







WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

November 5th, 2024 - Vol. 47 No. 16

2287th Regular Weekly Meeting

Birthday Greetings Nov 1st Mr. Sunil Sharma, Spouse of Rtn. Dr. Mahamaya Sharma Spouse Tapu, Wife of Rtn. Amar Saha

Anniversary Greetings Nov 8th Spouse Sabina & Rtn. Abbas Ali Haldar Nov 10th Spouse Rajshree & PP DK Rao

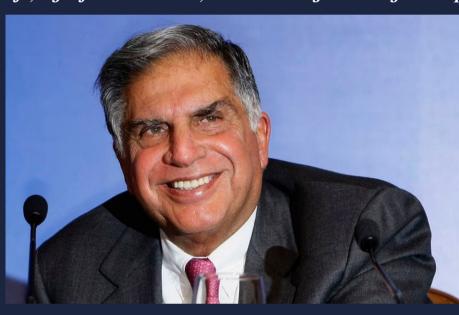
India loses its Kohinoor... again

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, especially 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 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 start-ups 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, 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.

 $Almost\,all\,industrial\,and\,business\,ty coons\,have\,their\,Ratan\,Tata\,story,\,but\,Infosys\,co-founder\,N\,R$ 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 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 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 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 muddied 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 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 nevergive-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."

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RI President Stephanie A Urchick - November's Message

One of Rotary's greatest strengths is the ability of our members to come together to create lasting change, and The Rotary Foundation helps us transform dreams of change into reality.

From eradicating polio to building peace, much of the work we do around the world would not be possible without our continued support of our Foundation.



The cause of peace is especially important to me, and one of the most effective ways we build peace is our Rotary Peace Fellowship — a product of The Rotary Foundation. The program helps current and aspiring peace and development professionals around the world learn how to prevent and how to end conflict.

Thanks to a \$15.5 million gift from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, we can continue supporting peacebuilders in more regions with the next Rotary Peace Center, at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul.

Opening yet another peace centre is a monumental achievement that we will celebrate at the 2025 Rotary

Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul.

The three-day conference 20-22 February will highlight the many ways our family of Rotary advocates for peace. Keynote speakers, panel discussions, and breakout sessions will allow us to share ideas about building peace and foster meaningful conversations about promoting peace everywhere.

Registration for the Presidential Peace Conference is open. I hope to see you there, but if you can't make it, our Foundation offers so many ways to change the world for the better. November is Rotary Foundation Month, a great time to get to know your Foundation better and pursue causes that appeal to you.

Global grants support large international activities with sustainable, measurable outcomes in Rotary's areas of focus. By working together to respond to pressing community needs, clubs and districts strengthen their global partnerships.

District grants fund small-scale, short-term activities that address needs in your community and in communities abroad. Each district chooses which activities it will fund with these grants.

Our Foundation can even help you support our wonderful youth programs, including Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, and Interact.

Your gifts to our Foundation also make Programs of Scale possible. These are long-term projects that seek to solve otherwise intractable problems.

To ensure these good works continue beyond our lifetimes, it is up to us to reach our ambitious Rotary Endowment goal of \$2.025 billion by 30 June 2025.

The Magic of Rotary does not appear out of nowhere. We create the magic with every new member inducted, every project completed, and every dollar donated to our Foundation.

Please join me in supporting The Rotary Foundation, and together, we will change the world for the better.

















Bill Gates Foundation thanks Rotary International

Gates Foundation extended its gratitude to Rotary International for its partnership in polio eradication via a video message from Microsoft Corp. co-founder Bill Gates shown last Tuesday afternoon to members of the Rotary Club of Saipan at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

"The Gates Foundation is thrilled to continue our 2- to-1 giving match, with Rotary up to \$50 million. The tripling impact of every dollar you raise, we're so grateful that Rotary has taken full advantage of that match during this critical period, and we hope to continue that streak in the years ahead," said Gates.

According to the billionaire philanthropist, Rotary's contributions including advocacy, awareness campaigns, and service have been instrumental in the progress made.

"The role of Rotary goes far beyond fundraising, of course, Rotarians have been leading the charge on this issue. Since the beginning through advocacy awareness campaigns... we should all be incredibly proud of how far we've come when polio is eradicated. And I, do mean when, not if it will be one of the biggest advances in public health in human history."

