunes, the room soon filled with energetic voices and conta-

gious laughter,” recalls Vaishnavi. One standout performance was *Kaathu Mela*, a popular Tamil song, that turned into an impromptu sing-along with both the children and Rotaractors joining in. “It was such a heart-warming moment. We were all united by music and fun,” she laughs.

At the end of the competitions, every child received chocolates, while the winners were awarded trophies. Prathap, who had sketched the Dali mask, proudly took home the art competition trophy. “I didn’t expect to win, but I’m thrilled. I will keep practising and learning new techniques,” he says. “For the children, the event was a chance to showcase their talent and feel acknowledged. For the Rotaractors, it was



a reminder that some of the most meaningful experiences come from simple acts of creativity, laughter and connection,” smiles Vaishnavi.

But *Chinnara Chillipili* didn’t end with the competition. “We wanted to showcase the children’s artwork to club members, mentors, friends and Rotarians,” she says. The club decided to create a 2025 calendar featuring all the children’s drawings. The competition was held on Aug 24, and by the time of the club’s installation on Sep 14, the calendars were ready. They were gifted to all the guests at the installation. “This gift felt personal and authentic. It wasn’t just about the drawings... it carried the memory of a day that celebrated creativity, joy, and brought us all closer together,” she recalls. ■





Inspiring youth and community transformation

Jaishree



Rotaractors with students in a school as part of the *Project Beyond Pink and Blue*.

On the occasion of International Youth Day, Rotaract Club of Resilience, RID 3011, launched *Project Bol Bachchan* — a holistic public speaking programme designed to transform shy students into confident orators. “Through engaging workshops, expert guidance and practical exercises, we aimed to enhance communication skills, build self-esteem and empower 45 students to become effective leaders,” says project coordinator Yash Arora.

Under *Project Jagriti*, the club distributed 500 packs of sanitary pads to adolescent girls and women in a slum colony in Delhi. “We spoke to them about menstrual hygiene and healthy habits. The girls were initially reticent to talk about menstruation but later on they felt comfortable and were receptive to discussions and suggestions,” he says. The club plans to continue this project throughout the year.

Project Beyond Pink and Blue was a two-day educational initiative aimed at promoting gender equality among school students. It focused on challenging traditional gender stereotypes and encouraging a mindset of inclusivity and equality among young students. Over

the course of two days, volunteers from the club interacted with 250 students, engaging them in meaningful conversations and activities related to gender equality. Through interactive workshops, students were encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and perceptions about gender roles. The workshops were designed to be both educational

and engaging, using storytelling, roleplays and group discussions, to facilitate deeper understanding. The goal of these sessions was to foster a sense of empathy and understanding among the students, creating a more inclusive learning environment. The initiative also aimed to empower students to think critically about stereotypes and to

stand up against gender biases in their daily lives, says Yash.

The club distributed stationery kits, notebooks, water bottles and lunch boxes to 150 students at the S K Foundation in Janakpuri, Delhi. “We did a needs assessment in the school before deciding on the project, and found that the children come from financially

Club volunteers train youngsters in public speaking.



weak families. Although they are eager to attend school, financial constraints make it difficult for the parents to provide the children the basic essentials,” he says. The club members identify this project as *Tools for Tomorrow*.

The club launched a series of inspiring podcasts titled *Sparsh: Stories of the Brave*, featuring real stories of bravery and resilience for the benefit of its members. Each podcast amplifies the voices of individuals who have faced unimaginable challenges and overcome them with strength and resilience. The podcast’s inaugural episode featured Alka Rai, who lost her father in the Uri terror attack in Kashmir. Despite the tragedy, Alka and her family found the courage to heal, rise, and inspire others.

Sparsh aims to share similar stories of bravery and resilience, highlighting the strength and courage of real people who have overcome adversity. “By sharing these stories, we hope to inspire



A Rotaractor gives a pack of school essentials to a child.



Sanitary pads being distributed in a slum colony.

and motivate others to find the strength to face their own challenges. The podcast has already gained recognition, having featured on newspaper websites and garnering praise for its inspiring content,” says Agarwal.

Project Pawfect provides shelter, vaccination, and love stray dogs. The project includes safe shelter for stray dogs, vaccination and deworming drives, and reflective collars to prevent accidents. Awareness sessions were conducted to educate the public about dog care and welfare. The club organised a 101-day food drive where the members provided food for stray dogs. ■

A Rotaract rally knits communities

V Muthukumaran

With the aim to forge unity among different communities, RAC Kankaria (Ahmedabad), RID 3055, is holding a 2km-rally for the last 14 years from Kankaria Lake, coursing through nearby colonies, and then ending at the starting point in a circle.

In the rally, around 50 Rotaractors and 20 Rotarians carry fire torches, along with placards and banners, “to drive home the message of unity in diversity among people of different faiths, castes, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds,” says Khush Narkhede, club secretary. The rally participants

raise slogans calling for national unity to make India stronger in all fields by overcoming hurdles and challenges under *Project Walk for Unity*.

Over the last six years, *Project Lighting the Homes* has distributed 650 solar lamps to roadside, underprivileged and tribal families across the city. “We approach the NGOs, Rotarians, and pass on the message among our families to mobilise funds for procuring the solar lamps. This year for the sixth edition of *Lighting the Homes*, we had collected ₹22,000 and with that, we distributed 200 solar lanterns and lamps to the poor families,” explains Narkhede.

