

# LIGHT

WEEKLY BULLETIN July 12th, 2022 - Vol. 45 No. 02

President - Rtn. Abinash K Singh ● Secretary - Rtn. Debasis Das ● TREASURER - Rtn. Chiranjib Sha ● Editor - PP Tanu Roy

For any country, its journey into the future is influenced by the journey of its past, and therefore, it's important for the present generation to know and recognise the sacrifices that our forefathers made for the freedom that we take for granted – well, mostly – today.

It's also a day for the present generation to discuss and debate the learning of history to ensure that we, as a nation, do not repeat any past mistakes.

The relevance of **August 15th** in our lives today becomes even more significant given the challenges the nation faces from across the border and disruptive forces within.

The social, political and religious stability in the country is increasingly under attack and threatens to undo the gains of our hard fought freedom for values of a secular, inclusive and democratic India.

It is now for the Youth of the day to imbibe the spirit of that magical night in 1947 and continue to build upon the path of values our freedom fighters so valiantly fought for. It's a day to unite all Indians!

JAI HIND!

**Birthday Greetings :**

Jul 12th : Spouse Ishrat Jahan, Wife of PP Ashfaque Ahmed



### *India proved the world wrong in tackling Covid: PM Modi*

One of the star speakers at the inaugural session of Houston Convention was Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and through a video speech he drew several parallels between Rotary's core principles and goals, and developments in India, which were impacting the entire world.

Giving an example of how these developments were having a positive impact on the world, he said that when the Covid pandemic came, "people thought India with its large population will not be that successful in its fight against the pandemic. The people of India proved them wrong. We administered two billion doses of Covid vaccine to our people. Similarly, India is working to eliminate TB by 2025, five years earlier than the global target of 2030."

Drawing another parallel between Rotary's ethos of Service Above Self and traditional Indian beliefs, Modi said thousands of years ago "our saints and sages gave us a powerful prayer which said all living beings should be happy and lead a healthy life. In our culture we also say great souls work and live only for the wellbeing of others. We are the land of the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi who showed in action what living for others really means."

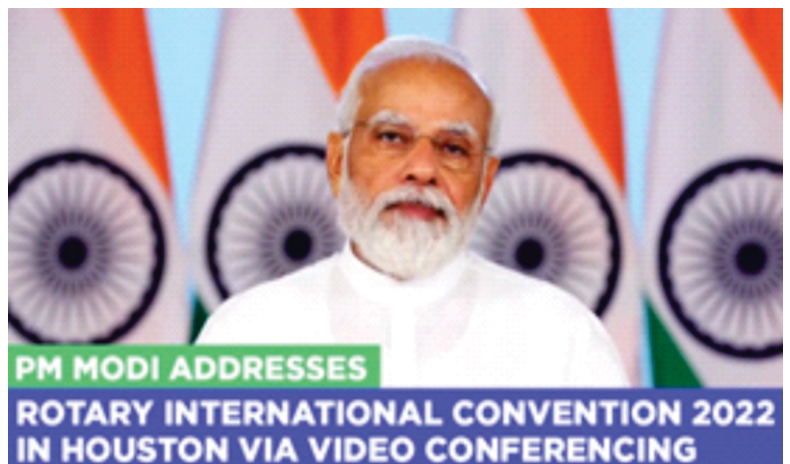
He said in today's world, "we all exist in an interdependent, inter related and inter connected world. Swami Vivekananda said very well that not one atom in this world can move without taking the entire world with it. It is important that individuals, organisations and governments work together to make our planet more prosperous and sustainable."

Expressing happiness that Rotary was working "in several causes that have a positive impact on the earth," the Prime Minister said sustainable development was the need of the hour. "Inspired by our centuries-old ethos of being in harmony with nature, 1.4 billion Indians are making every possible effort to make our earth cleaner and greener. Renewable energy is a growing focus area and at the global level India has taken the lead in forming the International Solar Alliance."