Gates added that Rotary's efforts are crucial in achieving this goal.

"The world would have never gotten to this point without Rotarians, and we won't be able to get over the finish line without all your efforts. I'm looking forward to celebrating with you the day we cross it together. So, thank you once again for all that you do," added Gates.

Gates mentioned that Rotary International played a pivotal role in the fight to eradicate polio, leading the creation of the Global Polio initiative in 1988 while polio paralyzed 350,000 children every year.

"In 2023, that number was down to 12 more than two and a half billion children received polio vaccines worldwide, and at least 20 million of them would have otherwise been paralyzed, never had to experience the disease."

Furthermore, the polio eradication efforts face challenges despite significant progress. Wild polio remains endemic in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and variant polio cases emerge in previously polio-free African countries.

"Climate disasters and global pandemics disrupted health systems around the world. We continue to see cases in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the only two countries where wild polio is still endemic, and unfortunately, we are still seeing variant polio cases in Africa, where the virus was previously eliminated. The top fact is as long as polio exists anywhere, it's a threat to spread back everywhere."

Gates also mentioned the new vaccines developed by the foundation reduce mutations and variants. Over a billion doses are administered worldwide, reducing outbreak risk by 80%.

"So, these next two years are absolutely critical and to aid our efforts, we have fantastic new tools at our disposal, like what's called the new OPB2 vaccine that our foundation helped develop and that produces fewer mutations and variants. That vaccine was actually rolled out in 2021, during the pandemic, and already more than a billion doses have been administered around the world, reducing the risk of new outbreaks by over 80% compared to the previous vaccine. But all the scientific progress in the world would be meaningless without people, making sure the vaccines actually are reaching all the kids."

The video ended with Gates expressing his gratitude to Rotarians once again as well as to healthcare workers and volunteers for their efforts.

















A call to support The Rotary Foundation

Anirudha Roychowdhury, RI Director, 2023-25

Fellow Rotarians,

Season Greetings!

Our Rotary journey is built on service and a shared commitment to making the world a better place. At the core of these efforts is The Rotary Foundation, a powerful force that turns our aspirations into impactful action. Through its programmes, the Foundation addresses global challenges — fostering peace, fighting disease, ensuring access to clean water and supporting education, among others.

Yet, only 30 per cent of Rotarians currently contribute to this remarkable cause. This is a call to action: supporting TRF is not just a responsibility, it's an opportunity to create lasting change. Every contribution, no matter how small, fuels projects that touch lives locally and globally. The Foundation has set an ambitious target of \$500 million for this year, and with your support, we can achieve it.



Your donations directly impact lives. Fifty per cent of contributions go to the World Fund, supporting international projects, while the other half is invested in local initiatives through district/global grants. This ensures that your contributions benefit both local and global communities.

As we move toward 2024–25, our Foundation Trustee Chair Mark Maloney has set five clear goals for us:

- Lead by example: Every Rotarian should contribute to the Annual Fund and Endowment Fund.
- Increase the donor base: Encourage more Rotarians to give and amplify our impact.
- Support polio eradication: Continue our unwavering

commitment to eradicating polio.



Promote the Paul Harris Society: Inspire more members to join and contribute regularly.

Organise Million Dollar events: Raise awareness and funds for the Endowment Fund through significant fundraising events.

Finally, we have a pledge to fulfil this year: we must ensure that our Endowment Fund reaches \$2.025 billion by June 2025. Currently, we are \$270 million short of this target. It is crucial that we encourage Rotarians to contribute to the Endowment Fund, helping to secure their legacy while supporting the long-term impact of Rotary's mission. Let's strengthen our commitment and be the driving force behind these goals. Every dollar makes a difference, and together, we will continue planting the seeds of hope for generations to come. Thank you for your continued support.

'When,' not 'if': Progress continues toward ending Polio

On World Polio Day, Rotary International leaders and public health experts reiterate their commitment to global eradication

Eradicating polio around the world is still an attainable goal, Rotary International President Stephanie A Urchick and public health experts said as they commemorated World Polio Day in the city where the vaccine was developed.