Around a dozen Rotaractors visited Nadabet, a border outpost 250km from Ahmedabad, and tied rakhi with 60 soldiers on Raksha Bandhan. “We distributed sweet boxes to 70 jawans and delivered handwritten Thank You letters to them as a token of gratitude for their tireless vigil in guarding our borders,” he says. *Project Celebrating Courage* is a tribute to Indian army men and “we will continue this two-year-old initiative in future too.”

Into its 50th year, and to mark its gold jubilee, the club members will be visiting 4–5 old age homes “where the elderly inmates will be served delicious food, engaged in fun games and



Rotaractors with BSF jawans at the Indo-Pak border post, Nadabet.



Rotaractors at the *Walk for Unity* in Ahmedabad.

receive essentials like monthly groceries and other donations from us,” says club president Dhatri Nagar. “We are still planning our golden jubilee events and projects, but we will certainly visit old age homes and spend time with elderly inmates.” Rotarians from their parent, RC Kankaria (Ahmedabad), help the Rotaractors in mobilising

project funds through their Rotary contacts, “also they provide space and venues for free at posh properties owned by them for Rotaract projects.”

Narkhede (23) wants to continue in Rotaract till 30 years, “as it has boosted my self-confidence over the last four years. Before joining the youth movement of Rotary I was an introvert with

low self-esteem. But now I can give a public speech in any event.”

After completing his BE (Mech) course in June this year, he is now employed as an executive at Bosch Rexroth, a major in factory automation. “The Rotaract life has groomed my personality which helped me to get this plum job,” he adds. ■



Raakhi being tied on the wrist of BSF jawans at the Indo-Pak border post, Nadabet.



Pav Bhaji and Purpose

Kiran Zehra



RAC Mumbai Mulund South, RID 3141, gathered at club secretary Ruchi Bheda's house early in the morning with aprons on, ready to cook up a giant batch of *Pav Bhaji* for *Project Dabbawalla*, an initiative to distribute nutritious meals to individuals in the Khindipada slum in Mumbai. The team assigned roles — chopping, stirring, seasoning etc. “And soon the air was filled with the aroma of tomatoes, spices and butter. Some members took on the role of taste-testers and got playfully competitive over who could make the bhaji taste just right,” smiles Ruchi.

Comparing the atmosphere of her house to a “food festival!” she adds that “we were cooking, chatting, and dancing in between stirring the bhaji. The best part was that we knew each plate would mean something to the person who received it.”

Khindipada is a densely populated slum near Bhandup, Mumbai “where families face challenges like limited access to water, sanitation and health-care. We went door-to-door navigating through the narrow lanes and distributed the freshly prepared Pav Bhaji to over 200 residents.”

Through the *Voices Unchained* initiative, the club extended support to sex workers and their families in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. Members gathered essentials like sanitary napkins, food packets and educational kits, addressing daily needs often left unfulfilled.

In collaboration with Apne Aap Women's Collective (AAWC), an NGO supporting sex workers, the Rotaractors raised over ₹1.5 lakh, contributing a year's supply of sanitary napkins for 1,000 women and educational kits for 60 children.

The team visited neighbourhoods to distribute the essentials and speak with families, listening to their stories and their dire needs. “For us, this was more than material support,” says Ruchi and adds that this “was about creating dialogue and showing respect for a community often overlooked.” ■

Above: A club member serving pav bhaji to a child.

Left: A Rotaractor discussing menstrual hygiene with sex workers.

Little Radhas and Krishnas brighten Janmashtami celebration

Team Rotary News

Dressed in beautifully adorned Radha and Krishna outfits, the children of Srishti Trust and Learning Centre celebrated the festival of Janmashtami in a heartwarming event organised by RAC Delhi South, RID 3011. “The tradition of dressing children as Lord Krishna and Radha during Janmashtami (birth of Lord Krishna) has cultural significance. It symbolises innocence, divinity,



and the playful nature of Lord Krishna’s childhood,” says Aakshi Saxena, a club member.

The event was organised to “bring smiles to the young participants, foster cultural pride, and community spirit,” she adds. The children danced for the Rotaractors. The club donated toys to the school. The event concluded with the distribution of refreshments.

On the same day, the club organised *Project Swasthsetu*, a mega blood donation and health checkup camp. Held in collaboration with the Max Hospital, Clove Dental, UK Eye Care and Nutriflex, the camp received 400 footfalls. Over 800 consultations were given, addressing a range of health concerns, from general health and dental care to eye checkups and nutrition advice. “The comprehensive health services offered during the camp ensured that individuals from various backgrounds could access healthcare,” says Kartik Dawar, project coordinator.



Promoting blood donation.



Above: Children entertaining the Rotaractors at the Srishti Trust.



A Rotaractor after donating blood at the camp.

Below: Rotaractors with gifts to be distributed to children at the Srishti Trust.

The blood donation drive was organised in partnership with the Rotary Blood Bank, Delhi. Over 50 units of blood were collected. “The drive contributed to addressing the critical need for blood in medical emergencies,” he says, and adds that the “social

media promotions led by Chandrika Dixit helped spread awareness about the camp, drawing more participants and highlighting the power of social media.”