Congratulating Rotary for working actively to provide clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, Modi said that his government had initiated the Swachh Bharat Mission in 2014 and "in five years we achieved near-total sanitation coverage. This benefitted the poor and India's women in particular."

At present India was marking 75 years since "freedom from colonial rule. A new collective movement has now taken shape to save water; this has been inspired by our age-old practices of water conservation combined with modern methods."

Drawing another parallel between Rotary and India, Modi said, "Your cause of growing local economies is very relevant in a post-cold war world. The Atmanirbhar movement taking shape in India aims to make our country self-reliant and also contribute to global prosperity." India had one of the largest and fastest growing start-up ecosystems in the world, many of which



were trying to provide solutions to global challenges. “India is home to one-seventh of humanity, and we remain open to learning from global practices and sharing ours with others.” These were only a few examples, he said, inviting the Rotary family to support these efforts at the grassroots level. He also invited the global community of Rotarians to join Indians in observing the International Yoga Day on June 21. “Yoga is an effective passport to physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual wellness. Can the Rotary family observe yoga day in a large way and promote the practice of yoga among its members? You will see the benefit of doing so,” he added.

He congratulated Rotarians, all successful people in their individual fields, “for coming forward to make the planet a better place.”

### *New year New beginnings*

**AS Venkatesh, RI Director, 2021–23**

One of the unique features of Rotary is the change of guard in all clubs across the globe on July 1 every year. While some may argue that this hampers a club from thinking big and setting long-term goals, those inside are keenly aware that this change in leadership provides scope for fresh thinking while building on the successes of the past. In addition, leadership development is one of the basic tenets of our organisation and this provides ample scope for the same.

At the club, this beginning of a new Rotary year, with a new team taking charge, is also probably the best time to look back, review and reassess our goals and the strategies for achieving the same. Success stories of the past have to be cherished, celebrated and built upon. Mistakes of the past have to be reviewed dispassionately and the learnings from those are to be remembered.

I commend every club for the work they did in the last year amidst huge challenges and uncertainties. It was indeed heartening to see the passion and commitment that so many Rotarians demonstrated in the year that went by.

The time has come to pass the baton. A new year is a good time to plan something that has never been done before. This is the time of the year when members are most likely to be in a receptive state of

mind to accept, adopt and approve new ideas. Let us make use of this opportunity. Let us look around our community and imagine what could be improved. Let us be empathetic to the less fortunate. Let us imagine the things one could do to make this diverse society an equitable and an inclusive one. Let this imagination lead us into hitherto untried areas. Let us take the less travelled road. While the journey would be enjoyable, it is also likely to herald unprecedented successes.

The time is now to Imagine Rotary!



## A LITTLE MORE INFO...

 **For how long was Rotary primarily a friendship and business reciprocity organisation?**

*Only about two years; then the club added a third objective to perform civic service.*

 **The first five Rotary Clubs were in?**

*Chicago, San Francisco, Oakland, Seattle and Los Angeles.*

 **What is the greatest distance from Chicago that a Rotary Club banner has been displayed?**

*Astronaut Frank Borman, of the Rotary Club of Space Center Houston, took a club banner on his orbit around the moon in Apollo 8.*

## Climate change affecting children even before birth

Written by Robby Berman

The effects of climate change are coming ever more clearly into focus. They are widespread, including heightened levels of air pollution, extreme and unpredictable weather, and heat.

**Climate change affects everyone, but studies have shown infants and children to be most vulnerable.**

A new study collects research regarding the health burdens imposed by climate change on today's children and future generations. The authors of the study, Professor Frederica Perera and Dr. Kari Nadeau, write:

“Protection of children’s health requires that health professionals understand the multiple harms to children from climate change and air pollution and use available strategies to reduce these harms.”

The study was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

### **THE EFFECTS OF EXTREME HEAT**

The planet is steadily getting hotter from the continued burning of fossil fuels and the use of coal and natural gas. Together, they are responsible for the two key greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide and methane. In recent years, billions of tons of carbon dioxide and 120 million metric tons of methane have been annually emitted.