"I know it is a question of when polio will be eradicated, not if," Urchick told the audience at a livestream event on 24 October in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.

















"Our Action Plan talks about improving our impact. That's really where our polio eradication program shines," Urchick added. "Millions of children won't get this crippling disease. Billions of US dollars won't be spent on ancillary health care costs as a result of this disease. We have made so much progress."

World Polio Day raises awareness and funds for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's work to eliminate the disease. Since Rotary and its partners formed the GPEI in 1988, the number of wild polio cases has decreased by 99.9%. The event highlighted Rotary's continuing efforts toward complete eradication.

Polio remains endemic in two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2024, increased case counts of wild poliovirus and the first case of paralytic polio in Gaza in 25 years served as a reminder that until the disease is fully



eliminated everywhere, it remains a threat to children everywhere.

Despite the challenges, Michael K McGovern, Chair of the International PolioPlus Committee, said he remains confident as ever that global eradication is within reach. "We're in a bumpy period, but we're going to get this done by continuing to focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan and doing the things that were done so successfully by Rotarians," he said.

The event included videos featuring polio vaccination workers in the field. Urchick said she was inspired by them during a visit to Karachi, Pakistan, earlier this year.

"Men work diligently to immunize thousands of children every day at traffic checkpoints, while women go house to house to reach families directly," Urchick said. "Some workers literally climb mountains to vaccinate children in remote locations, and their determination never wavers."

The livestream event was part of a two-day Rotary zone institute. RI Director Patrick Eakes, who convened the institute, said Pittsburgh was a perfect location because it's where Dr. Jonas Salk developed the vaccine. "We realized we were in a unique position," said Eakes, a member of the Rotary Club of Crescent (Greensboro), North Carolina, USA.

Dr. Peter L Salk, president of the Jonas Salk Legacy Foundation in La Jolla, California, and a part-time professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health, talked about what drove his father to develop the first inactive polio vaccine.

"He just never let go," Salk recalled. "It was his personality to have a dream and get things done."

Salk said his father wanted to make a difference in the world from a young age and became interested in science. After working in the US state of Michigan on an influenza vaccine, he came to Pittsburgh in 1947 to work at the virus research lab and received a grant for polio research from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. That led to his work developing the inactive polio vaccine.

Other presenters at the livestream event included 2016-17 RI President John Germ. Several members of Rotary's eradication effort also sent video messages.

In a video shown at the event that was originally recorded for the 2023 Rotary International Convention, Gates Foundation co-founder Bill Gates lauded the commitment toward eradication. "When polio is eradicated, it will be one of the biggest advances in public health in human history," said Gates. The Gates Foundation, a partner in the GPEI, matches up to US\$50 million that Rotary raises each year at a 2-to-1 ratio, which means up to US\$150 million for the effort each year.

Salk, too, said he was honoured to be in a room full of Rotary members who have a passion for solving tough problems.

"Every time I get together with Rotarians," he said, "I am just uplifted by the quality of humanity that you all radiate and the dedication you put in all the different realms helping the world become a better place."

















Minutes of the 2286th RWM held on October 22nd, 2024 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach

- 1. President Biswajit Saha called the RWM to order and requested the Rotarians to rise for the National Anthem.
- 2. The Club's Bijoya-Diwali celebrations is to be held on November 15th or 16th, 2024 as proposed. The venue and expenses will be discussed in the next meeting to take a final call.
- 3. As PN Dr. BN Jha was absent the proposal for a medical camp at Bediagram was not discussed. Postponed to the next meeting.
- 4. Medical Camp & Food ATM at KMWSC was discussed and it is proposed to hold our next meeting at KMWSC to enable us check the facilities and watch the PPT by their team on the projects at hand and to discuss the proposed projects with the authorities concerned.
- 5. President Rtn. Biswajit proposed to have a Joint RWM meeting on November 12th, 2024 with a guest speaker to be arranged by PP Dr. Sumanta Dasgupta on Cancer and inhouse cultural event. President will approach guest clubs for confirmation.
- 6. Club Secretary conducted the club business.
- 7. On confirmation of the minutes, President Biswajit terminated the meeting.