IPDRR Kriti Malhotra was present at the camp. ■



Educational support for children

Jaishree

The Rotaract Club of RVCE (RV College of Engineering, Bengaluru), RID 3191, has launched *Project Pustak* to empower children from financially weak families to pursue education and excel in academics, without dropping out of school. Through this year-long

project, the Rotaractors have reached out to 500 students across 15 government schools, providing them with school essentials such as notebooks, textbooks, stationery items, school bags, footwear and lunch boxes. The club ran a fundraiser drive in the college which got them an impressive ₹3 lakh. “We received contributions

ranging from ₹100 to ₹350 from students and the teaching faculty, and their support made this project possible,” says Mahi Garg, club secretary.

Project Pusthak was more than a charity drive or material support, says project chair Ishita Poddar. “It was a means of instilling a sense of hope and determination among



Rotaractors after distributing school essentials to children in a government school.

Project Pusthak was a means of instilling a sense of hope and determination among the students.

— Ishita Poddar
Project Chair

the students through lectures on how education serves as a tool for change toward opening up to a better life. We communicated this to the children, inspiring them to dream big, even when things seem uninspiring.”

The club observed World Food Day (Oct 16) and hosted *Naivedyam*, a global food drive in collaboration with 21 Rotaract clubs worldwide. The initiative provided meals to underprivileged communities, with some



Packing relief material for Wayanad flood victims.

clubs donating funds, and others organising localised meal-distribution efforts. In Bengaluru, 15 volunteers from the club, along with Rotaractors from RACs Bangalore Orchards, JNC, NMIT-MBA, Marathahalli and APSCE

participated in distributing packed food to 700 people residing in the slum localities of Banashankari.

“In all, the initiative made a meaningful impact by serving food to 1,300 individuals with the collective efforts of 80 volunteers worldwide,” says Mahi. This is the third year the club is hosting this event.

The Rotaractors volunteered with the college’s NSS unit to pack relief kits to be distributed to the people affected by the floods in Wayanad in Kerala. The kits comprising grocery items, clothes, blankets and other essentials were provided by various NGOs.

Project Hello Grandparents! helped the Rotaractors connect with the senior citizens staying at the Aarna Aayu Foundation in the city. They spent an afternoon with the elderly people, cheering them up with drama, dance and games. The club provided groceries and portable wellness equipment to the old age home. ■



Rotaractors playing Ludo with a woman at an old age home.



A medical camp in progress at an old age home.

Reaching out to the hungry in Ahmedabad

V Muthukumaran



Nivaala team of Rotaractors.

In a mega food distribution drive, around 10–15 Rotaractors of RC Ahmedabad Mid Town, RID 3055, come together every Sunday to serve 50kg of *khichdi*, a pudding made of rice and lentils with other ingredients, at Makarba, a *jhuggi jhopdi* (squatter settlements) in the city. “*Project Nivaala* (food bite) is a five-year-old initiative that reaches out to underprivileged families in slums by providing wholesome, nutritious food,” says club secretary Savan Barbhaya. In a year, they hold at least 60 Nivaala camps (or drives) including those on festivals like Holi, Diwali and Navratri.

Food is cooked at the canteen of the LJ Group of Institutions in the morning, and brought to the Makarba venue. “We also cover nearby areas where there is a large spread of shanties and ramshackle huts, and distribute food to just over 100 people in a Nivaala drive. While around 10 food camps are done jointly with other Rotaract clubs, the rest are managed by us through sponsors and large-hearted donors,” he explains.

Following the success of a general health camp-cum dental screening at the Jeevan Sandhya, an old age home, that benefited 200 elderly inmates, “we



Food being provided to children and young adults.

will be expanding our medical camp that will now include a physiotherapy session and eye screening for the senior citizens.” While 105 patients were examined at the health camp where a general physician and dentist extended their service in August, “it was found that the elders, most of them over 70 years, are in need of other health services. So, we will be gradually expanding our medical service at this old age home in the coming months.”

Project Aahaar (food) distributes food to cows, birds and dogs on Saturdays as pet-loving Rotaractors “are passionate about domestic animals that we see in our daily life.” The club holds two meetings a month — BoD and general body — to chart out the finer details of upcoming projects. “We ask our members if there are issues they want to raise and also include them in our agenda which will be taken up and discussed in the meeting,” says Barbhaya.

Expressing his thanks to the parent, RC Ahmedabad Mid Town, he says, “Rotarians guide us through our project activities, apart from extending mentorship.” Working as an IT professional, Barbhaya (25), recalls, “that it was an exciting, fun-filled three-year Rotaract journey so far, from being an extreme introvert to a confident public speaker, I have travelled a good distance in shaping my personality.”

While Rotaract has taught him leadership skills, “more than that, it has brought me a sense of community responsibility in me which I will cherish in my life. I will definitely become a Rotarian in the near future, but now my focus is on continuing with Rotaract activities,” he smiles. ■



Food delivered at a slum colony.

On International Chess Day (July 20), FIDE, the international chess federation, organised a global chess tournament to commemorate its centurion year.

Over 350 events took place worldwide, both online and over the board, setting a Guinness Record for most number of chess games played in 24 hours. While the initial goal was to surpass one million games, the total number played was an astounding 72,84,970

(7.2 million). One hundred and nine chess federations participated, reporting their results globally. The federations with the highest number of games were Sri Lanka (9,848 games), India (9,397 games) and Kazakhstan (8,759 games).

A new Chess Guinness Record

Jaishree

Sri Lanka and India also hosted the greatest number of registered tournaments for this competition, each with 78, followed by China with 45.