According to the study, heat exposure prior to birth is associated with a higher risk of pre-term births, as well as low birth weights, and is linked to infant hyperthermia and death.

For children, heat can promote kidney disease and heat stress. For older youth, the study points out, “heat-related illness is a leading and increasing cause of death and illness among student athletes.”

Dr. Ruth McDermott-Levy, professor and co-director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children’s Health and the Environment at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, was not involved in the study. She told Medical News Today:

“Children spend more time outdoors and are exposed to heat which can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and death. This is especially concerning during the summer months, when children may be at camps supervised by high school or young adult counselors.”

### **EXTREME WEATHER**

Intensifying weather events such as major floods and hurricanes are causing more childhood



injuries, drownings, and traumatic stress.

“For children from poor and marginalized communities, all of the climate change-related challenges will be compounded,” Dr. McDermott-Levy said.

The study points out that over 50 million children worldwide have been forced to leave their homes due to extreme weather events, including more than 90,000 displacements, many of them children, in the U.S. in 2020.

According to the study, “7.4 million children in the United States were exposed to lung-damaging wildfire smoke every year between 2008 and 2012.”

In addition, “With droughts and floods, we can expect [a] reduction of food and livestock production and problems with water quality,” said Dr. McDermott-Levy.

For food production, Dr. McDermott-Levy noted, “studies have shown that in the presence of high CO<sub>2</sub>, some grains and legumes have less protein and more carbohydrates, so this can interfere with the nutritional needs of childhood development.”

### **AIR POLLUTION, ASTHMA, AND MORE**

“We can expect,” said Dr. McDermott-Levy, “more cases and episodes of asthma exacerbations from poor air quality. Children’s lungs continue to develop into the second decade of life. They breathe more rapidly than adults (taking in more polluted air), and they spend more time outdoors.”

Other health issues associated with increased air pollution levels include infant deaths, adverse birth outcomes, asthma, and respiratory infections.

The researchers also cite structural and functional changes in the brains of children exposed to high levels of air pollution prior to birth or in early childhood, along with “reduced cognition, attention problems, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, and autistic traits.”

### **LIFE IN A CLIMATE CHANGE WORLD**

Climate change is also increasing the spread of infectious diseases, with animals moving to new territories due to changing seasons and habitat loss. This is mainly a concern in tropical regions.

“The future is going to be challenging for everyone related to climate change and health, but this is particularly true for children whose bodies are still developing,” said Dr. McDermott-Levy.

Dr. Patrick L. Kinney, professor of environmental health at Boston University’s School of Public Health in Massachusetts, who was also not involved in the study, advised that people and cities will have to adapt their lives and infrastructure to suit a world with a changing climate.

Neither Dr. McDermott-Levy nor Professor Kinney feels that the challenges ahead mean that prospective parents should decide not to have children.

Dr. McDermott-Levy said that although she understood many people’s concerns when planning for children, she said she did “not believe all is lost.”

“I would encourage them to get involved in local climate action and speak to their policymakers about climate change and mitigation policies to reduce our greenhouse emissions and effective climate adaptation plans,” she said.

*Professor Kinney added:*

*“We need a new generation of thoughtful, motivated young people to help guide our world back into a stable relationship with nature.”*

***Both experts stressed the need for medical schools to teach future physicians about the realities of climate change and to be flexible in mitigating its changing effects on patients.***



## *The real Bag for Life*

### **Dave King**

Feeling rock bottom is standing atop a viaduct, your body shaking with fear, looking down at the abyss – and with just one thought.

“I was terrified, I was ashamed, and I was embarrassed of being homeless,” recalled Colin, of that seminal moment in Halifax almost five years ago.

“Basically, I wanted to end it, I’d had enough. I got to the top of the viaduct, looked down, and I said ‘no, no Colin, if it don’t work you’re going to be very, very poorly, and it’s going to hurt’.”

Colin, a man in his 50s, describes the moment as his epiphany.

This was the juncture in his life where he had to turn things round. But he didn’t reach out for religion, instead he turned to Rotary.