In Andhra Pradesh, Rotaractors of RID 3160 led by DRR Nagarjun

Karnatakam organised a mega tournament where 501 games were played with the participation of 203 players. “FIDE was impressed with the mega show organised by Rotaract here. They are interested in working out





Above: DRR Nagarjun Karnatakam (L) with winners of a chess tournament.



Left: A chess tournament in progress.

a partnership with Rotary, Rotaract and Inner Wheel to form a Rotary chess federation. Discussions have just begun and it is in the nascent stage now,” says Karnatakam, himself an accomplished chess player.

He is the joint secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Chess Federation and a national arbitrator. “When this partnership materialises it will be a good public image platform for both Rotary and FIDE globally,” he says. ■



Training programme for Rotaract leaders

V Muthukumaran

For the first time in the newly-carved RID 3192, a residential training programme called *Spark* was conducted for about 100 incoming Rotaract club and district leaders.

The two-day and one night training event was inaugurated by DG Mahadev Prasad who urged the Rotaractors to “aim for big service projects as Rotaract is the future of Rotary.” Further, he wanted them to be passionate and committed in their action to bring lasting changing in the society.

The two-day training event at Kanakpura, a suburb of Bengaluru, had 14 speaker-cum-interactive sessions and a laughter-yoga therapy

session. “We had participants from 25 Rotaract clubs who were trained on different aspects of leadership and made aware of their roles and responsibilities,” said DRR Surya Kiran K. “We had another one-day training session after a month for incoming leaders of 25 other institution-based clubs as they were not elected by then due to college exams interfering with their installation,” he explained.

Addressing the Spark delegates, Kiran said, “we

need to have effective collaborations among Rotaract clubs to achieve bigger goals and for taking up impactful projects.” He encouraged the clubs to take up global grant projects, “for which you can partner with your parent Rotary to identify their focus area for grant application.”

Calling for Rotaractors to see Rotaract as an organisation for “holistic growth rather than just a charity group,” Kiran motivated them to

RID 3192 Rotaractors after completing the two-day training programme.



come out with innovative ideas for doing service projects and community activity. With 1,268 members across 50 Rotaract clubs, the DRR wanted to add at least 800 new Rotaractors, “so that our headcount crosses 2,000 numbers.”

In November, he is planning to conduct *Prathiba*, a cultural festival for government school students in and around Bengaluru. “We expect to have at least 1,500 students from Class 5–10 at the festival which will showcase their diverse talent, thus boosting their creativity,” said Kiran.

He runs a digital marketing business, and being a dual member in both Rotary and Rotaract Clubs of Bangalore West, this 27-year-old entrepreneur has been a Rotaractor for eight years. Having joined the Rotary family as an Interactor in 2015, “I really enjoy doing both Rotary and Rotaract projects.” While crystal ball gazing is difficult, but 10 years down the line, “I will definitely be doing Rotary projects that are 10 times bigger in size than what I do now,” he smiles. ■



DRR Surya Kiran presents a certificate to a Rotaractor at the Spark event.

At a breakout session near a swimming pool.



Building

Jaishree

A student explaining her perspective about overpopulation through artwork.

The Rotaract Club of Bombay Hills South, RID 3141, marked World Population Day (July 11) in September by organising an impactful series of events targeting children, adults, and individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds under their *Project One Earth, Many Lives*.

Club volunteers began by visiting a local government school, encouraging children to express their thoughts on population through art. “We were moved by their perspectives on population growth and its challenges,” said club president Shubham Kumar Yadav. “Some students observed that overpopulation could lead to resource depletion and food scarcity.” He also recalled a poignant moment when a child mentioned that his family of 12 shares a cramped two-room apartment, leaving no room for even one more person.

The club members then engaged with college professors to gain academic perspective. “They consider surging population as an asset to a nation. More people mean greater human capital, which could, in turn, foster economic growth, they say.”

The third component of the project brought club members to slum areas to understand the perspective of daily wage earners. “Many expressed that overpopulation has led to fewer opportunities and exacerbated their struggles,” shared

bonds

Madiha Mujid, the club's international service director. During their visit, the team also spoke to a beggar who shared a startling view. With four children, he saw any addition to the family as simply another pair of hands for begging.

"The project was an eye-opener for us. We were able to get so many perspectives and some of the views, especially from the children, had us overwhelmed. It reminded us of how blessed and privileged we are," said the club president.

This is the second year the club has conducted this project. "Last year we focussed on equity and inclusivity, sensitising school students and slum residents on gender equality and fairness," said Yadav who is pursuing a degree in advertising at Lala Lajpat Rai College. A Rotaractor for three years, he transitioned from his college Rotaract to this community-based club which was chartered in 2009, and now has a membership of 53 Rotaractors.

Ganapati Glory is another project executed by the club for



The club's international service director Madiha Mujib recording the views of a shopkeeper about population growth.

The team also spoke to a beggar who shared a startling view. With four children, he saw any addition to the family as simply another pair of hands for begging.

the second year now. Under this project, the club members visit Om Creations, an NGO supporting children with mental disabilities, to celebrate Ganesh Chaturti festival with them. "We encourage the children to create an eco-friendly Ganesh idol and during the festival, we visit the institution in batches of five, and participate in the worship, along with them," said Yadav. The Rotaractors volunteer in making the offerings for Ganesha, perform

puja and *aarti*, and partake the food along with the inmates. On the final day, after a grand *aarti* the idol is immersed in a well on the premises, with the participation of all the members.

"These five days are filled with joy and emotional fulfillment for us with music, dance, and shared laughter," Yadav added. "Our parents visit on the last day, witnessing the vibrant bond we Rotaractors share with these children." ■

Rotaract instils HOPE in less privileged

V Muthukumaran



At a writing workshop.

During the peak Covid times, the then DRR Varda Sardana, RID 3012, mooted a novel *Project HOPE* — Helping Other People Everyday — for the district Rotaract clubs in which Rotaractors take up events and service activities related to all the seven focus areas of RI in the first week of July, at the start of the new Rotary year. “In the first two years, this holistic project was done for 20 days at a stretch, but later on in the last three years we restricted our work to just eight days,” says district secretary Shashi Prakash.

While diverse projects and community work are done in the first seven days, “on the last day, all the four zones take up events related to the six district projects — *Rangde* (painting wall); *Aaina* (MHM and sex education); *Annupusthi* (food distribution, healthy lifestyle camps), *Pride Place* (LGBTQ rights), *Power of Pony Tails* (breast, cervical cancer awareness), and *Saahas* (educating poor children). Our zonal Rotaract representatives coordinate the multiple events in their

Medicines being distributed
to less privileged families.





Children being taught aerobic exercise.

Below: Sanitary pads being distributed.

respective areas,” he explains. Recalling the early days of *Project HOPE*, Prakash says, “it was started to effectively reach out to less privileged people who were suffering a lot during the Covid times. And now, we are happy that through this signature initiative we have touched over 200,000 lives across age groups over the last five years through RI’s focus areas.” The beneficiaries were mostly people from lower strata of society who could not even afford basic amenities related to nutrition, healthcare, sanitation and education.

At present, 600-plus Rotaractors from 36 Rotaract clubs are involved in *Project HOPE* which has



Children at a session on oral hygiene.

done some “impactful service in the national capital region of Delhi.” Giving her two cents on the project, DRR Kaavya Jain says, “we have survived the Covid, yet the essence of *Project Hope* stayed with us as our smallest action of helping others create a magical impact on the society.”

In the eight days of intense action at the start of new Rotary year, “we leave no stone unturned by touching all aspects of service through our action,” she says. With her district theme, *United efforts, diverse impacts*, Kaavya says, “Rotaractors need to work together and make the world a happier place through the magic of Rotary.”

While riding on a wave crest in his four-year Rotaract journey, Prakash (24), a dual member and working as a digital marketing manager, is “quite happy managing both my Rotaract and Rotary responsibilities.” For him, doing even a small meaningful service “can bring a smile on the faces of less privileged people, and this motivates me to continue with my present stint in both my Rotaract (RAC Delhi Pegasus) and Rotary (RC Delhi East End) worlds,” he smiles. ■

Threads and Talent

Team Rotary News

Bandhan, a project of RAC Sathaye College, RID 3141, “has been a cherished tradition of our club for over a decade,” says Shravani Ingavale, the club secretary. This year, the project involved selling handcrafted rakhis in the college. The rakhis were made by students at the VD Indian Society, a Mumbai-based

Rotaractors with children at the VD Indian Society.





Left: Club members and participants at a talent competition organised by the club.



A boy with mental disability making a rakhi.

NGO that supports children with mental disabilities. The drive aimed to combine festivity with meaningful financial support for the organisation.

Out of 115 rakhis crafted by the students, 110 were sold, and funds raised through the project were donated back to the NGO. “The drive not only raised awareness about the incredible work being done at the VD Indian Society but also allowed us to contribute to a meaningful cause,” Shravani adds.

The club organised *Tashanbaaz — Quest for the Best*, a talent competition

sponsored by Red FM, Boomer, and Maruti Suzuki. This event attracted around 250–300 students and showcased the vibrant talent within the college.

With over 35 participants, the talent show featured a variety of performances, including dance, music, drama and stand-up comedy. “The atmosphere was electric as performers captivated the audience with their skills and creativity. RJ Jiya from Red FM served as a judge, providing valuable feedback and encouragement to the participants,” she says. ■

meet at Varanasi

Team Rotary News

The 2024 SEARIC summit was organised in Varanasi. The three-day event was hosted by RI district 3120, led by DRR Kamadeshwar Singh. It had a participation of over 500 delegates from 38 districts across India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. RID 3120 DG Paritosh Bajaj was the chief guest and SEARIC MDIO president PDRR MS Abhijit was the programme convenor. PDRR Kushagra Bansal was the summit chair and DRRE Mahi Bhan, the summit secretary.

The event was a perfect mix of learning, fellowship and entertainment. Milind Raj, known as the Drone Man of India, spoke about AI, robot science and drones. Dalit rights activist Lenin Raghuvanshi, women and child rights activist Shruti Nagvanshi, mountaineer Ratnesh Pandey and ‘food man’ Vishal Singh who distributes food to caretakers of patients undergoing treatment in Delhi hospitals, were the other speakers.



DRRs, led by host DRR Kamadeshwar Singh, perform the flag march at the SEARIC meet.

The DRRs and their successors met to exchange notes on enhancing Rotaract experience in South East Asia. The DRRs presented a progress report of activities in their respective districts. RID 3292 will host the 2025 SEARIC summit at Pokhara, Nepal.