Colin moved on to establish an independent life and serve as an ambassador for the project Rucksacks 4 Homeless, run by Sowerby Bridge Rotary in West Yorkshire.

The project is now in its fifth year with more than 250 rucksacks distributed to the homeless in the Calderdale district around Halifax.

These are distributed through a number of homeless support organisations who can identify the legitimate homeless.

Carrying Rotary and Rucksacks 4 Homeless logos, each rucksack contains a warm sleeping bag, bivvy bag, a foil-backed sleeping mat, a lined beanie hat, scarf, thick insulated gloves, two pairs of long, warm socks, and a wind-up torch.

There is also a hygiene clip box containing a face cloth, liquid soap, shampoo, hand sanitiser, comb, deodorant, lip salve, toothbrush and toothpaste, plus face masks to wear during Covid.

Rotary also provides a labelled flask, which can be taken to several coffee shops in Halifax, which offer free refills to the homeless of hot or cold drinks.

For Colin, the road to despair and homelessness happened so quickly.

The former welder was in a relationship, had a daughter in her twenties, and his partner had just given birth to a baby girl.

He recalled: “When my partner left me, we were both working. We had been together for three years.

“We’d just had the baby, my dad had just died after fighting cancer for six years and things just snowballed. That were eight years ago.”

Alcohol was the accelerant. He had lost his job, his family, his home and, by his own admission, Colin was not a nice person to be around, then.

“The worst part of being homeless is you do it yourself. I lost my family myself, my friends, and you can only stay with people for so long before you start getting under their feet.

“I was drinking quite heavily. I wasn’t talking to people, I was shouting at people.

“Basically, I became homeless, a rough sleeper through debts, addiction to alcohol, broken relationships, and depression.

“I stopped caring. I didn’t know what to do. All I wanted was keep myself to myself. I suppose I



was a bit ashamed. I don't blame anybody but myself.

"I just got it wrong. I got it wrong because I didn't have the strength to cope at the time. That was it; I lost everything, so I ended up rough sleeping, even sleeping in a cave."

That moment at the viaduct was the turning point. Colin started to cut down on the drinking, slowly got back on his feet when he met Dave Fawcett, the chief executive of Happydays, a charity which works with the homeless in West Yorkshire.

"After what happened, I held my hands up, I went to get help from homeless organisations, and decided to give something back."

Colin had heard of a rucksack project for the homeless in Bristol and wanted to replicate that in Halifax.

"I didn't have a rucksack when I was homeless," recalled Colin. "I just had a big Parker jacket." So, Colin toured charity shops in the town to collect items for the rucksacks which he or Happydays distributed.

The idea snowballed when he was introduced to Hazel Brindle, who was then President of Sowerby Bridge Rotary.

Colin added: "Rotary took the time to come out and see me, to listen to someone who had hit rock bottom, and we took it up from there."

For Hazel, the rucksack project hit a nerve. Hazel worked on a trust programme which dealt with vulnerable young people, 95% of whom were homeless, had a drug addiction or been convicted of criminal offences.

"It really touched my heart to see these young people, who came to us with no self-confidence, but who taught me more about life than I ever knew," she recalled.

"As club president, I wanted to do something to help the homeless.

"When I met Dave Fawcett from Happydays, he mentioned that Colin had been doing something on his own collecting rucksacks from various charity shops and buying hygiene products out of his own pocket.

"Dave said it would give Colin a purpose if we joined forces."

So, the project began. Initially, some of the homeless would take the rucksacks and sell them to buy drugs or alcohol.

Now the process has been refined, with Colin advising and being at the heart of the initiative.

To give Rucksacks 4 Homeless a professional look, Rotarian Rupert Cooke, who is a graphic designer, came up with the project branding.

The logo design is based on the Paul Weller song 'Broken Stones', which has lyrics about trying to find your way home. He has also made a series of short films to promote the project.

Each of the filled rucksacks costs about £85 which is funded by donations to Sowerby Bridge Rotary.

They have recently been left an £8,000 legacy to help with that work.