The delegates visited the Vishwanath temple and witnessed the famous Ganga *aarti* on the banks of the river Ganga. They were also taken on a tour of Sarnath, the birth place of Buddhism, 10km from Varanasi. The summit concluded with a fashion show and cultural performances.■



RID 3040 creates record in tree plantation

Team Rotary News

The Rotaract clubs of RID 3040 came together to plant 11 lakh saplings in a single day at the Revti Range Indore BSF premises. This initiative was recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records. The Indore Municipal Corporation partnered with the Rotaract district for the project which had participation of 250 Rotaractors.

Union home minister Amit Shah, Madhya Pradesh chief minister Mohan Yadav, Indore mayor Pushyamitra Bhargav and state minister Kailash Vijayvargiya were present during the launch of the plantation initiative. The plants will be nurtured by the Rotaract clubs, the BSF and the city corporation. ■



Club members plant saplings in the BSF campus.



Get the Rotary funda right!

V Muthukumaran

In a maiden initiative to familiarise both school and college students with Rotary and its global activities, RAC Velalar College of Engineering and Technology, RID 3203, in Erode district of Tamil Nadu conducted a one-day interactive session that saw Rotaractors giving inspirational talks for 100 participants under *Project Empowered*.

During the first half for college-goers, “we spoke on how Rotaract improves their personal and professional lives, hones their leadership skills and helps in building a network of like-minded people for climbing the ladder of success,”

says club president T Abiram. In the second half, school students were exposed to the ideals of Rotary, and “how they can charter Interact clubs in their schools for an exciting journey in the path of service.”

Around 10 Rotaractors visited Tex Valley, a garment factory at Sathyamangalam near Erode, to take part in a cultural programme to mark Friendship Day. “We tied friendship bands on the wrist of 150 participants, mostly company staff and youth, thus giving a boost to the public image of our Rotaract club,” says Abiram. An orientation session was held at the Velalar Vidyalaya Matric HS School, Erode, before

they inaugurated an Interact club with 110 charter members. While Abiram introduced the students to Rotary and Rotaract through a presentation, Rtr Manoj Kumar spoke on the links between Interact, Rotaract and Rotary clubs. He motivated the students to become active Interactors for a successful and enjoyable life. “Around 20 Rotaractors attended the orientation session and clarified the doubts of Interactors.”

The college Rotaractors contributed to the Wayanad Relief Mission, a district Rotaract project. “We mobilised through our network and donated rice bags (25kg), clothes (five carton boxes), biscuits

Flood relief material being sent to Wayanad in Kerala.



and instant food items which were delivered to the landslide victims in Kerala as part of our district project,” explains Abiram.

Rotaractors joined hands for a flash mob at the Erode bus stand in which they staged an impromptu dance to create awareness on the need to follow traffic rules. “We educated the commuters on various traffic signals, urged them to wear helmets while riding two-wheelers, avoid drunken driving, overspeeding, and using cellphone during commute,” says Abiram. “The traffic awareness event was held jointly with our parent, RC Erode Thindal, and 50 Rotaractors took part in the flash mob.”

Rapport with parent Rotary

During their monthly meet with Rotarians, “we discuss our upcoming service projects, and they offer us some useful suggestions and guide us about the ways and means to execute our programmes.” Their parent Rotary



Students honour resource persons at an *Empowered* session.

also refers corporates and donors for sponsoring Rotaract projects.

The college management too chips in with part-funding of their Rotaract activities and events, says Abiram. Studying third year BE (triple E), he says, “I enjoy every bit of my

Rotaract life as it taught me leadership, self-development and made me to acquire skills in different domains.” He wants to become a Rotarian “only after I get settled in a good job that takes care of my financial needs for a secured life,” he smiles. ■



An interact orientation programme.



Promoting Literacy

Jaishree

Over 800 children across eight government schools benefitted from *Project Pragathi Prothsaha* of RAC Vidyaranyapura, RID 3192. The Rotaractors raised ₹4.5 lakh to support students from economically weak families around Bengaluru.

The project helped to distribute customised academic kits based on a detailed need analysis carried out in various schools. “We visit the schools and understand the students’ needs from the school head. Some schools placed a request for stationery kits

and one of the schools in Tiptur wanted us to provide the students tracksuits for sports purpose,” said club secretary Aparna Sajjaiah. Tracksuits were gifted to 120 students in that government school with support from RC Tiptur.

This is the second version of the project, the earlier one having been carried out on a large scale last year. “We had supported around 1,221 students across 12 schools last year,” said Dr Bhavana Dama, former secretary of the club. Seven Rotaract and two Rotary clubs partnered with

the host club which raised ₹3.5 lakh for the initiative.

The kits were carefully curated to provide students with everything they need for the academic year, empowering them to focus on their studies without worrying about school essentials. This year, the first phase concluded on Aug 26 with a distribution of 300 educational





kits including 1,800 notebooks and textbooks at a government school in Doddaballapur. Each kit included essential school supplies consisting of notebooks, geometry boxes, colour pencils, drawing books, water bottles, book labels and bags. Uniform sets were also gifted to students in one of the schools. “The goal is to support holistic development beyond just academics. We

are gearing up for the next phase and this time we will be focussing on schools in Chikkamagaluru,” said Aparna.

The club’s volunteers would hold motivational talks in the schools they visit, “raising awareness about the importance of education and inspiring students to grow into responsible citizens, and recognise the value of giving back to their communities.”