"We work with Happydays and SmartMove, which are two of the homeless organisations in the area," added Hazel.

"Happydays distribute them because they know the support workers in the area. Colin has a supply of them too as he often gets calls from people wanting rucksacks. Colin knows these people and knows they are going to the right place."

Sowerby Bridge would love to expand the project wider across Yorkshire to Bradford, Kirklees and Leeds, but that would require further funding or partners who want to expand this project.

John Needell, who is Colin's long-time mentor and friend, talked about turning the project national.

Prior to Covid, he and Colin had discussions with an agri-chemicals company and a homeless

charity in Manchester interested in funding and supporting a project just across the Pennines. “We would provide the rucksacks, the business would help with the fund-raising, and we would work with the homeless charity in Manchester to distribute the rucksacks to the right people” explained John.

The impact is impressive, but the rucksacks are a sticking plaster. They create a bridge and temporary solution which enables the homeless to get the longer term help they need.

Colin added: “I have had people come up to me and say this rucksack saved my life, it has helped me so much and helped me to keep going for a few weeks until I can find a property and support.”

As for Colin, he found a settled place to live, and was visited regularly by his 28-year-old daughter. He admitted he missed seeing his other daughter, whose mother has moved on.

Colin dreamt one day of starting a business, buying and selling Vespa scooters which he had repaired.

“That morning, five years ago, I turned my life round and did something about it to live independently.

“All my bills are paid. I’m not in debt. I have met so many nice and genuine people, not people who want to take things off me. People that welcome me.

“I know if I had not gone on that journey, I would not have met all these lovely people.”

**Colin died peacefully on May 16th after a short illness. His family asked for the article to be published as a tribute to his life and work.**



**Rotary Garden Reach ushrs the new Rotary Year 2022-23 in new style.**

**Our member-doctors along with Doctors from SE Railway Hospital, those who work closely with our Club was duly felicitated in our 1st RWM, July 5th, 2022 to celebrate Doctor’s Day which was on July 1st.**

**Incoming Club President & Secretary, Rtn. Abinash & Rtn. Debasis felicitated the Outgoing Club President & Secretary, Rtn. Amitav & Rtn. Tamal, respectively.**

**Rtn. Dr. BN Jha hosted the Felicitation programme and sponsored the mementoes.**



## MINUTES OF THE 2181ST RWM HELD ON JULY 5TH, 2022 AT BNR OFFICERS' CLUB, GARDEN REACH

1. President called the RWM to order and requested members to rise for the National Anthem.
2. President welcomed all the members & spouse, Doctors and their families to join the Doctors' Day celebration and extended a warm regards for their support throughout the year.
3. President informed members about the Thalassemia project on July 1st, "**Zero Thalassaemia**" - **Our pledge**. Club started the year with Signature project with above slogan at Thalassaemia Society of India, New Alipur. Distribution of food packets (sponsored by Secretary Rtn. Debasis), fruits (sponsored by Rtn. Sudip), Study Materials ( by President Rtn. Abinash) and felicitation of Dr. Sarkar of Thalassaemia Society and PP Dr. JK Singh on the occasion of Doctors' Day. PP Dr. JK briefed the club.  
Members present were President Rtn. Abinash, Secretary Rtn. Debasis, Rtn. Samiran, PP Dr. JK Singh, PP Ashfaque Ahmed & PP Naresh.
4. President informed that on July 24th, 2022 - Blood Donation camp will be held at Nabarun Samity, Maheshtala for supporting the Thalassemic patients and also Thalassaemia Awareness program.
5. Installation Chair, PP Tanu briefed the members regarding the programme and preparation of 45th Installation Meeting.
6. Secretary conducted Club business.
7. Incoming President & Secretary felicitated Outgoing President and Secretary.
8. Members were informed that the 1st Board Meeting of 2022-23 will be held on July 24th, Lunch. Hosted by PP Tapan K Roy, PP Timir Roy & PP Tanu Roy.
9. Minutes of the last RWM were confirmed. President terminated the meeting.