‘Eco-friendly Clay Ganesha Workshop’ is another flagship project of this eight-year-old club. The project, into its seventh consecutive year, has been inspiring communities to embrace eco-friendly practices during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival when Ganesha idols in plaster of Paris are widely used for worship. “Our aim is to promote cultural preservation coupled with environmental sustainability and

community involvement. This year we addressed 1,650 participants. Professional artisans were engaged to teach school and college students to craft Ganesh idols in eco-friendly clay devoid of any harmful paints or accessories. They were delighted to create their own idols in various avatars. It was interesting to witness their creativity — one child crafted the elephant god playing veena, and there was another Ganesha striking a pose with an umbrella, and many more,” said club president Rahul Raj M Singh.

Workshops were conducted at 10-plus schools, as well as at the Mantri Mall, NTI Grounds, and at the Heeranandani Apartments. Cultural performances, such as Yakshagana and storytelling about Ganesha’s origins, were integrated into the workshops at the Mantri Mall. ■



Left: Children with kits containing school essentials distributed to them by Rotaractors.



Right: A child showing off the Ganesh idol made by her.

Club Matters

RAC Delhi Mid Town Maitreyi — RID 3011

A mental health camp was conducted at an old age home with the aim to provide emotional support and ensure mental well-being of elders on Senior Citizen's Day. Starting with a meditation session, a range of activities was held to stimulate their minds and encourage positivity. Rotaractors engaged the elders in interactive, group discussions where they shared their experiences and anecdotes. The day concluded with a group singing session that brought everyone together in a joyful ambience.

RAC Delhi Dynamic Leaders — RID 3011

Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with the children of Apna Ghar, Paharganj. The event included a movie screening about Lord Krishna, his birth and accomplishments which regaled the children. Refreshments were distributed, followed by cake cutting, thanks to sponsorship from Goel Tiles and Sanitary Ware. The joyful event lifted the mood of orphaned children.

RAC Delhi Vibrance — RID 3012

More than 2,000 devotees visiting the Shri Bangla Sahib Gurudwara was given *Chabeel* (a milk syrup) to uplift their spirits. This gesture of goodwill fostered a sense of togetherness and social responsibility. Earlier, Rotaractors prepared *Chabeel*, performed *ardas*

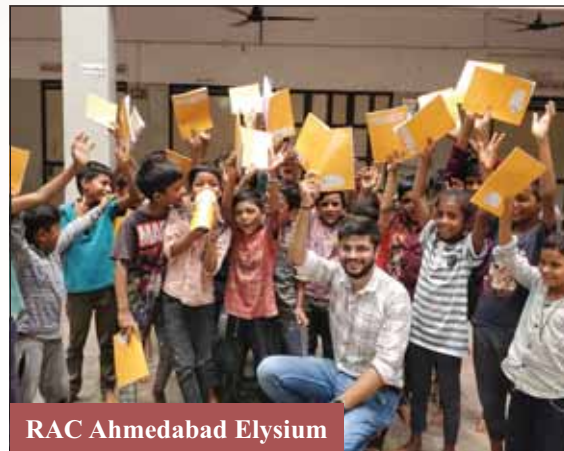
(prayer) before the distribution of the rose syrup. This project strengthened the community bonding of the club.

RAC PSCMR-CET — RID 3020

Around 700 students took part in variety programmes and interactions under *Project Yuvasamrat* to mark World Youth Day. The college juniors were explained about the importance of staying drug-free through engaging and informative sessions. Rotaractors spread the message of risks associated with drug use and shared strategies for maintaining a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. The multiple events combined fun with education to stress on a happy, healthy lifestyle for the younger generation.

RAC Ahmedabad Elysium — RID 3055

A book distribution event was held at an orphanage to mark



RAC Ahmedabad Elysium



RAC Coimbatore Gaalaxy



RAC Delhi Mid Town Maitreyi



RAC Delhi Vibrance



RAC Hanumangarh



Royal Institute to mark World Youth Skills Day. In his address, club president Ischit Jain urged youngsters to hone their skills for a lucrative career. Mementos were given to the winners. Club secretary Prateek Goyal spoke on the ability of skilled youth to transform the society.

RAC Nabha Greater — RID 3090

Around 30 medicinal plants and fruit trees were planted in a greening drive under the leadership of club president Sandeep Singla and DRRN Kashish Narula. The event lifted the public image of Rotaract and the residents appreciated the efforts of Rotaractors in preserving the ecology.

RAC Hyderabad - The Legends — RID 3150

Under *project The Gift of Education*, the club is sponsoring the education of two underprivileged students at the Gauthami Vidya Niketan High School, Hyderabad. It will cover their tuition fees, books and other expenses. All the Rotaractors have contributed for the project which was coordinated by Rtrs Reshma Nigam and Ravi Teja. The project aims

to empower poor students through education which will enable them to overcome financial limitations.

RAC Bengaluru Nava Chaitanya — RID 3192

Rtn Vallish Koushik, a wildlife conservationist, spoke at an online session under *Project Stripes in the Wild*. He dwelt on the need to protect tigers which played a crucial role in the sustaining the forest ecosystem. Around 240 Rotaractors including those from Sri Lanka and Nepal attended the virtual session. There are around 4,000-plus tigers in India and he called for nurturing safe habitats for the wild felines.

RAC Coimbatore Gaalaxy — RID 3201

Under *Project Petti Kadai* (small shop), the club set up a small shop for a differently-abled couple, Viji and Therasanathan, at the Sular Housing unit. This gesture will enable them to earn a decent income and live a sustainable life, taking care of their future. The project lifted the public image of the club in the vicinity.

Guru Dakshina Day in which IPDRRs came together to pay tribute to their gurus and express gratitude. Over 50 books and stationery kits were donated to children by Rotaractors, thus serving as a bridge between the past (guru's guidance) and the future (children's education).

RAC Hanumangarh — RID 3090

A drawing competition was held in partnership with Artflix at the

Lessons in PCOS

Team Rotary News

The members of RAC Indore Activists, RID 3040, and RAC SRM KTR, RID 3234, Chennai, came together to host a session on polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) through Google Meet.

The event featured two eminent speakers — Dr B Usha and L Pavithra who explained about the disorder and updated participants on the latest developments in understanding and managing the medical condition. They spoke about the symptoms and the broader implications for women affected with the disorder.

In another initiative, the members of RAC Indore Activists organised a stray dog feeding drive — *Bark & Feast*. The project had the support of The Barking Brigade, a professional dog-walking and pop-in service provider, and RACs SUAS and Young Uptown, that helped in boosting the reach of the initiative. Around 100 stray dogs were fed nourishing meals over the day. The Rotaractors also arranged veterinary care for dogs found with health issues. ■

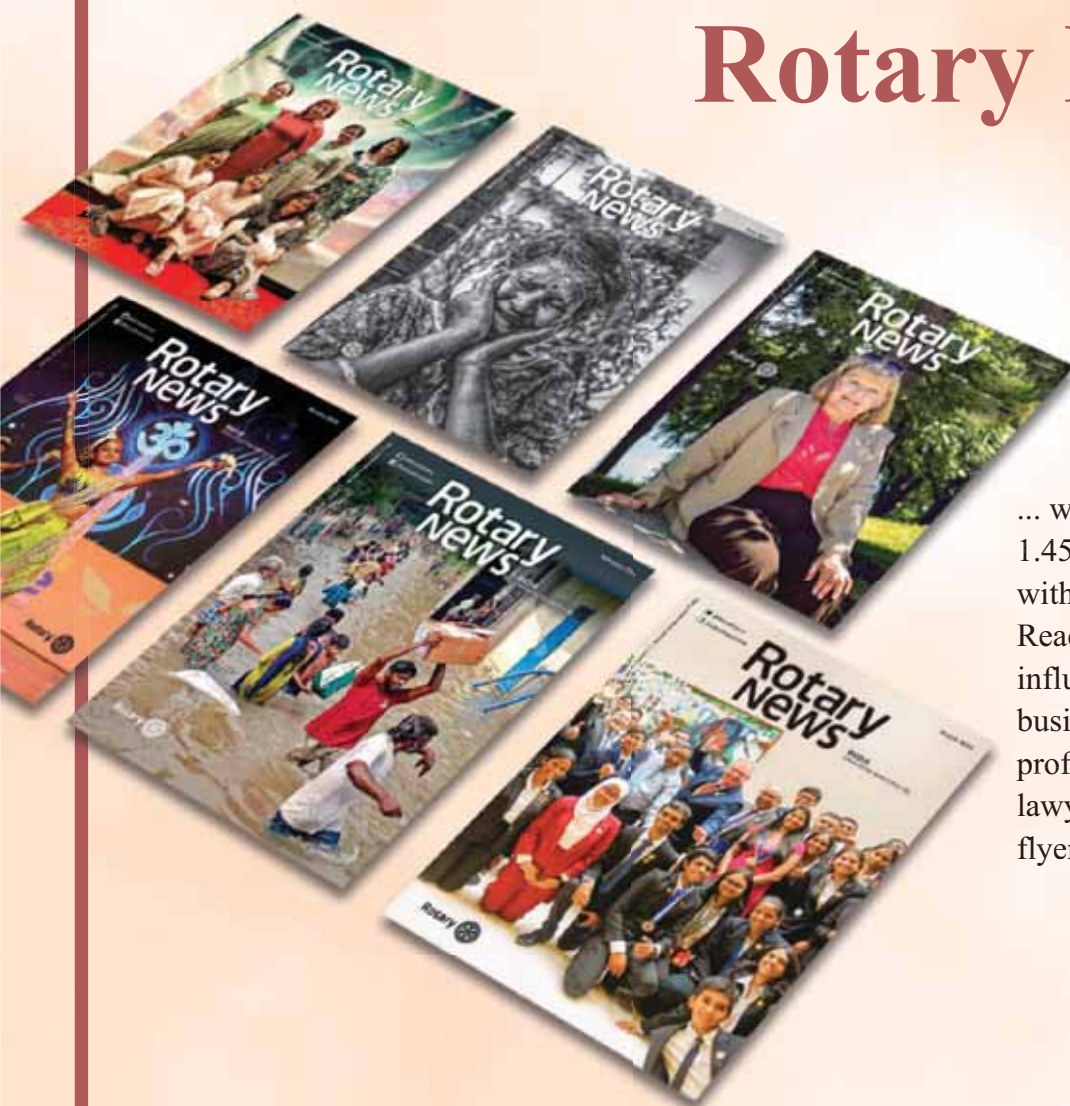


Rotaractors feeding a dog.



Veterinary care was arranged for stray dogs.

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